

Sepik IV - Part 2

Coming to Grips with the Future

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Sepik 4: Coming to grips with the Future – 1946 to 1975 and Beyond
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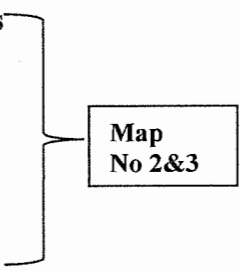
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Tribal Art - An Integral Component of Sepik Cultural Identity and Economy

Introducing Laurie Bragge – tribal art expert (?) and art dealer.

In these pages, I the writer, have appeared as a police officer, explorer, magistrate, manager, businessman, amateur historian, archivist, and amateur anthropologist among other things. The reader can decide whether I also qualify as an authority on tribal art.

That said, it is probably pertinent to draw attention to the fact that my personal and professional engagement with tribal art and artefacts, over some decades, was largely drawn from interactions with the artists themselves, within their tribal environments, rather than through books or lecture theatres...

After PNG Independence, the role of the kiaps changed and I resigned in the late 1970's after 18 years with the Administration. I chose to apply my kiap expertise and community relationships in endeavours to make a living in PNG doing what I enjoyed most as a kiap – being out among the communities and working with them. This went through four stages, which tended to complement each other :-

- With others, I developed a successful adventure tourism business, with village contacts as our hosts and entertainers. Visitors were introduced to living anthropology. This venture abruptly ended in 1989 with the Bougainville civil war, which made PNG adventure tourism unviable - tourists did not want **that much** adventure!
- During my period in tourism, my Sepik and Gulf District friends encouraged me to buy their tribal art and become a dealer. The promising niche I identified was wholesale marketing – selling to Australian and international tribal art retailers and collectors.
- After indifferent commercial success in this field of endeavour, I discovered that kiap expertise was highly valued in the PNG's resource industries in the fields of security, community relations, conflict resolution, information management and negotiating roles. It was also far better paid with fewer hassles than tribal art wholesaling, but nevertheless I maintained contact with artists and their products at village level.

To function effectively as a kiap and in my three post-kiap roles, I accumulated an extensive Sepik Archive. Threaded throughout this historical record are elements of Sepik material art in its various forms, which I've attempted to bring together in this chapter.

Prologue

Art and artistic expression have many manifestations. To borrow modern Western terms, throughout the Sepik there were tribal elements of the visual and graphic arts, performing arts, and as we will see later in the chapter, art was even incorporated into primitive information technology.

Tribal body art through ornaments, tattoos, etc. was commonly practiced, and designs were engraved or painted on just about every available surface; the skulls of the deceased were painted,

weapons, tools, gourds and coconuts, canoes, houses, domestic utensils, rock surfaces and even the trunks of standing trees were decorated. Music, song, dance and ritual also of course are identified as 'art', although not specifically part of our story here.

Our focus is largely on decorative expression through the medium of painting and carving of transportable pieces of timber, although stone and bone are also included. Innumerable three dimensional images – sculptures - were incorporated into a broad range of sacred and occasionally secular objects, usually wooden. As one would expect, there was a hierarchy of importance to the natives, and a hierarchy of values to Europeans who coveted these items; values based on cultural merit for some, simply aesthetics for others.

In pre-European times, wood was worked with stone, bone, teeth, tusks and shell. The white man introduced steel which revolutionized tribal life and impacted cultural expression, not just the execution of art through carving, but a re-evaluation of the religious significance of wood and stone. The European perception and appreciation of 'art' differed from that of the people who created it, and this added layers of complexity to the robust trade in Sepik art and artefacts which started well over 100 years ago and continues today.

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The following quotation from a 1988 guide to the purchasing of artefacts in PNG helps to introduce the theme of this chapter :-

The basis of tribal art is religion. It renders the divine or supernatural visible thereby enabling man to live in close contact with it and be secure, virile, fertile, and a successful gardener and hunter. Hence its images are found not only on ritualistic or ceremonial objects but also on more ordinary everyday ones such as house posts and gables, weapons, implements and even jewellery.

For men of primitive societies there is an element of the supernatural in all earthly things. Thus primitive art does not represent so much as embody the supernatural and its power.

Within the world of primitive art Papua New Guinea stands pre-eminent...The two great regions of art within PNG, the Sepik River basin and the Papuan Gulf, are completely different in style.¹

The 19th Century was a time of world-wide exploration, discovery and colonial exploitation. In the field of primitive art, anthropologist James Edge Partington and Charles Heape's two volume set: *Album of the Weapons, Tools, Ornaments, Articles of Dress etc. of the Natives of the Pacific Islands* thoroughly documented the exploration, discovery, and most importantly, the cataloguing of Pacific tribal art and related culture as it was known up until 1890. Their work was issued for private circulation in 1890. These rare volumes are especially important today because:

... in the exactitude of the line drawings and measurements, and Edge Partington's accurate classifications of the localities of the objects, these two clearly foresaw what has become one of the major problems of modern ethnology; namely that where the societies under study were not dying out, they were changing so rapidly that the material for such study would soon become unobtainable.²

From Edge-Partington's first visit to the Pacific in 1879 until publication of his work in 1890, sadly the colonial exploration of the Sepik had just begun and the outside world in general and Edge-Partington in particular remained unaware of the treasury of tribal art and related culture yet to be

discovered along the river, its lakes and tributaries. Had an additional Partington/ Heape volume or volumes eventuated that froze in time a detailed record of Sepik art as it existed in 1890, its value to the art world, Sepik history and the social sciences would be inestimable.

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The German exploration of the Sepik River basin between 1885 and 1914 was conducted mainly by scientists³ rather than by administrators, labour recruiters, missionaries, prospectors and others as happened during the subsequent Australian administration⁴. This placed the initial discovery, early collection and documentation of Sepik art in well qualified hands. A result today is that, despite the destruction caused by two World Wars, Germany has some of the best Sepik Art collections in existence. An excellent pictorial display of such collections can be found in Heinz Kelm's three volume publication *Kunst Von Sepik*. Herausgegeben vom Museum fur Volkerkunde Berlin: 1968.

Just 13 years into the Australian civil administration of former German New Guinea, while on a visit to the Sepik River, the following observation was made by Sarah Chinnery, [wife of anthropologist Ernest William Pearson Chinnery who, in 1932, was TNG's first Director of the Department of D.S. & N.A.]

The haus tambaran is [where]...the spiritual beliefs of the people are centred ... However, missionaries have destroyed or removed a lot of the old masks and figures in their efforts to break down old beliefs and instil their own teachings. In fact, they say one Father went into the haus tambaran and brought out the fearful carvings and showed them to the women. "Look. This is the Tambaran you are so frightened of – it's only a piece of wood". Of course this was a great tribal sin for the women to see these things. The men were shamed and everything there has been thrown away – the father took all he wanted of ethnographical interest to Germany.

These ancient haus tambarans, with all their treasures of carvings and totemic objects under our Government – and in one generation - are being allowed to fall into decay and are being stripped of their artefacts for the glorification of any museum that likes to pay a few shillings or pounds for them. These haus tambarans are the true Houses of Parliament where elders made laws and by force of fear made people submit and "hear their talk." Missions, Traders and Ethnologists who come out collecting have depleted the country of its own crafts and cultures. Of course many of the old practices were very cruel and cannot be tolerated by our government. But if the people's craft could be encouraged and organised...industry could be commercialised by sympathetic trading – all would not be lost.⁵

A quick review of the table of contents for Sepik Book 2 *The Waves of Change*, shows that these two paragraphs touch upon some of the critical issues that shook Sepik cultures to their foundations immediately after contact with the outside world. That said, I shall seek to quantify Sarah Chinnery's observations concerning the volume of art destroyed or taken from the Sepik pre-World War 2. These include:

1. Following a visit to German New Guinea by George Dorsey of the Joseph N Field Museum in Chicago in 1908, anthropologist Albert Buell Lewis from the same institution collected and documented more than 14,000 items between 1909 and 1913, many of which were from the Sepik region.
2. Many ethnographic objects were collected by the German Empress Augusta (Sepik) River expedition of 1912-13 to the middle Sepik, with an unknown but significant number taken back to

Europe. The German Neu Guinea Kompagnie had been active in this area as far back as 1887. (ref. Kaufmann 1990:592–593)

3. By 1914, anthropologist Dr. Richard Thurnwald, a member of the expedition above, had accumulated and documented a significant ethnographic collection of Sepik items which went missing when AN&MEF (Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Forces) troops looted his Sepik bases at Meander Camp [immediately downstream of the Sepik/Yellow River junction] and near Marienberg just after the outbreak of World War 1...⁶
4. An AN&MEF punitive expedition conducted by District Officer Oliver Thompson and Deputy DO Appleby in 1921/22 brought back a collection of tribal art to Aitape. Townsend later looked for similar pieces in the Sepik but found none. He noted *...these quite priceless examples of a primitive culture had vanished for ever.*⁷
5. The 1929 Crane expedition to the Sepik, also from the Field Museum in Chicago, took over 500 quality New Guinea photos (and even motion pictures), many depicting works of tribal art. The ill-defined tribal ‘sculpture collections’ of various members of the expedition were acquired variously by Harvard University, the Field Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

(Reference above... OFFICIAL/UNOFFICIAL IMAGES: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE CRANE PACIFIC EXPEDITION, 1928–1929 Virginia-Lee Webb Metropolitan Museum of Art *Pacific Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 —December 1997

6. Private collectors such as that of Awar plantation owner E.J. Wauchope⁸.
7. The 1935 collection for the Trocadero Museum, Paris by Comte de Ganay and the party of ethnologists on board the French brigantine *La Korrigane*.⁹
8. In 1935 Administrator General McNicholl, accompanied by a/ADO of the Aitape Sub-District, J.K. McCarthy patrolled the Sepik River from the mouth to a point some 700 miles upstream; somewhere well inside Dutch New Guinea.¹⁰ McNicholl travelled on the *Hermes*, a 60 ft. vessel with a crew of two Europeans and a number of natives. The *Hermes* was accompanied by the 40ft work boat *Osprey*. By the time the expedition commenced its downstream journey, *Hermes* was ‘... jam-packed with curios for the Rabaul Museum’¹¹ and the *Osprey* was similarly laden... ‘*We had a wonderful collection of artefacts.*’ McCarthy wrote¹². At the end of the 1935 Sepik expedition, J.K. McCarthy returned to Aitape and General McNicholl went back to Rabaul by steamer from Madang. The laden *Hermes* set off from Madang for Rabaul never to be seen again – lost at sea with all hands.¹³
9. Many other collections not recorded here and probably not documented at all.

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Writer’s Note A: As a digression here, regarding the loss of the *Hermes*, I am certain that if asked, Sepik elders would have no doubt that the spirits trapped in that cargo of images did what was necessary to punish those responsible for taking them from the Sepik. In a similar story at Yenchan in the Middle Sepik, the writer was told that when the Orator’s Chair was temporarily removed from its rightful place in the haus tambaran, two deaths occurred in Yenchan as a consequence. The people said this was the price that had to be paid.

Again western logic would differ from traditional beliefs concerning the causes. The western view would say the *Hermes* must have sunk in a storm, and the Yenchan deaths were caused by sickness. The traditional view might agree, but then ask ‘... *but what caused the storm and the sickness*’?

Note B: The words “curios” and “artefacts” used above reflect the superficial attitude of most Westerners to tribal art, i.e. interesting material objects of artistic merit reflective of the curious beliefs and customs of the “natives” and therefore worthy of public display in museums for all to see. The native view, on the other hand, would be focused upon the profound underlying significance of the sacred spirits and the religious beliefs which required the creation of the art necessary in the first place.

The layers of complexity however go much deeper. There is no single “native” view even within a single village community. As discussed below, knowledge of the cosmos, including the supernatural, and the closely related themes of oral history are passed down in Sepik society through the multiple levels of the male age class system in which the status of the elders who are in touch with the ancestral spirits equates to that of high priests.

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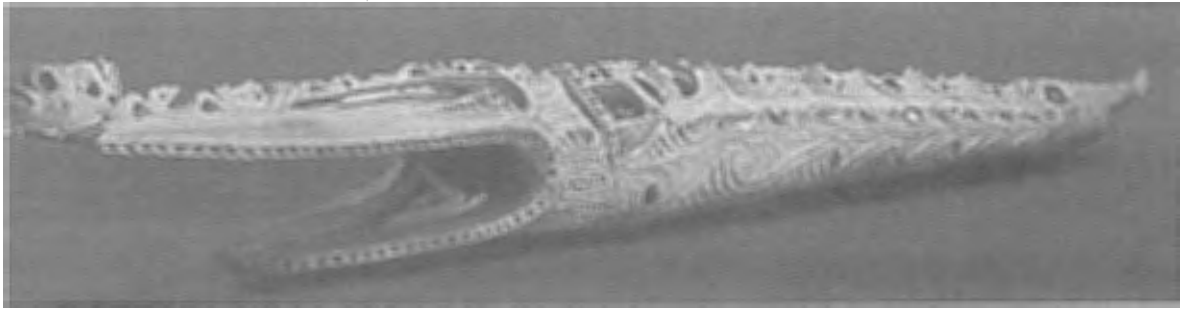
The writer reached the following conclusions about Sepik art as it existed in the pre-WW2 period.

- A. There was an abundance of artefacts available in the Sepik communities which had been contacted in that period. Clearly tens of thousands of pieces were either destroyed or removed from the Sepik up until World War 2.
- B. The very existence of such an advanced art culture must have been sustained for innumerable generations by art masters passing on their skills to the younger generations, who through practice became the art masters themselves in their old age.
 - a. The age-class systems across Sepik cultures would have facilitated this. As an individual passed through the age classes from initiation – to warrior – to elder he was progressively taught in increasing detail the oral histories of his people and his religion until the time he, as an elder, was custodian his people’s knowledge of the cosmos and high priest of the traditional religion.
 - b. It follows that as the individual’s progressive education through the age classes that his artistic representations of the divine in sculpture and painting would also have progressed, and with it his artistic skill levels. This would help explain the sheer abundance of art that was available for collection at that time.
- C. Pre-empting Sarah Chinnery’s vision of an *...industry commercialised by sympathetic trading*, it follows from B above that there was a hierarchy of importance of the art pieces in the Sepik at that time. Many objects, whilst reflecting serious religious values, were in abundance and would have been available for sale or trade. The rare exceptions would have been masterpieces credited with great power, venerated and held in awe by the whole community.

This was reflected by Administrator McNicholl’s reaction in 1935 to seeing the Karawari Crocodiles. Rather than add these sacred objects to the Rabaul Museum collection, he left the crocodiles in the village and on 30th June 1936 he posted the following notice in the Territory of New Guinea Gazette:

“ I, Walter Ramsay McNicholl, the Administrator, do hereby forbid the acquisition by any person by purchase of otherwise of two wooden images of crocodiles, carved with bone and

stone tools, at present in the village of Masamei¹⁴ on the Karawari River in the Sepik District¹⁵.”



Anthropologist Barry Craig’s article of 1995 “*Control of Illicit Export of Cultural Material from Papua New Guinea*” further describes some serious confusion about which particular Karawari carved crocodiles were the actual gazetted items and whether the village in question was - Manjamai Kundiman or Ambanwari, whether or not the items were moved and/or replaced. Art dealers certainly purchased some of the Karawari sacred crocodiles and removed them from PNG.

Currently on display in the PNG Museum is a beautiful six-metre long Karawari crocodile – *above*. However there appears to be no certainty that it is one of the crocodiles that was gazetted in 1936.

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A preliminary static classification of Sepik Art

In order to progress this chapter, we need to embrace some academic discussion on the categorisation of primitive art in general and Sepik art in particular. Erik K. Silverman in his article in the *International Journal of Anthropology* Vol 18-n.4 (219-230) of 2003 described a classification of Sepik art as “Tourist art”, which he described, rather unkindly as ...*inauthentic – mere kitch that bastardises a formerly authentic tradition in order to cater to uninformed tourists* and that ...*tourist art is motivated by money*.

He went on to state: *The dominant Western art-culture system, argues Clifford (1988)¹⁶ is formed by two oppositions authentic-inauthentic and masterpiece-artefact. There are four static categories:*

Authentic masterpieces (art)

Authentic artefacts (material culture, crafts)

Inauthentic masterpieces (fakes)

Inauthentic artefacts (tourist art)

Applying this categorisation to the McNicholl/McCarthy Sepik collection of 1935, clearly the Karawari Crocodiles were ***authentic masterpieces***. It seems safe to assume that the vast majority of the remainder pieces of the 1935 collection were ***authentic artefacts***. We shall return to the inauthentic categories in the post-World War 2 period and will also examine other examples of arguable authentic masterpieces: Magisaun, Tangweiyabinjua and the art from the caves of the Karawari – but first we need to understand two aspects of Sepik thought concerning sacred art:

#1 Man creates his own Gods: what do the carvings represent?

A fundamental aspect of Sepik traditional religion is the worship of dead ancestors. This is regularly reflected in human actions resulting from dreams in which a departed relative imparts a message to a living descendant - which may be as simple as. *The thatch on the house you are building is too thin – it will not last. Start over with thicker thatch.*

Sepik 1 Chapter 19 *A Case-study Explanation of the Diversity of Sepik Traditional Religions* explains it as follows. A great warrior/leader, by his deeds may earn more than just the respect of his people; they may revere him. Religion may be defined as a *system of faith and worship* but it must also include *a super-human controlling power that comes from beyond man himself*. For a temporal leader to become a god he must pass through the portal of death to spiritual immortality¹⁷. In Maori traditional religion such a god is Tangaroa. Sepik gods arguably include Mai'imp of the Sawos people, [Sepik 1 Chapter 20], Afek of the Min people [Sepik 1 Chapter 34], Gawatuk of the Bisik people, [Sepik 1 Chapter 33] Magisaun and Tangweiyabinjua of the Nyaula – Iatmul people [Sepik 1 – Chapter 27].

Long preserved and worshiped, carved representations of Sepik gods are typically replaced through time as they deteriorate, and are highly valued in the tribal art market.

#2 Of mortality and immortality.

The Sepik people themselves realised that while important ancestral and totemic spirits were [and are] believed to live for ever, their representations in wooden sculptures deteriorated through time and needed periodic replacement. This concept was explained by philosopher Kolion of Nogosop, who said in part that *stone alone does not rot – stone is the skin of Mai'imp*¹⁸ *Only Mai'imp lives for ever.* Kolion explained that Mai'imp was responsible for the staple food – sago and that he had created the sago/fish trade that sustained both Sawos and the enemy Iatmul communities.

Kolion believed there was no death on earth until mankind, in his jealousy over Mai'imp, made sorcery to kill him. After that everything became mortal – wood and mankind died and rotted. Only Mai'imp and stone remained immortal. Kolion's rendition of the Mai'imp legend is told in Sepik 1 Chapter 16. Kolion also explained that the missionaries nearly got it right: *The man's name was Mai'imp, not Jesus, and it was sago and fishes, not bread and fishes, but apart from that...*

Sepik elders recognise that to carve a new image to replace a deteriorating original is not a problem. The critically step is to transfer the spirit and its power from the old to the new; despite the short life of the carved image the spirit and religious beliefs related to it must endure. The transfer itself involved special spells over scrapings from the old carving. This discussion is taken further when we examine Magisaun and Tangweiyabinjua below.

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Traditional, Legislative and Administrative protection of culturally important objects:

As discussed above, traditionally the Sepik people preserved their cultural heritage in a physical sense by replacing objects as they deteriorated. The Sepik people would argue that a spiritual protection of the sacred objects and of true believers came from the power of their god or tambaran through the institutions of the haus tambaran, the church of the people, and the male age class system which elevates elders to the equivalent of high priests.

In pre-European times, the perceived spirits embodied in a haus tambaran (a sacrificed body was literally buried beneath the King post, giving its spirit to the structure above) were sufficient to deter enemies attacking the village from assaulting the haus tambaran. Sacred objects within the building were their own best protection.

Legislative Protection: In Sepik 2 Chapter 23, we saw that the Royal Commission on former German New Guinea decided against Governor Murray's recommendation of governing TNG under the same administration as the adjoining Australian colony of Papua. Nevertheless, TNG repeatedly looked to Papua for legislation that would suit TNG's needs. TNG Antiquities Ordinance 1923 was based upon the Papuan Antiquities Ordinance 1913 with some changes. Both the Papuan and TNG Antiquities Ordinances were replaced by the PNG Antiquities Ordinance 1953 when both Territories were brought together and administered as one. The 1953 Ordinance itself was replaced by the National Cultural Property Ordinance of 1965, and then with Independence in 1975, the National Cultural Property Ordinance became the National Cultural Property Act.

Administrative Protection: The effectiveness of any legislation is only as good as the effectiveness of how it is administered. There was a serious lack of cultural protection prior to World War 2 in the Sepik.

No pre-war evidence has been found to indicate that the Catholic Church through their missions was inhibited in any way by the Administration from the destruction of haus tambarans and sacred objects. The destruction was quite wide-spread, as is described in the example of the seven Aion villages of the Bien River area - Sepik 2 Chapter 13 .

The case of the feather pictures: ADO J.K. McCarthy recorded in an undated note (probably early 1930's) *I travelled up the Yuat River, a tributary of the Sepik and saw an artist using an unusual medium. He was creating a picture from coloured feathers... The man worked on a flat board about 18 by 24 inches. One side of the board had been treated by covering it with the gum of a tree so that it formed a fresh glue surface. Before him were a dozen or so small baskets each holding segments of different coloured feathers.*

There were the brilliant verdant hues of the king fisher, the white of the egret, the blues and orange of the bird of paradise, the scarlets, greens and yellows of the Kalanga [parrot], the brown and gold of the hawks and the pastel greys and pinks of the cranes. The feathers had been cut into small pieces, and these, in their neatly arranged baskets, comprised the artist's palette. He deftly picked his colour and with a touch placed it on the board where it was held fast by the glue. I stood for hours watching the figures of men, birds and animals, river and mountain take form as they made a bright pattern on the board. No artist had ever had a better palette and none had ever worked with such natural colours. After the glue had dried the board was taken into the haus tambaran and put on a rack with others.

... Some years later I heard that missionaries had destroyed the pictures because of their "paganism". I looked for them but there was no trace. The natives too were reluctant to talk of them. It is hard to believe that any sane man could be guilty of such vandalism, and harder still to believe that the clerical philistines responsible belonged to the same church that had done so much to preserve mankind's art.¹⁹

A Wartime commencement to cultural protection: The Haus Tambarans

As described in Sepik 3 – *The Sepik at War 1942-45*. In 1945 as the allies progressively re-captured the Abelam tribal region [Maprik] from the Japanese, Captain R.R. Cole of ANGAU was able to convince the military that where ever possible, the haus tambarans should not be destroyed as they were very important to the people.

Post-World War 2 in the Sepik – a progression towards cultural protection

(1) As described elsewhere Catholic priest Blasig of Kunjingini Mission continued the pre-war tradition by burning five Wosera haus tambarans, he was charged with arson in the Supreme Court.

Evidently no conviction was recorded, but this shot across the bows of the church would have sent a clear message regarding any further such behaviour.

(2) On 2nd August 1973 under instruction from the District Commissioner of the East Sepik District, the writer in his role as Assistant District Commissioner at Ambunti enquired into allegations in a newspaper article which claimed that important carvings had recently been destroyed in eight Karawari River villages and that the Administration had taken no action against the offenders.

Investigation revealed that the missionary in question had not destroyed any art – the village people had done it at the missionary’s instigation. Allegedly the missionary involved ...*blamed illness and death upon the powers of Satan who he told the people were present in their traditional carvings.*

No reply was received to my investigation report no legal action was taken but there were no further reports of destruction of sacred objects. The missionary had got the message.

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Authentic Sepik masterpieces discovered after World War 2

1. Art from the caves of the Upper Karawari River.

New York based D’Arcy Galleries 1968 volume entitled ‘*The Caves of the Karawari*’ displays good quality photos of 105 wood carved images in various stages of weathering, some almost unrecognisable as images. The text of the 1968 book in German, French and English, whilst descriptive on the mystique of the unknown (“cult secrets”, “pygmies” etc.), the mysterious people who made the images and the legend reportedly relating to them, is unencumbered by solid facts and silent on their acquisition. A simple sketch map of the location of the caves from which the images were taken, indicates the general area of the headwaters of the Karawari and Korosameri Rivers.

Alfred Buhler, the first anthropologist to visit the Karawari caves, did so in 1959. In the early 1960s it was reported ...*ancient carvings, mortuary relics, hunting amulets, and other portable artworks have been removed from caves and shelters to sell to international art dealers...The carvings were created by the Inyai-Ewa people...Before every minor or major hunt, the hunter would call upon the individual “helper figure” to assist him – each woodcarving according to Inyai informants is said to have a soul of its own – and the hunter would attempt to harness the soul of the carved figure to achieve success in the hunt (Kaufmann 2003:23).*

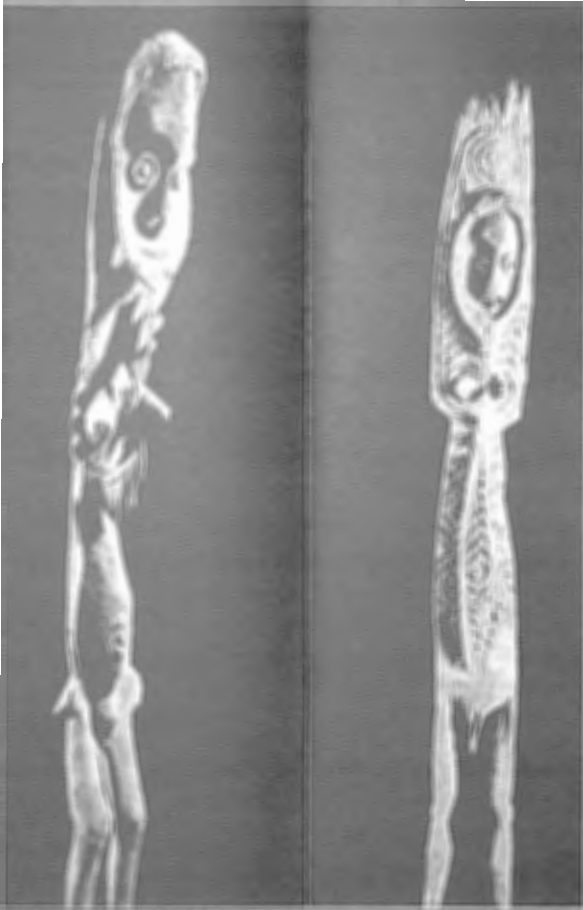
The Administration naturally took an interest. By 1966 Patrol Officer M.V. O’Regan reported *At Iniai village I investigated the claim that two European traders from ANGORAM have been buying stone carvings from the people. As a result of the investigation, it was learned that the traders in question are buying these carvings from prices varying from \$5 to 50 cents. I also learnt that these stone carvings are being collected by the people from the many caves that are to be found at Mt Kabrimeri at the back of Iniai village. The people told me that they were also finding very old wooden carvings in these caves. These wood carvings are also being sold to the traders. It is a great pity that these valuable artefacts are being removed from the caves. (Amboin; O’Regan 1966-7)*

Patrol Officer D. Van R. Claasen subsequently called for protection of the caves, and recommended the area be declared a National Park (Kauffmann 2003:1).

The publication of the D’Arcy Gallery catalogue in 1968 attracted wide interest. Determining the age of the 105 wooden images, many about a metre long/high, proved to be difficult. Although the science was imprecise, carbon-14 dating indicated that some at least were probably 2-

300 years old, others possibly older. Prices which some were to subsequently fetch with collectors were extraordinary. At a Christie's auction house in Paris in 2013, a stylised ceremonial bowl from the Karawari sold for the equivalent of over US\$114,000.

[see "The Karawari Caves Precinct of the Sepik River Basin, PNG". Report prepared by Jennifer Gabriel and Paul Gorecki, 2014 – Cairns Institute, James Cook University.]



Opposite – two Karawari figures, approx. one metre high, depicted in the D'Arcy Galleries 1968 volume entitled 'The Caves of the Karawari'

During the writer's visits to the Karawari and Korosameri Rivers systems in the early 1970's, the elders and artists made no mention of the items taken from the caves, when it happened, or who acquired them. From my experience, this suggests two things:

a/ The items were no longer of cultural importance to the people in question as the spirits would have been transferred to replacement images when the wood of the originals was seen to be deteriorating. The presence of these images in remote caves could be explained by the need to remove them far away from the replacement images, which were assumed to be in the appropriate haus tambarans. Indeed, there may be a parallel with human bones being placed in cave ossuaries elsewhere in the Sepik.

b/ That the appropriate elders were adequately compensated and that the further removal of the

replaced objects was well aligned with #1 above.

Note :- Whilst the emphasis here is on old transportable sacred wooden and stone objects which evidently were stored in the caves for indeterminate periods of time, it should be noted that the



Karawari cave complex also shelters some of the most extensive galleries of primitive rock art yet found in Melanesia.

2. Magisaun – left - of the western Iatmul village of Nyaurengai.

Magisaun is a seven ft. tall river god from Nyaurengai village. His canoe paddle is always by his side. In the early 1970s Magisaun was sold to an art dealer. A world-wide search was instituted when Magisaun suddenly disappeared from the owner's house. The eventual relocation of Magisaun saw it lodged with the PNG Museum on permanent loan.

The dealer told the writer that when he received Magisaun, he was distressed to see that an area of weathering on the chest of the figure had been scraped down to bare wood. He was told that these scrapings had been taken for the ceremony of transferring Magisaun's spirit from the old carving to its replacement which would remain in Nyaurengai. Thus the provenance of the original item, from the dealer's viewpoint, had been validated.



3. Tangweiyabinjua – *left* - the sister of Magisaun

On 21st July 1973 members of the Niaura clan of Yambanunubu met with the writer at Pagwi Patrol Post and complained that negotiations were under way with the Niaura clan of Kandingei for the sale of an ancestral figure known as Tangweiyabinjua and that they, as part owners should be recipients of part of the payment.

The intending buyer was approached and upon hearing of the complaint, returned the figure to Kandingei where the writer photographed the replacement and measured it at three feet six inches tall [42 inches] – approx. 105cm.

Photos and a detailed report were submitted in Situation Report No 1 of Ambunti Patrol Report No 1/1973-74 – which recommended ... *this figure should be purchased by either the PNG Museum or for the proposed Sepik Cultural centre. Protection against private purchase should be arranged under the National Cultural Property Ordinance.* This did not happen. The dealer re-purchased Tangweiyabinjua and the figure was “gone”.

In answer to my question “How can such an important ancestral figure be disposed of?” Kandingei informants told me:

We have made a replacement for Tangwei' [above] and we had a singsing to give the name to the new Tangwei' and now we want to get rid of the old carving. We all agreed to sell the old Tangwei – she has been here a long time and now we have replaced her. We sold her and took her to Ambunti. But then he sent her back and when she came... headaches were caused. When this sickness came to me we killed [sacrificed] three chickens and a dog for our ancestor who went away and then came back to me – [in order] to cure our sickness [which she inflicted]. We want to get rid of the old one. Now both are here, the old one and the new one will continue to give headaches and sickness as long as the old one remains. The new one has taken her place...²⁰.

In 2016 Mr. Crispin Howarth, Curator of Pacific Arts at the Australian National Gallery in Canberra, advised the writer that Tangweiyabinjua is currently in the JOLIKA collection of the De Young Museum, San Francisco, and that the figure is one of many given as a major gift by New York collector John Friede, just over a decade ago. The figure is described – **below** - in an extract from the official collection catalogue. Having for the first time seen an image of the original figure, the writer is amazed at the accuracy of the reproduction. I am sure that my measurement of 42 inches, if checked, would prove to be the actual 41 ½ inches tall. Although it is clear that the original figure was a basket hook, the reproduction was true in detail to include the broken hooks and even the small central knob at the base of the figure.



153. Female suspension hook. *East Sepik Province, middle Sepik River, Nyaurengai village, Iatmul people, Niyaura sub group.*

C-14 dating: 1330-1470 (95.4% probability) Wood, traces of pigment (both ends of the carved hook are missing). Height: 105.8 cm (41 ½ Inches).

The pectoral carvings below the breasts of the figure incorporate deep perforations, which are found on only earlier Iatmul and Sawos carvings. See the Mindimbit drum pl. 180. This hook is said to be the consort of Manggesaun [Magisaun], a male hook portraying an important culture hero. See Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery 1974: 111. (It would be interesting to obtain a Carbon-14 reading on that object).

Douglas Newton believed that our suspension hook and certain other early Iatmul religious objects actually originated with the Sawos people, which he believed were the progenitors of the Iatmul.

The discovery that this object is over 500 years old suggests that there is still much to learn about ancient Sepik origins and migration patterns.

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2. The seized collections of the PNG Museum:

The Seized Collections of the Papua New Guinea Museum is a 101-page book published by the PNG Creative Arts Centre in 1965. It depicts and describes Gulf, Highlands, Sepik and Ramu artefacts that were seized by museum staff from export consignments.

Despite the above, it was my experience that professional art buyers maintained a close working relationship with the PNG Museum staff, based on mutual respect. If I doubted whether I would secure a permit to export a particular piece, I would photograph it and submit the photograph for assessment. It always happened that if I suggested the piece may be important, the Museum always agreed and I did not get to buy it. If I made no comment, I usually got my permit and I bought the piece.

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A necessary modification to the preliminary ‘static’ classifications of Sepik Art

Just as Silverman found it necessary to move away from Clifford’s static classifications, the writer’s consideration of Sepik art also demands fluidity to reflect on-going changes in Sepik religious thought and the use of art to reflect evolving day to day issues. Sadly, as yet the writer has been able to find only an African masterpiece which encapsulates the concept of religious change. The figure **below** was photographed in the Musee du quai Branly in Paris in 2010.



The unbroken circular movement in this masterpiece is taken to represent traditional society in which everything is related to, and integrated with everything else. No individual aspect such as the economy, marriage or reproduction can be viewed in isolation, because each is part of a fully integrated societal whole.

Into the midst of this circular symmetry is thrust the uncompromising sharp angles of the Christian cross; The missionaries had arrived to force their teachings upon the “Pagans”.

In Africa, as in PNG, the Christian teachings did not replace the traditional religion – rather, Christianity was interpreted in the light of traditional and neo-traditional beliefs.

In this African example we see mothers and children venturing out onto the arms of the cross; Christianity is now accepted as supporting traditional fertility rites. In Sepik societies, Christianity is now asked to explain the origins of Western goods and technology - the Cargo.

It is relevant to briefly note here that Sepik art in a modified form has moved to incorporate elements of cargo cult. Carvings of military paraphernalia, radios, canned foodstuffs, motor cars, aeroplanes etc. have been made as manifestations of pseudo-religious pursuits. Whilst seen by some as bizarre, this new art form nevertheless perpetuates the age-old traditional yearning to link the supernatural to the material world. Theo Aerts of the SVD Catholic mission in the Sepik, recognised cargo cult beliefs as an evolving new religion which he compared with the early stages of Christianity. This is discussed in detail in Sepik Book 2 Chapter 35.

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Three 1970s examples of Sepik art being used to address current issues:

It would be an easy mistake to accept Silverman’s categorisation of “Tourist Art” as a blanket reflection of Sepik art in the 1960s and 1970s. The fact that most Sepik art created in that period was motivated by money in no way diminishes Sepik artistic expression and excellence, any more so than Michaelangelo’s work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling – for which he was commissioned and presumably paid.

The following three 1970s examples reflect the underlying authenticity of Sepik artistry and the religious, legal and moral convictions that motivated it.

A/ The Bien River cultural revival of the 1970s

Sepik 2 Chapter 13 *Destruction of Traditional Culture and Religion in the Bien River Area* described how the Catholic mission made initial contact with seven villages whose people spoke the Aion language. In their quest to introduce Christianity and to stamp out “Paganism” there was a systematic and thorough burning of haus tambarans and destructing by burning or burying of sacred images, over a period between approx. 1913 and 1930.



Sepik 4 Chapter 43 *The Bien River Traditional Revival 1970s* describes how a leader proclaimed the reason the mission was so keen and comprehensive in destroying the traditional religious beliefs, architecture and images half a century earlier. These actions, he said, were simply to prevent the ancestors delivering the cargo to the living.

He called for the immediate re-building of haus tambarans and carving of sacred images while there were initiated elders still living who remembered the Aion legends and totemic figures. The aim

in doing this was to celebrate every important ancestral spirit and totemic being that featured in Aion traditional beliefs, thereby encouraging the ancestors to deliver the cargo. The population was motivated as these photos indicate.



B/ The case of the Parembei drum message.

In 1970 my predecessor at Ambunti made it clear that among the potential threats to the peace and good order of the sub-district were land disputes between the large Middle Sepik villages. Upon receiving word of an outbreak of violence in one of these disputes, I proceeded down river to investigate. Upon entered the Iatmul tribal area I became aware of the beating of garamut drums in the distance. It started as what seemed to be a

vibration in the air then as we approached Yenchan and Parembei villages the beat of the drums became a loud low pitched rumble. In Yenchan I spoke with a resident Swiss anthropologist who told me the drum message coming out of Parembei were saying over and over: *Three months is OK - Six months is too much*. This was a message for me as the local magistrate! I heard the case and sentenced the guilty parties to the three-month gaol terms the offenders had self-assessed as appropriate.



The Garamut drums themselves – **above** - were works of art, and because of their size and weight, many of the old pieces remained in the villages. Sepik “Art” extends beyond the visible into the field of music and the skilful transmission, by sound, of detained message over large distances and directed to specific individuals.

C/ A case of social regulation by the use of art

In the Iatmul village of Yentchanmangua, I observed a carving that was different from the local style. It was a female figure with a grass skirt with legs and arms opened very wide. I was told that, to the horror of the Yentchanmangua people, one of their girls had become “loose”. The Iatmul differentiate themselves from the “grass country” villages downstream where sexual mores were far less strict.

In order to shame the young lady into behaving appropriately, a carving of her in a sexually available position was made and displayed in the haus tambaran. Soon she was a respectable married woman. Her “loose” persona would have been forgotten had the carvings of her and the “provenance story” not become best sellers. The carvers continued to meet market demand for carvings of the open legged girl, but the local sense of decorum meant my informant was disinclined to identify which young lady had initiated this new art form.¹



Five features of the contemporary trade in artefacts and handicrafts

I/ Inauthentic masterpieces – Fakes

I, [the writer], doubt there is an art collector or dealer alive who has not paid a high price for a piece that he was certain was an authentic masterpiece, complete with a well thought out, but

¹ My apologies for the poor quality of this photograph.

fabricated, provenance story – only to find out, too late, that he was the victim of a hoax. So how is a new work of art made to look old?

“Weathering” can be achieved by leaving the piece out in the rain, submerging it in water or mud for a period of time. Paint work can be aged by the spitting of betelnut juice, which quickly loses its blood red and becomes a bronze brown. The subtle glow of patina from ages of handling can be applied in just minutes by rubbing the high points of the carving with a smooth stone or a piece of timber which is harder than that from which the piece has been carved. It is understood that more sophisticated fakes are aged by the use of acid baths.

When examined closely [not evident in this photo below] the Iatmul openwork figure has an excellent patina of apparent physical handling through a great period of time. While the body of the carving is sound, there is some facial damage where the ancient hard wood has splintered away.

The artist and seller was my friend. He had not bothered to create convincing provenance, but explained truthfully that he had been saving this piece of ancient weathered Kwila to make this quality carving, for which he expected [and received] several hundred kina - a high price at the time. Sepik artists who can carve, age and present a masterpiece that convinces professional art dealers that it is an authentic masterpiece, may be a guilty of misrepresentation, but this does not take away from the fact that they are great artists.

The character that the artist has managed impart in his execution of this carving would seem to have resulted from his making the best use of the shape of the medium available to him.





The Minias “Lucky Figure”, with dog teeth encrusted carry bilum.

I was told confidentially that this piece – **above** - was made “after 1920” – a very long time after 1920. It was made by an expatriate former crocodile shooter using a dentist drill and some ancient weathered Kwila timber. The man’s Sepik wife made the ornate bilum. Other items produced by him include carved bone and pig tusk ornaments. As Geoff’s eye sight began to fail, in the tradition of true Sepik artists, his sons took up production of

“inauthentic masterpieces”.



II/ Art buyers and the PNG National Regulator.

Anyone wishing to take artefacts – **left** - out of PNG needs to apply to the National Museum in Port Moresby for an export permit. An application for an export permit must be accompanied by photos of every piece listed on the application. A 20ft container may contain thousands of pieces requiring a hundred or more photographs. The museum representative may single out one or more pieces to be presented for inspection, or he may insist upon personally inspecting the whole consignment, or he may issue the export permit without question.



The reality concerning any container of art, is that the [say] 2,786 items involved can theoretically be ranked in order of artistic merit and value. The very best 5 – 10% can be expected to sell quickly at high prices, while the lower 60% or more are “bread and butter” items that will sell through time at a little over gross cost.

It goes without saying that the buyer’s judgement is a key factor in determining the saleability of the

contents of his container. More than one container load of expensive firewood has been shipped out of the Sepik!

III/ Commercial considerations. A business plan, whether a formalised document or just a firm set of ideas which incorporate the reality for the individual buyer is critical. To succeed in tribal art dealing at a retail level requires ideal locations in capital cities and marketing expertise – neither of which comes cheaply. To sustain such an operation requires a large throughput, which by implication requires reliable sources of supply.

In my case my interest was with the artists, so I became a buyer and wholesaler of tribal art based on a gallery on my grazing property in the Upper Murray region of Victoria. Buyers with retail outlets visited from Australia and overseas.

IV/ Profitability and Provenance. Throughout this chapter there is minimal mention of monetary values and profitability in buying and selling of tribal objects of art. Broad generalizations can be misleading, and specific transactions are often not representative. As with all investments, time is one of a number of critical factor. For instance, in 1971 Sir David Attenborough purchased a number of tribal carvings for \$2-3 each whilst in the Middle Sepik filming the first contact between primitive tribesmen and an Administration patrol led by me the writer. In 2015 Sir David decided to part with these carvings, known as masks.

Had they been sold on the open market, they may have attracted prices of hundreds or perhaps some thousands of dollars each, a reasonable but not spectacular return on his initial investment 44 years earlier. Potentially boosting the dollar values, the cultural provenance of these items would have been reinforced by the fact that they had been collected and owned by the famous man himself, and were part of the “Attenborough Collection”. Happily Sir David donated them to the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.

The value of an art piece is enhanced when it has a documented history and a photo of the artist or seller with the object in question in its village setting. Provenance is often more important than the artistic merit of the art piece itself. Provenance of a new discovery from the Sepik carries far less weight than that which establishes the object is from, for instance, the Rockefeller, Rothschild, Goldman, Attenborough or, dare I say it, the Bragge collection.

In the early days of the writer’s wholesaling business, I designed a format for provenance and documented hundreds of objects. It quickly became obvious that except in occasional instances, the effort involved was not justified for low priced wholesale items or which there were usually many similar items on offer.

One of my retail clients pointed out to me that my “provenance” was actually damaging my business. It was not for me to point out the collectors’ pieces; better by far to allow the buyer to find his own treasures in the organised clutter. I realised that this was excellent advice. When buying in villages I enjoyed losing myself for hours as I inspected the “organised clutter”; taking the time to browse, discover and select my treasures for purchase.

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V/ Security. To go anywhere alone in PNG carrying a bag full on money is risky. I felt safe in areas where I had worked as a kiap or an Oil Industry representative and was well known by reputation. I was less comfortable in areas where I had no previous history or existing community relationships, e.g. I made only one buying trip into the Abelam area, where I was not known. At least one other buyer based himself in a Wewak hotel where he was secure and allowed the sellers come to

him. This limited the range of art he saw and created difficulties when he did not buy items brought to him at great trouble and expense.

Another buyer acquaintance was robbed soon after he left Korogo after doing his buying there. He returned to Korogo where he spoke of the armed men who waylaid and robbed him on the track. The Korogo men immediately went after the robbers and shot dead one who was from Korogo. The money bag was recovered and given back to the buyer.

The former member of the PNG Legislative Council, Bonjui of Korogo was buried in a place on honour in the centre of the village. The robber was buried next to him as a warning to anyone who threatened the economy of the village. The message was very clear – *We depend upon art buyers. They are not to be touched!*

For me personally, dealing in tribal art was an exciting though difficult and at times dangerous way to make a living. The way the writer did it was best suited to a young adventurer's life style – out on the river in the hot sun and cold rain, in a 50ft powered canoe, for weeks on end, moving from village to village - meeting and maintaining relationships with artists and village friends and losing oneself in the organised clutter of the village's current art offerings. Today regrettably, aspects of law and order, [not to mention encroaching old age], would render such a free-range occupation, if not untenable, then certainly unwise.

My "South Pacific Art" brochure included a typical provenance sheet discussed above. Note the "organised clutter" in our former gallery at Koetong in NE Victoria. The reverse page is to be found overleaf :-



South Pacific Art

is a tribal art supplier offering retail outlets the following services:

- 1: The purchase of stock from our gallery/workshop
- 2: Provenance documentation with photos of most pieces
- 3: Commission purchasing on your behalf including Provenance Documentation, Export Permitting, Packing and Shipping from PNG.



South Pacific Art's principal buyer is Laurie Bragge. Thirty years among PNG's tribal peoples gives Laurie and unequalled knowledge of tribal art and customs plus the friendship and respect of tribal leaders and artists everywhere. Your business could not be in better hands.



PROVENANCE DOCUMENTATION SAMPLE



NUMBER: 76
 BUYER: Laurie Bragge
 DATE OF PURCHASE: 14 JUL 1989
 DATE MANUFACTURE: 1983

ART. MATERIAL: Wood

ART TYPE: Canoe
 ART ITEM: Canoe Prow

Paramagabo

ITEM NAME IN DIALECT:
 PERSONAL OR SPIRIT NAME

HEIGHT: 1280mm
 WIDTH: 358mm

THICKNESS: 190mm
 WEIGHT: 3kg

ARTISTIC DESCRIPTION:
 Beautifully weathered ornate canoe prow displaying 'Mu' (crocodile) clan totems.

FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTION:
 Canoe prow of a canoe built/carved in 1983.

CONDITION:
 The raised central structure had broken off and been glued back. The wood at the canoe end of the prow shows some sign of rot.

SELLER:	Webom Nabau	AGE:	38	SEX:	M
SEL VILLAGE:	Swagup	SEL GEO AREA:	Upper Sepik		
SEL LANG FAMILY:	Nggala	SEL DIALECT:	Nii		
SEL DISTRICT:	Ambunti	SEL MAP REF:	Miammin		
SEL LATITUDE:	04.138	SEL LONG:	142.31E		
ARTIST:	Mu (Crocodile) Clans	ART AGE:	44	ART SEX:	M
ART VILLAGE:	Swagup	ART DISTRICT:	Ambunti		
USED BY:	Mu Clansmen	USER AGE:		USER SEX:	M
USER VILLAGE:	Swagup				

NOTE:
 The largest head represented on this prow is called 'Mlagula' and is known as the eye. The serrations on Mlagula's neck are 'Mumbr' or crocodile teeth. The small head back from the 'Mumbr' is 'Amor' a bird totem. The large billed head is 'Mor' the Hornbill.



South Pacific Art

Conclusion: Although the original pre-European art stocks of the Sepik have been grossly depleted in the last 120 years, private and public collections of tribal art worldwide have been enriched immeasurably by the addition of genuine works of art unique to this region.

Within the Sepik, the predominant source of income had previously been the employment of men as low-paid indentured labourers on distant plantations. In recent times, the sale or trade in arts and artefacts has allowed many locals to participate in a cash economy which provides access to transport, manufactured goods and foods, health services and education without the need to leave their homelands in search of work. Religious, ethical and philosophical considerations are matters for the future to judge.

End Notes Chapter 34

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- ¹ *The Artefacts and Crafts of Papua New Guinea – A Buyer’s Guide*. South China Press Ltd. Hong Kong 1988 Introduction pages.
 - ² John Hewett. Introduction to a facsimile copy of Edge-Partington and Heape’s 1890 volumes 1 & 2. Published in 1969 by The Holland Press, 112 Whitfield Street London W1.
 - ³ These scientists included: Dr.C.Schrader, Carl Hunstein, Lothar Von Weidenfled, Otto Schlagenhaufen, Professor Richard Neuhauss, Rudolf Schlecter, Georg Frederici, Leonard Schultze, Walter Behrmann, Adolf Roesicke, W.C.Stolle, Richard Thurnwald and others.
 - ⁴ Much, if not most, of this exploration during the Australian civil administration went unrecorded.
 - ⁵ Chinnery S. *Malaguna Road – The Papua New Guinea Diaries of Sarah Chinnery* – National Library of Australia 1998 Page 167.
 - ⁶ Craig B. *The Fate of Thurnwald’s Ethnographic Collections* – Baessler Archiv, Neue Folge Band XLV (1997) Pages 387 to 407.
 - ⁷ Townsend G.W.L. *District Officer - Pacific Publications* Sydney 1968 Page 56
 - ⁸ Chinnery S – *Malaguna Road*. National Library of Australia 1998 Page 145
 - ⁹ Chinnery S 1998 P179
 - ¹⁰ McCarthy K.J. ‘*Patrol Into Yesterday*’. F.W. Cheshire Press. Melbourne 1963 Page 154
 - ¹¹ McCarthy 1963 Page 147
 - ¹² McCarthy 1963 Page 147
 - ¹³ McCarthy 1963 Page 149
 - ¹⁴ This village name is often spelt “Mansamei”. Laycock’s Preliminary clarification of Sepik Languages and the Village Directory spells it Manjamai
 - ¹⁵ Barry Craig – *The Control of Illicit Export of Cultural Material from Papua New Guinea*. – Anthropology Division South Australian Museum 1995 Page 2
 - ¹⁶ Clifford J. *On Collecting Art and Culture in The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnology, Literature and Art*, PP 215-51. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.
 - ¹⁷ Peter Henry Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) *The Anthropology of Religion*. New Haven . Yale Uni Press 1939 p. 7 & 8
 - ¹⁸ Mai’imp [Moem is another representation of his name] is a cultural spirit hero of the Sawos people
 - ¹⁹ McCarthy 1963 Pages 64-5
 - ²⁰ Situation Report 1 – Ambunti Patrol Report 1/1973-74 – Pages 4 & 5

The Rise and Fall of a One-man Christian Mission in the Sepik District.¹

The name 'John James Smith' is not the one-man Christian mission's actual name; a pseudonym seems more appropriate. Faced with 'J.J. Smith's' arrival in the Sepik and stated plans, I was fascinated by the constraints the Administration officers applied to the management of his case, and the diplomacy with which the ADO at Ambunti handled a difficult situation.

Of even more interest was the fact that the Waskuk people tolerated and fed him and apparently remained neutral to his extreme religious beliefs. Given that many Sepik people were closely monitoring Christian missions and Europeans at this time – waiting for a slip or chance remark which might reveal the secret of the cargo, it remains unclear what the Waskuk people really expected of 'J.J. Smith.'

In the beginning, one day in early November 1965, a Mission Aviation Fellowship MAF plane landed at Ambunti on a flight en-route from Telefomin to Wewak. J.J. Smith alighted and, upon meeting ADO Barry Ryan¹, stated that he was an independent missionary and that he wished to carry the Gospel to people who had never heard of it to any degree. His original intention was to be "dropped off" in the April/Leonard Schultze headwaters and despite his lack of preparedness – two weeks in New Guinea, no pidgin language skills, no food, very little money, one suit case and a brief case - he would live as a native and convert small groups, arrange their Church Administration and then move on to another group to repeat the process.

Ryan explained to him that the only contact the Administration had with the April and Leonard Schultze River peoples was such that only well supplied and experienced parties could move among them in safety. Ryan also asked Father Padlo of the SVD to try and explain the difficulties to him. Despite this, Mr. Smith assured Ryan he would be safe; God would surround him with a cordon of angels and would explain the language and customs.

Mr. Smith then mentioned the May River area and Ryan explained that although the people there were under a greater level of Administration control, considerable experience and supplies would be necessary if useful work were to be accomplished there.

Mr. Ryan's personal opinion was that Smith was suffering from schizophrenia bordering on religious mania and as such was a most unsuitable person to work in totally isolated areas, given his absolute inexperience in such situations. This message was communicated to the District Commissioner in Wewak, who interviewed Mr. Smith and wrote back to ADO Ambunti, saying :-

I have interviewed Mr. Smith and have pointed out to him that he cannot work in areas upstream of Ambunti. Mr. Smith has agreed that he will work in the area between Ambunti and Pagwi. It would appear that he has had contact with an Administration teacher at Ambunti who he regards as a good God-fearing man and now feels he can serve best by attempting to improve the living conditions and teach English in the area as mentioned previously. If Mr. Smith attempts to go upstream of Ambunti, he is to be watched and I will endeavor to have his permit cancelled. Sgd. E.G. Hicks. District Commissioner. 18/11/1965

¹ We met Barry Ryan as a CPO in Sepik 4 Chapter 12 in 1953. We met him again as Patrol Officer in charge of Vanimo Patrol Post in Sepik 4 Chapter 17 in 1956.

ADO Ryan reported to DC Wewak on 4th January 1966 :-

Mr. Smith is at present living with the Waskuk people who have established themselves on land that forms part of the Ambunti station disputed area. I felt that this was as safe a place as possible in view of Mr. Smith's extreme newness to the area.

He has occupied himself since his arrival in digging wells and spreading his own beliefs. It is true that he does not believe in any kind of medicine and attributes all diseases to sin and dirty water...He has stated that he will not take anti-malarials unless I force him to do so by law.

At the same time, I do not wish to be involved in a dispute between differing religious orders and would appreciate your advice please. Enclosed is an "official complaint" lodged against Mr. Smith from Father Padlo SVD. [no copy of the official complaint was located on file.]

On 7th February 1966 District Commissioner Hicks on forwarded ADO Ambunti's letter to the Director DDS&NA.

...attached copies of all correspondence refer.

Quite apart from his peculiar religious convictions, I do not consider that Mr. Smith has the experience, the physique or the temperament to engage in missionary activity among the relatively primitive people beyond Ambunti. His stated intention, however, is to obtain permission to work among little contacted groups in the May and Frieda Rivers, on the basis that those native people who have already had contact with established missions are corrupt and, therefore, unreceptive to his teachings.

He can only be described as a "religious crank" and as such his ministrations might well create serious misunderstandings among ignorant and unsophisticated people. This is particularly so in his rejection of all forms of medical treatment. Mr. Smith is given to frequently disposing of his personal clothing to the native people and in fact was seen to be walking around Wewak for several days on end attired only in long pajamas. This was drawn to the attention of the Police who declined to act, however, because his form of attire could not legally be regarded as indecent or improper.

The ADO's concern is appreciated; however, unless and until Mr. Smith commits some breach of the law in consideration of which legal action can be taken, it would seem that he cannot be removed from the area.

Clearly Mr. Smith's activities are not in accordance with the aims and obligations of the Administration and I would welcome your advice as to how this case may be dealt with particularly as Mr. Smith is not, to my knowledge, an accredited member of any mission presently operating in the Territory.

Sgd. E.G. Hicks. District Commissioner

The next letter on file was addressed to ADO Ambunti from the Police Special Branch, Wewak; it was dated 17th January 1966 :-

1. *As you are no doubt aware the above named went to your area a couple of months ago to set up his business of saving the souls of the local population [surrounded by a cordon of angels.]*
2. *We are quite interested in this character for two main reasons:*
 - a. *He believes in faith healing – which could have some effect on P.H.D. [Public Health Department] work in the area.*
 - b. *He believes that the indigenous population should be given everything free – which has cargo cult tendencies.*
3. *I would be obliged if you could let me know how he is progressing, and what effect, if any his teachings are having on the locals...*

Sgd. H.W. Andrews. Inspector 3/c

On 19th January the DC responded to ADO Ryan with the Director's advice :-

I have checked Mr. Smith's entry with the Comptroller of Customs, who informs me:

1. *Mr. Smith arrived in the Territory from the United States on 27th October 1965 on a visa issued in Australia. He arrived in Lae.*
2. *He was engaged originally as a volunteer worker for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea. He has been registered as an alien and his registration card has been sent to ADO Ambunti to be held.*
3. *He has severed relations with the Lutheran Church and is operating independently.*
4. *He is, I understand, in possession of a return ticket to the United States. In view of this, Customs have not demanded any securities. However the ticket should be endorsed that it is not to be cashed in as there will then be no guarantee of Mr. Smith's departure from the Territory.*
5. *We cannot take any action against him unless he breaks the law or becomes a charge on the community.*
6. *Under no circumstances should he be given a Restricted Areas Permit.*

I can quite understand your problem but there is just nothing we can do about it as things stand...

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A Telegram numbered AMB 3 was sent at noon on the 2nd March 1966 :-

JOHN SMITH SUFFERING RECURRENT BOUTS FEVER CANNOT GUARANTEE TAKES MEDICINE RELIGIOUS REASONS STOP HAS NOW NO MONEY AND IS BEING FED BY LOCAL NATIVES STOP APPRECIATE YOUR AUTHORITY REPATRIATE WEWAK DISTROFF.

On 4th March 1966 ADO Ryan sent the following report to DC Wewak :-

Various correspondence and your radiogram AMB 3 refer, following our conversation today I evacuated Mr. Smith per Catholic Mission aircraft at 3.50 pm. Thank you for your prompt arrangements. The main problem is Mr. Smith's health which had deteriorated alarmingly over

the past few weeks. He believes that fish and unleavened bread are the only good food. However, for religious reasons he will not eat Sepik River fish as they live in impure water. While Mr. Smith had a little money he would buy tinned fish and flour and his health did not suffer as much. Now, as he has only about three dollars, as far as I can tell, he is forced to rely on gifts from the native people with whom he is living. But although the people are generous Mr. Smith eats extremely little lest his religious principles are prejudiced.

Mr. Smith will take no medication. He states that if he dies, which he recognized as a distinct possibility, this will be God's will, and we should not interfere. He was in great pain and complained of the heat (his term. 105 degrees) but still would not take medicine. He would drink nothing but a little water he had prepared according to his rites despite his obvious dehydration. He was too weak to move to the toilet and passed his scanty and infrequent urine where he lay. Both Mr. Neville and Mr. Peters examined him and advised me that he was seriously ill and should be hospitalized where careful nursing might make up for no medication.

Mr. Smith has been seen recently interfering with hospital patients. That is, he was seen to remove the bandages and dressings from one patient and replace the bandage. He was then instructed not to attempt any further interference. He has interfered with PWD workers removing grass cuttings from the airstrip, saying, Jesus did not like people working in the rain. This at a time when rain had closed the airstrip more often than not and it is essential that all cuttings be removed immediately.

These points are more annoying than serious but could embarrass the Administration at a future stage. However, as Mr. Smith has become a Public Charge on the Community it would suggest that this be brought to the attention of the Comptroller of Customs.

Mr. Smith was at first welcomed by the native people. He was an American. All Americans are rich and it seemed a feather in the people's cap to have a tame one living among them. Now however that he had to be supported by the people the attitude has changed to indifference and some embarrassment. When he became ill the reaction was that there would be unfortunate repercussions and that he should be removed.

Mr. Smith has previously been asked if he would go to hospital but refused. However, when asked again today he was in no fit state to refuse and could only say "if you think so." I cannot be quite sure of his words as he had great difficulty at that time in thinking.

I enclose some letters to Mr. Smith. I did not give them to him as he was in no state to read them and from the notation on the cover of one, which reads very like a threat, I thought perhaps it was better to wait until his health had improved before he read the contents. For your information, please.

Sgd. Barry A Ryan. Assistant District Commissioner

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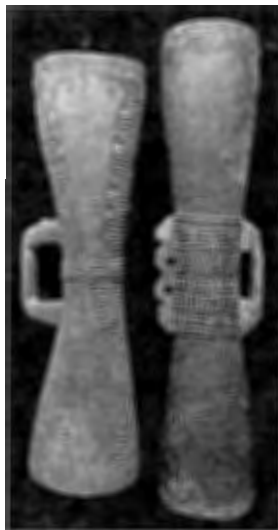
Regrettably this chapter must end in an anticlimactic manner, as no further information seems to be available regarding of the health outcomes and further movements of J.J. Smith in the Sepik. We can reasonably assume however that if he survived his ill-health, his almost complete dependence on those around him would have expedited his departure from the Sepik.

At about this time the adjacent Iatmul village's attitudes towards Christian missions was hardening, with cold objective assessments being made as to what the people were getting out of involvement with the missions. In particular they were looking for educational and medical benefits. The Kwoma, upstream of the Iatmul, no doubt anticipated some advantage from having a presumably rich American in their midst.

However the obvious failure in his own faith in his God when his faith healing was apparently leading to his own death, must have raised questions in Kwoma minds. J.J. Smith evidently made far less of an impact upon traditional Kwoma beliefs, than did missionary Stan Dale among the Yali, who killed and ate him and other Christians in the late 1960s. There was however a Kwoma movement against the Christian influences of the SDA church with the Kwoma traditional revival in 1971 [see Chapter 45]. There is no direct evidence to suggest that the actions of J.J. Smith in any way contributed to this movement.

End Notes Chapter 35

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 3 pages 55-64



Sepik 4 Chapter 36 A Posting to the Telefomin Sub District - February 1966

After spending 1964 and 1965 at Green River, Amanab and Imonda, in February 1966 I was posted to Telefomin. I was met off the plane by ADC John Wearne, Michael Edgar PO and John Kabisch CPO. At the foot of the flagpole by the office steps was a brass memorial to Gerald Szarka, Geoffrey Brodribb Harris and constables Buritori and Purari who were murdered nearby on 6th November 1953. As my duties allowed, I familiarized myself by reading the patrol report file. As John Wearne handed me the confidential report on the 1953 murders, he pointed out that a lot had changed since the murders occurred. [Sepik 4 Chapter 12] I read the file with interest and handed it back to be locked away. I am aware that some officers posted to Telefomin after me were denied access to this report.

Much of what had changed since 1953 was as a result of the murders themselves. Until then the “Min” people had no reason to perceive that the universe contained other than the very few Europeans and outsiders they had seen in Telefomin. This perception was shattered by the huge influx of DDS&NA staff and police who came to investigate the murders of the two patrol officers and two native police. While the investigations were conducted professionally with no punitive action taken, without doubt the “Min” perception of their cosmos was changed forever by the patrols that hunted down and arrested the killers. Sadly, the Telefomin files seemed to hold very little record of the changes this upheaval caused in the Telefomin and Eliptamin valleys. It was not until 2014 that I saw the Telefomin file covering the 1948-1960 period. A colleague had found it stored away in the Government Store just as I found the old Ambunti and Aitape files in 1970 and 1976 respectively.

The Telefomin Sub District may have changed, but in 1966 it remained as one of the most remote areas in PNG, with two of the last three remaining Restricted Areas within and adjacent to it; 1/ ... the western portion of the Mianmin tribal area to the northwest of Telefomin and, 2/ ... the North Hewa tribal region – adjacent to the Oksapmin administrative area in the Strickland River headwaters. The first area was in the upper headwaters of the north-flowing Sepik, the second area was in the headwaters of the south-flowing Fly River system.

In my first weeks in Telefomin I learned of two important differences between Telefomin people and other Sepik and Highlands people I had met :-

1. All “Min” people claim descent from a single ancestress they know as Afek. In 1966 I heard a brief version of this myth, similar to what Paul Quinlivan recorded in his 1954 Oceania Article [Chapter 13]. Some of the differences I picked up were the names of Afek applied in regions away from Telefomin – “Iuanku” in Oksapmin and “Babasebai” in the Leonard Schultze River headwaters. The best record I have seen of the Afek myth is that recorded in 1980 [14 years after my arrival in Telefomin and 26 years after Quinlivan’s account] by Robert Brumbaugh’s as *The Old Woman’s Legacy*.¹ [Sepik 1 chapter 34]
2. As reported in Justice Gore’s inquest determinations in 1954, the plan to remove outside influence from the “Min” world had been made well before the Telefomin uprising, and the appropriate opportunity was awaited. By 1966 the assumed capacity of the Telefomin people not only for complex planning, but to maintain total secrecy among a large number of people over a long period of time, was still a matter of concern to patrol officers.

A third difference, concerning “Min” social structure would be identified until 1980-81. “Min” social structure is based on groupings known as *Miit* which means a “category of people”, a “type” or “kind”, “an origin”, “source” or “root.” Anthropologist Dan Jorgensen suggests it would be a distortion

to attempt to fit “Min” social structure into the “clan” mold because while there are descent groups in the Min setting, descent-based exogamy does not apply. Another feature of *miit* social structure and practice was the raiding of enemy groups, killing and eating of the men and capturing the girls and women as spouses; the primary focus of building group strength and gaining land.

The *miit* concept was first recorded more or less simultaneously by three anthropologists – Jones in 1980 in her thesis on the Faiwolmin, Jorgensen in his thesis concerning the Telefomin and Gardner in his thesis focused on the Mianmin.² While the *miit* social structure was not known by name until 1980, aspects of it were described in various patrol reports from 1951 [Harry West] onwards.

Given the possibility that patrol officers stationed in Telefomin might find their patrols attacked or under threat of attack, we paid close attention to the DDS&NA standing instructions – and in particular the chapters concerned with managing patrols, the use of force and related issues. The mindset that I developed at that time included proceeding with caution, taking the time necessary to achieve the results specified in the patrol instructions and, learning from the Szarka and Harris incident, to not split your patrol [but of course there were times when I was forced to split it]. In fact Harris and Szarka did not split their patrol; they were conducting separate patrols in the same valley, close to the station in an area considered safe as it has been constantly patrolled for five years.

By 1966 I had conducted murder investigations and was experienced in police investigation procedures. While the patrol was in the field, the judgment of “the man on the spot” was critically important - actions taken should be decided on the basis of all the facts available at the time. The safety of the patrol party and of the people in whose area the patrol was operating were paramount, but so were the best traditions of the Department. Cowardice was never mentioned but it was inherent in the requirement not to take a backward step if under threat, and to remain in the area and re-establish peaceful contact after an incident occurred. In general terms it was recognized best practice to stop and wait and negotiate but not to retreat from a confrontation. Police powers in seeking to make arrests authorized patrol officers, in their capacity of Commissioned Officers of the RP&NGC, to use force necessary to overcome the force used against the patrol to achieve legal objectives. Against these traditions, the daily use of radio allowed discussion of events, tactics and strategies with senior officers.

Meanwhile Michael Edgar and John Kabisch were making preparations for the annual Atbalmin census patrol. The Atbalmin census division was bounded by the Irian Jaya border to the west, the Papuan border to the south and the Sepik River to the north. Geographically the region ran from the crest of the Star Mountains in the south to their foot at the Sepik River. The Atbalmin area includes some of the most rugged country in PNG and was a notoriously hungry area, with little food available to trade with visiting patrols. The patrol consisted on a permanent line of patrol carriers and would be resupplied by airdrops of food at regular intervals. There were known airdrop sites at the junctions of the Din and Nong Rivers and the Al and Taknip Rivers. One of my duties was to pack and deliver the airdrops. Radio contact was maintained daily between Telefomin and the patrol which went under the call sign “Telefomin Portable.”

Our method of packing was to place about 20 kilograms of rice in a copra sack and among the rice to place loose tins of meat and fish. The copra bag was then sewn into a tight package with twine and a bag needle. This tight package was then placed in a second copra sack, the neck of which was also sewn closed. If on impact with the ground the inner bundle broke, the contents would hopefully be contained by the loose outer sack. Within the bags, the rice around the tins theoretically cushioned one tin from damage from another.

The Patrol's first airdrop was scheduled for delivery to the Din Nong drop site on the 17th March 1966 from a Piaggio aircraft. The passenger seats were removed and the front passenger door removed. I was seated on the floor with one end of a rope around my waist and the other end attached to a cargo hook. The pilot explained that he would indicate by hand signals to me when to push four or five bags out the door on each pass the plane made over the drop site.

The patrol was to have the airdrop site cleared area of bush and to have a smoky fire burning at each end of it to give an idea of wind strength and direction. We took off and I was soon shivering from the cold wind rushing in the doorway at high altitude. The engine and wind noise was horrific. As we were approaching the site the pilot throttled back and when he gave me the pre-arranged signal, I kicked five bags out the doorway. As the plane circled to make its next pass I positioned another five bags. As the last bags were dropped I took a firm grip on the rope and leaned out the doorway to watch them fall. I saw one bag spinning slowly backwards on its way down and then it hit the centre of a white tent fly that was draped over a thatched roofed building. The bag went through the roof and the tent fly disappeared into the building with it. Something was seriously wrong; the target marker should not be on top of a building.

As soon as we landed John Wearne told the pilot that we had dropped the supplies into the patrol camp instead of the drop site. The pilot mistook the white tent fly on the rest house roof as the target. Michael told me later that he was in the rest house at the time trying to tell the pilot by radio that he was dropping in the wrong place. One patrol carrier was dead and another had a dislocated wrist. The dead man was the Luluai of Telefomin's most important village – Telefolip. There would have to be a Coroners inquiry and appropriate compensation paid.

The immediate problem was the future of the patrol. After some days of discussion Michael was able to convince the carriers to continue the journey rather than turning back to Telefomin. Another airdrop was conducted on 24th March – 15 bags delivered from a Cessna 185. While the Cessna carried a smaller pay load than the Piaggio, it had a much lower stall speed and therefore greater accuracy - all the bags fell in a 50-yard radius.

Meanwhile Pat Russell the Patrol Officer in charge at Oksapmin was due for leave and it was decided that I was to take over from him. I flew to Oksapmin on the 4th April 1966 and took over responsibility for the Oksapmin area on 5th April. Patrol reports I had read indicated that there were two walking routes into Oksapmin which is close to the Strickland gorge 45 miles east of Telefomin. The way we went was to fly over the Mittag Range and then over the headwaters of the Elip River to the headwaters of the Om River. This was roughly the route taken by John Black in January 1939 during the Hagen-Sepik patrol on his return journey to Mt Hagen. The other route was via Feramin and over the towering Victor Emmanuel Range.

The best summary of the patrolling history of the Oksapmin is set out in Ron Neville's Telefomin Patrol Report No 3/1957-8 of November 1957 :-

European contact with the Oxapmin [Oksapmin] had been intermittent, whilst there had been no contact whatever with the people to the south of the Papuan border. The first contact with the Oxapmin was made by Messrs. Taylor and Black during their Hagen-Sepik patrol in 1938/9 on their inward journey to Telefomin [Telefomin]. This was followed by Messrs. West in 1951, and Mr. Nolan in 1952. E.D. Wren came in 1955³. Oksapmin patrol post was opened in 1961.

Telefomin patrol report listings indicate that ADO Bill Brown's Telefomin patrol No 2/1960-61 was the only patrol to Oksapmin after Neville and before the establishment of Oksapmin patrol post in 1961 by J. Cochrane.⁴



Opposite - The writer [then aged 23] with Oksapmin interpreter Tandet and local people.

Oksapmin Patrol Post is located in a spectacular landlocked cup-like limestone valley of vivid green grassland with an impressive stand of hoop pines. Every valley rim is 1,000 feet or more higher than Oksapmin station. The Tekin River flows through the station after emerging from underground in a jumble of limestone boulders in the steep valley wall behind the station. It flows down the valley to disappear underground again in another giant rubble drain to eventually emerge again in the Strickland gorge. In times of heavy rain, the outlet at the far end of the valley became blocked and the valley became a lake until the blockage clears itself and the water drain away.

Oksapmin airstrip was 1,480 feet narrow ribbon of grass sloping steeply up a ridge with the station houses off the right top end. As the sun heats the limestone valley walls, the wind occasionally howls in circles within the valley cup so that the airstrip's two windsocks are occasionally observed pointing stiff fingers in opposite directions. On such days, pilots, having just flown 75 minutes from Wewak, have been known to turn around and fly back the way they came without landing.

From Oksapmin a giant jagged pinnacle of limestone is seen pointing skywards. Although the pinnacle looks close in the clear mountain air, it is actually on the opposite side of the Strickland Gorge in the Lake Kopyago area of what was then the Western Highlands District. The photo overleaf shows the pinnacle and also just visible at the foot of the photo – Oksapmin airstrip and Patrol Post. The gorge itself is over a vertical mile deep, a mini Grand Canyon of bare rock faces and precipitous slopes of green kunai grass where there was enough soil to support vegetation.

After Mr. Russell's departure on 7th April, I set about getting to know the members of Oksapmin's small police detachment of whom three made immediate impressions :-

Constable Yanopa, a giant amiable Chimbu from Chuave, Constable Maregori from Madang [on loan from Telefomin] and Constable Wari from Wari Isl. Milne Bay. Then there were brothers Tandet and Seling who interpreted the Oksapmin language, Wuniot and Mangatipnok - convicted murderers from Duranmin, in the Om valley. At this time I employed an Oksapmin man called Yimor as my personal servant and cook. I also walked the six miles to the Baptist Mission station at Tekin to meet the only other Europeans in the Sepik District this side of Telefomin; Keith Bricknell and Ian Flatters and their families.

I found Oksapmin to be new and exciting. The local people were friendly despite the fact there was not a lot of Pidgin spoken. The Oksapmin men, for the most part wore cane girdles, feather clad bilums, which were like cloaks, and curly penis gourds, which were unlike the short straight gourds worn in Telefomin and Mianmin.



An Oksapmin elder. The Oksapmin office is visible above his left shoulder and the newly constructed OIC's residence in the background.



Oksapmin belles with the full traditional Oksapmin grass skirts. Telefomin and Mianmin grass shirts by comparison are very short indeed.



The Oksapmin cup-like valley. Oksapmin Patrol Post and airstrip are just visible in the central foreground

Unlike the barren desolation of the Telefomin valley, the Oksapmin valleys supported a large population with tidy productive gardens and stands of casuarina trees like I knew in the Highlands. Also, unlike Telefomin, the Oksapmin people's subsistence crop is sweet potato rather than taro. My predecessors at Oksapmin had distributed European vegetable seeds, so potatoes, tomatoes, strawberries, cucumbers, pumpkins carrots and almost anything else you could think of was in abundance locally. I had not long been in Oksapmin when the Government store ran out of rations, so I purchased half a ton of sweet potatoes at two pence per pound to feed the inmates of the jail. The purchase took minutes. The growers and sellers were very keen to do business.

On 19th April 1966 a group of people from Duranmin in the Om Valley reported what seemed to be an influenza epidemic. I sent a medical orderly and medicines with Interpreter Wuniot, to investigate and provide medical assistance.

On 23rd April at 5.45pm CPL Nuwungot reported that a prisoner called Tjiong of Waula in the Tekin valley has escaped from Oksapmin gaol. This was the first Oksapmin escape on record and it was important that he be recaptured quickly. I departed on foot with four police at 6pm and arrived at Waula and spoke with the Tultul and village people there at 8pm. He was very friendly and cooperative. The Tultul explained that Tjiong was newly married and predictably was missing his young bride. He said Tjiong had not yet reached Waula so if we took the wife back to Oksapmin, Tjiong would follow. While this appeared to be an acceptable strategy to the Tultul I had to explain that Administration policy strictly forbids the taking of hostages. After some local searching and assurances from the Tultul that he would bring Tjiong in when he arrived in Waula, my police and I came back to Oksapmin, in the icy-cold rain, arriving at 1am. True to his word the Tultul and his people brought Tjiong back to Oksapmin five days later.

The police gave Tjiong the hard job of breaking limestone outcrops with a crowbar on the alignment of a motor cycle track I had surveyed from the Patrol Post towards Tekin Mission. He became so proficient at this that he earned prestige as the road work leader and did not try to escape again.

On 17th May the hospital orderly reported a case of severe burns that were beyond his capacity to treat. As I also needed to go to Wewak and on to Mt Hagen for training to conduct the first PNG National Census, a charter flight was ordered. At short notice I filled the unused space of that flight with 400 pounds of tomatoes, potatoes, cabbages, swedes and other European vegetables and arranged for the Dept. of Agriculture Stock and Fisheries to market the goods and send the proceeds back for the Oksapmin farmers.

Over time this concept became very popular locally and a business started of filling every empty back load with vegetables. On one flight I sent in a bundle of parsley. DASF sold it in small portions which resulted in an unusually high price to the growers on a per pound basis. They responded by bringing in sufficient parsley to fill most of an aircraft. I had to explain [in Pidgin] the theory of the price elasticity of demand – Wewak house wives could consume only so much parsley - demand and price waned when the market was satisfied.

There was also an ulterior motive involved with the first 400 pounds of vegetables. A delegation of Oksapmin leaders had asked me to acquire a stud boar to breed with their sows to improve local pig stocks. My friend from the 1964 election patrol – Geoff Harvey - had been transferred from Amanab to Wewak and might be able to help. DASF were agreeable and the boar would be made available to be flown back to Oksapmin with me upon my return from Mt Hagen.

After the Ok Tedi mine operations started, they sent regular flights into Oksapmin to buy vegetables for their mess. Anthropologist Doctor Hatanaka noted at the time that the market gardening quest saw the Oksapmin people growing less traditional foods as they focused on market gardening. They were spending their new-found wealth on what were luxuries to them – rice and tinned meat and fish from local trade stores.

Back to the 17th May, upon arrival in Wewak, I reported my presence in town to Mr. Hicks DC, who said he had an important task for me. Australia's Governor General Lord Casey was to have a reception at the DC's residence. My duties included cutting wire for flower arrangements being prepared by Mrs. Hicks, positioning seats and tables to cater for 120 guests and serving as barman!

Upon my return to Oksapmin from the Mt Hagen national census course, I found that the income from vegetable sales and the arrival of the long-awaited stud boar resulted in another delegation of local headmen. They wanted me to advise the DC on their behalf that they liked me very much and want my posting at Oksapmin to be a long one. Such popularity among PNG populations with limited outside-world experience was common in the experience of patrol officers, and was what got some of us elected to the House of Assembly. I was not about to send their message to the DC, or stand for election - instead I mentioned the motorcycle track that Oksapmin prisoners had commenced building towards Tekin Mission station.

I suggested that I could spend much more time among them if I could ride my motorcycle between Oksapmin and the larger population centres in the Tekin valley. This would require extending the motor cycle track. I had no money to pay labour, but I had plenty of tools if they chose to work voluntarily. The track would of necessity be on tribal land and I had no money to pay for that either. The response was overwhelming and the project went ahead in leaps and bounds.

I was regularly amazed to see crowbars that were almost tied in knots from the pressures that Oksapmin hand labour applied to them. I was later able to get "Minor New Works" funds to pay the labour. Subsequently then at Christmas 1970 while visiting PO Glen Henke at Oksapmin from Ambunti, I was horrified to see this track, with its hairpin bends, had been widened to accommodate tractor and trailer traffic.

On 3rd June 1966 I commenced a patrol to the Tekin valley to publicize the national census to be conducted shortly thereafter. When the patrol arrived in Tomianap I heard that there was a local haus tambaran and I asked to see it. The Luluai of Tomianap was in charge of the haus tambaran and he agreed to show me. I chose one policeman and an interpreter and we were led along a track through pitpit and kunai grass until the track gave out and we pushed our way through the pitpit. Then the Luluai, who was not a Pidgin speaker, indicated for the policeman and interpreter to wait some distance away; only he and I were to go on to see the sacred house.

The haus tambaran was a dilapidated squat building. The walls were clad with crudely carved timbers. The Luluai removed several slabs of timber that served as a small door, through which I would not have fitted, so I looked in and took photos. It was not until we rejoined the others that I was able to get any explanation, and even then communication was limited by the fact that my interpreter had not gone through the necessary stages of initiation to be permitted to know of some sacred secret knowledge. I learned that the Luluai in his role as guardian of the haus tambaran would rebuild the house over the sacred relics, when the current building collapsed. The relics would remain untouched. The clubs were from Aramkaea and the skulls were the ancestors of the Tomianap and Iuap people.



My guide, the Luluai of Tomiana No 1 and the haus tambaran, which was in a dilapidated condition.



The skulls were those of revered ancestors – not those of victims.



Opposite the ancestral skulls were stone headed clubs, a rarity in Oksapmin.

I learned that there was concern for the Iua people. Illness struck them down after the abandonment of their traditional village site [which was presumably close to Tomiana and the haus tambaran]. The cause of the illness was attributed to their distance from their ancestral village site and ancestral skulls in the haus tambaran. In terms of bureaucratic identification, the national census listed Iua as a sample village; a village that no longer existed.

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My breakfast was interrupted on 11th June 1966 when Interpreter Seling came to report that his sister-in law - his brother and fellow interpreter Tandet's wife - had committed suicide the previous evening. She hanged herself from a very tall tree far up the hill behind the patrol post. There had been what seemed to be a minor argument in Tandet's household the previous evening and his wife walked out into the night and killed herself. She was a heavy girl and it was only with great difficulty that we were able to lower her down from the branch from which had she hanged herself.

We took her back to Oksapmin and laid her in the shade under my office while I called the ADC in Telefomin, who was the coroner. Meanwhile the wailing of bereaved relatives under my office showed that I should have put a little more thought into my selection of a cool shady spot for the corpse. As the relatives were not angry with Tandet or anyone else over the death, the coroner agreed that the relatives could take the girl's body away for burial.

In late June in my capacity of Sub Enumerator for the national census, I conducted a training school at Oksapmin for the national census collectors and interviewers for the Telefomin sub district, and then sent out the patrols to conduct the census. When the patrols returned I took the Oksapmin documentation to Telefomin where I collected their documentation and took it to the Enumerator of the West Sepik District at Aitape, ADC Harry Roach. We spent the next two weeks processing documents and developing the West Sepik District national census report. To my eye Aitape was the most beautiful of all the Sepik government stations. I was not to know that a decade later I would be resident there as the ADC.

From the 1st of August to the 8th of October 1966, I led the Strickland/Sepik Divide exploratory patrol as described in the next Chapter. Two pieces of news awaited me when I walked back into civilization in October :-

1. I was to take over as acting ADC of the Telefomin Sub District when John and Pat Wearne went on leave in November.
2. Ernie Mitchell's patrol in the East Mianmin heard from the Luluai of Mowaimin in the Upper May River tributaries that 40 or 50 Urapmin and Fiarimin warriors in the Restricted Area had, for reasons unknown, raided a settlement said to be called Boliap and killed an unknown number of people. I was required to lead a patrol into the Restricted Area to investigate. That patrol was in the field from 23rd Nov. 1966 to 28th January 1967 and is described in the next Chapter.

End Notes Chapter 36

¹ Craig B and Hyndman D ed. Children of AFEK – University of Sydney 1990 P54-87

² Personal communication from Dan Jorgensen – mail 2/7/14 item 431 in Bragge Reference Volume 13.

³ Neville R.T. Telefomin Patrol report No 3/1956-7 Oct 17th to Nov 7th 1957

⁴ National Archives of PNG as copied by UCLA San Diego

Sepik 4 Chapter 37 The Exploration of the Strickland Sepik Divide - 1966

The exploration of the Strickland River tributary, the Om River, commenced on 25th January 1939 when Patrol Officer John Black left Telefomin on his return leg of the Hagen Sepik patrol of 1938-39. In following the course of the Om River downstream, they saw very few people and the party ran perilously short of food until 12th February when they found three huge sago palms and processed sufficient sago to fill their stomachs and to carry them onwards to the east to reach the Om and Lagaip Rivers junction on 17th February. ¹

Early patrols reached Oksapmin via the upper reaches of the Om River country: West [1951], Nolan [1952], Wren [1955], Neville [1957] Brown 1960-61 and Cochrane [1961]. Also in 1954 ADO Jones made murder arrests at the "fortress" in the extreme headwaters of the Om River. [Chapter 12]. Oksapmin Patrol No 7/1962-3 led by Arthur Marks PO investigated reported tribal fighting and murders at Duranmin and Sisimin. Marks made one follow up patrol. There were also Om River patrols by POs Lancaster, Wilson and Heathcote. ²

In the preparation for my patrol in 1966, I noted that the north-eastern corner of the Telefomin sub district - an area of several hundreds of square miles - lay north of the Sepik Strickland divide and that no Telefomin or Oksapmin patrol had entered that area. The maps of the area, current at that time, showed rivers as dotted lines and these indicated that tributaries of the generally north-flowing April, Leonard Schultze and Frieda Rivers drained the area – a veritable blank on the map.

As the occasional visitor came to Oksapmin from the Om River, I talked with them through Interpreter Wuniot about the unexplored country north of the divide. The reports varied but the names Unagabmin and Akiapmin tribal names were mentioned, and the recommended access to those places was via Emiapmin, in the adjacent Hewa restricted country south of the divide.

During preparations for this patrol, I found that District Commissioner Des Clancy seemed as excited about it as was I. In the early 1950s, he explored the Levani valley and the middle reaches of the Strickland River where sadly he experienced the drowning of some of his Huli carriers. I was not issued patrol instructions, so set out a set of objectives I intended to achieve :-

1. Revise the census of known Om River groups.
2. Initial contact and initial census of as yet unknown Om River groups
3. Make the first patrol crossing of the Strickland-Sepik divide
4. Initial contact and initial census of all groups north of the Central Divide within the Oksapmin administrative area.
5. Map the area. (*The patrol map appears at the end of this chapter.*)

As the people of the Om River and the Sepik Strickland Divide area are regarded as semi-nomadic, I arranged for an aerial survey of the area. ADC Wearne came with me as the airdrops the patrol would need were to be flown from Telefomin, and someone from there needed to identify potential airdrop sites with me. Potential drop sites were identified at Emiapmin, the Nene River and plentiful sites along the headwaters of the Leonard Schultze River. We saw and marked the rough map locations of 28 houses in the upper Leonard Schultze.

The timing of this patrol was in the driest period of the year, so I was not expecting to contend with flooded rivers or serious tropical storms. As usual with the departure of the lone kiap from a small

outstation there was a period of turmoil leading up to the patrol. Some serious questions required answers :-

1. Had everyone left at the patrol post enough food to eat for the next two to three months?
2. Would the radio batteries hold out to allow the opening and closing of the airstrip?
3. Exactly how much medicines and associated equipment would a 70 man-patrol require for 10 weeks +/- allowing for the treatment of a native population of unknown size and with unknown ailments?
4. What trade item to take for the purchase of local foods – salt was always popular. I also packed mirrors, small knives, matches, tomahawks, calico, axes, bush knives, face paint, coloured glass beads and a bag of ‘girigiri [small white cowrie shells, used as currency elsewhere]¹

The patrol consisted of myself, six police, four interpreters, one medical orderly and a carrier line of sixty, the core of which were 18 Om River men. These men came in to offer their services and were keen to lead the patrol to their areas. I had some difficulty recruiting Oksapmin carriers in addition to the 18 as the Om River country was believed in Oksapmin to be a “bad” place and that men who went there were afflicted by evil spirits and often died soon after their return. The medical logic was that the Oksapmin highlands were malaria free and the people, as a result, had no natural immunity. The Om valley lowlands on the other hand were a malarial area - I therefore insisted that all patrol members were given weekly doses of anti-malarial tablets.

The carrier line was so large because it was a ‘permanent’ line, rather than one recruited day by day as the patrol progressed. This was because the area had few people from whom to recruit carriers and also because we would enter unexplored country where our reception could not be anticipated. Logistically the patrol had to have sufficient carriers to carry food to feed carriers to carry food. The mathematics of this were that for each person on the patrol not carrying food, there had to be two men each carrying a forty pound food load in order to sustain themselves for fourteen days in the event that no food was acquired locally.

Patrol Leg 1 – Om River to the resupply point at Yoliape “Sisimin”

Writers Note: The previous Om River patrols led by Marks, Lancaster, Wilson and Heathcote had contacted and censused the groups known as Kutik, Morobanmin, Duranmin, Kiapmin [Akiapmin], Emiapmin, and Suamin and contact had been made with Yoliape. The suffix “min”, meaning “people”, was from the Telefol language and slipped into local usage because the interpreters on the early patrols were from Telefomin. The appropriate suffix in Oksapmin is “ap”. Oksap is therefore correct and Oksapmin is incorrect. The same logic also applies in the languages of the Sepik/Strickland Divide area.

The first leg of this patrol sought to visit each of these places, except Suamin and Emiapmin, by a route that would allow a re-supply at Yoliape by carriers walking in from Oksapmin. A key feature of these groups was that their semi nomadic life style resulted in regular shifts in their place of residence and group fragmentation on a regular basis. Professor Hatanaka would later provide a valuable analysis of the reasons for this.

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¹ To my surprise Girigiri was not prized by the people we met on this patrol.

The patrol party left Oksapmin on 1st August 1966 and walked for two and a half hours to Disana, an Oksapmin village at 6,200 feet above sea level [ASL] near the 7,100 ASL lip of the huge Om River valley. Having heard that the first settlement we intended to visit, Kutik, was abandoned, I sent runners ahead to confirm this. They reported back that Kutik village was deserted, and the Kutik population was now three separate groups, the Da River Kutik, a group known as the Gobi and another as the Kamagoiana. The bulk of the Kutik village people had migrated back to Teka in the Tekin valley, following influenza deaths in 1965.

On 2nd August the patrol descended from the lip of the Om valley down a razor back limestone ridge and the Tetangop Creek to reach the Kutik River where the Kamagoiana people were met and friendly contact was made. An initial census was conducted and headman Masadien was provisionally appointed as Luluai. While this group had not been visited before by a patrol, some members of the group had been to the Baptist mission at Tekin.

On 3rd August with Masadien as our guide we crossed to the left bank of the Kutik River and then climbed a steep ridge face to the top of the Kutik/Wombit divide. A large sandstone boulder with 45 grooves for sharpening stone axe or adze blades was seen on the crest of the ridge. My guides said it had not been used in living memory and was originally used by spirits to sharpen their blades in ancient times. A photo of this stone is located in Sepik 1 Chapter 50 *Stone Axe/Adze Manufacture and Trade in the Leonard Schultze Headwaters*.

We arrived at the Kondit River two and a half hours after setting out and ascended steeply to Gobi camp. The few people were present and they were sent to tell the remainder to gather. They did so next morning and an initial census was conducted of a group of Morobanmin people living to the west of the Kutik River. I revised the census of Gobi and of the Da River Kutik people who were now mostly resident along the Bi River to the west. Abundant fresh vegetables were purchased with salt.



Opposite - *The Tomianap 2 leader with armament.*

On 5th August the patrol climbed the ridge which forms the west side of the geographic feature known as the Kutik Gate and slowly descended the dangerously steep northern face, taking care not to dislodge stones onto the people below.

We forded the Kutik River at waist depth to the right [east] bank. After a short descent our Kamagoiana guide said he was lost. Following a faint pad to a deserted house, we then ascended a ridge until we found a walking track, whereupon the guide again took the lead. In the early afternoon we found a deserted house belonging to the Tomianap 2 people. [As the people were called Tomianap, and as there was already a group by that name, I called these new people Tomianap 2].

There were no signs of recent habitation so we moved on for twenty minutes going east and located a large garden. While we set up camp, our Duranmin carriers were sent out to locate the Tomianap 2 people. At 3.25pm a lone Tomianap man entered the camp without showing any fear. Soon after 5pm an additional five men, all heavily armed with bows and arrows, came in and despite their weaponry, they were quite friendly. Food was brought in and traded for salt. A large pig was

offered in exchange for a tomahawk and a mirror. The Tomianap headman requested that we kill the pig immediately or it would follow him back to his camp.

The pig was shot and the course of the bullet was traced through the pig, then through a buttressed root of a tree and into the ground beyond. The Tomianap men shook their heads to indicate that apart from the ringing in their ears, this was power that was far beyond their comprehension. One of their men agreed to sleep in our camp with the Duranmin carriers while the others went back to where they were camped, promising to bring their women and children in next morning. The initial census next day recorded a population total of 13 people. Among these were eight male children and nil female children; a clear indication that local caution prevented the showing of those who enemies such as the Telefol sought for abduction.

On the 7th Tomianap guides led us to a now abandoned hamlet of the Remban people. We crossed the Kamagaie Creek after three hours walk and arrived at a garden and house an hour later, where we set up camp. The house and garden were referred to as Porogu. Fourteen Remban people came into the camp three hours later at 3pm. They were friendly and I conducted an initial census. Plenty of fresh foods were traded and a police hunting party returned with a small wild pig in the evening. Next day I declared as a rest day. Several carriers and I were unwell and painfully swollen from attacks by swarms of wasps along the track between Tomianap and Remban. Three more Remban people came in and were included in the census. A pig was brought in and traded, to be shot at the



request of the people who had heard of the firepower demonstration at Tomianap and wanted to see for themselves. The medical orderly gave treatment to the Remban people and particularly to a girl with a huge swelling on her ankle.

On 9th August the patrol moved north-northwest and arrived at the Om River after two hours walk, and then walked a further hour upstream to where a cane suspension bridge – **opposite** - was found to be in poor repair. Several new lengths of cane were cut from the forest and the bridge was strengthened sufficiently to allow the patrol to cross to the north or left bank.



The patrol moved upstream along the Om to its junction with the Keinu River and made camp for the night. On the 10th the patrol followed the Keinu upstream to Morobanmin then on to Duranmin village with its kiap rest house. I inspected a newly constructed large fortress style communal house. Food was purchased with trade goods and cash. The recent treatment given to Duranmin people for influenza was followed up. The census was revised.

While at Duranmin, local people brought out a war shield which I recognized as being in the Telefomin design. They demonstrated how a single shield was used to protect one or more archers, who leapt out and fired arrows before leaping back behind the shield's protection. It was explained that strategies against attackers using such a shield was to employ a broad bladed arrow to try to split the shield, or to hit the hands holding the shield or the feet that were occasionally visible beneath the shield.

I purchased this shield – **below** - and asked about the design. I was told the design represents a man's body – eyes, arms, legs and vital organs [at the centre of the shield]. I was given two interpretations of the zigzag lines – snakes, and a representation of life and vigor.



On the 12th August the patrol departed from the Keinu River Duranmin camp and ascended the Keinu/Karu Divide at 4,500 feet ASL then followed the ridge descending to a combined Duranmin and Akiapmin camp on the Karu River at 2,500 feet ASL after a three and a half hour walk. The census was revised and medical examinations conducted. These people reported that they had cleared a track for the patrol to go north from there across the Sepik Strickland divide to the Akiapmin camp on the Tau River tributary of the upper Leonard Schultze River.

I thanked them for this good work and apologized that our plans for the patrol resupplies would not allow us to go that way on that occasion. Food security is all important on patrols such as this. I sent word to a Morubanmin camp on the middle reaches of the Karu River to expect us in a couple of days-time. One Akiapmin man knew the Unagabmin people north of the range and agreed to accompany the patrol to their area.

Of the Om River groups, the Duranmin had had most Administration contact. They spoke of the Telefomin raids on themselves and other Om River groups. The influx of kiaps and police to investigate the Telefomin uprising in 1953 had the effect of imposing law and order in areas close to Telefomin. It seems that the Telefol people then focused their aggression on the uncontrolled and unknown Om River communities. It was said that from the late 1950s until Arthur Mark's patrol in

1963, which brought the Om River communities to the notice of the administration, that these raids severely reduced the population of the Om not only from killing but also from the abduction of women and children, particularly girls who would grow to become Telefol spouses.

The Om River communities themselves were not without fault. They told me how, in 1963, a Morobanmin man called the Morobanmin, Suamin and Duranmin and a few Telefomin warriors together to fight the Sisimin. The instigator's wife had died and Sisimin sorcery was suspected. They told of killing five men and abducted three Sisimin women who were distributed one each to Suamin, Duranmin and Telefomin. Our trusted interpreter Mangatipnok who accompanied the raid, advocated that the woman given to Duranmin be killed, but the man to whom she was given said no, so she lived. As fate would have it, her savior was one of my eighteen Om River carriers and Mangatipnok, one of my interpreters.

As the raiders returned upstream from Sisimin they sang their victory song, and it was that which gave them away. Corporal Nin of the Oksapmin police detachment was hunting in the Om valley. His guide heard the song and explained its meaning. Corporal Nin reported to Arthur Marks, the OIC at Oksapmin, who led a patrol to investigate, make arrests and to free the women. Investigations also took place in Telefomin, but apparently the third woman, if she survived, could not be identified and freed.



Opposite: The 1963 sentry mentioned below was our friend in 1966. He is wearing the jaw bone of an ancient ancestor and it was in the best Sisimin and Hewa tradition to wear it as a luck and hunting charm.

Constable Yanopa had accompanied Mr. Marks' patrol in 1963 as well as mine in 1966. He told how they returned the two women to the Sisimin. As he and Constable Mandikai approached a Sisimin house they saw an armed guard with a clear line of fire in their direction. Yanopa motioned to one of the freed women to call to the sentry. She told him she had been freed and stepped forward with Yanopa close behind her. The man drew his bow, but the girl somehow shielded Yanopa, who was at least three times her size, and came and held the man. Yanopa disarmed him and then rubbed black trade paint on the sentry's face and produced a small mirror to allow the man for the first time in his life to see his own reflection.

In retrospect I believe that Marks' patrol and its elimination of tribal warfare in the Om valley removed the people's greatest fear – their probable annihilation by Telefomin and Sisimin raids. The exceptional reception my patrol received and local support for the Administration in that still a very primitive area, was due to the peace they enjoyed - they were celebrating their continued existence!

On the 15th August 1966 when we chose to move on from the Karu River Duranmin/Akiapmin camp, the Karu River was in high flood, thereby negating my plan to lead the patrol down the river bed. Instead we walked parallel to the river on a track high on the ridge south of the river to finally ford it at waist depth. At 2.45pm the patrol met the Morobanmin people who had been making sago. They led the way to the camp site used by Mr. Wilson, and a year or so later by Mr. Heathcote. After

setting up camp I revised the census of this Morobanmin group. An Emiapmin man who was visiting Morobanmin agreed to precede the patrol to Emiapmin and advise them of our expected arrival date.

Because, during the coming days, it would be necessary to back track through “hungry” country, I sent Interpreter Mangatipnok and some Duranmin carriers to another camp of the Morobanmin people on the Keinu River [a different Keinu River to the one visited on 9th – 11th August], and ask them to make sago to sell to the patrol which was expected to arrive there in four days’ time. The patrol now moved to the junction of the Keinu and Kotufa Rivers and set up camp. The Kotufa is a small little known stream which for some reason is mentioned in the boundary description between the West Sepik and the Western Highlands Districts and is part of the boundary of the North Hewa Restricted Area. For these reasons I decided to make a chain and compass survey of its course and get it onto the map.

The survey of the Kotufa River was conducted by Constables Maregori and Amatus and myself. I took the compass readings, by sighting on a heavy wooden staff, which had been stripped of bark so it stood out white in the gloom of the rain forest. It was carried by Maregori, while Amatus cleared intervening vegetation with a bush knife. This routine exercise only became noteworthy when two cassowaries came running down the left bank of the creek. They took no notice of us until Maregori hurled the staff like a spear, its blunt end hitting one of the cassowaries in the ribs with a loud thud. The huge bird turned at right angles and charged across the creek at Maregori who was standing high on the creek bank. As the cassowary raced through the water and up the bank Maregori grabbed its neck and fell with it back into the creek. Amatus leapt into the fray swinging his bush knife. From where I stood, I caught glimpses of skirmishing blue police uniforms, black cassowary feathers and the flashes of slashing blade, and finally I saw blood in the water. We ended up with two live but very wet police and one dead cassowary which we ate for dinner.



The survey work was completed on the 18th and we followed the Keinu River down to the Om River; the junction being just upstream of where the Om and Lagaip River’s join to become the Strickland River. The afternoon was spent building a cane suspension bridge across the Om River. The whole patrol was able to cross safely and set up camp on the southern bank by nightfall. Of the Sisimin people of Yoliap settlement there was no sign. Guards were posted as this group on the edge of the North Hewa² restricted area had threatened Mr. Lancaster’s patrol two years earlier, and our expected reception there was unknown. In terms of timing, we were where I had planned to be for a resupply of rations to be carried overland to us from Oksapmin on the 19th.

On the morning of the 19th with a small party of police and Om River men, I walked upstream until we found a track which we followed until we met three Sisimin men - **opposite**. They led us to a new communal fortress style house. A large gathering of people were there for its opening sing sing. They were from Porogu, Tomiana 2,

² “Hewa” is a Huli word from Tari & Koroba [as I understand it] referring to people living in areas of lower altitude than the Highlands where the Huli reside. “Kewa” in the Mendi languages means the same – and refers to the Erave, Samberigi and Kikori River people.

Oksapmin and a place in the restricted area called Yelemei. Some Yelemei men started returning home last evening but when they saw our camp, they ran back to Yoliape, where apparently the Porogu [Remban] men identified who we were and spoke of their recent good encounter with us.



We knew we had been seen because a dog accompanying the Yelemei men wandered into our camp last night and befriended our guard. While the carriers returned to our camp to move the patrol, I examined the communal house - opposite. It was built on a ridge for defense. The main support posts of the house were forest trees that had been cut twenty feet above the ground. These were supported by many smaller posts.

A ladder came up through a hole in the floor, into a narrow passage way that run the width of the building. At the far end of the passage was a low doorway, a hole in the wall really. An unwanted visitor would find it impossible to enter. When I did the census that morning, I counted 44 people who emerged from the house. The Sisimin group was led by Feiyau, a formidable man who reportedly had confronted Mr. Lancaster's patrol in 1964 with a drawn bow.

A second man appeared and he recognized Constables Yanopa and Mandekai and told Feiyau these men

were the friends who had returned the abducted women three years ago. The former sentry was in camp, and of him I recorded :-

Feiyau, speaking through Interpreter Wuniot, told how he tried to shoot the kiap [Mr. Lancaster] two years before and now that we were there he would shoot us. Given his history and the fact that three years ago he fought against Suamin, Morobanmin and Duranmin from where some of my carriers and Interpreter Wuniot came, I did not take this threat lightly, especially given the number of warriors currently in camp. For all of this, Feiyau appeared to remain friendly; it was almost as if no threat had been made – perhaps it was for his enemy [and my interpreter] Wuniot's benefit.

The expected resupply from Oksapmin did not arrive. I posted guards and we settled down for the night with drums and singing continuing for the house opening. Next morning I sent a runner towards Oksapmin seeking the resupply. Soon after a Sanaptianmin man [of the Oksapmin community] arrived to say the resupply party was camped at the foot of the Oksapmin range and would arrive later that day.

Feiyau came to me next morning and offered a large pig in exchange from a tomahawk. We had no tomahawks left, so I negotiated the purchase with a bush knife, a mirror and three boxes of matches. He insisted on the pig being shot, which made me assume his guests from Porogu and Tomiana 2 had told him of their experiences of rifle fire power. He seemed to be anticipating a terrific explosion because as Yanopa raised his rifle, Feiyau put his arms around Wuniot for support. The assembled house warmers were very impressed and Feiyau asked for the expended cartridge case and wore it in lieu of the pig tusk in the hole through his nose.

Feiyau now indicated through Wuniot that he had a secret he wished to tell me. He told how a man called Nai somehow angered his people and they responded by killing him with an apparent large number of arrows. This happened a week earlier, quite close to Yoliape, but on the other side of the Strickland River in the Lake Kopiago area – too far out of both my way and jurisdiction. I would report it by radio and ADC Telefomin could inform Gordon Brown, the OIC at Lake Kopiago.

The resupply patrol arrived from Oksapmin at 11.30am. With it came the A510 radio I would need once we enter unexplored country on the next leg of the patrol. I sent up the radio and made good contact with John Wearne in Telefomin. I gave him an update of our progress and of the murder in the Lake Kopiago area. With the resupply came some tomahawks, so I showed one and some red calico to Feiyau. In exchange for these items I said I wanted sufficient fresh foods to feed my patrol and the carriers of the resupply patrol for tonight – thus saving one days rice and tinned meat. This deal was struck.

Patrol Leg 2 – From Yoliape, cross Sepik/Strickland divide to Leonard Schultze headwaters

Following the visit to Emiapmin, the patrol planned to move north with Emiapmin guides across the Sepik/Strickland Divide into the unexplored north-east corner of the sub district. After sending the resupply patrol back to Oksapmin, we broke camp and moved down to the Om River bank. Heavy rain overnight saw the Om River wash away the bridge we had built, and wished to re-cross that day. We spent the whole day building another bridge; this one involved 170 feet of suspended cane. Being the best swimmer in our party, it was up to me to get the first line across. Our Om River carriers and new Sisimin friends easily crossed on small rafts which they use like children's kick boards. Once across they cut cane and used the line to drag the cane back across swift flowing water.

Constable Forbiyuk, a non-swimmer, expressed grave concerns for my safety in the water. Some six years later patrol officer Taffy Watkins was drowned while attempting to cross the Om at this location. The patrol crossed and made camp at the Om/Karu junction. Rations were issued and guards posted. Next day, 22nd August we retraced our steps of the 18th, arriving at Interpreter Mangatipnok's sago camp at 10.50am. We moved off again and reached Mt. Lancaster's Keinu River camp site where we made camp. Here I purchased the sago that had been made and issued some of it to the patrol in lieu of rations.

On 23rd we climbed the divide between the Keinu and Nene Rivers then descended to cross the Nene at waist depth. The Emiapmin had moved well to the east of where the last patrol had found them. I calculated they were now about five miles inside the restricted area. Some track clearing had taken place over recent days. This was done at the direction of the Akiapmin man who agreed to guide us to Unagabmin. He met us with the Emiapmin people and I rewarded him with a bush knife. The new Emiapmin settlement consists of a fortified building similar to the one I inspected at Yoliape just days ago.

The doorway at the top of the ladder was a low one through which one could only pass in a defenseless stooped stance. Once inside, a narrow passageway led to another low doorway further into the interior of the house. There were four clay lined hearths, set out in a rectangle with well-stocked fire wood rack above each of them. The area facing the doorway and between the four fireplaces was the men's area. The women and children's area was outside the alignment of the fire places. At the back of the house was another low doorway onto a narrow verandah that ran for the width of the building and overlooked the steep drop upon the edge of which the house had been built. The walls of the house were of thick arrow proof bark. I was told that the primary reason for clearing around the house was for defense. The clearing was an arrow shot wide. Sweet potato, cassava, bananas and other vegetables represented the extent of local agriculture in such clearings. These people were otherwise hunters and gatherers who lived off their skill with bows and arrows.

In my preparation for census, the runner I sent from Akiapmin told me that some of the people he told to be here for census told him that they had never seen a patrol because they made a point of absenting themselves, and this patrol would also be avoided. I sent police out in the early morning and they brought in three families in the late afternoon to have their names recorded in the census. They were told of their legal obligation to appear for census. They replied that now that they had seen their first white man and police, they were no longer afraid. A pig was purchased and shot in a firepower demonstration. The Tultul explained that although his people were short of food, they would like to trade some food for salt and beads. This offer was greatly appreciated. They were well paid.

Next day, the 25th, we left "New" Emiapmin and moved north-west, parallel to the Nene River and across the grain of the country until, after some seven hours we reached Mr. Lancaster's camp site where the now deserted "Old" Emiapmin had been visited by previous patrols. The only structure remaining on this site was a flimsy bark shelter. Inside were three huge bundles of arrows. Our guide was the owner and he readily agreed to trade for the ones I would like to acquire. I selected 53 arrows and the deal was transacted. I was keen to continue on but my guides said there was no reliable water beyond this point until we were on the other side of the range. This proved to be untrue, but perhaps a seven-hour day was enough for our laden carriers.

On the 26th we made an early start from "Old" Emiapmin, climbing a spur to the north and then to the northeast and crossing the Penam and Dap Rivers and some smaller tributaries of the Paou River. We then departed from the north bank of the Dap River and climbed steeply until we reached the crest of the Sepik Strickland divide. During the aerial survey that ridge was noted as being 7,500 feet above sea level. The crest of the divide was a razorback and it was possible to have one foot in Strickland watershed, draining south into the Gulf of Papua and the Coral Sea, and the other in the Sepik watershed draining north into the Bismarck Sea. The vegetation was eerie moss forest. We commenced descending along a ridge crest in a northerly direction with the Lau'u Creek on its eastern side. At 1.50 pm we saw signs of habitation; some leaves that had been cut within the last 24 hours and placed in a rock overhang shelter. A storm was threatening so we set up camp on the ridge. The Emiapmin and Akiapmin guides volunteered to go ahead to Unagabmin and forewarn them of our arrival next day, so they would not be surprised or frightened.

On the 27th August we broke camp and departed at 8am, descending in a northerly direction, crossing many tributaries of the Aifo River. At 9.35am and again at 11.00am we passed recently vacated bush houses. At midday we arrived at a large communal house surrounded by a large productive garden. The house was similar to that at Emiapmin and Yoliape. The only people to be seen were two women about 200 yards away in a garden. We called to them, but they immediately fled. Near the house I saw a dozen or so fish traps made of bark.

There were plenty of fresh tracks, but no people. At 2.10pm we moved further down the Aifo River and at 2.30pm came to another deserted communal house in another productive garden. At 3.15pm we arrived at yet another communal house from which our Akiapmin and Emiapmin guides and yesterday's messengers emerged with wide grins on their faces. I waved them back inside and followed them up the ladder. Inside the house, 25 people were sitting on the floor in silence. I greeted them through the Emiapmin guide who could speak their language and at this they appeared to relax and welcome us.

Outside the house I was surprised to see a bamboo pole standing tall. To my eye it could only be a flag pole; a patrol had been there before mine! We set up camp and purchased fresh foods with salt, beads and matches. I made good radio contact with Telefomin and explained our arrival in Unagabmin and the reception we had received. I was also very pleased with Tofiana, the Unagabmin leader, who made us very welcome, as I was with the Emiapmin and Akiapmin guides who led us there. I gave each of the guides the promised bush knives, and I rewarded Tofiana with a large piece of red calico. One of the first things I learned at Unagabmin was the name by which they know themselves. It was 'Kabian', not Unagabmin - that, they said, was what others called them.

Four years later when I was posted to Ambunti as ADC, I reviewed the patrol report file and read with interest Ambunti Patrol Report No 1/1965-66.

R. Barclay and K.J. Taylor – Ambunti Patrol 1/1965-66 – May-August 1965 80 days to the Southern Tributaries. The patrol entered the area via the Leonard Schultze River with Nua of Nekiai as the guide and interpreter. The patrol made contact with 33 Tuwari people in the Kolu area. Tracks indicated that the patrol had been watched and other tracks indicated people fled from the patrol. The next day 34 more people from Auyumo were contacted – headman's name was Samade. A Namerai visiting Auyumo agreed to guide the patrol up river. A pig was purchased and shot in a firepower demonstration

Meriauwi of Samabo [Paka] on the April River made contact requesting the patrol visit his area. In the Kibian [Kabian] area a middle aged man arrived singing in a loud voice in an apparent attempt to keep his courage up. He was visible shaking with terror. He was reassured of our friendly intentions. One group of 47 people and several smaller groups were seen in the Kabian area. The patrol complied with local wishes; it did not follow some tracks the local people indicated they did not want followed. An old man showed great interest in the bugle which was played a number of times to his great interest and satisfaction. A cave was found which showed signs of long occupation. A fence of bark sheets, now rotting, protected the entrance and scooped out holes in the rock still contained ashes.

At this point Mr. Barclay's patrol experienced difficulty in receiving an airdrop and patrol members became weak from hunger. Pilots indicated drop sites further down the April River. This took the patrol in the opposite direction to which it wanted to go. On July 28th after deputations from the carrier line that they were no longer strong enough to carry, the patrol moved to the April/Sitifa junction and thence by double canoe and MV Opal to Ambunti. The report estimated the population of the Leonard Schultze River [including the lower reaches] at 800 people and the April River at 1,400. Meriauwi was identified as the most influential leader in the area.

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Meanwhile back at Kabian, on 28th August 1966 I conducted the initial census of the group of people where we were camped, then I censused the people from the houses that were deserted

yesterday. I recorded a total of 53 names. It was noticeable that there were no young girls among the people seen and very few children. On the basis of this I estimated the local population to be around 100 people. I began taking down language word lists using forms I obtained from Alan Heally of SIL in Telefomin. Although interpretation was poor, I learned that these people claim descent from a woman they call Babasebai. They say she came up the Leonard Schultze River and from there crossed the central dividing range and along the Nene River thence via the Keinu – Sumumo – Karu and Om Rivers to Telefomin. Beyond this the locals would say nothing and suggested I ask the elders who were custodians of the story. I sensed some taboo had been broken by my informants because the elders denied anything concerning Telefomin and said she went over the Central Range and up the Lagaip – the opposite direction to Telefomin. This was the end of the discussion. I was interested as this was a new version of the important story of the ancestress known in Telefomin as Afek and in Oksapmin as Iuanku.

One of my Duranmin carriers said there was a similar ancestral story at Duranmin and Akiapmin. The story goes like this :-

An old woman was at the Tau River, a Hapi River [the local name of the Leonard Schultze River] downstream of our present camp. She had come from the far downstream and decided to stay at the Tau River, but the Akiapmin ancestors told her this was their land, not hers and she was not welcome. A fight developed and the old woman was forced to leave. She followed the Maui River, the main arm of the river southwards until she reached the Central Divide. She climbed to the top and then along the top before descending down a ridge to the headwaters of the Keinu River near Emiapmin, then the Karu River and crossed a ridge to the Om River. At the Kutik junction with the Om she followed the Kutik to its headwaters than went westward to the headwaters of the Bi River. Here she hesitated and decided [to follow the Bi down to the Om and] to cross the Om, but finding it flooded she decided to build a bridge. She crossed and went to Telefomin. She arrived at Utemtigin [in the Eliptamin valley] where she built a house. Then she looked around and saw the land was broken so she moved to where Telefomin station is now and seeing there was a big clear space with water, she settled there.

My informant claimed to know no more because Telefomin raids killed his father and all the elders who were the custodians of ancestral stories. The story he told was what he heard as a boy. The promise of learning the full story when he was old enough did not happen, as by then there was no one to left to tell it.³

Tofiana asked us to remain with his people for an extra day, so he could find a pig for us. As a further sign of trust he brought in ten women and young girls who had been hidden, and I included them in the census. But how far did the trust go? The Kabian people denied any knowledge of people to their east. The denials were so convincing that had I not seen houses to the east during our aerial reconnaissance, I might have believed them.

I turned to the ever reliable Constable Yanopa, giving him a bush knife and sending him to the Kabian house to bribe the locals to take us to the people they deny existed to their east. Yanopa put the knife on the floor and said “*Who wants it? Where are the people over the ridge? Take us there and it's yours.*” There were immediate volunteers.

After 25 minute walk on 30th we reached the Aifo River where it passed between two rocks about 20 feet apart. The bridge was down and the water was far too deep and swift to ford, so we spent an hour building a bridge. From the bridge we ascended 3,100 feet to a ridge top where I waited for the carriers to regroup. During the ascent we passed a deserted house which had a human skull on

either side of it, one at the base of a tree and the fresher of the two atop a pole. The dead there were not buried, but placed on platforms for the body to rot. The skulls were retrieved, presumably so the dead can watch over the living.

We passed two more deserted houses, which I recognized from my fly-over. Then at mid-afternoon we reached a huge communal house which also appeared to be deserted. Thinking that the locals had fled, I climbed the ladder and looked inside. Thirty people were sitting stock still on the floor in silence. The silence ended when our greetings were returned. Two of the men had visited us at Kabian and had apparently reassured the locals of our good intentions. I recorded the further 28 names.

In our discussions I was again reassured that I had now seen all the Kabian people. Now I was inclined to believe them. I was told that the next group downstream was called Setiali and these Kabian people were prepared to guide us there. When told they were short of food, I did not press our need to trade. A small amount of food was offered and we traded for it, then some more came in and then some more and more until we had enough food to feed our 70 men for two days.

Next day, the 31st, the patrol followed the Ole River downstream. It was a small stream when we started out but as we passed several junctions with other streams the Ole became a river, which our guides said was now called the Nene River. At noon our guides directed us to follow a right bank tributary upstream. This tributary was called the Moti. After an hour and 25 minutes we arrived at Setiali where we met 11 people and a further three further upstream at a location I determined to be well inside the Ambunti Sub District. Discussion with the Setiali people was difficult as I had to go through two interpreters. I recorded the names in the initial census of Setiali. Food was brought in and traded and relations with Setiali appeared to be good.

For no apparent reason the Setiali population together with our Kabian guides departed during a storm in the night. We remained at the Moti River Setiali camp on 1st September in the hope that the people might return, which they did not. Also both Constable Marigori and our medical orderly were ill and needed a rest day. I had missed my radio skeds with Telefomin for three consecutive days, but was finally able to make contact and bring the ADC up to date with our activities and the airdrop we are expecting on 7th September.

On the 2nd September we returned down to the Nene River and followed it downstream without guides until we came to an island I recognized as one of the possible airdrop sites I had selected from the air. The Nene River was in flood and our progress was slow. Two of our carriers were Tau River Akiapmin people. I asked them if they knew where we were and how far it was to their place. They said it was about two days to their place. I knew from the aerial survey that there were a number of communal houses in the area, but without guides and local goodwill, I decided we would go to Akiapmin and prepare to take the airdrop there. We should get guides there and could retrace some of our steps to contact any groups we had bypassed.

Next day, as we continued downstream I took compass bearings and judged distances in order to map the Upper Leonard Schultze, locally known as the Nene in its upstream section, then the Hapi and then further downstream, the Walio. We crossed and re-crossed as we travelled. There was approximately 30 miles of a major river system there at that time which did not appear on any map. When I found that the guides were trying to take the patrol on an inland route well south of the river I directed them back to the river so I could continue my surveying. Late that afternoon I saw smoke rising not far ahead, from an area where my guides assured me there were no people. It was late so we made camp on the river bank. I queried my Akiapmin guides and they continued to deny knowing of

people in this area. I knew they were lying, no doubt motivated by a natural desire to reach Akiapmin as soon as possible and enjoy the comforts of home.

Next morning, we had not gone far when we saw a large communal house on the opposite side of the river; [on the right or north bank of the river]. The house was large and there was smoke rising from its thatched roof. To make contact with them I selected the swimmers in my party - Constable Maregori, the Akiapmin guides and myself. Maregori swam with his .303 rifle strapped to his back and I side-stroked across with my gun belt and holstered .38 held high to keep it dry. We entered the forest and approached the house from the shelter of the trees. The house was surrounded by a garden which provided inhabitants unimpeded observation or line of fire of about 40 yards in every direction. Then we saw there were people working in the garden.

Using our Akiapmin people to call out a greeting in their language, we announced our presence. This caused instant pandemonium. The gardeners sprinted to the house and rushed up the ladder and went inside. This was not the reception I had hoped for and as I thought about the security of my small party, a man looked out the doorway at the top of the ladder. He saw me and I waved empty hands indicating no weapons and indicated that he and his people should stay in the house. After a moment, he repeated my gestures. I interpreted this to mean that all was well; Wuniot and the Akiapmin guides agreed. We went to the house and cautiously climbed the ladder to the doorway and went inside.

There were 45 people in the house and they seemed pleased to see us. Our guides communicated with them, apparently without difficulty, and after some discussion reminded me that when the patrol was at the Duranmin/Akiapmin camp on the Karu River [12th & 13th August] one of the Akiapmin carriers had been ill and we left him in the care of his people. When he was well again he crossed the range directly to Akiapmin and told the people there that the patrol was coming. The people in this house had received this information just yesterday, and had been waiting for us with fresh food ready to trade. We learned that they were another group of Setiali people, and this place of residence was called Auyumo. I thanked them for the food and said that after I shifted the patrol camp to this side of the river I would buy it with trade goods.

Constable Maregori and I checked the river and found a place to ford it. We led the patrol over and set up camp. The food offered for sale was sufficient to sustain the patrol for three days. Food security and the good reception we received here caused me to rethink my plans. The river banks here offered a good airdrop site. We could take the drop and establish a base camp here for sufficient days to contact the surrounding communities. This would allow the carriers a rest period in which the sick or injured could be treated. Through the interpreters I discussed these ideas with the Setiali people trying to explain that an aeroplane would come and drop food to us. Was this OK with them? And would they guide us to the surrounding communities? They indicated that we were very welcome and that they would provide guides. Indeed, they seemed to be enthusiastic, even excited.

There was heavy rain overnight and next morning, the 4th of September, the river was in flood. We searched for the best airdrop site and finally decided on an area on the south side of the river opposite Auyumo. At this point we learned that the Setiali traditionally used large rafts, capable of carrying up to four men. Under Setiali guidance, we built several of these and used them to transport our non-swimming Oksapmin carriers across. The carriers were understandably terrified. The technique used by the Setiali was that four or five of their men pushed the raft with four men on board out into the current and then clung to it as they waded and swam it to the other bank some hundreds of yards downstream.

The rafts I saw used south of the divide by the Sisimin, Akiapmin Duranmin and “Hewa” peoples of the Lagaip River were small one-man kick board types, sometime with a small mast upon which the user hangs his bilum to keep it and its contents dry.

I indicated the boundaries of the site I wanted cleared of timber for the airdrop. The intended approaches to the site were clear of obstructions, being over the river itself. The clearing went on all that day and the next. On the 6th I gave Wuniot a bush knife, as I had done with Yanopa a week earlier to acquire guides for our journeys after the air drop. Again the strategy worked. Wuniot returned with a volunteer and a report of a group called Yalimuo who reside in the headwaters of a river that joins the Nene/Hapi River’s right bank not far from Auyumo.

On the 7th Michael Edgar in Telefomin interrupted the Wewak outstation radio schedule to receive a weather report from me. The Piaggio aircraft was due in Telefomin at 9.15am to load our rations for our airdrop. Given my fatal drop to Michael’s Atbalmin patrol in March, I carefully described the layout of the drop site and the direction of its best approaches. There would be smoke fires on all four sides of the drop site and a white tent fly lying flat on the ground in the centre as the target. Of the patrol camp, there would be no sign visible from the air.

At 10.25am when we heard the plane in the distance, green leafy branches were thrown into the fires and four pillars of smoke went aloft. My vantage point was from behind a large tree stump near the middle of the drop site. The pilot’s aim was off and the bags fell short of the target; five went into the flooded river, which had carried away whole trees that fell into it during the clearing work. Amazingly two of these five bags were retrieved. Other bags burst when they hit rocks. A total of 25 bags were dropped and I calculated our losses at 10%. We had received over 1,000 pounds of rice and tinned meat. Incredibly while some tins of meat exploded on impact, a glass bottle of liniment survived as did a magnificent fruit cake that Pat Wearne had cooked for me and wrapped in paper. Unfortunately, the only bag of sugar was among the 10% of losses.

At 1.15pm I again spoke by radio with Michael in Telefomin. This had been the pilot’s first airdrop. He was very impressed with the drop site and its approaches and he was keen to hear how it went on the ground, so I mentioned that the bags fell short and the pilot said he would allow for it next time. As for the Setiali, they were very impressed. The real value to them was the giant garden area we had cleared for them. We packed the dropped food into carrier loads and I divided the patrol into three groups and gave instructions -

Group 1. The Akiapmin and Duranmin and three Setiali volunteers, 12 men in all, would carry 12 carrier loads down river to Akiapmin. They were to tell the Akiapmin that we would be there in a week or so. The absence of the nine carriers we would otherwise have had to feed for a week would save us 63 man days of rations.

Group 2. Twenty carriers, four police, an interpreter and guide who were to accompany me to contact the Yalimuo, somewhere north-east of where we were. We would be away for up to five days.

Group 3. Constables Maregori was sick. He and Constable Amatus would guard the base camp and rations, together with the remaining carriers of whom some were too sick to move. They would stay at Auyumo until the return of group 2.

I discussed patrol security with the patrol police and the need for each member to be particularly vigilant until the patrol parties were re-united. There was a Departmental principle which stipulated that a patrol should not be split as it increased the security risk. I was confident that we had

exceptionally good relations locally and that there was no danger. Sadly, murdered patrol officers Szarka and Harris probably thought the same in November 1953 before the Telefomin uprising.

After seeing off the 12 men of Group 1 going to Akiapmin, at 8am on the 8th with our Setiali guide, I went with Group 3 from Auyumo back upstream along the Hapi River until we reached the junction of the Halo River coming in from the north. We then followed the Halo upstream past the Halo/Agamufo junction at 10am, the Halo/Yelefe junction at midday to arrive at the Halo/Bepi junction at 12.20pm. From there we ascended the ridge line between the Bepi and Halo River gaining 2,500 feet in altitude to arrive at a large communal house at 2.20pm.

We went into the house and I shook hands with everyone in reach. The people were friendly, but I sensed a level of reserve in their attitude. Among them were the two Kabian guides who deserted with the first Setiali group we met some days ago. I questioned the Kabian man but obtained no satisfactory explanation of why they deserted. Given that the Setiali left in the night, I conducted the initial census of Yalimuo that afternoon rather than wait until tomorrow when they too might be gone. I recorded a total of 38 names.

A large quantity of fresh vegetables was offered for sale and the reserved attitude lifted a lot when the sellers saw the trade items on offer. They were most interested in face paint, small coloured glass beads and matches. In the evening Wuniot and I sat with the Yalimuo people and had a relaxed discussion which proved very fruitful. They agreed to bring in other Yalimuo people who had not been censused including the runaway Setiali who we were told live just over a ridge from there.

I planned that we will stay there another day and see what eventuates. Mention was also made of a portion of this group in the April River area two days walk east from there. By my calculation they were too far into the Ambunti Sub District for us to pursue. That evening I reminded the police guard to be vigilant, particularly at dusk and dawn.



Opposite - A Yalimuo woman infected with *tinea imbricate* skin disease (known in Pidgin as 'grill-e'). She is wearing a typical grass skirt seen in the upper Leonard Schultze River area. The hair cut is typical of the area and of that of the Upper April River, which I patrolled in the early 1970s.

After a quiet night, the Yalimuo brought in several people not previously seen and I included them in the census. They also brought in more food for sale together with a pig which I purchased with a tomahawk and a piece of calico. I had the pig shot in a firepower demonstration, which appeared to interest the people greatly. They no longer displayed their reserved attitude and were quite friendly.

We remained at Yalimuo on the 10th and in the morning I sent two police out "hunting". They returned in the afternoon and reported there were no further signs of habitation within a two-hour radius of our camp. On the 11th we retraced our steps of the 8th to Auyumo, we then crossed the Hapi River to where Constables Maregori and Amatus had shifted camp to the airdrop site to ensure that the patrol's progress to Akiapmin was not delayed by possible flooding

of the Hapi River. At the new camp site, I was introduced to some local people I had not previously seen. They called themselves the Sumwari.

Members of their group had been hunting close to the Hapi River when they had heard the Piaggio dropping our supplies. They had come to investigate and Maregori prevailed upon them to await my return. They agreed to take us to their settlement next day - September 12th, which was also my 24th birthday. They lived in the watershed of a southern tributary called the Pench³ [Peneife] River.

Next day, just under an hour's walk brought us to the Pench/Hapi junction at which point our Sumwari guides suddenly vanished. I sent police back to the drop site to bring them in. The police returned with a man who was said to be the Sumwari leader and his son. The man showed no fear of the police but was visibly terrified of myself and had to be physically held to prevent him running away. His son fled. After some discussion and reassurance, I gave him a bush knife. He then happily led the way up the Pench River. After a time he asked if he might pursue his son to prevent him telling the Sumwari people from fleeing. I agreed to this.

We continued on and passed a deserted house at 11.40am, then a productive garden and communal house at 12.25pm. We met 12 Sumwari people there and I immediately conducted an initial census. We set up camp and continued our discussions with the people who now appeared to be friendly and unafraid. I had heard of another group of people north of the Hapi River and west of the Setiali settlement of Auyumo. The Sumwari had had contacts with them and agreed to take us there when we moved on.

As with previous similar situations, despite our evidently good relations, that night the Sumwari people fled. We remained camped there next day while the police tracked them for a great distance to the south-west from where they apparently kept going. Gifts of face paint, mirrors and calico were left in the house to encourage a better reception for the next patrol. I posted guards that night. Their departure was a double blow as they were to guide us to the Miyali. I decided against looking for the Miyali without the good will of friendly guides – the next patrol may have a better chance of contacting them if they do not flee from us.

On the morning of the 14th we returned downstream to the Hapi and then mapped our way downstream along it. At 2.40pm we met a group of carriers I had sent ahead on the 8th. They led us to the upper of two Akiapmin camps. For reasons I could not determine, this hamlet had the same name as the Setiali hamlet – Auyumo. We set up camp next to the Halinau Creek. After purchasing a large amount of fresh vegetables, I conducted the initial census of this Akiapmin group who call themselves Tuwari. I expressed the administration's appreciation of the work they put in clearing the track from here over the central range to their Karu River camp. The headman in turn showed me a village book issued by Ambunti PO Robin Barclay the previous year and said we were welcome to stay in his area for as long as we wanted.

On the 15th I recorded some stories of the raids on the Tuwari by Telefomin raiding parties from Nenataman in the Frieda River headwaters. Those raids reportedly ceased three years earlier, at the same time that raids on Om River communities ceased after Mr. Marks' 1963 patrol. The impact of these raids was blamed for the present scattered distribution of the Akiapmin [Tuwari] people – on the Karu River – a reported five days walk south from there, and at Kolu some distance downstream

³ In 1989 I revisited this area and corrected the spelling of the river name to Peneife. In 1989 with a Sumwari elder I was taken to a stone axe quarry on this river.

of where we were on the Hapi River. Mr. Barclay's village book entry shows the walk from Kolu to our current location took 6.5 hours.

I also recorded more of the story of the common ancestress known here as Babasebai, in Oksapmin as Iuanku and in Telefomin as Afek. Our next objective was a southern tributary of the Hapi called the Tau River. On the 17th, our guided led us overland through forested country to the Tau River which we reached some 200 yards upstream of a large communal house. This was Kolu, the lower Tuwari [Akiapmin] settlement. The walk nearly halved Mr. Barclay's walking time which shows the value of good guides and a properly cleared track. We crossed the Tau to where the local people had prepared a good camp site for us.

I recall being very impressed with the huge amount of work done on clearing tracks and camp sites for us and the lengths the Tuwari people went to make us welcome. When the Tuwari village book was presented for me to see, there was also a deputation with a request. The Tuwari people wanted to be administered from Oksapmin, not Ambunti. They argued they belong in the Telefomin sub district because they, with the "min" people, claim common descent from the ancestress Babasebai.

It was only in 1970 when I read the Ambunti and May River patrol reports that I learned there was a lot more going on at that time in and around Tuwari. I also admit that I experienced a cold shiver when I read the following :-

...in [Ambunti] patrol 1/65-66 Barclay states that although the Wusuai kept the patrol under observation no contact was made. May River patrol [report] 2/65-66 stated Wusuai had been attacked by Taiwari [Tuwari], one man, Amai, being killed. The Taiwari were alleged to have threatened to kill the next DDA officer to visit their area, but successful contact was made by Mr. Bragge, OIC Oksapmin, recorded in Oksapmin patrol 1/1966/7.⁴

Meanwhile my thoughts on 17th September 1966 were with the patrol members who were sick. Of these Constable Maregori was most unwell with influenza and the aches and pains and short breath that went with it. Morale among the Oksapmin carriers was at low ebb. Their concern was that if their sickest man should die in this remote place, his spirit would never find its way back home. They wanted to carry him home immediately so he could die there and not here. I sympathized and asked them which way they thought Oksapmin was from where we were with the Tuwari. It turned out that they had no idea. I discussed some alternatives over the radio with John Wearne. The conclusion was to look after the sick and keep them with us, carrying them if need be. We were expecting a helicopter in a week or so and could evacuate them then.

The main concern was the security risk of splitting the patrol. After the Waina Sowanda incident the previous year, DDC Wakeford wryly commented, "*Will they never learn from Telefomin?*" As for us in 1966 within the Telefomin Sub District - we were among people with far less contact than the Eliptamin people had when they killed Szarka, Harris and Constables Buritori and Purari. And if things went wrong now with that background history, what would Canberra say? I must not have been thinking too much about this because my very next decision was to split the patrol. Interpreter Wuniot, a Duranmin, was of no further use with the languages ahead, so I agreed for him to return to Oksapmin with a group of Akiapmin men who wanted to see the station and work for wages on jobs I agreed to give them there.

In my radio conversation with John Wearne on 18th September, he asked me to look into local trade patterns, presumably for the Area Study he was then compiling for the establishment of the Telefomin Local Government Council. My research on the topic noted :-

1/ ... Many of the people on the Om and Nene/Hapi valleys wear sea shell phalocrypts. The source of this shell is interesting as they are of a large variety. It appears all the shell comes in through Unagabmin [Kabian] and were traded through Emiapmin into the Om and down the Nene/Hapi River [after presumably arriving at Kabian from the Sepik River via the April River].

2/ ... Oksapmin was an area characterized by relatively soft limestone, with no good stone axe material locally. The Oksapmins traded for stone axe/adzes with the Om River people and I assumed the Om River people made the axes. Not so. I determined they were made in the headwaters of the Tau River and the Tuwari trade them through. The most unusual trade item was bows. A few were made locally, but none were made in Oksapmin, and apparently none in the Om valley. They were traded through from Kiunga on the Fly River 80 to 100 miles from where we were. They came via Oksapmin and Telefomin to the Om River and thence over the range to the Tuwari area.

3/ ... Steel axes came into this area from Telefomin through the Om River, prior to the initial contact just the previous year. Presumably even before Telefomin was established [1948], Dutch steel axes arrived there from across the border with former Dutch New Guinea via Telefomin. Dutch axes were Dutch steel axes were characterized by a round handle hole in the head. I saw one at Setiali.⁵ It was of some considerable age and very worn down.

Patrol Leg 3 - In search of the Pume raiders and cannibals of Unamo

The original patrol planning did not include this leg. Plans changed when the Leonard Schultze River headwaters people told how until 1963, they were regularly attacked by an unknown group they knew as the Pume, who resided at a place called Unamo, possibly in the Frieda River drainage. The raiders killed and ate men and abducted women and children. Unamo was said to be five to ten days walk to the west. Research indicated the names Unamo and Pume had not been contacted by the Administration.

I negotiated for guides to take us westward in quest of the people the Tuwari know as their enemies - the Pume - who were believed to live at a place called Unamo. The OIC at May River had heard of Unamo as an uncontacted Frieda River headwaters group. He heard this at Paupe, another Unamo enemy on the middle reaches of the Frieda River. This was reported to ADC Telefomin via Ambunti. Telefomin however did not know any place by that name.¹ That afternoon I was able to purchase enough fresh foods to carry and consume on the first night's walk towards Unamo.

On this occasion fish hooks proved to be a popular item of trade. Until three years earlier, Unamo's incessant raiding had wiped out a group of people whose lands lay between themselves and Akiapmin; that group was known as the Paiemo. By 1966 there were only four Paiemo survivors and they had fled to live in the protection of the Duranmin people south of the Central Divide. As a consequence of the former Paiemo land owners having been driven out, there was now a vast area of uninhabited land between Tuwari and Unamo.

At that time - 1966 - the whole of Papua New Guinea was covered by both 1: 100,000 and 1: 250,000 [Four miles to the inch] maps. The map sheet of the northern part of the region this current patrol traversed was on the May River 1:250,000 sheet. **A small portion of that map appears below**, showing dotted-in rivers and roughly sketched ridges which bore no resemblance to reality in the rain-forested country we crossed. The only people to have crossed were tribal raiding parties going out to kill and to bring back human meat and captured women and children. There were not even established

tracks. Usually the only indication we saw that anyone had ever previously gone that way were small broken saplings that had regrown – **below**.



We set off early on 19th September walking westward with the intention of getting some miles behind us. We crossed and followed unmapped rivers, the names of which I recorded as we went. During the march I kept close contact with Constable Maregori, our sickest patrol member who refused to be carried. In fact, Maregori made a point of not slowing the patrol at all. After two and a half hours walk our guides advised us that we had entered Pume territory, the former lands of the unfortunate Paiemo people. As the land was won in battle, the guides indicated there was no dispute; the Pume owned those lands. I had no idea what our reception would be from the Pume, but I looked forward to meeting these reputed great cannibal warriors. We walked eight hours and eight minutes that day before setting up camp by Si Creek, a tributary of the Ni River [otherwise known as the Nena by the Telefomin, the Niar by the Mianmin and the Frieda River by the Germans and map makers since.] Our guides now said we would sleep the following night in the forest and arrive in Unamo the next day – a big reduction on their earlier estimate of 5 to 10 days walk.

On 20th we were under way at 6.40am following Si Creek to its junction with the Sia River, then followed the Sia to its junction with the Ni or Frieda River, arriving there at 8.45am. We followed the Ni River upstream until 12.25pm when we left the river and commenced crossing broken hill country until 2.10pm when a good camp site was identified and cleared for the night on a ridge line called Kalibai. Rations were issued and guards posted. That night I tuned in to Radio Wewak and was pleased to hear a news item that mentioned a Lake Kopiago patrol that had been dispatched to investigate a murder reported by the Oksapmin patrol, and had returned to Lake Kopiago with the murderers involved.

Next day the 21st September 1966 we were under way at 6.50am. We continued climbing the ridge line through heavy rain forest. Then at 8am the track left the ridge crest and cut across its eastern

face. Not long before 10am the guides pointed out the hamlet of Unamo in a clearing up ahead. To my eye it was a typical Telefomin hamlet of small individual houses rather than a single communal fortress style house we had seen to date. The carriers regrouped and I re-organised the patrol, so the Akiapmin guides and carriers, the enemies of the Pume people of Unamo, were at the rear. Interpreter Mangatipnok, two police and I went ahead and were able to enter the hamlet without being noticed. I told Mangatipnok to announce our presence in Telefomin language. Surprised people poured from the houses. One of the women became nearly hysterical when she recognized Mangatipnok. She pointed at him and told another woman whose son he was. Mangatipnok was the centre of attention of these women who had been captured in battle years before at Duranmin and elsewhere. To my eye they now seemed happily married in Unamo, even if by no choice of their own. I photographed three of these abducted women and asked if they wished to be taken back to their homes. None of them did, they said, because their families were now there at Unamo.

As I compiled the census, I asked Mangatipnok to count how many of the population were brought there as captives. In a total population of 135 Nenataman people I censused on 25th September 1966, there were 14 living captives of whom 10 resided at Unamo and four at Wabiadang. Of the 14, 11 were women. Mangatipnok went on to say that nearly all Nenataman people are descended from captured women. I was told that most of the raiding in the Om valley was conducted from Eliptamin, while most raiding in the Hapi or Leonard Schultze headwaters was conducted from there at Unamo.

The mystery of "Pume" and "Unamo" was now resolved. The Pume were Nenataman people and Unamo was a Nenataman village, which had not been visited by a patrol until that time, but this was by no means an initial Administration contact with these people. They had been censused at another Nenataman village called Wabiadang. Nenataman consists of three settlements - Wabiadang, Tumsengan and Mereanang. It seems that Unamo is another name for Mereanang. Nenataman was visited by John Black in 1938, by Frank Jones in 1954, by Tim Gill in 1965 and no doubt others in between. Gill's report mentioned an uncontacted group called Berefaitan east of there. The Unamo people explained that Berefaitan is the Nenataman name for Paiemo, the group which had been virtually annihilated by their neighbours; another mystery solved. We set up camp on the ridge above Unamo. Although we seemed to have excellent relations there, and were able to purchase plenty of fresh foods, I ordered the posting of night guards.

I asked Telefomin by radio to send a runner with the Nenataman census register to meet me at Wabiadang, so I could revise the census. I understood that it took a patrol three days to walk from Telefomin to Unamo, but a runner could do it in two. After a rest day in Unamo, we were under way again on 23rd September. The track took us down to Unamo Creek and then upstream along the Abei River for an hour - from there we left the river and ascended to the crest of the Abei/Nena Rivers' divide. We followed the divide in an ascent of 4,000 feet before descended to reach the hamlet of Tumsengan after a five hour walk. After friendly discussions there, the patrol moved on to Wabiadang, a further 20 minutes walk away. Word had preceded us from Unamo and work had been done repairing the rest house and clearing the walking track.

At Wabiadang I noticed that the Nenataman Telefomins are physically smaller than the Om River and Akiapmin people. They also seemed to talk nonstop, whereas the Akiapmin and other Hapi and Om River peoples are quiet and seem to be reserved in their expression. After revising the Nenataman census, I asked them why they fought the Paiemo, Akiapmin, Duranmin and others. Their response was - "*Because they were our enemies.*" They seemed to have less idea why they were enemies. It seemed to me they wanted conquered lands and captured women and clearly they enjoyed fighting and cannibalism, at which they were reputedly to be very good. They spoke of only one Akiapmin return raid against Unamo during which eight Unamo people were said to be killed.



Unamo hamlet. After three days walk from Akiapmin we were surprised to see typical Telefomin style houses – quite different to the fortress style communal houses of the people of the Strickland/ Sepik Divide area.



Three captured spouses from Duranmin in the Om valley. They declined my offer to take them back to where they were captured as each of them now had a family here and appeared to be well treated.



The haus tambaran at the Nenatamun hamlet of Wabiadang, with a patrol policeman in front; a miniature of the Telefolin haus tambaran with inside walls clad in pig jaws, and the same double fire place arrangement. Bundles containing many arrows stood against the inside walls.

When it came time for my Akiapmin guides to return home, a dispute arose. A 14-year old lad called Solisep/Tenyieng wanted to return to Akiapmin to see his relatives from whom he was taken in a raid when he was a child. Tenyieng, the “adopted” father was fearful of losing Solisep for good and did not want him to go. I was expected to make a decision. I said Solisep belonged to Nenatamun. He had been taken in the time before the Administration influence and Western law was established here. Prior to that customary law must prevail. My interpretation of the date when customary law gave way to Western law there was when Arthur Marks and his patrol first enforced Western law in these valleys in 1963. If Solisep went to Akiapmin and did not return, it would be a matter for the court in Telefomin. In my presence at least all parties agreed to this interpretation.

I inspected two war shields. The first had a personal name “Bamituman” being the place where the tree was cut to make it. This shield had dozens of arrow holes and embedded arrow points in it. It evidently was used in many raids against Akiapmin and one raid against Duranmin. The other shield had much damage from where the Akiapmin hit it with stones. I learned that the Akiapmin fortress style communal houses were difficult to attack. The raiders fired arrows and the people in the house returned their fire until they ran out of arrows, then when the attackers came in close, they threw or dropped rocks on them.

On 24th I sent several Duranmin carriers on ahead of the patrol to inform the Suamin people of the Fu River in the Om headwaters to expect us in the coming days. I finished my work at Nenatamun on 25th September, but was required to wait at Wabiadang for a helicopter re-supply – the weather however caused delays.

Writer’s Note: Although I didn’t know it at the time, en route to Unamo and Wabiadang we had traversed a section of the upper Frieda River which held special importance. An extensive zone of copper mineralization was to be identified there less than three years later. In 1970, geologist John Hartley, then in charge of New Guinea operations of Carpentaria Exploration Co, told me in Ambunti that they had found signs of mineralization on some of my 1966 campsites. I may well have been the first European on the Frieda copper deposit. Now, half a century later (2016), the Frieda is recognized as a world-class resource, the potential mining of which will have a major impact on the Sepik and its peoples.

The homeward leg.

The patrol crossed the Sepik/Strickland divide into the Fu River tributary of the Om River and visited Suamin before re-crossing the Om and moving via the Bi River tributary headwaters southwards to Khaka, thence to the headwaters of the Tekin River and on to Oksapmin.

Finally, after waiting until 10am on 28th for the helicopter which did not arrive, we broke camp at Wabiadang. We descended to the Ibai Creek from where we climbed over 4,000 feet to the top of the Central Divide arriving at 2.05pm. From there we descended into the Strickland fall along Tinas Creek which was a tributary of the Fu River; itself a tributary of the Om River headwaters. Here we encountered some Eliptamin men, who had met our Duranmin carriers some days earlier. Coming to see what was delaying us, they camped the night with us by Tinas Creek and offered to guide us the following day.

There was a major storm overnight and the Tinas Creek flooded. Next morning our Eliptamin guides led the patrol through rugged country in a general south-easterly direction to a hamlet called

Mumabi on the Ayam Creek. The Mumabi residents are from Abunkamin and Agumtavip; Telefomin speakers from the Eliptaman⁴ valley. I had not expected to find Eliptamin people there and so I took down details of their land claims.

I established that these people were fairly permanent residents of the Fu River and I calculated their location as 141 deg. 5615 minutes east by 4 deg. 57 minutes south, with an altitude of about 4,000 feet ASL. They stated that the basis of their claim on that side of the Central Divide was :-

About 80 years ago the Iligimin people, then resident in the Eliptamin valley, raided Telefolin and burnt down the haus tambaran. The Telefomin people raided Iligimin and the Iligimin fled to the area where Mumabi then stood. The Telefomin occupied the Eliptamin valley lands of the conquered Iligimin.

The Iligimin had previously won the area east of the divide from the Fwialimin, a group that had become extinct. About half a generation of the new Eliptamin settlers decided to occupy those former Iligimin/Fwialimin lands. The fathers of the current generation migrated, and from there raided the Suamin and Duranmin people and in the process gained much more land than their fathers [grand-fathers of the present generation] had won from the Iligimin in the first place. Many captives were taken. I saw some of them there, but most now resided in the Eliptaman valley.⁶

I recorded three observations concerning these people :-

1. While Mumabi looks like Unamo with its small individual Telefomin-style houses, the Mumabi people were in the process of building a fortress-style communal house as found throughout the Om and Hapi River areas. I did not establish what motivated this.
2. They indicated they wanted to build an airstrip and have a patrol post established there. I took the time to explain why that was not going to happen. They took the news well.
3. Their ties were with Eliptamin and I understood they went there for annual census revision.

On 30th September, an hour and ten minutes' walk brought the patrol to the bank of the Fu River. The Fu was in flood and the patrol followed it downstream for just under a further eight hours before making camp at the junction of the Fu and Wabu Rivers. Next day, 1st of October, the Fu was still in flood and the patrol was unable to cross from the east [i.e. the left] bank. At 11am we met the Duranmin carriers and some Suamin men who led the way to the Suamin rest house, where we arrived at 11.35am.

The long awaited helicopter landed at 3.45pm bringing ADC John Wearne. The whole patrol had awaited this helicopter visit with anticipation as the sugar supply had run out over a week previously and heavy cravings had set in. My discussion with Mr. Wearne lasted only as long as it took to unload, as the weather was closing in and the pilot did not want to be stranded there. The main topic of conversation was that the DC wanted me to take over as ADC Telefomin when John was to go on leave the following month.

Oksapmin Interpreter Tandet arrived on that day after a radio request from me – soon we were to be among Oksapmin speaking people. I sent messengers to the Bi River to let them know to expect us. I also sent men to the Om River to build or repair a bridge for our use. Other visitors were a group of Duranmin people including the Luluai [**below left**] who came to see the Duranmin carriers. I revised the Suamin census and found that the total population was 25 people.

⁴ In this para we “Eliptamin” and “Eliptaman” “...min” refers to Elip people whereas ‘...man’ refers to the Elip valley.

The Akiapmin man [below right] had the typical nose decoration of both the Telefomin people – the cassowary quill and of the Sepik Hill language group – the rhinoceros beetle horn protruding from the end of the nose. The earlobe carries his smoking pipe.



On 3rd of October after a rest day at Suamin, we departed from there at 7am. The Fu's flood level had dropped enough to allow the patrol to ford it and climb the Fu/Om divide to the site of the cane suspension bridge. We finished the repairs and the whole patrol had crossed by 9.25am. The bridge was 168 feet of suspended cane and crossing it was akin to walking down a skipping rope. We followed the flooded Om River's bank upstream in heavy cold rain to the junction of the Bi and Om Rivers. The Bi, which was usually a small stream, was also in high flood. The patrol crossed on the trunk of a large tree we felled, then followed the west bank upstream until we arrived at an old garden site where we set up camp.

We reached Khakha hamlet after only two hours walk on 4th and we set up camp on a site the Khakha people had prepared for us. In the afternoon I conducted the census and made notes of local history as told by the elders :-

The land around the Bi River once accommodated a large population of groups known as the Fiihitana, Omtara, Bolimbiga, Matipgera, Kimgeura, Ivalgera, Biana, Imuksup, Gomsup and Gwemoran, all of whom spoke the Oksapmin language, and Kasang who were of Feramin origins and spoke the Telefomin language. None of these groups currently existed. The Khakha group was made up of people from Tetabil, Nuka and Kweptanmin. Of these three groups, only Kweptanmin existed as a separate group at the time of my visit.⁷

Nuka was censused as a separate group in 1964, and I recall reading of Tetabil in 1951-2 reports as Telefomin patrols came to Oksapmin via the Bi River. The census figures seem to explain the population decline. I calculated a 4% natural decrease in population on the last census figures.

The 5th of October was a rest day and on the 6th we climbed via the headwaters of the Wanga River back into the highlands over a divide at 8,000 feet ASL, and made camp in an alpine swamp area known as the Yam River; a walk of five hours. This valley is about three miles long and one mile wide. It is clad on vividly coloured grasses, with very few trees to be seen in the valley proper. Our

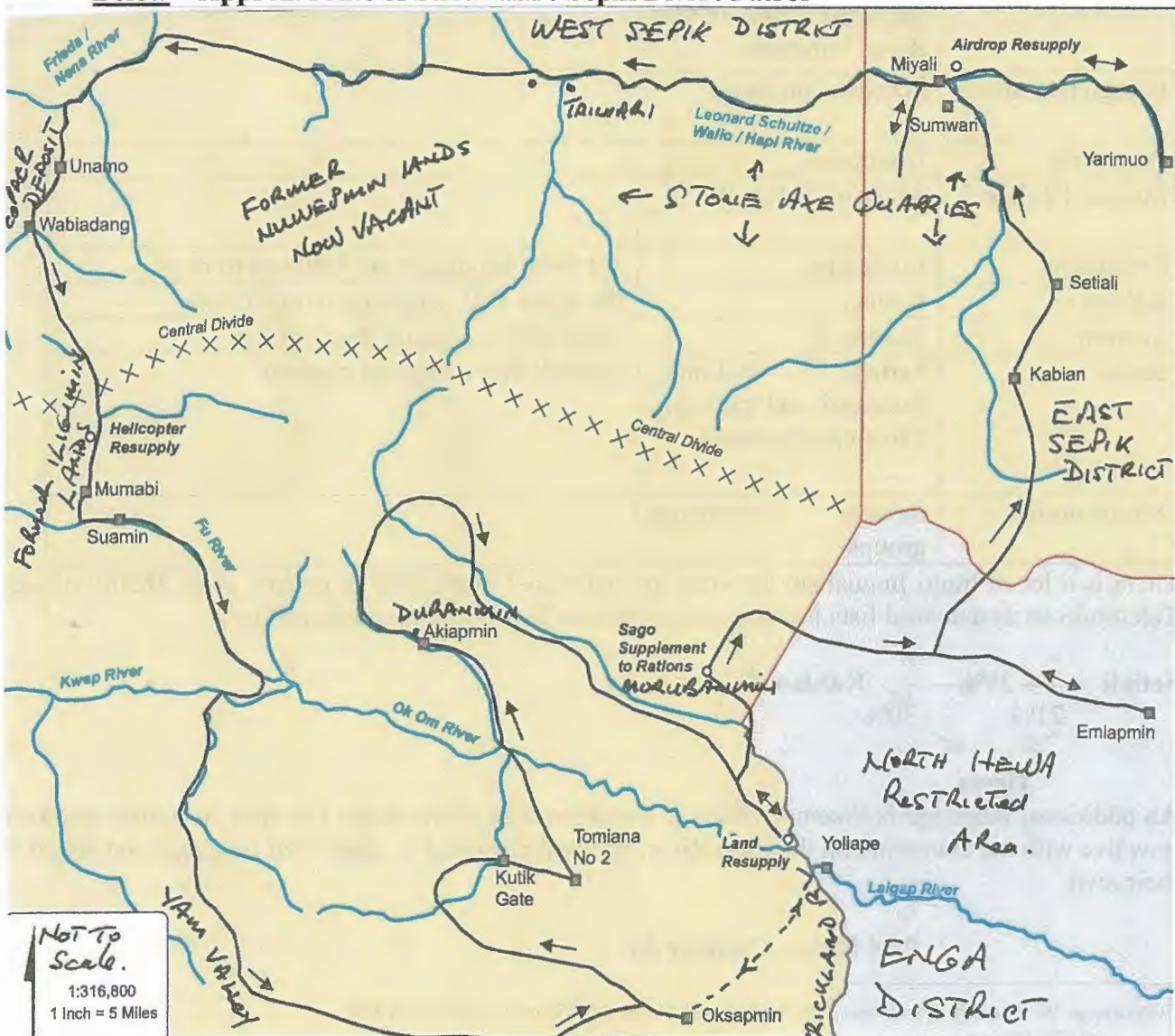
camp site was the same one used by Bill Brown in 1959-60 and others since as they journeyed from Telefomin to Oksapmin.

On 8th of October the walk to Tekin mission via Tekap, Divanap, Arimin, Tomianap and Kusanap, was an easy one of six hours. The Bricknell family insisted that I stay the night at the Baptist mission at Tekin and I did not argue.

The patrol arrived back in Oksapmin on the 9th and was stood down. We had been in the field for a total of 70 days.

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Below – Approx. route of Strickland / Sepik Divide Patrol

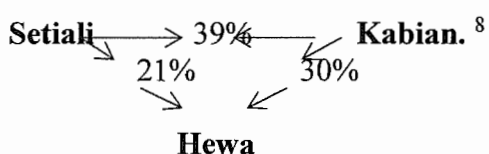


Languages of the Sepik Strickland Divide :-

During the patrol I believed that I encountered eleven separate languages. With the later benefit of Laycock’s *Checklist and Preliminary Classification of Sepik Languages* [ANU 1973], I believe on the basis of discussions during the patrol that the language structure of the area patrolled by Oksapmin Patrol No 1/1966-7 is as shown in the table :-

Language	Community	Belonging to:
Oksapmin	Disana, Divana, Gobi, Kamagoiana, Khakha, Kutik, Teka, Tomiana 1	The Oksapmin Language family or the Oksapmin Language stock within the Trans New Guinea Language Phylum.
Telefol	Unamo, Wabiadang, Tumsengan, Abunkamin, Agamtavip.	The Ok Language family of the Central and Southern language stock within the Trans New Guinea Language Phylum.
Tuwari [Akiamin]	Two settlements in the Leonard Schultze headwaters and one on the Karu River, an Om River Tributary.	The Leonard Schultze language family of the Leonard Schultze Language Stock of the Sepik/Ramu language Phylum.
Porogu [Remban]	Porogu, Tomiana2	All these languages are believed to be of the Sepik Hill Language family of the Sepik Hill Language Stock of the Sepik/Ramu Language phylum
Duranmin	Duranmin	
Sisimin [Yoliape]	Sisimin [Yoliape]	
Emiapmin	Emiapmin	
Kabian	Kabian	
Suamin	Suamin	
Setiali	Setiali, Yalimuo, Sumwari and probably Miyali [not visited]	
Morobanmin	Several scattered groups	

There is a lot of multi lingualism between the individual Sepik Hill languages. Alan Heally of SIL Telefomin analysed word lists I took down to indicate the following relationships :-



An additional language is Paiemo, which is also known as Nuwepmin. The four surviving speakers now live with the Duranmin on the Karu River, and will presumably adopt their language and abandon their own.

End Notes Chapter 38

¹ Gammage W. *The Sky Travellers*. The Miegunyah Press. Melbourne Uni Press 1998 P179-181

² L.Bragge - Oksapmin Patrol Report No 1/1966-67 P 1 *History & Background*

³ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 15 diary 28th August 1966

⁴ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 Page 110

⁵ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 15 diary 18th September 1966

⁶ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 15 diary 29th September 1966

⁷ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 15 diary 4th October 1966

⁸ Oksapmin Patrol Report No 1/1966-7 Page 9

Sepik 4 Chapter 38 The Mianmin Murder Investigation of 1966/7

On 8th November 1966 I was at Oksapmin packing up for my transfer to Telefomin when there was a radio call from ADC John Wearne. He told me that PO Ernie Mitchell patrol which was currently in East Mianmin had just called in a report of tribal fighting and an unknown number of deaths in the West Mianmin Restricted area. My first job after taking over as acting ADC would be to take a patrol in there to investigate.

I immediately told Constable Yanopa to pack his things; he was coming with me. This was going to be my toughest patrol assignment to date and I would need the best police. I would also need an experienced second officer. Mitchell could have done it, but he injured his leg and was currently being carried back towards Telefomin secured to a stretcher¹. I was told I could choose whoever I wanted from within the West Sepik District. I chose Tony Try, OIC Imonda. He had been recruited as a CPO with Ernie Mitchell and myself in 1961.

West Mianmin, being classified as “restricted” under the 1950 Restricted Areas Ordinance, meant the people who lived there were not under Administration control, and only authorized Administration personnel and people issued with permits, were allowed in there. This was for the protection of the outsider as well as of the indigenous residents.

Yanopa and I arrived in Telefomin on 9th November. Ernie Mitchell and CPO Neil Robinson’s East Mianmin patrol, accompanied by the Luluai of Mawaimin arrived on the 10th. The Luluai had reported rumours of fighting and killing at a hamlet of the Kimiasomin group but the details were very vague. He originally said there were five people killed, but later reduced that to two. Whereas he was originally unclear about who did the killings, on the 16th November he indicated that the killers had been from groups called Urapmin and Fiarimin. His information was said to have come from a warrior involved in the raid. Meanwhile, independent evidence reached Telefomin in the form of several blood-stained arrows. These had been passed from village to village from the northwest. The men who delivered them knew only that they were to give them to the Kiap. They did not know what had happened or where, or even who sent the arrows. All that was clear was that *something had happened*.

On 17th November DC Des Clancy and Tony Try arrived in Telefomin. After Mr. Clancy had been briefed on what we knew of the rumours from the north-west, he issued the following Patrol Instructions on 17th November 1966 :-

Sub District Office
Telefomin

Mr. L.Bragge
Assistant District Officer
TELEFOMIN.

Be prepared to lead a patrol into the West Mianmin area of the Telefomin Sub District. This is restricted country and the people are relatively uncontacted. You will be the leader of the patrol and will be responsible for its safe and successful management.

You will be issued with a two-way radio which will enable you to keep in contact with Telefomin. Try and come up on the air each day at 1315 or at any other pre-arranged time.

¹ Ernie confided that being carried was a terrifying experience in such rugged country. He would prefer to have walked had he been able.

The patrol will consist of :-
Mr. Bragge, Patrol Leader
Mr. Try
Constable 1st Class Ganim and eleven constables.

Purpose of the patrol: To investigate reports of an attack by a group of West Mianmin people on a hamlet, Boliap of the Kimiasomin group and to determine the truth of the stories alleging that two Boliap were killed in the attack. Ensure that at all times members of the Police detachment are kept close to the patrol leader and that individuals or small groups do not wander from the camp and from the main party.

Police will be issued with ten rounds of ammunition per man. Balance will be carried under the control of the patrol leader and will be issued at his discretion. Ammunition will be strictly accounted for from time to time and particularly at the end of the patrol. The patrol will not split at any time. Take sufficient rations with you for two weeks (2). Trade goods will be issued to you to assist and airdrops will be arranged at your request.

Your main job is to carry out the investigation and assess the situation and the attendant problems when you arrive at the scene of the alleged murders. After you have done this a decision will be made as to further actions. If possible you will discuss your plans with me by radio. If this is not possible any decision will be left to your discretion.

Use only such force at any time as is absolutely necessary and remember that the safety of your party and of the people in whose area you are working is your responsibility. There has been one patrol previously in the area so the people can be expected to be nervous of you and particularly in view of the circumstances of your visit.

Keep guards posted at all times and keep your carriers closed up in their ranks on the march. If the story of the attack is untrue or exaggerated carry on with a normal patrol, making friends and contacts where ever you can and report on any potential airstrip and dropping sites you come across.

The best of luck to you.

(D.J. Clancy)
District Commissioner.

Three other critically important members of the patrol were :-

- Kuifam of Timelmin was in his early teens when he was arrested by Mr. Neville's 1956-57 patrol. He was convicted of willful murder committed during the 1956 raid on Atbalmin, and learned to speak Pidgin English while in gaol in Wewak.
- Cess was a Telefomin Interpreter.
- Anterapnok – medical orderly.

In 1965 John Wearne and CPO Martin Kerr patrolled the West Mianmin without incident. As John knew the country we discussed patrol logistics and agreed that the patrol would need a permanent carrier line numbering about one hundred and twenty men. In addition, we would need additional police to those available in Telefomin. These would have to be borrowed from Wewak. We took advantage of Mr. Wearne's knowledge of West Mianmin and did a fly over to identify where the people were, and look for possible airdrop sites. Apart from learning everything we could from Mr. Wearne, we read his report to which Mr. Clancy alluded as the only previous patrol in the area.

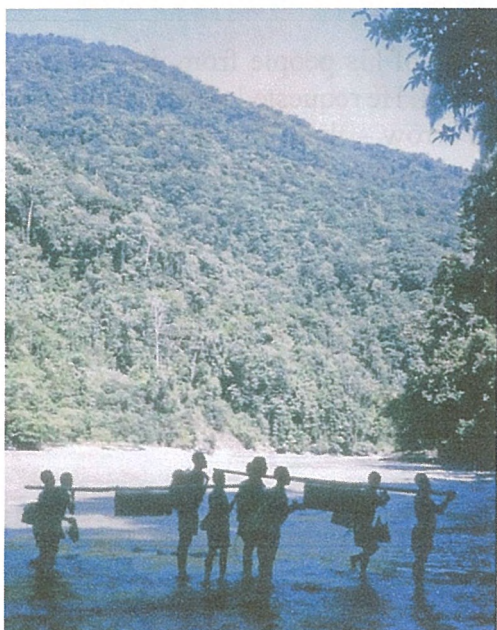
On 19th November we took the police to the rifle range for a practice shoot. There were three reasons for doing this :-

1. If the patrol came under attack, it was essential that Mr. Try and I knew the shooting capabilities of each individual in our police detachment. As it turned out the two of the four police borrowed from Wewak proved to be afraid of their rifles and turned their heads away with eyes tightly closed when pulling the trigger. We were not long into the patrol when these two said it was too rough and they could not go on. It was a relief to send them back.
2. Range practice does much to weld the detachment into a team and focus their thoughts and a unifying discipline focused on the task ahead.
3. In line with Mr. Clancy's instruction re the use of force ...it provided the best mindset for understanding the standing firing orders, which explained what instructions they could expect from the officers in the event that it became necessary to fire the rifles.

We documented a contingency plan, in the case of radio failure, of what we thought the patrol route might be and allocated dates as to where and when we would need our re-supply airdrops. This plan listed the contents of what each airdrop should contain. The patrol would make the effort to prepare the drop sites and be there to receive supplies. Happily, the radio did not fail and we retained the flexibility we needed to take airdrops where and when we needed them.

In planning my recent patrol of the Sepik Strickland divide [August to October] I had the luxury of choosing to travel in the dry season. The timing of the West Mianmin patrol was determined by the need for a police investigation, the timing of which unfortunately coincided with the beginning of the wet season.

We recruited 129 carriers, including as many Mianmin as we could get with the remainder from Telefomin. Telefomin patrol No 3/1966-67 set out on 23rd November at 8.50am and followed the Sepik River downstream – **below** - retracing the route that explorer Richard Thurnwald followed to discover the Telefomin valley in September 1914 [see Sepik 2 Chapter 20]. We slept that night at Sepkialikmin and the next in a bush camp at the junction of the Sepik and Elip Rivers.



On 25th November the patrol set off at 7am in light rain and reached a cane bridge over the Fak or Clear River at 9.40am. It took an hour for the patrol to cross. We were now on Mianmin tribal lands and in the Restricted Area. From here on I walked at the head of the patrol and Mr. Try at the rear, with our police interspersed among the carrier line. In order to keep the patrol as compact as possible on the march, we walked to a plan that I halted after walking for three hours to allow the patrol to catch up and regroup. Then after a short rest period, I set off again for another three hours. Our route continued following the Sepik River to the north-west.

At 1.35pm we passed through a taro garden on a ridge above the Sepik River and ten minutes later arrived at Bovaripmin. The grass in the village and local paths had been cut by the Bovaripmin people who immediately made us welcome. No West Mianmin could speak pidgin at that time,

so all our communication was through Interpreter Kuifam. Luluai Babaksep told us that he had heard of the raid. His information was that a Tabu River group called the Sanman had been raided by the Aki River group called Urapmin [the Aki and the Tabu Rivers are the main tributaries of the August River.]

Writer's Note: Additional information of which we were unaware during the 1966/7 patrol

As indicated in Chapter 19 It was the Urapmin who were the primary group with whom Ron Neville's Telefomin Patrols No 2/1956-7 and No 4/1956-57 were involved in the investigation of the Atbalmin massacre of 1956. The Urapmin were then located on the San and Uk tributaries of the Fak River. They were now located in the Aki tributary of the August River area far to the west. Anthropologist Don Gardner, who later studied the West Mianmin, was asked in 2014 if there was a reason why the Urapmin had moved westward to the Aki in the decade between 1956 and 1966. His email response included:

...Mian...moved around a great deal...there would be very few western Mian groups who had not moved quite a-ways between the mid-50s and mid-60s.

Dr. Gardner pointed out that the Urapmin know themselves as **Ulabten**, which is a miit name. As discussed earlier, as the early patrols used Telefomin interpreters, the Telefomin suffix "Min" [People] was applied to group names and was thereby entered in patrol reports and brought into common usage – just as the appropriate suffix in Oksapmin is "ap", in Mianmin it is "ten".

Most importantly, in November 1966 Mr. Try and I were unaware that the Urapmin now identified to us as the instigators of the raid against the Sanman, had also instigated the Atbalmin massacre and had clashed with Mr. Neville's patrol in 1956/7.

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We set up camp and purchased a large quantity of fresh vegetables, primarily taro, with salt. In the late afternoon it was discovered that medical orderly Anterapnok was missing. A police search located him fishing in the Sepik River. He was brought back to camp and reminded that although the Bovaripmin were friendly, this was restricted country and security procedures were to be followed. Radio contact was made with Telefomin and guards were posted for the night. Bovaripmin was 1,600 above sea level. [ASL]

Next morning the Luluai of Karenmin arrived with a group of his people from downstream. They brought with them a large pig to sell to the patrol for a tomahawk. He requested that he be allowed to kill the pig for us, which he did with a broad bamboo bladed arrow – three feet of which passed through the pig and was drawn back out by the Luluai before the pig knew it was dead and fell to the ground. This demonstration of Mianmin firepower certainly impressed me.

The Karenmin Luluai said he had heard of the raid in the Tabu valley, but claimed to know no details. We revised the census of Bovarimin and of those Karenmin people then visiting Bovaripmin. On the 28th November the patrol moved in a general northwesterly direction for five and a half hours to arrive at the Miak River Karenmin settlement. The country covered that day was extremely rugged and difficult as the patrol moved across the face of the Three Pinnacles Range, climbing down into and back out of the Nam and other river and creek valleys.

We set up camp on a site cleared for us by the Karenmin and purchased a large quantity of taro. At 4.15pm we made radio contact with both Telefomin and Green River. We were well pleased with the friendliness of the Karenmin people. Our camp site altitude was 3,800 feet ASL.



Above left - Boveripmin man with cassowary quills through his nose, and a pig tusk through his ear.



Above right - The presence of Boveripmin woman and children was a good sign for patrol security



Opposite - The man on the left is wearing pig penis arm bands, to demonstrate hunting prowess.

Corporal Ganim and Kuifam came to our tent and reported that the local talk was that there was a plan to attack the patrol when it entered the Aki valley. We asked that the man who gave them this information be brought in to be interviewed in the morning. It was also clear that news of our presence and the patrol's purpose had preceded us.

On 29th November a Sepik River Karenmin man was brought in by Kuifam. He told us that a month ago when he was in the Tabu valley he met with a Fiarimin warrior. The Fiarimin said that should a patrol come to investigate the Sanman issue, it would be attacked in rough country with arrows, or in camp with bone daggers and axes, when the Aki River people came in to sell vegetables.

We asked our Karenmin informant about the raid against the Sanman. It seems the raid may have been larger than we have understood to date. The new story was that a Sanman woman either went into the Sanman haus tambaran or broke some other serious haus tambaran taboo and as a result the Sanman taro crop failed. The story continued that the Sanman went into taro gardens in the Aki valley and were attacked there and a second attack occurred in the Tabu River tributaries.



We made radio contact with Telefomin and Imonda at 1.15pm and 4.15pm and passed news of the threat against the patrol. This information was passed to the DC by Telefomin in accordance with his request along with our plan to proceed with caution. A 200 yard length of 1/4" rope was requested for delivery in our first airdrop. We would use this as a security cordon around our camp sites to control people entering it.

On 30th November, with a Karenmin guide we climbed to the top of the Thurnwald Range at 7,400 feet ASL and descended into the Tabu River valley – **opposite**. In the early afternoon we reached the site of Mr. Wearne's Tabu River camp site. We set up camp there – 3,400 Feet ASL. In the afternoon several Tabu River Karenmin people came into camp to sell fresh foods. They claimed no knowledge of the raid against the Sanman. Conducted census - night guards posted.

After a wet night, with a Karenmin youth as our guide we crossed extremely rugged country south of the Tabu, crossing a tributary called the Sogura to reach a taro garden with Karenmin people present. After talking

with them we descended steeply via the Asano Creek which we followed to the Asano/Tabu junction and then followed the Tabu downstream in a westward direction. We crossed Wantem Creek and reached Mr. Weane's No 6 camp site at 1.35pm – rain all day. We set up camp and the radio and made contact with both Wutung patrol post and Telefomin. On 2nd December we continued downstream along the Tabu, crossing and re-crossing it at knee to neck depth. We passed Mr. Wearne's next camp site and kept going west until the Tabu River valley sides become so sheer to allow further safe travel. We cleared a camp site in the forest. There was some sunshine in the afternoon so we dried out our sodden patrol gear – no trace of the Kimiasomin people.

On 3rd December three Mianmin carriers volunteered to go and locate the Kimiasomin. They returned later in the day with two men, two women, a youth of about 14 years and a child in arms. These people claimed to be Urapmin people of the Tabu valley. They sold some fresh vegetables and were presented with gifts. They said the Sanman and Kimiasomin camp was south from the Tabu River, some distance back the way we had come - upstream from where we were camped. They would guide us there. We made radio contact with Telefomin, issued rations and posted night guards.



The friendly helpfulness of the Bovaripmin and Karenmin people we met south of the Three Pinnacles range turned to suspicion and distrust among the Karenmin and Kimiasomin people we met north of it. On 4th December we spent time building a bridge across the flooded Tabu River and crossing to the south [left] bank. Our attempts that morning to make radio contact with Telefomin were drowned out by an Indonesian station. Our guides led us back upstream for nearly two hours to reach a track from the Tabu River to Kimiasomin. After another two hours on this track we met a Kimiasomin man – **opposite** - who agreed to take us to his settlement.

Soon our destination was visible about a quarter of a mile away, across the deep gorge of the Sogolmok River, the crossing of which took us a full three hours. Our observation was that the Sogolmok River tributaries were vertical waterfalls rather than creeks. We visited three hamlets and set up camp at 4.10pm. While the Kimiasomin people we met seemed friendly and sold us a small amount of taro, we saw very few men of fighting age. Guards were posted and warned to be very alert. The Kimiasomin knew of the raid upon the Sanman and said that three people were killed and a further two abducted. Our camp that night was 3,200 feet ASL.

On 5th December our attempts to get the Kimiasomin to guide us to the Sanman camp met with statements of disappointment that we did not want to stay longer with them and declined to provide guides. We conducted census of the Kimiasomin present as well as some Tabu River Someimin. We were able to buy some fresh foods. Two Kimiasomin girls eventually agreed to go to the Sanman camp and returned to report it deserted with indications that the Sanman survivors had fled.

The girls were given a laplap each for their efforts and the Kimiasomin men were promised a tomahawk if they succeeded in bringing the Sanman survivors in. At the mention of reward, men quickly left on that mission. The patrol was now short of food, so work commenced on clearing an airdrop site. It was high in the mountains, and not a good site, but we did not want to leave this area as we knew the Sanman survivors were nearby. We informed Telefomin by radio to cancel the planned Piaggio flight in favor of a Cessna, which would better handle this drop site.

We learned more about the raid from a group of Kimiasomin men, visiting from the Sepik valley, and commenced compiling a list of Urapmin and Fiarimin men who had taken part. We purchased fresh foods and a pig. After careful explanation of the firepower of our rifles, the pig was shot in a demonstration. We emphasized our peaceful and lawful intentions, and explained that we wanted people to know what rifles could do in case someone decided to fight with the patrol. This

demonstration appeared to be well received. There also appeared to be some quiet anticipation that the Urapmin and Fiarimin might be taught a lesson, which of course was never our intention.

Mr. Clancy was on the radio that day and asked for an update of what was happening. After hearing this, he said that we should conduct a full police investigation at the scenes of the



crimes. Furthermore, with regard to proceeding from there into the Aki Valley in an effort to make arrests, he suggested that we proceed as planned and make a decision concerning the Aki valley strategies when the time comes. The clearing of the airdrop site by our carriers was popular as it would provide the Kimiasomin with a huge garden area – above - free of the huge task of clearing it. The clearing continued through the 6th of December and it became apparent that the spectacle of the airdrop was awaited with great anticipation by the Kimiasomin.

The 7th was the day of the airdrop. We radioed a weather report to Telefomin and allocated tasks to the police to keep the carriers and locals away from the drop site. Three fires were lit so the smoke would pinpoint the drop site and indicate wind direction.

The target was a plastic tent fly laid flat on the ground. There were two flights with fourteen bags dropped in each. We were able to recover all the bags and calculated a 15% loss as some bags hit the trees. As expected, the pilot was unimpressed with our selection of the air drop site.

Our Kimiasomin runners brought in two Sanman men, Balanka and Motubu, with their wives. We distributed presents and established good relations with these Sanman survivors. Discussions with them added detail to what we had already learned. It appeared that there had been two killing sites – one involving Sanman carrying taro shoots for planting and another involving a woman called Dosin and her children. Dosin was presumably the woman who was involved with the haus tambaran – see below - an event which the people believed caused the taro crop to fail.

Our discussions with the Sanman continued next day and Motubu agreed to go and bring the remaining Sanman people back to meet us tomorrow at the camp from which they had recently fled. It was said that some of the murder weapons were located there. We now believed that five Sanman people had been murdered. On the afternoon radio sked with Telefomin we asked for five exhumation orders. These were issued by B. McCabe J.P. in Vanimo. Balanka made the following statement :-

...Dosin stood and looked through the door of the Sanman haus tambaran. Women are strictly forbidden to have haus tambaran involvement. After Dosin looked in the door the taro did not grow as large as expected and pigs ruined a good deal of it. The failure of the crop was directly attributed to her. Habiap, Dosin's husband was away in the forest hunting pigs and spent the night away from home.

That night someone came to Dosin's isolated house and hit her with something crushing her right temple without breaking the skin. There were three people in the house at the time; two of Dosin's and one child of Habiap's second wife who had died. The latter child was a girl called Wiatemon. Habiap returned to the house to find Dosin and the infant dead, the latter died from lack of milk. The surviving daughter did not hear anything during the night. She had since died of a huge tropical ulcer which had left the leg bone bare. The other girl Wiatemon was missing [and at the time of my interview with Balanka, she was still missing, presumed abducted]

Balanka told how :-

The two dead were buried next morning. Next a Fiarimin man called Amokep met a Sanman woman called Nemangiang near the Tabu River and told her that he had the girl and was looking after her until she was old enough and then he would marry her. Amokep told Nemangiang that he had killed Dosin by sorcery because she had broken a sacred rule.¹

We tried [without success] to locate Nemangiang as her evidence would be vital.

On 9th December we broke camp and departed from Kimiasomin at 7.25am. We followed the Sogolmok River downstream to its junction with the Tabu, then followed the Tabu River downstream and crossed to the right or northern bank where we were led to a Sanman house. There were no people there, but our guides reassured us, so we set up camp and waited. At 6pm the guides came back accompanied by 17 Sanman survivors. Questioning of them established more of the facts and identified two more witnesses in Dosin's case. It was agreed that four witnesses would accompany the patrol

tomorrow to view the site where Dosin and her child died near the Haiagal River. The Sanman then retired to spend the night in their house and the patrol camp settled down with guards posted as usual.

We broke camp on 10th December only to discover that all 17 Sanman had fled during the night. Mr. Try and I did some soul searching – 17 days into the patrol and we were worse off than being back at square one. Our identified witnesses were gone and there was no chance of getting them back. What should we have done? Taken the witnesses into police custody? 20-20 hindsight logic suggested that the Sanman had assessed the chances of two kiaps and just a dozen police against the many warriors of the Aki valley and concluded that the Aki warriors would win. We also realized the Sanman would have been terrified of returning so close to the enemy to show us the sites of the murders. The patrol's collective bio-rhythms hit rock bottom.

We concluded that we needed to cross the Tabu/Sepik divide to the Sepik River Ivikmin group as they might be able to lead us to the Aki valley to try to make arrests and hopefully retrieve the Sanman witnesses on our return journey to Telefomin. With heavy hearts we followed the Tabu downstream then commenced the climb out of the Tabu valley.

That morning, at the front of the patrol, an incident occurred which seemed to be a turning point in our fortunes. I was trudging up the razor backed ridge with my head down deep in heavy thought when I heard Constable Yaregawa behind me crash to the ground shouting. In my mind's eye we were under attack and by sheer reflex I found myself diving for cover over the side of the ridge, unshouldering and working a cartridge into the chamber of my rifle while in midair – I was instantly ready for whatever was afoot.



‘Binatang kaikaim mi’ [a wasp stung me] said Yaregawa, with a huge grin on his face as he dragged me to my feet, picked up my hat and plonked it back on my head. Everyone thought it was extremely funny and the gloom that had hung over our party lifted. However it was not until 1.40pm when the patrol arrived at Ivikmin that we were certain our luck had changed. We were met by Luluai Yamsap, who was visibly happy to see us. His happy grin was all the more engaging as all his front teeth were missing - **opposite.**

When I asked the Ivikmin through Interpreter Kuifam if they had news of the Sanman, as soon as the words were translated into Mianmin, the Ivikmin looked around suspiciously as they hushed me to silence - saying that anyone could be listening! It was like a scene from a Keystone Cop's movie. Yamsap wanted to know if I had received the arrows he had sent in two months before. I told him we had received them and thanked him very much for doing that. Five more arrows were brought from the Ivikmin haus tambaran. Three had blood on them from two bodies and the other two arrows had missed their targets.

There were also Sanman people here; people other than the 17 who had fled the previous night. A teenage girl called Alanterap showed us two new arrow wounds in her back. When she and an elder called Hagauwenap were attacked, she fled and although two arrows hit her, she was able to pull them out as she ran. Hagauwenap was not so lucky and did not survive. Two other witnesses said the total Sanman death toll was nine.

We took the opportunity to examine the Ivikmin communal house. It was about the same size as the fortress style houses I had seen on the Sepik Strickland divide, except they were built lower to the ground and not with the same attention to defence. Inside the Ivikmin house, the central floor area was lower than a surrounding sleeping bench which had a dozen or so family hearths set into it.

Arrangements were made for the witnesses to be fed and accommodated in our camp with our Mianmin carriers. There was no way we would wake up the next day, as we had done that morning, to find our Sanman witnesses gone. They asked if they could sleep in the Ivikmin communal house and we agreed, provided that Kuifam spent the night with them. I placed the Sanman witnesses under his responsibility. We made radio contact with Telefomin and posted guards for the night. The Sepik River Ivikmin site was very tropical at 800 feet ASL. We spent 11th December there taking statements from the Sanman witnesses.

Our plan on the 12th December was to visit the sites of the murders and gather evidence. Yamsap made us aware that he wanted to accompany the patrol all the way back to Telefomin and we did nothing to discourage him. We set off at 7.15am following the Amaniam River upstream and reached the top of the Sepik/Tabu divide, then went down the other side to reach the Tabu River at 10.50am. We followed the Tabu River upstream for 45 minutes and then forded it to its right or north bank and the junction of the Guguma River.

We followed the Guguma upstream until we reached a camp site used by Mr. Wearne's patrol last year. We set up camp there as we could investigate the murder scenes from that point. As we were close to the Aki valley, we used the rope we received in the airdrop and set up a security cordon around our camp. It now became apparent that the Sanman witnesses were terrified at being so close to the Aki valley just over the next ridge, and the possibility that marauding Urapmin or Fiarimin warriors might appear at any moment and kill them.

Mr. Try and I discussed the situation – if this second lot of witnesses ran away as the first lot did, there would be no way for prosecutions to proceed. We agreed the best way to keep these witnesses available was to move them to Telefomin. Given that we were about to try to arrest the killers, we would not release any police to achieve this. South of the Sepik at Atbalmin police post Corporal Kusimnok, a senior policeman of Telefomin origin was stationed and was able to be contacted by radio. The plan was to instruct Kusimnok to leave Atbalmin and make his way to the Sepik River Ivikmin camp to escort the witnesses to Telefomin. If he left next morning, he should arrive at Ivikmin in the afternoon of 15th December. The patrol would release the Telefomin Interpreter Cess and Luluai Yamsap to deliver the witnesses to Ivikmin and then accompany them with Kusimnok to Telefomin.

As plans go its greatest risk was whether we could rely upon the authority of Luluai Yamsap to convince the witnesses to go all the way to Telefomin. We were very impressed with Yamsap's support and personal determination and we did not see that we had any viable alternate options. I called Kusimnok on the radio and gave him his instructions. We then discussed the plan with the witnesses, who despite communication difficulties left us with no doubt that they would willingly walk to Telefomin [or anywhere else for that matter], rather than go with us into the Aki valley. Although they were very keen to leave, first they had to identify the bodies for us. In the evening we set up a rope security cordon around our camp and set night guards.

On 13th December we followed the Guguma River upstream for two hours to the Guguma/Haiagal junction and 15 minutes later we were at a house on the bank of the Haiagal. The patrol carriers and some witnesses were left in the care of ten police while Mr. Try, two police, two witnesses and Kuifam



moved a further 150 yards upstream to where we found a headless skeleton identified to us as Hagauwenap. The skeleton was lying under a tree by the River.

It was difficult to believe that in just two months a body could deteriorate back to bare bones. We cleared sufficient vegetation from the site to allow enough light in to take photographs. I asked about the missing skull and was told that Hauagwenap's brother Beita with Wasei and Totirimap had moved Hagauwenap's body from the river bed and placed it on the bank where we found it. Beita removed three arrows from the body and collected two that had missed. These were the arrows sent by Yamsap up the Sepik to Telefomin. Later Beita returned to collect the skull and put it in the Sanman haus tambaran.

The bones – **opposite** - were still interspersed with many arrows that had transfixed Hagauwenap. With his body rotted away it was clear where each arrow had gone. We removed each and labelled it after noting its location on our sketch of the skeleton. We ended up with seventeen arrows labelled arrows, two of which were so firmly embedded in vertebra that the vertebra came away with the arrows as evidence for later presentation in the Supreme Court.

The patrol then climbed the ridge between the Haiagal and Guguma Rivers and descended to the Guguma and set up camp there. Mr. Try and I then went with two police, the witnesses and Kuifam



to view the body of a youth called Bogonga. This entailed a climb through a very steep and overgrown old garden area. Bogonga had been given a traditional "burial" by being placed on a platform in the branches of a tree to decompose - **below**.

His skull should then have been removed to the haus tambaran, but in Bogonga's case the burial platform was too close to the Aki valley and people were fearful of being found there and killed.

We presumed our exhumation orders covered traditional burials so we had the platform lifted down out of the tree like a stretcher and examined what was left of Bogonga's body, which unlike Hagauwenap's still contained sufficient organic matter to feed an active colony of ants. We were unable to find any evidence of what might have killed Bogonga; there were no arrow among his bones on the burial platform. Pusap of Sanman said that he heard Bogonga cry out, but did not actually see him shot. He removed two arrows from his body and helped Bogonga's father, Dekobop, put the body on the platform in the tree.² We found one broken arrow in

an adjacent ruined house and assumed it was one of those removed from Bogonga's body by Pusap. We returned to camp for the night.

There was a long police statement made by Balanka, one of the 17 Sanman who fled on 9th December. Initially we placed a lot of importance on it, but subsequent evidence from other Sanman made us discount the statement. Balanka claimed for instance that Bogonga was transfixed by a single arrow which came out his back and that he, Balanka put him on the burial platform with the arrow still embedded in the body.

On the 14th December heavy rain set in and when it eased Mr. Try, four police, the witnesses, interpreter and I left the camp and walked over rugged country for 70 minutes in an easterly direction to a bush house where the woman Warimap/Sobwi described the circumstances of the deaths of her family in the following words:

*'We went down to collect taro from Urapmin where Hengafei took us to two gardens to collect. We returned to our houses on the Guguma River and slept there. I went to the bush very early next morning to find insects for food. I left my husband and two children behind at the camp. I returned late in the afternoon to find my husband Houtap and children [girls] Terereng and Menfanganing dead; all three had arrows in them. I took the arrows out of the bodies and placed them next to the body of my husband. I placed tree bark over the bodies and went to the house of Bwatamap on the middle Guguma River. I then moved to the head of the Abua River with some other Sanman people.'*³

The bush house Warimap showed to us was an open structure on the ground and of the bodies we found only scattered bones. It seems that wild pigs had rooted up the earthen floor and devoured the bodies. While Warimap claimed that her husband and two children had been killed, we found only two skulls. Warimap then admitted that the second child Menfanganing was missing presumed abducted. We later heard this girl was being held at Fiarimin. A thorough search of the site produced fourteen broken arrows. We took photographs and sketched the site.

We did not see where Dosin and her child had died. There was a growing sense of urgency among the Sanman witnesses; they wanted to get as far away from this place as possible and as soon as they could. We made our way back to our camp, where we prepared for the departure of the party accompanying the witnesses. The party consisted of the Sanman witnesses, Luluai Yamsap and five Ivikmin men, Interpreter Cess, as well as ten Telefomin and Mianmin carriers who we were repatriating, and who carried sufficient rations to get the whole party to Telefomin. There was also a temporary police escort of eight men.

The party left at 11am. The eight police were instructed to stay with the party until 2pm, by which time they should be out of the danger zone; to see the party on its way to Ivikmin and then return to our camp. Mr. Try and I reviewed our current situation, the main points of which were :-

1. We were in breach of our instructions, having split the patrol when instructed not to, but with a successful outcome in mind, we did not see any alternative. The four remaining police were under instruction to remain alert. Mr. Try and I were also armed and watchful. We set our remaining carriers to work clearing the bush back from our rope cordon far enough that any Mianmin archer who approached would be seen before he was within effective arrow range.
2. We would soon need another airdrop of rations. We learned by radio that Mandated Airlines chief pilot Frank Smith said the latest day before Christmas than an airdrop would be flown was 23rd December. We had sufficient food to last until then.
3. The list of wanted men we compiled from witness statements now contained 99 names. On one hand we expected there were some duplications, but on the other it was clear that we needed to detain every Urapmin, Fiarimin and Someimin men we could, in order to establish whether each person was involved or not. It was also clear that the number of wanted men far outnumbered the armed men of our patrol.

4. We believed that at last we had a clear idea of what the raid on the Sanman was about:

- a. The Sanman believed that the cause of the failure of their taro crop was because the serious taboo that was broken when the woman Dosin stood and looked into the Sanman haus tambaran.
- b. There had been two raids against the Sanman; the first raid which killed Dosin and her child occurred well before the second in which Hagauwenap and at least three others died. Pusap of Sanman explained:

There were accusations that Mintimap, a man of the Someimin group was killed by Sanman sorcery. All Someimin warriors except Toma along with some Fiarimin men took part in this raid that killed Dosin. Pusap heard from Dosin's husband Habiap that his wife was killed by Antirap of Someimin⁴

- c. The death of Dosin and the passing of time after that event made the Sanman people believe their fortunes had changed and that with the alleged perpetrator of the failure of the taro crop dead, they were free to plant a new taro crop if only they had the necessary taro shoots.

A rumour also circulated that Dosin had to die, but the Sanman people being unable to do it themselves, invited the Someimin to come and kill her. Not surprisingly we were unable to find hard evidence of this. The Sanman were unlikely to admit to such a thing, neither would the Someimin if we ever caught them.

- d. With Urapmin approval, eight Sanman men; Balanka, Magosinap, Nanom, Houtap, Hagauwenap, Bwatamap, Motubu and Afai, and some women went to Urapmin to obtain taro shoots to replant their gardens. On their way there they saw a large pig. Their aim was true and the pig fell to their arrows. This was taken as an additional good omen for their future. They obtained their taro shoots and returned home to the Guguma and Haiagal River areas where they spent the night consumed the pig. The following morning when they took the taro shoots to plant them, they were ambushed by the Urapmin and Fiarimin raiding party; the same people who just the day before had provided the taro shoots.
- e. The Urapmin stated that the pig killed and consumed by the Sanman was not wild but a domesticated pig of theirs and for this reason they called in the Fiarimin and attacked the Sanman. While we suspected there were reasons other than this, communication was poor and the circumstances of the time and place did not facilitate deep anthropological research.
- f. The Sanman deaths for which the Sanman witnesses accounted at the murder scenes were:-

On the first raid:

- i. **Dosin/Daskib** and her child **Aninap/Babiap** and the girl **Wiatem** abducted

On the second raid:

- ii. **Hagauwenap/Neimina** – an elderly man:
- iii. **Bogonga/Emai** – a teenage male
- iv. **Houtap/Debemin, Terereng/Houtap** a female child and the girl **Menfangining** abducted.

The two abducted females were apparently considered to be among the dead and were counted as such.

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The eight escort police returned to camp without incident at 5pm on the 14th December. They reported that they had left the witness party safely inside the Ivikmin land boundary. We issued rations and posted night guards. On 15th December we broke camp and departed at 7.10am and followed a ridge line to the crest of the Guguma/Aki Divide where we arrived at 8.00am. From there the patrol proceeded cautiously through old gardens and a deserted hamlet until people were heard in the bush ahead. With Mr. Try, eight police and Kuifam we went to investigate, only to hear a man's voice shout from behind us. The translation was that he had found the tracks of many people. Assuming that the Urapmin settlement was close, we returned to the main party and followed a maze of tracks through old abandoned gardens in heavy rain.

We came upon a house and held two men who were attempting to flee. Both their names were on our "wanted list". Two more men and a youth were surprised to stumble upon the patrol and were held - they too were on our list. When asked, they said Luluai Fanap of Urapmin was at the nearby communal "singing" house. We went there and found the building deserted. It was a similar building to the one we saw at Ivikmin. This one had 18 family hearths spaced out along the sleeping benches.

The patrol returned via the first two houses mentioned and a large taro garden, to an easily defensible camp site, where we set up camp and the radio. The youth we detained was sent to locate Luluai Fanap and after some time returned with him. Soon after a further ten men came into the camp site and were held after a scuffle that occurred as soon as the Sanman raid was mentioned. All 14 men arrested were restrained with handcuffs and had the charges explained to them, along with a formal caution which was also explained. The wives of these men sat with them and they agreed to go and fetch fresh foods to sell.

We set about securing the camp site as best we could and placed the rope cordon around it. Late in the afternoon we heard voices. Kuifam called back to them, but as expected no one approached. We made radio contact with Telefomin and then the patrol settled for the night with guards posted.

Writers Note: Something important that we did not know at the time. Being unaware that this was the same Urapmin group that instigated the Atbalmin massacre from East Mianmin in 1956, we had no idea that Kuifam must have recognised Urapmin elders and been recognized by them as one of the killers of the Atbalmin people, and one of their number who was convicted and spent time with them in gaol in Wewak. Certainly Kuifam said or did anything to enlighten us. If asked to judge our interpreter's performance, I would have said that he was quiet, reliable and neutral.

On the 16th we addressed our prisoners, repeating the caution and asked if anyone wished to make a statement concerning the Sanman raid and killings. Four men indicated that they did. Deitenip, Wikaieme, Meninap and Ianowara made confessional statements.

As it was evident that every adult male in the Aki valley would probably be charged if we were able to arrest them, and while in all probability they might confess to the killings, we needed additional evidence. Confessional statements may become inadmissible for any number of reasons. Therefore, I went to the Urapmin communal house with a police escort and Kuifam and met with the Urapmin women there. I explained that we would be taking their men to Telefomin to go to court and I needed one of more women to come with us and explain to the court what happened on the night before the raid and the morning after it. We needed evidence of who was involved, what they said before they went and after they came back. I did not expect success in this, but I had to ask, if only so that in my evidence to the court I could demonstrate that I had made the effort.

To my surprise one lady immediately responded. Her name was Wenkriema, the wife of Naifurap, one of the men we had arrested. She said she would come and she would tell. Her police statement reads as follows :-

I was in the haus singsing when the raid occurred on the Sanman people. The raiders slept in this house the night before the raid. I came and slept in a house nearby and I was on the verandah and I saw them leave.

I saw Yanowara, Bitenumap, Nifiam, Meminap, Sendimap, Henḡap, Timbarimap, Kemebinap, Deitenip, Wagalisap, Yewinap, Komeginap, Yarotirimap and Biromap of Urampin and I saw Wiribip, Kebirimap, Magalimap, Wiridurup, Nimerumap, Magalimap, Gomo, Tongwinip, Samai, Sisenga, Wagonip, Yewei, Tawap, Iweremap, Basañia and Masa all of Fiarimin. I saw all these Fiarimin men in the haus singsing on the night before the raid and I saw them leave with the party in the morning.

I heard no talk of the raid in the haus singsing as I am not a man. I heard about the raid after it was over. [Also] I knew they had gone to fight because on the morning they left a lad called Nanigin/Sabaringap who called out that the line was going to the Guguma River to fight. I saw that Nanigin did not go with them. I was with Nimirara, the wife of Fanap. Fanap did not go with the party. Others who I did not see did not go either. The raiding party all left at once, none left earlier or later. I think the reason for the trouble was over a pig.

We brought Wenkriema to our camp and placed her in the care of her husband. The next day, the 17th December, we spoke to Luluai Fanap about the layout of the Fiarimin settlements which were nearby and upstream along the Aki River to the east of Urampin. That was where we would go next, seeking to make more arrests. Further confessional statements were taken. An amount of fresh foods was purchased from Urampin women.

The patrol plan was to follow the Aki to its headwaters and then cross into the Fiak River, a tributary of the May River – making whatever arrests we could as we went. From Mawaimin on the Fiak the prisoners would be sent to Telefomin under police escort. Mawaimin was as close as we would



come to Telefomin – three days walk. When Wenkriema heard we were about to depart, she went to her garden and harvested a large quantity of taro, which she believed would be enough to feed herself and her husband on this journey. We of course were rationing the prisoners, but this lady was very determined not to be dissuaded from what she saw as her duty.

18th December 1966

The patrol moved off with light rain falling. An hour later the Aki River was reached and some

hours were spent felling trees to try to bridge it. As a large Fiarimin communal house was said to be close by, a line was secured across the Aki River – **above** - and Mr. Try, myself, a strong police party and interpreter forded it to the other bank, holding the line for support. As soon as it became evident the house was further away than expected, Constable Yaregawa was sent back to bring the patrol across

the river to join us. However Yaregawa had no sooner crossed when the river abruptly rose five feet, cutting the patrol in two.

Luluai Fanap was with us and led us to a large garden with a communal house - there he managed to bolt free of the two police who were supposed to keep him secure. Heavy rain continued as we cautiously established that the communal house was deserted. In the afternoon we heard voices calling out from further up the valley, but we saw no one. We helped ourselves to taro and plantains from the Fiarimin garden and settled for the night, cooking our stolen food at the family heaths in the communal house. Guards were posted.



but we saw no one. We helped ourselves to taro and plantains from the Fiarimin garden and settled for the night, cooking our stolen food at the family heaths in the communal house. Guards were posted.

Opposite - *An ancestral skull rested above the fireplace Mr. Try and I shared.*

19th December 1966

We set off with great caution at 6.20am and arrived at the Aki River 55 minutes later. We saw a cane suspension bridge dragging in the current on the Urapmin bank; it had

recently been cut on the Fiarimin side. The flood had subsided and the patrol crossed to join us on the Fiarimin side. Upon returning to the communal house we found the tracks of three adults who had evidently checked the house after we left. Mr. Try, myself and eight police tracked the three and arrested two Fiarimin men in a taro garden. The patrol moved up and camp was made on a steep, defensible bluff.

20th December

A police scouting party was sent out in the early morning and returned in the late afternoon without seeing anyone, but they saw tracks of many people moving east.

21st December

A very tough and unsuccessful day was spent in the Ongwida and Samal valleys seeking the elusive Fiarimin people. We did not even find fresh tracks. We camped by the Samal River.



22nd December

We broke camp and moved south-west for two hours and 20 minutes to arrive at an old deserted² communal house – **opposite** - with a small haus tambaran – **below left**.

This site was suitable for the airdrop, so we set up camp and set the carriers to clearing the drop site. We inspected the haus tambaran and found that it contained 23 human

² Note the many stones in the foreground. These are used for cooking in the ground [Mumu in Pidgin English]

skulls and numerous other bones – some of the cassowary bones had white marks painted on them – **below right.**



23rd December 1966

The 23rd was the last day before Christmas that an airdrop could be flown, so we declared it as Christmas day in West Mianmin. In anticipation that the patrol would be still in the field on Christmas day, Mr. Try had packed a bottle of champagne. In order that it could be properly chilled we arranged for every freezer in Telefomin to make ice to be dropped to us. Even the Baptist missionaries, who disapproved of alcohol, did their part, although they may not have been told why we needed the ice.

The Cessna came in low and conducted the drop to perfection. We calculated a 100% recovery. The only damaged goods were six tins of meat which split, but they were not lost as they were issued immediately. The champagne was put on ice and the opening of the mail revealed Christmas cake, plum pudding and other sweets. Christmas was celebrated until the last of the ice melted with champagne consumed from enamel mugs! Our last 100 pounds of rice that had been carried in copra bags during regular rain since our Kimiasomin airdrop was discarded as inedible.

24th December

It rained all night and throughout the 24th. The prisoners were asked about some houses Mr. Mitchell saw while conducting the airdrop. In the late afternoon we saw smoke rising from the headwaters of the Samal River.

25th December

The patrol camp was left in place while a strong party retraced our steps into the Samal River area. The party passed the camp site of 21st December and at 10am descended into the area where the smoke was seen. Three men were detained and some fresh tracks were followed before the party returned to camp.

26th December

A group of our East Mianmin carriers were sent ahead to Mawaimin to forewarn them of the patrol's arrival in a day or so, and for them to hold any Fiarimin people who may be in their area. Two

pigs were purchased from one of the Fiarimin men detained after he expressed a wish to sell them. The opportunity was taken to give a fire power demonstration. The prisoners seemed more horrified by the

noise of the .303 than by the death of the pig – **opposite.**

27th December

There was driving wind and rain for six hours from 4am, which delayed the patrol's departure until 11.10am and continued east until 2pm when camp was made next to Eregamten Creek.

28th December

Broke camp and departed at 7.10am and travelled through very broken country until 1.55pm when the top of the Aki/Fiak divide was reached. On



a larger scale, it was the divide between the August and May River systems. From this point, passing clouds and showers permitting, we had a good view of Mt Kasa. It was a long, exhausting and wet walk to Mawaimin. We were pleased to receive word over the radio that the witness party we sent in with Corporal Kusimnok, Cess and Luluai Yamsap had arrived safely in Telefomin.

29th December

Today was a rest and recuperation day, and the Mawaimin people made the patrol very welcome. A large quantity of taro was traded along with a pig, which the owner dispatched for us with a well-aimed arrow - **below.** Medical Orderly Anterapnok and a number of our carriers are ill and received treatment, with the aid of Constable Yaregawa, who had some medical training.



By radio communication with Telefomin and indirectly with Vanimo, the District Commissioner approved our plan of sending our prisoners, witness, the unwell Medical Orderly and ten carriers back to Telefomin under the protection of two of our police. Mr. Try and myself took the opportunity to examine the Mawaimin haus tambaran, which contained 19 human skulls plus pig and cassowary bones.

30th December 1966

At 7.40am two parties left Mawaimin. The prisoners under escort went south-east towards Telefomin, and the remainder of the patrol moved west to retrace the steps of 28th into the Aki valley, to seek more arrests and witnesses. Our journey westward down the Aki valley found little

evidence of the Fiarimin or Urapmin people; some fresh taro shoots, two bows and a dozen arrows were found in a Samal valley garden on 1st January. The most recent tracks suggest

that the [left] May River headwaters, to our north, may be where they have gone. No smoke was seen to indicate that the people we seek are anywhere in the Fiarmin or Urapmin areas.

On the afternoon of the 2nd January, a track was found that crossed over a ridge leading north-west from the Ongwinga River, which was a tributary that joined the Aki from the north. With no better options available to us, we decided to go that way next day. We were still generally following the Aki valley downstream to the west. Meanwhile, constant rain over recent days necessitated our spreading our damp rice on a tent fly to dry when the sun decided to shine for a few hours.

3rd January 1967

After breaking camp, we crossed the Ongwinga River and climbed steadily for an hour until the crest of the Ongwinga/Einam divide was reached at 9.15am. Nearby in the Einam valley we found several deserted bush houses, one of which contained 15 arrows. Indications were that about a week earlier, a large group of people had moved along the track towards the north-west. Soon after, we found another deserted house with a single human skull in it. From this point the track turned westward and two hours walking brought us to the bank of the Einam River. On the opposite bank there was no sign of a track, presumably the creek bed was the track, but which way – upstream or downstream? We camped on the river bank for the night while search parties sought the track. The only track found led towards Urapmin where we made the arrests on 15th December.

4th January

The patrol followed the track towards Urapmin. Beside the track we saw a monument or shrine which consisted of a dozen elongated stones, each about 15 inches long and 4 inches wide embedded in a mound of earth [photo overleaf]. With no local people available we were unable to ask what it was. The shrine, if that was what it was, was overgrown. I paused only long enough to take a photo – belatedly I wished I had taken the time to clear the vegetation to get a better photograph - **opposite**.



By mid afternoon we reached an abandoned hamlet overlooking the Aki River opposite the Urapmin area. We made camp there for the night.

5th January The patrol forded the Aki River at chest depth with the aid of a hand rope. We set up camp next to the Urapmin dance house. Scouting parties encountered two men who evaded capture. Fresh tracks were found indicating a large group of people had moved north-west downstream.

6th January The patrol followed the track down stream until it brought us to a cane suspension bridge immediately opposite where the Totema River flows into the Aki. The whole patrol was safely across to the north bank by 9.20am. The tracks from the bridge led along the Totema River until all signs of tracks were abruptly lost.

When our searches failed to find fresh tracks, I decided the patrol would cut a path westward, on a compass bearing of 270 degrees. The logic was that sooner or later this direction would bring us back out on the banks of the Aki River which we knew flowed north westward in that area. We had passed out of the Restricted Area into the August River division of the Amanab sub district - not far from where my Green River patrol took me to the top of Mt. Blue three years before [Chapter 33]. Our expectations of catching more people were diminishing as we left the Mianmin area behind us. Also the element of surprise was gone and we were no match for people seeking to evade us in their own country.

Heading westward led us up the rain forest clad face of the Aki/Totema divide. Upon reaching the top, fresh taro leaves were found and very fresh tracks led along the ridge. Then a dog was heard barking up ahead. A few hundred metres up the track we found eight newly constructed bush shelters. Rustling in the bush nearby at first made us think of an ambush, but it proved to be three domesticated pigs, livestock of the residents.

Of the residents the only sign were three sets of tracks going in separate direction. Our approach had apparently been detected and the people had fled. We quickly hid our patrol gear in the bush and the patrol was divided into three groups to follow the three sets of tracks.

Mr. Try's party, which followed the crest of the ridge came upon a man standing guard on a rise overlooking the track. As soon as the man saw Constable Maregori, who was Mr. Try's tracker, he fired an arrow which narrowly missed Maregori's ear. Almost in the same action of firing the arrow, the man was over the side of the ridge and gone. Soon afterwards Constable Yaregawa heard voices up ahead. The guard had called no warning, leaving four of his fellows sitting around a cooking fire. Three of these four were held and the fourth escaped.

That afternoon we conducted a relayed radio discussion with District Commissioner Clancy. He was pleased with our progress to date with the arrests of 21 men. He suggested that perhaps it was time for the patrol to commence its journey back to Telefomin. While one does not argue with one's DC, I suggested we should remain a little longer to try to free two abducted Sanman girls, investigate the Someimin raid and view Sanman remains we had not yet seen. I heard Mr. Clancy say "*I got most of that...*" which I took as reluctant agreement.

Writer's Note:

Although not a major confrontation, the firing of the arrow above constituted an attack on our patrol. I realized that although West Mianmin area was still classified as "restricted" they were not showing the aggression that Messrs. West and Booth encountered in 1956-57. It was apparent that the tactics shown by those officers had done much to pacify the Mianmin. The tactics of the earlier patrol and ours a decade later were the same. Both patrols were conducting legal investigations and each patrol was lawfully required to defend itself to the extent of the minimum force necessary to achieve its objectives.

The Mianmin aggression and sense of their all-conquering past record saw them lose three dead in conflicts with the 1956-7 patrol. This serious lesson learned by the Mianmin seemed to have resulted in far less aggression against our patrol a decade later. Fortunately we were not required to use 'force', i.e. the use of firearms.

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We took an airdrop on a site we cleared on the crest of the Aki/Tabu Divide. As some of our carrier line were unwell, we decided to build a raft to carry the sickest to the Aki/Tabu junction as the Aki River appeared placid at that point.

However around the next bend the Aki transformed itself from a placid stream to treacherous rapids. There was also another hazard – a large communal house with extensive gardens was sighted on the left bank downstream. Discussion with our new prisoners revealed this house belonged to the Serawania people, a different language group to the Mianmin. The house proved to be deserted.

13th January 1967

Rather than continuing with rafting, we made a stretcher to carry our sickest carrier. The patrol arrived at the junction of the Aki and Tabu Rivers after a four hour walk. We were now in much flatter

country. The immediate river junction area appeared to offer a potential airstrip site. This could be the site of a new patrol post to administer the August River, West Mianmin and Atbalmin as well as the southern portion of the Indonesian border. We decided to stay a few days and survey the site.

From the 14th to 18th January 1967, our survey revealed the potential for an airstrip of 2,100 feet by 200 feet on this site. Also immediately to the east of the airstrip site was an area of higher ground that could be the site for the patrol post buildings.

On the 15th we saw a group of people on the opposite bank of the Aki River. Kuifam found that he could talk to them with difficulty. They were Serawania people of the Blimo language group, some members of which PO Noel Cavanagh contacted from Green River in 1961, as did Bernie Mulcahy in 1965. They told us there was another “Kiap” camped downstream on the August River. If it had been a kiap we would have known; it had to be someone else and we needed to check his authority if he had been in the Restricted Area. We were concerned that it could be an Indonesian officer from Kiwirok,



which we understood to be not too far over the border. A coin toss decided that I would go to investigate while Mr. Try remained with the patrol at the river junction putting finishing touches to a bridge we were building across the Tabu River to ensure we could cross when we departed from there.

I selected five police, a couple of carriers, two Serawania lads and Kuifam. We forded the Tabu River at chest depth and headed down stream. We followed the section of the August where the Ward Williams expedition landed their amphibian in January 1937, and not being aware that the river was already named the “August”, named it the January River.

After two and a half hours walking we arrived at two houses where we met six people who were identified to us as Bubriari, a group that speaks the same language as the Serawania. Without being overtly unfriendly, they gave us a cool reception. The visitor had slept with them the previous evening and that morning had rafted down the August River. We established later that he was from the CMMML mission at Green River. We arrived back at our river junction camp as darkness fell. I paid the Serewania guides with a small mirror and a box of matches. They seemed well pleased.

17th January 1967

Our camp was visited today by people from Serawania, Bubriari and Ivikmin No 2. Each group brought in food to trade. The Serewania leader Itrubei/Naliabei [pictured on previous page] was an impressive fellow. I appointed him as provisional³ Luluai, gave him his badge and explained what his duties entailed.

18th January

On the afternoon radio sked with Telefomin we learned that six of our Mianmin prisoners had escaped from Telefomin gaol. Two were recaptured immediately at the local airstrip, and a further two at Sepkialikmin. The last two had got clean away. This news saddened the patrol police in particular.

³ The appointment would have to go before the Director DDS&NA for final approval

At midnight the police guards awoke Mr. Try and I⁴, to say that both the Aki and Tabu Rivers water levels were rising fast and the camp was in danger and that most of the carriers had made for higher ground. We stepped from our beds into 18 inches of cold flowing water. We secured patrol boxes which were floating by this stage with a rope and then made our way through darkness and driving rain, wading in knee to waist deep water. The higher ground was on the other side of the airstrip clearing, so we met many underwater branches and tree trunks as we moved blindly forward.

After 45 minutes of wading we were re-united with the rest of the patrol members. We asked if everyone was accounted for and were mildly surprised when answered that as well as could be established no one was missing. A miracle! And then another miracle – in the midst of all this wetness someone got a roaring bon-fire going. This not only provided light and warmth, but raised morale and the stories started being aired. One of our more elderly carriers was awakened by water creeping into his sleeping place. He took his walking stick and hit the water as if to drive it back. The water responded to the blow by splashing into his eyes. He dashed off in the direction of the higher ground



19th January

At 4am the flood water commenced receding. This allowed Mr. Try and myself to return to our camp to survey the damage at dawn. The floodwaters had risen 15 feet above the average river level we had experienced since camping at the junction, and had passed through our camp at an average three feet deep. The whole camp site was covered with a four-inch depth of very fine black silty mud. As we had a big day ahead we settled down for two hours sleep. At 9.00am we broke camp. Fortunately the flood had not taken our newly constructed

cane suspension bridge across the Tabu River. By 10.20am we had the whole patrol across. I stepped the bridge out at 270 feet of suspended cane - above.

At this point we discovered that there were two Ivikmin groups. Yamsap's group we called Ivikmin No 1. Ivikmin No 2, downstream of Ivikmin No 1, was our immediate destination. The route to it took us downstream along the August River to a point where we could cross over a ridgeline to the Sepik River, which we could follow up stream.

At about an hour after noon we reached the junction of the August and Oroka Rivers and there we made camp. The afternoon was sunny for a change so we took the opportunity to lay out our patrol equipment to dry. While this was happening Mr. Try and I examined another possible airstrip site, but we dismissed it as it was also covered with last nights' fine black mud; proof that this one too was subject to flooding.

We were very lucky indeed that lives were not lost in the midnight flood of the 18th, particularly as most of our carriers were not swimmers. As if to re-emphasize a bush spirit warning that the patrol should be on its way, high winds and a violent electrical storm erupted over our camp on the night of the 19th. A very heavy tree branch was blown from above and speared through the police tent – demolishing it in the darkness of that terrible night. Again, miraculously, no one was injured.

⁴ Constable Maregori later re-enacted this moment for other patrol members. Maregori claimed that we in unison in identical deadpan voices... "Shit!"

20th January 1967

The patrol route followed the Oroka River upstream to the south-east for two hours, followed by a steady climb to the crest of the August/Sepik divide. Fifteen minutes later we arrived at a dance house high on the ridge overlooking the Sepik River immediately opposite where the Din River enters it from the south. The Ivikmin inhabitants asked us to stay the night so we set up camp between two large taro gardens. The initial census of Ivikmin No 2 was conducted and their leader Ambet was provisionally appointed as Luluai.

21st January

Five hours walk upstream along the Sepik River brought the patrol to Ivikmin No 1. A decision had to be made. Telefomin and home lay a week's walk up the Sepik to the south east, or the patrol could go back into the Tabu and Aki River areas to pursue the Someimin killers of Dosin and her child. This task could take weeks, even months, and our chances of success were poor with the element of surprise no longer with us. I decided that patrol actions over the last couple of months would be a good lesson to the Someimin. When I announced the decision to go home, I received a standing ovation from the patrol personnel. It had been a hard patrol and our people had had enough.

The journey up river was uneventful and the patrol arrived in Telefomin on the 28th of January, early enough in the day that most of the patrol carriers after being paid could make their way home and be there before nightfall. We had been in the field for 64 days.

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Post Script - As always with a patrol like this, one there were loose ends to be tied off.

Loose end 1. Should the patrol have stayed in the field and pursued the Someimin?

I raised this question in Telefomin patrol report 3/1966/67 on page 4 Para 21 as follows :-

In consideration of the lack of action against the Someimin people it should be realized that this was only the second patrol into this Restricted Area⁵ and was the first that many individual people had seen. These people are extremely primitive. In the interests of the future administration of this area it would be wise to overlook this raid [i.e. the Someimin part of the action against the Sanman]. Unless a massive force of police is used, only a small portion of this raiding party will be captured and the net result of the patrol will be to alienate the Someimin people from the Administration. The present patrol will be a good warning to them, and should dissuade any further fighting in the area.

The District Commissioner's comments on this patrol report – reference 67-2-7 of 14th April 1967 stated in part :-

I support the recommendation that action in the first raid, alleged to have been perpetuated by the Someimin group, should be limited to a strict warning against any further lawlessness, in the interests of settling the people down again. The current arrests will have the effect of showing the people the power of the Administration and it is felt that it should not be long before our control should be effective over the area

⁵ We have since learned that there were at least three other visits by outsiders to parts of the West Mianmin. In 1937 the Ward Williams exploration party was landed on the August River and prospected their way up to the Aki River and over the divide into the May River fall. Messrs Booth and Conroy patrolled part of the Tabu River system during their part of Telefomin patrol No 4/1956-57. The writer did not see this report until 2014. Mr. Booth's report mentioned a 1955 petroleum survey party who contacted the Ivikmin people in 1955. This was presumably the APC party led by S.V. Sykes, who conducted a survey in the Telefomin area in 1954

Loose end 2. Concerning the Mianmin escapes from Telefomin gaol.

2nd February 1967: L. Bragge Field Officer's Journal entry: A Police orderly room hearing was conducted for Constables Bisambi and Gomba, who were on duty at Telefomin gaol when the Urapmin murder suspects escaped. I do not recall what penalty I imposed, but it was probably the forfeiture of a fortnight's pay each. The record of that decision would have gone onto each of their personal files, and would have been taken into account when promotions were being considered in the future.

Loose end 3. A plea from West Mianmin.

28th February 1967: L. Bragge Field Officer's Journal entry: Word was received from Mawaimin in East Mianmin. Five days ago a large group of Urapmin and Fiarimin people visited Mawaimin bringing a pig and two young women. They gave the pig as a present to the Mawaimin and presented the girls as spouses to Mawaimin men with no bride price or related reciprocal expectations.

In return they wanted the Mawaimin to go to Telefomin to ask the kiap to release their men currently held in the Telefomin gaol.⁵ It was explained to the Mawaimin messengers, that sadly this could not be done until due process of the Supreme Court decided the fate of the alleged killers, a topic that is discussed in the next chapter.

Loose end 4. A pregnancy with far reaching consequences.

On a date that I neglected to record, Baptist Mission infant maternal welfare sister Wemben came to my office and asked if the "woman in the gaol" [Wenkriema] could be released into their care and allowed to live at the hospital as she was expecting a baby. I asked Wemben how the Telefomin staff at the hospital expected to communicate with Wenkriema as she spoke only the Mianmin language – Wemben replied "*We'll get by.*" Wenkriema was too important to our case, so she remained in the care of her husband in the gaol. I did allow gaol visits by the nurses who monitored the progress of Wenkriema's pregnancy. Then one midnight there was loud knocking at my door... could I bring the Land Rover to the gaol to take Wenkriema to the hospital? It was her time. Wenkriema's story is continued in the next chapter.

Loose end 4. The de-restriction of the West Mianmin area.

As indicated during this Chapter, the Mianmin were rapidly coming under Administration influence and so I recommended that the area should be de-restricted. On 11th March 1971, by notice in the Government Gazette, the last two remaining Restricted Areas in PNG were de-restricted. These were the West Mianmin and the North Hewa.

End Notes Chapter 38

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 15 diary 9th December 1966.

² Pusap's police statement - Patrol notebook files with Telefomin Patrol Report No 3/1966-67 in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 2.

³ Patrol notebook files with Telefomin Patrol Report No 3/1966-67 in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 2.

⁴ Pusap's police statement - Patrol notebook files with Telefomin Patrol Report No 3/1966-67 in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 2.

⁵ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 15 – diary entry 28th February 1967

Sepik 4 Chapter 39 The Threat of Tribal War in Oksapmin –

The Supreme Court Trial, and Making Peace With the Mianmin.

1. The Threat of Tribal War in Oksapmin.

Just five days after returning from the West Mianmin patrol – see previous chapter - on 3rd February 1967, Mr. Keith Bricknell of the Baptist mission at Tekin in the Oksapmin area called to say that trouble was brewing between the Bimin and Tekap communities in the Oksapmin area.

A number of Bimin warriors had moved into the Tekin valley with the stated intention of killing a sorcerer from Tekmin who was accused of killing a man from Bimin. Both groups were reported to be edgy and Mr Bricknell expected tribal fighting to commence unless quick action was taken.

The headman of the Bimin had visited Tekin mission and requested that I come from Telefomin to sort out the problem. I asked Mr Bricknell to try to keep the headman at the mission and to get word to Oksapmin for the police to come and try to keep the Bimin from attacking Tekmin, at least for a couple of days. I sent a coded telegram to the DC. Poor weather had prevented aircraft movements in the Telefomin/Oksapmin area for some days, so I proposed that I would make an overland dash to arrive at Tekmin as quickly as possible. If the skies cleared Mr. Try could fly to Oksapmin and move in behind the Bimin force. We could each then draw them back.

The quickest patrol route between Telefomin and Tekmin was over the 11,000/12,000 ft. Mt. Womtakin via Feramin. There was no time to lose, and the only way I could leave immediately was to use prisoners from the Telefomin gaol as carriers [as far as Feramin at least]. CPO Neil Robinson accompanied me. We left Telefomin at 2.40pm and arrived at Feramin rest house at 5.50pm.

4th February 1967

Our route took us upstream along the Sepik into pinnacle limestone country with many sinkholes, ascending steadily. We could hear water flowing deep inside the limestone under our feet. Then at 4.15pm we found the surface water and made camp beside it. The last carriers arrived at 5.10pm. Issued rations and slept at camp No 1.

5th February

We broke camp and moved off at 7.15am We ascended until 1.30pm when Mr. Marks' camp site immediately below the pass through the Victor Emmanuel range [Mt. Womtakin] was reached. As heavy rain was falling we set up camp, as walking in such conditions at this altitude was seemingly impossible. During the day, in order to keep carriers dropping out of the line and freezing beside the track, I had walked at the rear of the line with Mr. Robinson in the lead. Extremely cold night. Slept camp No 2.

6th February

Broke camp and moved off at 7.20am, again with Mr. Robinson leading and myself at the rear. Crossed several small creeks which are the extreme Sepik headwaters and ascended through tundra like vegetation. Passed through Mr. Lancaster's camp site to reach the top of the pass at 9am. The Army Four-mile map showed the altitude as 3,505 metres or 11,792 ft. asl. The day was clear and we had fantastic views of Mt Stolle and also the Schatterberg Range including D'Albertis Dome. Descended the eastern side of the range until noon when icy cold rain blasted the patrol. We continued on until 1.20pm when we reached Mr. Marks' and Mr Lancaster's camp site beside Bugabu Creek and set up camp there. Between the moving mists Mr Robinson caught a glimpse of the alpine Yam valley to the north-east, where I had camped towards the end of the Strickland/Sepik patrol three months earlier. Slept at camp no 3.

7th February 1967

Moved off at 7.10am and arrived at the Tekin River at 9.10am. At 9.40am we ascended the north bank of the river to re-join the walking track from the Yam Valley and continued eastward until 10.20am when a group of Tekmin people were contacted in a garden. Arrived Tekmin rest house at 12.25pm

A510 radio set up and contact made with Telefomin at 1.15pm. Sent a note to Mr. Try who was then camped in the Tekin valley at Divana. The story of the Bimin/Tekmin confrontation was now modified to indicate that the Bimin warriors had moved into the Tekin valley in quest for compensation for a sorcery death. The culprit was identified by the use of a divining rod. Both sides were pleased the patrols had arrived and both were awaiting a decision. I paid off the Feramin carriers and purchased a large quantity of sweet potatoes, of which I gave sufficient to the Feramins to get them home. I also gave them plenty of matches.

8th February 1967

The sorcery matter was discussed at length with both sides agreeing the person responsible was the Tekmin man who had suggested the compensation in the first place. It was decided that both sides should take responsibility for their involvement, and that no sorcery compensation was to be paid. I did order however that a pig be paid to the Bimin for the inconvenience of having to come to the Tekin valley to resolve the issue. This seemed to satisfy everyone and the Bimin men returned home. There was a face-saving element involved – the intervention of our two patrols allowed the Bimin warriors to depart with their dignity intact. Had the administration taken no action it would probably have proved impossible for the Bimin fighting force to have departed from their confrontation with the Tekmin without arrows being fired.

We departed from Divana at 8.20am and arrived at Oksapmin at 1.05pm after a short stop over at Tekin mission. Patrol stood down. The Oksapmin people were extremely pleased to welcome the writer and Constable Yanopa¹ back. They had heard that both of us were killed by the Mianmin. I introduced Mr Robinson as the new O.I.C. at Oksapmin. I returned to Telefomin.

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2. The Supreme Court Trial of the West Mianmin

In late March 1967, in preparation for the preliminary hearing² of the Mianmin murder case, I reviewed the evidence. The weakness in our case was that it relied heavily upon confessional statements, which if successfully challenged might see the defendants go free for want of corroborating evidence. The normal procedure in cases like this with multiple murder victims is, subject to evidence being available, to charge all the defendants with the murder of a single victim. In the case of an acquittal, while the defendants cannot be tried again for killing that deceased, they can be tried on the same or augmented evidence with killing a second victim, then if need be, a third etc.

My review indicated that the strongest evidence I had involved the murder of Hagauwenap. It involved all the defendants and also we had the witness Alanterap who was there when Hagauwenap was murdered. Wenkriema's evidence would also help. My review of the confessional statements,

¹ The Oksapmin people were in awe of Yanopa, who to them was a gentle giant, always with a smile on his face. He was their special friend.

² Judicial procedure requires that a preliminary hearing be held in the District Court prior to the case being referred to the Supreme Court. Upon hearing the evidence, the District Court may acquit the defendants, or commit the defendants for trial, or commit the defendants for sentencing in the Supreme Court.

taken in haste during the patrol, showed that six of the defendants' confessional statements involved killing Houtap, not Hagauwenap – although they were also involved in killing the latter.

I now re-interviewed the six defendants. After being cautioned again, each made a statement concerning his part in the killing of Hagauwenap.

4th and 5th April 1967

Stipendiary Magistrate Garry Keenan arrived in Telefomin on the 4th and commenced the preliminary hearing of wilful murder charges against the Urapmin and Fiarimin detainees. Thirteen were committed to stand trial out of the total of 19 detainees [originally 21 but two had escaped].

14th April 1967

A long discussion, translated by interpreter Kuifam, was held with the Luluai of Temsapmin and those detainees who were released after not being committed for trial. I explained the Administration law and order policy. I gave each of the released men a spade and a bush knife to take home. I made sure they understood that the matter of the Sanman murders was ended and that the Administration would seek no further arrests in the Sanman case.

I explained that soon I bring another patrol to the Aki valley³ to meet the people there and make friends. I had to wait for the Supreme Court hearing and also for the birth of Wenkriema's baby. Then I would bring both Wenkriema and the baby back home. I said that it was my hope that we would receive a friendly reception and that I would take it as good sign if they built a rest house for the patrol somewhere near the Urapmin dance house. On the other hand, if they chose to fight I would have my rifle with me and we could do that as well. It was up to them.

I explained that I would provide them with food and an armed police escort to see them safely through the enemy Telefomin lands and well into Mianmin territory to Karenmin, from where they could make their own way home. They responded positively to this and were visibly pleased to see that Constable Yaregawa, who they liked, would accompany them.

27th April 1967

Constable Yaregawa arrived back in Telefomin after successfully delivering the Mianmin party to Karenmin.

4th May 1967

The prison guard awakened me at midnight with the news that Wenkriema was experiencing labour pains. I collected her from the hospital with the Land Rover and delivered her to the hospital where I left her in the care of the midwives/infant maternal welfare nurses.

14th to 24th June 1967.

Sir Sydney Frost and the Supreme Court party were in Telefomin to hear the wilful murder charges against the Mianmin defendants. The case of Naifurap was set aside in order that his wife Wenkriema⁴ could give evidence against the other defendants.

For two full days – the 15th and 16th - the writer gave evidence. As expected there was a challenge from the Defence Counsel as to admissibility of the confessional evidence. This required a voir dire hearing [a trial within a trial]

³ DC Clancy insisted that I personally lead the next patrol into West Mianmin because my last patrol had been attacked. Whilst my patrol report indicated that all was well, should there be any repercussions from the activities of the first patrol, it was only fitting that I be the officer who was there to handle whatever came next.

⁴ Legally Wenkriema was a capable, but not compellable witness against her husband. This was apparently too complex a point to explain so the court wisely decided she was not to give evidence against Naifurap.

The issue was whether those who confessed did so free from duress. The key issue was that patrol security required that the defendants be restrained with handcuffs. There was also a question concerning time delays in taking the confessional statements. I explained that the delays were caused by the need to conduct the police investigation and to ensuring patrol security. The Judge ruled that the confessional statements were admissible evidence.

On 19th June the witnesses Alanterap, Beita and Totirnap gave their evidence and on the 20th Wenkriema gave hers. In the summing up, the Defence council argued that there was no case to answer concerning defendants Waglisak, Nefiam, Yanowara and Wikaiema. Justice Frost acquitted the first two and convicted the remaining ten.

Nefiam was bewildered by this decision as he knew he was involved in the killing. He was acquitted because when he heard the charge and the caution, his statement consisted of only a few words, which when translated into English via Pidgin were "*That 's it*". As I believed the caution would have been invalidated had I plied Nefiam with further questions, I simply asked him to apply his mark to his statement after it had been translated back to him.

On 21st June I was again giving evidence. This time it was an antecedent report, a statement concerning the primitive nature of the Urapmin and Fiarimin communities, and that the murders were in accordance with Mianmin custom concerning the sacredness of the haus tambaran, the violation of which in the people's belief caused their taro crop to fail, and that how everything followed on from that. The ten convicted men had done no more than what came naturally to them; that was what Mianmin warriors were expected to do!

As ADC Telefomin, I explained that the best decision in terms of the future administration of the area, and bringing peace to the Mianmin tribal area, would be best achieved by short terms of imprisonment - sufficient for the prisoners to see the coast at Wewak and to learn Pidgin English. The peace process would then be best served by the released prisoners being sent home to their tribal area as ambassadors for the Administration.

Justice Frost did not agree, and sentenced each of the defendants to 10 years with hard labour.

I was devastated, having fully expected light sentences. In this clash of cultures, I felt that the kiap system had failed the Mianmins by not convincing the upper level of authority as to the appropriate course of action. The Defence Counsel indicated that he would appeal the severity of the sentence. If he ever did, his appeal failed. The sentences were served in the Boram corrective institution in Wewak. I never did understand why the judge awarded such heavy sentences.

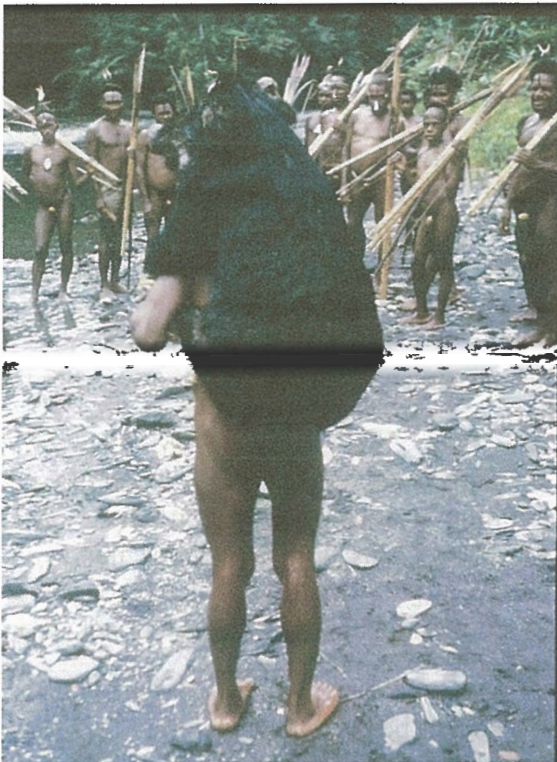
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3. Making Peace with the Mianmin

Telefomin patrol No. 1/1967-68 departed from Telefomin station on the 7th July 1967. Accompanying myself as ADC Telefomin were CPO Chris Van Lieshout, six police, one interpreter, one Medical Orderly and a permanent carrier line of 92 men. Also accompanying was Wenkriema and her new born baby, and the acquitted Mianmin men Waglisak and Nefiam. Responsibility for Wenkriema and the baby during the trek was given to the acquitted men.

As the patrol would also conduct the annual census of the Atbalmin division, time was spent in the Atbalmin communities residing close to the Sepik River, which we followed downstream to the north-west. As a result it was not until the 20th July that the patrol reached Ivikmin No 1.

Luluai Yamsap who provided so much assistance to the murder investigation patrol of December/January last, welcomed this patrol. He mentioned that he had sent his son to the Aki valley to have Urapmin and Fiarimin men to come to Ivikmin to escort the patrol into their valley.



Soon after the patrol's arrival, Yamsap announced that a wild pig was damaging their gardens and that he and his men needed to attend to it. Sometime later we witnessed the spectacle of 20 or so men returning from the hunt and chanting as they came down the gravel bed of the Amania River. Each man had a bamboo bladed arrow fitted to his bow string, shimmering magnificently in the mottled light as the arrow twirled back and forth between the firing fingers. The grinning hunters came to where Mr. Van Lieshout and I were bathing in the river and each of them snapped fingers with each of us in the Minamin equivalent of a handshake. One man at the rear was carrying a huge dead pig 'piggy' back style - **opposite**.

Yamsap briefed me after our patrol left this area in January. Fanap of Urapmin send word to Yamsap demanding to know why he had assisted the patrol which had chased his people. Yamsap told Fanap that he had done no wrong and that it was only right that he had helped the patrol – it was the Aki river people who were in the wrong. Presumably after some consideration Fanap apologised to Yamsap and sent gifts and a request that he bring the Sanman survivors, who were still being sheltered at Ivikmin to Nonobip, the site of the Urapmin communal house. Yamsap did that and witnessed the Urapmin address to the Sanman. The address went to the effect:



The old times are over now. We killed your people and the kiap came and caught some of our people and took them away. There will be no more fighting. We have learned our lesson.¹

With that the Urapmin gave the Sanman a boar and gifts of axes, knives beads and other valuables. The Fiarimin gave the Sanman a sow and other valuables. The Sanman were happy that the aggression against them was at an end

21st July 1967

Yamsap's son returned with the two men – **opposite** - who were released in April together with a third man not previously seen. They went directly to Wenkriema obviously checking that she was well and had not been harmed in any way. She was all smiles and proudly showed her infant to the new comers. They talked with Wenkiema, but stayed well clear of Mr. Van Lieshout and I.



23rd July 1967

Our escorts led the patrol up and over the Sepik Tabu divide and down to the Tabu River, which was now a placid crystal clear stream flowing over a bed of large multi-coloured stones. The patrol forded the river and moved on and made camp beside the upper reaches of the Guguma River - guards posted and warned to be alert.

24th July 1967

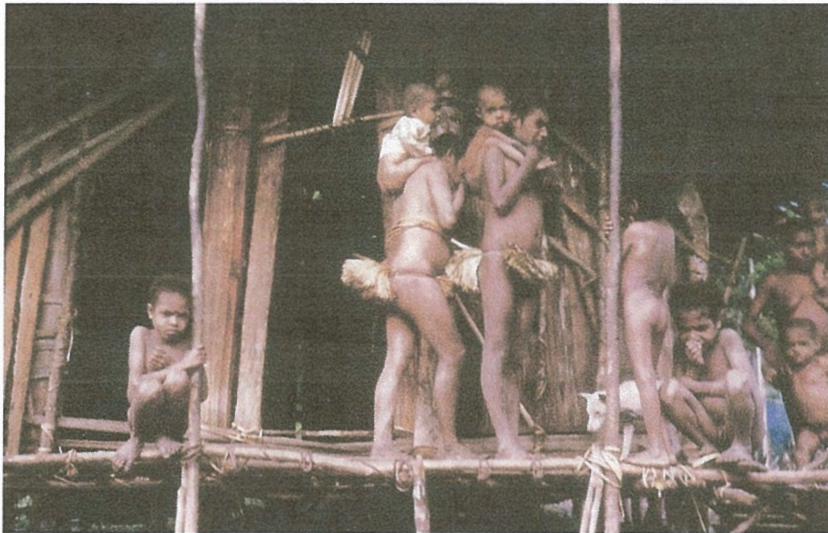
The patrol climbed for an hour from our camp site to reach the top of the Guguma/Aki divide. We had not long started the descent into the Aki valley when we saw that the track had been cleared to a width varying from six to nine feet - **opposite**. Two saplings had been broken off about seven feet above the ground and split. Two halves of a broken bow were lodged in the splits – like sign posts pointing towards Urapmin. The clear message we read from this was that the Urapmin did not want to fight.

A little further on, we were met by two Urapmin men who without speaking, offered a still warm baked taro to each of us. They then led the way to Nonobip, where Luluai Fanap and the released prisoners were standing in front of a large crowd of people waiting to greet us. We shook hands and snapped knuckles in the Mianmin fashion, whereupon the crowd surged forward shouting a chorus of “Wontok” [friend], a Pidgin word which the returning detainees must have brought back from Telefomin.

A cold chill ran down my spine - was this treachery, were we being overpowered in this surge of Mianmin bodies? Relief however came immediately from the friendly smiles, which told me that we were safe. I looked across at Chris and saw he was delighted at our welcome. Sometime later as we discussed this, I asked whether at that moment he could have successfully defended himself with either his rifle or sidearm. I know that had my arms been pinned, and had treachery been the intention, then I would have been a dead man. I felt momentary satisfaction when I saw this same realisation reflected on Chris’s face.



The former prisoners now brought their wives and children forward to be introduced to me and despite the language barrier I felt at home among friends. I believe the true feelings of the wider population was best expressed in the photos – **opposite** and **below**. The proud Mianmin warriors appeared both cautious and bewildered at their contemplation of a future that did not include raiding, abducting wives from enemy groups and cannibal feasts – some expressions asked ...“*what is the world coming to?*”



Next we inspected the new rest house and police barracks which had been built at my request. The building was small, but quite adequate. Fanap made a statement which Kuifam translated "*If we had more warning we would have done more work on the track*". I assured him that the tracks were in excellent condition and I thanked him and his people for the effort they had made. Fanap added that his people were now happy to follow the Government laws and that I could keep the remaining

prisoners in gaol in Telefomin until I chose to let them go. I replied that this was an important point and we should discuss it in the dance house.

I explained the difference between the police powers that my patrol had exercised when making the arrests, as differentiated from the role of the Supreme Court. While the released prisoners were reminded of the man with the wig and the colourful robes, the Urapmin and Fiarimin population as a whole regarded me, the "Kiap" as the embodiment of "Government". I explained that their men were no longer in Telefomin, but in gaol in Wewak where they would stay for a very long time.

It was very clear to me that the Urapmin and Fiarimin were missing their men. I believe they felt themselves to be vulnerable with so many of their fighting men unavailable. This may, in part at least, have been their reason for their stated intention of following the Government law, presumably in the hope that neighbours with the capacity to take advantage of their weakened defence capacity, did the same. I explained that the Administration was planning to find an airstrip site so a patrol post could be established with a kiap living in their midst to look after the Mianmin, Atbalmin and August River areas. There was enthusiasm for this suggestion and promises to provide future labour.

Once my words had been translated, Fanap spoke of the compensation that had been paid to the Sanman and how he intends that the people in the Aki valley would live in peace. This discussion revealed that the Urapmin and Fiarimin people thought that the investigation patrol itself was the punishment for their raid on the Sanman. They believed that the patrol was killing the prisoners it took [as the Mianmin themselves would have done]. They were surprised, therefore, when the released prisoners returned home alive, and learned that they had been well treated and properly fed. Two issues had been particularly difficult for the people while they were on the run from the patrol. The women had to give birth in the bush, sometimes without the help of other women. Also their domesticated pigs had reverted to the wild after not receiving their daily feed and human companionship

25th July 1967

Luluai Fanap brought a large pig and tied it to a post near the rest house, and made a speech which was translated for us. He said that until now he had not had the opportunity to make a gift to the Administration in recognition of his acceptance of his appointment as Luluai, and also to show that the Administration was accepted and welcomed by the Urapmin people. He would now give this pig which he would kill with an arrow, as the people were afraid of the sound of the rifle.

Not all of the demonstrations of goodwill came from the Urapmin people. The Administration's return of Wenkriema and her baby was apparently unique in the experience of the Urapmin and

Fiarimin who were specialists in obtaining spouses by raiding their enemies. Wenkriema and her baby became the Administration's ambassadors. I had been concerned that because of her evidence against the defendants in the Supreme Court she might be victimised, but we saw no evidence of this.

At this time her husband Naifurap was still awaiting trial at the next sitting of the Supreme Court in Vanimo, so she was back in the village effectively alone. I did not discover what village arrangements were made to look after her and the child, but I was not concerned as Wenkriema was a formidable lady who would find her place back in her community.

26th July 1967

The patrol accompanied by many Urapmin people retraced its steps of the 23rd, arriving at Ivikmin No 1 late in the afternoon. Our peacemaking with the West Mianmin was successfully completed. Our only remaining duty on the north side of the Sepik was to construct a bridge that would move the patrol into Atbalmin territory south of the river. To achieve this, we moved two days walk downstream to a site in the Ivikmin No 2 area which had been identified as the best place to build a bridge - **below**

29th July 1967 We found the Sepik to be in flood. In preparation to build a cane suspension bridge



over the river, the patrol was divided into two groups; one to go into the forest and cut cane, while the other cut timbers to construct the bridge framing on the gravel bar at the water's edge. The Sepik River at this point was nearly 100 yards wide. Mr. Van Lieshout and I swam the river several times, unsuccessfully trying to get a line across. Each time, while we successfully reached the opposite bank, the line we towed through the water was

taken by the current and dragged us away from our destination before we could get a secure footing so we had to let go or be dragged with it.

Luluai Ambep of Ivikmin No 2 did not want us swimming there as he said that a man had been taken by a crocodile in this section of the river. I personally thought that he was fearful of the Administration reaction if either of us drowned in his area or responsibility. Ambep said we should wait, as his men would get the line across as soon as the flood eased a little.

30th July 1967.

The following description is from page 30 paragraphs #51 and #52 of Telefomin patrol report 1/1967-68.

"Two men had learned their particular part [including the necessary spells] in the job of bridge building from their fathers before them. These two men were the only ones in the whole area for this job. One of the two rafted across the Sepik and positioned himself in a tree about 40 ft. above the river, taking with him a length of bush rope with the stem of a plant called "Golgol". On our bank our man was crouched over a small smoky fire on which he was cooking a taro tuber and saying words over it to the effect:

We are building a bridge. Let us succeed by the two lines joining. We will pull the line over and draw a single cane across, which will be attached to three canes for the bridge. Go and meet the other line.

The Golgol plant was tied to the bush rope by the man up the tree and the man on the opposite bank did the same. He threw his plant and rope out into the river and it seemed to land almost at his feet. The man in the tree did the same and again the plant was seen to fall very short. Both rôpes vanished under water with a large distance between them. Seconds later the two ropes were tangled with each other. From then on the bridge was simple to build.

Mr. Van Lieshout and I were amazed at the fact that these two Mianmin men got the line across the Sepik River at all, let alone on the very first throw. The patrol crossed the bridge we built and conducted the Atbalmin section of the patrol, which was in the field until 4th October 1967. That adventure however is not relevant to the current Chapter.



Above – Trading with the Atbalmin. Red pandanus fruit known as ‘aran’.

5th December 1967.

Naifurap was convicted of the wilful murder of Hagauwenap. Sentencing was suspended pending medical advice on his ill health.

Final Note: The West Mianmin area was de-restricted on 11th March 1971. In 1973-74, the Yapsiei patrol post and airstrip were established near the Sepik River north-west of Telefomin to administer the area.

End Notes Chapter 39

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 16 – diary 20th July 1967

Sepik 4 Chapter 40 The Discovery & Early Exploration of the Frieda Copper/Gold Deposit

In the modern world it is most uncommon for a large hitherto unknown mineral deposit to be found, especially one which has surface expression, i.e. where rocks of interest are visible on the ground surface. Not one but two such events occurred in the remote western section of Papua New Guinea at approx. the same time in the late 1960's. The first was at Ok Tedi which is now - 2016 - a major gold/copper mining operation in the headwaters of the south-flowing Fly River (the Mt. Kare gold deposit, discovered in 1987 near Porgera, could also be included in this 'greenfield' definition of recent discoveries). The second discovery was in the Frieda River catchment, a middle tributary of the north-flowing Sepik River

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Early Signs of Mineralization in the Region:

The German Behrmann expedition of 1912-1913 explored well up the Frieda River, at least to a point where the river emerged from the hills. This was a serious scientific expedition, with trained personnel across a range of disciplines. Hypothetically, they may well have noticed iron-rich rocks associated with mineralization in the Frieda.

As noted in Sepik 2 Chapter 48, the well-equipped American Ward Williams expedition spent three months in 1937 prospecting for gold in uncontacted Mianmin country in the middle section of the May River. They apparently found traces of gold, but nothing to offer further encouragement. Five years later, the Thurston expedition also traversed the upper May River en route from the Sepik to Daru via Telefomin, escaping from the Japanese advance in 1942 – see Sepik 3 Attachment A. Thurston, himself a gold miner, noted in his diary on 10th May 1942 :-

The country on the Upper May was the only country we came through that might warrant investigation for minerals.¹

The Bulolo Gold Dredging company (BGD) had mined in the Wau and Bulolo goldfields in the Morobe District pre-war, and post-war it evidently was willing to spend money prospecting further afield. In the Administration's Angoram monthly report for October 1949, it was reported that the ... '*Bulolo party is working the Frieda and Leonard Schultze Rivers. Bulolo party reported happy relations with the natives met. Not one incident was reported and all natives were friendly.*'

[Things were about to change for prospectors with the passing of the Restricted Areas Ordinance of 1950. Exploration in remote areas was to require a special permit under this Ordinance, until the last Restricted Areas in PNG were de-restricted in early 1971].

In a letter dated 17th May 1950 from ADO Angoram Mr. R.G. Ormsby to the District Officer in Wewak, reference was made to a recent patrol which had been successfully conducted by Patrol Officer Mr. G.B. Gilbert into an uncontrolled area between the Yessan and Frieda Rivers. In that letter, it was noted that ... '*The BGD Party mentioned by Mr. Gilbert have now established a base camp in the vicinity of the Frieda River, and will be operating in the area for at least some months.*'

No information seems to be available as to whether BGD found any minerals of interest. However, it is reasonable to assume that, as the gold shedding from the Frieda deposit is virtually undetectable except in a laboratory, it probably wasn't recognized. Traces of mineralisation possibly associated with copper may well have been noted if the party prospected into the headwaters, but probably would have been of little interest to an alluvial gold mining company at that time.

Ex-kiap and Sepik entrepreneur John Pasquarelli (Sepik 4 Part 1 Chapter 30 *Wicked Angoram*) was at the small Frieda River village of Paupe on the day that the American president John F. Kennedy was assassinated – Friday 22nd November 1963. He was engaged on an artefact buying expedition. Subsequently he and his team proceeded upstream for a few kilometres before branching into the Nena River and continuing on foot. He recalled ... *'Panning revealed good gold trace in the feeder creeks and rock samples that I recovered along the way were identified to me later as copper pyrites and copper sulphides'*².

Given, as indicated, the Frieda gold is virtually undetectable except in a laboratory, the writer believes that the untrained Mr. Pasquarelli's interview with Mr Nalu in 2012 used the benefit of hindsight and, great raconteur that he is, did not allow the facts to get in the way of a good story. (Mr. Pasquarelli was subsequently elected as MP for the Angoram Open electorate in the first national House of Assembly for the term 1964 – 1968).

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In 1966-67 the Australian federal Bureau of Mineral Resources (BMR) carried out the first systematic geological survey of the upper reaches of the Sepik River (see *Geology of the South Sepik Region, New Guinea, Bur. Miner. Resour. Geol. Geophys. Aust. Bull. 133* by Dow, D.B., Smit, J.A.J., Bain, J.H.C. and Ryburn, R.L. 1972). Geologist Duncan Dow was in charge of this quest, and was subsequently to write a book many years later about his experiences in search of minerals in the then TP&NG entitled '*New Guinea Hazard*'. In relation to the Frieda, he takes up the story, with the benefit of hindsight, recalling events in late 1967 :-

'One of my first reconnaissance flights from the new base (at May River Patrol Post) was over country that, while not of extreme relief, is very rugged, unpopulated and covered by dense jungle. A few small sections of a tributary of the Frieda River were visible through the canopy and I requested a landing in one of the few openings big enough to descend into. As the helicopter balanced on one skid I jumped down onto the boulders for a closer look at the rock type.

... A quick glance told me that the rocks were the type of igneous rocks commonly associated with copper deposits, so I signalled Bruce (once again) to take off and give me ten minutes to properly examine the boulders. My excitement mounted as I realised most of the rocks shedding from upstream had been altered by hot mineralising solutions and were shot through with pyrite, a prominent brassy mineral that accompanies most mineral deposits ... '

More importantly, Mr. Dow and his colleagues took stream sediment samples for chemical analysis back in Australia, and some were to subsequently indicate elevated levels of copper and other minerals in creeks between the Nena and Niar Rivers, tributaries in the mid-section of the Frieda River. In their final BMR report published over four years later – again, with the benefit of hindsight - they noted ... *'in several areas, the geological environment is favourable for the occurrence of large-tonnage low-grade orebodies. ... The most promising is the Frieda River prospect, which is an area of several square kilometres in which disseminated copper mineralization is associated with hydrothermally altered stocks and dykes of andesite porphyry.'*

Coincidentally, only a short time before Mr. Dow and his colleagues made their discovery, Carpentaria Exploration Company (CEC), a division of the Australian Mt. Isa Mines, had successfully applied for a Prospect Authority over a large area of the southern Sepik mountains and adjoining lands which included the Frieda River catchment. This was granted on 10th August 1967 and became known as Prospecting Authority 58 [PA58]. CEC already had an interest in the Porgera mineral deposit (

PA29) indications of which had been recognised by Patrol Officers Taylor and Black in 1938/39 during their epic Hagen Sepik patrol.

At that time in the late 1960's, most of the country west from Porgera to the Indonesian border was largely unexplored, a situation which had not escaped the attention of other large mining companies including Placer Dome, CRA and Kennecott. The Administration in the then TP&NG was keen to have the big players on the ground carrying out exploration, and there was something of a scramble by the latter to secure available country. Kennecott was based in Goroka and their interest and activity westwards was to lead to the discovery of Ok Tedi.

CEC was not aware of the discovery of encouraging geology in the Frieda River drainage by the BMR in late 1967, nor was the BMR aware that the Frieda region was already held by CEC under PA 58 granted in August that year, covering areas of the April, Leonard Schultze, and Frieda River, as well as part of the May River.

Consequently then at the beginning of the 1968 field season, CEC found itself in the fortunate position of holding prospecting rights to a large slab of under-explored country in western New Guinea, with a significant but ill-defined zone of potential mineralization smack in the middle of it. CEC in those days had exploration interests throughout Australia, in New Zealand as well as in New Guinea, and competition was intense within the company by party leaders to secure their fair share of the available exploration funding. It seems there was little understanding by the company of the difficulties facing its field personnel in setting up a complex exploration program in remote New Guinea. Over the following few years, their achievements on the ground in NG were quite exceptional.

Writers Note :-

1/ For much of the information contained in this chapter, I am indebted to former CEC personnel who were engaged on the Frieda project in the early days of development from the late 1960's to the mid 1970's. Unless otherwise noted, significant contributions to this story have been made through personal communications with geologists Bob Hall and Peter Simpson, geochemists Russ Lord and Bob Schultz, and field assistants Horst Schmidt and Ray Langford. Messrs Hall, Simpson, Lord and Schmidt have been generous with their private photos. Much of the history of CEC's aviation operations in the Sepik is drawn from pilot Bill Dossett's excellent booklet *Flying Memories*.

2/ Whilst on an extended patrol out of Oksapmin in 1966, [Chapter 37] I was in pursuit of mysterious cannibals known to their enemies as Pume of Unamo village. These turned out to be the Nenatamun people of the upper Frieda River. In 1970, geologist John Hartley, then in charge of CEC field operations in NG, told me in Ambunti that they had found signs of mineralization on some of my 1966 campsites. I may well have been the first European on or close to the Frieda copper deposit.

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Before continuing the story of exploration at the Frieda, it is instructive to review Administration patrol reports from that period which had relevance to the early mineral explorers in the broader regional context from the early 1960's to the early 1970's. Listed below are brief extracts taken from Chapter 14 The Continued Exploration of the Upper Sepik :-

P99 3/62-3 Paupe, Sio and part Bitara [later in Sepik May and Wongamusen Census Divisions respectively]

On a return trip from a station inspection at May River in September 1962, ADO Des Martin initially contacted Paupe on the Frieda River and Kertom, a hamlet of the Bitara group on the Sio

River. On the basis of discussions at Paupe, Martin estimated the population of the Frieda vicinity at 600 people. He noted that the Paupe were not traditional river people and had no canoes. Their river travel was by rafts.

P108 5/67-8 Karawari Census Division Moli/Bugiauwi [Salumei River area] Colton.

ADC Ambunti's comment to District Officer:

CEC will soon be prospecting this area – we must contact the Bikaru before this happens. A patrol should go in and make friendly contact. Maume and Colton to do the patrol and an aerial survey first – if you have the funds please approve this patrol.

P109 4/67-8 Upper April River – Treutlein

Begapuke made it known there would be a payback [for the killings of Kumali and his wife.] As a result the [raiding] groups started to move to the safety of Wagu [several days walk to the north]. The patrol arranged for all the Gahom allies to go to the BMR camp at the Sitifa/April junction to meet with Begapuke and their Paka allies. Five Pakas, 49 Gahom and allies, and 25 Begapukes attended. There were speeches by the ADO and by representatives of each group. Gifts were exchanged. All agreed that the old ways were finished and peace was best.

P110 10/67-8 Wongamusen, Leonard Schultze, April & Wogamush Rivers - Corrigan

The people are happy about Prospecting Authorities, but have no understanding of the coming House of Assembly elections [1968 election].

P111 2/68-9 Wario/Sio – Tomlinson & Pennefather – October/December 1968. 46 days

This patrol set out to achieve what No 1/68-9 failed to do and also to accompany Carpentaria Explorations Mr. H.B. Schmidt while sampling between the headwaters of the April and Leonard Schultze Rivers much further north than the route taken by Barclay. The patrol by Mr. L. Bragge from Oksapmin followed along the Upper Leonard Schultze River and this patrol crossed its tracks.

P169 May River 5/68-9 Sepik May – Tomlinson

Paupe was investigated for allegedly pilfering from Carpentaria Exploration Company [CEC] goods – evidence existed, but no charges were laid.

P172 May River 8/69-70 Sepik May [Paupe] – Pennefather

Paupe complained about Iwams claiming Paupe lands and crossing those lands to go and work for CEC. Also that CEC employees use shotguns – hunting on Paupe lands

P114 8/69-70 Paupe [Frieda River] Paylor & Veratau.

Labourer Merik/Andrias was in an adulterous relationship with Tiari, the wife of the Tultul. This was a personal rather than a village matter. It seems the Tultul gave tacit agreement for Tiari to conduct prostitution (with CEC personnel?).

CEC labourers complain that their effects are searched when they sign off. CEC says much pilfering from the top camps – justifies searches.

P115 16/69-70 Niksek – Tomlinson & Veratau

This patrol publicised the granting of Prospecting Authorities over the April River area.

Previous non-administration contacts with the area: 1966 BMR teams 1968-9 CEC.

Political Education (re approaching Self Government and Independence 1969 – 70):

Comprehension of these talks was nil and the interest shown varied from complete indifference and boredom, to the enthusiastic nodding of heads.

P116 1/70-71 Swagup – Packer

This patrol investigated the reported accidental shooting death of Baipwan/Bino. Baipwan. He had previously been gaoled for selling his wives as prostitutes to Laskompani employees who passed through while serving as river transporters for CEC at Frieda River. As ADC, the writer ordered the patrol as it seemed likely to be murder, as was proven to be the case. It turned out he was shot by Yaganau, one of his wife Wagubutu’s lovers.

P115 17/69-70 Wario Sio – White

Conducted the first complete Wario/Sio census. There were no objections to the Prospecting Authorities the patrol advertised. Six men were selected to attend the Mining Warden’s hearing.

Ambunti Patrol 19/70-71 Niksek L. Bragge with ABC/BBC film crew and R. Langford of Carpentaria Exploration.

The primary purpose of the patrol was to advertise Prospecting Authority No 58 which had been granted to CEC, and to contact the people in the Eastern April River headwaters before the prospectors entered the area. CEC requested that Mr. Langford accompany the patrol and this was agreed to in exchange for helicopter support. A combined ABC/BBC film crew led by David Attenborough accompanied the patrol. The documentary produced was entitled “*A Blank on the Map*”. See Sepik 4 Part 1 Chapter 44.

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Senior geologist John Hartley led the CEC New Guinea exploration program for the first 3-4 years up to the end of 1970. Because of the extreme remoteness of the Frieda prospect and the complete absence of any sort of infrastructure, it was necessary to address logistical issues before much more



work was carried out on the ground. Initially a large gravel bar on the Nena River about a kilometre below its junction with Discovery Creek was utilized for helicopter access for ground reconnaissance, quickly reinforced by two helipads constructed on ridge tops closer to the prospect.

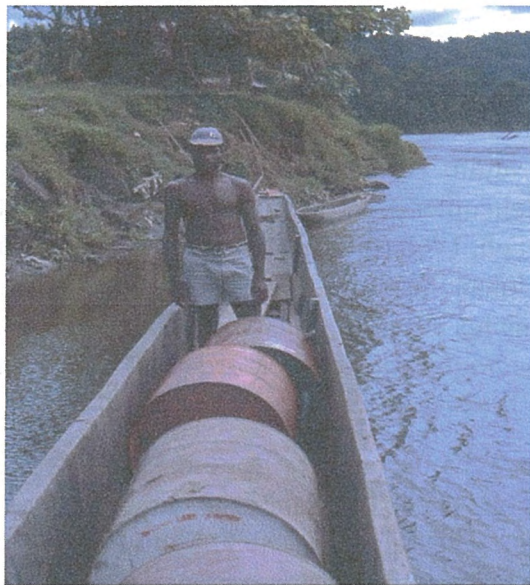
Opposite: *The first CEC exploration camp near the junction of the Frieda and Nena (Ok Mlia) Rivers – early 1968.*

The elevation of the Frieda prospect area ranges from approx. 100m at Frieda airstrip to about 1000m above sea level, being located in mountainous



rainforest-clad country in the northern foothills of the Central Range. Early records kept by CEC indicated the annual rainfall was approx. eight metres or over 300 inches, with a distinct but not sharply defined wet season as is the case in northern Australia. A period of a week or more without rain was considered a drought!

A preliminary base camp, known as ‘Bottom Camp’, together with a helicopter pad was established on a low terrace beside the Frieda River just upstream from its junction with the Nena River in early 1968 to begin the first field season. Personnel and equipment were brought upstream from Ambunti by powered canoes and a Hamilton jetboat – *opposite above* - owned by local trade store owner Warren Hansen who had taken over Las Kompani from John Pasquarelli.



Some of the larger canoes – *opposite centre* - 50-60 feet long and hollowed out of large trees, could carry up to five 44 gallon drums of aviation and other fuels lying down end on end, and two such canoes with a decking lashed between them could carry several tons weight of assorted cargo, powered by two outboard motors. The trip upriver from Ambunti on the Sepik to Bottom Camp on the Frieda took about five hours in the jetboat, compared to a whole day for the double canoes – *below*.

Some of the fuel drums transported upriver were destined to return downriver, but not in a planned manner. Helicopter pilot Bill Dossett recalled that one night, when

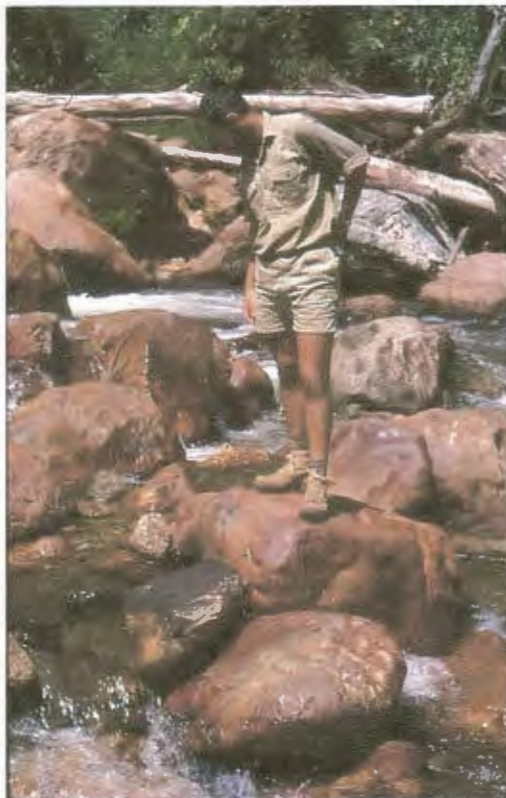
he was the only European in camp, the adjacent river had risen about 13 feet during sustained heavy rain. Being disturbed from his slumber by water lapping around the foot of his bed, he grabbed a torch and clad only in underpants, waded out to where his chartered Bell G3B1 helicopter was sitting on slightly higher ground. The helicopter had floats attached instead of skids, and although surrounded by rising water, fortunately it had not yet started to float away.



With the help of a bossboi, a length of rope was found and the helicopter was tethered to nearby trees, while drums of fuel and assorted gear were being washed downstream. As dawn broke, Bill decided to start up the machine and fly it out of harm’s way. However by then it was floating and, being aware that the chopper would turn sideways when the blades started rotating, the tricky business of releasing the taut ropes was arranged with the boss-boi as the chopper ‘sprang’ into the air! Subsequent flooding events led to the relocation of the camp to a more elevated terrace some 200m downstream.

A similar incident had occurred not long before at a BMR campsite at the junction of the April and Sitipa Rivers. Rising floodwaters had forced Crowleys pilot Bill Wallace to start his Bell helicopter (which evidently had skids) and hover above the helipad in the dark while logs were piled up to elevate the pad and keep the chopper out of the water. It worked.

A more serious incident occurred at Bottom Camp when a helicopter was overloaded with bags of rice and the inattentive pilot attempted to take off. The aircraft became airborne, but either because of the weight issue or a malfunction, or both, the chopper lurched sideways and crashed into a bush toilet on the river's edge. Fortunately a tree stump prevented the machine from toppling into the river, from which it would never have been recovered. No injuries were reported, but the demolition of the dunny left the helicopter with serious damage, and after it was disassembled and removed, it was out of service for months whilst repairs were carried out in Australia.

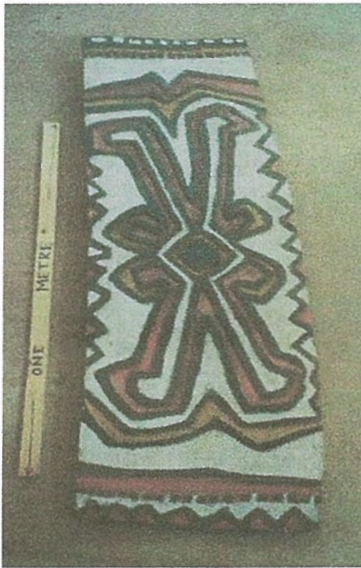


'Top Camp' (otherwise known as Base Camp or Frieda Base) had been established up in the mountains beside a stream appropriately named Prospect Creek near the zone of known mineralization. Top Camp was built opposite the site of the second helicopter pad constructed on the prospect by John Hartley in Feb. 1968 (the first pad having been built by BMR geologist Johan Smit some distance upstream a few months earlier during his initial reconnaissance in late 1967). *Opposite* - CEC geologist Joe Janecek examines iron-rich rocks in Prospect Creek (Ok Uwaii) 1970

Located about 12 miles from Bottom Camp as the helicopter flies, Top Camp became the focus of the exploration program. The forest was felled and cleared, a large helipad was levelled by pick and shovel, and crude but functional buildings were erected by the native workers who initially came from Ambunti, nearby Inioik, and from May River. All chopping was done by axe. Although chainsaws were available, it was considered unwise to equip unsophisticated and sometimes volatile tribesmen with such potentially lethal tools/weapons.

The area was very sparsely populated, with only two small isolated Telefomin-speaking villages, Unamo and Wabia, about a day's walk away to the south-east from the prospect. These villages, together with Paupe on the Frieda River to the north, fell short of providing a satisfactory workforce. Telefomins and subsequently Mianmins began to appear, walking for about four days from their tribal territories to the south and south-west into Top Camp hoping for work, and were often signed on. Although speaking related languages, these two groups were traditional enemies, and no doubt there were tensions at times as everybody wanted one of the coveted jobs.

It is interesting to note that some of the older men employed from Telefomin had been jailed years before for their part in the murder of Patrol Officers Szarka and Harris and two native policemen not far to the south of the Frieda in November 1953. In fact, some of the local workers calculated their approx. age by referencing to the time of the demise of that administration party.



Opposite - Fighting shield from village of Wabia, which, together with Unamo, were the only villages adjacent to the Frieda - 1970

The Telefomins were generally thought to be better workers, with stronger ownership claims to local lands, and the proportion of river men slowly declined. The pay rate in those days was 75 cents Australian per day including rations and accommodation, slightly more for a 'boss-boi', or supervisor. Medical services were to become available too, with the subsequent employment of native medical orderlies working in a well-equipped 'haus sick'. An early incident involved one of CEC's technical personnel who, whilst using his machete as a brake going downhill, slid his hand down the blade, almost severing a finger

The buildings erected were generally framed by local rainforest saplings, with a plastic 'sail' or vinyl tarpaulin as roofing material – see photos. Floors were split 'limbom', a local palm, with the convex side up. Similar to Black palm commonly used in bow and arrow manufacture, limbom was softer and easier to work, although it only had a life expectancy of 4-6 years. Everything was lashed together with strips of the ubiquitous lawyer cane. Rolls of this cane as well as bundles of split limbom felled out in the forest by work parties were flown into the camps by helicopter, as was everything else, usually slung under the choppers in nets suspended by a hook which could be released by the pilot.

Within a short period, an office (with a corrugated iron roof and concrete floor) was built, a core shed, barracks, a trade store, and communal buildings including a kitchen and dining room for the Europeans. Hot water for showers and the kitchen was provided by a wood-fired 'donkey' system consisting of a galvanized 44 gallon drum. Toilets were simply 'long-drop' arrangements with an enclosed seat perched above small permanent creeks running through the camp. A 'bois camp' was located above the main camp, with a large diesel generator powering the whole complex. Untreated water came through pipes via a gravity feed system from a small permanent creek above the camp. Unsuccessful attempts were made to encourage the native workforce to start vegetable gardens – maybe the soil was poor, or perhaps it was considered women's work.

It was quickly recognized that, as the workers were paid in cash, there was a need for a trade store to make basic commodities such as non-perishable foodstuffs, tobacco, clothing, personal items, cooking/eating utensils, etc. available for purchase. A storekeeper was employed, and profits were reinvested in stock. In late 1971 a group of Telefomins arrived with about \$40 in coins wanting to buy a shotgun. It was explained that they needed a permit issued by the kiaps. As the camp became a little more sophisticated, several employees set up saving book bank accounts. They gave money to the company accountant from Madang who visited each pay day, to deposit in their individual bank accounts. Playing cards were banned, although clandestine gambling was conducted, which led to some aggravation at times. However the ever trustworthy bossbois kept a lid on things.

A common aspiration among the Telefomin and Mianmin workers was to eventually return to their villages with enough money to buy corrugated iron roofing for their houses. Upon returning after a leave break, they would often bring back tribal artefacts which found a ready market among the expatriate staff, notably stone axes/adzes which sold for A\$3-5. The handles were crudely made, suggesting the art of intricate cane weaving was already being lost.



***Above** - Carriers assisting with regional geological reconnaissance - April / Leonard Schultz Rivers 1969*

An unsuccessful aeromagnetic survey was conducted in February 1969. At that time CEC boosted its European workforce by five additional personnel, not just to investigate the Frieda prospect but to check out other areas over which they had permission to explore, including Porgera and the April River. It was on the April River in mid-1968 that helicopter pilot Bill Dossett slipped through some loose logs on the bush helipad and sustained some broken ribs. Fortunately, he was still able to fly the machine.

Up until the mid 1960's, aside from local sketch maps made by kiaps, the only topographic maps available for much of the upper Sepik were those which had been compiled by the German Behrmann expedition over half a century earlier in 1912-13. Even some significant river systems were, in part, simply approximate dotted lines. Former geochemist Ross Lord explains, ... *'In exploration work one needs maps, but in 1968 when I first went to TP&NG, they were pretty much non-existent. There were the 1:1 000 000 Aeronautical sheets but nothing at a useable scale. Our initial approach was to stream sediment sample the terrain in conjunction with doing basic geology, often by noting the relative proportions of the different rock types in the creeks. So we collected all these samples, but we needed something to plot them on.*

One of my first attempts to create a base map, was to fly down the Porgera River to the Lagaip and follow it to Kopiago. I had a Brunton compass between my feet, and a notebook on my lap. And I drew what I saw, every now and then noting a bearing of that part of the river, and any major tributaries that entered the Lagaip. When I ran off the page, I put an 'A', turned the page, put another 'A' at the bottom, and continued. End of that page with a 'B' and so on. So I ended up with a bunch of pictures that later I joined together. And for a scale, I started at Porgera, and finished at Kopiago, and I knew how far apart they were, so I had a scale of sorts.

Word got around, and when I was back in Brisbane, the [CEC] Exploration Manager was visited by someone from the Defence Department. He was shown in my direction, and I showed him my map. He hadn't seen anything like it!

We always had standing orders for aerial photographs, but the companies didn't want to supply photos with more than 5% cloud cover. A problem in PNG. Periodically we got the odd photo, but nothing like proper coverage. Later we had Side-looking Radar and that was a help, but we had done most of the coverage by then. Now the explorers have satellite coverage, but then – in the late 1960's - that was a long way in the future.'



Above: (left to right) CEC Party Leader John Hartley, pilot Bill Dossett, and geochemist Russ Lord. Crowleys chartered Bell helicopter, with floats, on bush helipad - Frieda River 1969

By this time pilot Bill Dossett (who flew with the RAF during WW2) had been enticed to leave Crowleys and take charge of setting up the CEC aerial operations, together with aircraft engineer Ron See. Following an aerial survey, Bill and John Hartley had selected a site for an airstrip approx. two miles downstream from the original Bottom Camp on the left/west bank of the Frieda River. Happily, this site coincided with the limit of navigation by watercraft capable of carrying loads on the Frieda. Preparations began for the formidable task of carving an airstrip out of the rainforest.



Above - First CEC Frieda drill site on Pish Creek – mid 1969

In late 1969 – early 1970, Austral Geophysical Prospectors (AGP) were subsequently contracted to conduct an intensive diamond drilling program. Bob Hall recalls ...' *The drills and all associated gear was shipped out of Brisbane on a small ship that travelled up the Sepik and Frieda Rivers and almost made it to Paupe.*

All the gear was either flown directly off the ship (by helicopter) or landed on a clearing on the nearby bank. Then it was either flown from there, or some was taken by double canoe up to a gravel bar at

Carpentaria Exploration was initially utilizing the services of Crowley Airways for aerial transport until they decided to set up their own aviation division, M.I.M. Aviation, and by 1972 they had acquired two American Hughes 500 helicopters (the first in the Territory) and a new Britten Norman Islander 300 ten seater twin engine aircraft. This was initially based in Ambunti, but the need for a proper private airstrip closer to the Frieda prospect was becoming an imperative.

On the main prospect to the south, geological mapping and sampling had identified drilling targets on two creeks known as Pish and Bully (named after the staple exploration diet – tins of fish and tins of bully beef). In early 1969 the Administration had offered CEC some used diamond drilling equipment at Mt. Hagen and it was repaired, flown to Ambunti and taken up to the Frieda by double canoe and helicopter. This initial drilling under head driller John Booth on Pish Creek however was unsatisfactory.



*Paupe and flown from there - **opposite**. All the gear had a number corresponding to the rig number, so the pilots were signalled the number and they flew that load to where the rig was setting up.*

It was a big logistical exercise and I think pioneered moving big rigs by helicopter. The Hughes 500 choppers stripped out could carry/lift just on 1000kg. One load of all important drill barrels

fell from the chopper into the jungle between Paupe and Frieda Strip. I was in the helicopter at the time with Bill Dossett. We tried to pin point the spot and sent parties of locals into the jungle looking for the load, but with no luck. I did hear a story years later that this load was found sticking out of the bank of the Frieda River, obviously uncovered by the ever changing meanderings of the river'

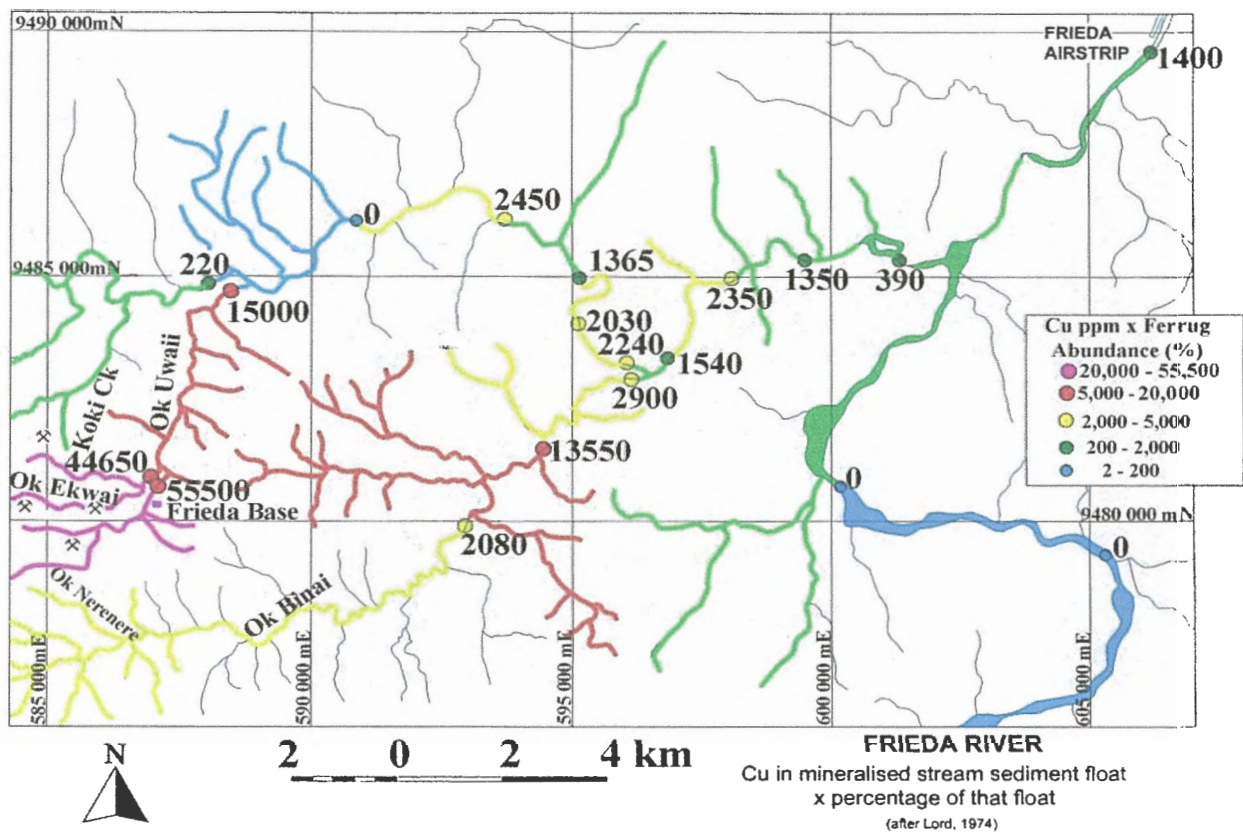


Drilling of skarn mineralization commenced then in Pish – Bully Creeks in May 1969, **opposite** - firstly using Mindrill E500 rigs. Subsequently four Longyear 38's would simultaneously be in action. Experienced driller Bill Blair was the first in charge. Clearing of the forest and construction of ridge-top drill sites and helipads was carried out with axes, picks and shovels by the available manual labour, and drilling commenced in June 1970. Everything was transported to and from the drill

sites by helicopter – helicopter hours during those early days totalled approx. 85-90 per month each. The all-important full core trays were handled with particular care. Up to 40 helicopter trips were required to get a single drill site operational. Drill pad sites were often down in gullies or on exposed ridge tops to minimize excavations on slopes. The drilling contractors had a separate camp euphemistically known as 'Paradise', located at the north end of Koki Creek, near its junction with Kokomo Creek. It was self-sufficient with all basic amenities including workshop, worker accommodation and helipad. Each morning a radio 'sked' was arranged between Frieda Base, Bottom Camp (Frieda Strip) and Paradise to discuss the day's activities, and personnel and aircraft movements. Early morning fog in the mountains often delayed operations.

About that time, the company was engaged in setting up a local analytical laboratory to process the geological samples which would soon be generated, rather than enduring the time-consuming and tedious business of despatching samples to Australia. In late 1969 young geochemist Bob Schultz had been given the daunting job of establishing a lab from scratch in Madang. He had had recent experience with the then new multi-element atomic absorption process, and purchased this equipment in Adelaide

before flying to Madang with his new bride to find married accommodation and suitable industrial



premises, both in short supply.

Above - Geography and geochemistry in combination identify primary zones of copper mineralization

Finally leases were arranged, and as the lab took shape after renovations and the arrival of the analytical equipment, the challenging task of recruiting untrained local labour began simply by putting a 'job vacant' sign outside the building. After a tedious selection process, two promising young indigenous lads were initially employed carrying out basic sample preparation, and the local workforce eventually built up to about a dozen. By then the decision had been made to build company houses and a permanent laboratory to make Madang the company's New Guinea headquarters.

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Meanwhile, McIntyre and Associates of Townsville had been engaged as consulting engineers, and Frank Martin of Wewak Transport (who had as his partner the young Michael Somare) was contracted to build the Frieda airstrip. Initially labourers from May River had been employed to fell the forest, a job they evidently approached with gusto. However once the trees were down, the enthusiasm waned somewhat as the hard work of chopping up, burning or pushing the timber into the adjacent river commenced.

Writer's Note: Frank Martin was MP for Sepik/Madang Special Electorate in the first national House of Assembly 1964-68. "Special" was dropped in 1968 and replaced by regional electorates based upon provinces. Michael Somare (later to become PNG's first Prime Minister and a Knight) won it from Mr. Martin in 1968, and has held onto it ever since (2016).

Bill Dossett takes up the story of the new airstrip in mid 1970 :- ' then Frank Martin at last got the go-ahead. He actually built a metal barge (subsequently called the 'Copper Queen') at Wewak, driven by two Hamilton jet units, to bring up (equipment and) supplies etc. The first trip took over three days, but had to come many sea miles before entering the mighty Sepik to drive upstream



against the 4-6 knot current. From then on things started to move, with two 'dozers plus two trucks [at least one of the dozers was a D6, the tipper trucks were 6 by 6 wheel drive, and an International tracked loader was utilized as well]. They increased the height of the intended strip by a metre, piling large rounded stones from the downstream islands.

Above – Frieda airstrip after initial clearing in 1970 looking south (upstream) - construction camp in photo centre beside river

The 'strip was 2,100 feet long with a good cleared overshoot area at the north end – it could have easily been extended should it become a requirement. It had nearly a mile of road from the north end to a respectable jetty, a workshop for maintenance of ground equipment, drills etc., an aircraft hanger and workshop plus stores [all with concrete floors], and properly built accommodation for 7-8 expatriate personnel.

The Frieda airstrip was opened the following year presumably with the first landing of the company's Islander aircraft, although the helicopters had been operating from there for some time with the abandonment of the Bottom Camp not far upstream (an Army Caribou reportedly made the first landing on the strip before it was certified, and Warren Hansen in his Cessna 172 did a 'touch and go'). Not long after, an 18 foot jet boat was added to CEC's transport inventory. It was said of the Frieda strip that it has two parallel runways – one for conventional aircraft, and another offset by about 60-80 metres for floatplanes on the water of the adjacent river.

For the purposes of radio communication, 'Bottom Camp' had become 'Frieda Strip'. By this time Bob Hall had taken over from John Hartley as Party Leader, the person in charge of PNG operations. In relation to the airstrip, Bob was later to report, ... 'One problem we had from time to time, which involved the kiap at Ambunti, was the head man at Paupe village on pay day used to sometimes bring up a bunch of women to the airstrip and put them to work as prostitutes. If we caught them and him, we flew them all to Ambunti for the local kiap to deal with. I occasionally saw the head man on the prisoner grass cutting gang on the Ambunti airstrip'.³

A rough bush walking track was blazed between the Frieda Strip and Top Camp, a distance that took two walking days. An attempt was made to clear a road wide enough under the canopy of the forest to accommodate a small four-wheel drive vehicle or tractor along this route as there would have

been significant advantages in having land transport between the two operations, but the terrain was simply too rugged and wet, and included a crossing of the Nena River. Many years later in 2015, the developers of the proposed Frieda copper mine were engaged in the construction of this road, following an alignment similar to that which was initially proposed in the early 1970's.

There was another issue which needed to be confronted near the new Frieda airstrip. Geologist Peter Simpson reported in late 1972 ... ' *At the upstream end of the airstrip, there are or were two large boulders sticking up out of the water which has been deflecting the current against the opposite bank (airstrip side) and this has been threatening the strip itself. We've had gangs of boys down there with jack hammers and gelignite blowing those big rocks to pieces.*

One of them had a 12 inch layer of silt and stones over its flat top, and at the bottom of this was a layer of red clay in which a collection of adzes, scrapers, sac-sac pounders and flaked chert stones were found. There was also an ash filled depression in which flat oven-stones were grouped in a circle. Most of these adzes and so on (all rather rough) were recovered by us and will be sent with an explanatory note to the (Port) Moresby museum.'

The strip has provided excellent service for many years since, so presumably the river bank stabilized naturally after some rather expensive remedial works including gabions filled with rock.



Above left - Frieda Airstrip in 1973 looking downstream (north) – note remnant boulders in river at bottom of photo. Above right - Drilling precariously on a razor back ridge – the region is prone to earth tremors. Photos by courtesy Highlands Pacific.

In order to properly map the mineral deposit, it was necessary to name the various creeks in that location. The company had an engaging energetic young field assistant named Horst Schmidt at that time (Horst had been known to return from a patrol clad only in underpants, having traded his clothes for artefacts in some remote place!). Horse Creek was euphemistically named in his honour. This drainage was to prove pivotal in the exploration program. Other streams were Discovery Creek, Storm Creek, Prospect Creek already mentioned, Koki and pH Creek, the latter evidently being a

reference to the high acidity of 4, sufficient to adversely affect fish life. Some years later, local Telefomin names were adopted, so Prospect Creek became Ok Uwaii, Storm Creek became Ok Ekwai-ining, PH Creek became Ok Ekwai, Discovery Creek was rebranded Ok Binai, and the Nena River was known to the locals as Ok Mlia. Horse and Koki Creeks evidently retained those appellations, as did Pish and Bully Creeks.

In relation to defining local land ownership, former head of exploration Bob Hall recalls ...

‘An American anthropologist studying at UPNG did the tribal boundary mapping at Frieda. I cannot remember his name, but he was there for several weeks. He walked all the boundaries with representatives of each group. I don’t recall there being any big issues, and future compensation was paid on the basis of these issues. I recall most of the boundaries followed ridge lines. It was always my understanding that the Frieda area was a no-mans’ land. The Paupe’s were the descendants of a weak group who were pushed out of the area by the Min people (from the south). It was always difficult to get Paupe’s to work at Frieda as I think they felt threatened.

The work of the anthropologist, commissioned by CEC, was carried out in consultation with Tony Friend, the ADC at Telefomin. I the writer had made notes on tribal boundaries, land tenure, etc. during my 1966 patrol through that area, so I assume that information was taken into consideration. The boundary maps were utilized by the local Mining Warden to determine annual compensation payable in relation to limbom palms harvested, areas of forest felled, lands occupied etc. Payment was



made on behalf of CEC by a Telefomin kiap who was flown to and from the Frieda by company helicopter. Payment, usually several thousand dollars, was in cash which was taken away to be distributed to villagers through their village councils. Compensation was paid at both Base Camp – **opposite** - and Frieda ‘Strip.

After the initial establishment of the exploration program, CEC was acutely aware of the longer term possibilities of the mineral deposit at the Frieda, and its responsibility to introduce the local people to what may lie ahead of them. It was decided to invite potentially influential individuals on a trip to the outside world. The new Islander aircraft provided the means to take these select personnel to the heart of the parent company’s operation – the huge Mt. Isa mine in north-west Queensland. This was actually to be the second such trip to Mt. Isa. Party leader Bob Hall had taken a similar group by chartered aircraft to Mt. Isa a few months before, and that trip had been judged a success. A policy of ‘no alcohol’ had been put in place for the travellers.

Geologist Peter Simpson was nominated to guide the second group of six native men, five of whom were company employees. Of these five, two were Telefomins (although they weren’t local landowners), a bright educated 18 y/o lad from Wewak, and two company ‘boss-bois’ or supervisors originally from Popenetta and Ambunti respectively. The sixth New Guinean to travel was Naui Sauinambi, the local Member of the House of Assembly for the Ambunti Yangoru Open electorate. Before departure, there was a fly-around of local villages to collect some artefacts to be handed over

as gifts to their future hosts in far-off Mt. Isa. The disparate group then flew firstly north to Wewak to be kitted out with new Western clothes and shoes, a novel experience for some, as was seeing and tasting salt water. The party then headed south across the spine of the country, and after some adventures and misadventures via Daru and Thursday Island, finally touched down in the rocky red landscape of arid inland Queensland. The Sepiks were duly impressed with all they saw evidently – the people, the town, the mine, and notably large supermarkets and hardware stores ...

An informative film named *Painim Kopa* ('In Search of Copper'), which was narrated in pidgin by Michael Somare, had been made by the company and was screened many times for the enlightenment of local employees at the Frieda. It portrayed the geological search and discovery of copper, the possible subsequent mining of the metal, and the social changes and benefits which (hopefully) would follow.



In the early 1970's, exploration forged ahead with a drilling program designed to identify the nature and extent of the mineralization. The initial five/six drill holes in Pish-Bully Creek were a disappointment with insignificant copper content - the first hole had a depth of 137m with an overall grade of 0.15% copper. The third hole was drilled under a small creek where an unusual green precipitate - probably malachite, a copper mineral - was noted. The assays however were disappointing. Subsequently the focus shifted to nearby Horse Creek.

Opposite - Field assistant Horst Schmidt in the 'copper' creek.

It was a good move – the first hole identified not only significant copper mineralization, visible in the core samples, but also a porphyry copper style of mineralization which offered promise of further discoveries. Minor elements of gold and silver were also identified, sufficient to provide additional value to the resource. The elated exploration manager in Brisbane suggested drilling a 'directors' hole beside the first one, duplicating the good news to keep the company directors happy (and, presumably, to keep the funding flowing)! Drilling subsequently

moved on to Koki Creek, with further good results. The Frieda was rapidly becoming a significant national resource.

As managers, Carpentaria Exploration Company adopted a sensitive and enlightened policy towards the locals. Employment was usually offered to men who had local geographical or cultural ties with the Frieda region, and training programs were provided for young educated men, usually from coastal areas. For those who subscribed to Christianity, the services of a native lay preacher were sometimes available. The workforce was generally content, well housed and fed. The daily work routine started at the prospect office, where boss-bois and their respective 'lines' of 8-12 workers were assigned duties for the day.

There was also easy access to medical services and modern medicines. Every morning there was a parade outside the 'haus sick' for those unwell or injured – ***photo below***. Medical services extended to surrounding villages. However, on one occasion a worker performed a day's work, had his evening meal and was dead by midnight with cerebral malaria. The body was flown to Telefomin, and examined by the District Medical Officer who fortunately happened to be there. The government



subsequently determined compensation which was paid by CEC to the family of the deceased. The Frieda camp was shocked – the workforce was on edge for a while (through fears of possible sorcery?).

Workforce relations were generally excellent, both between natives and expatriates, and

among the natives themselves, who were divided broadly into Sepiks and Highlanders. Minor incidents flared up occasionally, e.g. the camp cook from Ambunti attacked his May River assistant on one occasion with a tin opener, and two rival factions quickly assembled. Peace was restored however, but not before four bush knives were found and removed from the 'haus cook'. A four day break was declared at Christmas, and the two local groups would separately have a sing sing, enlivened to a minor degree by the once-a-year issuing of two bottles of beer per person. A blind eye was turned towards the appearance of native women and children who usually weren't encouraged to stop at the camp.

On one occasion however in the early 1970's, a disgruntled European employee complained to the authorities in Wewak that the local workers at the Frieda were being intimidated by a manager threatening them with a .22 pistol. Such a firearm did exist, being kept in a locked safe at Top Camp in case security was needed for the payroll, but it was never used. The camp was raided by police who arrived without warning in an army Iroquois helicopter with a search warrant. However, after some interviews, a look around the camp and a cup of tea, they left a little shamefaced after it became evident the claims of intimidation were groundless. In taking off, with the errant firearm in custody, the large helicopter successfully stripped the roof off several nearby building!



A more serious event occurred after Independence in the late 1970's. During one of the regular distributions of land rental / compensation monies at Top Camp by the kiaps from Telefomin, an assertive local individual, demanded to know why responsible jobs were not being given to local natives (the company already had a number of local university-qualified technical staff members, and paid bursaries to select high school students in Madang, Wewak and Vanimo).

Opposite – CEC OIC Bob Hall presenting bursaries - Wewak High 1974

The person in charge explained that the native professional staff had been to university, and if the Telefomins aspired to these jobs, they needed to become similarly qualified. With a national

election looming, there was a debate as to where the next new high school was to be built – at Vanimo on the coast, or at Telefomin. The assembled thong was advised to lobby their local Member (or those who nominated for the forthcoming election), to ensure the high school would be built at Telefomin.

The trouble-maker somehow succeeded in persuading the workers they had been insulted, and a week or so after the meeting, he initiated a strike. The local workforce downed tools and left the Frieda en masse. There followed some unfortunate publicity, questions were raised at high levels in the government, the company was obliged to respond in a forceful manner, compromises were reached and the workforce eventually returned to the job. The person who initiated the unrest was elected to parliament in due course, and was subsequently jailed for embezzlement. Telefomin did eventually get its high school.

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Interestingly during this period, a piece of rubberized fabric representing the ‘skin’ of an airship was being exposed experimentally to the tropical climate at the Frieda. This special material was provided by the Goodyear company in America as part of a serious exercise to test the suitability of airships to potentially transport heavy materials and equipment to the future mine site. However, current logistical and transport ideas are focused on roads, pipelines, and heavy barges on the Sepik.



A section of Top Camp looking north down Prospect Creek (Ok Uwaii)1972 – Haus Cook and dining, rear left - trade store, blue roof right. European accommodation and helipad in foreground.

The feasibility of the latter form of transport was established by the ‘Copper Queen’, utilized during the construction of the Frieda airstrip. The craft had been sold by Frank Martin to John Pasquarelli to service his Karawari tourist lodge south of Angoram. After falling into disrepair at Ambunti, the barge was subsequently acquired by CEC and plied the Sepik as a supply craft between the Frieda airstrip and Pawgi, located at the end of the road from coastal Wewak.

Eventually a significant copper/gold resource was to be identified within a zone of geological alteration approx. 15km by 7km. In early 1974, CEC had outlined several more potential drilling targets, but at that time the company negotiated a joint venture with a Japanese Sumitomo-led OMRD consortium which became the operational managers. The Japanese subsequently drilled these sites – which became known as Ival (an extension of the Horse deposit) and Nena – with some success, although the Nena mineralization, located about six kilometres north-west of the primary deposit, contained elevated levels of arsenic and so the Japanese were disinclined to further investigate.

By 1979, over 300 diamond and percussion holes had been drilled overall, and the Frieda workforce was evolving into a mixed unit of Australians, Europeans, Asians and Nationals. With senior geologist Bob Hall back in charge of operations, from 1979 to 1983 another joint venture between Frieda Copper (MIM), Norddeutsche Affinerie and OMRD resumed drilling at Nena and some of the other satellite porphyry copper deposits, in an effort to increase the overall resource. Various consortia have since furthered the work of exploration, and carried out a number of appraisals of the economic future of the deposit. Highlands Pacific, an original derivative of MIM / CEC, continues as a junior partner in the Frieda project.

The current (2016) senior partner in the Frieda consortia, Chinese government owned PanAust Limited released a summary of their feasibility study in May 2016. It identifies a resource of 2.7 billion tonnes of mineralization (excluding the arsenic-rich Nena reserves) containing an average grade of 0.42% copper and 0.23 g/t of gold. The initial pre-production establishment cost of the open-cut mine development is estimated to be US\$3.6 billion. The PNG government has an option to purchase an equity of up to 30% of the project, based on exploration expenditure to date. A Special Mining Lease Application was submitted to the government in late June 2016.

Despite the size and tantalizing wealth of the resource, the potential rewards for stakeholders must be balanced against the isolation, lack of infrastructure, the technical, logistical, environmental and social issues which in combination present formidable challenges to the success of future mining. Unfortunately, most reports suggest large mining developments in PNG are often plagued by a history of failure against any check-list of local indicators, including human rights. With oft-repeated promises of minimal impacts and largess and beneficence for all rarely coming to fruition, the future welfare of the pristine Sepik and its inhabitants must be an over-riding consideration.

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End Notes Chapter 4D

¹ J. Thurston diary page 11 – In Bragge Reference Notes Vol 2 item 42

² Malun Nalu – Happenings in Papua New Guinea 2012

³ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 P 116. K. Packer patrol report to Swagup – a murder over issues of prostitution indirectly related to Frieda.

Sepik 4 Chapter 41 The Deaths of Overly Zealous Christian Missionaries

Writer's Note # 1: In Chapter 11 we met Reverend Stan Dale as he corresponded with ADO [Telefomin] Harry West in 1950, discussing the possibilities of opening a mission station in Telefomin. As the establishment of the Baptist mission in Telefomin followed just months later, I assumed that Mr. Dale represented the Baptists, but this proved not to be so. By chance in August 2016, several former Oksapmin kiaps, including myself, had dinner in Cairns, Queensland with old friends - retired Baptist missionaries Ian and Jill Flatters, who we knew at Tekin mission station. Mr. Flatters said that Mr. Dale '*... was not one of ours.*' A re-read of the West/Dale correspondence revealed a memo – reference 32/1 dated 18th May 1950 to the District Officer, which stated in part:-

'Attached is a copy of a letter from Mr. Stan Dale stating that His Honour the Administrator has granted what Mr. Dale termed "a group of us" permission to commence mission work in this sub-district. One would expect such an enquiry to reveal the name of the organisation concerned and to come from its headquarters.

A file copy of a memo to you (Tel. 32/1 of 27th June 1949) marked "confidential" indicates that an earlier letter from Mr. Dale was received here and forwarded to you. No copy of this letter was kept here and I do not know the reason for the secrecy.¹

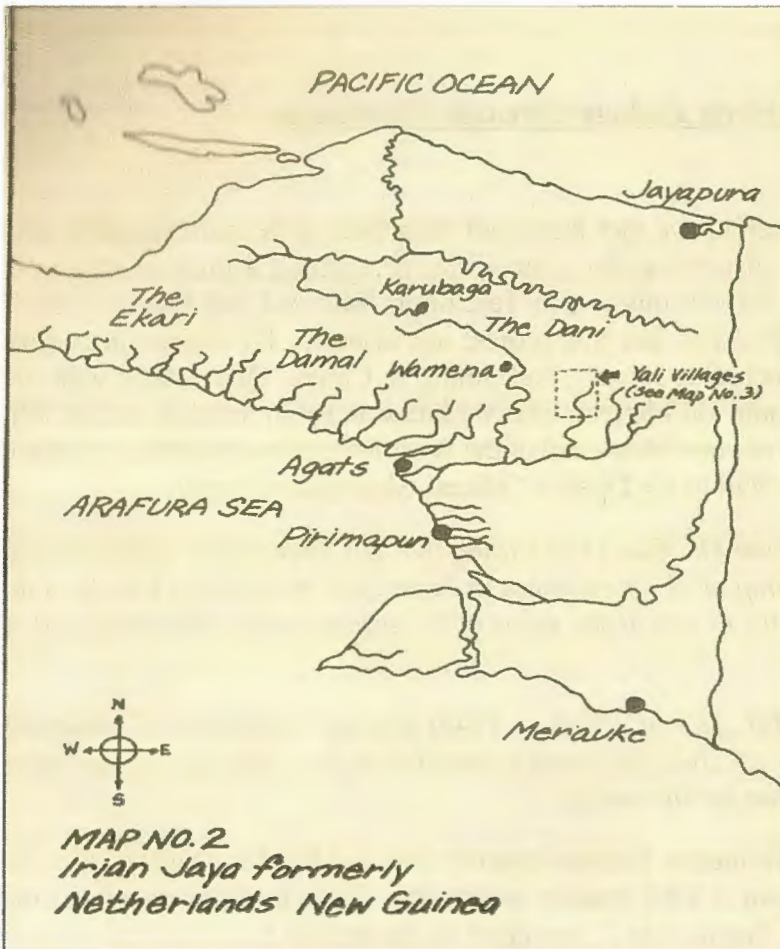
The file contained no reply to this memo. Further research revealed that Mr. Dale had already failed as an Unevangelised Fields Mission [UFM] teacher among the Seki/Zimakani people of the Western District. UFM authorities found that he was ... *too hard on the natives.*²

After failing to establish his Telefomin mission, Mr Dale and his new wife Patricia joined the Christian Missions in Many Lands [CMML] and worked among the Wapei people – Lumi Sub District of the Sepik District at Eritei. After four years there, while on furlough Mr Dale was informed that he would not be able to work in the Sepik as :-

'... There are those in the field who object to your return, saying they disagree with your manner of disciplining the natives.³

While Sepik Book 4 is of course about Sepik history, the writer feels this diversion into an adjacent area of Dutch New Guinea/Irian Jaya [the Yali tribal lands are located about 160 miles west of Telefomin] is important as it picks up on the theme of deliberate and systematic destruction of traditional religion and sacred objects by the missions in order to impose Christianity in their place. This theme is touched upon throughout Sepik Books 2 and 4. Whilst there was reportedly only limited resistance to this destructive policy of the missions in the Sepik, a potentially violent reaction by the natives was ever-present. It is important therefore to include Reverend Dale's story as it relates to his own death, and the deaths of others at the hands of indigenous people who resisted the destruction of their sacred objects, which Mr. Dale saw as ... *fetishes connected with a deeply entrenched Satanic system*⁴.

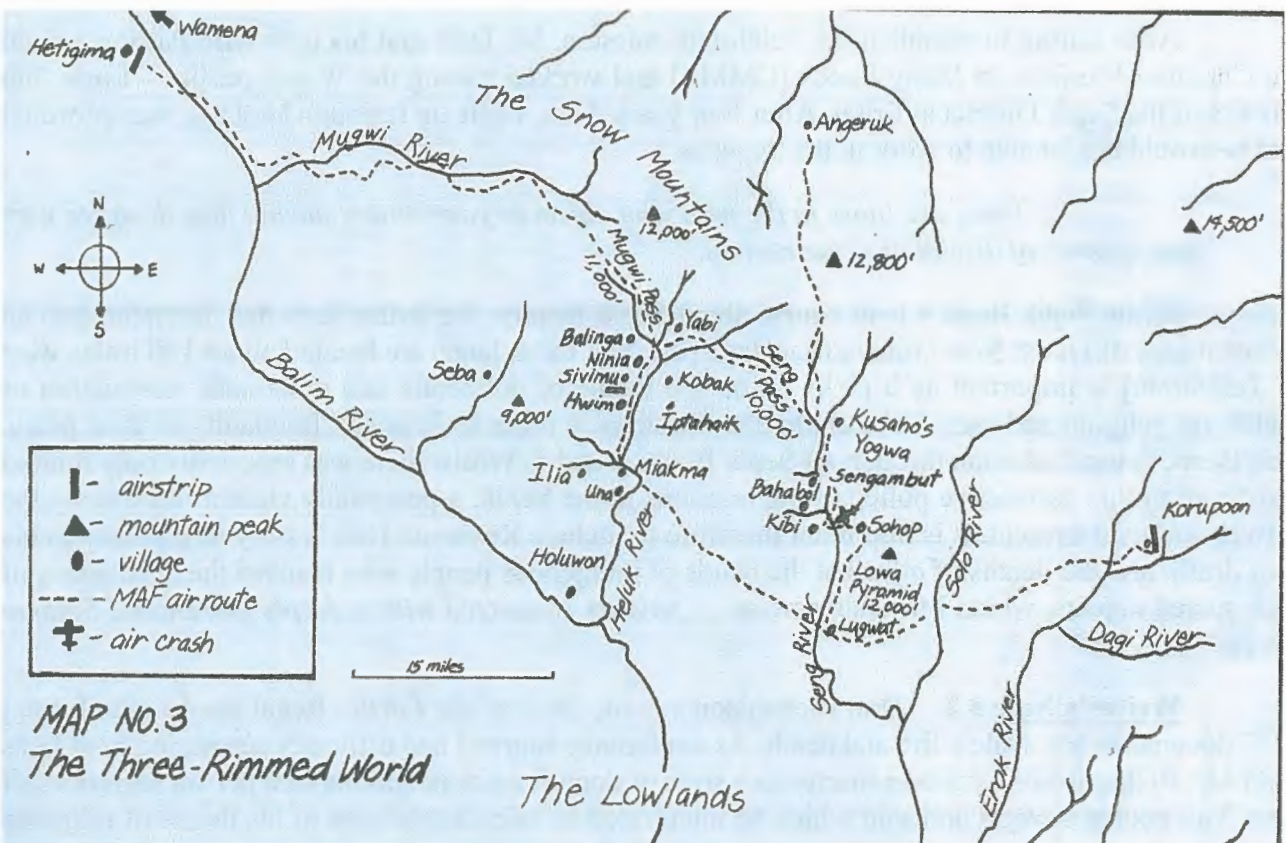
Writer's Note # 2. Don Richardson's book *Lords of the Earth* - Regal Books [California] 1977 documents Mr. Dale's life and death. As a reference source I had difficulty separating hard facts from Mr. Richardson's Christian martyrdom style of documentation, and his first person narratives of what Yali people thought and said which he interpreted as being supportive of his theme of religious zealotry.



With his PNG options seemingly exhausted, in May 1959, Mr. Dale's application to the Regions Beyond Missionary Union [RBMU] was accepted and he and his family commenced mission work in Dutch New Guinea. On 13th of December 1960 they flew to Karubaga which was the RBMU base, and on 20th March 1961 Mr Dale, his wife and Bruno deLeeuw, a Canadian bachelor, were granted permission to establish a mission in a populated, but unnamed valley that a MAF pilot had seen from the air⁵.

Note: The Yali are the source of stone axes traded to the Green River area / Upper Sepik and The Telefomin people

Messrs Dale and deLeeuw's entry into the Heluk valley and their initial contact with the Yali people coincided with a mortuary ceremony for victims of a tribal raid, with the raiders standing on the far bank of the Heluk



Maps above are from 'Lords of the Earth' - pages 14 & 15

River still shouting insults and challenges. It was not in Mr. Dale's nature to allow a challenge to go unanswered. He plunged into the river and waded across. Mr. Dale later wrote '... *When I reached the bank most of the men had disappeared! Those remaining apparently decided to be friendly.*'⁶

Mr Dale had crossed from the Balinga tribal side of the river to the side of their enemy's the Yabi-Kobak, and set up camp there. With this dramatic introduction and using a Dani interpreter, Mr. Dale set about making peace between these warring tribes. He located an airstrip site he had identified during an earlier aerial reconnaissance and established Ninia mission station there. After completion of the airstrip, Mrs. Dale joined her husband at Ninia. On 1st January 1963 Mrs. Dale had the first visit to her kitchen by a Yali woman⁷ and was soon organising women's meetings. The mission was well established by 1964.

By July 1964 the Dales had completed four years of service and were due for furlough, and they flew out of Ninia for a year's break in Australia on 28/11/1964⁸. Costas Macris replaced the Dales at Ninia mission for the duration of their absence - they returned from furlough in March 1965. Two months later, Stan came to a crucial decision: now was the time to tackle the touchy problem of Yali dependence upon charms, fetishes and witchcraft paraphernalia.⁹ Mr. Dale's narrative entitled '*In Death Triumphant*' is quoted below :-

"The people in part of the Heluk Valley have burnt their fetishes. Within that simple statement there lies concealed a triumph and a tragedy. From the time we first began preaching the gospel at Ninia, we knew that ultimately we would have to deal with the matter of fetishes¹. These in themselves may appear innocuous. They may be almost anything, a lump of desiccated pig fat, shaped stones and smaller adzes, large flat oval stones, balls of hollow dried clay and such like. Yet these things are associated with magical powers which themselves cannot be dismissed as mere harmless primitive native superstitions. One only has to see the power that these things hold over the lives of the people in this land to realise that fetishes are connected with a deeply entrenched Satanic system and that it is quite impossible to be wholly committed to Christ whilst still retaining these.

Upon returning to Ninia from furloughs my wife and I found that those who professed a conversion before we went home were still faithfully following the Lord. We discovered however, that none of them had destroyed his fetishes and it has been abundantly proven in this land that a complete and final break from the past is a matter of necessity as a safeguard against backsliding into old pagan ways. For weeks, additional instruction on the separation of Christians from the evil was given to the little company of believers. Then on Sunday the 22nd May [1965?], as I was speaking about the duties and responsibilities of Christians, I urged those present with the fact that they had not parted with their fetishes. "*I will burn mine tomorrow*", replied the leader of the Christians.

The next morning a couple of other leading Christians came to me and stated that they too intended to burn their fetishes. Suddenly, like a leaping flame, the idea spread among the Christians. With excited whoops they went dancing up the mountain to their villages, dived into the men's clubhouses and started dragging out of their dark corner the bags of fetishes. Not only the Christians, but those who were receiving regular instruction with the Christian faith, joined in carrying down the fetishes to the mission station to be burned. Even the old diehard makers of the magic spells surrendered their fetishes for destruction. For two or three hours the eager group of young men ran from village to village until they had collected a great heap of magical objects. Then the Christians gathered nearby and sang some hymns of praise and offered thanks to God for release from those

¹ "Fetishes" are what the Sepik people would call "Tambarans" – objects of importance to the religion of the people – believed worthy of worship and of being capable of communicating with the living through dreams and visions. In a reversed situation the Yali would regard the Shroud of Turin as a "fetish".

things which for so long had kept them in bondage. A match was set to the pile, and the flames leaped upwards they broke out again in spontaneous songs of joys.

The following day, (Tuesday) the Ninia Christians went to a string of villages on a ridge to the westward (collectively called LILIGAN) where the Gospel was preached each week, and persuaded the people there to burn their fetishes too. I went over there and witnessed this being done with spontaneous enthusiasm, then speaking to them on Ananias and Sapphira², told them that they were not doing it for men but for God, and charged them to continue faithful to the word of (unclear word) that had so often been preached to them.

While this was going on, some men from Ninia called to us across the valley that the people from PALINGAMA (another of our preaching posts) were coming over to make trouble. However, nothing came of it and the rest of the day past quietly.

On the Wednesday, the Christians and myself went to PALINGAMA, to explain to the people who were receiving regular Christian instruction, the reasons for burning the fetishes. Nearing the village there was considerable excitement, when it was reported that a group of men were lying in wait for us with bows and arrows, so I told the rest of them to wait while I went ahead to investigate I saw a few men with bows and arrows, but they discreetly disappeared as I got nearer. Then we gathered together the men who were in the village, explained that they too, like the NINIA and the LILIGAN people could be free of the power of fetishes, and urged them to destroy them. They agreed to do this, and they and the NINIA Christians began to collect the fetishes for burning.

While this was going on we saw a large group of men gathering across the river. These people, (KAUBAK) had always been traditional enemies of the people on our side of the river, and although they were not involved in any way, they apparently decided to intervene. I could see that they were starting to work themselves into a fury, so I strolled down to the river's bank with the intention of discouraging them. It was too late. Suddenly the whole crowd of them came charging down to the river and began to shoot arrows at me, but most of them fell well short. Within a few minutes the Christians came running to my aid, and although they were unarmed a few of them managed to get across the river. This diverted attention from me so that I was able to get over too. I shouted to the Christians to keep out of the affair, and detoured through a patch of bushland, intending to come up behind our assailants and get quite close to them and reason with them.

However, by the time I had emerged from the bush, I found that all the Christians had crossed the river and the attackers had retired to a steep hillside. As we approached, calling out to them and trying to establish a friendly contact with them, they commenced shooting again. About fifty arrows were fired, but the Christians quite calmly advanced dodging arrows that fell near. Three men were waiting for us as I climbed at steep rise, and began shooting, although I shouted that I was their friend and held up my hands to show them I was unarmed. By this time though, they were probably so worked up they couldn't even hear. The first arrow went just over my head, the second, caught by an updraft of air, went wide. The third man waited with grim determination until I was quite close then took aim and fired, but the arrow missed by several feet.

By this time the troublemakers had apparently become discouraged by their lack of success and were dispersing. Some made off across the river where they had come from, and the others disappeared into their villages or hid in the forest. Catching up with some of them I gave them a piece of my mind. I said, "*Why did you shoot at us? I have always been your friend and I have never done*

² Acts of the Apostles 5:1-11 The case of Ananias and Sapphira.

you any harm. If these people want to burn their fetishes you let them, no-one asked you to burn yours. Anyway don't you shoot at anyone and in future just mind your own business."

We went back to PALINGAMA and burned the great piles of fetishes there and everyone returned to NINIA with great rejoicing. It was quite evident now to the Christians that God could and would protect them, as I so frequently told them. They were enormously encouraged by the destruction and by the Lord's protection and their faith was greatly strengthened. The Sunday meetings continued as before in the places where the fetishes had been burnt and there was a deepening desire for the Word of God in the days that followed.

About a week after the fetishes were burnt, I went across to LILIGAN and spent the night. The following morning a large crowd assembled and listened eagerly to the word of God. They were rejoicing from their freedom from fetishes and assured me that they purposed to wholly follow the Lord. They also told me that the people in the lower HELUK Valley were desirous of hearing the gospel, and wanted us to go down there and teach them. As I had been down there a few weeks previously and had had a very good reception at the nearer villages, I believed in this statement. Consequently, the following week I mentioned this to the Christians at our Thursday night prayer meeting and asked if anyone would like to go down there for a few days and preach the gospel to them. Two young men, JEIKWARAGU and BINGGUOK, volunteered to go and the following morning at about 10:30 set out, taking with them a large coloured chart on the broad...which I had prepared for them. As they were late in starting I told them to sleep in the first village in the LOWER HELUK area. All that subsequently happened hinged upon the fact that they did not do this.

At about four o'clock on Saturday afternoon we heard the women in the nearest village wailing hopelessly for the dead. We asked why they were wailing and were told that the two men had been killed. It seemed so incredible to us that at first we refused to believe it, but as further reports in confirmation of this came to us, we were finally forced to accept the tragic fact. It was too late that evening to get any help and we had to do what we could to reassure the NINIA people, who were obviously expecting the murders to be followed up by an attack on their villages. We spent an almost sleepless night numbed with shock and grief, for the two young men had been so close to us that it was as if our own children had been killed.

Early in the morning we contacted MAF and asked the police to come in immediately. Within an hour the WAMENA (in the BALIEM Valley) District Officer and four policemen had arrived and I asked them to go with me to investigate the scene of the murders, find out exactly what happened and recover the bodies. When we reached LILIGAN we were informed that the enemy was waiting in ambush for us at the HELUK River so we proceeded very cautiously down the forested mountain and through the precipitous gorge that followed. There was no sign of any opposition and we came at last to a flimsy bridge across the river. At this point the District Officer, who had fallen and grazed his knee, decided to return with his police to NINIA.

This was a crucial moment as I knew it would be extremely dangerous to go on without them but burdened and broken hearted over the death of the two young men, I felt I could not face the Christians at NINIA again without doing all that was in my power to recover the bodies of their friends, and mine. I gave strict instructions to the NINIA boys who had accompanied us to return with the Police and then walked on alone. At first I walked slowly, carefully investigating the track in front of me before proceeding, as every bush could conceal an enemy and every thicket an ambush. Then the Lord gave me an assurance of His protection and I stepped out more briskly. I had almost reached the first village in the area where the murders had taken place, when I looked back and saw two policemen and four NINIA youths following me in the distance.

Near the village I discovered where BINGGUOK had been cremated by some courageous LILIGAN people, who had daringly come into the area to give him their equivalent of a decent burial, but we could find no trace of JEIKWARAGU's body so continued up the side of the valley and searched the area. There was evidence of a large body of men having been in the area and then on the side of the hill we found the sweet potato beds trampled down where the murderers had danced their victory dance after killing the two boys. By this time, it was getting late and we decided to camp for the night at the village near which the lads had been killed. We had seen no one and a thick fog covered the ridges around about and it seemed possible that the killers had not even seen us entering the valley. Anyway, with the NINIA boys and a policeman searching around and another policeman with me it seemed safe for me to prepare a meal.

I had moved away from the fire in the centre of the hut and was getting something from my pack near the doorway when I felt a violent stab in my right side and saw a five-foot arrow embedded deeply in me. I snatched it out with one swift straight pull, hearing as I did so an exclamation of satisfaction from outside. As I scrambled from the door another arrow pieced my right thigh. We could hear movements all around us. We were surrounded in a death trap, for the enemy could pour arrows into the hut from every direction.

Furthermore, a bright fire made us clearly visible to the attackers. Before I could extinguish it another arrow hit me in the left thigh and when I moved around to the other side of the hut two more arrows struck me, one causing a wound in the right forearm and the other penetrated deeply on the left side, piecing the diaphragm and the bowel. There rose behind the hut the high pitched, keening notes of the death wail, as the attackers triumphantly proclaimed that they had killed me. It was indescribably eerie and as by this time the wounds were beginning to trouble me, I thought for a moment they might be right. At last the policeman who was with me, who had already fired a few ineffectual shots, saw a man creeping up on us with his bow and arrow, and shot him. The other policeman came up at the same time and commenced firing and the attackers precipitately fled.

We gathered our belongings and went back down the valley in the deepening darkness, intending to find a safer place to camp. As we did so I began to realise how serious my wounds were. Every step was an agony and the air was wheezing in and out of me uncontrollably. We soon reached the village near the HELUK River where we had planned to sleep. The NINIA boys though, had different ideas. "No", they said, "*We'll keep on walking through the night. Tomorrow you will be too stiff to move*".

The six hours or more that followed were one long nightmare. We walked in total darkness at first, thinking the enemy might be following us, but later lit a lantern. Even with its light though the track ways faintly illuminated, and the track was rough. Sometimes we had to wade along the edge of the rushing river, sometimes we clambered over the slippery rocks high above it ... time and time again I fell. Great waves of pain swept over me, threatening to blot out consciousness. Twice I gasped, "*leave me alone, I'm dying.*" "*Oh, my father,*" replied the boys "*come on*". And gently they took me by the hand and led me on. Then the Lord's own word came to me, "*I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.*", and I clung to the promise like a staff, as we came out of the gloomy gorge and commenced to climb the mountain beyond. It was hard enough to climb in daylight, for a man who is strong and well. At night and for someone in my condition it seemed impossible, but God brought me through. Then at last we were walking along the mountain top to LILIGAN, to rest and partial relief of pain ... Early next morning, the local men made a litter, and carried me with great gentleness down the steep mountainside and up the father ridge to NINIA."

On 13th June 1966, warned by a forerunner, at 5.45am Mrs Dale called MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) on the radio. The plane landed soon after 7am and they waited for Stan's arrival by stretcher¹⁰. Mr. Dale's narrative continues :-

“ There the M.A.F. plane was waiting, ready to take me immediately to KARUBAGA, where at last I relaxed. No words could describe the skilled and loving attention that was lavished upon me in the days that followed, as the dedicated hospital staff fought for my life.

Now several weeks have gone by, and as I daily gain more strength I look back in thankfulness to all that had helped me; the lads who lovingly led me through the night; Dr Long and his medical staff; the hundreds of Missionaries and many thousands of native Christians who fervently prayed in the critical days, for through the combined efforts and the mercy of God I was brought back from the dark valley of the shadow of death to the light and life and love of family and friends. But for BINGGUOK and JEIKWAROGO there was no return. In their love and loyalty, they gave the last limit of sacrifice all that they had ... themselves.

It was not until a week or so after they had died that we were able to get all the details of their death. They had not slept in the first Village on the Lower HELUK as I had instructed them, but they had gone on an extra hour and camped at another place called ILIA. The next morning, they had conducted a service and were eating a meal, when the local people warned them that the enemy were waiting and advised them to go home. They ran down to the valley below, but a large number of the enemy were waiting in ambush for them, and they found themselves surrounded. Bingguok was killed almost immediately apparently without any pleas for mercy. Jeikwarogu dived into some bushes and hid but straight away bounded out shouted, "*I am a child of God why should I hide? Shoot me and shoot Jesus too.*" I cannot remember having taught him, but evidently in that moment the Holy Spirit brought to his heart the truth that "*In all our afflictions He is afflicted*" and he was not alone when he faced the savagery of his attackers. The next moment he was shot through the chest and fell. In this manner they died, the first two martyrs of the TALI [Yali] tribe.

What will be the outcome of the tragedy? To the killers it has no doubt been a triumph of the power of fetishes over the power of God. The NINIA people are still jittery, fearing further attacks. The faith of some Christians, especially that of the relatives of the martyred boys, has been severely shaken, while others have come through the time of testing triumphantly, their faith and courage strengthened. From our little group of tested Christians, we have lost two of our most outstanding, for both were preachers and Jeikwarogu especially had a real gift in this regard, while Bingkok taught literacy classes and Jeikwarogu taught Bible lessons. Even the death of our own first child was not a greater blow to us than the death of these two whom we had learned to love. Why should they be taken when they are needed so badly? The tempter comes with his age old slander, "*to what purpose was this waste?*"

We do not pretend to know all the purposes of God in this affair, but we do know that God who created countless millions of stars in the Universe, and set them each one whirling in its appointed orbit will not be frustrated by the puny opposition of man. We know that, "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to pulling down the strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God.*" We trust that these strongholds of Satan still remaining in the HELUK Valley and the surrounding areas will yet be smashed by the hammer of the Word of God; from this baptism of blood there will rise a sacrificial sanctified church; that from this dark and dreadful tragedy will yet in glory and the triumph of his grace.

Pray for us, for we have just returned to NINIA and will continue to preach the Gospel and build up the Church here. A corn of wheat has fallen to the ground and dried. May it bring forth much fruit in the days ahead.” ... **End of Mr. Dale’s narrative**

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In August 1968 Mr. Dale planned to explore the Solo and Seng valleys and seek to build an airstrip there¹¹. He was warned there was danger as these people were allied with those who wounded him in 1966. He ignored this warning. In September 1968 Mr. Dale and Phillip Jesse Masters, a Dani helper, Yemu, and three Dani carriers set out and crossed the Heluk/Seng divide into the Seng valley. The airstrip site proved to be too small. They sought to return the way they had come, but hostile warriors massed threateningly. They now decided to follow the Seng River northwards, intending to cross the divide into the upper Heluk. The warriors followed and finally attacked¹² at a place called Fumaha. Mr Dale threw fire crackers and the attackers fled. That evening they camped at Wikboon and radioed in that they would cross into the Heluk valley next day and reach Ninia that evening.

Next morning several hundred warriors surrounded the missionaries as they were breaking camp. The missionaries commenced talking with the warriors following them. Finally, there were war cries... The war cry resounded again, much closer now. Suddenly they came floundering through the river, bows held high. Others streamed down through the forest. Mr. Dale and Yemu stood at the lower end of a gravel beach. Mr. Masters was alone at the other end, and the three Dani [carriers] waited another 30 metres beyond Mr. Masters.

A Yali traditional priest named Bereway slipped around behind Mr. Dale and at point blank range shot an arrow in under his upraised right arm. Another Yali priest Bunu shot a bamboo bladed shaft into Stan’s back just below his right shoulder. As the arrows entered his flesh Stan pulled them out one by one, broke them and cast them away...until he could not keep ahead of them...some thirty arrows found their mark in Mr. Dale’s body¹³.

The warriors now turned their attention to Mr. Masters. Yemu and the three Dani carriers waited until they knew Dale was too badly wounded to survive - they threw their packs away and bolted. Although the Yali were not head-hunters, Bunu moved by fear beheaded both Stan and Phil. Still not satisfied, the killers stripped both bodies and cut them to pieces. From the beginning it had been planned for a cannibal feast.¹⁴

The four Dani’s separated. Two reached Ninia, but no one there could speak the Dani language, so one of the Dani carriers spoke Dani into the radio to another Dani at Karubaga – reporting what had happened. Yemu finally arrived but he had no idea what happened to the 4th carrier Dangan.¹⁵ Next morning word reached a small geological survey team in the PNG side of the border in the Star Mountains 159 miles away. Ex Kiap John MacGregor, the OIC of Olsobip³ Patrol Post in the Kiunga sub District, Western District takes up the story :-

Olsobip Intelligence Report No 2/1968-69.

- 1. Subject.** The deaths of two missionaries and two adherents – Ninia, West Irian [later known as Irian Jaya and later still, the Indonesian province of Papua]
- 2. Location.** Ninia mission station near the Baliem valley entrance to highlands. Incident occurred near the lower Heluk valley, Kaubak group.
- 3. Date.** About 25th Sept. 1968. Informant visited the area on the 27th Sept. and 28th Sept. 1968.

³ Olsobip in the Western District is 17 miles south of Telefomin in the West Sepik [Sandaun] district.

4. **Report.** On 27th of September, 1968 aircraft VS-FJP which is a 47G-3B1 helicopter⁴, was cleared by D.C.A. to assist in an air search around the Ninia area. Mr. Robert Hamilton was the pilot and his information was as follows :-

Refuelled Star Mountains base camp, proceeded to Kawakit. Mission airstrip... 1.20 [time?] from base camp. With M.A.F. Cessna 185 PK-MPJ as guide went to the north side of the range to Kiwi Mission airstrip...and thence to Maltja... From Maltja to Ninia, (Altitude 6,600', strip 1,300' long very rough with the last 1/3 of the strip at 24-degree angle – closes in the afternoon due to high winds and fog). All airstrips visited were one-way. Overnighted at Ninia mission.

On the 28th September at 6.00am proceeded to a valley 20 minutes north east of Ninia at 9,000'. Commenced shuttle runs.

1. Dropped off missionary and soldier in valley, returned to Ninia.
2. Dropped off interpreter and Bren gun.
3. Dropped off missionary and soldier.

Noted on the ridge (about 200' above the valley), a cluster of houses, where the natives appeared highly agitated. Natives armed but scattered when helicopter came close. M.A.F. Cessna operating in the same area, watching for movements of people in the valley, whilst helicopter completed shuttle operations. Then flew two trips into actual ambush site, high in the valley, in a creek bed – dropped off and picked up one missionary, two soldiers and one interpreter. Flew parties to Ninia. Then to base camp near Olsobip.

The party that visited the ambush site discovered 60 – 80 arrows, one shirt, one radio antennae and some broken teeth on the ground. Some of the arrows had blood on them. The two missionaries were unarmed due to the Indonesian policy of withdrawing missionary firearms in 1963. Proceeded up to two garden houses, where there was a lot of blood and fire places, the feast site¹⁶. **Writer's Note:** This strongly implies, without actually saying, that the victims were cannibalised. On the question of cannibalism, Don Richardson reports :-

“Did you people devour Phil and Stan?” we asked through interpreters.

“Of course we did: we ALL ate them.” He lied - seven years would pass before the truth came out – cremation.

Writer's Note: In such circumstances, it is the writers experience based on dozens of murder investigations, that the statements made by defendants on initial arrest are entirely truthful. In this case, the story which evolved seven years after the event, in the writer's view, is the truth as Mr. Richardson would like to have it.

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A month after the murders on 25th October 1968, six soldiers, seven police, one District Officer and 40 carriers assembled at Ninia...to pacify by force if necessary the Yali people of the Seng valley. Frank Clark, a UBMU field leader and missionary/author Don Richardson accompanied the patrol.¹⁷ Near the site of the murders the patrol was attacked by arrows and bounders from above. One carrier was wounded by an arrow. Eleven prisoners were taken of whom five sought to escape and were shot dead.¹⁸

There was an interesting post-script to this story :-

⁴ The helicopter and geological survey were presumably involved in the Ok Tedi copper/gold deposit survey.

MAF aircraft MPH *Mike Papa Hotel* was seeking to land at Mukia. Pilot Menno said he was following the Baliem River but unbeknownst to him he was actually in the Seng River. His passengers that day were Gene and Lois Newman and their children Paul aged 9, Steven 5, Joyce 3 and Johnathan 1. The plane crashed and burned – all were killed except Paul who escaped and was found by a Yali elder called Kusaho

Ruth Pontier had been communicating with pilot Menno aboard MPH when he suddenly went off air. She reported her fears, and MAF search and rescue swung into action. The PNG helicopter was called back to help, and the wreckage of MPH was found close to where the murders of Messrs Dale and Masters had taken place. The bodies were collected from the wreckage and by luck Paul Masters was seen rushing down the hill towards the helicopter as it was about to leave. Paul pointed up the hill and said “*A man who lives up there took good care of me*”. By way of repayment and reciprocated good will, Frank Clark arranged the release of the Yali prisoner Sel in Wamena and he was flown home to the Seng valley by helicopter before it returned to its PNG base.¹⁹

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There can be no doubt that Stan Dale was a man of great courage or that it was the strength of his Christian convictions that killed two young Yali Christians, Jeikwaragu and Bingguok and very nearly killed him in 1966 - and finally did kill him and Mr. Phillip Masters in September 1968, as well as two more native acolytes.

The other people with the courage of their religious convictions, at that time and in that place, were the Yali tribesmen who killed these six Christians. In this case both the RBMU missionaries and at least six Yali traditional “true believers” lost their lives for what they believed.

Mr. Dale equated Yali ‘*fetishes*’ and associated beliefs from the perspective of his Christian beliefs – linking them with a ‘*deeply entrenched Satanic system*’. It is apparent that, in no way did he recognise or accept that since the beginning of Yali time, traditional religion had developed in the Heluk and adjacent valleys. It was local faith in that traditional religion that allowed the Yali people to survive and prosper in their local cosmos, including a difficult natural environment.

Colonial agencies brought with them at least three identifiable elements of change in relation to traditional religious practices in Melanesian societies :-

- 1. Intolerance or ignorance of traditional religion and attempted forced evangelism.** Mr. Dales approach appears to have fallen not far short of this extreme. His conviction was that ‘*... a complete and final break with the past is a matter of necessity as a safeguard against backsliding into old pagan ways.*’

Such an approach seeks to impose an overriding belief system [in this case the religion of Christianity] on a society with existing religious beliefs. Exploring this a step further, Mr. Dale arrived into the Yali world and no doubt approved of the success of Yali sweet potato subsistence agriculture, believing that a future Yali Christian community had assured food security. However Yali gardening success, as in all successful subsistence gardening societies, would rely upon age old cultivation practices as well as garden magic and rituals related to soil fertility and productivity. Chapter 38 provides an example of a taro crop failure and related consequence when a traditional religious principle was not complied with.

Coupled to the above, traditional sacred objects were integral components of ritual which ensured not only successful gardening, but perpetuation of the male age class system through initiation, the preservation of tribal oral history, human fertility, success in hunting and warfare, as well as belief in the powers of the spirits of dead ancestors and the supernatural. This intricate web

sustained trust in the continued existence and prosperity of themselves and their cosmos as they perceived it.

- 2. A moderated Christian Mission approach.** We saw at the start of this chapter that Mr. Dale's work in PNG with the UFM and CMML each resulted in the termination of his services as he was seen by his peers to be '...*too hard on the natives*'.

It is understood that the ultimate aim of Christian missions in Melanesia is to encourage the local tribal people to assess and embrace their particular denominational interpretation of Christianity. Ideally this would see the people, of their own free will, adopt Christian values if they chose to do so. In PNG, the Australian colonial administration required that its field officers work alongside the Christian missions and generally avoid interference with their work. This harmony however came under scrutiny where it was necessary for recognition of traditional religious beliefs as "Common Law."

- 3. Recognition of traditional religious beliefs as "Common Law."** There were differences of interpretation between *A Moderated Christian approach* and a secular approach to traditional indigenous religions. PNG's Native Customs Recognition Ordinance of 1963 [now the Native Customs Recognition Act] recognised "native custom" as PNG Common Law, with the exception of customs which were repugnant to statutory law such as rape and murder.

The Australian colonial administration of PNG [and today the Independent State of PNG] recognised the value of traditional society for the stability it provided in the rural life of the country. Such things as tribal initiation ceremonies, the haus tambarans and curative health rituals, which were unacceptable to the missions, were "legal" according to the Administration.

End Note Chapter 41

¹ Correspondence in section 3 of an arch-leaver file of Archival correspondence marked "Telefomin" – Bragge Sepik Archive.

² Richardson D. *Lords of the Earth* – Regal Books, a division of GL Publishing – Ventura California 1977 Page 114

³ Richardson D 1977 page 122

⁴ Dale S. *In death Triumphant*. A report written by Mr Dale soon before his death in September 1968. Page 1

⁵ Richardson D 1977 page 131/2

⁶ Richardson D 1977 page 145

⁷ Richardson D 1977 page 138

⁸ Richardson D 1977 page 241

⁹ Richardson D 1977 page 258

¹⁰ Richardson D 1977 page 279

¹¹ Richardson D 1977 page 289

¹² Richardson D 1977 page 296

¹³ Richardson D 1977 page 305

¹⁴ Richardson D 1977 page 307

¹⁵ Richardson D 1977 page 313

¹⁶ MacGregor J Olsobip Intelligence Report No 2/1968-69.

¹⁷ Richardson D 1977 page 322

¹⁸ Richardson D 1977 page 339

¹⁹ Richardson D 1977 page 350.

Sepik 4 Chapter 42. Doctor Hatanaka and Further Exploration of the Hewa¹ 1967-71

Introductory comment.

During 1965, Japanese anthropologist Dr. Sachiko Hatanaka visited Lake Kopiago. She was interested to meet Hewa people who lived in the Lagaip/and Upper Strickland river areas. The little-known Hewa were of particular interest to anthropologists. Although Papua New Guinea no longer had true hunter-gatherers in its population, the Hewa were the next best thing. They were semi-nomadic and relied more upon hunting and gathering than on agriculture for their subsistence. They were indeed a group worthy of study, as they could shed valuable light upon the critical phase of human evolution of transition from nomadic hunting and gathering to the sedentary lifestyles based upon an agricultural economy.

Moreover, there was a critical time factor involved. How long would the Hewa continue their present life-style? They presumably knew of the neighbouring Duna and Huli tribes who were very successful sedentary agriculturalists. Why then, had the Hewa not already adopted agriculture? The more that was learned about the Hewa, the more interesting they became as a study group.

Dr. Hatanaka met the Catholic priest from the Lake Kopiago mission. He arranged for a group of Duna tribal youths including a female companion to escort her down into the Strickland Gorge in the hope of meeting Hewa people. But before they could do so, they examined a vacant Hewa house and found it contained human skulls. This sufficiently frightened the Duna guides, that they immediately led Dr. Hatanaka back to Lake Kopiago.

At Lake Kopiago Dr. Hatanaka approached the Patrol Officer in charge, requesting permission to study the Hewa. He refused, pointing out that most of the Hewa country was still restricted, and therefore closed to outsiders¹.

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During 1967, in my capacity as ADC Telefomin, I received a letter from Dr Hatanaka, seeking permission to conduct field work among the Hewa people of the Om River area. She explained that her application for access to the Hewa in the Western Highlands via Lake Kopiago had been rejected. She then met Patrol Officer Norm Wilson who suggested she apply to ADC Telefomin as some Hewa people were administered from Oksapmin in the Telefomin sub district. Mr. Wilson had patrolled the area himself a couple of years earlier.

As indicated in Chapter 37, the writer's 1966 ten-week exploration of the Sepik Strickland divide including the Om River area, found the "Hewa" people to be friendly and I considered that an anthropologist of Dr. Hatanaka's experience would be safe. Also, I saw great value in encouraging the documentation of in-depth anthropological research that the infrequent visits by patrol officers could never achieve.

In considering Dr. Hatanaka's application, I reviewed all that I knew of the initial and early contact history of the Lagaip restricted area.

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The initial contact with the Lagaip River Hewa.

Patrol Officer John Black's return eastward from Telefomin during the Hagen-Sepik patrol of 1938-9, brought his patrol down the Om River to the Om/Lagaip River junction on 19th February 1939. From there he followed the north [the right] bank of the Lagaip River upstream. Mr. Black's patrol was in the unenviable position of needing to hurry because of lack of food and therefore not

¹ "Hewa" is a Huli word referring to people who live in areas of lower altitudes and therefore malarial. Further to the east, the Mendi related languages use the word "Kewa" to mean the same thing.

having the time to make friends with the Hewa people through whose country his patrol passed. Some Hewa lives were lost when they attacked the patrol. The Taylor and Black Hagen/Sepik patrol of 1938-9, including the Hewa attacks, is described in Sepik 2 Chapter 47.

Subsequent Western Highlands patrols that contacted Hewa People.

1960 – POs B. McBride and R. Henderson's Lagaip/Strickland Patrol contacted some of the Hewa population between the Urubwa River and the Strickland gorge. The patrol did not cross the Lagaip to the north bank and this particular area had not been penetrated since Mr. Black's patrol [this comment was made by David Permezel in 1962/3]²

1961 – Lake Kopiago and Oksapmin Patrol Posts were established to the south of the Hewa country.

Kopiago Patrol No 4/1962-63 – a/ADO D.F. Permezel. This patrol visited the Hewa area south of the Lagaip River.

Lake Kopiago Patrol Number unknown POs D.J.Hook and W.Cawthorn – in September 1964 visited the south west portion of the Hewa following the de-restriction of South Hewa.³

Lake Kopiago Patrol No 1 1965-66 P.O. P.E. [Norm] Wilson – South Hewa Division

1967 Developments in the Om and Lagaip River areas

On 3rd March 1967, I learned from Neil Robinson, the OIC Oksapmin, of a reported murder committed in the Lower Lagaip River restricted area. The alleged murders were reported to have been committed by the Sisimin "Hewa" men of the Oksapmin administrative area. Details of the alleged incident were vague and the information was passed to the OIC at Lake Kopiago as the alleged killing had taken place in his area.

On 17th March 1967, a man called Mo reported to Oksapmin Patrol Post that there had been two reprisal raids against the Yoliape [Sisimin] people. I flew to Oksapmin and interviewed Mo who said:

Oksapmin groups Yoliape and Remban raided a Western Highlands group called Suwiyafi and killed a man called Yamia and in reprisal the Suwiyafi killed a Yoliape woman called Miamai who was married into Suwiyafi. Then Muriaf of Suwiyafi led a raid that killed Mo's brother Amufo, a man of the Nafiafi group – North Hewa.

The problem appeared to be escalating, and to that date all the alleged killing had occurred in the Lagaip River area. The responsibility to investigate rested with the OIC of Lake Kopiago, Mr. Ian Smalley. However, he was unavailable as he was investigating another murder. The DC of the West Sepik, Mr. Clancy, obtained permission from the DC of the Western Highlands for an Oksapmin patrol to enter the North Hewa Restricted Area to investigate and take whatever action was found necessary.

That patrol consisted of myself, ADC L. Bragge, OIC Oksapmin, N. Robertson, ten police, one medical orderly, one interpreter and 76 carriers. The patrol objectives were:

1. To investigate three reported murders.
2. Initial contact
3. Extension and consolidation of Administration influence.
4. To seek to resolve ill-will between feuding groups.

23rd May 1967

As the patrol would enter uncontrolled territory, five rounds of ammunition were issued to each of the ten police. The standard firing orders were given with a modification. Reports from Marks' 1963, and Lancaster's 1964 Om River patrols described drawn bows with the arrow not being released. It was suggested therefore that the Hewa may behave in a threatening manner but stop short of

releasing arrow. Therefore, additional care must be taken before firing on apparently hostile people in this area. I was preaching to the converted - among the ten police selected in 1967 were Constables Yanopa and Mandekai who had been involved in the said drawn bows incidents in 1963/4. The ten police also included reliable experienced men including Kaupa, Lavion and Barun who would set an example for the younger police in the patrol team.

24th May

Upon arrival at Yoliape a strong party of police was sent in search of the alleged killers, while the rest of the patrol set up camp on the bank of the Om River and started collecting cane to build the bridge that would allow the patrol to cross to the north bank of the river.

25th May

The police party sent out yesterday, returned with several Yoliape people. Of these Gadei/Fetateli and Ebinei/Bagawon were arrested and charged with the murder of Yamia. The Yoliape leader Feiyau was also detained as an accessory before the fact. A party consisting of Constables Lavion, Wusi, Matapo and Amatus were confronted by brothers Masiu/Morubin and Uwalu. Uwalu fitted an arrow to his bow and drew it back to its full extent as Constable Wusi approached. Wusi managed to disarm Uwalu and both brothers were arrested without injury to them or the police. Yet again [thankfully] the arrow was not released.

26th May 1967.

Six prisoners were sent to Oksapmin with Constable Amatus and Matapo and eight carriers. The partly constructed bridge was washed away by flash flooding, so construction work recommenced.

28th May

The patrol crossed the new bridge and moved east, crossing the Karu River, a tributary of the Om River and thereby entered the North Hewa Restricted Area. At this point the patrol passed under a forest canopy which housed a colony of hundreds of thousands flying foxes roosting in the trees with nearly of the foliage stripped away. Forty-five minutes later the patrol reached Mr. Marks 1963 camp site. After several hours further walk, we set up camp on Mr. Lancaster's 1964 camp site. This served to remind us that the "Sisimin" of Yoliape now regarded as West Sepik people, migrated from the Lower Lagaip River area in 1964-5.

Mr. Robinson, three police, our interpreter and I, continued on to a new garden and communal fortress style house on posts estimated to be 30 feet tall on a ridge high above the Lagaip River. The inhabitants met us in a friendly manner with gifts of sugar cane. We were able to communicate through Interpreter Wuniot. A lad from our welcoming party was asked to find Mo for us, as we were here at his request. We returned to camp for the night promising to move our camp into their area next day.

Mo duly arrived at the patrol camp with two other men. After accepting gifts of matches there was a discussion which brought some clarity to the situation that we were here to investigate. Firstly, Mo's brother Amufo, originally reported murdered was still alive – Mo had been misinformed. When asked, Mo confirmed that the Yoliape woman Miamai was indeed still dead.

I ascertained that we were dealing with two separate groups of Hewa people each with two names; Mo's group which he called Nafiafi, was also known as Afenam. They had been contacted by Mr. Lancaster in 1964 and the next group upstream, an uncontacted group called the Suwiyafi, was also known as the Puyari.

The Yoliape [Sisimin], allied with Nafiafi [Afenam], had reportedly killed Yamia of Suwiyafi who were unreliably reported to have conducted reprisal raids killing Amufo, who turned out to be still alive. Mo named three Suwiyafi men who had allegedly killed Miamai.

29th May

The patrol moved as planned and while clearing the camp site a human skull was found on an old tree stump. We were in the Nafiafi area and the people appeared to be reluctant to come into the patrol camp unless Mo was with them.

I learned that the trade routes here, fit in with the Om and Leonard Schultze Rivers routes in relation to stone axe trade, but unlike the Leonard Schultze River people, these people do not claim descent from Telefomin's ancestress [*Afek* in Telefomin and known as *Babasebai* on the Om and Leonard Schultze River areas]⁴

30th May

The patrol was underway early, moving upstream along the Lagaip River in company with nine Nafiafi/Afenam men. Before 9.00 am the patrol halted on a grassy plateau high above the Lagaip River. From this vantage point there were gardens and houses visible on all sides. An Nafiafi/Afenam elder was sent to inform the Suwiyafi of our presence. Shouting and yodeling suddenly sounded from the ridge tops. The translated message was "*A big group of men has come.*" After that there was an extended period of silence.

Shortly after midday there was a shout from a nearby garden to our east. The shouted message was that the people were assembled there and they would come in, when the people from our north came in. I warned the police to be watchful of this apparent pincer movement against us.

About 30 people came into the camp. They carried with them an abundant supply of fresh foods to trade. None of them was carrying a weapon apart from a couple of steel axes carried at the hip; the handles passed down through the cane "cow-catcher" girdles as described on the next page. Salt, matches, face paint and beads were the trade items they most wanted in payment for their food offerings. The story of this contact is taken up by Oksapmin patrol report No 2/1966-67:⁵

The present patrol made initial contact with the Puyari people to the extent that one man only could recall seeing and running away from Mr. Black's 1939 patrol. The remainder of the group claimed never before to have seen Europeans; this seems incredible as these people are located only two day's-walk from Oksapmin and about three days from Lake Kopyago station. These people know about both stations...

The patrol entered the Puyari area with caution as a threat of an attack had been passed on to the patrol by Mo of Afenam. Luckily, we were able to reach the heart of the Puyari area by moving along the river bank without being seen.

The remainder of the day and the next were both enjoyable and amusing. Everywhere we looked there were people shaking their heads and clicking their tongues in wonderment, picking up this and that and examining it [our equipment] minutely; of particular interest was a spade...Meal times...It was embarrassing being watched how we used the knife and fork and hearing this activity being discussed in Hewa language between the onlookers. The writer offered half a cup of tea to one onlooker. He looked uncertainly at me and then at the cup and then at his friends, who urged him on. He awkwardly sipped from the cup, made an exclamation and passed it to a friend to try. After each meal it became the accepted thing that the locals had the remains of the tea, and they savored the beverage down to the last slop and tea leaf.

Mr. Robinson's hair was examined minutely and fondled whenever it came within reach. Rifles and revolvers were inspected from a distance and comments about them were usually made in whispers. Clearly the rifles were recognized as weapons and an excellent opportunity to show off firepower, without being offensive, presented itself when the Puyari sold a pig to the patrol. [After explaining what was about to happen] Constable Yanopa shot

the pig. The path of the bullet was traced through the pig and into the ground. The people clearly had not expected the amount of noise that the shot made; they covered their ears and clung to each other and clicked their tongues.

It was pointed out that these weapons were used by the Administration for defense only. The Administration did not like to fight. Because bullets have the same effect on people that they do on pigs, and that bows and arrows were no match for these weapons...the local people seemed most impressed.

Relations with the group were excellent from the outset. The patrol left after gifts had been given to the headman of Puyari and to Mo. This prompted a short speech from the Puyari headman about how pleased his group was to be visited by an Administration patrol and how he had listened to, and intended to follow the discussions about law and order...

The typical Puyari man was seen to be wearing shredded croton leaves to cover the genitals and buttocks, woven arm and leg bands with grass tufts tucked into the armbands. A cane girdle of the type worn throughout the Telefomin sub district, except that the front of Hewa girdles is built up with woven cane that resembled an inverted railway train "cow catcher" The hair is caught up in a large string bag covered 'bun'. This bun is often decorated with leaves. Pig tusks are worn through the septum of the nose. The tusk usually has a pig tail thrust into the open end of it. String bags are decorated with a cane ring that has up to two dozen pig tails attached to it, as an apparent indication of hunting prowess. Puyari men appear to take great pride in their appearance and are most impressive to see.

The Puyari women are less decorative. They wear a full grass skirt similar to those worn by Oksapmin women. The only other decoration commonly seen is a necklace of two pig tusks joined together like mounted bull's horns with several 'girigiri' [small white cowrie shells] attached around the centre join of the tusks. Some women and most men wear a string of Job's tears across the chest under the armpit and up the back and under the other armpit, so they cross front and back...

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The Murder Investigation and Proceedings

The reason the Afenam people were involved was that the Yoliape [who stand accused of the murder of Yamia of Suwiyafi] had lived with them in the Lower Lagaip area until two or three years earlier, before migrating westward into the West Sepik. District.

The patrol was warned by Mo that the Suwiyufi [Puyari]...threatened to attack the first patrol that entered their territory. With this in mind a force of ten police accompanied the patrol. It was decided that, as the Puyari had only been recently contacted, a lengthy discussion on law and order under Administration policies would suffice, and their alleged activities prior to contact would be overlooked. However, a warning was issued that any further unlawful activity would result in Administration punishment.

The action taken in the matter of the alleged death of Yamia was limited by the fact that no witness to Yamia's death could be obtained and nor was the body recovered. The four men participating in the raid made statements to the effect that they shot Yamia with arrows, but they did not see him die. [He fell into the Lagaip and was swept away, alive]. The decision was taken that there was insufficient evidence of death to sustain a willful murder charge. [Therefore] at Oksapmin on the 5th June 1967 a Local Court case found the defendants Masiu/Morubin, Uwalu/Morubin, Gadei/Fetateli and Ebinei/Bagawon guilty of willfully using violence towards Yamia, contra Section 83(a) of the Native Administration Regulations 1924 as amended to date.

The two men arrested as accessories before the fact included Luluai and former fight leader Feiyau. They were taken to Oksapmin with the four above mentioned and were made to sit in on the Local Court Case. A warning about future law breaking and violence was issued and a lengthy lecture given about Administration. policy. The arrest, and being marched to Oksapmin as a prisoner, should indicate to Feiyau that he is neither above the law or invincible. This and his eventual release amounted to a successful show of strength on the part of the Administration... Feiyau said as he was released that he recognized the strength of the kiap and wished to live at peace with the Administration.⁶

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The writer concluded that the situation the patrol found at Yoliape and the lower Lagaip River area was sufficiently stable to allow Dr. Hatanaka to undertake field research at there. Two members of the RP&NGC as well as Interpreter Wuniot would be stationed there as well for protection, and as an Administration listening post for any unrest that might develop.



Above left - Dr. Sachiko Hatanaka

Above right - Hewa former fight leader and Luluai Feiyau.

28th October 1967

Dr. Hatanaka arrived in Oksapmin and was met by the new OIC Mr. Chris Van Lieshout. For obvious security reasons, she was not allowed to go to Yoliape until the Sisimin prisoners were released. She spent her time at Oksapmin goal with the Yoliape prisoners learning their language.

11th November 1967

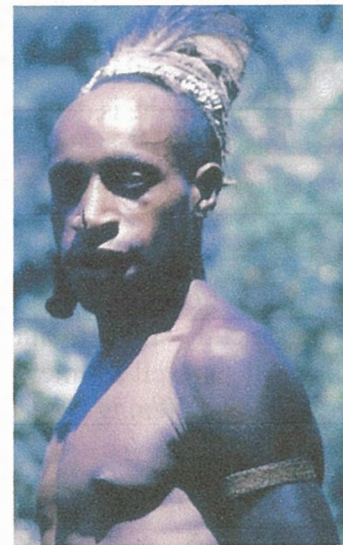
After arriving from Telefomin with CPO R. Hutchings on 6th November, the writer released one Yoliape prisoner on 7th and he was sent ahead to warn the Yoliape people of the patrol's intended arrival on the 11th. Oksapmin Patrol No 1/1967-68 consisted of the writer, C. Van Lieshout, R. Hutchings, Interpreter Wuniot, six police and Dr. Hatanaka. After leaving Oksapmin on 10th November, the patrol arrived at the writer's 1966 Om River camp site at 10.50am on the 11th. There, the patrol met with Luluai Feiyau and his people who made Dr. Hatanaka and the patrol welcome.

A house site was selected and five days were spent building a house for Dr. Hatanaka. This activity was interwoven with discussions with Feiyau and the Yoliape people, concerning Dr. Hatanaka living among them and conducting her research for the next 15 months. Constable Wari, one of two police who would remain with Dr. Hatanaka, was shown how to operate an A510 portable radio so he could communicate with Telefomin and Oksapmin. During those five days the patrol was visited by friends from Afenam and Puyari from North Hewa and from Remban and

Suamin in the Om Valley. The Yoliape assisted with the house construction by bringing in eighteen large sheets of heavy tree bark for the walls of the house.



Dr. Hatanaka's house being built.



A Yoliape youth 1967

15th November 1967

The patrol departed at 7am for Oksapmin, leaving Dr. Hatanaka with a new secure house and police protection for her to commence her field research among a Sisimin community.

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As the fate of staff postings would have it, I was posted as ADC Ambunti, East Sepik from 1970 to 1974, and while there I conducted two more patrols into the Sepik/Strickland Divide territories of the Sepik Hill language groups to whom the Hewa belong. This involved the exploration of the April and Salumei River headwaters:

- Ambunti patrol report 4/1970-71 – April River exploration east of the Bamali River tributary.
- Ambunti patrol 19/1970-71 – April River headwaters, with David Attenborough, during which a one-hour documentary was produced entitled *A Blank on the Map* – Chapter 46

Having remained in communication with Dr. Hatanaka, she was kind enough to suggest that we co-author a paper – she, to discuss her in-depth findings at Yoliape, and I to discuss my patrol observations and mapping of the Om and Sepik/Strickland Divide region. The paper was entitled *Habitat, Isolation and Subsistence Economy in the Central Range of New Guinea – Oceania 1973; 44:38-57*. The following summarizes highlights of the Oceania article which provided an important learning curve for me: -

Page 38. The people in our discussion do not form tribes or clan groups as most highlanders do. Their primary social group is limited to an extended family and is a unit of movement. Each kin group, called *rei* has its own name...The people in the Om-Lagaip area were called “Sisimin” and “Hewa” by Australian Government officials, although we call them “Saiyolof” using the local name. The Saiyolof believe that their ancestors separated from the Saiyo people of the upper Lagaip and migrated to Sai raro (the lower Lagaip).

Page 39 The Saiyolof are adjacent to the Oksapmin in the South, the Telefomin in the west and the Duna in the south-east but bear little resemblance to these better-known highland peoples. Their general appearance and material culture are similar to the Negrito of the Malay Peninsular...

Page 40 The Saiyolof belong to the Sepik language family whose speakers are an estimated 7,000 people comprising 14 dialects [or languages] in 1972.² This group extends from the Upper Sepik area to the southern foothills of the Central Range, ...people living among the tributaries of the upper Sepik River were studied as sago gatherers (Townsend, 1972) ...people living in the foothills of the Central Range had simple cultivation and largely depended upon wild food resources until their contact with the government. They still look like semi sedentary horticulturalists. There were approximately 1,200 people living in the Om-Lagaip area. The Saiyolof make up about one fourth of this population...

Recent pacification [in the 1960's] altered the Saiyolofs life from a semi-sedentary to a sedentary way of life. In the semi-sedentary stage, the size of community in which men were able to live was controlled by supply...accordingly the individual group did not exceed 20 to 30 people³. Pacification in the area permitted a great expansion in travel...A prerequisite of the development of Saiyolof society was caused by the end of warfare and the introduction of the sweet potato.

This table below provides refinements on the writer's understanding of the language structure as shown in the table on the last page of Chapter 37. I believe it remained true to say that not only was the language structure of the Sepik Strickland Divide area not fully researched at that time, but that following pacification, group amalgamations and the increased use of lingua franca saw languages dying out; the Paiemo, as discussed in Chapter 37, being a probable case in point.

The Saiyolof and adjacent groups

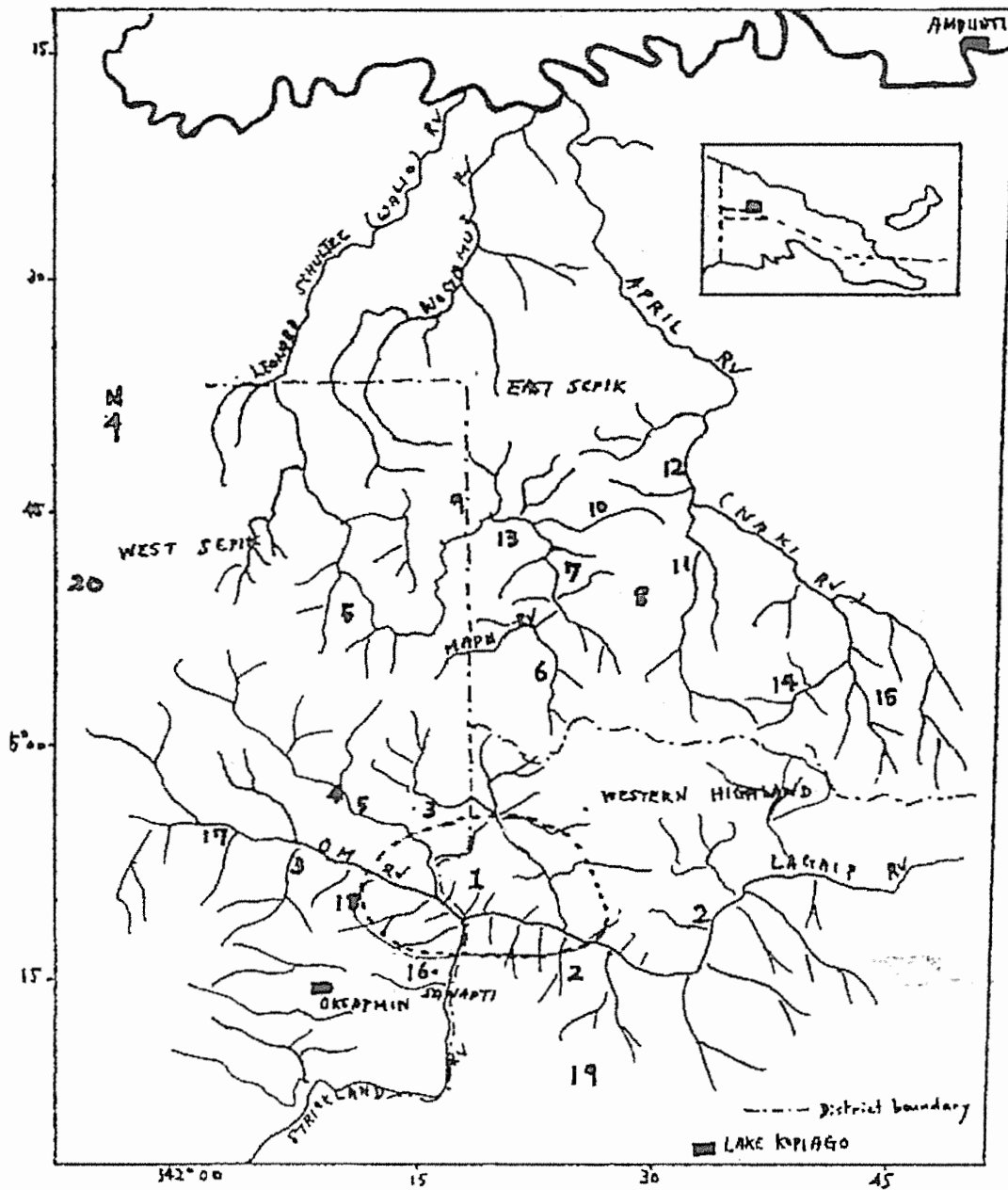
Language Family	Group	Name given by Administration.	Est. Popn 1970-72
Sepik Hill Family	Saiyo	Sisimin Hewa	250
ditto		Hewa - Southern Lagaip [derestricted 1964]	820
ditto	Asaba	Morobarumin – Middle Om River	30
ditto	Oba	Emiapmin – North Lagaip restricted area	30
ditto	Omai	Unagapmin/Kapiano – Nth of Central Divide	81
ditto	*Yarumui	Yarumui Upper – Nth of Central Divide	64
ditto	*Sumwali	Sumwali – Nth of Central Divide	13
ditto	*Miyali	Miyali – Nth of Central Divide	30
ditto	*Paka	Paka – Nth of Central Divide	51
ditto	*Siabio	Siabio – Nth of Central Divide	16
ditto	Setiali	Setiali – Nth of Central Divide	70
ditto	*Wilialife	Wilialife – Nth of Central Divide	70
ditto	*Biami	Biami – Nth of Central Divide	32
ditto	*Bikaru	Bikaru – Nth of Central Divide	60
Ok Om Family	Paiya	Duranmin – Middle Om River	80
ditto	Tuiali	Akiapmin – Upper Leonard Schultz River	94
ditto	Aupa	Akiapmin – Om River	38
ditto	Fouali	Suwanmin – Middle Om River	21
Unknown Family	Progue	Remban – Middle Om River	31
ditto	Tomiana	----- Middle Om River	-
ditto	Salago	Oksapmin	5,700

Page 45 Many Saiyolof were afraid of contact with the government and hid deep in the bush before 1966...Bragge had contact with 43 people living at the Om/Lagaip junction in 1966 but in 1967, 220 people appeared to Hatanaka. 79% had not previously seen a non-indigenous person.

² Dr. [Hatanaka] communication from Professor S. Wurm and Dr. D Laycock.

³ The environment was capable of providing sufficient food for only such a number of people. If more food was required to feed more people, the greater area involved would mean the hunter gatherers could not all return to their secure dwelling for the night – thus the population of the Rei was limited.

Location of local groups.



Map 1.

Local groups

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 1 Saiyo (Sisimin) | 8 Siabio | 15 Bikaru |
| 2 Hewa | 9 Miyali | 16 Salago |
| 3 Asaba | 10 Yarumui | 17 Suarmin |
| 4 Dranmin | 11 Wilialife | 18 Porogu or Tomianmin |
| 5 Akiapmin | 12 Paka | 19 Duna |
| 6 Kabiano | 13 Sumuali | 20 Unamo |
| 7 Setiali | 14 Biarni | |

The Saiyolof live in an area of approximately 1,000 square kilometres along the Om, Lagaip and Strickland Rivers. Their territory extends from the Om River up the Lagaip valley for about 30 kilometres. They demarcate the area into four territories: Yoliapi, Uiali, Konoife and Saiyo.

According to oral tradition, two local groups, Abalof and Asabalof, who spoke the same language came down to the Om from the upper Kotufa River. Their descendants spread eastwards. When the Saiyolof arrived after them, possibly from across the Central Range, there were no inhabitants in the Om/Lagaip area. The present inhabitants trace their genealogies back three or four generations. There were considerable populations of Yoliapi and Uiali before the 1930s. Many of the Saiyo and Uiali people were killed during raids by neighbouring tribes and the survivors were driven out to South and North Lagaip - that is, Saiyo and Konoife. Many rei near the Asabalof and Paiya became extinct due to warfare and non-fertility during the previous generation.

The Saiyolof and Asabalof have been fighting since time immemorial. At the end of 1961 an allied force of Paiya, Fouli, Aupa and some Telefomin groups invaded the Saiyolof area at the request of Asaba. The latter suspected that Saiyo sorcery had caused the death of their leader's wife. In 1962⁴ these raiders were arrested in the Upper Om area by patrol officers from Telefomin. While these raiders were in prison, the Saiyolof took revenge on the Asabalof who had occupied Yoliapi in 1963. The Asabalof were almost extinct. The Saiyolof knew that they would not be subject to any more raids from adjacent groups who were now under the control of the Administration. They returned from the Lagaip Valley to the Om Junction area, that is, to Yoliapi and Uiali, but the population in the area was still extremely sparse.

Writer's Note: Dr. Roger Ivar Lohmann of the University of Wisconsin-Madison produced several papers on the Asabano [Asabalof] between 1991 and 2000.

It should also be noted that Interpreter Wuniot who was used by the writer on patrols in Saiyolof areas was detested by the Saiyolof as he was a Duranmin man [of the Asabalof] arrested in the 1963 raids against the Saiyolof. While I was aware of this, I had no choice as there was no other Pidgin speaker available who could communicate with the Saiyolof. Wuniot, like some other Administration interpreters learned Pidgin while in gaol.

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Page 46 The residential house or base among the Saiyolof in peace times lasts from one to two years. Then the people move on...the Saiyolof usually stay in the same place as long as the garden has bananas...garden crops are the prime factor in controlling the duration of the residence.

The Saiyolof migration into the area during the last two decades was mostly caused by warfare or the establishment of new gardens⁵ their...residential houses, large, fortress-type structures, built five metres off the ground using existing trees...

The house accommodates an extended family and the front verandah may be as large as 13 m by 10 m. The supports for the house are standing tree trunks with the crown removed, further supported by long stakes and poles. The walls are round timbers closely bound with ropes and canes packed between with the leaf of the rattan cane. The house consists of one main room and enclosed verandahs and front and rear. Along each side of the communal house there are two hearths set below the flooring.

Construction follows the selection of an easily defended site surrounded by good gardening land. The most favoured sites are narrow ridges ending in an abrupt cliff with a fan shaped area of garden land on the hillside...The house is built on the edge of the cliff, thus making it unapproachable except along the narrow ridge crest. To reach this ridge crest people have to pass through up to about

⁴ L.W.Bragge – I believe this was in fact Arthur Marks patrol from Oksapmin in 1963

⁵ This evidence comes from patrol reports and aerial photos.

10 hectares of open cleared taro garden. At no point is the forest edge of the garden within arrow shot of the house.

The Asabalof used to obtain salt from the Saiyolof or the Obalof and barter it for bows and bilums from the Oksapmin area through the Porogu and stone axe blades and pigs from the Paiyalof and Aupalof. Feathers and various kinds of shells circulated among the groups. The trade route was well defined across the Central Range. Stone axes in the area originated near the tributaries of the Upper Leonard Schultze (Hapi) River where the Tuialilof and the Kabanolof live. The use of the stone axe which was a piece of capital equipment used in producing other goods indicates its great importance to subsistence in its various uses. The stone axe was also important in inter-personal relationships... Axe blades from the Upper Leonard Schultze area were traded through Saiyolof as far as Oksapmin [and on to Kiunga], Telefomin and Lake Kopyago.

[As mentioned] the primary social group, an extended family with patrilineal core called rei, is a residential unit. It is basically a foraging band in a forested terrain. The largest rei has 23 members. Formerly there were 42 rei [among the Saiyolof], which had more members altogether than the present rei total population. At present nine rei have only one survivor left. And three rei have incomplete families. The people can still recall the names of considerable numbers of rei which have become extinct. Originally the rei had only its own territory movement, but under government control its members can move around freely anywhere.

The Om and Lagaip Rivers divide the Saiyolof people into two regions. The rei originating north of the river do not marry with the rei originating on the south side.

The location of Rei [as at 1973].

Territorial Group	Admin. name	Rei
Yoliapi	Sisimin	Yoliapi, Neriafapu, Maruo, Waugapi*, Afua*
Uiali	Sisimin	Uiali, Sebaueni, Waren, Numeau, Korene, Terief, Wasim, Korien*, Fabureif*
Konoife [Saiuae]	Hewa	Koniife, Uinou, Opaifalu, Pafiani, Fonaien, Useki, Fanif*, Apif
Saiyo [Sairaro]	Hewa	Paialif [Wasif], Sateinom, Puari, Aiari, Kasi, Komapi, Fianiaru, Uitai, Peri, Minabif, Tori
Sairafani [Waiki]	Hewa	Tamariaf, Wasif, Tamgai, Useif [Waif]. Utauni, Puyari, Furuni, Tamani, Sifani.
*Rei which became extinct during the decade 1963 - 1973		

Saiyolof marriage is not strictly exogamous, seven of 53 couples whom we contacted included a spouse from outside the Saiyolof group. Two marriages involved the exchange of women, and in the others the spouses were from the Utauni in a far area. The Uiali derived from segmentation of the Utauni. The Yoliapi and Uiali groups experienced marked depopulation during the last few decades. Also, they lost many females as a result of tribal fighting and now there are many single males...

Women are never free in Saiyolof society. Child betrothal is very common; girls are married before puberty. After pacification in the area, the domestic group or household became stable and the number of married couples increased for two reasons despite the shortage of women among them. Three women were sent back by the kiap from the former enemy which had kidnapped them, and exchange of women with the adjacent population became possible with pacification.

Page 53 The Saiyolof do not have a leader with centralized power, although formerly all rei groups were federated under a leader for tribal fighting. The rei neither band together nor compose a corporate group. [Page 54] The Saiyolof... pattern of shifting cultivation does not include deliberate bush fallow... According to Brookfield's classification on a qualitative assessment of agricultural

methods in New Guinea, the Saiyolofs was the simplest one - no tillage, no forms of soil nutrient, erosion or water control. In the change from semi-nomadic to a sedentary way of life, gardening has changed from extensive to intensive cultivation. The Saiyolofs garden changed in both quantity and quality... In the case of shifting cultivation, the settlement traditionally moves. Most of the Saiyolof have resided in the same site for two or more years since 1967.

Page 56 The question of the relationship of pig to the Saiyolof is not yet clear. The Saiyolof distinguish a word for a wild pig, *yaiseni*, from a domestic pig *uife*. They had probably not domesticated pigs before, but in 1967 a few people began to obtain the *uife* from trade and fed them around their residences. Dogs are used to find and flush game and are very important for the Saiyolof, being one of their few properties...

Recently, the Saiyolof have been obliged to share their hunting area with Oksapmin people, especially the Salagolof living near the Government station. Because of this the Saiyolof have received some little domestic pigs from the Salagolof. They have obtained a variety of food plants from the Oksapmin area. The Saiyolof now bring tobacco, which grows very well in the Om/Lagaip valley, pandanus nuts, eggs of the bush turkey and sago starch to Oksapmin people in exchange for trade store goods and food plant. They will have more advanced knowledge of gardening through their frequent contact with Oksapmin people and before long will become subsistence farmers. **End of Quote ...**

Again, as the fate of staff postings would have it - in November 1974, I conducted an additional murder investigation, out of Lake Kopiago in the Hewa country north of the Lagaip River. That patrol [Koroba Patrol Report No 5/1974-75] is described in Chapter 53.

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Concluding comment: Upon re-reading this chapter half a century after the events and decisions described therein occurred, a passing thought: – “What if something bad had happened?” After all, Yoliape in 1967, was on the very edge of the North Hewa restricted area. The Administration would have had every right to have taken serious disciplinary action against me. Senior officers would scratch their heads and demanded *What were you thinking?*

My defense, would have relied upon the “kiap principle” of the man on the spot, being the best qualified to make the decision, taking into consideration all the facts available to him at the time. Happily, as it turned out to be a good decision, the story of which is continued in Sepik 5 Chapter 14 *The “Hewa” Cosmos in the Late 20th and early 21st centuries*

End Notes Chapter 42

¹ Personal communication with Professor Hatanaka in 2018

² D.P. Permezel – Lake Kopiago Patrol No 4/1962-63

³ S. Hatanaka research notes

⁴ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 15 – diary entry 29th May 1967

⁵ This patrol report is located in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 2

⁶ Oksapmin Patrol Report 2/1966-67 – extracts from pages 1-4

Chapter 43 The Bien River traditional revival 1970s.

This chapter should be read in conjunction with Sepik 2 Chapter 13 *Destruction of the traditional culture and religion in the Bien River area*. Chapter 43 is a story in two parts:

1. The story of the attempted cultural revival and how the Catholic mission defused it.
2. The story of logistics and community trust in buying the posts in the dry season and transporting them out when water levels made the Bien River navigable to canoes.

The story commenced in Sepik 2 Chapter 13 is continued here.¹ The story told by Ombos and Oromai elders in 1991 continues thus:

Ninga was a Bien River villager from the Lower Bien River, but who was living at Oromai. In 1966 he told the village people that the missionaries had a motive for their quick and final destruction of the haus tambarans and the traditional religion of the people. He claimed that it was to conceal the Secrets of the cargo.

Ninga proposed that a fully traditional haus tambaran be built for the crocodile totem with all the important ancestors of the clans represented in the art on the haus tambaran posts. The people would thereby be seen to show their respect for the ancestors to such an extent that the ancestral spirits would reveal to them the secrets of the cargo; secrets that were known only to the dead. He urged the people to carve the posts and build the haus tambaran as a matter of urgency while the elders who knew the myths and legends and who held the secret knowledge of the tambarans were still alive. Once the elders were gone the opportunity to access the cargo through Aion cultural knowledge would also be gone.

When the crocodile's eyes were carved, the whole earth went dark. There must have been an eclipse of the sun and the people took this as a sign that the talk of the cult was true.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the village people were firmly caught up in Ninga's cargo belief and they set about carving the posts for his haus tambaran. But there was a division of opinion among the village people. Someone from the Aion language group reported the carving of the images on the posts, and the reasons for it to Fathers Lena and Kwas at Marienberg. The priests came and blessed the posts, thereby neutralising the power of the ancestral images with Christian holy water. As a result, the haus tambaran was not built and Ninga cult beliefs died out.

Although Ninga's motivation was faulty in its cargo expectations, his project was very exciting as it sought to capture the combined traditional knowledge of the remaining elders of the Aion language group. This equates to an attempt to re-create the Aion "Old and New Testaments" in the form of carved images and associated telling of Aion oral histories.

Similar motivations had had happened in the early 1970s in the middle Sepik where elders were telling me their ancestral stories. It seems likely that Ninga's motivation was similar to that of his Middle-Sepik counterparts; a sense of an impending ending and a last chance to obtain the secrets of the cargo before it was too late.

My extensive cargo cult archive reference volumes [See Attachment 1] indicate Ninga's cargo cult was never recorded. There is also no known record of missionaries being tried for arson for the destruction of haus tambarans under the Criminal Code, or being tried under the Antiquities

Ordinance of the day for any offence. Ninga was reported to have moved to Arrange and then to Panging village where he died in 1984.

A “haus tambaran” was built in 1972 at Ombos, but it was a men’s meeting house only, without any traditional religious rituals, functions or attributes. In 1991 I saw a “haus tambaran” at Ombos, and when I returned in 1992 I saw that it had been demolished. Enquiries revealed that the house had been built in 1982. When asked about the short life of that particular house the elders replied that the building was never properly consecrated as a haus tambaran and as a result the people did not use it fully [or presumably maintain it]. The fact that that “haus tambaran” was no longer perceived as providing the people with an umbrella of protection was discussed as a key reason for the rise of sorcery in the area since the people adopted Christianity.



The three posts depicted here belonged to the Oi’il haus tambaran – built in 1971 and belonging to the Jimi clan of the Cassowary totem. The main instigator of the building of Oi’il haus tambaran was Dukonda of the flying fox clan of Agrant village. People from Singrin were invited to help and contributed some Singrin influence in the art work. The three posts each have personal names – Aium, Aij and Aguruk. Each is carved on both sides and each is described - top to bottom.

Aium Two small pigs heads above raised hands. The top figure with arms raised is the ancestor Aium of the Jimi clan. Next – female ancestress Gumuk. Next is a mask figure Aijam, then another male figure Oi’il. Next – the crocodile figure with two birds is not names. Then the mask called Ajianta.

Reverse side: Male figure Aium, female Ukuyjok – long nosed – she was dumb. Then Aigat, an ancestor who was always hungry, female Au’wul, male Jop, female Agamp with long nose, female Amia, male Awajamp with newly broken left arm.

Aij. This post is of the flying fox clan. The main carver was Dukonda of Akaian village. The top mask is Agamgagei, then male figure Aij, mask and chest of Obut. Male Agana, mask Kindom, female figure Grimangei – the evil female earth spirit who replaced Imburup’s wife. The lowest figure is Jandam, a male tambaran.

Reverse side. The flying fox Agul, Male Kiriba, Female Agogira. The next male is Aiop, who had a flying fox face, but who could also turn into a crocodile at will.

Aguruk.

This post is also of the flying fox clan “Agrap”. Flying fox Amai is at the cracked top of the post. Male Dirola – this figure has no eyes, as was the stated way of carving in the old Aion style. Then the female Gwama. The male with his hands over his eyes is Ginapo – female with flying fox face – Amok, Male Eveia. The last mask is Diok.

Reverse side. Mask under the fork is Duda. Next is the cultural hero Aguruk followed by the female Kirikina. The male Abit and a female Agruput. Last is a long nosed figure called Mapuk, an Aion leader of years long gone.



As a family historian I was fascinated by the fact that people in the village could trace descent those people depicted in the posts, and when the descent link was too distant, a relationship could still be claimed through clan membership – where descent links are known but cannot necessarily be proven. This is exactly as I know the Bragg family roots are in Devon and Dorset in the UK, the Bragg ancestral place – from where the family spread world-wide. The unity being in surname.

The collective known and remembered clan and family histories, including recent Aion tribal pre-history constitutes what my Middle Sepik informants would call the Aion “New Testament”. The stories of some of the carvings represent Aion myths and legends and totemic beings; the Aion “Old Testament.”

The purchase of the posts. My interest in these posts was prompted by three things:

1. The provenance of a fascinating story of cargo cult prompted by the earlier mission attempted destruction of Aion traditional religion.
2. The quality of the art work and the ready identification of individual figures on the posts. Also the fact that the whole exercise had re-created a community knowledge of Aion cultural history.
3. Decades of weathering that had beautifully aged these works of art.

The people, now dedicated Christians, wanted desperately to sell the posts. The clear impression I received was that the removal of the posts would help erase painful memories of a cultural mistake made by the clan fathers and grandfathers decades ago. My offer to buy some posts met with resounding agreement. I photographed posts and pieces of posts in order to lodge an export permit application with the PNG National Museum.

I was faced with three problems.

1. It was the dry season and water craft could not get in or out of Ombos and Oromai until the next wet season – some months into the future.
2. I could see the people wanted to sell all the posts and I was not sure if I wanted them all.
3. I wanted to spend more time there to better record the history, but my time was not my own.

I asked the village leaders whether, if I purchased some posts, could I leave them in the village in the care of a reliable person and come back in the wet season to transport them down the Bien River and to Angoram. This was agreed. The reliable carer; Adam of Oromai, was introduced and a “post caring fee” was agreed. Adam openly admired my back pack and I agreed that I would bring it back for him when I returned. As to the posts I did not buy, I would review the photos and think about them and possibly buy more of them when I returned in the wet season.



With this agreed. I then purchased selected posts and part posts, which were assembled outside Adam’s house in Oromai, where they would await the return of the rains. While passing through Port Moresby on my next R&R break from the oil industry, I lodged an export permit application for all of the posts I photographed as I knew in my heart that I would buy them all.

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On 23rd February 1992, as I passed back through Port Moresby I met with Dr Mark Buse of the Port Moresby museum and took possession of an export permit for the Bien River posts. From there I made my way to Angoram and arranged the hire of two 60 ft. long canoes, the largest that were available.

On 25th February 1992, With local helpers, I departed from Angoram with the canoes. We turned into the Bien River which was now in flood. We made our way without difficulty of Ombos, where we took on guides to show the way further upstream to Oromai. I was welcomed there as a long lost friend. The posts I had purchased were safe, and others, as yet unpurchased, were assembled ready for my inspection and price negotiations, which were quickly agreed. Adam of course was there and was pleased to accept the promised backpack. We loaded the canoes and commenced our journey back to Ombos, where we arrived just before dark.

I stayed overnight with an Ombos family and as usual the evening was spent recording the myths and legends as told by the village elders.

On 26th February the Ombos village people and I finalised the prices on some last remaining posts. Then with all my purchases loaded both canoes were very low in the water. We departed from Ombos at 8.55 am and turned out of the Bien River into the Sepik at 10.40 am. The laden canoes moved slowly against the current and the mild choppy waves on the Sepik River sent shivers down



the length of the canoes. A fleeting thought suggested to my vivid imagination that Ninga's ancestral spirits and totems were shaking the canoes in one last effort not to be taken from their Aion tribal resting place.

We reached Angoram with both canoes and their cargoes intact. There I employed 11 local men to unload the canoes and carry my purchases from the river bank and stack them carefully under a friend's house in the "Service camp" upstream of the Angoram wharf. There they would remain in until I was ready to ship them.

Foot note. Photos of the Ombos and Oromai Posts are located in Bragge Photo Album marked Tribal Art Vol 3. The diary of the both the 1991 and 1992 visits to Ombos and Oromai are to be found in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 26.

End Notes Chapter 43

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 26 Pages 102-122

After serving 1968 and 1969 in Milne Bay's Esa'ala Sub District, I was posted as ADC of the Ambunti Sub District to the East Sepik. My wife of two years, Beverley and I received an excellent introduction to the Sepik River as we and our personal effects were delivered from Wewak to Ambunti by the trawler *Andra*.

We made ourselves comfortable on board and departed from Wewak at 10pm, 23rd May 1970. At 5am on the 24th the *Andra* entered the mouth of the Sepik River and arrived at Angoram at 3.15pm. We were met there by ADC Frank and Mrs Faulkner. They showed us around the station and invited us to dinner.



Impressions of the Middle Sepik –

Above - The haus tambaran at Korogo

Below - Typical Iatmul face - Middle Sepik¹.
Tough, uncompromising yet reliable ...



We departed from Angoram under a full moon at 10.45 pm and spent the following night, the 25th at Korogo. We met the Korogo people and they showed us over their impressive haus tambaran. After an early start on the 26th we reached Ambunti at 6am.

Over the next fortnight I familiarised myself with the Ambunti staff and sub district, including May River and Pagwi Patrol Posts. I took over from Mr. John Corrigan on 12th June 1970. Mr. Corrigan seemed to know all there was to know about the Sepik. I sought his ideas on what my work priorities should be.

I learned that the Mongombo between Parembei and Kanganaman required attention, as did the disputed ownership of Timbunmeri Island in the Chambri Lakes...and there were other land disputes which were simmering just below the surface and which could easily spark law and order problems. Therefore, I concluded, after mastering the day to day administration of the sub district, these land issues should be my top priority.

My experience of sub-district administration was limited to Telefomin in 1966-67. I soon learned that Ambunti was several magnitudes more complex; it was between two and three times the geographic size, with three times the population of Telefomin for a start. I also gained the impression that the Middle Sepik contained some of PNG's most sophisticated and politically tough people, yet

¹ Peter Janguan of Yambanumbu – outboard motor operator. A typical Iatmul. Tough, uncompromising and reliable.

not far to the south there was uncontacted populations in the fringe areas of the Central Range; clearly Ambunti sub district was a place of extreme diversity.

Also, for reasons not then fully understood, there was a significant increase in cargo cult activity, and with the rapid approach of Self Government and Independence, the Sepik was becoming a place of political sensitivity. The early 1970's was also a time when the "localisation" of the Public Service was a key issue for PNG generally, and for Sub District administration in particular.

Ambunti staff. When I took over, the sub district staff consisted of: ADO Murray Tomlinson, Trainee PO Henry Veratau, POs Bill Dowd and John White and CPO Kevin Packer. The OIC at Pagwi Patrol Post was CPO Frank Den Ousten and the OIC at May River Patrol Post was David Pennefather. The cash office clerk was Luke Rahu. During my four years at Ambunti there was a regular turnover of staff posted to the sub district, with staff going and coming from leave and transfers to and from other Sepik stations. These included: Levi Binjari, Bruce Robertson, Phil' Moore, John Mamo, Geoff Payne, Dennis Mahar, Roger Kauffman, Dave Steven, Ian Walker, Tim McNickel, Joe Bori, Bill Sanders, Ray Lenaghan², John Gimai, Leo Yimitin, Albert Borok and others.

ADC Ambunti's day to day routine. This is best described by the Pidgin term *Gavman*. As the ADC I personified the "Government" of the sub district. I was responsible for the peace, order and good governance of some 50 language groups resident in some 9,000 square miles of Sepik rivers, tributaries, swamps, plains and mountains. Specifically I was responsible for police, courts, the local gaol and the co-ordination of all government activities at Ambunti. I conducted regular court circuits to Pagwi and May River, where I also conducted quarterly station inspections. I was policy advisor to the sub districts two Local Government Councils [Ambunti and Gau] and I oversaw the activity of staff members who served as administrative advisers to these councils.

Day to day routines also required the submission of monthly returns and reports to the Department of Law for court records, to the Corrective Institutions Branch for Prison records, Quarterly and Annual reports for incorporation into District Reports, regular requisitions for rations for gaol inmates, hospital patients and patrol activities, and the associated stock takes. There were regular reimbursements and balances for the cash office, as well as inwards and outwards correspondence registers. The ADC was the sub district registrar of firearms - it was difficult to think of any regular administrative activity that did not require a time consuming "return" that was required by some Department or Agency.

There was no hotel at Ambunti, so administrative staff were required to accommodate official visitors and attend to their needs. Regular visitors included Supreme Court parties of four [the Judge, his Associate plus Prosecution and Defence Councils], Lands Titles parties, Mining Warden parties and regular visits by official parties from Wewak and Port Moresby to conduct station inspections as well as other functions.

There were also fact finding and consultative committees which met with sub district populations who had to be assembled, fed and accommodated by sub district staff. These committees included:

- District Coordinating Committee meetings [occasionally held on outstations]
- Mining Warden Court hearings
- Constitutional Development Committee
- Administrator's Executive Committee [one meeting at Ambunti]
- The Eight Point Plan Committee [1973 =>]

² Mr. Lenaghan was not posted to Ambunti Sub District as such, he was in charge of Edwaki patrol post at Yellow River when Yellow River was taken over by the Ambunti sub district.

Treasury Audits
Courses for staff – National Census, House of Assembly Election training courses
Political Education courses.
Other – as required by Wewak and Port Moresby HQs

There were also occasional VIP visitors including Prime Minister's wife – Mrs Gorton, Australian politicians – Messrs Anthony, Barnes, Nixon, the PNG Administrator. Some arrived casually – others required a police guard of honour. An ABC/BBC film crew with David Attenborough visited in 1971 to film one of my patrols as a documentary called *A Blank on the Map*.

Two special experiences at Ambunti require special mention :-

#1 The Ambunti office files Some time after Mr. Corrigan left, I found time to start reading the Ambunti files. With few exceptions, I discovered to my disappointment that the filing system went back only 18 months, and this for a station that had been established in 1924. I found nothing on the Japandai Massacre or the 1930s murder of ADO Colin MacDonald. I could not find anything on the land disputes which were to be my primary focus.

Some weeks later, while conducting a stocktake in the government store down by the river, I discovered an untidy mountain of plywood tea chests. Investigation revealed no less than four previous sets of sub district files. It appeared that the traditional practice on outstations was to place files in old tea chests when the cabinets became full, and take them to the Government store, rather than ordering more cabinets. Then a new set of files were commenced in fresh manila folders, in the same set of cabinets.

I had the tea chests taken to the office and the contents emptied out to be systematically sorted and culled. The documents had suffered badly from years of extreme humidity in the airless store, as well as from the revages of rats and insects. Many documents had been converted into odious rat urine-soaked confetti, while others were glued together in sodden lumps that could not be separated. There were also routine files of little historic interest such as ration orders going back for decades. However among it all were many historic gems – English translations of German New Guinea annual reports and monthly, quarterly and annual reports from post war Angoram and Ambunti.

As other duties allowed over a period of months, the historic records were read and returned to their place in the current office files. In the process I developed a broad knowledge of the Sepik with new information, some of which had never been published. I made extracts, summaries and copies of important items. I took notes on hundreds of patrol reports from Ambunti, May River, Pagwi and Edwaki and hundreds more court cases and situation reports. This accumulation of Sepik historic records are now found in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Volumes 20,21 and 22.

#2 Activity that started out as research into tribal land settlement patterns, but which was taken over by the Sepik elders to serve their own agendas. My acquaintance with Sepik elders commenced on Ambunti station with my quest to understand the Japandai Massacre of 1923/4, which was the reason why Ambunti was established in the first place. I sought out and talked with elders from all sides of that head hunting raid. This put me in contact with Garu Jam of Yambon, Nauwi Sauinambi of Bangwis, Karandaman of Malu, various elders of Avatip, Baras and Nonguru of Japandai and Kwonji of Burui, among others,

To the man, these elders clearly appreciated my interest in their oral histories and they were keen to be involved. Almost immediately it became apparent these men were key to far more Sepik history than just the Japandai Massacre. Indeed the Japandai massacre was one episode in a vast continuum of Sepik oral history.

Kwonji was the son of a Sawos woman who was captured in an enemy Iatmul raid. As a youth Kwonji became PO GWL Townsend's interpreter for both his father's Iatmul language and his mother's Sawos language. He worked closely with Kemerabi, a former headhunter from Japandai who became Townsend's ambassador in the exploration and pacification of the Sepik Plains.

Nonguru was Kemerabi's son, who through time became "Cain" to Kwonji's "Abel" – mainly against the background of the wartime history of the Sepik.

Baras was recruited by Captain J.L. Taylor of ANGAU as a special constable during coast watching operations behind Japanese lines in the Sepik. Baras survived capture by the Japanese.

Karandaman was a Japanese collaborator who was lucky to escape execution after the war. He was an extremely intelligent, knowledgeable and entertaining narrator of Sepik history.

Nauwi was the House of Assembly member for Ambunti Yangoru Open electorate 1968-72. He also had a wealth of traditional and wartime knowledge which he was keen to share.

These elders became regular visitors to the office and probably saw themselves as my official advisors. I suspect that when I later interviewed elders in every village I visited on patrol they too became keen to enter into a perceived special relationship that had developed with the elders at and around Ambunti. As to the motivations of the elders, I was told more than once that if I recorded their oral histories, then future generations would have access to their knowledge. They bemoaned the fact that each time an elder died, so did a portion of the Sepik oral traditions. The younger people of the tribes were not interested. Perhaps a year or so into this experience it occurred to me that these oral historians, friends and confidants were the same men I originally believed to be politically tough people who I expected to be difficult to administer.

I conducted 20 patrols during my years at Ambunti. During the daytime hours on patrol, I attended to routine patrol tasks of census revision, compiling patrol report and area study information, resolution of minor disputes, hearing of occasional court cases. The elders would wait patiently for evening when they would come to the rest house to talk. I used a tape recorder and portable typewriter in recording what they said. My original intention was to record the elder's stories of their myths, legends and ancestral memories concerning tribal settlement patterns. I hoped by doing that in all the villages where there were major disputes, I might document a base line understanding of their history of land disputes which potentially threatened law and order.

Initially the Devil's Advocate in me warned that I should not expect too much; after all, why would PNG's politically toughest people give me information that could be used against them in resolution of disputes with their enemies? To my amazement, the elders in every village were very keen to speak into the microphone and appeared to do so without reservation. After I was given the history of land settlement, the elders always had more to say and I allowed the tape to keep running until they had finished. This sometimes took hours. During these sessions, the elders occasionally told the younger people to leave so that special secret facts and ancient names, not suitable for uninitiated ears, would be whispered into the microphone.

In order to ensure that I understood what was said, I translated the tapes from Pidgin to English between the headphones and trying fingers before I moved the patrol to the next village. This allowed me to clarify with elders anything that was unclear to me. Pidgin, as spoken in the Sepik can sometimes carry complex double meanings – synonyms, metaphors and parables.³ [in Pidgin "Tok Bokis"]. When this happened, I typed the Pidgin words as well. Whilst on patrol, sometimes the typing, translating and indexing took all of the next day, occasionally longer.

³ Parables are not common in Sepik Pidgin, but very common and colourful among the Huli of the Southern Highlands.

This quickly resulted in the accumulation of a huge amount of very diverse information. Analysis revealed that what the elders were telling me was the history of their people from the time of the beginning of their creation to the present day. Some informants even identified their myths and legends as the “Sepik Old Testament”; equating the wondrous and improbable deeds of totemic beings with those, for instance, of Jonah and the whale. They differentiated these myths and legends from their known and remembered pre-history, which they called the “Sepik New Testament.”

In order to sort and file this mass of information I developed an index with eight vertical columns down the right side of the page. I placed an astrix in the column to identify the relevant historic era. The columns in order were: 1. Myths and Legends, 2. Pre-history, 3 German, 4. Pre-war Australian, 5. Japanese, 6. Post War Australian, 7. Self-Government and Independence, and 8. Cargo Cult.⁴

At the end of my four years at Ambunti, where were two volumes of interviews [nearly 600 close typed foolscap pages], which are now Bragge Sepik Research notes - Volumes 18 and 19. Volume 17 is the index to volumes 18-22, without which the huge volume of information would be an endless jig-saw that would bring even the most dedicated future researcher to his or her knees.

Interview Volume 1

Page	Topic	Village	Myths & Legends	Pre-history	German	Pre-WW2 Australian	Japanese	Post-war Australian	Self-Government & Independence	Cargo cult
	Informant : Wolion of Yamuk	YMUK								
237	Stone monoliths- origin/significance	YMUK		*						
237	Smoked human meat – Initiation & cannibalism	YMUK		*						
237	Stone monoliths – village strength	YMUK		*						
237	Creation – water recedes, dog arrives	YMUK	*							
237	LGC Dog Rule – current rejection of	YMUK						*		
237/8	Migration – Gaikarobi to Yamuk	YMUK	*	*						
238	Black & White brothers at Yamuk	YMUK	*							*
238	White brother’s departure and return	YMUK	*							*
238	Brother villages Yamuk, Parembei, Torembei	YMUK	*							
238	Kanganaman migration ex Yamuk	YMUK	*							
238	Avatip migration ex Yamuk	YMUK	*							
238	White brother’s return as Morning Star	YMUK	*							*
238/9	Enemies of Yamuk	YMUK		*						

⁴ While item 8 is not part of the chronological sequence, it was and is a universal topic of special interest to me and relevance to Sepik 4

As this Sepik archive developed, it became known to anthropologists working in the sub-district. Some of them visited the Ambunti office to consult the archive, which I made freely available. Dr. Christian Kaufmann of Basel, Switzerland, indicated the archive's value to him lay in its broad scope. This, he said, allowed the typical anthropological micro-study to be viewed in the context of a sub-district-wide historical background. From another academic perspective, the patrol reports which I helped to make available to ethnographer Deborah Gewertz, were widely used and referenced in her *Sepik River Societies* – Yale University Press 1983.

The archive received a major academic test when I was invited to present a paper on a topic of my choice to a symposium in Switzerland during 1984. *The Japandai Migrations* was very well received and now appears in *Sepik Heritage*, Carolina Press 1990. That success and a sense of duty to my 200 + now deceased Sepik informants prompting the writing of the present four Sepik volumes, utilizing my archive as a primary source of information. In 2016 it remains a job in progress.

The original purpose of this research was to allow me to better administer the Ambunti sub-district. The success of this exercise was reflected in my patrol reports and area studies, as was acknowledged by the Director of DDS&NA in March 1974:-

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of the photographs and captions submitted by Mr. Bragge, Assistant District Commissioner. They do indeed enhance his excellent area study as well as reflecting great credit on the officer himself. This headquarters had come to expect an extremely high standard of work from Mr. Bragge and is gratified to note that this is no exception. The Papua New Guinea Museum's anthropologist, Mr. Egloff has expressed great interest in the photographs and will be pleased to accept a duplicate copy of the photographs for the Papua New Guinea Institute, of which he was a member ...⁵

ooo000ooo

The remainder of this chapter seeks, through examples, to provide snap shots of events and the status quo that existed in the Ambunti sub district in 1970-74 - a period of rapid change.⁶

1. The circumstances of the murder of ex-Luluai Baipwon of Swagup.

Baipwon probably saw himself as a progressive leader of a very conservative and traditional village community, which had changed little since Swagup warriors attacked Doolan and Orwin's patrol in February 1952. As Swagup village still existed on the same remote waterways where it had been when the attack occurred. Baipwon encouraged his people to move out on to Sepik River bank and end their self-imposed isolation and confront an alternative future. During Ambunti patrol No 5/1962-63 by H.W. Gill, he noted that in 1961 the Luluai was leading a move out onto the Sepik River bank and the people were following gingerly. The Luluai had purchased coconuts for planting.¹

With the inauguration of the Ambunti Local Government Council in 1967, the Administration-appointed Luluais were retired and replaced with elected Councillors – Biko in the case of Swagup. Ex-Luluai Baipwon continued his initiative of moving the village to the Sepik River bank. When Carpentaria Exploration Company [CEC], established a base camp to facilitate its exploration of the Frieda River copper deposit, CEC contracted with Laskompani at Ambunti to provide river transport. Baipwon saw a business opportunity – as Murray Tomlinson reported in Ambunti Patrol report No 6/1969-70 :-

⁵ Director to District Commissioner Wewak 67-1-0 of 22nd March 1974 *Ambunti Patrol Report 5/1973-74 – Appendix T*

⁶ This time was also important to me on a personal level with the birth of Bev's and my first child, daughter Louisa Ann on 24th July 1973. Without disrespect to Dr. Gobius of the Wewak hospital, Bev described the event as being akin to having a baby while camping out.

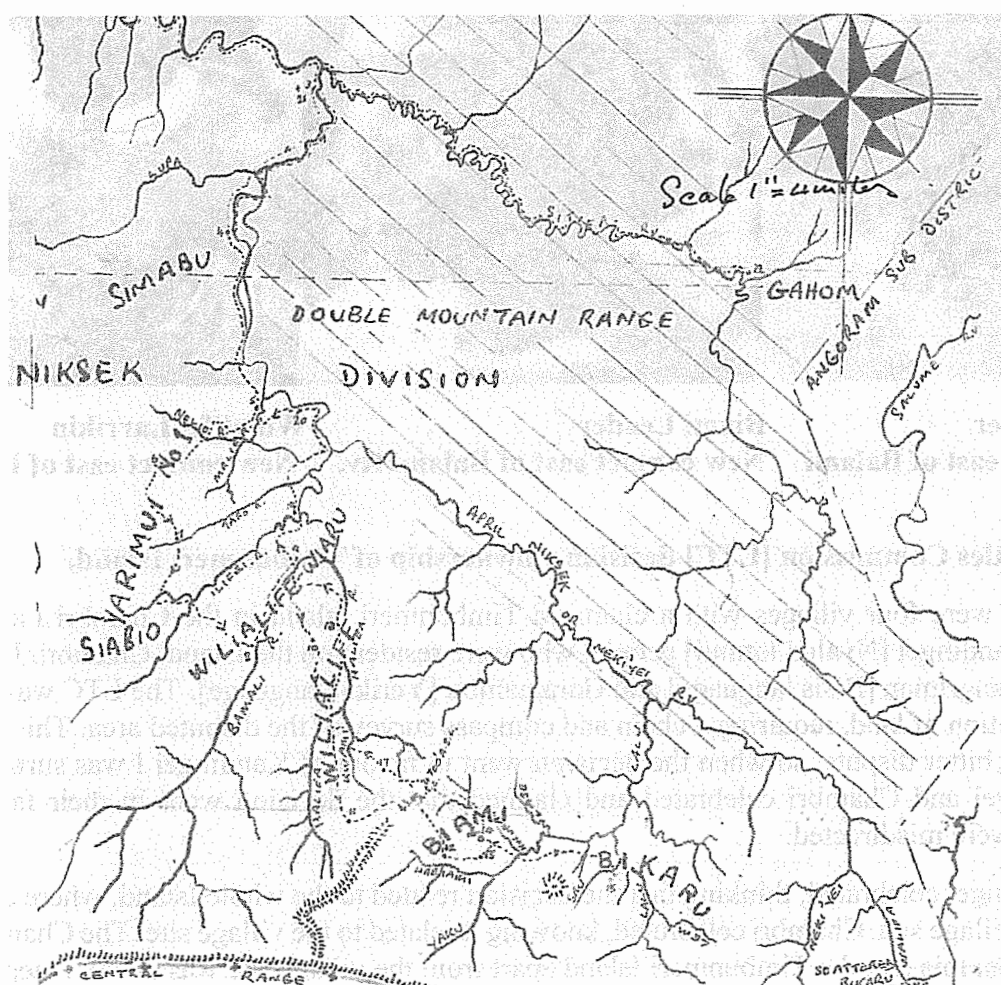
Two women complained that their husband was forcing them to have sexual intercourse with itinerant travellers moving along the Sepik River, while he pocketed the proceeds. They claimed "they were not a business enterprise like crocodile skins." The man was sentenced under Reg. 85 of the Native Administration Regulations.²

It came as no surprise when Baipwon was reported shot dead. The suggestion that this was an accident was quickly disproven by Kevin Packer during his Ambunti patrol No 1/1970-71.³ The Supreme Court convicted the killer, Yaganaut, and sentenced him to five year's gaol.⁴ With the death of Baipwon the move of Swagup village to the bank of the Sepik River ended. When the writer censused Swagup in February 1974, the village was still located on the remote waterways well inland from the main river.

2. The exploration of the eastern Bamali headwaters of the April River.

Robin Barclay's 80-day Ambunti patrol No 1/1965-66 explored the Leonard Schultze River headwaters and the April River headwaters west of the tributary that Behrman's party followed to the crest of the Central Range in 1913 - the Bamali River.

With an application for a Prospecting Authority successfully lodged [PA 58] over this region, it was necessary for Administration patrols to visit this unexplored area and contact the people there, and as far as possible to explain to them that prospectors would be coming - they had a legal right to be there and that they were not to be harmed. This was achieved by Ambunti Patrols No 4/1970-71 Bragge and Robertson, and 19/1970-71 Bragge, Ray Langford of Carpentaria Exploration and a BBC/ABC film crew. This combined April River patrol is the subject of Chapter 46 *A Blank on the Map*. The map below relates to Patrol No 4/1970-71 and is not to scale.





Ambunti Patrol No 19/ 1970-71 entered the region from east via the Korosameri and Salumei Rivers as described in the next chapter. We had a lot of difficulty contacting the people on this occasion.

The main reason for this was a number of recent deaths, apparently from an influenza outbreak. We saw human skulls in gardens, apparently positioned to ensure food security – **opposite.**

Among the last tribesmen to be contacted in PNG - 1970/71 ... **below**



Bikaru Leader

New contact east of Balami

Biami Leader

New contact east of Balami Rv.

Wilialifei Larrikin

New contact east of Balami Rv.

3. Lands Titles Commission [LTC] decision – ownership of Timbunmeri Island.

There were four villages with a claim on Timbunmeri Island in the Chambri Lakes east of Ambunti – Kandingei [Nyalua Iatmul] people, who were resident on the Island, Chambri, [Nor-Pondo language] Changriman [Bisis language] and Garamambu [Yerikai language]. The LTC was very strict with its definition of land, requiring a chain and compass survey of the disputed area. This had been a long standing bitter dispute, so when the decision went in favour of Kandingei I was surprised when both Kandingei and Chambri celebrated and claimed that the decision went in their favour. Both celebrations were misdirected.

Kandingei celebrated, thinking that the decision related to the whole Island, where as it related only to their village site. Chambri celebrated, knowing it related to the village site. The Chambri people concluded from this that the Timbunmeri Island apart from the village site was theirs. I stepped in and

pointed out that the only land for which the ownership was clear was the Timbunmeri Island village site. If Chambri wanted to make a claim on a bigger or different area, then they needed to lodge a fresh application for another LTC hearing. Until the time I left Ambunti no fresh application had been lodged. Comments on another dispute typified the ongoing status quo of such disputes ... *This dispute will not be finished until all of "X" group of people and all of "Y" group of people are dead.*⁵

As the past is usually the best indicator of the future, the Timbunmeri dispute I predicted would continue for a long time into the future, if not for ever. In regard to this matter in the past, there were decisions by PO H. Thomas on 14/5/1951, PO R. Orwin on 28/3/1951, PO G. Gilbert – undated, PO R. Orwin [again] undated, a/ADO A. Zweck 21/9/1951, PO R. Orwin [again] 4/10/1952, PO P. Wenke 16/2/1952, PO. P. Wenke [again] 1/4/1954 and PO N. Grant on 19/8/1954.⁶

4. Gold and Chromite discovery at Panewai Lagoon.

On December 7th 1970 the writer went to Panewai [opposite Yellow River] with PO John White in order to make arrests after a minor incident involving Mr. White's previous visit to the village. Recent heavy rain had swept the red clay of the village clean and I noticed grains of fine black mineral glistening in the sunlight. I collected a sample which was duly sent with a discovery report to the Senior Resident Geologist in Port Moresby. Sometime later I received a reply that the black mineral was chromite, but the item of real interest was a minute speck of gold. I made my way back to Panewai and did some serious gold panning. I found plenty of chromite, but not a single gold colour.

5. National Day weekend 11th to 13th September 1971 – the raising of the new national flag.



The National flag of Papua New Guinea was adopted on July 1, 1971. It depicts the Southern Cross, and a Raggiana bird-of-paradise in silhouette. The flag was designed by 15-year old schoolgirl Susan Karike, [now Mrs. Susan Huhume] from Meii village in the Gulf province won the nation-wide competition for a new flag design – left - in 1971.⁷ To my observation the people of the Ambunti sub district displayed no noticeable reaction to the changing from the Australian to the PNG National Flag. Did this reflect their innate conservatism?

6. Relations with M.H.A. Nauwi Sauinambi of Bangwis.

A very close working relationship developed between the writer and Mr. Sauinambi M.H.A. through the interviews with elders as mentioned above.

As explained elsewhere in these pages, until the 1972 elections, the “government” of Papua New Guinea, although there were elected members of parliament, remained embodied in the kiaps. This started to change during the lead-up to the 1972 elections, with the Pangu Party and Assistant Administrator, Dr. John Gunther seeking change as is explored in Chapter 49. In my role as ADC, I tried to involve Mr. Sauinambi MP in most of the things that I did. Two construction projects benefited from our close working relationship. These were the ... a/ Waskuk Hills Road and b/ ... the Ambunti Court House. Thirdly, our relationship resulted in the writer being the only expatriate invited to the 1973 Nokwi ceremony.

⁷ The staple crop of the Kwoma people is yam. There are three traditional ceremonies – the third of which is the Nokwi ceremony – Nokwi was the ancestress who captured the first yams in her fish net.

6a/ ... The Waskuk Hills Road.

Although Ambunti had been in existence for 46 years by 1970, and the Kwoma people of the Waskuk Hills were traditionally not canoe people, no one had built a road to link Ambunti with the Waskuk Hills to the north-west. Consequently the writer discussed the possibility with Mr. Sauinambi and the Kwoma people. The potential benefit, apart from improved access, was the encouragement of cash cropping by providing road access to markets via river shipping points. It was agreed that the road construction should be undertaken by volunteer labour. The writer surveyed the road using an Abney level and work commenced in July 1970 with a combined team of prisoners from Ambunti gaol and volunteers from Kwoma villages. Eleven months later Bangwis village 8.8 miles from Ambunti was visited by motor cycle and the Bangwis people held a singsing to celebrate the road opening. It has been progressively upgraded since then.

6b/ ... The Ambunti Court House.

District and Local Court cases were held in a small court room behind the Ambunti office, while the Ambunti Local Government Council Chambers were used for Supreme Court sittings. Ambunti not only needed a dedicated court house, it needed to be built in a way that celebrated Sepik architecture and art. A small allocation of Minor New Works funds was acquired and Mr. Sauinambi had no difficulty in getting agreement from the Kwoma elders to build the court house adjacent to the sub district office, in the form of a Kwoma haus tambaran.

Each link on the chain hanging from the roof apex was contributed by one of the Kwoma elders who helped carve the posts or paint the ceiling panels. Each link signified a memorable event in the life of that elder – perhaps a head taken or a wench seduced – such links might be added with an indulgent chuckle, and of course no one asked about that particular memory. I was told that anyone from a junior age class who tried to add a link would be scorned by being publicly asked “*What did you ever do that would justify you being involved here?*”.



Photographed **above** is Mr. Justice Clarkson of the PNG Supreme Court who opened the court house in March 1972. Standing with him is ADC Colin Sanderson who relieved me during my leave. Also **above** is a photo of the bark paintings, ridge pole and a Nokwi figure which were typical internal decorations of Kwoma haus tambarans.

Mr. Sauinambi informed the Judge that oaths would be unnecessary in the court house. “Something” had been placed in the King Post hole before the post went in. This “something” would

compel all to speak the truth or suffer unspeakable traditional consequences. The task of lifting and standing the hardwood posts saw Mr. Sauinambi call upon and receive volunteers from Avatip – Manambu speakers. - **below** - The most nerve-racking moment involved lifting the 50ft ridge pole into the forks at the top of the King Posts. The 1972 Nokwi ceremony is described in full in Chapter 45.



7. Addressing the problems of the remoteness of May River Patrol Post.

The Yellow River massacre of August 1956 resulted in the Iwam killers being taken away to gaol. It was necessary to establish May River Patrol Post to ensure that the Iwam population, then deprived of their warriors, did not fall victim to revenge attacks by Yellow River warriors or anyone else who might decide the temptation was too great to ignore. May River Patrol Post was built on a small hillock beside the May River, some 15 miles upstream of the May/Sepik junction. The Post was central to the Iwam tribal area.

Once the Iwam prisoners had served their time and were released and returned home, it was found necessary for May River to remain open primarily because murders occurred there on a regular basis. Staff was required to investigate these murders and to explore and patrol the area with a view to its pacification.

For the staff posted to May River there was no available recreation; nothing to do apart from the administrative work load. It was a one man posting, on a remote hillock surrounded by swamps – 168 river miles upstream of Ambunti, which was itself a remote place. It was recognised that extended isolation in such an environment could be detrimental to an officer's physical and mental health. It was unofficial policy that no officer should be posted to May River for longer than six months.

The SDA mission opened an airstrip at nearby Ama in 1970. It was decided to close May River and open a Patrol Post at Ama which could be serviced by regular aircraft, as were Green River, Oksapmin and other remote stations. There were also good soils at Ama which would allow the police detachment and other station people to plant gardens. Ama was close enough to Waniap Creek to allow canoe access to the May and Sepik Rivers.

May River Patrol Post



Ama airstrip beside the Patrol Post



Officer's mental health: a case in point, and an example of ADC's staff management:

As part of the training of a Trainee PO, Mr. "X" had completed some patrol training as the second officer to the PO in charge at May River. It was time for him to gain some cash office training, so he was transferred back to Ambunti.

On his first day back at Ambunti, Mr X complained of a tooth ache. The writer arranged a dental appointment in Wewak and a seat on an aircraft next morning. Late that afternoon Mr. X asked the writer if he and I might drive out to inspect progress on the construction of the Waskuk Road. However once we were away from Ambunti station Mr. X said '*... I really do not want to see the road, I want to talk with you.*' He asked if '*they*' had told me that he Mr X had tried to jump off the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and he went on to ask if I thought he was in the process of experiencing a nervous breakdown. I indicated that I was inexperienced in such things, but suggested that he should not talk about them. I re-assured him that his flight was arranged for next morning and that he could have a few days in Wewak – a pleasant few days to relax by the sea.

Back in Ambunti I left Mr X in the care of my second in command Mr. Robertson, with whom Mr. X was staying and went to the office and wrote a confidential report to the District Commissioner outlining Mr. X's strange behaviour.



In the office next morning Mr. X pleaded with Mr. Robinson that he needed a break. Mr. Robertson sympathised with him, telling him his plane was on the way, that he should go back to the house and rest, that when the plane arrived he, Mr Robertson would come and get him and put him aboard. *Left - Ambunti airstrip, with Sepik River in foreground. Orneal Kooyer's Ambunti Academie on left ...*



Staff Changeover”, drawn by a judge’s associate during Supreme Court sitting in Ambunti.

This was excellent advice and Mr. X should have followed it – instead of doing so he came into my office and moaned ‘*I have to have a break.*’ By this time I had had enough of Mr X and being totally inexperienced with matters of mental illness, I ordered him to ‘*Bugger off!*’

At this, Mr “X” leapt vertically out of his chair shouting ‘*Right!*’, sprinted from the office, charged across the parade ground and launched himself headlong out into the space provided by a house cutting below the office. He travelled about 25 feet horizontally and dropped 15 feet where he hit and demolished a 1,000-gallon galvanised iron water tank with his body from his head to his hip.

I ran to where he lay behind the water tank. Incredible he appeared to be uninjured, but his eyes had rolled back and only the whites were showing and he was singing songs from Jesus Christ Superstar. Mr Robertson got there soon after I did. I suggested that he go and make Mr. X a cup of **strong** coffee, but as soon as Mr. X smelt the alcohol he tipped out the contents from the cup.

Cartoon opposite – “*May River*

A radio call to Wewak quickly brought Dr. Gobius on a chartered aircraft. An injection rendered Mr. X unconscious and he was flown to hospital with Dr. Gobius. That night he attempted to hang himself in Wewak hospital. The District Commissioner questioned the Department as to how such an individual found his way, undetected, through the recruitment process. I dreaded to think how this episode might have played out in a more remote setting without an airstrip or radio communications or the staunch back-up of the likes of Mr. Robertson.

8. The search for the remains of Lieutenant Joseph Barracluff at Begapuke.

As described in Sepik 3, Lieut. Joseph Barracluff, a member of Captain James Taylor’s coast watching party, was killed by a Japanese patrol at Begapuke on the April River in August 1943. When asked by DDC Mr. Kerry Leen to attempt to retrieve Barracluff’s remains, I was able to recruit guides from my elderly informants – some of whom had been with Taylor’s party at Begapuke and Karandaman, and some of whom had accompanied the Japanese on the raid that killed Barracluff. The Japanese honoured Barracluff’s bravery by burying him. We found his grave, but it had been shallow and the remains had been destroyed by wild pigs. While no human remains were recovered, we did collect and deliver to Mr. Leen a number of relics from the 1943 battle of Begapuke.

9. The perceived Kamasiut threat⁸ at Garamambu

Kamasiut was a war-like community that lived in the eastern area of the Hunstein Mountain Range. They were believed to have been annihilated in successive raids in 1943 during the Japanese occupation, by their neighbours the Garamambu, Milae, Mari, Yerikai, Wagu and Yigei.

In October 1971, Garamambu people reported that they believed there were Kamasiut survivors in their remote Hunstein lands who again presented a threat to Garamambu. I set out to investigate during Ambunti patrol No 6/1971-72. The investigation in the villages which annihilated Kamasiut failed to provide sufficient evidence to justify a patrol into the Kamasiut country. This decision appears to have been the correct one as there has been no evidence of Kamasiut survivors in the years since.

10. The search for McDonald's broken grave stone.

As described in Sepik 2, ADO Colin McDonald was murdered at Ambunti in late February 1935⁹ and was buried on the top of the hill behind the ADO's house. One evening in the early 1970s, Beverley and I were in Wewak and by chance met former DC and Police Commissioner Bob Cole and we were invited to dine with him at the Wewak hotel. We enjoyed an evening of Sepik stories.

One of Mr. Cole's anecdotes involved a polished granite grave stone for McDonald's grave. It had been prepared in Sydney and then shipped to Port Moresby, from there it was shipped to Wewak, and then taken by trawler up the Sepik River to Ambunti. Prisoners unloaded it and carried it from the river bank up the hill. Not far short of the grave, they dropped it and it broke in two. A replacement grave stone was prepared in Sydney and followed the same tedious route to Ambunti. This time it reached the grave intact.

Mr. Cole said that as far as he knew, the broken grave stone was thrown into the bush beside the track. Back at Ambunti, I organised a search which recovered both halves of the original grave stone. In recognition of the unfortunate ADO Mc Donald, I had them set into the office veranda outside my office window.

11. The 1971 => Mt. Turu Cargo Cult.

Arguably the single greatest unifying religious belief experienced by the Sepik people was the Mt Turu cargo cult, which is described in the next chapter. Tens of thousands of people became involved. While the cult mainly impacted the East Sepik, it also impacted the West Sepik, particularly the Nuku and Lumi sub districts.

12. The 1972 House of Assembly elections – Upper Sepik Open.

As described in Chapter 48, the 1972 election, for which I was appointed Assistant Returning Officer for the Upper Sepik Open electorate, saw the emergence of the Pangu Party and an intensification of political sensitivities throughout PNG, during which "Kiap" became a four-letter word. [see Chapter 50].

13. Political Education.

As with all needs to communicate with the rural population of PNG, the necessary political education work load became a primary responsibility of the Kiap system. Political education which was an on-going DDS&NA function, rose to prominence with the need to explain the 1964 House of Assembly election to rural PNG. It again became critically important with the approach of Self-Government and Independence. Every patrol in the early 1970s was required to explain such things as *The eight-point Improvement Plan*, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 49. The eight points were.

- 1) Increase in the proportion of the economy controlled by Papuans and New Guineans
- 2) Equal distribution of benefits.
- 3) Decentralization.
- 4) Small scale artisan activity
- 5) Self-reliance
- 6) Locally raised revenue
- 7) Equal participation of women

8) Necessary government control and involvement

My experience of political education throughout this period was that Sepik people waited patiently for me to finish talking about the above, so they could ask about what they really wanted to discuss. They did not want either Self-Government or Independence in the foreseeable future. Rather they questioned me time and again about the origins of the “Cargo” - at no time, did I have a more dedicated audience when I spoke about cargo cult.

In summation, the Sepik people perceived that when Self Government/Independence arrived [there was a widespread suspicion that this entity was a person], Europeans would leave. Consequently there was an urgency to persuade the Europeans to reveal the secrets⁸ of the cargo before they left.

14. The increased sense of PNG as a sovereign nation.

- A. A case of Postal discrimination.** On 23rd April 1971, a complaint was received that the Post Master in Ambunti, a European employee of Laskompani, opened mail bags after hours so Europeans could collect their mail, but he refused to do the same for PNG nationals. The Post Master was interviewed and told to prevent such accusations of discrimination - no mail bags were to be opened out of office hours. This came as a relief to him; the discrimination came about when he was asked for mail by people to whom he could not say “no” [Ambunti’s European population]
- B. “Lining” for census in Self Governing PNG.** On 4th December 1973, just four days after the declaration of Self-Government, the writer was in Aibom village for the annual⁹ census revision. I suggested to Councillor Bowi that the people stay in the shade and come up in family groups when called rather than “lining” as was the custom through the colonial period. This brought a sharp response from Bowi who was adamant that I should not worry about such things. His people would “line” as always because census revision was important to the people as it represented PNG’s registry of Births Marriages and Deaths. How else could the people have an accurate record of children’s ages and so on.

15. The death of Patrol Officer Marcus “Taffy” Watkins.

On 25th August 1972 Taffy arrived in Ambunti, with permission from his superiors in Telefomin, in order to discuss with me his plans to retrace my steps on Oksapmin Patrol No 1/1966/7. [Chapter 37]. This exercise was necessary because every census division in PNG was to be patrolled at least annually. I had conducted the initial census and medical checks - pacification in that case was not necessary. ADC Barry Fischer had done a follow up patrol to mine. Taffy was to follow Barry - bringing the census up to date was the equivalent of updating the registry of Births Marriages and Deaths - it was also a way to catch up on any unexpected deaths - murders, tribal fights, epidemics – or irregular events.

Taffy and I went over patrol maps and diaries until he had a good understanding of the adventure that lay ahead of him. Taffy was staying with Bruce Robertson, who told me that when it was time to board his flight back to Oksapmin, he was reluctant. It was as if he had a premonition that something bad was going to happen to him. Four days later Taffy drowned in the Om River at Sisimin. On 2nd October 1972 Phil Moore and I went to Wewak to be pallbearers at his funeral.

⁸ As indicated throughout these volumes, there is a PNG wide beliefs that Europeans know the secrets origins of the cargo – western goods and technology, and they have a vested interest in not sharing this knowledge with their brown brothers.

⁹ Ambunti Patrol No 5/1973-74.

16. The record Sepik flood of 1972-73.

In 1972/73 PNG experienced extreme weather conditions. Dry clear skies in 1972 brought frosts which killed sweet potato crops causing a famine in the highlands. Then huge rains in 1973 caused a record flood in the Sepik River and its tributaries. Close monitoring of flooded villages – **below** - was initiated in Ambunti sub district with regular village visits by myself and MHA Mr. Anskar Karmel. As the flood followed so soon after the Highlands famine, questions were asked if a Sepik Flood appeal should be launched. Happily, our intelligence indicated that assistance was not required. The flood brought an abundance of fish and prawns. It also made it easier for canoe access to the sago markets in the lower Sepik plains, and the people availed themselves of the opportunity to float in building materials for repair works once the flood waters receded.



←The Kanganaman haus Tambaran.



After four mostly enjoyable years at Ambunti I found myself transferred to the Southern Highlands, where, as if by Sepik magnetism, I was almost immediately investigating murders in the Strickland /Sepik divide area – see Chapter 53. **End Notes Chapter 44**

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 page 99

² Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 page 114

³ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 page 116

⁴ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 12 Journal entry of 12/11/1970.

⁵ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 page 132

⁶ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 page 137-8

⁷ Wikipedia

⁸ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 12 Journal entry of 23/4/1971.

⁹ G.W.L.Townsend 1968 page 223

Sepik 4 Chapter 45 The Kwoma Cultural Revival of 1971 >

Writers Note: As with the 'Bien Cultural Revival' described in Chapter 43, I have not seen mention in any other document of a 'Kwoma Cultural Revival'. In both the case of Bien and Kwoma, the term 'cultural revival' is wholly mine – I feel the term best encapsulates elements of change which occurred in the daily lives of the villagers in the early 1970's. It is hoped that anthropologists with a greater depth of knowledge on the Aion and Kwoma societies, if they have not already done so, may further elaborate on the events of the early 1970's which I describe below.

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The following was reported to the District Commissioner in Wewak in February 1971 after garamut drums had sounded for a fortnight from Malu village, four miles downstream from Ambunti. MP Nauwi Sauinambi explained the reason for the drumming as follows :-

In about 1965 Nameiangambu of Yambon started a cargo cult.¹ The cult was not very strong and it died out with the recent death of Nameiangambu. The cult belief was that the traditional indigenous culture and artefacts are a key to the cargo. Nameiangambu pointed out that Europeans do not have masks and things like that. The dead ancestors of the Sepik people are waiting to give the cargo to the people, but while the artefacts are still present, they cannot. The answer according to Nameiangambu, was to throw all the old artefacts into the Sepik. The old artefacts of Malu and Yambon were destroyed. When the cargo did not come the people became disenchanted with the idea and commenced bemoaning their lost material culture.

The [1971] activity was a Timbuan singsing, during which replicas of the old pieces and the old stories are being remade and retold. Bangwis [of the Kwoma language group] an enemy of Malu [of the Manambu language group] has been called upon to help the Malu people and the local MP is actively telling the old traditional stories and more or less educating² the [Malu] people.

No harm is seen in this, but close contact with the local Member is being maintained. Remodelled human skulls³ are part of the material culture involved. The people have been advised that they may remodel skulls to replace the old ones, but that any trade in skulls will be dealt with heavily.¹

The top of the hill in Bangwis is the traditional site of the haus tambaran, and in the absence of a haus tambaran, the SDA church was built on the site. In January 1972, Ambunti Patrol Report No 9/1971-72 - Area Study noted the following under the heading "Missions" :-

...the church was built before the present haus tambaran, and has not been moved. The slight fuss last year is now seen as a significant village division [between SDA Christians and Kwoma traditionalists.]

SDA Policy is to ignore the existence of traditional beliefs, believing they can replace them with the Christian word. Through mission influence the Yam/Mami ceremony has not been held in Bangwis since 1948, and now the elders have decided they should hold one, particularly so the younger men can learn the ceremony before all the old men die.

¹ A search of Ambunti files found no record of this cult.

² These traditional enemies sought to combine in ancient times to annihilate an enemy known as both Souli/Mogana and Kompong Ngalla, who lived on the top of Mt Ambunti – This is covered in Sepik 1.

³ The headhunting tradition of the Middle Sepik includes remaking the face of the deceased person with clay, earth colours, shells for eyes and human hair.

The village people say the pastor has stated in church he will call upon God to kill anyone who takes part. They state they approached the missionary at Ambunti about this and they were advised the church would be taken from the Bangwis if the ceremony eventuated. When asked if people would die if the church was removed, the missionary is alleged to have stated God would not kill people, but God might show his wrath by making people ill.

At Ambunti the missionary was asked to comment and replied that he would investigate the pastor's alleged statement. He said the traditional ceremony was disapproved of, but he would not try to prevent it if it did not interfere with his services. Any SDA member who attended would have to leave the church and any SDA student who attended would be expelled from SDA schools.

With regard to people becoming ill, he replied the SDA church believes God does not reap revenge for deeds against him, but the church could not take responsibility for events after God's protection had been withdrawn. He then quoted a case, roughly in the following words; a case which has become very important throughout the Sub-District :-

A Japanaut church member left the church and went to Mt. Turu. He paid his subscription to the cargo cult and tried to climb the mountain. He fell down in a coma and when he eventually came back to his senses, he realized that he had been warned and left the cult and returned to the church. He remained a strong church member until the next initiation ceremony at Timbunmeri (Christmas 1971). He left the church and participated in the singing in the Timbunmeri haus tambaran and fell down dead. The sing-sing broke up.

The missionary stated he will tell people God did not kill him. He will state that he probably died of a heart attack. He added, 'We believe God withdrew his protection'. Freely interpreted, by local people with traditional background, this would be interpreted as sorcery. The missionary was advised that if a sorcerer said identical things naming a "power" [protection] of his own, he could be convicted of sorcery.²

The roots of this dispute were reported in Situation Report No 2 of Ambunti Patrol No 9/1971-72 :-

A series of three important ceremonies are held regularly in the Waskuk Hills or Kwoma area. The period of the sing-sing and the period of preparation for it – three to four weeks all told – entail a number of prohibitions – the prohibition of loud noise within hearing of the sing-sing site clashes with the desire of the mission representative in Bangwis, Tundimi, to ring the mission bell loudly every day.

[On balance] the decisions of the Bangwis are made on traditional lines. The Nauitek clan is pro-SDA, while the other two clans Intakauk and Aumo are non-adherents to the mission and want to go ahead with their sing-sings.

It is believed that the SDA followers are praying to God to kill the old men – a sign of [the success] of this was [perceived to be] when a Bangwis fell off the Council tractor in recent weeks and was injured and hospitalized in Wewak.

The anthropologist R. Bowden told me there has been trouble brewing as although the SDA agree the people may have their sing-sings, Tundimi will not compromise on the ringing of the bell. On Sunday 10th March the matter was again under debate and a riot involving 100

people took place – no serious injuries were sustained, and the Local Government Councillor told MP Mr. Sauinambi that it was a local matter and not to involve the Administration

As the SDA missionary, Mr. Lundstrom, was away from Ambunti at the time, I took the opportunity on 28th March 1973 to speak with the acting missionary in charge Mr. Gordon Taylor about the situation in Bangwis. A diary note made at the time states:-

Mr. Taylor refused to stop the ringing of the bell. He said, “We cannot give in on our beliefs. The church was on the site first, they built the haus tambaran next to it later on. There has always been a conflict between Christ and Satan. The situation gets worse. We cannot bend even in the light of fighting. We must follow our beliefs”.

In reply to my statement that the church could find itself at odds with the Administrative objectives of maintaining law and order, Mr Taylor replied, *‘If we are persecuted, that is the lot of the Christian faith. They can move the church elsewhere but it would be an expensive job and we will not assist in the reconstruction. The church services are daily and the church bell will continue to be rung daily’*.

My position as ADC in such a dispute was determined by two conflicting instructions. As indicated in Chapter 7, field officers were under instructions not to interfere with the lawful activities of the Christian missions [Circular instruction 109 of 3rd March 1950 and subsequent instructions]. On the other hand, the Native Customs Recognition Ordinance of 1963 recognized native custom [other than customs that were repugnant to statute law] as enforceable – such customs as the Kwoma yam ceremonies were in effect, PNG Common Law.

There were three outcomes of this situation :-

1/ **Immediate.** I instructed Mr. Taylor to order the forthwith cessation of bell ringing until the period of silence required by the traditional ceremonies were over. I told him that he could do this either as a goodwill gesture in the public interest at Bangwis, or he could do in accordance with a court order.

2/ **Short term.** The traditional ceremonies went ahead, but with further SDA repercussions for a ceremony at Waskuk – see below.

3/ **Longer term.** The SDA church was moved from the haus tambaran site

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The Nokwi ceremony at Waskuk in January 1973

Kwoma culture has a sequence of three Yam ceremonies. The first is the Yena ceremony, which is represented by a ‘Yena’ head, which may either be fashioned in clay or carved from wood. The second is the Minja ceremony, which is represented as a larger mask carving in wood, and the third is the Nokwi ceremony, which is represented by female figures carved in wood.

While the dispute between the Bangwis traditionalists and the SDA mission adherents was still heating up, in January 1973 I was invited to attend a Nokwi ceremony at Waskuk village. Douglas Newton, curator of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Primitive Art was in Ambunti and sought to attend the ceremony by turning up with a cash payment offer of \$600. A loud verbal dispute followed and Mr. Newton was turned away.

At Waskuk I saw that the haus tambaran had been securely fenced to obscure vision from outside – photo **below left**. Outside the haus tambaran was a large decorated platform with four pointed extensions. At two of these points, decorated human skulls had been positioned and at the other two, decorated carved wooden heads. The surface of each extension was covered in beautiful bilums and cassowary skins over which were laid long lengths of tambu and cowrie shell-encrusted tribal wealth. The sides of the extension were decorated with yellow gourds.

Below the central platform, a large hole had been dug which contained water and the water drums which were played with long poles that were handled from the platform above. Other musical instruments being played were wooden trumpets. Decorated warriors with spears danced in a running formation around the central platform – **below right**.



Not long after the Nokwi ceremony in 1973 I heard that the SDA school students who attended the ceremony had been expelled. I spoke about this with the missionary Mr. Lundstrom. He pointed out that the SDA education system did not accept the Weeden report on education and therefore the Administration had no authority over SDA schools.

About a week later, Mr. Lundstrom, being a reasonable man, came back to Ambunti sub district office to announce that the expelled students were back at school. He explained that his investigation had revealed that the students did not want to attend the ceremony, but that they had no choice; they were required to attend by their pagan parents. In short, Mr. Lundstrom had found a face-saving way to satisfy all parties.

I revisited Bangwis 16 years later [1989] and met with Mr. Sauinambi and others, and while I did not have the opportunity to obtain a full update on the status quo between the SDA and the traditionalists in Bangwis, I did observe that traditional activity was continuing as an important part of

village life. The church was gone and men's activities, including the carving and painting of Yena and Minja masks continued in the haus tambaran.

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Left: A skull with headdress of shell wealth at one point of the Nokwi platform.



Left: An important Bangwis elder - Walasaka - had died. His younger brother Nauwi Sauinambi took Walasaka's skull and remodelled it with clay, shells, earth colours and a beard of human hair and placed it on the shoulders of a life sized wooden body that Mr. Sauinambi carved to represent his brother.

Walasaka's human bone dagger rests on his right shoulder.

In a culture where the spirits of the dead are revered, Walasaka's fierce countenance and tales of his lifetime achievements will not be quickly forgotten in Bangwis.



Opposite & above: The traditional beautification of Kwoma girls, by scarring their stomachs had also been revived. Elder Apkwina explained how the skin of the stomach is first anaesthetised by applying stinging nettles before the cutting begins.

The added advantage, he explained is that sufficient application of nettles makes the skin become firm, which is a better medium for the cutter's artistic expression. Apkwina bemoaned the fact that it was not like before – these days, he said, the girls don't even like the stinging nettles.



Opposite. During my 1989 visit I also noted that teenage girls on ceremonial occasions wore shell wealth and very attractive facial paint.

Conclusion: The 1971 Kwoma cultural revival, if indeed, that is what it was, appeared to still be strongly in place in 1989. A mainstay of Kwoma cultural history through those 16 years was my friend Nauwi Saunambi. With his passing will the cultural strength of the Kwoma remain? Will Nauwi's son remodel Nauwi's skull, so his father's image can stand beside uncle Walasaka? Time will tell.

End Notes Chapter 45

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 Page 29

² Ambunti Patrol Report No 9/1971-2 Area Study Heading H Missions.

Sepik 4 Chapter 46 A Blank on the Map

- In Front of the Camera with David Attenborough May/June 1971

Writer's Note: The format of this chapter varies from the norm because it was compiled for Sir David Attenborough's 90th Birthday, [8th May 2016] and presented to him as a commemorative booklet.



Mary Kelly Retalios

Laurie

Patrol participants :-

Back row, left to right - Senior Constable Boma, Constables Kaius, Ekuma, Bagindo, and Constable 1st Class Paino

Front, left to right - Ray Langford Carpentaria Exploration Co., BBC cameraman Hugh Miles, Laurie Bragge ADC Ambunti, BBC leader David Attenborough, BBC soundman Ian Sansom, and ABC producer Keith Adam.

One of the more memorable patrols I carried out during my time in Ambunti was with a combined BBC / ABC film crew led by celebrated broadcaster, writer and naturalist David (now Sir David) Attenborough. 'Memorable' because a one-hour documentary entitled 'A Blank On The Map' was subsequently produced, a copy of which was quite hard to come by for many years after, but now freely available on any computer at a touch of a few keys.

This chapter affords a lighter opportunity to describe in a little more detail the logistics and general day to day operation of a permanent carrier line patrol, in a slightly different style. The reader will discover however, that this was not exactly a 'typical' patrol. It was to become Ambunti Patrol #19/ 1970-71

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By early 1971, Carpentaria Exploration Company, a division of Mt. Isa Mines, had acquired Prospect Authority 58 which entitled it to explore for minerals over a large section of the Sepik River drainage north of the Central Range of New Guinea. This included an area which I had recently patrolled in late 1970 (see Ambunti Patrol 4/ 1970-71) during which I had made limited contact with the Biami and Bikaru people in the upper April River (Niksek Census Division). With an overall population estimated to be around 200, there were almost certainly other people in that area yet to be contacted. Although it was not a Restricted Area, the Administration was wary of having Westerners going in there with helicopters etc. before the people had been contacted and told of the changes about to befall them. Consequently, a patrol was organized to do just that.

Simultaneously, producer Keith Adam of the ABC was in New Guinea gathering information about possible news stories, had somehow heard of the proposed patrol into the April River and contacted the District Commissioners office in Wewak. Kerry Leen the DDC, with a strong sense of history, was enthusiastic about a possible filming of the April River people, and referred Keith to me in Ambunti. It was during discussions with the latter that I learned of the probable involvement of David Attenborough with a BBC film crew.



Above - Cessna on final approach to Ambunti beside Sepik River

Details were discussed re logistics, cost sharing etc. and preparations went ahead. CEC was to send along a field assistant Ray Langford to take geological samples during the patrol, and the company was agreeable to provide logistical support, notably helicopter transport as needed from their base on the Frieda River. Although Ray was a junior member of CEC's exploration team, he was selected evidently to accompany the patrol because he was fit and keen - and barefooted! Most his colleagues wore heavy hiking boots, often had damp socks and suffered from a range of fungal foot infections.

The enthusiastic film crew duly arrived in Ambunti by air. It consisted of David, Keith, camera man Hugh Miles and sound man Ian Sansam. I was a little concerned by the large amount of gear they had, and their general level of fitness. After I carried out an aerial reconnaissance of the destination area with David, confirming that the native population there was sparse and the terrain rugged, the group were notably subdued and thoughtful. Filming however had already started. On the lawn in front of my house with maps at hand, David interviewed me on camera. "Where do you expect we will find these people Laurie?". The camera angle was shifted; my microphone was adjusted. "Where do you expect we will find these people Laurie?" again. Things weren't quite right - more adjustments. "Where do you expect ... ?"! This patrol was classified as Special Purpose. I was beginning to realise just how 'special' it was going to be!



Above - Interview and filming - explaining the Indonesian border of the patrol

Finally, on Monday 3rd May, all the gear was assembled on the bank of the Sepik at Ambunti and we boarded the Administration workboats 'Opal' and 'Sapphire' to head off downstream, towing two single canoes and a double canoe loaded with two 44gal. drums of fuel. The film crew were out on the river filming the departure in a dinghy, but even without them, the boats were fully laden with myself, Ray, 107 carriers and a medical orderly, as well as five armed policemen under the direction of Senior Constable Paino, members of the R.P. & N.G.C., who were deemed necessary to generally assist, and deal with any possible hostilities. On hand briefly was a reporter from Radio Wewak doing voice recordings of patrol participants and describing our departure.

After a brief stop at Pagwi, we left the Sepik and proceeded up the Karawari River, then into the Korosameri where we spent the first night at Mumeri village. Departed Mumeri at 6.40am, arrived at Wimat Catholic Mission at 11.25am and began transferring all the gear from the work boats into the motorised canoes. Proceeded upstream in the canoes, branching into the Salumei River and arrived at Yambi village where we were to spend the night. The canoes returned downstream to bring up the remaining gear and personnel. On the way upstream we had disturbed a huge flying fox colony on the river bank.



The next day 5th May we travelled further upstream to arrive at Inaru village at 2pm, with only a brief stop en route for the men to shoot a golden possum – opposite. In places, cascades of the beautiful crimson D'Albertis vine ('Flame of the Forest') decorated the dense green wall of the rainforest. The BBC film crew arrived by chartered jet boat shortly after us – unfortunately through a shortage of fuel they were

unable to go further upstream as planned, which meant we suddenly had a lot more carrying to do as the canoes were unable to continue for the same reason.

The canoes however continued shuttling gear and carriers up to Inaru¹ where we spent the night. Next morning the river had risen by eight feet and we nearly lost the double canoe at risk of getting washed downstream. With the extra water in the river, we could have saved a lot of time and effort by going further upstream in the boats/canoes, but it wasn't to be.



Above - Fully laden workboat MV Opal proceeding up Karawari River

Below – arriving at Inaru village on the Salumei River

The 6th was a day of consolidation at Inaru, sorting out gear and breaking it all up into carrier loads each of about 40 pounds' weight. I was becoming increasingly concerned about the issue of interpreters, or lack thereof. A month earlier I had unsuccessfully sent out word to secure the services of Bisorio people who were the only ones who could speak the Bikaru language, the Bikaru being the focus of the patrol. The Bisorios however were nomads, so in an effort to find some of them, I sent two Inaru men, our Watakatauwi interpreter and a constable out in an effort to track them down. There was unusual aircraft activity overhead, and we were informed by radio that a distress call had been received, but we heard no more about it.



The medical orderly treated five cases of yaws and three cases of tropical ulcers. Two men had hugely swollen testicles, possibly elephantiasis. I issued rations to all, and, after handing out nine

¹ The Inaru people were the ones responsible for the Yagisimali massacre in 1952 [Chapter 10]

rounds of ammunition each, I gave standing firing orders in pidgin to the Police on parade under a fluttering Australian flag on a bush pole, an event the BBC were keen to film. They were particularly interested in the part about only 'shootim long leg' as last resort action in case of hostilities - which of course was what I definitely didn't need with such a large and unwieldy party.



Left - Locals selling firewood, bananas and taro at Inaru village, and receiving medical attention
Right – Police on parade being given patrol instructions

The film crew purchased two large carved Hunstein 'hooked' masks for A\$2 and A\$3 respectively, and sent them back with the canoes for storage at Ambunti. These two masks, together with another, were donated to the National Gallery of Australia in 2016 by Sir David Attenborough.

We finally started our walk upstream on the clear morning of the 8th - all 120 of us – following gravel banks along the river. Six Europeans, five policemen, a medical orderly and 108 carriers – certainly one of the largest patrols I had ever led. Although the pace was modest and the shingle reasonably level, the recent flood had made everything muddy and slippery and there were a few minor casualties, including Keith and the white-legged Englishmen who were already having trouble with their rubber soled footwear.

That day however held additional significance – 8th May 1971 was David Attenborough's 45th birthday. The occasion was marked by his losing a large gold tooth filling. He excitedly showed it to Ray the prospector, telling him he had found the lump of gold in the gravel of the nearby river. Ray suspiciously inspected the 'nugget' with a hand lens, and then dismissively pretended to throw it back into the river. David lurched forward in his best rugby style, not wanting to be separated from that valuable part of his anatomy! We discovered that among his many talents, David also had a geology degree which helped him identify fibrous asbestos seen in a dark green outcrop near the river.

Steady rain falling that night and not much sleep worrying about the river level which was also monitored by the police. Next morning, I left a cache of 15lbs of rice and three tins of meat for Constable Kaius who hopefully was following us up with interpreters, and the march up the Salumei continued. With a very fair complexion, Ian the sound man was suffering with sunburn and

innumerable insect bites, but he valiantly laboured on without complaint. I was astonished to be told he had never tasted tomato sauce before coming on this patrol!

On the subject of food, although not officially condoned, it was standard practice for patrols to shoot wildlife for the pot to supplement rations. The police on occasions shot at wild pigs, with indifferent success. However, with a distinguished naturalist of David Attenborough's stature with us, I was hesitant. Whilst we were walking across an open shingle bank on one occasion, a cassowary broke cover and ran across our path. Knowing that another bird was likely to follow, I grabbed a .303 rifle from a nearby constable, loaded and took aim as the second bird appeared - but then lowered the rifle. David asked why I didn't shoot. I replied '*Because you are here!*'. He seemed disappointed. On another occasion though, a tree climbing kangaroo was despatched and went into the stew so quickly David didn't even see the skin which he wanted to keep.

Somehow the film crew had secured a supply of Australian Army ration packs, something which I assumed was impossible to procure. CEC had also tried unsuccessfully to get these rations. I don't know how David and his men did it, but their Army rations were to prove a useful supplement to our unappetising patrol food. In addition to tinned and dehydrated food, nuts, chocolate etc., each pack contained a small simple green tin opener which also doubled as a spoon - these were highly prized by the carriers and just about all of them had one each by the end of the patrol. At the end of the patrol back at Ambunti, David confided with my wife that for him one of the rare delights of the patrol was being able to suck on a small Army tube of condensed milk in his sleeping bag at night!

By the 11th I was concerned about the non-arrival of the constable, as were his colleagues, so I called a halt for a day to give him a chance to catch up. Such rest days were welcomed by all, affording a chance to wash clothes (and bodies) and generally relax, hoping that the weather would be fine. The carriers drifted off into the rainforest to forage - their interest was often focused on an edible plant they called 'too-lip' - two leaves - which described the opposing twin leaves of its growing habit. Many had axes and chopped into a nondescript tree species we Europeans called the 'kerosene tree'. As the name implied, it burnt readily, even when green, and the carriers would split off small slivers and pack them away in readiness for lighting future fires, especially when things were wet, which they often were. The medic shot a grey possum with the shotgun with which he was entrusted.

Constable Kaius didn't appear, so I decided we would wait the next day as well. I sent two carriers back to wait for him at the last camp site. To pass the time, I did some panning in the river which yielded a few colours of gold, and cooked a meat pie which was well received. A fishing party caught two sizeable catfish in the river. I also assisted the film crew put some material together - Keith Adam the producer was to become known as 'Take One' by the police and carriers as he was the person who held the hinged clapboard, announcing the sequence and the 'take' number before 'clapping' the board in front of the camera, an event initially thought by the patrol members to be quite funny and not a little puzzling!

Later that morning however Constable Kaius finally returned, unfortunately without any interpreters. He and the two Inaru men had searched unsuccessfully for the Bisorios in the wild country to the east, hampered by flooded streams. We would have to cope as best we could in communicating with any locals we met. Rations were issued, I did the usual radio sked and guards were posted that night for the first time. The routine was that the police stood guard in two hours shifts each, moving quietly around the camp. Fortunately there were no security incidents for the duration of the patrol.

Our planned patrol route was to follow the Salumei River up into the foothills of the Central Range, where we hoped to meet the Bikaru and any uncontacted groups in the vicinity, and then to

work our way westward through the April River headwaters (refer Map 2). There we would further explore, and seek people as we went downstream, eventually to rendezvous with our canoes and work boat at the highest point of navigation, thence to return down the April and Sepik Rivers back to Ambunti, having described a huge circle.

Broke camp at 7.15 the next day the 13th and soon saw the remains of an old bush shelter. Much climbing and ascending and siding of ridges in trying to stay fairly close to the Salumei River which was in moderate flood. Called a halt at 11am to check the map and allow carriers to catch up. At 3.20pm we saw a bush house on the opposite side of the river, so I decided to make camp there and investigate. I made up a parcel of salt, trade beads and fish hooks, and paddled across the river on my airbed with my revolver on a string around my neck.

A fire was still burning with pig pieces being smoked, taro and sweet potato nearby and a bow with about a dozen arrows, and a steel axe – but no people who had obviously just fled. I left the trade goods however in the hope that they may engender some goodwill. Upon leaving to paddle back across the river though, I discovered my airbed had a leak, so after some delay Ray came across on his airbed. We exchanged places as I wanted to keep my revolver dry, and Ray swam back. Overall we were nine hours on the track, with six and a half hours actually walking which saw us cover about five miles in a straight line. I was pleased to be able to pinpoint our position on the map and aerial photos (no GPS in those days!).

On Friday 14th, despite the fact that the carrier loads had become reasonably light with the consumption of food, only about two miles were covered in a straight line. Rain was falling constantly. An abandoned native house was seen – we followed a faint track most of the day. I called a halt at 1pm and last carriers arrived at the camp at 2.15. We had arrived at a junction of the main river and a large



tributary which I planned to follow the following day. Radio contact was made with Ambunti and Frieda Base, confirming the helicopter food resupply in two days' time.

Broke camp on the 15th at 7.30am and commenced cutting a track up through very difficult country, attempting to gain altitude for the proposed helicopter resupply. Fortunately,

the weather was fine. We crossed and recrossed the large un-named stream, saw some old gardens and finally set up camp at an abandoned bush house at 3.25pm.

Above – Every descent was followed by a tricky creek crossing and then a steep climb.

Some of the carriers had fallen at creek crossings and the film crew were worried about their gear getting wet. Everybody was bruised and battered – last carriers finally came in at 6pm. However,

we had been following fresh tracks that afternoon and I was hopeful of maybe contacting some locals the next day. Issued extra tins of fish as a reward for a hard day's work and to lighten loads, and posted guards.

The usual routine with each day's march was that I would lead with map and compass, with one or two men out front with bush knife and axe to cut the track if necessary, followed by David and the film crew, with the police scattered down the carrier line to maintain momentum and keep good order. The police only carried their rifles and personal packs – as they kept guard on a roster each night, it was only fair that they didn't have to carry heavy loads through the day. Ray the prospector brought up the end of the line with an assistant – they panned concentrates, and took rock and stream sediment samples at creek crossings for mineral analysis.

We finally found some people on the 16th. We set off in the morning following a steep ridge in a SW direction along a well-defined native pad. We ascended to 2,400 feet above sea level, dropped down into a saddle and then up again, finally sighting a house and gardens at 11.30. I told the patrol to stop and wait as I cautiously approached the house on foot, calling out as I went. Seven women and two men exploded out of the house. One of the men hesitated, but when his mate grabbed a bow and a bundle of arrows and yelled at him, he too fled into the forest. All afternoon we could hear them shouting to each other and one chap appeared briefly, but they would not return. How invaluable an interpreter would have been ...



Above - Camping in the garden of a large fortified house – the occupants had fled ...

The BBC were greatly pleased as at last they had something to film, even though there was nobody at home. David did a slow circuit of the inside of the large fortified house, handling and describing the contents on camera as he went, while the camp was being set up nearby. We began construction of a helicopter pad in preparation for the resupply. That night I discussed options with the film crew as they had invested a lot of time and effort for little reward, and this situation was likely to continue. They decided to temporarily leave the patrol, especially as they had planned filming elsewhere, and would re-join us at a propitious time and place. Spoke to both Ambunti and Frieda base on the radio – posted guards. The next day is quoted from my official patrol diary – what I didn't record was the fact that Bev my wife was able to fly out from Ambunti to our camp for a brief visit: -

17th May 1971

'Completed helicopter landing pad next to camp. House in garden had been visited during the night – salt gone, door closed and more arrows and food placed inside. 7.00 am weather report passed

to Frieda Base and Ambunti. Helicopter arrived 0925 and shuttled rations in from INARO and shuttled BBC party to Ambunti. Did a survey flight of the BISOARIO area to attempt to pick up an interpreter.

Two settlements seen, appear to be deserted, and a third high on a ridge – no possibility of helicopter landing – returned to patrol camp after inspecting proposed route for tomorrow's walk.

Local BIKARU people seen during the day, but ran off when approached. Accepted further gifts of calico and a mirror left for them at their house. Broke down incoming rations including a week's supply of soap, matches, tobacco and meat, including biscuits. Posted guards. To bed early ill with cold.'

Travelling was a lot easier and quicker next day without the film crew, although I came down with a heavy cold, shared by a few carriers. We followed a well-defined native track with the usual ups and downs – saw distant gardens and signs of recent activity, including a rock shelter with fresh cut leaves on the floor, and an upright stick about five feet high surrounded by concentric circles in the soil. Camped in an old garden with limestone escarpments looming above us, guards posted, spoke to Ambunti at 4.45pm.



Burial cave above – human remains, weapons and personal adornments on limestone ledges. The dead are highly revered in New Guinea traditional society; their spirits are relied upon to protect and guide the living in their daily lives with communications through dreams. The spirits of the dead are members of the community just as are the living.

Early next morning we found a burial site in a limestone cave beside the well-used track. There were eight skulls in all, only one with a jawbone, some painted with red, brown and yellow stripes, perched on outward facing ledges. All the skulls had teeth missing. Other human bones lying about, together with old personal adornments including girigiri shell necklaces and a broken pearl shell crescent. No child skulls were present – none showed any signs of a violent death although wasps nests within discouraged close inspection. In case the BBC wanted to return to film the site (they subsequently declined the opportunity), I decided to build a helicopter pad nearby with a small party while the patrol continued along the ridge, setting up camp at 3700' a.s.l. just below the main April / Karawari divide.

Next day 20th May we reached the divide at about midday, waited for the carriers to regroup, and then started a gentle descent into what I assumed was the headwaters of the Lame River. Near the

crest we noticed a cleared space in which a tree stood surrounded by a depressed circle on the ground approx. seven feet in diameter, apparently worn by stamping feet. Further on we passed a crude disused sleeping shelter with old firewood, charcoal, two rotten spears and a chert chopper on the floor. The forest floor was uneven, mossy, damp and gloomy – not an inviting place. No recent signs of people however. Camp at 3,150' a.s.l. – as usual guards posted.

As we were now within the boundaries of Prospect Authority 58, the next day I selected 13 men and left them with Ray to build a helicopter pad for future exploration while I continued on with the patrol. The terrain continued to be challenging. The barefooted carriers were having difficulty on slippery uneven ground – at least one fell off a mossy log into a creek, losing his food and personal gear and injuring himself. After four hours walking, it took another three hours for the end of the carrier line to catch up, our only completing about two miles in a straight line. Thank heaven the BBC weren't with us! I was quite unwell and called a halt at 2.50pm, setting up camp in the rain. The construction party returned at 4.30. Radio contact, rations issued, guards posted – 3,370' a.s.l.

I was bedridden the next day Saturday 22nd with a severe cold. Our medic prescribed a range of pills and a penicillin injection. I sent out two police scouting parties in an attempt to locate signs of population. They advised me that old and new gardens evidently existed to the east, with a house with bows, arrows etc. inside, and more activity to the west with a fresh garden and well defined tracks, including footprints near the perimeter of the camp suggesting we were under surveillance. A dog was seen on the track. The carriers had a much deserved rest, repairing patrol equipment, their torn clothes, making axe handles etc.



Being encouraged by the report of gardens etc. to the west, we headed off in that general direction next morning, quickly finding a garden burial with decorated skull – **above** - , jawbone (minus front teeth), leg bones and lime gourds. Nearby was a recently burnt house. Ascending to the crest of a divide at 4,250' a.s.l. in cold rain, it was necessary to cut our way through the forest during the afternoon, crossing a large stream which was assumed to be the Nekia River. I led the way across, wading in cold waist deep water. A pair of carriers lost control of their patrol box which luckily floated until it was recovered. Another suitable helicopter site was identified and a party remained behind to build a pad. That evening I spoke to Frieda Base on the radio to discuss details of the forthcoming air drop. 3,700' a.s.l.

May 24th saw us heading uphill again in a WNW direction, ascending to 5,300' a.s.l. A particularly difficult day – poor visibility, foggy and cold, steady rain, very slow progress. The track had to be laboriously hacked out of the dense forest, usually by the two powerful Mianmin men with

CEC who only carried light backpacks. On my compass bearing, one would lead the way slashing at light vegetation with a machete, followed by the second man cutting heavier timber with an axe, opening a track about three feet wide. Halted at 2.30pm in the rain and set up camp at an altitude of 5,150', nearly a mile above sea level. With no streams nearby, we had to catch water running off the vinyl sails. Cooking fires that night were more smoking and smouldering than burning. Issued a week's supply of meat, soap, tobacco, matches, and biscuits, as well as rice.

As a general rule, the carrier line divided themselves up into small groups and each group was responsible for carrying their own food and preparing it at night and in the morning (there was no lunch), a process which simply involved cooking rice on a fire and opening a tin or tins of bully beef or fish. The police did the same. Everybody had their own plastic or enamel cup, bowl or plate – glass has little application in the rough and tumble of patrol work. We Europeans had a designated native to prepare our food and bring it to us – our diet was a little more varied with assorted tin stuffs, packets or dried food, and sometimes fresh groceries following a resupply.



Left – *Setting up camp in the damp gloom of the rainforest*

Right – *Ration issue – over a 14 day period, for every man carry a permanent load, it was necessary to have two other men carrying food for the three of them.*

The only highlight on that miserable day was the discovery of a rare high altitude bower birds bower at about 4,800' a.s.l. It consisted a foot-high stack of small sticks at the base of a sapling, with the whole structure surrounded by a tiny circular path. Upon being told of it later, David Attenborough was greatly interested and really quite disappointed he didn't get to see it. At that time, it may well have been an unknown species.

Next day we were forced too far south by the rugged terrain and steep cliffs, and progress was again slow, our having to cut our way across the grain of the country. The following day 26th May, was similar, our having to backtrack on occasions when confronted with impossible cliffs or escarpments. We worked strenuously back towards the north west and gradually descended into the drainage of the Lalu River in the April watershed – found a tree freshly cut down to form a bridge. About three miles were traversed - carriers had lighter loads as little food was left. Another helicopter pad was cleared for future access (experience suggested that these clearings would be utilized as

readymade garden areas by the locals). Last of the party into camp at 4.25pm, issued rations, radio contact with Frieda and Ambunti, posted guards, camp at 2650' a.s.l.

Spirits rose the next day as the weather was fine and clear, we found a good native pad to follow heading generally in the right direction downstream. Signs of natives about but again didn't sight any. We were approaching an area I had visited approx. six months earlier. The houses we saw were different from those encountered to the north and east. These were simply inverted V's with the walls and roof being the same structure, palm leaves sheeted on a simple stick frame. One house contained a rusty tin can which, in this primitive region, was something of a rarity. There were things there which the BBC may have been interested in filming – we were expecting their return the next day, together with a resupply of rations. Confirmed details on the radio that evening.

Next morning, on Friday 28th May, a helicopter pad was built while I scouted to the west looking for the Bikaru people I had recently met not far from our present position. Although I found my most easterly camp site from last year's patrol, I found no people despite signs of recent activity. The helicopter duly returned but as the pilot couldn't see the camp on his first pass, he dropped the BBC crew on a sandbank in the river while he continued searching. Finally, our parties were reunited about midday, and although we received mail, fresh food and assorted goodies, the helicopter only delivered half the quantity of rice required to see us through to the airdrop site still several days walk ahead. Six sick carriers were evacuated, a couple with pneumonia barely able to walk. The local natives certainly knew we were there by that time, with all the helicopter activity, so we hoped they would come in to visit us.



Above - Ex RAF pilot Bill Dossett returns with the BBC film crew

A north-westerly direction was taken the next morning, retracing steps of my previous patrol. Reasonable progress despite the carriers having to carry nine more patrol boxes belonging to the film crew. Some contained heavy batteries as there was no way they could be recharged or exchanged en route. The patrol boxes were sturdy lockable galvanized metal trunks with elongated looped handles which extended above the top of the box, thus allowing a carry pole to be passed through, resting on the shoulder of carrier's front and back. In a sago patch, we found a smoking fire beside a rapidly abandoned bush house – some salt was left as a gift. There was a definite impression that the locals,

although there weren't many of them, were quite determined to avoid us. That elusive behaviour, combined with the lack of an interpreter, of course made any sort of census registration impossible.

With time starting to run short, the BBC wanted something significant to film. Although there had been brief opportunities to secure interesting footage, because their camera and sound equipment was reasonably bulky and took time to set up, spontaneity was not an option.

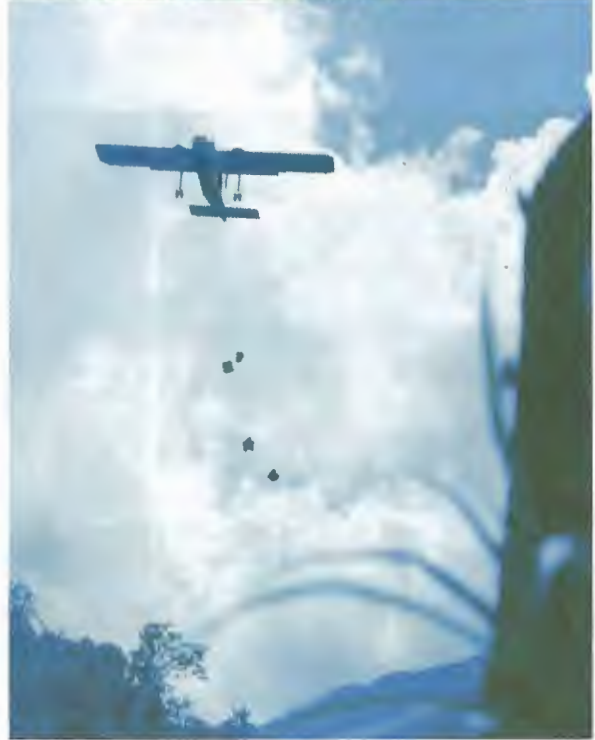
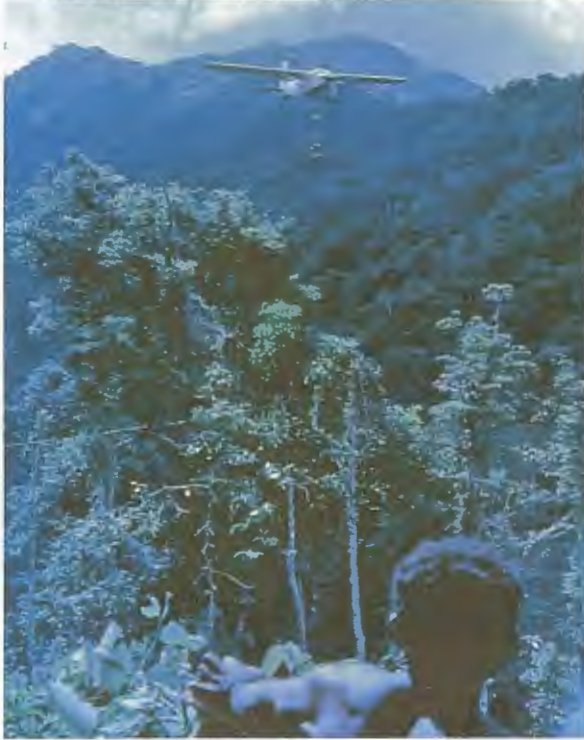
Therefore, they were quite pleased when it became evident we needed to build a swinging bridge across a sizeable and fast flowing stream. Most of our carriers were from the flat Sepik plains and knew nothing of building high level cane bridges, but luckily we had a few Highlanders who knew their stuff and they swung into action. The forest contained all the building material we needed – the pidgin word for vine is actually 'rope'



***Above** - Cane swinging bridge, built entirely from forest products in five hours*

With the cutting of numerous lengths of lawyer cane, construction commenced on the morning of 30th May and the bridge was complete within about five hours, approx. 70 feet long and 30 feet above the water. The camera rolled as carriers walked gingerly across the swaying structure. "Excellent sequence – just what we wanted – excellent!" David was heard to mutter. I struggled to share his enthusiasm – I was really quite unwell with a high temperature, nausea, dizziness and acute aches and pains. That same afternoon we reached the drop site which I had cleared about six months earlier on my earlier patrol into this region.

The next day I deputised David and Ray to oversee the arrangements for the airdrop, scheduled for about midday. I was unable to get out of bed and stayed there for 36 hours – our medico diagnosed a combination of malaria and pneumonia, and administered assorted medication, with little immediate result. In the meantime, light regrowth on the drop zone was cleared, and smoky fires lit to indicate wind speed and direction at either end of the ridge down which the aircraft would fly. Fortunately, the weather was perfect for the event. Our camp – **below** - was set off in the bush from the drop zone, and our bright yellow sails (vinyl tarpaulins) were covered by leaves and branches - on a previous patrol the sails in the patrol camp had been mistaken for the target, with disastrous results.



Above - Britten-Norman Islander 'laying eggs' – a total of 42 bags were dropped over four deliveries

The BBC camera was set up and rolling when the twin engine aircraft arrived and made its first dummy run. Ray was in the middle of the drop zone crouched down behind a large stump. With no direct radio communication with the aircraft, his role was to lay out a long strip of red calico to indicate undershooting or overshooting of the falling bags. The first drop was way too late and the four or five bags went flying off down the valley into a creek. The red calico was adjusted, and the subsequent drops were all pretty well on target. Each bag weighed about 60lbs, and consisted of double layered hessian. Most contained rice with tin meat or fish loosely packed within, as well as sugar, tea, tobacco, biscuits etc. Overall 42 bags were dropped on three separate flights from Ambunti – some bags exploded on impact with stumps, a couple were lost completely, many sustained damage but I calculated losses overall at an acceptable 12%. Fresh fruit and vegetables, steak, frozen chickens etc. (but no eggs!) fell out of the sky for the Europeans, as well as welcome mail.



Above - Filming the collection of airdrop bags – 12% losses were acceptable

However, I was still most unwell and had decided to have myself evacuated by helicopter, to be replaced by PO Geoff Payne from Ambunti to take the patrol on down to the lower April. Although the BBC were disappointed we had met no local people, they felt they had adequate footage to make a reasonable story, and they too started preparations to be taken out by helicopter. I was definitely not happy about the suggestion that my evacuation would be the climax of their filming! However, things fortunately were to change abruptly the next morning ...

Tuesday 1st June My official patrol report for that day reads (as something of an understatement) :-

Nine BIAMI tribesmen brought into camp by a scouting party sent out to look for them. They indicated they were on their way to visit us when met by the scouts. BIAMI'S seem delighted to see us and accepted tobacco.

After discussions mainly through gestures, pointed out we wanted –

a/ to trade beads, salt, matches for taro and other foods

b/ we want to see all women and children of the BIAMI

c/ Two BIAMI men to contact the BIKARU and have them visit the patrol camp.

The BIAMI seem to understand this and agreed readily to do so and departed from patrol camp in two directions – one party to obtain taro and collect other BIAMI'S, and the other to fetch the BIKARU – we hope.

BBC team were extremely impressed with the BIAMI who are very overt and born actors. 1645 Radio contact with Ambunti and Frieda Base, reported health improving and cancelled helicopter for my removal. Spent rest of day in bed, issued rations, posted guards. Slept Camp 21 (altitude 2500')

Wed. June 2nd At least some of the tribesmen who came in to the camp the previous day had met me on my previous patrol into this valley last year. Unfortunately, only four of them returned, bringing with them taro, bush cucumber, bananas and small bundles of sago for trade.



***Above** - Bridging the cultural divide – David attempts to gather tribal information. It is interesting to note that some academics and educators were subsequently to seize upon this interaction to demonstrate and interpret elements of non-verbal communication.*

When the Biami were given tobacco and newspaper to smoke it, they seemed unable to draw a connection between the two until a policeman demonstrated. We spent an amicable hour or so trying to communicate, mainly discussing local geography and who lived where. Counting was done by fingers first, then marking incremental segments up the arm to the shoulder. The camera and sound men earned their pay, while David employed theatrical gestures in trying to clarify aspects of their personal adornment, e.g. cassowary feathers. After trading was concluded, we indicated we'd like them to show us their house or kinfolk, but as soon as we set off, they suddenly fled into the forest. It was an unfortunate and anti-climatic end to our engagement with these tribesmen – without any interpreter, they possibly misunderstood our intentions.



***Above** - Trading with the Biami – we offered salt, trade beads and matches for taro and bananas*

That night I drew up a list of the BBC's agreed share of the cost of the patrol. The goods for which they paid included 18 x 112lb bags of rice, 18 cases of meat each of 48 tins, 4 x 70lb bags of sugar, 22 lbs of tobacco, and 9 x 25lb tins of biscuits. The largest expense for them, aside from aircraft and jet boat hire, was the hire of 50 carriers for 41 days at A70 cents each per day. They estimated the documentary they were to finally produce would cost about £6,000.

Everybody was in high spirits. I was looking forward to completing the patrol relatively



unencumbered, and the film crew were pleased they had essentially fulfilled their goal. As usual David entertained us around the campfire that night with interesting and often hilarious stories from his Zoo Quest series, and of his time with the BBC.

3rd June. We had little expectation of the Biami returning, and that proved to be the case. With continuing fine weather, the helicopter returned the following day as per schedule. The BBC and all their gear was airlifted back to Ambunti, taking several trips, and I took the opportunity to evacuate several sick carriers as well as excess patrol gear. I was feeling a little better. The incoming supplies were more than sufficient for us to finish the patrol, and were

broken down into carrier loads. The BBC left us with a good supply of Army rations packs. The camp was cleaned up in preparation for departure the next day (tins were buried, but we knew that the locals would probably dig them up again). From that point onwards, it was going to be fairly easy walking – I arranged by radio for the motorized canoes and a workboat to meet us on the lower April River in a weeks' time for a return to Ambunti.

Retracing steps next day of Ambunti Patrol 4/ 1970-71 westward up the Koteifa River, we inspected a coffin – **below** - made of bark standing vertically on a raised platform in a deserted garden in the misty morning. The body within, which appeared to be complete, was still decomposing. An arrow was seen embedded in a nearby stump. Continued upstream, then ascended a ridge and crossed a divide at 4700' a.s.l. at 1.15pm – waited for carriers to regroup. Descended quite quickly down from the ranges, and camped at the old campsite #17 of my earlier patrol, having walked about seven miles.

The 5th of June saw us still in familiar territory, heading generally downstream crossing and recrossing the Halifa River without difficulty. Several gardens close by and distant, none appeared to be in use. We came to a huge communal house at 10.30am, approx. 25 by 35 feet and 15 feet above the ground. Nobody about but signs of recent occupation. A fresh skull with a jawbone incongruously protruding from its earhole hung on an outside wall. Inside were four fireplaces, two at either end, piles of firewood, four beautifully carved black palm spears, a decorated cassowary bone dagger, a sophisticated spring-loaded fish trap and various personal adornments. Also noted was a fine sharp-edged chert flake, possibly used for the intricate decorations on arrow heads.

Several small outhouses harboured a few items of interest, including two large kundu drums, one of which was fully five feet long. The six fresh skulls we had seen during the trip, although relatively few in number, probably represent a significant proportion of the local population who had died in recent times, not to mention other fresh skulls we may not have seen. This and the fact that the

local people were definitely avoiding us, was beginning to suggest that maybe some sort of epidemic had gone through this valley, and the inescapable conclusion that my patrol of about six months ago may have been the agency by which a contagious disease had been introduced.

That afternoon however we did in fact find more people, at my old camp site on the Halifa River just above the junction with the Bamali River. Last year there was a small house on that site and a small garden – now there was another enormous communal house in a large garden of about 15 acres. As we approached downhill, there were yells of alarm and people scattered in all directions. I called and waved my hat and that seemed to steady them somewhat. By the time we arrived at the house, nobody was to be seen, but an old chap appeared at the doorway above and beckoned for me to come up. Senior constable Paino and I gingerly climbed up, both armed, but found only two men, a woman and a child calmly sitting on the floor. Four more men subsequently returned from the bush together with their dogs, and two more overnight, but some of those who fled were not seen again. Temperature was quite warm, altitude at that place was approx. 560' a.s.l.

Next morning the 6th of June some serious trading began as I decided we would have a rest day. We bought about 200lbs of taro and bananas and distributed them among the grateful carriers. Ten dessert spoonfulls of multi-coloured trade beads were exchanged for about 25 large taros. The police bought a pig for one steel axe, three shirts, three pairs of shorts, five mirrors as well as some trade beads. I provided everything except the clothing – we still had a lot of trade goods left. The police shot the pig, making sure the locals watched the demonstration. The noise alone was always guaranteed to impress. Less impressive was the sight of the tribesmen sporting shirts and shorts, usually not together – welcome to civilization!

That afternoon I went up into their truly impressive house to try to have a talk with the people – six men, a woman and a child – typical Hewa with their head shaved except for a cylindrical bun of hair on top tied with strips of bark. All had cane hoops around their waist, with broad leaves hanging fore and aft, and fine woven cane armbands. I utilized the services of a pidgin speaking Gahom carrier from the Sitifa River who could partly understand the local language. After general pleasantries, I did in fact determine that there had been a recent illness between that place and the Lalu River to the east. The local people had been unaffected – possibly why they hadn't run away. Forced coughing and chest slapping suggested influenza, a disease to which they would have had absolutely no resistance. Three Bikaru men and four Biami men evidently had died – no mention of women or children.

Footnote :- David Attenborough told me he had negotiated to buy a genuine old Hunstein mask made up of a series of hooks from our Gahom interpreter. Many years later, I was contacted regarding the provenance of this item and the two masks from Inaru, I confirmed they had been made later than 1960. Sepik artefacts made before that date required an export permit.

In an attempt to deal with the problem of communication with these people and hasten their coming under administration control, I asked if one of them would like to return to Ambunti with us to learn Pidgin and something of the outside world. They nodded enthusiastically and indicated a lad quietly sitting in a corner, who suddenly became animated and began vigorously chewing betel nut. As an inducement I explained the material rewards potentially awaiting him, including trousers, steel axe, money etc. I showed them some silver coins, but this elicited only polite interest, money of course being an unknown concept. Next morning however when it was time to leave, the young chap – **below** - was nowhere to be seen, forsaking the opportunity to visit civilization.



We traded a steel axe and two bush knives for three well-made fighting shields, a transaction which made the locals literally jump for joy. We also bought a stone axe head and about 15 superb arrows. The April River arrows are particularly attractive, being finely made and intricately decorated, although the bows are simple unadorned black palm. The arrows attracted a trade price of a box of matches or a razor blade each. It occurred to me that the BBC might well have been better off filming these people who had had no contact with the outside world before I arrived there 6 months previously.



Left – one of three fighting shields bought from the Hewa tribesmen. The blue shorts had belonged to one of our police, and had just been traded as part payment for a pig.

Right – checking the map against local knowledge

Departed camp at 7am on the morning of 7th June, climbing to the crest of the Halifa / Bamali divide at about 2000' a.s.l., and descended down to the Bamali River which was swollen by the rain we had walked through that morning - 40 yards wide, deep and running strongly. We forded with difficulty in chest deep water. All across safely by 10.45am, but unfortunately a bag of sugar and a bag of rice were lost in the crossing, and most of the remaining rice was wet.

There were old and new gardens on the Bamali left bank. At 11.15am we arrived at a huge communal house belonging to the Wilialifei people, the largest we had seen thus far – about 35 feet high, with a floor area of 45 feet by 35 feet – four men were present – **below** - and despite their initial surprise, didn't run away. They wanted us to stay the night and trade for some food, but unfortunately we had a tight schedule to meet the canoes further downstream. I was anxious to put the Bamali, Ilifei and Tafo Rivers behind us so we wouldn't get isolated by floodwaters.

Nevertheless, before we left the Wilialifei, I noted they had a large quantity of beautiful arrows and I bought 25 of them for a bush knife. They also had one of the old colonial Dutch steel axes with a round handle hole. Followed the Bamali River downstream, cut inland, crossed the Ilifei / Tafo divide, and set up camp and radio beside the Tafo River after passing through my old camp site #19. Last carriers in at 3.30pm, issued rations, posted guards. 550' a.s.l. – no need for blankets . Ray unwell with what appeared to be malaria.



***Above** - A brief visit to the Wilialefei – we were all good friends.*

8th June Broke camp and moved off ascending and siding ridges with many short sharp ups



and downs and creek crossings. Light loads for the carriers with not much food left – they were energised now that the end of the patrol was near. Passed Bamali / April junction at 9.15am and was able to start using alluvial river flats and gravel bars for walking. Passed my old camp #20. Ascended up over the April / Malife divide and camped on my old #5 camp of 4/ 70-71 beside the Malife River.

9th June Ray in poor health so I decided to send the patrol ahead downstream along the well-worn

footpath while he and I floated down on our airbeds to the April and then on to Paka village, arriving in less than three hours. Surprised to find a 10' rubber boat there with an outboard motor. It belonged to a Japanese university group studying ethnology and anthropology – one female and two male students, and an older supervisor. Not sure who got the biggest shock - ourselves, the Japanese or the local natives when we silently arrived on our unusual mode of transport on the river!

Communication was difficult – only one of the university party spoke a little broken English and they had a paid native English / pidgin interpreter / guide from outside the region. The latter evidently wasn't doing his job too well so I took him aside and had a quiet word. The Japanese seemed to be poorly prepared for their remote field work and were particularly interested in my maps which they photographed. All my party arrived in camp before midday. Our canoes were to meet us at this village, but ironically the river level was quite low. Spoke to Tultul Meriawe with peaked cap, cane hoops above white shorts – **below** - and cassowary quills through his nose, and about 30 of the locals.



10th June Everybody keen to get going after bidding goodbye to the Japanese and locals. The patrol set off by foot under the supervision of the police - Ray and I again floated downstream on our airbeds to meet the motorised canoes at the Sitipa / April junction. Sent the two single canoes back upstream to collect the patrol, still comprised of about 90 men. Two return trips with the canoes saw everybody and all the gear at the junction. A tarpaulin had been set up on the double canoe – redistributed loads on the three craft and we set off down the April at about 2pm at a rapid pace, fairly spearing through the water. Arrived just on dusk at Biaga village about a mile upstream from the April – Sepik junction, where the workboat MV *Opal* was waiting for us.

11th June Restless night at Biaga for everybody – Ray and I slept in the haus kiap but everybody else coped as best they could as we didn't have time to set up a proper camp and the mosquitoes were bad. Before we departed I inspected the village and checked shotgun registrations (approx. one such gun was allowed per 100 people – most were old single shot 12-gauge, produced I understand en masse by the Greener company in England, converting 1870-vintage Martini Henry military rifles by simply screwing on a shotgun barrel to replace the rifle barrel). All four craft headed off downstream to the Sepik River at 8.30am, and not long after we passed through the 'narrows' known as the Yambon Gate where the great river, less than 100 yards wide, was compressed between rocky outcrops, running fast with a depth of over 30 fathoms.

Finally, with the carriers yelling and joking, the water craft described a gentle turn and came back against the current to tie up at the wharf at Ambunti, arriving 'home' just before 2pm. At the wharf there was a welcoming committee of station staff, my wife Bev, and friends and family of the patrol members. Unloaded and sorted out the gear, paid off the carriers and the patrol was stood down.



Above - End of patrol - unloading at Ambunti 11th June 1971

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Postscript 1

Altogether we had spent the proverbial 40 days and 40 nights in the April River wilderness, 27 of which had been on the march. We had traversed a region of exceptionally difficult terrain in the headwaters of the Salumei and April Rivers, and added to the scant body of information on that area. CEC were to conduct a small drilling program searching for copper as a consequence of geological samples taken during the patrol and subsequently.

It was unsettling to discover that the Biami and Bikaru people had likely been impacted by introduced disease, but with the area coming under administration control, medical attention would be available to them in future. Although there was limited contact with the local people, they had been desensitised to the imminent penetration by outsiders. The ABC/BBC documentary presented to the world a glimpse of a small group of tribesmen who at that time were among the most primitive and remote in Papua New Guinea.

Postscript 2

Jumping forward to the present (2015) and the future, it is gratifying to note that the April – Salumei region of Papua New Guinea has been identified as a region of high conservation status with outstanding natural, biological and cultural values. International recognition and support, e.g. Qantas, has led to the development of a carbon offset program for this region, (sometimes referred to as REDD - Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), which provides for community development without the need for destructive large scale harvesting of natural resources.

The ‘blank on the map’ is no more. However, it is to be hoped that David Attenborough’s concerns expressed in his documentary regarding the impending cultural clash looming for the people of the Salumei / April River systems have been ameliorated.

Postscript 3

For me, I didn’t have much of a break later in June 1971. Whilst typing up reports of the April River patrol, I was distracted by information filtering in of major events brewing at a place called Mt. Turu to the north-east of Ambunti. There evidently was a serious large-scale cargo cult movement

developing, involving tens of thousands of people. Although it was peripheral to my area of responsibility, I needed to know what was going on. That however is another story – see Chapter 47.

Postscript 4

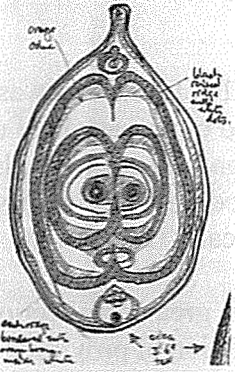
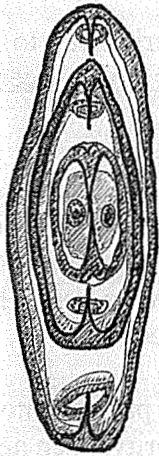
A quarter of a century after the 1971 patrol, I was in Angoram when I heard that Paino, the ever reliable police NCO on the 1971 and other patrols of mine, was in a village squatter camp not far from Aigris market [eye grease - flirtation]. I went to see him and was quietly shocked at how he had aged and how frail he was, but he voiced his surprise first..."*What happened to you?*" he said "*You used to be very big*". In fact, I was physically larger in the 1990s that I had been in 1971.

His memory was shaped by his great recollections of our shared patrols into unexplored country, and the well-earned police reputation of providing the necessary security when new tribesmen were met. It was reliable and trustworthy men like Paino who were the seldom recognised backbone of the PNG "Kiap system."

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National Gallery of Australia studio photographs of the three Hunstein hook masks collected by Sir David Attenborough during the April River patrol and donated to the NGA in 2015. Photos not to scale



Two of the Masks from Inaru village, sketched by Sir David at Inaru in May 1971, and acquired by him



A collection of five masks, including the two above, in the Inaru haus tambaran in May 1971



③ MAPS
MONTAGNE

TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

PATROL REPORT

Report Number... ABUMBI 19/1970-1971

Subdistrict.....

District..... East Hupa District

Type of Patrol.....

Patrol Conducted by..... Mr. A. Wraga - ABUMBI District Commissioner

Area Patrolled	}	<u>Waga Waga Division</u>
(Council and/or		<u>New Council Area</u>
Census Division/s.)		<u>Waga Waga Division</u>

Personnel Accompanying Patrol..... Mr. Wraga - District Commr. C.D.O.

.....

1. Medical orderly..... 107 carriers

Duration of Patrol—from 11/1/1971 to 11/5/1971

No. of Days..... 4

Last D.D.A. Patrol to Area: Abumbi Patrol 4/1970-71 Part/Part not previously

Date..... 10-1-1970 to 10-9-1970 Duration..... 32 days patrolled

Objects of Patrol (Briefly) Control population of Abumbi April headwaters, court
and Abumbi C.D. field areas, and R.E.C. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000

Total Population of Area Patrolled..... 2001 in Census Division 1 of Abumbi
and 200 in the Eastern April Headwaters.

The Secretary,
Department of the Administrator,
KONEDOBU.

Forwarded, please.

/ /19

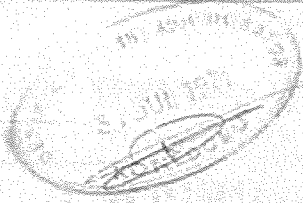
District Commissioner.



TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

67-8-70

Telegrams
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Our Reference
If calling ask for
M.



In Reply
Please Quote

No. 67-1-12

Department of the Administrator
Division of District
Administration,
District Office,
HEWAK, East Sepik District.

28th July, 1971.

The Secretary,
Department of the Administrator,
KONEDOBU.

REPORT OF AMBUNTI PATROL NO. 19/70-71
TO EASTERN HEADWATERS APRIL RIVER

Three copies of the report of the above patrol conducted by Assistant District Commissioner Ambunti, Mr. L. W. Bragge are forwarded herewith.

There is probably no active field officer in the Administration better equipped to handle this sort of patrol than Mr. Bragge. He has again conducted this exploratory patrol in a most able manner and submitted an excellent report with well compiled supporting maps. I look forward to seeing his photographs, copies of which will be forwarded to you.

It was unfortunate that he was not able to achieve all the patrol aims. The reluctance of the previously contacted groups to renew relations with this patrol was undoubtedly due in part to the legacy of disease apparently left by the last patrol. If the patrol had been unencumbered by the B.B.C. television team and the Carpentaria Field Assistant and the consequent unwieldy carrier line, it would have been more mobile and may have been able to make better contact.

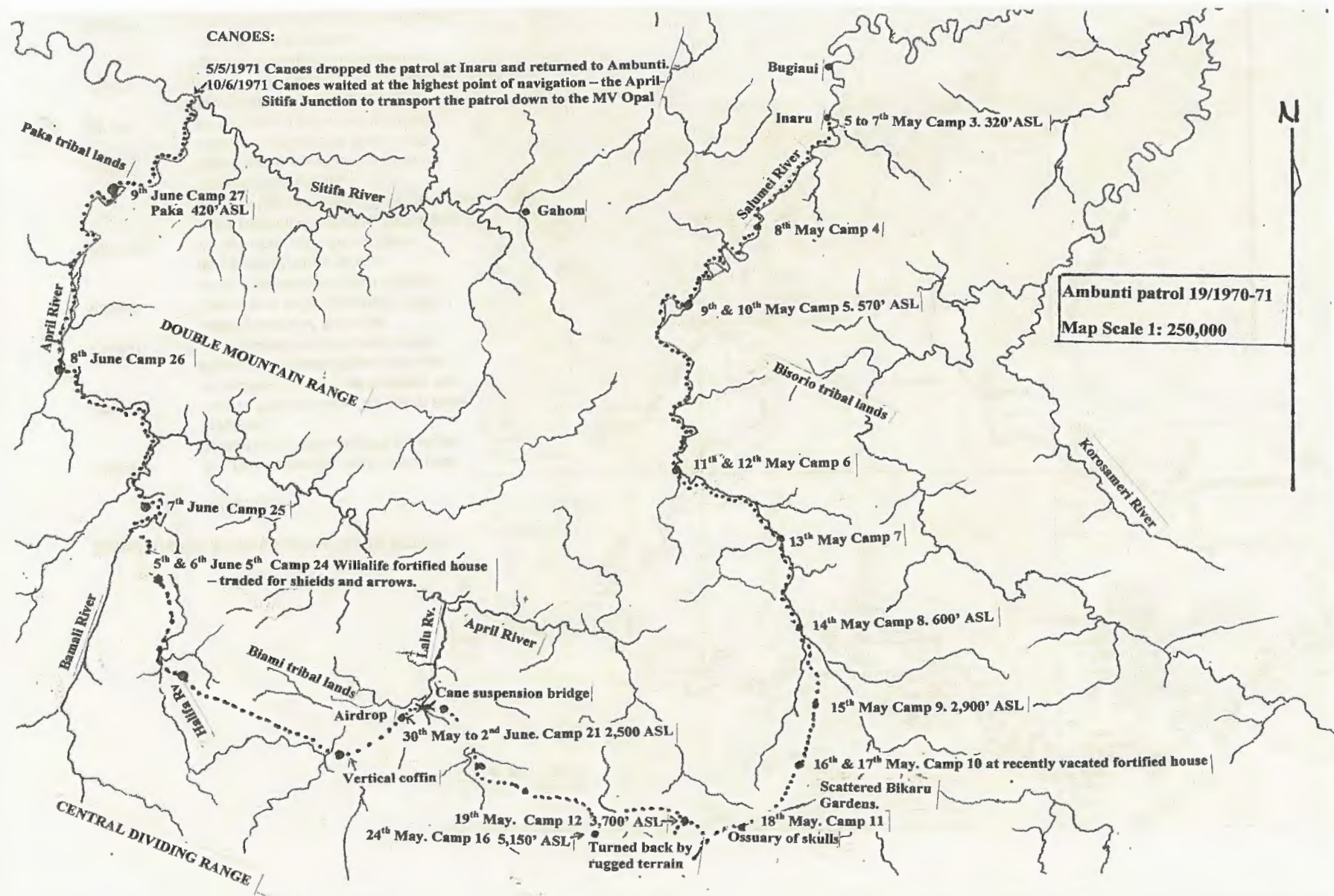
The B.B.C. leader, Mr. Attenborough, has written to this office expressing his deep appreciation of assistance given and admiration for the way the patrol was carried out. It will be interesting to see the final documentary.

While Mr. Bragge has an obvious talent for this kind of work, his duties as Assistant District Commissioner at Ambunti demand that he curb his zeal for exploratory patrols and concentrate more on supervisory duties at Ambunti and Pigiwi.

A well conducted patrol through very difficult country and a well presented and informative report.

BK Leen
(B. K. LEEN)
A/DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

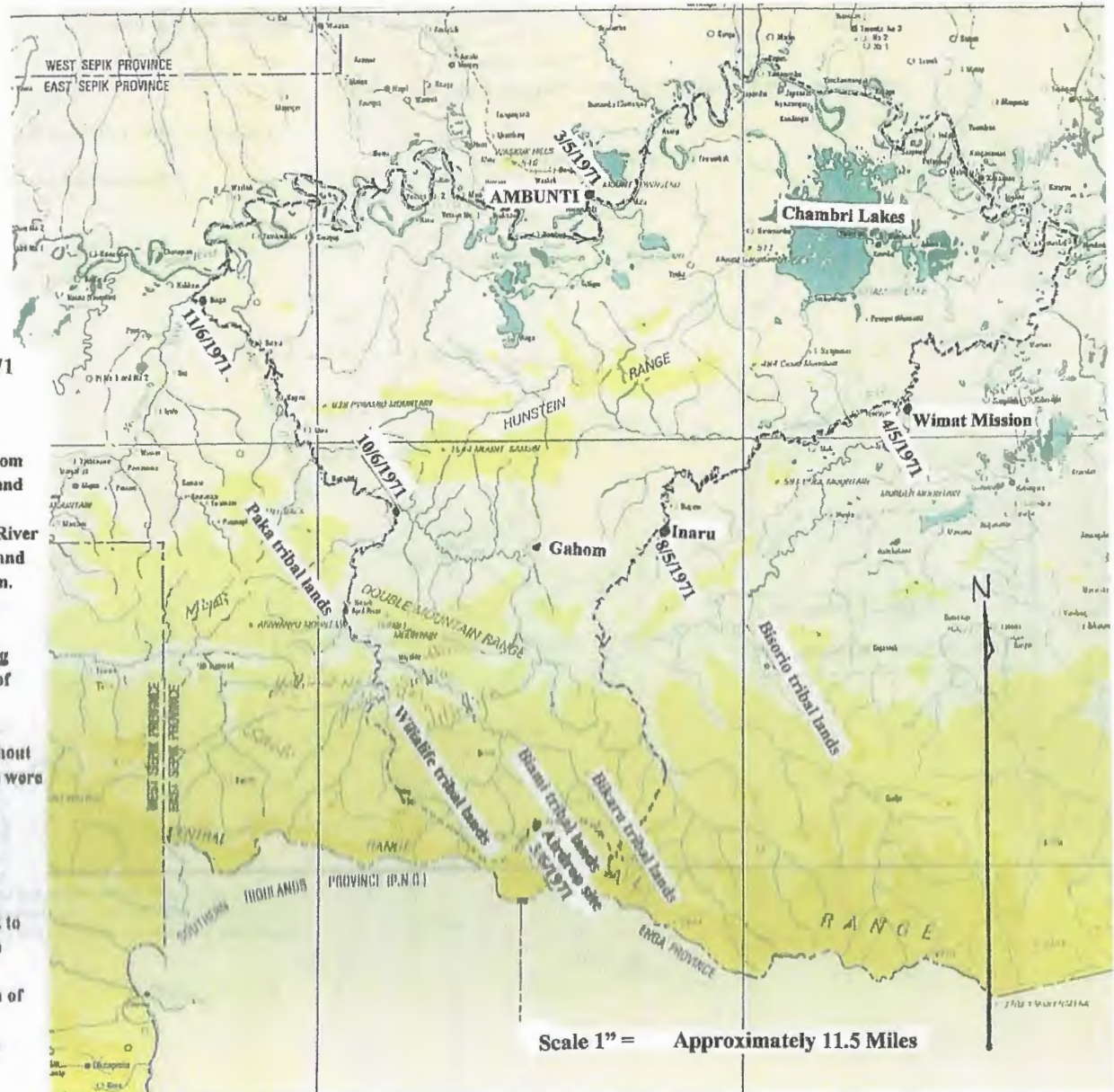
c.c. to Assistant District Commissioner, Ambunti.



Patrol Map of Ambunti Patrol No 19/1970-71

LEGEND

- 3/5/1971 The Patrol departed downstream from Ambunti on Work boats MV Opal and Sapphire
- 4/5/1971 Arrived Wimat mission. Koromeri River too shallow – transferred to canoes and followed the Salumei River upstream.
- 5/5/1971 Arrived Inaru and prepared for the walking section of the patrol.
- 3/5/1971 Commenced walking upstream along the Salumei River into the foothills of the Central Dividing Range.
- 31/5/1971 We passed through Blikaru lands under constant observation, but without seeing the Blikaru people. On 31st we were resupplied by airdrop.
- 1/6/1971 Nine Bliami men and boys came into camp and the film crew filmed it all.
- 1/6/1971 We had more good contact with the Bliamis before they abruptly left us.
- 1/6/1971 A helicopter took the film crew back to Ambunti and the patrol followed the April River downstream.
- 0/6/1971 Patrol met the canoes at the junction of The April and Sitifa Rivers.
- 1/6/1971 The canoes brought the patrol to the workboat Opal . The Opal took us to Ambunti that day.



Scale 1" = Approximately 11.5 Miles



Above left – David Attenborough and Laurie Bragge contemplate strategy in finding local tribesmen
- photo Bob Hall

Above right – Biami tribesmen contemplate the white visitors after walking into their camp

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Sepik 4 Chapter 47 The Mt. Turu Cargo Cult of 1971 and its Subsequent Forms ...

This chapter also includes movements related to the Mt. Turu Cargo Cult, including – The Peli Association [P.A.], The Mt. Turu Christian Democratic Association [M.T.C.D.A.] and the Seven Association [7.A]

The primary focus of this chapter is on the Boiken language group and Mt. Hurun [otherwise known as Mt Turu], as shown on Map 2. The Boiken language group is the north-eastern most of the eight languages which makes up the Ndu language family – the other Ndu languages are Iatmul, Sawos, Abelam Ngalla, Manambu, Biananumbu, and Yelogu.

Through mid-1971, the world's media began telling readers about a cargo cult belief in New Guinea; a belief which suggested that cargo would flow from the sacred mountain Hurun [Mt. Turu], when cement survey markers were removed from its summit on the 7th of July 1971. Not surprisingly the story of this cult neither begins nor ends in 1971.

The description of the history of millenarian¹ beliefs that laid the foundation for the 1971 cult stretches back to before the first contact between the Yangoru Boiken speaking people and the outside world. In documenting this, I am relying primarily upon P.A.(Jim) Roscoe's *The Far Side of Hurun*²: This history is described in three phases :-

Phase 1: First contact until the Second World War.

Phase 2: Millenarian centre moves from Ambukanja/Marambanja.

Phase 3: The late 1960s onwards – Ambukanja/Marambanja's dramatic move back to Millenarian's centre stage.

Phase 1: First contact until the Second World War and beyond

Even before initial contact between the Yangoru people and the outside world was made by missionaries Fathers Eberhart Limbrok and Francis Kirschbaum who crossed the Prince Alexander Mountains on 4th October 1912, research indicates that millennium expectations were evident in Ambukanja village high in the foothills above present day Yangoru. At that time there was considerable European-inspired development along the coast and the Yangoru people were aware of this.³

Father Limbrok described being greeted by throngs of friendly, delighted villagers. He believed this unexpected warm reception was welcome evidence that the mission's teachings had spread to a receptive audience in the hinterland. However according to the informants in 1989, the elders saw it differently. Most villagers held the white men to be *Kamba*, spirits of the dead, who had returned to visit their living relatives. By 1915 the mission's efforts had been transformed into a movement :-

*In which people attended the church and prayed in expectation that "God the Father" would come down, the spirits of the dead would return, and villagers would become like white skins*⁴ [meaning Europeans].

The movement initially stayed within the five village war confederacy of which Ambukanja was part, but with the easing of fear of fighting, brought about by Administration influence through the kiaps, people came from further afield. By the late 1920s and early 1930s...

A movement spread through the northern villages advocating the abandonment of warfare, sorcery and initiation ritual in the belief that villagers would thereby find God (in a

literal sense), become “white skins”, and so gain unfettered access to Western goods now filtering through the region.⁵

Subsequently, the Yangoru area was patrolled by the Administration from Wewak, and one night in the 1930s bonfires were lit on the peaks of Mt Hurun and other prominent Sepik mountains, including Mt Ambunti, in celebrations of King George VI's coronation [1937] and other occasions. This indicated to the Yangoru people that :-

The village of Ambukanja had secured western assistance in an event that would bring about the millennium...Luluais and Tultuls from throughout Yangoru converged on the Ambukanja hamlet of Kularawo to witness the firing of the summit. For the remainder of the night they participated in a “lumohlia” – a song and dance in honour of the dead and celebration of the political triumphs of the living – at dawn they returned home to their villages in expectation that now “the good times would come.”⁶

This would not be the last time that locals and Europeans jointly participated in an event, with each culture having a very different interpretation of proceedings.

In about 1939 a native called Helo began a movement to contact the dead spirits. This was on the coast, but soon afterwards Helo “gave his thinking” to a relative called Hombinei at Ambukanja who continued the movement. The Administration gaoled the cultists in Wewak, presumably on charges of spreading false reports, where they remained until the Japanese released them in 1942. Hombinei returned to Ambukanja and restarted his movement with the claim that the Japanese were the returned ancestors. In this he was probably assisted by the Japanese policy of claiming to be ancestral spirits to ensure village support.⁷

Following Hombinei's instructions, people began to bring the occupying soldiers pigs and food in the expectation that the new “Law” would thereby come. Hombinei became very influential with the Japanese...Before long, though, the occupiers betrayed their claims to ancestor-hood by beatings and shootings of those who failed to obey them, and soon thereafter Hombinei's following disintegrated.⁸

However, as the remainder of this chapter demonstrates, the cult leaders managed to keep the actions of its followers lawful and generally co-operative with authorities. This outcome was supported by the Administration policy of taking no action unless the law was broken.

Around 1950 Yangoru's millenarian efforts took a different turn under the direction of Paulus Hawina of Marambanja. He was a classificatory⁹ son of Hombinei and had risen to high rank in the Japanese army. After the war he became influential in the region's development efforts such as the Yangoru Rural Progress Society, and a constant supporter of the Administration, which mobilized labour for the construction of 40 miles of what is now the Sepik Highway.

The concepts of “Business” and “Development” are not usually regarded as involving cargo cult, but the linkage occurs when motivations of the people are driven by millenarian expectations. For instance, people planting rice did so in the expectation that they possessed the means of Westerners to generate enormous wealth and power, whereas the actual cash value of a bag of threshed rice failed miserably to meet those expectations. Then in June 1953 Yangoru Patrol Post staff again cleared the summit of Mt Hurun for another bon-fire, this one for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Villagers organized large amounts of food...

Villagers recognised the connection with royalty but again misunderstood the purpose. The firing, it was believed, would remove the Australians and their Administration and affect the accession of New Guineans to their positions and estate.¹⁰ At this time Ambukanja's millenarian fortunes were in decline and there was a rise in movements sponsored by other villages.¹¹

Phase 2: The Millenarian centre moves from Ambukanja/Marambanja.

This phase commenced about 1949 when the "New Times" movement, headed by war hero ex-Sgt. Yauiga from the Nagam area gained influence in Yangoru. In 1949-50 patrol officers took action against people conducting rituals involving graves in Haripmor village. In 1952 some months before Hawina launched his Yangoru Rural Progress Society, ten villages in West Yangoru formed the Nindepolye Rural Progress Society to manage their rice growing movement.

Writer's Note In the early to mid-1950s in Yangoru the Administration and capable patrol officers on the ground saw commendable progress without associating Luluai Hawina in particular with millenarian movements. On 8th March 1965 Hawina/Ingombi of Yangoru was awarded a Loyal Service Medal. The citation reads :-

In 1916 Hawina was appointed Tultul of his village and two years later he became Luluai. He retained this position until the establishment of the Yangoru Local Government Council in 1960. He cared for his people when they were forced into hiding by the Japanese invasion, during the Second World War, then assisted Australian soldiers when they arrived, accompanying them on the Yangoru skirmishes armed with a shot gun and grenades. He assisted in organizing labour, building the Wewak-Yangoru-Maprik road, and encouraging the development of economic crops.

John Wearne was stationed in Yangoru as officer in charge in 1954/55. He recalls Paramount Luluai Hawina as a close and trusted friend who he last saw during a visit to Marambanja in 1969.¹²

Writer's Note cont: I also note some possible millenarian aspects attributed to Hawina in Chapter 22. Nambuk of Korogo went to Yangoru to meet Luluai Hawina, and from 1954 to 1958 visited on a monthly basis bringing gifts. Hawina reportedly told Nambuk, *...stories of acquiring wealth from economic development and by cult activities; the former being used to cover the latter.*¹³

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In 1958, despite Hawina's attempt to suppress it, a cargo cult involving the burial of Western goods in grave yards broke out in the Wilaru area west of Yangoru. In 1959 a movement developed around Neigrie mission when the priest and village catechists initiated a recruitment drive. Thousands were drawn from throughout Yangoru to renounce sorcery and polygyny. Although the Catholic mission apparently interpreted these events from a Christian perspective, the catechist and the villagers expected "God-Jesus" to return and usher in an eternal bliss in which food, housing and money would appear spontaneously.¹⁴

About this time, the Kuvari people believed an impending lunar eclipse was interpreted as the end of the world. Then, from 1963 to 1965 the people of Witupe, south of Yangoru, were involved in a movement variously called the Angoram Ex-Servicemen's Club and the Angoram Sports Club which buried money boxes and built an airfield. There was also a report of a movement that claimed whites were diverting cargo sent by the ancestors and, in 1958, a child was supposedly sacrificed in connection with a cult.¹⁵

Phase 3: The late 1960s to 1989 – Ambukanja/Marambanja’s dramatic move back to millenarian centre stage

Matias Yaliwan, the spiritual leader of this resurgence was the Marambanja grandson of the earlier millennium leader Hombinei. Supporting Yeliwan was the son of Hawina, Daniel, who was also a classificatory grandson of Hombinei. Daniel Hawina epitomizes the commonly observed secular ‘organizer’ at the side of the sacred-charismatic prophet-leader¹⁶ Among the cult’s strongest opponents was Pangu MP. Mr Pita Lus.



Photo. National Geographic Caption: *Messiah of money, Matias Yeliwan – leader of the quasi-religious cargo cult – tells disciples in Munjiharangi [Marambanja] village, how, by mimicking the white man’s ways, they can become rich in material goods, or cargo.*¹⁷

In 1962, a U.S. Air Force party acting for the Administration sunk several cement trigonometric markers into the summit of Mt. Hurun, unaware of the Yangoru belief that village prosperity can be destroyed by burying dispelled stones on ridges and mountains. The mountain thus became pregnant for exploitation for the second time in half a century.¹⁸ In 1969 the markers became the focus of a cargo cult as it was believed the markers desecrated the mountain which was a traditional sacred place and that the markers stopped the cargo.¹⁹

Late in 1969 Yeliwan, Daniel Hawina and a few followers removed one marker and, for doing so, they were gaoled.²⁰ By early 1971, the cult was becoming a matter of national and international concern and media coverage exploded with reports of fact and rumour. On the 17th of May, the Port Moresby *Post-Courier* carried the headline ‘*Human Sacrifice : 15,000 to Watch Cargo Cult Rites*’. Evidently Matias Yaliman, whilst in prison, had had a dream which suggested he was to be sacrificed, and he would rise up three days later like Jesus Christ, and all the good things would flow for the people of PNG. The cult following at this time was estimated between 50,000 and 200,000 adherents.²¹

A movement of such a magnitude with dedicated followers was potentially a very serious law and order concern.

The Peli ["Peli" meaning eagle or hawk] Association, which went largely unreported through the drama of the "Mt Turu" cargo cult media coverage, was originated in 1969²² and was Matias Yaliwan and Daniel Hawina's organisation behind the Mt Turu cult. Membership fees [of the Peli Association] varied from \$10-20 for men and \$2 for women, although prominent members paid \$25 or more and dead relatives were accepted as paid up members. The fees were collected in the main by Daniel Hawina and his deputies during public meetings...in the period prior to 7th July subscriptions amounted to \$21,572. The notes were kept in one box and the silver in another.²³ The 7th of July 1971 – the seventh day of the seventh month - somehow became a most propitious date. There was great speculation about what would happen on that date. Stories included:-

1. There would be a long night (people accumulated firewood, blankets, European foods and clothing in preparation).
2. People were to be in doors during the long night or they might turn against each other.
3. All weapons were to be removed before the long night.
4. During the long night people would turn white.
5. After the long night Europeans and natives would be able to sit down and eat together.
6. During the long night people would be visited by centipedes, millipedes and all kinds of snakes. The snakes would kiss people and finally a large python – part snake, part human, would come and join them. There was no way to avoid the visit from this *masalai* [spirit], snakes and insects; only after their visit, the long night would end and morning come.
7. During the night pigs, birds and other animals would return to their place of origin.
8. As well as darkness there would be a huge wave over the Prince Alexander Mountains, fog and a severe earthquake. These would be followed by a great sickness.
9. Many believed that some 300 American 707 jets would land on the mountain top and disgorge friendly Americans, money and cargo.

Instructions as to what to do on 7th included – praying, reading their bible and put right any wrongs and no smoking, no chewing betelnut, no working, no handling of knives, no sounding of slit gongs, no sleeping with women, no handling of guns and no swearing.²⁴

Radio Wewak has been ordered to maintain a 24-hour listening watch on that day [7th July 1971] in case of trouble. The officer-in-charge of the Madang Police District, Superintendent Mike Thomas flew to Wewak to take charge of police operations.²⁵ The sequence of lead up events is best traced through the media coverage :-

- Post Courier 21st April 1971 – Fears of cargo cult revival.
Mathias Yaliwan of Ambukaja...had been jailed for removing survey markers ...claimed a *masalai* [an evil spirit] that lived on Mt Turum had become angry and was causing cargo stoppage and had prevented cash crops from growing.
- Post Courier & Sydney Morning Herald 18th May 1971 – Govt "plays it cool"
no action over cult.
The administration will take no action against the cargo cult which is seeping through the East Sepik District. A spokesman said today the Administration would "play it cool" and not do anything that could possibly strengthen the movement.
- The Australian "Back to the Cargo Cult" 19th May 1971.

A New Guinean politician²⁶ once told voters that he would slit his throat at the front of all wisdom – Parliament House Canberra – as the blood flowed so would riches to all his people. ...In Australia the stories of strange and sometimes weird antics of cargo cultists have generally been met with great hilarity, but in Papua New Guinea they stand as a depressing and seemingly immovable barrier to progress.

- Sydney Morning Herald 19th May 1971. *The NG Christ legend.*²⁷

...The Yangoru belief with its emphasis on a double human sacrifice, two dollar notes made through a magic stone and spirits drying up rivers and withering crops... [are current drivers in the cult activity].

As villagers stream to Mt Turum, where the sacrifice is planned to take place, the Administration will be faced with an extremely difficult decision on how to stamp it out. The problem is that any direct action by a white Administration will only reinforce beliefs that there is a secret key to cargo and that white man will go to any lengths to keep it to himself.

- Post Courier 27th May 1971 *Human Sacrifice! 15,000 to watch cargo cult rites.*

Yeliwan has offered himself as the first sacrifice – on 7th July. He will be followed by a youth yet to be named.

- The Australian 24th May 1971 *Church attacks NG cult.*

The Bishop of Wewak, Bishop Arkvelt warned that the cult has reached dangerous proportions and that it could result in widespread violence and bloodshed. Bishop Arkvelt said cult followers have been burning money in the belief that this would help to bring great wealth... The parliamentary leader of the Pangu Pati [Michael Somare] claims he has been threatened with violence for joining the Administration campaign to discredit the cult.

- Post Courier 24th May 1971 *Cult is still after markers*

The cult leader, Yeliwan Mathias, said the cement markers would go “*on the seventh day of the seventh month.*”

- Sydney Morning Herald 25th May 1971 *Cargo cult markers to remain.*

Following grows in widening area of NG.

The survey markers...would not be removed, the Administrator Mr. Johnson said today...this decision had been made by the Administrator’s Executive Council...

- Post Courier 24th June 1971 *Wewak clash on cult [verbal between L.G.Councillors]*

...Vice president...Peter Maut said that only the Yangoru people were involved in the cult. But Cr Kumasi said such talk was rubbish “*There are now about 18,500 members of the present cult*” he said.

- Sydney Morning Herald 26th June 1971 *The Magic Men of Turu*

...If Yeliwan is part mystic, Daniel is rather more practical. An intelligent compact and handsome figure, he has considerable powers of natural leadership...he plays a kind of desiccated, black Rasputin to Yeliwan’s mystic emperor of the mountain...

- Post Courier 6th July 1971 *They’re pouring into Turu*

Estimates of the people involved vary from 10,000 to 30,000. The people have been flocking to the mountain for the past seven weeks... The cultists believe that 400 American planes will land near the mountain bringing cargo for the people. Trade stores

have reported record sales of blankets and food to people heading to the mountain. One small trade store reported selling almost 400 blankets.

Writer's Note: We heard at Ambunti at this time that the Agricultural station at Bainyik, which was responsible for purchasing, processing and marketing locally grown rice, had also sold out all stock mainly to the cultists. This was a serendipitous outcome, as the local dry rice was less popular locally than "wet" rice imported from Australia and marketing of the local product was mainly done through administration institutions such as hospitals, school, gaols etc., where the consumers had no option but to eat what was provided.

- Sydney Morning Herald 7th July 1971 *Radio plea on NG Cult – Govt bid to avert trouble.*

The East Sepik acting District Commissioner, Mr. Kerry Leen, twice broadcast a speech both in English and Pidgin, telling his listeners not to make fools of themselves over the Mt Turu Cult; "*The eyes and ears of the world are upon you*" he warned.

- Post Courier 7th July 1971 *Cult shows Territory is not ready for Independence*

Cults of this nature reveal to Australia and the United Nations that we are not ready for Independence...By failing to achieve their goals, the cultists will eventually realise their errors.

Post Courier 7th July 1971 *Cultists rip out block – hand to hand down mountain by 6,000*

Daniel Hawina stated :-

1. There will be no violence or trouble on Mt Turu today.
2. All men no matter what colour or race can come to the ceremony on Turu. There will be no arguments or fighting.
3. Cargo will not come. The markers will be removed to ensure the return of animals. The people's gardens will flourish again.
4. The people will be searched for weapons and any weapons found will be confiscated.

- Post Courier 8th July 1971 *Bizarre end – journalists visit Yeliwan at Marambanja.*

When asked how long after the removal of the markers it would take for crops to flourish and the game to return. Yeliwan replied "*I am not the boss. It is up to God.*"

- The Australian 8th July 1971 *Cargo Cultists wait for the fish to bite.*

Yesterday's ceremony went without incident. There was no violence. Three human sacrifices planned for the ceremony did not take place and the only unlawful act was the removal of the markers. The cult ceremony began just after dawn yesterday (at 7am)...about 6,000 villagers stood in line stretching from the peak of the mountain to the patrol post of Yangoru. After the markers were removed they were handed from one villager to another...to Yangoru sub district office where they were deposited.

- Sydney Morning Herald 8th July 1971 *The markers go but the cargo has not yet come. 10,000 at ritual in Yangoru.*

...quiet is now expected as cultists await results from the removal of the markers.

- The Australian 9th July 1971 *Waiting for a ship that will never come.*

Professor Peter Lawrence – author of Road Belong Cargo – said :-

“Every time a cargo cult prediction fails, the leaders always tell the people it’s because of specific failure or omission – you name it. They will always find something. In last Wednesday’s case they started out by telling the people the cargo would be found under the markers on the mountain, then they switched it to greater wealth in the gardens which is, after all, a lot easier to explain away.”

On 23rd July 1971 the District Commissioner sent a memo to ADC Ambunti and presumably others which stated :-

I am concerned that recent reports have been filtering into this office that the native people in some areas think that the Administration is tacitly condoning the line taken by the Turu cultists...

all field officers must be prepared at all times to combat the idea that the Administration condones this or any similar cult thinking or activity. In any discussion that you may have on this subject with the native people it should be made clear that the administration is strongly opposed to cults of this nature.

It should be hammered home to the people that the only way the majority can improve their economic lot is by physical work and thrift. Most native people have been disillusioned at some time or other by what they regard as the unfulfilled promises of riches to be had from cash cropping. We must be careful not to promise any more than a modest income from these sources. ...Reactions to the cult should be reported in every monthly intelligence summary until further notice.

Sgd A.D. Steven a/DC

The Peli Association

While the Peli Association came into existence in 1969, media focus in 1970/71 was on the cult itself. After the cult failed to produce the cargo, media coverage turned away from “Mt Turu Cult”, which was old news, to the activities of the “Peli Association”, which continued to grow and diversify. Firstly though, what did the leaders perceive as the issues, goals and ideals of the Peli Association?

Daniel Hawina and others within the PA constantly accused the Mission and Government of hiding the true story. He said the New Testament consists of parables, which must be studied so that the hidden meanings can be brought to light.²⁸ The Peli ideal according to Daniel Hawina is for all people to be happy and live in harmony. While the legacy of the bad brother Cain left New Guineans living in poor conditions, they aspire to live in harmony. From Abel the Europeans have inherited the Bible and so all now live in the state of harmony that New Guineans seek.

The means to realise the ideal is for all people to be Peli Members, then when Independence comes, if the people pray together...the people will live as Adam and Eve did before God took them out of Paradise.²⁹

Post Courier 4th January 1972 Missions *Worried on Cult. P 3*

Christian Missions in the East Sepik are “gravely concerned” at the widespread penetration of the Peli Association into mission areas...Many people are joining the cult and neglecting their mission services, their families and their gardens ...people are joining just in

case they miss out on the cargo. Mr Pearce [South Seas Evangelical Mission] said that the government and the missions were not the true leaders of the people - the Peli leaders were.

Peli Association diversification included Yaliwan's bid for election to the House of Assembly in 1972. A measure of the cult support, despite its failure to deliver the cargo, was to direct its numbers into the polling booths. Clearly the people wanted to believe in Matias Yaliwan – **left, seated** - despite the fact the cargo was not delivered. In January 1972 the Chief Electoral Commissioner Simon Kaumi had to fly to the Sepik District to investigate reports that voters were moving into the Yangoru-Saussia area to vote for Mathias Yeliwan.³⁰ While only enrolled Yangoru-Saussia electorate, voters were eligible to vote for Yangoru-Saussia candidates. Peli supporters from other electorates came expecting their votes would help Yeliwan win.

Sydney Morning Herald 14th February 1972 Cult Campaigns – Yaliwan the prophet turns politician for the New Guinea Election.

The cargo cult today has become the Peli of Eagle Association, while Yeliwan, the prophet has become Yeliwan the politician. He is not only considered as a serious candidate for the seat of Yangoru [Yangoru-Saussia Open Electorate] in the Territory election starting on February 19th, but is given a very good chance of winning.

The 1972 election was conducted in late February and early March. Matias Yaliwan was elected as MP for the Yangoru-Saussia Open electorate. The media coverage continued to trace occurrences and change in the Peli Association. In parliament Yeliwan found opposition from fellow MPs, in particular Pita Lus :-

The Peli Association was spoiling the name of the East Sepik and Papua New Guinea MHA Mr. Pita Lus (Maprik) said...he was worried that many people had stopped working their plantations because they had been told that the Peli Association was making money for them. Mr Lus asked the people to forget the Peli ideas and go to work on their coffee, rice and coconut plantations...He said Papua New Guineans should work to make their country go ahead and not sit and wait for things to happen out of nowhere³¹



Post Courier 29th May 1972 'Palace' revolt in Peli

The East Sepik Advisory Council has been told of a "Palace revolt" within the Peli Association – The offspring of the Mt Turu cargo cult...Councillor Maut said Mr. Matias Yaliwan had...stormed out. The meeting had continued on...Six Committee members and six "Flower Girls"...decided that Mr. Yaliwan had until the third meeting of the House of Assembly to make good his promises – which were :-

1. [immediate] Independence for PNG, without the intermediate step of Self-Government.
2. Rightful recognition of Mr. Yaliwan as the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

Post Courier 21st June 1972 Yeliwan forsakes his cargo cult.

Former Mount Turu cargo cult leader, Mr. Matias Yaliwan, told the House of Assembly he was no longer associated with the cult's off-spring the Peli Association... He said that Daniel Hawina was now the leader... Mr. Lus, whose own electorate has been affected by cult and Peli activities... blamed his fellow Sepik MP for what was happening in the area.

Through early 1972, the Peli Association developed the "Power House" [sometimes called "Money House"] concept. True believers could contribute money to the power house, where the power would multiply it. The money could be left in suitcases in the money houses, or placed in a dish shaken by "Workers" and "Flowers" and checked from time to time to see if the money had multiplied.

Wewak Local Government Councillors were told that the cult had influenced villagers as far away as May River in the West Sepik and villages along the Sepik River. Cult spokesman Koaie stated "*There is a great power in the money houses that cannot be explained to non-believers.*"³²

Post Courier [date obscured] 1972 *Pelis have a 'New Chance.'*

Disenchanted members of the Peli Association will be given a second chance to have their suitcases filled with money. But leader Daniel Hawina, said these members would have to confess their wrongs to Peli before he would pass on the special power.

When receiving the suitcases [into the Power House] villagers were told to return in two weeks to see if the money had grown. Mr Hawina said those members who had believed in his powers had found their cases stacked with money. Some members had received smaller amounts and others found their suitcases empty. Mr Hawina said many members had broken the laws of the Peli Association ...these members would be given another chance to believe in his special powers...But Confess First.

- Post Courier 14th Sept. 1972 *Yeliwan says "no" to Peli – after being requested to rejoin*

The Peli Association wants its former leader to take charge of the organization again...several deputations from the association has asked Mr. Yaliwan to return... Mr. Yaliwan refused. He said many things about the Peli Association disturbed him. He said money could not multiply without hard work to earn it. "*The people should be encouraged to return to their villages and work*" Mr. Yaliwan said.

Post Courier 15th November 1972 *Peli men jailed*

The magistrate, Mr. W.Graham, sentenced Hawina, who was already serving a five month sentence for riotous behavior, to a further five months with hard labour on striking charges. Vice-President Marcus Yaklesanbi was convicted of "laying hold" and striking charges. He was sentenced to three months. He too was already serving five months for riotous behaviour.

The Emergence of the Mt Turu Christian Democratic Association. [M.T.C.D.A.]

Media coverage of the formation of M.T.C.D.A., if it exists, did not come to the writer's attention. There was however considerable discussion in Ambunti Sub District villages and elsewhere of the new name "Mt Turu Christian Democratic Association" and patrol reports linked the two association names as one "P.A./M.T.C.D.A". A report and instruction of late 1972 in the Ambunti files³³ reads as follows:-

Following the arrest and gaoling of Daniel Hawina, Marcus Keanu and four other members of the Peli Association [PA] in October this year, the leadership of the PA was assumed by Jimmy Simba ... and the organisation appears to be going into a state of disintegration. However, in late October Matias Yaliwan, MHA for Yangoru-Saussia Open and founder of the PA, returned from Port Moresby and announced that he has resigned from the House of Assembly, had been the victim of sorcery on the part of a PA faction headed by Daniel Hawina and that he intended to found a new association which would compete against the PA. Yeliwan claimed that he no longer believed in cargo cult activities and that the only way to wealth lay through hard work and economic development.

On 29th October 1972. At a meeting attended by approximately 500 persons, most of whom were PA members, Yaliwan and Simbago announced that the PA was dead and that a new association to be known as the Mount Turu Christian Democratic Association was to be formed to replace PA. Yaliwan stated that all PA members would be eligible to join the new organisation and that all such persons who had contributed more than 70 cents to the old PA would be reimbursed. The joining fee for M.T.C.D.A. would be fixed at 70c. Yaliwan also announced plans to decentralise the former PA set up at Marambanja and of sending recruiting teams to all village locations. These teams would consist of experienced committee men, flower-girls and workers and assist in the setting up of 'power houses' and the production of money. The activities of such teams have been reported from Kubalia, Dreikikir and Maprik areas, and may be expected to be more widespread in the next few weeks and months.

The activities of MTCDA appear to be based almost exclusively on PA cult type activities such as the construction and operation of "power houses", the employment of "flower girls" and "workers", production of money through the "Paitim-dish" method and the encouragement of promiscuous sexual activities, appeasement of the spirits of ancestors etc... This in spite of Yaliwan's claim he would not support another cargo cult movement.

Present information suggests that something of a power struggle between Simbago and Daniel Hawina is underway with Simbago attempting to seize power before Daniel Hawina is released from gaol in February next. Indications are that Yaliwan, whilst blaming [Daniel] Hawina for some of the minor misfortunes of the PA, during recent months, still hopes to affect reconciliation with him when he is released from gaol and does not fully support Simbago. In the meanwhile a policy of decentralisation is being pursued, indicating that the MTCDA will, in future, operate from three village centres instead of from the old PD headquarters at Marambanja. Full details of future MTCDA plans are still being sought but it is clear that a large scale recruiting campaign is in full swing and that this is meeting with some success.

Interest in PA/MTCDA by Communist Party of Australia and radical groups

Considerable interest is being elicited in the PA/MTCDA by the Communist Party of Australia [CPA] and by other left wing groups such as the Free Papua New Guinea Association [FPNGA] and the campaign for an Independent Niugini [CFAIN] both of which are under communist influence. The exact intentions of these organisations are not currently known but there is little doubt that attempts have been made to penetrate and eventually control MTCDA.

In view of the above, information relating to the following is required:

1. Names, identification details, office bearers, committees, flowers, workers and supervisors of MTCDA

2. Names, identification details of any expatriates, university students, or journalists having contact with MTCDA leadership.
3. Locations of all PA/MTCDA offices and power houses.
4. Information on recruiting teams at village locations.
5. Estimates of total membership at village locations and degree of support for PA/MTCDA.

Ambunti's January 1973 monthly intelligence summary reported :-

...significant...is the increase in political involvement of P.A/M.T.C.D.A. members. It is obvious that a new policy of theirs is to take an active part in all possible political discussions and meetings. This group could easily lead and dominate political thought in this area of political apathy...Criticisms and pressure on MHA [Anskar Karmel] on his stand against the missions was initiated by Malu P.A/M.T.C.D.A. members...³⁴

Post Courier 3rd January 1973 Yangoru Anti-Cult Protest meeting

More than 100 people attended...Spokesman and House of Assembly Interpreter Mr. Wawia said that resistance to the cult had come to a head that week when the day came for opening of a special box in the Peli Power House at Parjim village. Many dollars had been placed in the box with the promise that the money would multiply. But when the box was opened in the presence of many villagers, it was empty. He said that many Peli cult members had wanted to fight the cult leaders.

- Post Courier 15th March 1973 I resigned says MHA – but has he?

Mystery still surrounds the alleged resignation from the House of Assembly of the Member for Yangoru-Saussia, Mr. Matias Yaliwan. Mr. Yaliwan claimed in Wewak he sent a letter of resignation to the Speaker of the House Mr. Holloway... No letter of resignation had been received... If he misses the next two meetings without leave of absence he would automatically forfeit his seat...Mr. Yaliwan said...it was certain he would “never again” attend a meeting of the House of Assembly....

Mr. Yaliwan announced yesterday the formation of a new association. It would be known as the Seven Association because members would pay 70cents membership. Outside members would \$200 he said... Members of the Seven Association had built a two-story, eight bedroom-house in Kogama village...for Mr. Yaliwan...one of the rooms would be used as a chapel.

The short-lived Mt. Turu Christian Democratic Association is replaced by the Seven Association [7.A]

From the information available to the writer, the M.T.C.D.A. lasted from November 1972 until the announcement of the formation of the 7.A. It is apparent that while the name has changed from PA to MTCDA to 7A, that the activities of the “cult” behind the names did not change. Also apparent is Yaliwan's regular self-contradiction as to what he stands for. Equally apparent is that despite his self-contradictions, the people continue to believe in Yaliwan, if not worship him.

Evidence of Mt Turu cult/PA/MTCDA/7A influence in Ambunti Sub District

As an indication of the strength of the cult throughout the Sepik District, it needs to be understood that the Ambunti sub district is a fringe area, far from the heartland of Yangoru and Mt Turu. In dealing with the cult over a four year period as ADC Ambunti, the writer constantly monitored

security aspects and was thankful that the cult leaders, no matter how obscure their beliefs and teachings, always urged their followers not to become violent. This allowed the writer and his staff to mingle and remain in constant communication with the cultists.

Given a different direction from the leaders the cult, and in light of the vast number of dedicated supporters, there was potential to have been violence and political outcomes comparable to the 1950s Mau Mau uprising in Kenya. The Ambunti story continues :-

In October 1971 at Miambei, Worimbi and Nogosop villages it was noticed that the original \$10 subscription payers had become “committee” members. Once a month they report to Yangoru for instructions. The main activity at that time was to collect 70c memberships from men and 30c from women. The people claim that they had been told :-

- The kiap will put you in gaol if you do not pay.
- The kiaps have all got shares and are helping us.
- This new flag [PNG National flag] was designed and presented to you by us.
- Pay the money and you will take delivery of three new PMVs
- One day the cult will take over the work of the Councils and the Police.

A minority of the people were deep believers. The majority were in it “just in case”.³⁵ The following is a summary of related events and expectations in the Ambunti district :-

Prior to 1972 national elections: Manja village Yaliwan has told us that our [Peli Assn] membership money will be lost if we don't vote. Further he will provide a black box for us to vote for him and the DC will come and collect these votes. The box will not be opened for three months.³⁶

During the 1972 elections: Kwimba village people to the man stated they would vote for Yaliwan. The Patrol Officer/Presiding Officer told them they could not as Yaliwan was not a candidate in their electorate. Some said they would go to Yangoru to vote. Yaliwan's henchmen Markus and Yauli had spread the word: *Elect Yaliwan. If he is not elected how will he be able to repay your subscription money?*

Later: Most of Kwimba did vote for Yaliwan, which made their votes informal. Yeliwan was elected but attended only one House of Assemble session before saying he would resign as sorcery was being made against him. He did not finally resign until 1973.³⁷

During the 1972 elections: Councillor Kiagen of Worimbi and Wabitbanga of Aurimbit were financial members of the Pangu Party. Kiagen said: *I have a little black book which “came up nothing” [just appeared] God gave it to me. The book claims that when Pangu Pati takes over the Government every supporter or member will receive \$6,600... for their faith in the party. The money will come from a money factory yet to be built, but its construction will be a priority.* NB this cult did not get off the ground.³⁸

May 1972 – Fifteen Yambon village people had become members of the Peli Association. Two paid \$12 and the rest paid 70c each. The \$12 men sent their daughters to Yangoru to work for the [Peli] Association. This was in response to a request for each village to send two girls. At Melawei only six joined Peli Association @ 70c each. P.O. advised the people that there is no ban on the Assn., but they should not to put too much hope on the cargo coming.³⁹

June 1972 –Melawei and Yambon had constructed money [power] houses in their cemeteries. The people believe all Peli Assn. members at Melawei and Yambon would receive “the power”. Gwiap was at Yangoru receiving the “power”. Rumour had it that Daniel Hawina would spent time in a HQ at Melawei looking after the Ambunti area.⁴⁰ All people of Melawei are now members of the Peli Assn. Seven paid \$12 membership. Gwiap went to live as a hermit in the bush awaiting the ancestors to come and show him the road to the cargo.⁴¹

June 1972 Gaii LGC delegation fact finding trip to Marambanja. The delegation of Gaii President Mathias Yambumbe and a dozen Coucillors first visited the Yangoru LGC chambers where they walked with Council President Father Mormon and others who accompanied them to Marambanja.

While in Marambanja the Councillors were entertained by the Association’s Flower girls. The entertainment took the form of these young hostesses parading around naked, serving food, drinks and lighting cigarettes. Mathias Yambumbe and Father Mormon received the affection of these Flower girls in the form of kissing.

Daniel Hawina gave a talk with about 2,000 people present. When Mathias Yambumbe tried to question and otherwise respond to Daniel’s statements, he was howled down by and heckled by Daniel and others present...In the June meeting of the Gaii LGC Mathias Yambumbe moved that people from the Gaii LGC area be prevented from associating with the Peli Assn...The Councillors agreed.⁴²

September 1972 A Peli Assn. “power house” had just been competed at Korogo. Councillor Yabandimi/Winget, a \$12 member stated there are 51 male and 71 female members at Korogo. Important men include Numbuk⁴³, who sent his daughter to Yangoru as a “Flower” girl and Kongkong/Marabi who sent a suitcase to Mt Turu to obtain the “Power”. The main interest in Peli was stated to be “Lukim tasol” [just looking].

Timbunmeri people’s interest in Peli teachings was to establish if there is any truth in it. They demanded to know if the teachings are false, why the Government is not doing anything about it.⁴⁴

The Messiah cult of November 1972 which is reported in Chapter 10 as cult No # 26, occurred at Ulupu, which is not far to the west of Yangoru. It is reported as a separate cult, but being in the same region in the same time frame as the post Mt. Turu cult rise of the Peli Association, if nothing else, Mt. Turu cult/PA would have provided fertile ground for the germination of the Messiah cult.

Nov/Dec 1972 A Council election at Malu saw the vote split between Malu proper, which was anti Peli and Apan hamlet which was pro-Peli. Peli/Apan won narrowly.

Melawei and Yambon Peli Assn complexes had been built; each had two residential houses, one for “Flowers” and one for “Workers”, a kitchen and a “money” house. They were fenced 30 yards around the complex with a second fence five yards around the buildings. Non-members were discouraged by permanent guards manning the gate. Moore was allowed only to the outer fence. At Yambon there were 17 girls aged from 11 to 14 years and five youths aged between 14 and 16. Of the girls only three had been to Yangoru – Geimtok/Veliagen, Ginjinwaiku/Krapas and Maibakanjin/Banjiwan – the rest were being trained as “Flowers”. Only one boy, Tungui/Kanu, had been to Yangoru. He was training the rest.



The “Money house” complex at Bensim in 1972 was more impressive and better kept than Bensim village itself.



National Geographic Photo – Caption reads *Playing the dishes cargo cultists in Marambanja “making money” by pouring coins back and forth between bowls. Occasionally a stash of money is “found” nearby, reinforcing member’s belief in the efficacy of their efforts. Government officials try to discourage such activities, since cult members often abandon normal occupations in their mystic strivings after cargo.*⁴⁵

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At Melawei there were five girls and two boys in the compound. The atmosphere at Yambon was tense when the patrol arrived. At Melawei it was friendly and cooperative.⁴⁶

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January 1973 Situation Report 3 of Ambunti Patrol 13/1972-73

PELI ASSN. / MT. TURU CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ASSN. [P.A./M.T.C.D.A.]
ACTIVITY BURUI KUNAI & SEPIK PLAINS AREA.

In summation: By mid to late December 1972 P.A. /M.T.C.D.A. activity in the Burui Kunai and Sepik Plains appeared to have ceased. Money [power] houses were not in use and “dish fighting” ceremonies had stopped.

An informant at Bensim stated that Joseph Katabi Dulau, the Peli Assn. committee member of Bensim visited Matias Yaliwan at the Minja River near Yangoru in December and was told by Matias to cease all activity and wait for eight months. At the end of that period Matias would start a new work. It was accepted throughout the area that the people had not stopped cult activity; they were simply waiting to be led.

At that time, the stronger cult villages of Bensim, Marap and Sarum all challenged talk on Self-Government [1st January 1973] stating that Matias says only direct Independence is good, and Self-Government was to be avoided. A list of “Committee Members”, “Flowers” and “Workers” had been sent to the District Commissioner, Wewak.⁴⁷ The patrol observed money house complexes⁴⁸ as follows-

Bensim	Active until December 1972
Maingugu	Inactive, built but never used
Between Wereman & Vagiput	Inactive, built but never used
Torembei No 1	Active until December 1972
Marap	Active until December 1972
Yakiap	Inactive, built but never used
Japanaut [adjacent Sepik Rv. area.]	Active until December 1972
Korogo [adjacent Sepik Rv. area]	Inactive, and believed never used.

***Above** - Bensim Money House complex, which is far more impressive than Bensim village itself. The large building is the “money” of “power” house. The other buildings are the mess, dormitories for “Flowers” and “Workers” and the Overseer’s house*

Affiliated villages involved with each active complex

Bensim - Bensim, Jama, Yanget, Nambagoa

Torembei - Torembei 1 & 2, Jiginimbu and Slel. It is also believed to a lesser extent to include Kwimba, Nagotimbi, Kosimbi and Aurimbit. There was reported to have been a dispute over the position of the complex resulting in the last four names villages losing interest. They wanted it built more centrally at Namangoa “service camp⁴⁹”.

When it was built further south at Torembei 1, they lost interest – **Marap** - Marap 1, Marap 2, Sarum.

At Marap, the Sarums, being a traditional enemy group were only allowed to participate in Peli activity after the payment of a price reported to be one large pig, three fowls and \$50 to the Marap people. The dish to be used (evidently for the money) was anointed with the pig’s blood and used in the feast in which the pig was consumed.

Sarum’s total population moved to Marap, and Sarum village became overgrown. The Local Government Councillor who was resident at Miambei ordered the Sarum people to return home under threat of imposition of Council rules concerning care of villages. They returned home in December 1972. The village was seen to be in good condition in February 1973.

Cessation of activities in “money” or “power” houses Activities in all money/power houses seemed to have ceased shortly before Christmas 1972. Whether this was part of an overall plan or not was not known. Other factors that may be involved in the stopping of the “work” were:

1. December was the commencement of Sepik flooding which partly inundated the Nyaurengai and Korogo complexes.
2. In December the Sarum people moved back home from Marap under council rule threats from their Councillor.
3. At Bensim, a “worker” had sexual relations with a “flower” - against P.A./M.T.C.D.A rules and, as a result, it was believed that the money would not come because “maunden ilok” [the mountain is locked]
4. At the Vagiput/Wereman complex, a money house was ordered built by Dambui, but before building started Dambui went to gaol for three months for having sex with a “flower”. The complex was never used and is now overgrown.
5. At Maingugu and Yakiap, strength of belief was apparently insufficient to sustain the people and the construction work was never completed.

Alteration in housing styles under the influence of the Mt Turu cult.

In the Burui Kunai and Sepik Plains there are two distinct housing styles. The Wosera/Maprik house style with the roof reaching down to ground, which looks like a tent. The other is the typical Sepik style, a large house on high posts with four walls.



The villages of Slei No 1 & 2, Yakiap, Sarum and Marap No 1 & 2 formerly used the Sepik style, but now each of these villages had some houses of the Wosera/Maprik style - **above**. The explanation for this was that Matias Yaliwan said that when the cement markers were removed from Mt Turu, there would be an earthquake and a huge wind. He said people should live in Wosera style housing as they were safer [closer to the ground]. This was also the general area in which people voted for Yeliwan, even though he was not a candidate in their Wosera/Gaii Open electorate.

As a conclusion to this chapter, the writer can only describe the status quo of cult activity when he left Ambunti and the Sepik in 1974. The following description of the turmoil of cult activities as they impacted the individuals in Sepik River villages demonstrates that there was no end to cult activity, nor was there likely to be in the foreseeable future. The turmoil of cult activity is described by the Local Government Councillor for the Iatmul village of Japanaut. This interview was recorded in Japanaut on 9th November 1972 during Ambunti patrol no 8/1972-73. It is important for the reader to understand that the story is being told by an informant from his beliefs interpreted via his perception of the Sepik cosmos :-

'Matias [Yaliwan] was the originator of the Peli Assn. He said you must believe in Jesus; I will work hard for you and you must gather money. If you believe strongly enough in Jesus you will succeed. You must kill pigs in the places of your ancestors to show respect for your ancestors by offering them food – pig meat. After this the Flowers and Workers can work in the money houses and shake the dish and money will come up...Money will not come into the dish if not everyone believes in Jesus. When the Flowers hold the dish now they are naked and have their backs to the Workers who are behind them.

Only very young girls with new breasts are good for this work. When the money comes the Workers take the dishes away and empty them and then the Flowers start again. The naked Flowers sit on the floor with their legs apart so the door is open and move the dish around in front of them. The work is usually in three hour intervals from 6am to 6pm.

In earlier times of the Association both Flowers and Workers shook the dish, but both were naked and close to each other, the dish was usually put aside and the Flowers got a bad name and some people said that they were prostitutes.

The story about the suitcases being the source of wealth, have now been proven to be lies. The people were led to believe that money would appear in suitcases if the suitcases were left in “money houses” and later opened. But when they were opened there was nothing there. I have patrolled all through the Burui Kunai and other areas and the story is always the same; No money comes.

There is a leadership split between Matias Yaliwan who is the leader and whom we believe is genuine in his beliefs, and his second Daniel Hawina. All the bad talk has come from things that Daniel arranged.

At one time we believed we would get money by putting money in the grave of an ancestor, or in the imitation of his grave at Marambanja and then having sexual intercourse with Flowers on his grave. Although our people tried this they reported back to Daniel that they got no extra money... Others tried the same thing, intercourse next to or on top of money in a house called the “House of Promise”, but without success.

This and the Flowers with the dish have one thing in common. The activity must take place in a special place – where the ground is special; an ancestor’s grave of a house with an earthen floor which has been sanctified so that the building has “power”. Also both activities involve the bared private parts of young attractive females either touching the sacred earth floor or very close to it.’

Writer’s Note: – the unstated inference is sexual access for ancestral spirits.

The Japanaut Councillor continues his story :-

Membership of 70c makes the person a “seven step” member. A \$10 membership fee makes him a full member. In two weeks-times a group of Flowers and Workers, at present in the Dreikikir area, will come down to Japanaut and other Sepik River villages to teach Flowers and Workers the skills. Four girls and four boys have been recruited to be taught. One Japanaut Flower, who has been to Yangoru, is to keep watch over the new buildings [at Japanaut] until the “teachers” arrive’.

Writer’s Note: The complex of cult buildings at Japanaut include a money house with an earthen floor about 14’ by 20’, a Flower dormitory, a Worker dormitory each 12’ by 20’, an open kitchen and mess hall and two toilets. An area of 1.5 to 2 acres around the complex has been cleared of every blade of grass. The complex was built very quickly in September 1972, with all Japanaut residents participating. Their attitude is “Try it – it just might be true”

The Japanaut Councillor continues his story :-

The Peli Association is moving from Marambanja and Mt Turu...money houses are being built far and wide on a decentralisation basis. Travelling teachers are visiting each complex.

Lucas [also known as Simon Dambwi] is our present committee member. He is my brother. Nyaka was a big man on the committee when the Mt Turu cult was on, but now he is

out of it. He is not allowed to come close or to take part in Peli activity on Money Houses. I do not know why this is.

...when the teaching team gets here they will stay and rest for a week. The people give offerings of food to the ancestors, and then the teachers will try to teach our Flowers and Workers and see if any money comes up.

The contributions of 70c and \$10 go into a house called a “Haus Kantiri” [cousin house] and this prepared the road for the money to come. The Flowers and Workers must wash their bodies in hot water and they cannot be near their mothers.’

In conclusion, the above description of the turmoil of cult activities as they impacted individuals and communities on the Sepik River demonstrates that there was no end to cult activity, nor is there likely to be in the foreseeable future.

End Notes Chapter 47

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- ¹ Millenarian movements are described by Wikipedia as – from Latin Millenarius “containing a thousand”, is the belief by a religious, social or political group or movement in a coming major transformation of society, after which all things will be changed.
- ² Mt Hurun is known also as Mt Turu. Media coverage also called the mountain Mt.Tur
- ³ Roscoe 1988 P 516
- ⁴ Roscoe 1988 P 518
- ⁵ Roscoe 1988 P 518
- ⁶ Roscoe 1988 P 519
- ⁷ Bragge L.W. Sepik 3 ‘The Sepik at War’ – Chapter 54 *The East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere propaganda*
- ⁸ Roscoe 1988 P 519
- ⁹ Classificatory son is someone whose ideals are judged by the community as following in the philosophical footsteps of a leader, as if he was that leader’s own son.
- ¹⁰ Curiously, and perhaps with a little irony, it is interesting to note that hilltop bonfires in early Britain were an important component of the rites of Celtic paganism. – Charles Squires - *Celtic Mythology and Legend* pp 409-411
- ¹¹ Roscoe 1988 P 519
- ¹² Wearne J.M. email exchange April 2014 – Item 415 Bragge reference volume 13
- ¹³ Bragge L.W. Sepik 4 Chapter 25.
- ¹⁴ Roscoe 1988 P 520
- ¹⁵ Roscoe 1988 P 520
- ¹⁶ Roscoe 1988 P 520
- ¹⁷ National Geographic Vol 144 July to December 1973Page 362
- ¹⁸ Roscoe 1988 P 525
- ¹⁹ Hwekmartin J, Jamenen D, Lea A, Ningigha and Wangu M – Yangoru Cargo Cult, 1971, in *Journal of the Papua New Guinea Society* Vol 5 No 2. Page 4
- ²⁰ Hwekmartin et al – page number obscured
- ²¹ Roscoe 1988 P 520
- ²² Internet “Peli (Hawk) Association
- ²³ Hwekmartin et al – page number obscured pages 11-12
- ²⁴ Hwekmartin et al – page number obscured pages 13-14
- ²⁵ Post Courier 7th July 1971 *Radio Plea on NG Cult. Govt bid to avert trouble*
- ²⁶ Yenobi [Yanepei] of Lumi – See Sepik 4 Part 1 Chapter 10 cargo cult #2
- ²⁷ Concerning Yenobi a cult leader and 1968 candidate proposed sacrificing himself to bring the cargo.

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- ²⁸ Knight M. The Peli Ideal – Catalyst 5(4) PP 2-33 1975 Page 9
- ²⁹ Knight M 1975 Page 10-11
- ³⁰ Downes 1980 P 487
- ³¹ Post Courier 11th May 1972.
- ³² Statement by Mr. Koae - Post Courier May 16th 1972 Page 2
- ³³ Page 278 of Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 20 – 11th December 1972 and headed *Mt Turu Christian Democratic Association (M.T.C.D.A.)*
- ³⁴ Page 282 Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 – Monthly intelligence summary 11th Dec 1972 - 10 Jan 1973.
- ³⁵ Pagwi Patrol Report 1/1971-72 Burui Kunai and Sepik Plains – Payne
- ³⁶ Pagwi Patrol Report 3/1971/72 Gaui Council area pre-1972 elections
- ³⁷ Pagwi Patrol Report 4/1971-72 Burui Kunai and Sepik Plains
- ³⁸ Pagwi Patrol Report 5/1971-72 Gaui Council area – House of Assembly elections - Payne
- ³⁹ Ambunti Patrol Report 17/1971-72 – Numau Ablatak area – Kauffman and Mc Nickle
- ⁴⁰ Ambunti Patrol Report 18/1971-72 – Wongamusen and Niksek areas – Kauffman
- ⁴¹ Ambunti Patrol Report 1/1972-73 – Waskuk Hills – Kauffman and Moore
- ⁴² Report dated 16th June 1972 by Trainee PO John Mamo of Pagwi who accompanied the delegation.
- ⁴³ The same Numbuk who is the subject of Chapter 26
- ⁴⁴ Pagwi Patrol Report 2/1972-3 Main River - Mamo
- ⁴⁵ National Geographic Vol 144 July to December 1973Page 363
- ⁴⁶ Ambunti Patrol Report 10/1972-73 – Numau Ablatak – Moore.
- ⁴⁷ A feature of this cult was its non-aggressive and co-operative nature. Cult members provided detailed information when asked.
- ⁴⁸ The Torembei and Marap complexes were not seen but were freely discussed.
- ⁴⁹ “Service camp” was physically separate from the village, but close by. It is presumed, but not established that it was a facility built in relation to the earlier *Angoram Servicemen’s Club/Angoram Sports Club Cult*.

Sepik 4 Chapter 48 The 1972 House of Assembly Elections

Writer's Note 1: Some political threads running through the 1972 election campaigns and polling management, as discussed in this chapter, could equally be covered in Chapter 50 *When Kiap Became a Four-letter Word*. These came primarily from two root causes :-

1. The electoral officials were mainly the kiaps who administered the sub district populations who were now the voters. ADCs and their staff [the kiaps], of necessity in their administration of sub districts, maintained working relationships with sitting Members who were elected in 1968. These MP/kiap relationships were pregnant with political risks, no matter whether the relationships were amicable or problematic.
2. The 1972 election witnessed huge changes in the PNG political system, particularly with the development of party politics and the flexing of political muscle with the approach of Self Government and Independence – both of which would occur during the life of the parliament elected in 1972. Pangu MPs tended to oppose the officially nominated Administration members of the House of Assembly as well as any previously elected members and candidates who were identified as Administration supporters.

Writers Note 2: While this chapter primarily describes the situation in that portion of the Ambunti sub district that was located in the Upper Sepik Open electorate as it was configured in 1972, I believe three described aspects were applicable, to a greater or lesser extent, PNG-wide. These were:

1. The first real evidence of national politics and the use of political parties.
2. Individual candidates commencing to use political “dirty tricks” to further political ambitions.
3. As discussed above - political opposition to, and the undermining of the “Kiap System”.

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The 1972 electoral boundaries adjustments

The 1972 Upper Sepik Open Electorate was compiled from the geographic bits and pieces that were left over when the Electoral Boundaries Commission put the ideal Sepik electoral jig-saw together - the “ideal” population consisting of Open electorates of 30,000 people who enjoyed close internal cultural linkages with each other. The Sepik’s dense population areas were adjacent to each other – from east to west: The Wewak and Maprik sub districts of East Sepik Province, and the Lumi sub district, which then included Nuku, of West Sepik Province. This band of dense populations follows the southern flank of the Prince Alexander, Torricelli and Bewani Mountains on Map 1,2 & 3 respectively. After the “easy bit” Open electorates were identified, the Electoral Commission did the best they could from what was left.

How would I have done it? – Exactly as above.
Would everyone be happy? – Of course not.

Left over from Maprik sub district was the Wosera population of 18,000 people. This was tacked onto the adjacent Middle Sepik; the Gaui Local Government Council area of the Ambunti sub district to form Wosera Gaui Open electorate. This of course left Ambunti Sub District with insufficient population to have an “Ambunti Open” electorate in its own right

The Upper Sepik Open now comprised the following sparsely populated and culturally diverse census divisions of one sub district of the East Sepik Province, Ambunti, and three sub districts of the West Sepik Province, Lumi, Amanab and Telefomin.

Ambunti sub district – Upper Sepik, Waskuk Hills, Numau/Ablatak, Niksek [April River], Samsai [the Hunstein mountain], Wario/Sio, Wongamusen and the five May River census divisions.

Lumi sub district - Yellow River area [South West Wapei].

Amanab sub district – The Green River census divisions.

Telefomin sub district. - The whole sub district.

A total area of the Upper Sepik Open was about 10,000 square miles with a population of around 34,000. The cultural links between these people varied from very remote and non-existent.

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Two critically important problems for this re-constituted Upper Sepik Open electorate:

1. The new boundaries included the home constituencies of two 1968 sitting MPs: Nauwi Sauinambi - Ambunti Yangoru Open, and Wesani Iwoksim for Upper Sepik. Both sought electoral boundary adjustments which would strengthen their electoral chances in 1972. Neither got the boundary changes they sought. Both MPs objected to the Electoral Boundaries Committee, but to no avail.¹
2. In terms of administration, Ambunti sub district was firmly entrenched in the East Sepik District because it had always been argued that the Sepik River and its communities could not be split between the East and West Sepik Provinces administrations. However the 1972 boundary re-distribution *did* split Sepik: the Upper Sepik Open was in the West Sepik Regional electorate, not the East Sepik Regional where the Ambunti river people believed they should have been. Ambunti voters neither knew of, nor were interested in West Sepik politics or candidates.

Electoral Preparations A to H.

A. The Common Roll.

22/4/1971. I delivered the census registers for the 12 Ambunti census divisions that were included in the Upper Sepik Open electorate to Mrs. Lundstrom of the SDA mission. She had agreed to compile the common roll and was now contracted to do that.

Rural PNG does not have a national register of births marriages and deaths. That function was performed by the annual census revision patrols conducted by the kiaps. The 12 registers in question were all currently up to date; Mrs Lundstrom would list from them all living persons aged 18 or older.

B. Checking the Upper Sepik Open electoral boundaries map.

Upon receipt of the electoral boundaries map, I checked the coordinates of the boundary between Upper Sepik and Wosera-Gauai open electorates and discovered an error which placed most of Ambunti's Upper Sepik Census Division in the Wosera-Gauai Open electorate. I advised the Returning Officers of Wosera Gauai and Upper Sepik as well as the East Sepik District Commissioner and when I received no response, I arranged the Upper Sepik electoral patrols to achieve what was required. This was a typical "kiap-system" way of doing things: to made something work when bureaucratic processes failed to do so in the time lines required.

In the 1920s the ancestors of the current Brugnowi village population migrated far upstream from Japandai village¹ in what was now the Wosera Gauai Open electorate. Joseph Anganjuan of Japandai wanted the Brugnowi votes to be counted in Wosera Gauai Open. Upon my insistence the Upper Sepik Returning Officer contacted the Chief Electoral Officer, who ruled that my decision was correct²; Brugnowi would vote in the Upper Sepik Open electorate, not Wosera-Gauai Open.

¹ See Sepik 2 chapters concerning the Japandai Migrations and the 1924 Investigation into the Japandai massacre.

C. Electoral preparations and associated politics

The 1964 and 1968 elections were relatively uncomplicated and the kiaps serving as electoral officers did their job with few problems. The election of 1972 would be different as we soon discovered.

- **Wayne Cross OIC Amboin** was mentioned by name on the National News, accused of allegedly telling people not to vote for the Pangu Party. Mr. Cross was immediately excluded from participation as an official in the elections, apparently without even a DDS&NA departmental enquiry. To make things worse, Mr. Cross by arguing his case quickly found that a public servant seldom won when accusations originate from a Member of Parliament.
- **ADC Angoram** was accused in the media of supplying administration transport to some candidates, but not to others.
- **A visit to Ambunti by two Returning Officers.**

The Returning Officer for the Upper Sepik Open – Barry Fischer [ADC Telefomin] and Returning Officer for the West Sepik Regional seat – Dan Van Claasen [ADC Vanimo] visited. Behind closed doors we discussed Wayne Cross' exclusion from election duties. The two returning Officers also mentioned several aspects concerning the sitting member Wesani Iwoksim ;-

- a. Mr. Iwoksim pushed through an amendment to the legislation which increased the nomination fee from \$50 to \$100. This was a huge amount of money in the Upper Sepik and would exclude some candidates who were unable to raise that much money.
- b. During 1971, to the horror of the Baptist mission and the Telefomin community, Mr. Iwoksim returned to Telefomin with a young Papuan wife and immediately divorced his Telefomin wife. He built a new house where he lived in isolation with his new wife. His constituents who voted him into office in 1968 now wanted nothing to do with him.
- c. Mr. Iwoksim went into the DC's office in Wewak and demanded a Government car and house because he was the Assistant Minister for Social Development and Home Affairs: Telefomin was too remote and he needed these facilities to perform his ministerial role. The more likely truth was that he was no longer welcome in Telefomin because of "b"³

- **Mr. Fischer terminated as Returning Officer.**

Soon after the Fischer/Van Claasen visit to Ambunti, Mr. Fisher was replaced as Returning Officer by PO Tony Hazlewood. Mr. Iwoksim had reportedly complained to Mr. Fenbury, a senior DDS&NA officer that if Mr. Fischer remained as Returning Officer, it could be detrimental to Mr. Iwoksim's chances of re-election.

- a. While Mr. Fischer was senior to me in terms of DDS&NA service, Mr Hazlewood was my junior. It follows that I could have appealed his appointment as Returning Officer. I was happy not to, as I had already postponed my leave in order to conduct the election. As Returning Officer my leave would be further delayed.
- Mr. Iwoksim reportedly complained that the POIC Oksapmin Mr. Rick Hutchings had paid the \$100 nomination fee for the Oksapmin candidate Ambet and was telling the Oksapmin people to vote only for Ambet. The truth or otherwise of this was not learned, but perception rather than fact, as always, was what drove people to take action. In this case, I was told here was Administration concern that a repeat of the 1953 Telefomin rebellion might be brewing in Oksapmin and Mr. Hutchings was reportedly instructed to be vigilant and to carry a firearm. This instruction was to have far reaching consequences.

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D. Two narrow paths I found myself forced to tread as Assistant Returning Officer :-

(1) Polling advice to the Ambunti Sub District community.

As indicated throughout this Sepik Book 4, the community saw their kiap as “The Government”. Of necessity, the position of ADC in particular, had many concurrent differing and arguably undemocratic roles – Commissioned officer of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, Magistrate of the Coroners Court as well as Local and District Courts, and Gaoler, among others. One of my roles was to serve as Policy Adviser to the Ambunti Local Government Council as well as being appointed as the Assistant Returning Officer for the Upper Sepik Open Electorate. As Policy Adviser, I addressed a sitting of the Ambunti Local Government Council that careful consideration should be given in the nomination of electoral candidates. I said that the Ambunti community would be wise to nominate as few candidates as possible so as not to split the vote and thereby possibly allow some remote ethnic candidate to win. To illustrate, I quoted Ambunti’s experience in the previous two elections:

- **The outcome of the 1964 election** - Ambunti represented by Wegera Kenu of Vanimo.

Why was this so?

It was so because Ambunti put up three candidates - splitting the vote three ways, whereas Vanimo put up one and he won because the Vanimo vote was not split!

- **The outcome of the 1968 election** saw Ambunti put up only one candidate, whereas Yangoru put up five candidates and the Gaui Local Government Council area put up three. Ambunti’s Nauwi Sauinambi won because the Ambunti vote was not split.

As might be expected, these arguments brought opportunist politics into play - or was it attempted graft? Former Ambunti Local Government President Tampsin/ Yambundu² of Avatip village came to see me. He explained that he was getting his money together to pay his nomination fee and that he thought he had a good chance of winning the Upper Sepik Open seat.

Tampsin went on to say “*I really cannot make up my mind whether to go into the House [of Assembly] or whether to go to Cape Hoskins [in New Britain] and take up an oil palm block*”.

Of course, one does not simply ‘*go to Cape Hoskins and take up an oil palm block*’...a strong recommendation from ADC Ambunti would probably increase the chances of the application’s success. I agreed, and as was my duty, I helped him with his Cape Hoskins application, and Tampsin decided not to nominate in the 1972 election.

(2) The working relationship between sitting the MP and ADC Ambunti.

As ADC it was my responsibility to involve the sitting MP [Mr. Sauinambi] in his role as elected representative of the people, as much as possible in the administration of the Ambunti sub district. This was made easier for both of us because we had become close friends. Therein however lay an apparent conflict of interest for me in my role as Assistant Returning Officer. My *duty* no doubt gave an unfair advantage to him as one among several nominated candidates for the 1972 election.

While I was careful to maintain an official separation between my electoral duties and relations with individual candidates, it was not always easy, e.g. :-

² Tampsin was the local pronunciation of “Townsend” – Ambunti’s best known pre-war Kiap after whom he was named.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA
BALLOT-PAPER
UPPER SEPIK OPEN ELECTORATE

ELECTION OF ONE MEMBER TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Directions—Mark your Vote on this Ballot-Paper by placing the Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 in the squares respectively opposite the names of the candidates so as to indicate the order of your preference for them.



- SILAS NEKSEP
- NAUWI SAUINAMBI
- AMBET ATAPU
- WESANI IWOKSIM
Wesani Iwoksim
- ROB ROY KEURA
- DIYOS WAPNOK
- ANSKAR KARMEL
- MARKIS TINEROK
- HARRY WELDON
Harry Weldon

a. Since my arrival in Ambunti, Mr Sauinambi had been one of my first and best informed interviewees on Sepik history. He was a gold mine of information and I heavily relied upon his knowledge to advance my knowledge of the Sepik³

b. By chance, the construction that I commissioned for a court house at Ambunti was in the form of a Kwoma haus tambaran. [see photos in Chapter 43]. Being a Kwoma elder, Mr. Sauinambi was closely associated with the construction. As the election period commenced, the courthouse project became a matter of Kwoma pride and was to some extent recognised as Mr Sauinambi's own creation and further evidence of his mutual friendship with *Loribrek*⁴, Assistant Returning Officer.

c. On 24th January 1972, at Mr. Sauinambi's request, 120 Yau'umbak and Avatip men came to Ambunti for the specific task of raising the heavy 50ft carved ridge pole into the forks [some 20 feet above the ground] of the two "king posts" of the court house. It was an honour for these river men to be asked, and a major political coup for Mr. Sauinambi that they accepted his invitation.

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E. Candidates – Opposite - in 1972, and their Sepik River campaigns ...

Mr. Sauinambi was the first candidate to nominate. He came to my office to discuss his election campaign plans on 13th and 15th October 1971, 1st and 5th November 1971 and 17th January 1972⁵. Apart from being active locally, he campaigned in the May River and Oksapmin areas.

Mr. Sauinambi's personal image which endeared him to the Ambunti community was enhanced by his very long-standing marriage to his Kwoma wife and the fatherly respect he showed his many children. He was also respected as a strongly conservative person, and staunch supporter of the Administration.

Mr. Sauinambi received occasional ad hoc visits at Ambunti from Mr. Tom Ellis, Director of the Dept. of District Services and Native Affairs. Then on 31st December 1971, Mr. Middleton MP and his wife visited Ambunti to see him from Karkar Island in the

³ In volume 18 – Bragge Sepik research notes his interview runs to approx. 6,000 words

⁴ I became known throughout Ambunti sub district as *Loribrek* - the local pronunciation of Laurie Bragge

⁵ Field officer's journal entries

Madang District. Messrs Ellis and Middleton were perceived by the Ambunti community as the important men that they were. That they had come to personally see Mr. Sauinambi gave him huge political status among the Ambunti community. As the election approached, it seemed Mr. Sauinambi's campaign was well on track.

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Mr. Harry Weldon's campaign.

Mr Weldon, a young man of Bangwis village, was a distant relative of Mr. Sauinambi MP, who was also from Bangwis. Mr. Weldon had been dismissed as a pastor with the SDA mission. Mr. Weldon's SDA status automatically placed him at odds with Mr. Sauinambi's Kwoma traditionalist position. [see Chapter 45 – *The Kwoma Cultural Revival of 1971*]. Mr Weldon was ridiculed in Bangwis, being asked what he thought he was doing by nominating against his own family senior, Mr. Sauinambi?

Reports reached Ambunti sub district office that in September 1971 Mr. Weldon stood up in the SDA church and asked the Bangwis village congregation to pray that God would kill Mr. Sauinambi and the village Councillor so that he, Mr Weldon, could be elected in the 1972 election. As this appeared to be threatening criminal behaviour, I instructed Patrol Officer Mahar to investigate. No prosecution was made because the Bangwis community did not believe Mr. Weldon's comments were threatening, rather, they thought Mr. Weldon's statement and Mr. Weldon himself were a big joke, in no way to be taken seriously.⁴

Shortly afterwards Mr. Weldon was accused of beating his wife, Leah, a Wabag woman. Leah refused to make a complaint. Mr. Weldon came to the office soon afterwards to discuss his campaign and I raised the matter of wife beating – to which he replied ... *'You see the implications, of course Sir, of you being an electoral official as well as a Magistrate?'* I suggested that he not try to play games with me, and to be warned that if he again beat his wife, she would not be asked to make the complaint - the police would do it – to which he replied ... *'Thank you Sir, and of course I will heed your good words. good morning and may God bless.'*

Mr. Weldon did beat his wife again. The police did lay the complaint, and this time Mrs. Weldon gave eloquent evidence of both assault and of on-going shockingly graphic verbal abuse. As Magistrate, I placed him on a 12-month good behaviour bond. Mr. Weldon's electoral campaign went quiet for a period. Then, however Kauminga, the village leader at Tongwinjamb, passed on a letter he received from Mr. Weldon. The letter set out Mr. Weldon's campaign promises as follows :-

1. The people could have as many shotguns as they wanted. [ADC Ambunti was the sub district registrar of firearms and this election promise was never going to be met].
2. Medical Aid Posts would be established anywhere the people wanted them. [A Public Health Department responsibility. Mr. Weldon's undertaking was never going to happen].
3. People died in the villages while Mr. Sauinambi was MP. No one would die while he, Harry Weldon, was MP.⁵

About this time, Mr. Sauinambi came to the office in serious distress. Someone had destroyed his yam garden. Yams are the sacred staple crop in Kwoma culture, and Mr. Sauinambi's yams had been chopped into pieces. He said :-

This is a political move by Harry Weldon expressing the thought that I am finished as far as the House of Assembly is concerned.

The police investigation failed to find evidence as to who destroyed the yam garden.⁶

Mr. Weldon's next move proved to be a serious political mistake. He sought to involve himself in the Court House construction, where Mr Sauinambi was making good political mileage. Whereas Kwoma elders of status were allocated areas of the Court House posts to carve and we recognised as having the honour of contributing links in the chain hanging from the finials [each link representing a significant event in that elder's life], Mr Weldon was given labouring, lifting and carrying tasks as befitting his junior status in the Kwoma village hierarchy.⁷

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Mr. Garu Jam's campaign.

Mr. Jam of Yambon village was the Vice President of the Ambunti Local Government Council. On 1st November 1971 he nominated as a candidate. He withdrew his nomination after his nomination fee cheque bounced.⁸

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Mr. Wesani Iwoksim's campaign.

Mr. Iwoksim stood as a candidate in 1964 and I met him in Green River. I also knew him in 1966-67 in my role as ADC Telefomin. He stood in the 1968 election and won. In December 1971 he arrived at Ambunti and made no show of recognising me. Perhaps he assumed that I had already been briefed by Returning Officers Fischer and Claasen.

He arrived in Ambunti and to my amazement stayed with his fellow MP Mr Sauinambi⁹, although he was there to campaign against him. On 27th December 1971 he visited Ambunti sub district office and told me that the election would be declared as invalid if an Ambunti candidate was elected because the Administration did not provide water transport for the Telefomin candidates. He told me that he would be taking the matter up of *the lack of assistance you have offered me*¹⁰ with his Department in Port Moresby. I replied that as Assistant Returning Officer, it was my duty to treat all candidates equally. I was doing that by not providing any of them with any advantage over any other candidate. Each candidate was responsible to make his own water transport and other arrangements.

"Specto Moresby"⁶ sent me a telegram requesting transport for Mr. Iwoksim to go to May River on 8/2/72 when he arrived by air that day. I replied that Mr. Iwoksim would be met off the flight by a local operator who was prepared to hire him his motorised canoe and driver¹¹.

Information received was that Mr. Iwoksim campaigned ineffectually. For example, at a Christmas party organised by Trainee Patrol Officer Livai Binjari, Mr Iwoksim was politely interrupted by the host when he started a campaign speech. *'This is a Christmas dance, not a political meeting. Grab a girl and have a good time – no speeches!'* My estimation of young Livai rose immensely.

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Mr. Anskar Karmel's campaign.

Pangu leader Michael Somare was elected unopposed in the East Sepik Regional seat. He came to Ambunti to campaign on behalf of Pangu's candidate Mr. Anskar Karmel. Mr. Somare did not visit the sub district office, but sent a message of apology expressing his regrets that time did not permit him to visit.

Mr. Karmel, a local trader and native of Kamanimbit village in the Angoram Sub District, did visit the sub district office on 25/1/72. As he was not a prominent member of the local community, I

⁶ Presumably Mr. Iwoksim's Department.

met him only once or twice. He introduced himself and discussed his campaign briefly. His main point seemed to be that his campaign had consumed \$300 in outboard fuel.

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F. The exposure of Mr. Sauinambi's Achilles' Heel.

On the same flight that delivered Mr. Iwoksim to Ambunti but, to all intents and purposes travelling separately, was a middle aged Papuan lady called Malisa Susupe. Mr. Sauinambi showed signs of recognising her and took both she and Mr. Iwoksim to his house. Word quickly spread that she was Mr. Sauinambi's new, second wife. While inspecting progress on the court house, I quizzed Mr. Sauinambi who toed a pebble around in the dust in his visible embarrassment. He finally said :-

' This is not Waskuk fashion but Moresby is a long way from Waskuk. There is a group of these women who attach themselves to us bush MPs... I slept with her sometimes... she is a close relative of Wesani's Papuan wife.

I suggested that he get her out of Ambunti, that he was being set up and would lose the election over her - if he had not already done so. However he said he could not send her away - he felt responsible for her. When Mr. Iwoksim departed, Melisa did as well, having served her purpose. Reports of strong disapproval of Mr. Sauinambi's relationship with the Papuan "wife" came in from all over Ambunti sub district. In most cases the shift in support from Mr. Sauinambi did not go to the apparent instigator, Mr. Iwoksim, but to Mr. Karmel. The early support Mr. Sauinambi had in the Yellow River area was diverted to Mr Karmel when he reported that Mr. Sauinambi had married a Motuan woman and was going to Moresby to live with her – there was no point in voting for him!¹²

G. The mechanics of conducting the 1972 Upper Sepik election: On 2nd November 1971, about 30 kiaps from throughout the East and West Sepik Provinces came to Wewak to attend an electoral course in preparation for the coming election. A further short course was conducted in Maprik for East Sepik kiaps by Mr. Graham, OIC Dreikikir. On 8th February 1972, Mr. Hazlewood, the newly appointed Returning Officer for the Upper Sepik visited Ambunti for a briefing on the progress of electoral arrangements. On the 9th Mr. Hazlewood conducted a training course for Presiding Officers.

On 12th February Mr Claasen arrived in Ambunti to deliver the ballot papers. Myself and Messrs Kauffman and Walker spent eight hours counting out 23,000 ballot papers and related electoral materials and allocating them to various patrols that were soon to depart.

On 16th February, Mr. Walker's patrol departed by canoe for the Leonard Schultze River area. Messrs Mahar and Mamo also departed on time. My own patrol departed for the Numau Ablatak, Waskuk Hills and Upper Sepik divisions. All patrols were back at Ambunti by 9th March.

On 11th March after manning a polling station at Ambunti for late voters, I departed with all the Ambunti ballot boxes per a Mission Aviation Fellowship aircraft. We collected Mr. Lenaghan and the Yellow River ballot boxes at Edwaki and proceeded to Telefomin for the count, which was completed on 13th March. On 15th March I returned to Ambunti and from there proceeded on leave.

Mr. Anskar Karmel was declared the winner of the Upper Sepik Open seat.

H. The primary focus on the other Sepik electorates in 1972. As discussed in the previous chapter, world attention was focussed the Mt. Turu cargo cult in Yangoru, where cult supporters elected cult leader Matthias Yeliwan to the House of Assembly. So strong was Yeliwan's support that cultists from other electorates tried to vote for him with the result that many votes were declared invalid.

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End Notes Chapter 48

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Sepik 4 Chapter 49 Leading into Self-determination - PNG Self Government and Independence.

Section 1 - Historic Context.

The people of Papua New Guinea are known as Melanesians. Melanesia¹ is a sub-region of Oceania which includes far more than Papua New Guinea; it extends from the western end of the Pacific Ocean to the Arafura Sea, and eastward to Fiji. The region includes the four countries of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea.¹ Melanesian culture is also found in the Indonesian Province of Papua and in some of its Indonesian off-shore islands.

The indigenous people of Melanesia had no conception of the extent of their cultural and “Papuan” linguistic group. Prior to European contact, Melanesia was probably best described as a collection of many hundreds of mini nation-states, many as small as a single village, or in some cases, a hunter gatherer community. Each claimed an area of land and depended upon its own subsistence economy for food security. Each had its own religion, social structure and laws which regulated personal interaction and interaction with their environment, marriage, initiation etc. Each managed its own affairs and survival and engaged with other mini nation-states in trade – both of manufactured items such as stone axe blades and pottery, and in consumables such as sago and fish. There were also military alliances and warfare between these mini nation-states.

Due to 19th century European colonialism, Melanesia was divided between the Netherlands – [West New Guinea], Germany – [North East New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago], Britain [New Guinea - South East New Guinea and offshore Islands, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and New Hebrides (Vanuatu)] – the latter it shared with France. Thus colonialization enforced unities wider than that of the mini nation-states described above.

Subsequent history concerning the Island of New Guinea and its off shore islands:

British New Guinea and British New Guinea became two Australian colonies following WW1; the League of Nations Trust Territory of New Guinea and the colonial possession of Papua respectively. Dutch New Guinea was invaded by Indonesia in 1962 and became the Indonesian Province of Papua.

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Section 2 - Australia and its mandate responsibilities

Australia’s obligations concerning self-determination for Papua New Guinea commenced with the conditions that were specified in the League of Nations Mandate in 1920:

Article 1 – The mandate relates to former German Islands in the Pacific south of the equator, other than Samoa.

Article 2 – *The Mandatory shall promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the territory...*

Article 3 – Slavery is to be prohibited. Supply of intoxicating beverages to natives - prohibited.

Article 4 – Military training of the natives otherwise for purpose of internal police – prohibited².

Article 5 – Freedom of religion and related issues.

These conditions of the mandate were neither onerous, nor did they set any time frames. Nevertheless, as Sir Hubert Murray pointed out, they marked :-

¹ Melanesia is a Greek word meaning Black Islands.

² Sepik 3 describes how this provision prohibited TNG police being used as a fighting force against the Japanese invaders. TNG Police joined the Royal Papua Constabulary in order to fight the Japanese.

...the final repudiation of one system of colonial government and the definite acceptance of another. It marks the abandonment of the theory that a colony is to be regarded as a business proposition, and the native inhabitants merely as "assets" to be used for the purpose of business; it marks the definite approval of the opposite theory, that the colonising power has a special duty towards the colony and the inhabitants, quite apart from any questions of business and development.²

In the writer's view it was an unanticipated outcome of World War 2 which motivated the Australian Administration to seriously reconsider the statute of the League of Nations, which had become United Nations mandatory obligations.

In early 1942 the Australian colonial policy was not to tell the people of PNG about the approaching war as it might cause civil unrest and make unnecessary problems for the administration. Three years later some 55,000 Papuans and New Guineans were working for the allied cause... The unity in the common cause of defeating the enemy gained Papuans and New Guineans recognition and admiration from American, Australian, Indian and Japanese troops. Three years earlier, such recognition and admiration would have been inconceivable to any of these armed services and above all to Papuans and New Guineans themselves; the world and the PNG cosmos had changed forever...³

As described in Sepik 4 Part 2 Chapter 5, the tasks facing the civil administration involved the re-construction of war shattered PNG, and then the implementation of legislation and policies aimed at developing PNG towards being a self-governing and independent sovereign state. These included :-

- The Papua-New Guinea Provisional Administration Act 1945
- 1947 – the introduction of "indirect-government" policy with Administration officers advising PNG people in order to help facilitate them making their own decisions regarding economic and social development, etc.
- The Papua & New Guinea Act 1949 [including provisions for a Legislative Council] and provision for the administration of the Australian possession of Papua along with the Trust Territory of New Guinea.
- The Native Local Government Council Ordinance 1949 – a furthering of indirect rule with elected officials responsible for their constituencies, and developing administrative experience in preparation for Self-Government and Independence.
- More legislation and policy, including the Native Customs Recognition Ordinance 1963, which effectively made indigenous customs the enforceable Common Law of PNG.

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Nevertheless, there was concern as expressed on the 24th June 1947 in the Circular Instruction issued by the Director DS&NA, which noted:

'Throughout the territory there have been repercussions through careless explanation by Europeans and others of the ideal of ultimate self-government for the indigenes. A garbled account of self-government to the people who have not yet mastered their own local government is manifestly absurd [and] also disturbing. The native people, with very few exceptions, are unable to appreciate the long term nature of this aim of policy and keep it in the proper perspective.

Administrative officers are directed to equate their talks to natives to reality. Discussions about current events are valuable but matters that will not be of particular interest to them for many years should certainly not be overstressed.⁴

PNG Self-Government as envisioned by Director Jones in 1947 clearly related to a time in the far distant future. Not in his wildest dreams could the story and outcomes related in this chapter have seemed remotely possible to Director Jones. Indeed, until August 1963, 18-year-old public servants

were still being recruited in Australia for service in Papua New Guinea with the expectation of retiring at the age of 65 years [in about 2010].

On 10 January 1968, Australian Prime Minister John Gorton expressed his view that Papua New Guinea should become self-governing, self-supporting and achieve the status of an independent nation as soon as practicable... He related trusteeship termination in New Guinea to a better relationship with Indonesia [on the basis of possible Indonesian hostility if Independence was delayed too long and “Pan-Papuanism” sentiment for “One Island” nationalism³ developed]. In discussion with Tony Voutas and with Peter Hastings, Mr. Gorton rejected the proposal that Australia should wait for Papua New Guinea to decide their own future.⁵

The 1962 United Nations visiting mission led by Sir Hugh Foot has been seen as having made an exceptional contribution to Australian policy in Papua New Guinea,⁶ making it clear that the rate of PNG progress towards Self-Government and Independence was inadequate. Researcher, author and former District Commissioner Ian Downs suggests ‘... *The Foot Report of 1962 made proposals for decisions which were already taken*’ by Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck.⁷

Whether the primary stimulus was Foot or Hasluck, there was an increased focus on taking steps towards preparing PNG for self-determination. From a DDS&NA perspective these included :-

1. Increased focus on establishment of Local Government Councils – see Sepik 4 Chapter 33
2. Repeal of discriminatory legislation – see Sepik 5 Chapter 7 – e.g. Native Women’s Protect Ordinance and alcohol restrictions
3. Establishment of an elected national House of Assembly - see Sepik 4 Chapter 32
4. Institution of Political Education campaigns and increased focus on indirect administration.
5. Commencement of localization of the Public Service – see Sepik 5 Chapter 9.

In 1967 twelve students⁴ and one teacher at the Administrative college in Port Moresby, with assistance from ex-kiaps Barry Holloway and Tony Voutas formed the Pangu Party. The thirteen from the Administrative College became known as the thirteen angry young men.⁸

Section 3 - The Mataungan Association and Whitlam initiatives and outcomes

On the Gazelle Peninsular of New Britain there had been discontent over land, expatriate plantation owners and boundaries since German times. With the increase in Tolai population and Tolai wealth from cash cropping, land shortage issues became a very serious problem.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Tolai resented both expatriate expansion and increased centralization of authority in Port Moresby... with the agricultural boom they resented the presence of foreigners on alienated land. Tolai nationalism and xenophobia developed into Mataunganism. The Mataungan Association outspoken articulation of nationalism and criticism of the Government was a new experience for the Administration.⁹

The **Mataungan Association** was a group of Tolais who were determined to re-establish the predominance of the Tolai Nation in the Gazelle. The name **Mataungan** in the Kuanua language – mata [eye] and ungan – to look after - was chosen after a series of meetings in May 1969 at Vunamami and Kabaira Bay.¹⁰

³ As discussed, the Island of New Guinea and its offshore Islands was arbitrarily divided in the 19th century. It was logical that with PNG Self Government and Independence rapidly approaching that some parties considered re-unification with the “their brother” in the former Netherlands colony in the other half of the Islans. It did not happen.

⁴ Albert Maori Kiki, Oala Rarua, Sinaka Goava, Kamono Waro, Ebia Olewalw, Gerai Asiba, Michael Somare, Elliott Elijah, Karl Nombri, Iomo Batton, Reuben Taureka, Pen Anakapu and Cecil Abel [teacher].

The Administration favoured the introduction of multi-racial Local Government Councils as a logical step forward, and as a means of increasing taxation revenue. This policy did not address Mataungan xenophobia; what the Administration did in fact was open access to a 100% indigenous Rabaul Council to expatriates – the Mataungan’s arch-enemy.

In retrospect this was a seriously bad Administration mistake, but given the Mataungan drive and manipulative skills, it seems safe to assume that had it not been multi racial Councils, they would have found something else to fuel their political momentum. Growing support inspired the Mataungan leaders on 2/9/1969 to stage a ritual theft of the keys to the Gazelle Council Chamber. They locked and closed down the building.... A District Court case followed and the Mataungans were acquitted. The locks had been replaced within an hour.¹¹

Mr. Hasluck arranged for the Administrator to institute a Commission of Inquiry in late 1969, but it achieved nothing.

On 7/12/1969 the Administrator’s party was attacked in Malaguna village and J. Fenton⁵ was injured before the Administrator’s party made their escape. In court the Mataungans said they aimed to intimidate, but not to cause harm. Meanwhile 300 Mataungan marchers were dispersed by 80 police flown in that morning... Unprovoked vicious attacks followed on non Mataungan Tolai leaders [Rakunat Dimani, Vin Tobaining, Ishmael Towalaka and others. Between 8/12/69 and 19/1/70]. Police arrested and charged 104 people. The calm non-violent behaviour of all Europeans and the composure and discipline in the Gazelle gained the reluctant respect of the people. The Tolai people were to continue at the cutting edge of the movement for PNG nationalism.¹²

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The Labor leader of the Australian Opposition E.G. Whitlam visited PNG from 28th December 1969 to 12th January 1970. At the outset of the tour he announced Labor Policy, in the event that they won the next election, would be to grant immediate Self Government to PNG and he hoped, full Independence by 1976, with full Australian aid and assistance.¹³ It was natural for Mr. Whitlam to seek and associate with radical groups in PNG, such as the Pangu Party and the Mataungan Association and the Bougainville secessionists.

Throughout the tour he made gestures calculated to convince the Nationalists of his compassion and sympathy for them...Mr. Whitlam’s compassion was sincere... but the way it was expressed was confusing, even insulting to those with more conservative views. He turned national resentment of expatriates into hatred...The most frequent targets of his undisguised dislike were Administration officials, the expatriate community and conservative local leaders whom he labelled “Uncle Toms.”¹⁴ [referring to Harriet Becher Stowe’s 1852 novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, in which Uncle Tom was a dutiful long suffering Negro servant of a white master].

When Mr. Whitlam visited Rabaul, the Mataungan Association squeezed very drop of political advantage from his visit to impress the Tolai people and embarrass the Administration. At Matupit oval in front of 10,000 supporters they used Whitlam with crude ruthless skill to say what they wanted him to say. [Footnote: The Mataungan interpreters more than made up for anything that Mr. Whitlam overlooked]. Then they manipulated the crowd to arouse his compassion with songs, flags, flattery, entreaties and cheers. On the official dais the leaders nudged and grinned at each other, unable to conceal their satisfaction. The histrionic performance of Oscar Tammur and his Mataungans at Matupit was – in Mr. Whitlam’s reported words – ‘one of the most moving experiences of our lives’, and ‘the biggest election rally we have seen’. Few could have resisted the devout upturned faces that the Mataungans orchestrated to greet Mr. Whitlam at Matupit on 7th January 1970. Overnight, he became

⁵ We met PO Jim Fenton in 1959 during the investigation of the Suwana massacre in the May River area.

a saviour to deliver the Mataungans from bondage... the leader of the Opposition of the Australian parliament was no more than a Mataungan puppet.

The future politics of Independence owed much to the Mataungan movement - Tolais were leaders in administration, in education, in the police force and in medical services in every district in the country. The Whitlam visit turned the parochial problems of the Gazelle into nationalist propaganda in which the Administration was shown to be supporting expatriate domination rather than merely maintaining the existence of a legally constituted local council. The Mataungans felt that violence was sanctified by Labor support.¹⁵

In terms of politics relating to PNG Self-determination, clearly Prime Minister Gorton had lost the initiative and the Government, who had been considering issues of self-determination at least since January 1968, were perceived as the “bad guys” playing catch-up. Prime Minister Gorton visited PNG and arrived in Rabaul on 4th July 1970 on a belated follow up to Mr. Whitlam’s visit. Journalist Laurie Oakes reported :-

It was the most hostile crowd that Mr Gorton had ever faced and 250 police stood almost shoulder to shoulder along the airport fence in case the Mataungans tried to break through. When the Prime Minister stepped from his VIP plane the Mataungans roared with hate, shaking their fists and shouting at him to go home.

Prime Minister Gorton could be excused if he had shown some irritation in Rabaul at becoming the target of Mataungan slander, by being blamed for German land alienations before the turn of the 20th century, the killings at Navuneram in 1958, the multiracial council dispute, the problems on Bougainville and the rest of what Tammur called “Mr. G. Whitlam’s findings.”¹⁶

Prime Minister Gorton was adamant that violent Mataungan attitudes did not make him doubt the Tolai competence for home rule. Nor had conservative primitive highlanders in Goroka, Mt Hagen and Mendi convinced him that self-government was immature. Gorton accepted the Administrator’s view that a situation could develop beyond the capacity of the police to control – which would justify the use of the PIR to maintain the peace and evict squatters. This observation was eventually confirmed¹⁷

On 7/2/1971, the UN visiting mission was told by Oskar Tammur that the Tolai wanted Self Government in 1971 or 1972. The Mataungan militant behaviour included the illegal occupation of expatriate plantation lands. Thousands of Tolais at first rejected Mataungan militancy and remained loyal to Tolai councillors of the multi-racial Councils... but soon the Tolai were evenly divided. The Mataungans deliberately provoked police actions so they could attract Tolai sympathy, and martyrdom was always close to the attitude of their leaders.

Prior to the imminent [1972] House of Assembly elections in PNG, the Australian Government was planning the transfer of power within legal and constitutional imperatives. The planned transfer of powers was to take place in three stages :-

1. Those powers to be transferred before 1 December 1973.
2. Those powers which might have to wait until after Self-Government.
3. Those powers and responsibilities which could not be decided until after Independence.

The method of transfer would be the subject of continuous consultation between officers of the Department of External Territories and the PNG Government.¹⁸

Intense political agitation in the capital Rabaul clearly intended to lead towards Self-Government did not improve the situation in the Gazelle. Harry West⁶ handed over as District Commissioner to Jack Emanuel, an officer with long New Britain experience dating from before the Navuneram incident in which he played a prominent part. Emanuel believed he had the confidence of all Tolais.

Writer's Note: The Navuneram incident is described in Sepik 4 Part 2 Chapter 5 *Behind the Scenes - Added Responsibilities to the DDS&NA Duty Statement*. In brief, on 4th August 1958, a patrol was set upon by villagers throwing stones, and hand to hand fighting took place. As the situation became critical, the order was given for the Administration party to fire over the heads of the villagers. Two villagers were killed, and a third was wounded by gunshots. The event had far-reaching repercussions.

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There was a land dispute at Kabaira Bay where the Electricity Commission negotiated the purchase of 20 hectares of plantation land owned by Plantation Holdings. The area included land which had been continually occupied by Kabaira people for 57 years. On 26th June 1971 the Electricity Commission announced that it had been forced to abandon its plans to build a power station at Kabaira Bay. Upon this announcement, the Tolai commenced squatting on other parts of the plantation. On the morning of 19th August 1971, DC Emanuel and Superintendent Feeney arrived with two platoons of police mobile units. After some scuffles, Emanuel and a man called Taupa moved away from the group talking. Soon after Emanuel was found dead, covered in blood and a broken Japanese bayonet was found nearby. The investigation that followed revealed an array of theories about motive :-

1. Unpremeditated violence by a man enraged by eviction from Kabaira land.
2. A planned ritual killing as a climax of Tolai rage and frustration and that it could have happened to *any other* high official.
3. An act of revenge for Navuneram and what had followed Navuneram in Tolai mythology: ...this meant that Emanuel was a selected victim linked closely with the mythology and head of the alien government in the Gazelle in 1971.¹⁹

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The PNG national elections were held between 9th February and 11th March 1972. The Mataungan Association had candidates in all four East New Britain electorates and won three. Only Mathias Toliman survived the Mataungan drive for power in the Gazelle.²⁰ Although it looked like the United Party would have the numbers to govern, Julius Chan of the People's Progress Party [PPP] proposed a coalition with Michael Somare as Chief Minister.

In the Australian election of 2 December 1972, Labor won and Gough Whitlam became Prime Minister. Chief Minister Michael Somare was invited to Australia on 16th January for discussions with the Prime Minister. Whitlam assured Somare that the time table for Self-Government agreed by the previous government for 1st December 1973 or as soon as possible thereafter, would be met. Whitlam proposed that they should work towards Independence in 1974. Mr. Somare emphasized that until his country had progressed further with self-government, his government would be reluctant to enter into a firm commitment for Independence. Indeed, there were a number of unresolved national issues at this time. Among them were :-

The Panguna Copper and Gold mine.

There were demands for an independent Bougainville. The revenues of the Panguna mine were a source of the secessionist confidence that Bougainville could survive as a separate nation. The secessionist movement commenced in the 1960s and continued into the 1970s and 1980s. The mine

⁶ We met Harry West as PO/acting ADO in charge of Telefomin in 1951.

was an environmental and eventually a social disaster, but at that time it was crucial to the PNG economy.²¹

The Pacific Islands Regiment.

The Territories of Papua and New Guinea during World War II recruited battalions of local soldiers to help fight against the Japanese. These battalions formed the Pacific Islands Regiment [PIR] of the Australian Army. The PIR was disbanded after the war. The regiment was re-raised in 1951 as part of the Australian Army and continued to serve until Papua New Guinea gained its independence in 1975, when it became part of the PNGDF.^{7 22}

Localisation of the Public Service - this topic is covered in Sepik 4 Part 2 Chapter 15.

Highlands Tribal Warfare - this topic is covered in Sepik 4 Part 2 Chapter 16.

Other issues which are beyond the scope of these pages, also remained unresolved.

Seemingly motivated more by a firm push from the Australian Labor Government than by the PNG community, PNG achieved Independence on 16 September 1975. The country joined the United Nations (UN) on 10 October 1975 by way of Security Council Resolution 375 and General Assembly Resolution 3368. The 1977 national elections confirmed Michael Somare as Prime Minister at the head of a coalition led by the Pangu Party.²³

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Section 4. Attitudes to Self-Government and Independence in the Sepik.

This section relates primarily to the Ambunti sub-district of the East Sepik District, but is considered relevant to the entire Sepik rural population. All DDS&NA patrols from the late 1960s to the mid the 1970s period conducted political education campaigns to prepare the people for Self-Government and Independence. However this task was not as easy as might be imagined. The collective minds of the Sepik people were certainly not a clean slate upon which to chalk indelible Self-Government and Independence messages. This is explained as follows :-

1. Sepik elders, the custodians of the Sepik oral history, lived through the phases of colonial history which included the administrations of Germany, Australia, Japan, Australia again and now they were being prepared for yet another – Self Government and Independence! Not surprisingly, given the remembered past, they were fearful about what the future might hold.
2. This concern was heightened by ancillary matters covered in both political education and general discussion, such as the need for a new national currency, a PNG constitution, visiting advisory committees, a new flag, compensation for loss of careers for Australian public servants, and more.
3. The awesome power of Radio Wewak and print media bombarded the community with reports, opinions and analyses of the Mt. Turu cargo cult, in which tens of thousands of Sepiks were true believers. Media also covered Josephine Abaijah's *Papua besena* separatist movement which sought a separate nation status for Papua. There were reports on the Bougainville secessionist movement and world news including concerns about the spread of communism in S.E. Asia.
4. Fundamental to the thinking of most Middle Sepiks elders was an amalgamation of beliefs in Christianity with traditional religious beliefs. The elders called this amalgamation *The Sepik Old and New Testaments*, in which cultural hero Mai'imp was Jesus, and the bread and fishes were the staple diet of the Sepik - sago and fishes.

⁷ The formation and performance of the New Guinea Infantry Battalions which made up the Pacific Islands Regiment are discussed in detail in the latter Chapters of Sepik 3 *The Sepik at War*

5. The combination of 4, and widely held cargo cult beliefs resulted in a lack of willingness by Sepik people to completely accept the truth of what Europeans told them; they believed Europeans had the secrets of the cargo and a vested interest not to share – so why believe what they said?

Against this background in October and November 1973, immediately before Self Government, PO Bruce Robertson reported in Ambunti patrol report No 3/73-4, the following comments on Self Government by Main River [Iatmul] people :-

- Papua cannot boss us – Australia must stay here.
- Is Papua going to fight us?
- What is this woman from Papua trying to do? [**Note** - This refers to Josephine Abajjah & Papua Besena]
- We are scared of the way Japan came before – [**Note** - This reflects fear that Self Government may equate to a military invasion.]
- All the men in the towns and cities will receive plenty of things when Self Government comes, but we here in the bush will not. [**Note** - this may reflect the belief that the cargo, which was thought to be going to be delivered, was in the Chinese stores in Wewak – see below]
- When Self Government arrive will all the white men leave?
- If Australia leaves altogether, the communists will get us.
- When will Self Government arrive and what will **he** do.
- What law will we live by? – Local Government, Papua New Guinea or Australian law?
- Will a man come or will it be only a new fashion that comes?
- They say money, either new or old, will come [**Note** - this refers to the conversion from Australian currency – decimal and pre-decimal - to the new PNG currency which happened on 19th April 1975.]
- Ex-MLC member Bonjui of Korogo said, *‘I know PNG gets Self Government on 1/12/1973, but our government will not be able to handle the work’*.
- What sort of man will come?
- Are the laws going to be any better than the ones we have now?

In their concern, Malingai people were stockpiling sago and other food in their houses. The National Day poster depicting clasped hands [handshake] was thought at Kanganaman to indicate the ‘man’ will come on 1st December 1973 and take them into custody. People think that shotgun confiscations are significant.

Wariness towards Self Government is reflected - in brief - that :-

Self-Government is a man.

Self-Government is a country

Self-Government will replace local government councils, just as local government replaced the Luluai/Tultul village officials system.

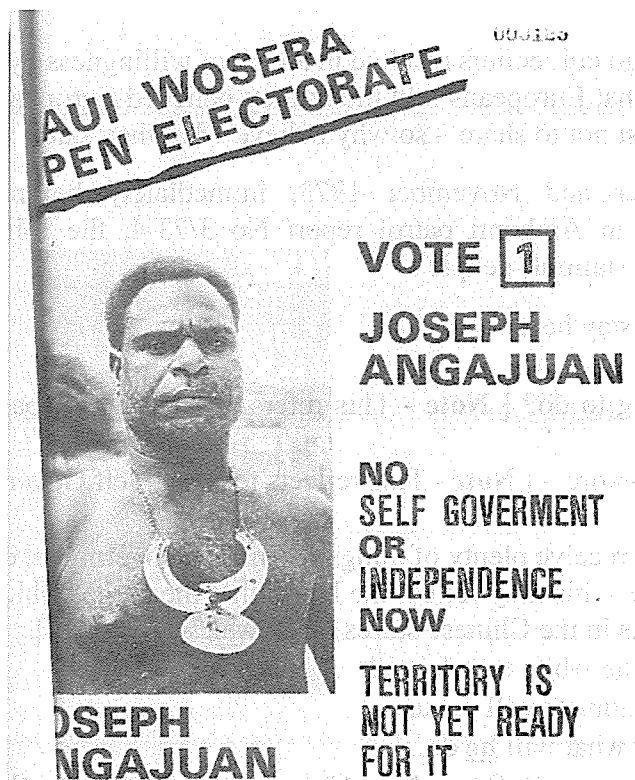
Self-Government tax will be introduced alongside Local Government tax and income tax.

Present laws will be substituted by new laws.

Europeans will leave their [PNG] families behind and depart permanently.

Europeans will leave, taking all knowledge and machinery [for making goods] with them.

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Opposite – Joseph Angajuan of Japandai village reflected the overwhelming view of the Sepik people in his choice of poster slogans.

However it was not enough to get him elected.

Other random observations – a selection from many.

• Gaiu of Indabu asked the writer ... ‘We nearly have Self Government now, so why have the whitemen not shown us the secret of fighting the dish! ... The secrets of the money the white men hide from us... When the whiteman came he bought our women with traditional wealth of Rings and Kinas. Money came with the whiteman and he has not yet told us the source of the money... it is a mystery and we would like you to tell us about it.’¹

- Kolion of Nogosop ... ‘It was a very good talk you gave us this morning [Political education on S-G and Independence]. Later we will change the laws and the languages and this man will come back [meaning cultural hero Mai’imp]. There will be talk of who killed him and who did not kill him. Everyone will cry and then we will change our languages to a single language. Australia, India, England will all come here for this⁸... The people were worried that the Australians should not go and leave us. We do not know everything. We do not yet have full knowledge. When we have full knowledge Australia can go back to their place.’²⁴
- Mondri of Torembei – also related the story of the creation at Mebinbit. In Mondri’s version, whiteman was the younger brother with the modern technology and the Sepik people were the descendants of the big brother with traditional technology. Mondri continued ... ‘Now SG is nearly here and little brother is nearly ready to leave me... Mebinbit was the place where both brothers came from and from where we originally separated.’²⁵
- Councillor and elders of Marap described the war time rape, torture and murder of [twenty six] local women accused of sorcery²⁶ by local Sepik officials appointed by the Japanese, ... ‘that is why we feel that with self-government, the natives if given control, will do this sort of thing to us again.’²⁷
- Robertson and Gigmai – Wario/Sio Ambunti patrol No 11/1972-3²⁸ ‘An old man called Kebihe of Biaga went to Sio and spread false reports there. The Sio Luluai took the talk to Nakek and it spread from there... the story was that men and women would be killed if they did not obey the laws that self-government would bring. The law [reportedly] stated that when self-government arrived [also known as “Masta Government”] which ever married man who refused to allow his wife to have intercourse with the new arrivals would be hanged by the neck. Self-Government would then take a small knife and stab the woman in the chest and cut down to her stomach’. These same people were reported by Anskar Karmel as having killed their livestock and fled to the refuge of the forest.

⁸ This reflects the belief the Mebinbit was the “Garden of Eden” the place of the creation of Mankind and that all mankind would return for this event.

- Pennefather D – Main River and Chambri Lakes. Ambunti Patrol 3/ 1970-71²⁹ was asked – ‘*Will Self-Government and Independence mean war for us all? Are the Australians just going to leave us? Australia must stay. NG had not yet got a factory to make guns and ammunition*’.
- Pennefather, in the same report, also reported: ‘...*The people were interested in the Mataungan Assn and its trouble. The people thought it was a war between the Admin and the Tolais. The people were thirsty for knowledge of this trouble in Rabaul*’.

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An eye-opening snapshot of Wewak a week before Self Government

By chance I, the writer, was in Wewak on a visit from Ambunti during the fortnight before Self Government and I was surprised to observe significant changes there, which were brought on by the proximity of Self-Government. The snapshot, in some cases was vivid at the time, but short lived.

Retail Trade and shipping. In the post-war Sepik, public servants on remote outstations received their weekly frozen food supplies by a combination of standing orders and credit accounts with Wewak trading establishments, and a weekly government chartered aircraft service – known as the “milk-run”, which delivered the “freezer” and the mail. When I was posted to the Sepik in 1964, I was directed to open a bank account into which my salary would be deposited, and credit accounts with the trading establishments of George Seeto, Tang Mow and Burns Philp. This was an automatic procedure. From memory it was sufficient to be identified as a public servant who provided a weekly standing order and an outstation delivery address. The traders and clients seldom came face to face.

On 21st November 1973 I went to George Seeto’s store and selected goods to purchase and asked the lady behind the counter to put them on my account. I was amazed to see her backing away without taking her eyes off me - it was as if I had suddenly turned into a cobra ready to strike! She came back with a man from the office. “*What is the trouble?*” he asked, and when told, he asked incredulously “*You have an account with us?!! I check*”. He thumbed his way through a book, found the account and allowed the purchases to be charged. He told me that Wewak stores had closed the credit accounts of most expatriates as of 30/10/73, a month before the national elections. The traders clearly expected expatriates to leave PNG upon Self Government without paying their accounts.

There had been threats against the Chinese in the past, so they had some cause for concern. The most serious issue in this district was from the Peli Association; a threat which stated that the cargo which the Sepik anticipated was in the Chinese stores, waiting to be collected at Independence.³⁰

The Commonwealth Bank manager told me the Wewak Chinese were moving their money out of PNG – some were buying flats in Sydney. Also a shipping line had just that week ceased servicing Wewak. Shipping agents were in negotiation with another shipping line, but nothing was confirmed. As a result of these combined circumstances, the store shelves in Wewak were very poorly stocked. It seemed that everyone was waiting so see what 1/12/73, Self-Government day, would bring.

The Golden Handshake “Cargo cult” and associated lethargy.

There was a lot of discussion among permanent officers of the public service about loss of careers compensation negotiations - the golden hand shake. In late 1973 the expectation was that those entitled to a golden handshake would take it and go. The uncertainty produced by the protracted negotiations and delayed decision on entitlements and implementation procedures made the problem worse. It seemed that a lethargy had settled over the public service and there was mention of a ‘golden-hand shake cargo cult’ having taken over the national headquarters in Konedobu.

Some issues concerning the Localisation of the Public Service.

There was also a perception that localisation of the public service was lowering standards of the Administration in several ways. Without disrespect to Jack Bagita, or to the need to promote

national officers to senior positions, Jack was a trainee patrol officer, slightly junior to my CPO status at Chuave in 1962. In late 1973 Jack had become District Commissioner in New Ireland. Capable expatriate staff were being taken from field posts to become training officers and executive staff to support the localisation program³¹.

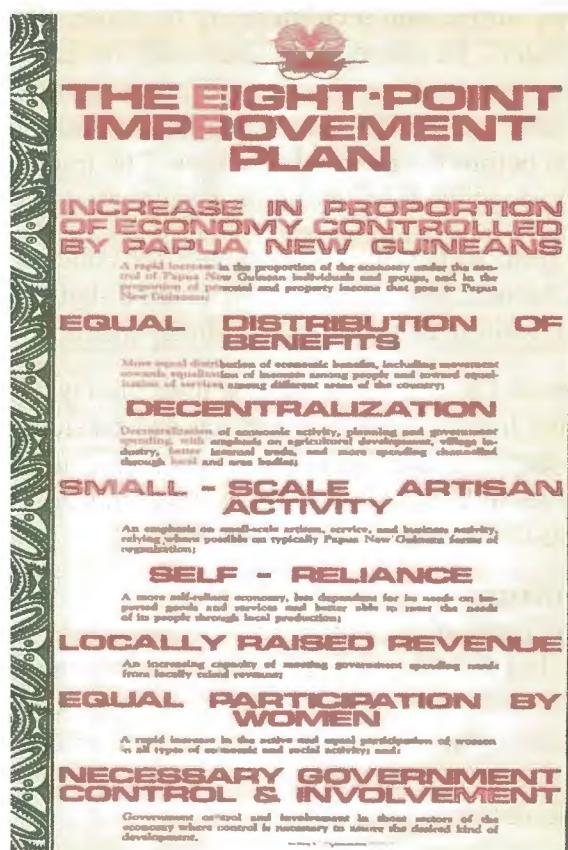
My view of the 'kiap system' tradition was that the maintenance of law and order underpinned everything, and murder investigations must take priority. A month earlier however, in October, when I heard of a murder in the April River area and reported it to District Office in Wewak, I was instructed that Ambunti station duties were to take priority over launching a murder investigation.³² This was my first indication that the kiap system, as I knew it, was unravelling.

Conclusions:

In 1973, Chief Minister Michael Somare ordered the creation of a Constitutional Planning Committee. This committee involved itself in nearly two years of community consultation in identifying the five home-grown goals and directive principles that underpinned the PNG Constitution.

The community consultation which produced such a fine constitutional overview was at odds with the steadfast fear and uncertainty attributed to the conservative Sepik communities in this chapter. This quandary was explored in the 2004[?] thesis of Sam Sirox Kali. In which he argued :-

' ... that on 26th June 1974 in the House of Assembly, the Constitutional Development Committee wrongly claimed that the vision of the five national goals and directive principles originated as the result of public consultation; that they were in fact based upon the eight aims of 1973. These were originally drawn from the Faber Report⁹, which in turn had been drawn from the African decolonisation experience and the United Nations declaration of the right of all people to be free. Mr Kari stated that this prevented the constitution being "home grown".



The document **opposite** became an integral part of political education in the period leading towards Self Government and Independence. At village level none of the eight points were easily explained or adapted into the community perception of their cosmos which had developed and solidified in community perception since the beginning of time. Like most new and "different" ideas, they did not find a lasting place in the people's perception. (The full text of this poster can be seen at the end of this chapter – in English and Pidgin).

Mr. Kari argued in his thesis that the eight points were the basis of the constitutions five national goals, which appear below. It certainly looks that way ;

- 1/ Integral human development, liberation & fulfillment.
- 2/ Equality and participation.
- 3/ National sovereignty and self-reliance.
- 4/ National resources and environment
- 5/ Papua New Guinean ways – Melanesian ways

NB – see full text of this poster, together with its Pidgin counterpart, at the end of this chapter.

⁹ Professor Michael Faber of the University of East Anglia, UK had previous African experience, in 1972 he conducted, and reported on a six-week research visit to PNG.

If, given that the public consultation outcome with the Sepik people was not reflective of the five national goals and directive principles, what did the Sepiks perceive to be the requirements for an independent PNG? Certainly not these eight points. In particular the Sepik would never have suggested equal participation by women. In short the Eight Point Plan bore no relationship to the Sepik reality on the early 1970s. The Sepik message that I heard at the time was :-

1. We are not ready for Independence and we do not want it.
2. We need to learn the secrets of the cargo before the white people leave
3. We need to be free of sorcery and traditional evil practices.
4. We need time to develop slowly - we have learned from our past history to fear the future.

Some of these issues are further explored in Sepik Book 4 Part 3 Chapter 1 *Sepik Political Conservatism*, including an examination of the views of Peter Worsley and Jean Guiart that cargo cult movements in Melanesia were the beginning of nationalism, and the views of Miroslav Hroch that they were not.

The writer shared the view of most kiaps that Gough Whitlam's actions in the early 1970's, both as Labor Opposition Leader and then as Prime Minister, did PNG a serious disservice by rushing the country's Independence. By doing so, he provided an outcome which became inevitable, like a self-fulfilling prophesy. The Eight Point Plan seems to have been tailored to fit in with that inevitability, rather than being a condensation of what rural PNG told the consultative process.

Transition to PNG independence should not have been separated from the parallel transition to decolonisation. These combined agendas relate to the same issue, but from opposite national perspectives: PNG – taking over responsibility for an emerging nation, and Australia – handing over responsibility for former colonies. This puts the writer in mind of the wording at the foot of Kiap Handover – Takeover certificates on PNG Outstations: – *Handed over & taken over as is, where is and with any faults that there may be.*

Given the course upon which PNG history was set - peering into a crystal ball in quest of whether PNG would have become a different or a better place today given a longer gestation period - I can see no clear message and so I conclude "Probably Not!"

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End Notes Chapter 49

¹ Wikipedia

² Murray H. Papua of Today. P.S King & Son Ltd London 1925. Page 210

³ L.W.Bragge Sepik book 3 - The Sepik at War 1942-45 [not yet published] page 284

⁴ DS&NA circular instruction No 50 of 26th June 1947 Native Agitation and Unrest

⁵ Downs I. 1970. P 469-470

⁶ Downs I. 1970 P239

⁷ Downs I. 1970 P239-251

⁸ Denoon. D A Trial Separation – Australia and the decolonisation of PNG – Pandanus books, ANU 2005 Page 55.

⁹ Downs I. 1970. P 424-425

¹⁰ Downs I. 1970. P 339

¹¹ Downs I. 1970. P 430

¹² Downs I. 1970. P 435-7

¹³ Downs I. 1970. P 462/3

¹⁴ Downs I. 1970. P 464

¹⁵ Downs I. 1970. P 465-6

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- ¹⁶ Downs I. 1970. P 476-7
¹⁷ Downs I. 1970. P 477
¹⁸ Downs I. 1970. P 480-81
¹⁹ Downs I. 1970. P 520-521
²⁰ Downs I. 1970. P 486
²¹ Wikipedia – Bougainville Copper.
²² Wikipedia. Pacific Islands Regiment
²³ Wikipedia. PNG Independence.
²⁴ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 18 page 256
²⁵ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 18 page 218
²⁶ Bragge L.W. Sepik Book 3 *The Sepik at War* Chapter 39. Not yet published
²⁷ Bragge Sepik Research volume 20 page 250
²⁸ Bragge Sepik Research volume 20 page 130-131
²⁹ Bragge Sepik Research volume 21 page 138
³⁰ Bragge Sepik Research volume 21 page 199
³¹ When I handed over as ADC at Aitape in 1978 to Dominic Tari, I was appointed Principle of the Aitape training centre. I carried this experience over into my career in the PNG Petroleum Industry 1989-2011, where I localised my senior positions several times and mentored my replacements. Ironically my capacity to do myself out of a job provided me with employment security – there was always another position to be localised.
³² Bragge Sepik Research volume 21 page 200

ATTACHMENTS SEE BELOW – next pages :-

Page 1 Eight Point Improvement Plan - in English

Page 2 Eight Point Improvement Plan - in Pidgin



THE EIGHT-POINT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

INCREASE IN PROPORTION OF ECONOMY CONTROLLED BY PAPUA NEW GUINEANS

A rapid increase in the proportion of the economy under the control of Papua New Guinean individuals and groups, and in the proportion of personal and property income that goes to Papua New Guineans;

EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS

More equal distribution of economic benefits, including movement towards equalization of incomes among people and toward equalization of services among different areas of the country;

DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization of economic activity, planning and government spending, with emphasis on agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade, and more spending channelled through local and area bodies;

SMALL - SCALE ARTISAN ACTIVITY

An emphasis on small-scale artisan, service, and business activity, relying where possible on typically Papua New Guinean forms of organization;

SELF - RELIANCE

A more self-reliant economy, less dependent for its needs on imported goods and services and better able to meet the needs of its people through local production;

LOCALLY RAISED REVENUE

An increasing capacity of meeting government spending needs from locally raised revenue;

EQUAL PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN

A rapid increase in the active and equal participation of women in all types of economic and social activity; and:

NECESSARY GOVERNMENT CONTROL & INVOLVEMENT

Government control and involvement in those sectors of the economy where control is necessary to assure the desired kind of development.

The Ministry of Commerce, Development and Finance



ETPELA ROT I MEKIM KANTRI I GO HET

1 Ol Papua Niu Gini yet i mas bosim moa na moa wok bisnis

Em i min olsem: Hariap tasol moa na moa Papua Niu Gini i mas bosim ol kampani na wok bisnis. Olsem bai moa na moa winmani i ken kamap long han bilong ol yet.

2 Skelim na tilim ol gutschanting bai olgeta pipel i kisim wan mak

Em i min olsem: Skelim na tilim ol winmani, ol pe bilong olkain wokman, na olkain gutpela helpim bilong gavman (olsem skul, haus sik, rot) bai olgeta distrik i kisim wan mak.

3 Helpim ol kain kain bisnis i stap ausait long ol taun

Em i min olsem: Gavman i mas tilim mani long ol wan wan distrik na larim distrik na lokal gavman kaunsil yet i yusim bilong mekim go het wok didiman na helpim ol smolpela bisnis long ples. Ol i mas lukaut tu bai ol pipel i gat rot bilong baim na salim olkain gutpela samting ol i bin mekim kamapim.

4 Helpim ol smolpela bisnisan i go het

Em i min olsem: Gavman i mas strong long helpim ol kain kain smolpela wok bisnis, na liklik bisnisan i save mekim wok bisnis bilong em long pasin bilong ples.

5 Yumi mas helpim yumi yet

Em i min olsem: Ol wok bisnis bilong yumi i no ken hangamap long ol man na long olkain samting i save kam long ol narapela kantri. Yumi yet i mas traim wokim olgeta samting ol pipel bilong yumi i mas gat bilong sindaun gut.

6 Painim takismani long kantri yet

Em i min olsem: Yumi mas painim kain kain pasin bilong winim takismani bai gavman i ken mekim planti wok bilong en.

7 Ol meri i mas mekim wankain wok olsem ol man

Em i min olsem: Moa na moa meri i mas insait long olkain bisnis na wok bilong helpim kantri i go het.

8 Gavman i mas insait wantaim na stiaim ol wok bilong go het

Em i min olsem: Gavman yet i mas insait long sampela kain bisnis na lukautim ol lo na pasin bilong en, bai bisnis i no ken daunim go het bilong kantri.

As a colonial institution, the “Kiap System” of indigenous administration in Papua New Guinea was generally regarded as being very successful. To the people of rural PNG, their kiap was the personification of “Gavman” [Government]. A key factor in this success was that the Kiaps lived among the communities and aimed to understand what was happening, sometimes even to the point of being able to anticipate what was going to happen next, and to be able to defuse issues before they became problems. The only way so few men could perform so many functions was by exercising authority in democratically conflicting roles.

A case in point – kiaps in their role as Assistant District Commissioner were concurrently the commissioned officer in charge of the Police detachment, Justice of the Peace and Magistrate of the District, Local and Coroner’s courts. He was also in charge of the corrective institution [gaol] among many other roles. In short, the kiap system functioned so well because of two things: it usually had the trust of the community, and it turned a blind eye to the doctrine of the separation of powers.

That which worked well in colonial times however came under question as preparations for Self-Government and Independence moved PNG towards de-colonization. Not unexpectedly, the changing times challenged the authority of the kiap system on several fronts :-

- I. By late in the term of the second House of Assembly [1968-1972], the elected representatives of the people [M.H.A.s] became aware that the kiaps were in fact not the “Gavman” – they, the M.H.A.s were! While most kiaps actively involved the M.H.A.s as much as possible in “governing”, some people perceived the kiap system, and specific kiaps in some cases, to be a challenge to their ideas of what was right and who was in charge.

Sadly, the taking up of this challenge often came through the media in the form of sneak personal attacks, which were not always accurate and to which the kiap in question had no right of reply. When mud is flung, some of it usually sticks.

- II. Some university students learned that the kiap system could be challenged as it could be seen as being in contravention of the democratic rights and human rights of the community. In the Western Highlands during the Christmas break in 1974, university students came home with the aim of applying their new-found knowledge to solving the problems of Highlands warfare, which was raging out of control at that time. Upon arrival they found that the Administration had sent kiaps into the field to undertake that task [Chapter 54]. These students quickly learned, to their frustration, that back home in Melpa tribal society they were judged by their age and warrior status [or lack thereof], not by their level of university learning. They also found that some Melpa elders were working with the kiaps towards re-establishing peace in the Western Highlands.
- III. While the Kiaps remained “King” in most rural villages and particularly among the elders, this was not always so among indigenous Members of Parliament and urban dwellers. Indeed, to some PNG people, “kiap” took its place alongside other four letter words of Anglo-Saxon origin.

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Chapter 48 *The 1972 House of Assembly Elections* provided several instances of Sepik District kiaps being replaced from their roles as electoral officials, and one officer transferred out of Amboin Patrol Post because of accusations by M.H.As.¹

Writer’s Note 1: Extracts from the correspondence and reports of this time in my Sepik Research Notes Volume 21 probably best reflect a time of extreme political uncertainty, as Papua New Guinea came to grips with its future. One of my diary notes captures part of this sensitivity :-

Harry West, the First Assistant Secretary was out [at Ambunti] with the DC...and he said none of us was to stick our necks out for the period until after the next sitting of the House of Assembly while the re-organisation of the Department is underway...There has been debate about the fate of the Department...the Chief Minister has indicated that he wants the Department of the Administrator field staff taken into his own Department...Michael Somare [the Chief Minister] has said that a lot of kiaps will have to change some of their ideas and fit into what he wants, but he wants us and does not think the country can function without us.²

My first experience of a challenge to kiap authority occurred in December 1971. Because of political implications, I reported the matter to the District Commissioner on 6th December :-

At Pagwi on 1st December 1971 three Chambri men were convicted of assault and each sentenced to one month with hard labour at Ambunti. The men remained at Pagwi until 3rd December awaiting transport, and in that time they spoke to M.H.A.s Messrs...¹ Upon their arrival at Ambunti they asked if they were still expected to serve their sentences...They stated that the village councillor had fined them \$8 and the matter was closed and that Mr...M.H.A. had stated if the councillor settled it then the kiap had no jurisdiction.

The men were advised of the mechanism of appeal to the Supreme Court [which just happened to be sitting at Ambunti at the time] and told to come to the office to lodge appeals if they so desired. During the night of the 5th they repeatedly asked the warden to see their M.H.A...The three detainees plus Mr. Sauinambi M.H.A. appeared at the office on the morning of the 6th.

Notice of Appeal papers were brought out and explained, as were the grounds of appeal – [wrongful conviction or severity of sentence]. They made it clear in the presence of the M.H.A. that they did not wish to appeal to the Supreme Court on any grounds. The Corrective Institution Regulations were then explained to them and they were advised that if they stepped out of line while in gaol, they would be dealt with accordingly.

This is brought to your attention due to the political involvement of the M.H.A.s and possible resulting Parliamentary questions.³

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Writer's Note: What follows was very painful for myself and my family. It started out as a false report broadcast over the radio, but because people chose not to believe the explanation that the report was false, the situation escalated to another national broadcast on 14th March 1973, which, in turn, led to a full departmental investigation. While the writer was exonerated, the investigating officer's conclusions noted here held true well into my future :-

Although I find these complaints groundless, the fact is that the charges having been made in public they can never be completely refuted, and Mr. Bragge will wear the stigma for some time to come. Mud sticks.

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Upon my return to Ambunti from leave in 1972 I was horrified to hear that reports, attributed to me, had been broadcast over Radio Wewak and 9PA, the National radio station. I was alleged to have said the Ambunti people were lazy and would not work and development as a result was slow.

¹ Two prominent members of the House of Assembly named in my letter to the District Commissioner, but who need not be named here.

As I had never said such a thing, I immediately² contacted the Manager of Radio Wewak and asked if such a broadcast had indeed been made and if so, whether I could have a copy of it.

Mr. Miles, Station manager, replied on 25th August with an 18-line news item in Pidgin, the gist of the news item was that ADC Mr. Bragge told the May meeting of the Ambunti Local Government Council that a local mining company was no longer employing Ambunti people because they found them lazy and big headed people who absented themselves from work sites. Mr Miles of Radio Wewak added in his reply :-

Unfortunately, this is once again a problem of either people failing to hear properly or understand, or of the way something is blown up or changed as it is passed around by word of mouth.

The item source was in fact the minutes of the May meeting of the Ambunti Local Government Council. I have checked these minutes and am satisfied that the accompanying item was a correct translation from the para from the minutes.⁴

I the writer also checked the May 1972 Minutes which read :-

Present: ADC Mr. Sanderson. [The manager's vetting which found the translation correct, somehow interpreted "Sanderson" to read "Bragge"]

My reply to Mr Miles dated 12th September 1972 reads :-

There is little wonder the Ambunti people were confused...The news item specifically named me as making the statement. I was on leave in May, and the minutes of the May meeting clearly state Mr. Sanderson was the ADC who made the statement.

Attached please find a copy of my letter of explanation to the Ambunti Local Government Council. I would appreciate it if you would also write a letter of explanation to the Ambunti Local Government Council as the news item caused considerable local concern.

Other inaccuracies in your news item. The Mining Co was stated to be on the Sitifa³ not the Frieda. That Co [on the Sitifa] is U.S. Steel, not BHP [as named in the broadcast]. The Frieda River Co is Carpentaria Explorations, a subsidiary of MIM⁴, not BHP. BHP in fact does not employ any people within this sub district.

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I have no record of a response from Mr. Miles and I do not believe Radio Wewak took any action to correct the inaccurate information. In retrospect, perhaps I should have worded my letter more politely, reflecting less of my view of their competence or otherwise. However, as indicated in the investigation report below, one of my faults was that I tended to ruffle feathers.

Writer's Note 1: If I knew then what I know now I would have sought legal advice to do whatever was necessary to not only establish my innocence and affinity with the Ambunti people and to display my outrage, but **to be seen** to have established my innocence and affinity with the Ambunti people and display my outrage. I was about to learn the hard way that hard facts of a situation can stand for nil, while perception, even wrongly based, can stand for everything.

In the real world of PNG in 1973 however, career orientated public servants did not do things like that, but of course I did not know then what I know now.

² on 8th August 1972

³ A tributary of the Upper April River.

⁴ Mount Isa Mines

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As it was, I took over again as ADC Ambunti from Mr. Sanderson and threw myself into my work. It seemed to me that all was going well until I received an unexpected call from Mr. District Commissioner Hicks to present myself forthwith in his office in Wewak. This was mid-March 1973.

I had no idea why I was sent for. Mr. Hicks opened the discussion with “*Have you got any enemies at Ambunti?*”. His response to my apparent confused look was to hand me a letter from the Secretary of the Department of the Chief Minister. It was entitled :-

CHARGES OF MAL-ADMINISTRATION AGAINST A.D.C. AMBUNTI. I was stunned. There is no way to describe the terrible shock these words caused me. When I was able to collect my thoughts I asked myself “... *what is going on, and how could I not have seen this coming?*”

District Inspector David Steven was appointed to conduct the investigation of the charges against me. I am eternally grateful to David for the thorough job he did and the clarity of his findings. His long report which follows best describes the charges and his investigative findings :-⁵

DEPARTMENT OF CHIEF MINISTER AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

District Office

PO Box 72, Wewak

DI 1-3-5

20th March, 1973

The Secretary

Department of Chief Minister & Development Administration,

KONEDOBU.

CHARGES OF MAL-ADMINISTRATION AGAINST A.D.C. AMBUNTI.

Your file J2-1-161 refers. Consequent to your letter of 28th February and the news item broadcast by the 9 PA on Wednesday 14th March, reporting a statement supposed to have been made by M.H.A. Mr. Anskar Karmel, I carried out an investigation into the charges against A.D.C. Mr. L. Bragge at Wewak and at Ambunti on 14th, 15th and 16th March. The result of my inquiries was that I could find no evidence to substantiate the serious but vague allegations made by Mr. Anskar Karmel and the Ambunti partitioners. The authors of the letter seem to have been motivated by malice and spite.

After his return from Port Moresby on the afternoon of 14th March, I had a long informal discussion with Mr. Anskar Karmel, during the evening. He confirmed that he had made a statement to an A.B.C. reporter the previous day criticising Mr. Bragge’s stewardship of Ambunti. He alleged that Mr Bragge was guilty of the following breaches:

- a) Disloyalty to the National Government.
- b) Neglecting proper maintenance of the station and roads
- c) Permitting his wife to usurp the authority of the other station D.D.A. officers during his absence from Ambunti.
- d) Misappropriating Government Property.

Mr. Karmel said he had not intended to make a statement to the press but that a reporter had approached him to enlarge upon a report the journalist had received regarding the situation at Ambunti. Mr. Karmel considered that he had been tricked into making the statement.

The only one of the above points that Mr. Karmel was prepared to substantiate from personal knowledge was the state of the station and roads. He conceded that the other complaints had been made to him by station personnel but he had no real evidence as to their fact. By the time our discussion

ended he appeared genuinely regretful that he had made the statement and jeopardised Mr. Bragge's career.

The following day I flew to Ambunti and commenced further enquiries there. I started to interview some of the signatories individually but they were not very communicative. At their suggestion I agreed to a mass meeting which was held at the Club room the following day, Friday, commencing at 9am.

About 50 people were present. They consisted mostly of station personnel with a smattering of village people including councillors. I read the letter sent to the Chief Minister and invited people to air their grievances and to substantiate the charges against Mr. Bragge.

Mr. Nauwi Sauinambi, former M.H.A, and currently labour foreman on Ambunti station, laid the following complaints.

- a) Mr. Bragge does not regularly attend meetings of the Ambunti Local Government Council.

Comment. I established that in fact Mr. Bragge has attended every Council meeting for at least the time he has been on the station. However, during the last 12 months he has been on Ambunti station for about four months. For the remainder of the period he has been either on leave or absent on patrol or other duties. The Administrative advisor has always been present. As Policy Advisor, the ADC is not obliged to attend all meetings. In fact, Mr. Bragge has been criticised by Gaui Councillors at Pagwi for giving too much advice to the Council there.

- b) The Ambunti people are still incensed at the criticism of the Ambunti people which Mr. Bragge made in a news report over Radio Wewak last year.

Comment. This refers to a news item broadcast over Radio Wewak on 23rd May, 1972. The item alleges that Mr. Bragge in addressing a meeting of the Ambunti Local Government Council in May 1972, had quoted officials of Carpentaria Exploration coy. at Frieda River as saying that the Ambunti people are "lazy big-heads". Mr. Bragge was on leave at the time and never made the statement. Mr. Sanderson was ADC at the time. Mr. Bragge, on his return from leave, wrote an explanation of the error to the Council President, but the Ambunti people seem to prefer not to believe him.

- c) Mr. Bragge does not allow other Departments at Ambunti to use the only utility truck on the station.

Comment. The vehicle is on 24-hour allocation to D.D.A. Ambunti, but is frequently used by other Departments as I have personally observed. The vehicle is also used to transport M.H.A. Mr. Karmel to and from his house adjacent to the station. On a recent occasion Mr. Bragge declined to carry Mr. Karmel's goods for his trade store. This could be the source of the criticism.

- d) Mr. Bragge does not properly maintain the station and town roads. The people have "shame" over the state of the station.

Comment. The grass is not cut as frequently as it could be, and the roads are not in good condition. However, in recent months the prisoners and station labourers have been used on construction of new roads and other projects. Ambunti is experiencing a particularly severe wet season which partially accounts for the state of the roads. Since Mr. Bragge went to Ambunti a lot more station roads have been constructed. There are more vehicles using the roads and maintenance has become quite a problem. The Ambunti Council has taken over maintenance of the airstrip and is negotiating a contract for road maintenance, sanitation and garbage.

- e) Mr. Bragge buys a lot of artefacts for re-sale. Before proceeding to Australia on his last recreation leave, he spent a fortnight gold-mining near Yerikai village. At the same time, he denies other Government employees the right to engage in business.

Comment. Mr. Sauinambi could produce no evidence that Mr. Bragge was re-selling the artefacts which he buys. Mr. Bragge took out a miner's right before embarking on his gold panning expedition. The people of Yerikai raise no objection to his mining activities.⁵

- f) Mr. Bragge does not give audience to the people who come to the office with complaints. They often have to wait for hours and even then do not get heard.

Comment. Several speakers made this complaint but no one instanced a specific case. Mr. Bragge denies that he ever keeps people waiting for more than a few minutes under normal circumstances. If court action is required, hearings are often laid down for later hearing. The normal court day is Friday. Police enquiries are always referred to Mr. Robertson when he is on the station.

Before winning the Ambunti-Yangoru seat in the last House of Assembly. Mr Sauinambi was a labour foreman at Ambunti. After defeat in the last election Mr. Sauinambi was re-employed nominally as a foreman, but paid at a normal labourer's rate. After the meeting Mr. Sauinambi approached me to see if his pay could be restored to his former rate. He obviously felt cheated and slighted that his services were not adequately recognised. Mr. Bragge says he took him on strength again mainly as a source of information. He had occasion to chide Mr. Sauinambi recently for not reporting a riotous brawl which had taken place in Mr. Sauinambi's village.

Writer's Note 2: *E Tu Nauwi?* As indicated in Sepik 4 Part 1 Chapter 49, as Assistant Returning Officer for the 1972 Upper Sepik election, I had concerns that my personal friendship with Mr. Sauinambi and my professional relationship as ADC with his M.H.A. status might be as perceived as favouritism. Consequently, I sought to be seen to offer identical treatment to all candidates.

Mr. Sauinambi suffered a huge personal shock when a fellow candidate brought Mr. Sauinambi's "Papuan wife" to Ambunti. This scandal not only cost him the election but shattered his personal standing as a respected elder in his conservative Kwoma culture. I interpreted his action in attacking me as an attempt to jump aboard the anti-kiap band-wagon and be seen again as a leader – thereby diverting attention from his own problems.

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Ambunti Council Vice-President Mr. Yangas Wikapa complained that Councillors and others he knew had been forced to wait all day for an audience with the ADC and even then had not been heard. People came from long distances and had been obliged to wait for several days without being supplied with food.

Comment. Mr. Bragge said it is his practice to provide food for court witnesses and people who had been asked to come to the station. Those who came of their own volition were expected to provide their own food.

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⁵ For the record, this gold mining trip was organised to fill in the first fortnight of my wife's and my leave while awaiting the arrival of Justice Raine on the next Supreme Court circuit, in order that I could attend the official opening of the Ambunti Court House, which is mentioned in previous chapters. Gold? – a fortnight's alluvial mining produced two ounces – the Mt. Garamambu field was marginal at best.

Councillor Ambonangi-Yamban complained that Mr. Bragge had vetoed the Council's desire to alter the name of the Rural Development Road from the *Waskuk Hills Road* to *Ambunti Wosera Road*. As a result, the people became apathetic about working on the road.

Comment. I pointed out that the A.D.C. had no power to veto a Council decision and they could call the road whatever they wished. Mr. Bragge said he had recommended that the title "Waskuk Hills Road" be retained until the road reached its planned destination. When that phase was complete and if it was decided to branch off towards Wosera, the project name could be changed. There was no question of compelling the Council to retain the name. He had merely given his advice and opinion.

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Ambunti Primary School Headmaster, Mr. Wimposi Nanget complained that the Sub-District Office Clerk and Mrs. Bragge made decisions which should be made by the A.D.C. He instanced the case of the Clerk and Mrs. Bragge authorising him to use the DDA vehicle. He considered that such a decision should have been made by the A.D.C.

No comment required.

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D.D.A. Storeman Camillus Kami had the following complaints: -

- I. Mr. Bragge had issued shovels and gold panning dishes to the people of Yerikai Village without authority.

Comment: The shovels and dishes were supplied by the Department of Lands Surveys and Mines for sale to the native people who were interested in mining. The equipment had been bought by the Yerikai people and receipts issued.

- II. Mr. Bragge had used patrol advances to buy artefacts on patrol. He said he had been told this.

Comment: Mr. Kami could produce no evidence of this. It is common practice for field staff to use the patrol advance for private purchases. There is no objection to this provided the money is replaced by the officer before acquittal.

- III. Mr. Kami stated that he has been accused of misappropriating benzene from the Government store, when overseas officers use Government benzene and Government craft for pleasure on weekends

Comment: Mr. Bragge thought that Mr. Kami was probably referring to the fact that he had taken Lands Titles Commissioner Mr. Page to the Waskuk Lagoon the previous weekend, on a duck shooting expedition. Reasonable use of Administration vessels and vehicles for recreation purposes on outstations is authorised by the Secretary, Department of the Administrator.

Mr. Kami has been at Ambunti for only about 18 months. A recent stocktake carried out by Mrs. Bragge in her capacity as Clerical Assistant, revealed that Mr. Kami had accumulated a deficiency of over \$2,000 worth of stock during his period as storeman. A report is being prepared on this matter. Mr. Bragge recently castigated Mr. Kami when he found that another person was in possession of the store keys.

- IV. Mr. Kami complained that the A.D.C.'s packing cases were cluttering up the store when he had insufficient space for store items.

Comment. There appears to be ample room for store goods. It is customary for officers to store packing cases, which are Administration property, in Government stores.

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N.C.O. in charge of the Ambunti Police Detachment, Senior Constable Peno complained that when Mr. Bragge goes on patrol he does not issue instructions as to what work to do on the station.

Comment. Mr. Bragge says that the No 2 1/c Patrol Officer Mr. Robinson is in charge of Police and all instructions to police are issued through him. Mr. Robinson was formerly a Police Constable in the Victorian Police Force.

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Forestry Assistant Mr. Pora complained that he receives no assistance from the A.D.C. in the matter of canoes for patrolling. Consequently, he is unable to carry out his field work.

Comment. Mr. Bragge assured me that Mr. Pora is provided with water transport whenever he needs it. His Department has not provided fuel at Ambunti and in fact the Forestry Assistant has been using our Department's fuel for his work.

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Corrective Institutions Warder Grade 2 Mr. Kilis complained that the A.D.C. had made no effort to provide funds for kerosene or firewood for the corrective institution.

Comment. Funds had been requested for this purpose from the Controller but the request had been rejected.

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There is little doubt that the author of this letter to the Chief Minister was Mr. Mambi Gawi, Power House Operator and employee of the Electricity Commission. He denies authorship of the letter but Messrs. Anskar Karmel, Naui Sauinambi and others attribute the letter to him.

Mr. Gawi admits only to gathering the signatures. I am convinced that few of the signatories to the petition knew the contents of the letter. After the meeting an elderly former policeman approached me to have his signature removed. He said that if he had known the contents of the letter he would never have signed it.

Mr. Gawi is on imminent transfer from Ambunti. Mr. Bragge considers that he is a persistent trouble maker and has had him "on the mat" on several occasions.

Mr. Karmel claims that the meeting held on Ambunti station on 17th February to discuss Mr. Bragge's stewardship was called by the station personnel. The station people say Mr. Karmel convened the meeting and I consider that this is the correct version.

At the conclusion of the meeting I asked why it was that at no previous time in the three years that Mr. Bragge had been A.D.C. at Ambunti had any criticism been levelled at Mr. Bragge. I specifically asked Mr. Naui Sauinambi, who was Ambunti M.H.A. for the greater part of that period, why he had raised no objections.

Mr. Sauinambi replied that there had been no cause to criticise Mr. Bragge's performance and attitude until 1972. He considered that the people's disillusionment with Mr. Bragge started when they heard the news item in which he is alleged to have "rubbished" the Ambunti people.

Mr. Bragge is clearly innocent of that charge and wrote an explanation of the matter in Pidgin to the President of the Ambunti Local Government Council. If anyone is blameworthy of this incident it should be A.D.C. Mr. Sanderson, but the people seem to prefer not to accept this fact.

Of the charges laid against Mr. Bragge I could fully substantiate none of them. There was no evidence offered of disloyalty to the Government and I am convinced that none could be found.

There may be some grounds for complaint that the station is not maintained to the standard that it could be. The A.D.C. has used his labour resources on new projects such as road construction. He could pay more attention to maintenance but this probably will be the responsibility of the Council in the near future. The station could not be described as overgrown and the wet season has hampered outside work.

I could find no real evidence that Mrs. Bragge has been usurping the authority of D.D.A. officers during Mr. Bragge's absence. Unfortunately, all three of Mr. Bragge's field officers were absent on patrol during my visit. They may have been able to shed more light on these allegations. I think the criticism may stem from the fact that Mrs. Bragge conducted a stocktake which revealed the serious deficiencies in the store. The storeman is one of Mr. Bragge's most outspoken critics. Mrs Bragge conducted the stocktake after an A.P.O⁶. had made a hash of the job. The charges of misappropriation of Government property obviously originated from the storeman Mr. Camillus Kami. There was absolutely no evidence to support this and I am convinced that Mr. Bragge is scrupulously honest.

M.H.A. Mr. Karmel claimed that expatriate officers as well as local people were pressing for Mr. Bragge's removal. The two senior members of Mr. Bragge's expatriate staff were absent from the station. The remaining member Council Adviser, Mr. Moore, fully supported Mr. Bragge. Mr Heathcote makes no secret of his personal dislike for Mr. Bragge but he regards him as an efficient administrative officer. Mr. Bragge has had several brushes with European missionaries in his area but none of them has questioned his integrity as an officer.

Writer's Note: *One such brush with a missionary may explain my 'inflexibility' in an Ambunti situation, and the reasons for my lack of action in another missionary brush in Aitape 1977.*

A flight landed at Ambunti and some cargo was left unattended in the parking bay. I was amazed to see that this included a number of brand new shotguns still in their packing cases. A criminal offence had been committed by the "owner" in leaving these firearms unattended - I took them to the safety of the office. They were addressed to a Catholic priest at Kubkain, so I sent a note to him telling him where he could collect his consignment.

The note also requested him to bring the authorisation from the Registrar of Firearms for the acquisition of the firearms. I knew full well that no such authorisations existed because I was the registrar for the Ambunti sub district, and I had not issued any such authorisations. The priest had no explanations, so I charged him with a number of firearms offences. I asked the District Commissioner to send a District Court Magistrate to Ambunti to hear the case. The DC communicated with the Bishop in Aitape and I was asked to drop the charges. I complied, but only after raising the objection that it was discriminatory in that I convicted indigenous offenders, but that a European escaped prosecution because he was a European and a priest. The shotguns were confiscated and probably destroyed, as per standard procedure.

In 1977 during the Warapu murder investigations, there was evidence that a priest had been burying murder victims without reporting the murders to the authorities. If proven, this was a serious criminal offence. I did not bother investigating the matter and charging the priest as I knew from my Ambunti experience what the outcome would be.

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⁶ APO – Assistant Patrol Officer

Conclusion.

I have been closely associated with Mr. Bragge in the East and West Sepik Districts during the last six years. I have frequently inspected his stations at Telefomin and Ambunti and I regard him as a most efficient, loyal and capable officer. His field work in primitive areas is outstanding.

On the debit side, his public relations leave something to be desired. He frequently clashes with other government representatives and not infrequently with his own officers. In these cases, he usually has right on his side. He sets a high standard for himself and expects a similar standard from his fellow officers. He lacks flexibility. Mr. Bragge is something of a loner.

I gained the distinct impression during the investigation that charges against Mr. Bragge were largely motivated by revenge on the part of officers and others whom Mr. Bragge has had occasion to castigate in his official capacity.

Recommendations.

If it were not for the A.B.C. news item which made this sordid affair public property, I would have no hesitation in recommending that these charges against Mr. Bragge be dismissed and that he serve the remainder of his term, at least, as A.D.C. at Ambunti. But although I find these complaints groundless, the fact is that the charges having been made public they can never be completely refuted, and Mr. Bragge will wear the stigma for some time to come.

Mr. Bragge likes Ambunti and would like to continue as A.D.C. there. However, he realises the position he is in. It would be difficult for him to re-establish a good working relationship with the M.H.A. and his staff and people. Mr. Bragge has been shown all the correspondence relating to this affair and following my meeting with the people on Friday I discussed the matter fully with him. He knows who his enemies are and in his capacity as Magistrate and chief executive officer of the sub district he would have difficulty in not showing bias.

On the other hand, I am most reluctant to recommend his transfer from Ambunti. This would be widely interpreted as a concession by the Government that Mr. Bragge is at fault and his opponents have had a victory. I would be most reluctant to give them this satisfaction and at the same time to jeopardise Mr. Bragge's career opportunities.

Mr. Bragge joined this Department as a Cadet Patrol Officer straight out of High School. He is trained for no other occupation and has no wish to change. He has indicated that he wishes to continue to work for the Papua New Guinea Government for as long after Independence as his services are required. The Government would be well advised to retain the services of an officer of his integrity.

If a transfer is to be made it should be out of the District to another A.D.C. position in another District. Mr. Bragge is an enthusiastic field worker and has no interest in a desk job. If you consider that a transfer is the only solution to the problem I recommend that it not be made immediately. An immediate transfer would certainly brand Mr. Bragge as the guilty party.

As Mr. Karmel made his statement to the Press outside the House of Assembly he presumably has no privilege. The statement could be interpreted as being slanderous and libellous and Mr. Karmel would appear to be vulnerable to civil action. Mr. Bragge intends seeking legal advice but is reluctant to follow any course which would jeopardise his future employment with the Papua New Guinea Government.

This report is larger than I intended that it should be, but I consider that you should be presented with all the facts of the case as I see it.

A.D. Steven. District Inspector.

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Writer's Note 3. I served the remainder of my term at Ambunti, spending a lot of time out on patrol and adding to my Sepik archive through the on-going trust and friendship of the village people and Sepik elders. On 9th April 1973 I informed the District Commissioner of the following under confidential cover :-

Mr Karmel returned to Ambunti in late March. His presence was only learned of on 2nd April 1973.

Upon request he visited sub district office to discuss the wharf, the flood and his news broadcast concerning the A.D.C. Mr. Karmel expressed his regret and said he had stayed in his house for fear of repercussions on that issue. I advised him that the matter was not closed, but in the meantime he, as M.H.A. and I as A.D.C. had a duty to work together.

Towards this end Mr. Karmel and I made a tour of flood affected areas and spoke with village people throughout the area on 3rd April 1973. We came to joint conclusions that the situation was under control and no outside aid was required.

At the request of the President of the Gaui Local Government Council it was planned that Mr. Karmel and myself would go to the Gaui meeting on 5th, but this trip was prevented by rain.

I am confident these relations can be maintained.⁶

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In another confidential memo to the District Commissioner dated 11th May 1973 I reported :-

Mr. Nauwi Sauinambi advised me today that he had been approached last night by Busaur, the Peli Association committee member of Malu. Busaur asked if Mr. Sauinambi had any complaints against the A.D.C. over Mr. Sauinambi's dismissal from the D.D.A. labour line. Mr. Sauinambi replied that he wanted to resign and left his employment for that reason.

Mr. Sauinambi asked what this was about and was told that a letter of complaint against the A.D.C. was being written to the District Commissioner...Busaur advised Mr. Sauinambi that he had already approached Mr. Karmel M.H.A. and had been told by Mr. Karmel to go ahead and write.

Station politics are highlighted in this as Mr Karmel had spoken with the A.D.C. half an hour before Mr. Sauinambi and had not mentioned the matter. Outwardly relations between A.D.C. and M.H.A. are very good. The other side is that Mr. Sauinambi, who is a most reliable source of information, is once again confiding in the A.D.C.⁷

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My conclusions in 1972/3 Clearly in some circles "Kiap" remained a four letter. However as Mr. Steven's report indicated, I now knew who my enemies were and I paid the attention necessary to ensuring that as I went about my duties as A.D.C. I did so in a manner that was above reproach. Part of doing so was to add to my Sepik archive copies of reports and correspondence for later reference in the event that perception should once again be at variance from the facts.

Déjà vu Ambunti January 1969 In developing the Sepik archive I came across the following report which indicated that my predecessor, A.D.C. John Corrigan at Ambunti had gone through a similar experience four years earlier than I. Clearly, at Ambunti "Kiap" had started to become a four letter word earlier than I first thought. Clearly also, the phenomenon was an identifiable trend that was impacting the Kiap System, rather than random attacks on individual officers. I remember feeling better as some of the complaints against Mr Corrigan in 1969 were the same as accusations against me in 1973. On 27th January 1969 Mr Corrigan reported in part, under the heading :-

ACTIVITIES KONTRAK NAGWAN⁷ AMBUNTI.⁸

“ ...KONTRAK has been quite industrious in drawing up support for his petition aimed at securing my transfer from Ambunti. The grounds of the petition are said to be my harsh attitude towards Public Servants, Police and Warders and my alleged attitude of non-co-operation with Traders and amazingly enough my harsh attitude to European officers...

Concerning harshness to station personnel. If my refusal to condone drunken revels, often involving brawls, continuing into the early hours of the morning, is considered unduly harsh, then Kontrak's criticism may be justified. It is presumed the function of the Police Force is preservation of Law and Order, however, often the police themselves are involved in these drunken revels and naturally enough are reluctant to take any action when they themselves are on duty. Certainly there have been occasions when I have taken the police to task over this behaviour and also Public Servants and I have left such people in no doubt as to what I think of such behaviour and the example to village people.

As to the Warders, it has been my experience of this highly paid, underworked group that it is necessary to maintain continual disciplinary pressure to keep them up to the mark. It was due to the inefficiency of two members of this organisation that seven detainees escaped from the Ambunti Corrective Institution in September, last year. As indication of their record at Ambunti can be seen in the fact that two have been dismissed and another has been involved in serious disciplinary charges and has been convicted of a criminal offence in the District Court.

It appears another of Kontrak's grievances against me has been my refusal to see all and sundry, on demand, in the office. There is no efficient clerical staff at Ambunti and many of the routine affairs of the office have to be attended to by me personally. Consequently, I do not have sufficient time to drop everything and listen to matters that can quite often be handled by junior staff. I am now in the process of educating all callers to the office to see first either one of the junior staff or the clerical assistant, who if not able to deal with the particular matter can then refer the caller to me. This does not, however, prevent persons including Public Servants from barging in unannounced to my office past the clerical assistant Mr. William Boisen who is so inefficient he cannot even exercise the duty of asking all callers their business and who takes no action to prevent entrance of unannounced persons into my office.

Kontrak is a person of some significance from Parembei village...he was an unsuccessful candidate in the 1964 House of Assembly election and is a member of the Ambunti ward in the Ambunti Local Government Council. He has some pretensions to being a spokesman on political matters for both the station and the River in general but whether or not he has affiliations with any political party is not known. It appears his modus operandi was to go through each department on the station, calling a meeting of its members, asking whether any of them had any grievances against me and whether they would be prepared to lend weight to his campaign against me. One such meeting was at the Hospital and was reported to me by the local officer medical assistant Mr. Nason today.

Apart from being informed of Kontrak's behaviour by Messrs. Nason and den Ousten⁸, the local M.H.A. Nauwi [Sauinambi] volunteered a report unprompted of a conversation Kontrak had with him in an attempt to enlist Nauwi's support. Kontrak seems to have been unsuccessful in this as Nauwi has assured me of his support in this matter and he is appreciative of my efforts of maintaining law and order on the station. He also assured me of the support of the Waskuk people.

⁷ Kontrak was employed by the Motor Transport Department Branch at Ambunti as a tractor driver.

⁸ Cadet Patrol Officer stationed at Ambunti

I have interviewed a number of people regarding Kontrak (acting on information provided by Nauwi) and all have vehemently denied giving any support to Kontrak. I am inclined to believe that a number have done so but the denial was prompted by fear of possible official reprisal. Present indications are that Kontrak could be, at least on the surface, isolated in his attack but according to Nauwi there is some talk of him trying to impeach me at the next meeting of the Ambunti LGC. Kontrak is absent from the station spending a weekend in his village. I intend leaving to-morrow on patrol and unless he returns this afternoon I will not have the opportunity to confront him over his actions.

Just after Christmas it was necessary to undertake maintenance on the Ambunti airstrip and Kontrak was requested to work overtime of the weekend of 29th/30th December. Approval was obtained from Transport Wewak authorising this overtime and Kontrak was agreeable to this. He worked well enough on Saturday however, on Sunday when Kontrak was to resume work at 8am, he failed to appear, and it wasn't until 10am when he did so in a thoroughly intoxicated condition after an all-night session with Laskompani employees. At this stage a section of the airstrip had been ploughed and excavated and was to be filled with gravel...it was only through Mr. den Ousten volunteering his Sunday leisure time that the work on the airstrip was completed by Sunday so the airstrip could be opened on Monday morning.

Again on the 8th January, Kontrak drove the tractor to the office in an intoxicated condition. He was discovered by myself, arrested, and Mr. Pennefather conducted an investigation. Foolishly I did not press this matter to the extent of court action, but as on the first occasion Kontrak was left in no doubt as to my opinion of him and his behaviour.

There is no doubt in my mind that Kontrak's attack on me is from personal malice arising from what he considers unjustified abuse over the incidents described above. What is particularly sickening to me is the underhand way in which this person operates. His attitude on Friday was quite reasonable and we had discussed arrangements for him to take a number of days off in return for overtime worked by him whilst all the time he was planning his sneak attack on me.

Normally I would not go to such lengths over an incident such as this, but as eventually you will receive either a written complaint from Kontrak or perhaps his attack may be channelled through Mr. Somare (it certainly won't be through Mr. Nauwi) it is my intention to place my version before you.

Personally I am determined to maintain discipline and a respect for good law and order on this station, and clashes with sneaks such as the order of Kontrak are a feature of such endeavours. For your information please.

J.C. Corrigan
Assistant District Commissioner "

End Notes Chapter 50

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 21 Page 86.

² Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 21 Page 86. Who were alleged to have given support to

³ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 21 Page 125.

⁴ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 21 Page 108

⁵ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 21 Pages 110-116

⁶ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 21 Page 140

⁷ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 21 Page 117

⁸ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 22 Page 98

Sepik 4 Chapter 51 Iatmul Initiation Ceremonies 1933, 1961 and 1973 – a Comparison

Introduction: This chapter seeks to describe not only the initiation ceremonies themselves, but also the reactions of the Iatmul people to challenges they faced in conducting initiation ceremonies through time. Initiation was an essential step in male development in head hunting societies. The essential traditional qualifying step of head hunting was described by G.W.L. Townsend as follows :-

It was part of the Middle-Sepik way of life that every young man had to procure an enemy head before he could be accepted as an adult in the village, or before any woman would accept him as a husband. Sometimes, if an old man had a very young son, the father might commission a raiding party from his village to bring back a live captive. Then, in the safety of the village, the youth could do the captive to death and so be entitled to wear around his loins a flying-fox skin that was the mark of the man who had taken a head.¹ The taking of a head also qualified the youth to undergo initiation and commence his cultural learning as a first step in the age-class system of the Middle-Sepik.

This chapter examines three Iatmul initiation ceremonies that occurred at different times in Sepik history, and the impact of external pressures which led to changes in the conduct of the ceremonies. What happened when Kassa Townsend, Sepik Robbie and other kiaps stopped the essential pre-initiation step of head hunting by hanging those who had been convicted of committing murder in order to take heads? What happened as the Iatmul converted to Christianity and the priests told the congregations that initiation was a pagan ceremony, and what happened when the Iatmul boys of initiation age were unavailable because they were away at boarding school?

As we saw in Sepik 2 Chapter 39, Sepik Robbie attended this initiation ceremony immediately after arresting Kupagalion head hunters in the Kabriman/Kuvanmas area; headhunters who once convicted in the Supreme Court were hanged at Kuvanmas by Kassa Townsend. The anguish felt by head hunters as they went to their deaths, were expressed in words attributed to Owun of Korogo as he was about to be hanged at Ambunti in 1930 :-

The Government is going to hang me for killing men. I gave the man to my child to kill and now I am going to die for this. When I am dead, take the rope back to the place and give it to my son and my people and let them know this must signify the end of killing and fighting on the Sepik.²

Sepik 2 Chapter 32 further examines the impact of hangings on head hunting in the Sepik. Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the immediate impacts that the end of head hunting had on Iatmul initiations. Councillor Win of Kandingei answered my question in the early 1970's as follows :-

The reason for cutting the skin is that when you are born you come from your mother's belly after being carried around in there. You have some of her blood, and so you do not have a man's strength to carry a heavy load or to fight or to walk up mountains etc. So it is necessary to remove the mother's blood. After the initiation the body generates its own man's blood and he will be fat and strong – full strength.

Question. *What about the traditional need to take a head before initiation?*

Answer. *Traditionally this was not necessary for initiation. He, the initiate will get his strength in the initiation ceremony and then he can go and kill to get the right to wear black paint. It was not and is not necessary to kill before initiation.³*

Win's answer went against everything I have ever heard on this topic – before or since. I believe Win's statement represents an essential and logical *new truth* that was required in the modern Sepik to validate the on-going initiation ceremonies – otherwise it could be argued that the initiations are invalid and this, in turn, could support the mission call to abolish initiations. Perhaps the final word in this debate comes from the initiates themselves; Wani explained :-

The novices do not worry about the pain. They want to have the marks⁴.

This seems to reflect the importance of “belonging;” to outwardly display the markings of manhood. The scars themselves appear to be the important thing and the traditional meaning attributable to the head hunting days are perhaps no longer relevant?¹

Certainly initiations ceased in some Ndu societies such as the Boiken⁵ and Sawos. It was equally evident that initiation ceremonies continued among the Iatmul. Boys had to become men in their societies and initiation was the step that made this happen. A good description of the impact of initiation comes, not from Iatmul society, but from Malu, another closely related Ndu language speaking community. Mr. Gilbert's description seems to also accurately reflect Iatmul beliefs.

For the past six months [during 1948] the natives of Malu [Manambu language group] have been engaged in a skin marking ceremony where according to native belief the maternal blood is removed from the body thus clearing the male body from any weakness inherited from the mothers of the initiates.

During the initiation all initiates were forbidden to associate with female members of the village. If this does happen then it is believed that the women will die.

At the completion of the initiation, the initiated emerge from the enclosure and run the gauntlet of those previously initiated and are whipped unmercifully. Pieces of wire, timber and rope are used during this portion of the ceremony and the more the initiate suffers the stronger he will be in times of stress in later life.

Where beforehand, the initiates appeared to be brash and flighty youths, some now are quiet and solid citizens. This change in character may be due to the time spent in the ceremonial house when they reached maturity, or it could be that the native faith has been instilled into them to the extent that they want to assume the dignity and wisdom associated with those previously initiated, and are considered to belong to the upper strata of the village.⁶

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Anthropological Notes – Initiation Ceremony.⁷

Reference: [Ambunti] Patrol Report A.7/1932-33 by E. D. Robinson

“Some little time ago a number of the Elders of Angriman village Middle Sepik invited me to attend an initiation ceremony which they said would be taking place shortly after I came out of the Karman area. As it is a very great compliment, also an undoubted sign of good faith to be invited to their most important function I decided to attend.

Accompanied by Mr Walsh, Medical Assistant, I arrived at Angriman on Saturday 25th February 1933 and the natives told me the dance would commence that evening. At about 5 pm the Luluai and a number of the elders of the village came along to the rest house and asked me to accompany them...

¹ The writer is not satisfied that he has a full understanding

We were escorted to the Club House, the 'Haus Tambaran' which was surrounded by a high fence made of coconut fronds; passing this we were led to the other side to a small platform which had been built especially for us to sit upon. Here we were instructed to remain and await events.

Shortly after our arrival the music began inside the fence, no musicians could be seen, but one could tell by the sounds what instruments were being employed – the following were noted: Wooden Drum – 'garamut', small; hand drum – 'kundu', long bamboos blown as flutes and two [male and female] water drums, water kundus – these are larger than hand kundus, being about three to four feet in length and of similar workmanship but without a skin on the top. They are each held by a man who is standing in a pool of water which is fenced, and so hidden from all eyes. The instrument is played by the man smartly banging the mouth on the surface of the water in such a manner that the note of the male and female drums are heard alternately, making a sound which resembles the bark or cry of a crocodile – making a constant whoo-who, whoo-who.

Then the door in the fence, which was shaped to resemble the jaws of a crocodile, slowly opened in an up and down movement which was produced by men hidden inside pulling on ropes attached to the top of the door. Through this came the dancers in files of two – eight men with drums in the lead, then two men carrying a carved stick which they beat with a smaller stick, making a kind of gong, then more men with hand drums and so. [In all] the line numbered 80 to 100 men. When all were outside they were joined by the women and the door slowly closed. The men were painted in various colours from head to foot, all wearing beautiful head dresses made from the feathers of various birds, not the least being the Birds of Paradise, White Herons [Osprey] and Goura Pigeons. The women were covered with shells and various kinds of native currency – 'Tambu'.

Then commenced a slow march forward – a dance from one end of the village to the other, this would continue for about 20 minutes. Then the women would fall out one by one and the men would march towards the door in the fence which slowly opened, remaining so until the whole line of men had been absorbed and then slowly closed. The dance was very impressive and must have been particularly so to the intended victims of the ceremony who were watching, it not of course allowed beyond the fence. We remained for some considerable time, then after warning them to call us when it was time for the initiation to take place we went to bed.

At 4.50am on the following morning we were awakened by the Luluai and we returned to the dance ground. All the people were still dancing, doing the same slow step which we had watched the previous night and most of them were looking very, very, weary. At about 5.20am we were taken inside the fence and put into a safe position and told that the real part was about to begin.

Watching through the fence we saw the parents and relations leading by the hand their charges who were to be initiated, four of these were young "monkeys" from about 10 to 12 years of age, whilst the other was a man of about 22 years of age. He had been away to work before he went through the ceremony.

Then we noticed that all the men inside the fence had armed themselves with light sticks, shortly the door was opened and all the relatives with their charges rushed inside and were immediately seized upon and soundly trashed in a struggle that lasted about 20 minutes, after which everyone quietened down and rested all being in very good humour with no sign of enmity shown on either side.

The real preparations for the marking of the skin of the initiates began, five small canoes were brought inside, turned upside down and placed at intervals about six yards apart, alongside each of these a wooden basin of water was placed in which a green-snail shell 'terribum' being an advance payment by the father or guardian of the initiate to the man who would do the marking.



Opposite - The photo is from anthropologist Gregory Bateson's 'Naven' of an initiation in the Iatmul village of Malingai, upstream of Angriman where Sepik Robbie witnessed the initiation. [Naven originally published in 1936]

Robbie's report continues:

Then the initiates were brought along and each placed on a canoe on his back and the marking began. The markings were done in some cases with safety razors

blades, and in others with slivers of bamboo. First three circles were made around the nipple of each breast, when this was finished the upper arms were done, then the back of the body was marked from the shoulder down to the back of the knee, the cuts being $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long and just slitting the skin.

The marking was a painful process as in every case the initiate cried incessantly, some initiates struggling so violently that the operators tied them to the canoe. Throughout the operation I noticed that the operators were as gentle as possible, sometimes they slapped their victims smartly with the hand and told them to keep quiet, but all the time they were doing their work as quickly and quietly as possible.

The process of marking occupied from two to three hours and at the end of the ceremony both operator and initiate were covered with the blood from the incisions. The victim was then allowed to rest for a few minutes, and then his relatives took him down to the river and washed him, all but himself singing joyfully throughout.

He was then brought back inside the club house 'Haus Tambaran' and laid on a mat while his wounds were treated with 'Tust' [guak²] oil which was applied with a feather.

These five lads will now remain in the club house for three months only being allowed the society of the initiated men, food will be brought to them for this period by these men, then they will hold a less important dance 'singsing' and after this is over they will go to their homes and proudly show their markings 'keloids' to the women folk.

It might be as well to explain various details of this most important ceremony as I got them through an interpreter from one of the elders of the village. Firstly, the crocodile is the background of the whole ceremony, the keloids are supposed to be the scars made by the teeth of the crocodile, the door leading inside the fence around the club house represents the jaws of the crocodile so that inside is the belly of the crocodile. The cause of the fight is as follows: -

The crocodile is calling for his victim. This is represented by the two water drums. The relatives are supposedly trying to save their protégés from the crocodile, and so the fight [upon entering the haus tambaran fence] represents the last struggle which eventually the crocodile wins, and so the victim finishes up fully scarred after the experience.

² Tree oil

It is rather curious to note that in spite of the influences of the ‘White Man’ as represented by the singlets and trousers etc...that the ceremony is every bit as serious now as it was before our advent, every male must go through this ceremony before he may enter the club house. The boy who goes away for some years to work with the “White Man” notwithstanding that he is considered a fine fellow in that he can speak Pidgin English and understands numbers of wonderful things from the outside world, he must still submit to what must be great agony before he may take any real part in the village life...”

E.D. Robinson, Assistant District Officer.

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The Kanganaman initiation at the 1961 Sepik show.

While this topic is described in full in Sepik 4 Chapter 28, brief mention needs to be made here of the Iatmul strategy used in that case to protect the institution of Iatmul initiations against mission interference. A priest at Kapaimari mission sought to stop initiation ceremonies because the mission considered them to be pagan rituals. The Iatmul elders of Kanganaman made such a spectacle of the initiation at the Sepik show, with apparent Administration support, that they established initiation ceremonies as an enduring feature of Middle Sepik life; initiation ceremonies were here to stay!

The Administration for its part was horrified and the individual junior officer involved paid for his unintentional involvement with his kiap career.

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The Nyaurengai initiation of 1973.

During Ambunti patrol No 5/1973/74 in November 1973, the writer was invited by retired Constable Managun to attend his son’s initiation. It was an honour that I was pleased to accept. On 28th November 1973, accompanied by Trainee Patrol Officer Albert Borok, I moved my patrol from Yentchanmangua village to Nyaurengai where I was met by Councillor Win of the adjacent village of Kandingei. Win, who was one of my many informants, would be my informant throughout the ceremony, making sure I understood all the finer details of the initiation. He explained that Managun’s son had gone away to school and after graduating he immediately found employment. Now he was an adult working for the Department of Civil Aviation in Port Moresby. Managun was concerned that now his son was a big lad and his mother’s blood has not been cleansed from his body.⁸

I saw that the haus tambaran was completely obscured by a tall fence. Win explained the ceremony that was soon to happen and I took down pages of notes. Win explained that the ceremony itself was introduced by the moaning sound of bull-roarers. These were to call the crocodiles from distant places. In Sepik Robbie’s 1933 experience the calling of the crocodiles was done with water drums.

That evening there was an important early morning portion of the ceremony, which I did not see. Win explained it thus:

Managun’s son was in a separate house where he would be segregated from women and children. At about 2am the dancers selected a low coconut palm and a man with a human bone dagger climbed it and stabbed a green coconut. He twisted the nut free and pass it down between his legs to other men who had climbed the palm after him and now clung to it beneath him. The nut was passed down between each of their legs. The nut was passed in this way by five or six men before it reached the foot of the palm. These men took the nut to the house where Managun’s son was staying and placed it beside a dish of water there.

Into this dish they scraped dried human meat, human bone and ashes from a spear that had been charred. Only spears that had, at some time in the past, killed people could be used. The coconut water from the nut described, would be added to the water and scrapings. Ginger [the fight totem plant] would then be scraped into the dish.

The ceremony now required a line of men to form up with legs apart forming a leg-tunnel with the dish on the floor in front of them. Three men were positioned at the end of the tunnel; one holding a piece of baked sago, another holding coconut meat and the third holding stinging nettles. The men would then take turns to crawl through the tunnel and as each man's head emerged from the tunnel it would be slapped with the stinging nettles. Next the coconut man put a piece of coconut from the dish into the mouth followed by sago from the sago man. This process continued until all the men have eaten from the dish. The novice also went through the leg-tunnel and partook from the dish.

The female relatives of the novice are then allowed in to finish the sago, coconut and concoction from dish³. The dancers then return to the haus tambaran. The novice remains in the house and slept [or at least tried to sleep].

Back in the haus tambaran the dancers continued their dance in the way described until dawn. At dawn they danced five times around inside the fence and then five times around the outside, whereupon the dance ended. The dancers lit fires and torches inside the fence as you will see.⁹

I awoke at 6am on 30th November to the sound of the garamut playing in the haus tambaran. Then at 7am the notes of the garamut changed and my canoe driver told me this signified the fact that the novice was about to enter the haus tambaran. We arrived at the haus tambaran in time to witness this.

Albert and I were escorted to the haus tambaran fence where Win explained in a gleeful half apology that everyone inside the fence had to wear black face paint – honorary “homicide” status.



With our faces suitably blackened, we were allowed inside the haus tambaran fence. There I saw that two flaming torches of dried fronds were burning. They were set in the ground about five feet apart and were leaning so they were close to the haus tambaran door, which was firmly closed. Inside the fence the elders and dancers stood in two lines, each was holding a light stick. The haus tambaran fence shook violently from axe blows being struck from the outside - someone was trying to break in!

³ This seems to be out of character with the segregation of the sexes during initiation, but that is what I was told.

Councillor Win told me he was going to help those breaking in against those waiting with the sticks. He said that as Albert and I were wearing black face paint, we were obliged to help the men who thrash those breaking in. I raised my camera and said that this was my weapon of choice.



Above and Opposite - *Some applications of black face paint extended to the whole body, and as the initiation ceremony was also a joyful occasion some personal decorations were comical. The initiation began with moaning of bull-roarers and the periodic “slap” of a coconut frond being brought down with force onto the ground. Two water drums were being played by naked young men.*

^{WANI}
Wani went and helped the leading man as he broke through the hole they had now made in the fence. The young initiated men came slowly through the hole, each holding onto the hips of the man in front of him. Half way down the line was the novice with four men gathered around him, holding his head down, protecting him and half carrying him between the two lines of men who were beating them. The new comers all suffered minor cuts, bruises and raised welts. The novice remained protected and the blows aimed in his direction hit his body guards only. They went along the line of beaters only once and then the beat of the water drum was silenced.

Managun’s son, when I saw him yesterday was fat and self-confident. He had a great mop of hair and “mutton chops” on either side of his face. Today I did not recognise him. Every hair on his head apart from his eyebrows had been roughly shaved off. His personal bearing was completely altered as he now did nothing for himself. He was carried, guided, pushed and helped in everything he did. He did not speak and was not showing any facial expression. Most of the time his eyes were closed.

The skin cutting began without further ceremony. An ornate crocodile table was brought and the novice's cousin [His mother's brother's son] lay down upon it and Managun's son leaned his back against his cousin's chest. Clamped between his teeth was a ginger plant, which served as both something to bite down upon and to represent the "fight totem". Managun himself approached and with a safety razor blade, made the first cut on his son's skin; the start of a circle around the right nipple. Managun then stepped back and three cutters moved to take his place, each armed with razor blades. The method of cutting was to pinch the skin between finger and thumb and making a cut up to half an inch long – **below** - about every two seconds until he had made about half a dozen cuts, then he would sit back and examine his work, deciding where to cut next. With three men cutting, the whole



operation took about 45 minutes. Half way through the novice was turned over so his back could be cut. Throughout the whole period he made no sound other than the occasional grunt and grimace. It was evident that the cuts that caused the greatest pain was through the skin over the kidneys and over the hip bone. He squirmed at that point and made a small sound. The cutters quietly admonished and shushed him.

When the cutting was done he was helped to his feet and supported while buckets of water were poured over him to wash the blood away. This obviously hurt and he winced. He lay down again on the crocodile table and oil was then rubbed into the cuts on his back cuts only. I asked about the cuts on his chest and was told – only the back. I thought it was the oil that made the keloids form, which was the purpose of the exercise – I did not get an explanation.

The moods of the initiation were more obvious to me afterwards. While the skin cutting was being done, the young initiated men danced and sang loudly and happily. It seemed to that they were taunting the novice – as if to say *We have been through this – not it is your turn.*

Once the skin cutting was finished the song changed to something like a hymn – slow spiritual and respectful as they now carried the new initiate outside for the women and uninitiated to see. He was naked and he kept his head down and eyes closed. They carried him piggy-back style and paraded him around very slowly. Some women wearing feather and other decorations danced around the edge of the group of men who carried him, until they went back inside the haus tambaran.

Humiliation seemed to be main sensation for the newly initiated – paraded naked in front of his mother and other women, he did nothing for himself, like a new born child and I guess that what we witnessed was the display of re-birth into manhood. Back in the haus tambaran he lay down to sleep. Managun sat on a stool nearby watching over him. A young man came and held his ankle and said in Pidgin "Relax, you are all tensed up – go to sleep" it was like an adult soothing a child. Win now explained that for the next few weeks Managun's son will be confined within the haus tambaran

fence for some weeks. He will be periodically beaten and will have to submit to this without retaliation. I went to Managun and thanked him and Albert and I left to continue the patrol.



Opposite - This photo was taken at a later stage of an initiation ceremony on Timbunmeri Island in the Chambri Lakes. During their confinement the newly initiated wear a small grass skirt with covers the genitals and during this period they are painted with grey Sepik clay.

Other notes on modern Iatmul initiations.

1. **Changed initiation ceremonial periods:** Initiation ceremonies pre and immediately post World War 2 were conducted in the dry season over periods of many months during which the newly initiated were educated in the oral histories of their people and important religious rituals. Things had changed by the 1970s, changes which required the initiation ceremonies now to be conducted at Christmas time and to be limited to three or four week's duration.

Iatmul people came to value western education and the associated employment opportunities it offered. This restricted the village access to its youth to around the end of the year when they were home from boarding school. As a result, initiations were arranged to fit into the Christmas holidays.

I was told of one case of a Sepik youth bringing his Madang school friend home with him for Christmas. The Sepik boy's family told the Madang youth that his friend was going to be initiated and would be out of circulation for the remainder of the holidays. The Madang boy opted to stay with his friend and so he too was initiated. One can only imagine what his mother thought when her boy arrived back as an initiated Sepik man!

2. **Commercialisation and its impact on traditional values:** While I had been invited by my friend Managun to this initiation, I quickly learnt that an assemblage of elders and not Managun were the organisers of this initiation. This came to my attention in three ways :-
- a. My companion Trainee PO Albert was a young man of the Yangoru area and he had not been initiated. I was concerned about his safety during the initiation. My suspicion was that under the guise of Iatmul outrage he could be seized, thrown down and initiated there and then, although he was accompanying me and agreement for him to enter was assumed. Negotiations resulted in me buying a case of beer as a contribution that assured Albert's safety, or at least the continuance of his uninitiated state!
 - b. There was a German photographer there filming the initiation. He had paid cash to acquire this right.
 - c. On a previous visit to Kandingei, there had been a discussion with a Japanese film crew including women. It was agreed they could enter if they paid the fee asked. I do not know if this actually happened, but it seemed it was possible to satisfy "tradition" if sufficient money was forthcoming.
 - d. My disappointment with this commercialisation of Iatmul initiations was turned around by a chance discussion with Win as we boarded our canoe. Win was of the opinion that my

canoe driver had not been initiated - I argued that he had been, based on the scars I had seen on his body. The driver resolved this discussion for us when he said :-

Oh yes, we did that [cutting his body to produce scars] to show the Europeans while I was on the coast. I will be initiated at Yambunumbu in December¹⁰.

I concluded that while there was blatant opportunistic commercialisation of Iatmul initiations, the perceived validity of the initiation ceremony was not impacted by it. Initiation was far more than the mere marking of the skin. It was a complete religious ritual which involves acceptance by the whole community, the institution of the haus tambaran, the spirit crocodiles and beliefs in the power of ancient dried enemy human flesh and bone scrapings from spear points that killed the enemy. Without all of this, the novice would not be accepted by the community - or by himself - as having had his mother's blood removed, and being "re-born" as a man into his village community.

End Notes Chapter 51

¹ G.W.L. Townsend – District officer. Pacific Publications 1968 Page 97

² Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 18 page 117.

³ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 19 page 306

⁴ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 19 page 309

⁵ Roscoe P. Yangoru Boiken Initiation – in Sepik Heritage – Carolina Academic press 1990 Pages 408-409

⁶ Angoram Patrol report no 9 of 1947-48 by patrol officer G.B. Gilbert. Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 pages 73-74

⁷ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 20 pages 14-16 a memorandum to District Officer Sepik – dated 9th March 1933.

⁸ Managun, like his son had left home as a youth without being initiated. He completed a career in the RP&NGC and then retired. So, as an old man in 1973 he still had not been initiated but he felt the need for his son to go through the experience. I gained the impression that part of his need in doing this was to complete an obligation to his community. If two consecutive generations in one family avoided initiation, it might appear to be a breakaway movement. My presumption was that Managun did not want that perception associated with his family

⁹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 19 page 305

¹⁰ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 19 page 309

During the census at Mensuat on Peliugwi Island in the Chambri Lakes on 11th December 1973, I noticed on a teenage girl's shoulder, where her blouse did not completely cover them, what appeared to be initiation keloids¹. Inquiries after the census provided the information in this chapter.



Councillor Maribika explained that traditionally skin cutting of single girls was conducted by all groups in this area of the Chambri Lakes, i.e. the Chambri, Mari, Bisis language groups and possibly by the enemy Nyaula as well (see below). The significance of the cutting of girl's skins was the same in each of the named language groups. The main reason was a status symbol for the girl's parents – to identify them as sufficiently wealthy that they could have this expensive skin cutting performed. The ceremony required the preparation of a vast amount of shell wealth and food items in payment for the skin cutter and maintenance of the girl while her keloids healed.

The girl's mother's brother, or his son, was the person who performed the cutting and recipient of the payment. Given that the Chambri Lakes language groups are patrilineal, this payment effectively passed from the girl's father's clan to that of her mother – the same direction the bride price [if one was made²] would have gone. The decision to undertake this step would not have been taken lightly.

Maribika also mentioned that pressure for such ceremonies to be performed was also applied by the mother's brother's clan for his niece's skin to be cut as he and his clan wanted the payment, but

¹ This girl turned out to be Councillor Maribika's own daughter.

² In this area some marriages were facilitated by sister exchange rather than bride price, but the trend was towards bride price and away from sister exchange.

as with bride price, there would have been an eventual balancing of the books when a daughter of the cutter or his clan had her skin cut. Part of his description of the ceremony was :-

Traditionally we used to cut some of our women on the back and the belly and the breasts. The same marks as men. This was decoration and beautification... With our male initiation and female beautification the cutting was done at two times. First the back, then the chest. This was done for comfort sake; you have to have one good side to sleep on while the cuts heal. Traditionally the cutting was done with bamboo and mussel shells. The skin was treated with nettles then beaten with a broom or the stem of a betelnut – you know, like a broom. This was done until the feeling left the skin and then the skin was cut.

Writer's Note: An obvious research question which sadly was not asked, was whether female skin cutting impacted upon the bride price of the girl when she married – one would assume that as her skin cutting ceremony marked her as coming from a wealthy family, that a higher bride price might be demanded. A second line of research questions should also have explored the impact of skin cutting on sister exchange marriages.

Maribika explained that traditionally the female skin cutting was done in the house of the married couple after it had been fenced, just as the haus tambaran was fenced for Iatmul male initiation. For three weeks or so after being cut the girl was not permitted to touch food with their hands. They were fed with wooden forceps. The food itself was prepared by a special woman who had been appointed to look after the girl(s).

The girl(s) remained in the enclosure painted in Sepik clay. At the end of about six months a day was set for the girl(s) to come out of the enclosure. First the clay was washed from their bodies and they were decorated in shell wealth headdresses and other ornaments. By this time all the cuts would be healed into attractive scars, which would be admired by people who had assembled to see the girl(s) as she/they came out. This was an important time of community pride and festivities. It was at this time that the Mother's brother was paid the shell wealth and pigs that were due to him for his skilful beautification of his nieces' body.

At such times the people of other villages – Yambiyambi, Changriman, Chambri and elsewhere would assemble to celebrate in a feast in which all were expected to participate. Maribika indicated that in the case of Chambri, which had a huge population, only the relatives would come, not outsiders.

Maribika's explained that skin cutting on girls traditionally involved no initiation significance and bride price was said not to be affected. This girl's skin cutting custom had not been used in recent times [1970's] in the Chambri Lakes – so what was different at Mensuat?

Maribika offered the following explanation :-

They [the nine girl's involved] consider the custom of cutting skin to be good. They were aware of the custom, but they did not see any of their parents making preparations to have their skins cut. They apparently decided to cut their own skins in secret and try the custom out. They wanted to be decorative.

The girls got together one day in June last year [1972]. They went into the house next to mine...they went secretly and quietly without telling anyone of their intentions. I walked past the house and I saw what they were doing, but I did not say anything. They cut several girls on the back and shoulders and applied ground and oil to make the raised keloids. I think they cut three that day. You could not see the marks when they were dressed.

*They came out of the house that day and did not say anything. The men found out and started saying this was men's work and that the girls had broken the law. They waited for me to talk, but I kept quiet and the talk died down and now it is finished.*¹

Qn. Were their actions then a slap in the face for their parents?

Ans. ...uncertainty...then a failure to answer

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A similar incident in the Nyaula village of Japanaut in 1970-71. In the Japanaut incident seven girls secretly cut their own skins. There was no known precedent for this.

Paul Banji explained :-

The Councillor's brother Lucas found the marks on his daughter's skin when she was washing. Her name was Niaetbandiaugwi. He was very angry with her and she told him what happened. A very important law had been broken. Lucas sent a tange³ to Kandingei to come to Japanaut to kill fowls, ducks and dogs and to chop down banana and coconut palms belonging to anyone and everyone – not just the families of the offending girls. The custom also indicated if they found a girl or uninitiated male they could cut their skin there and then. In fear of this happening, all such girls and uninitiated males fled to the bush. The Kandingei people took the meat they had killed and the fruit from the trees they cut and consumed it back in Kandingei.

*The people of Japanaut knew the law and so they could do nothing against the Kandingeis. The families of the seven girls had to pay compensation for the damage done. Fowls \$1 each, Ducks \$2 each...*²

Writer's Note:

Clearly the seven girl's actions in Japanaut were regarded far more seriously than those of the nine Mensuat girls. It is difficult to imagine that there were no on-going consequences from angry Japanaut families. Unfortunately, I have no information on this.

Footnote: Sepik 4 Chapter 45 mentions "beautification" of Kwoma girls by skin cutting.

End Notes Chapter 53

¹ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 19 Page 346

² Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 19 Page 393

³ A sheaf of croton leaves indicating a time interval of one day per leaf until an action was to happen.

Sepik 4 Chapter 53 The North Hewa Murder Investigation Nov. 1974

After my leave in mid-1974 I found myself and family stationed at Tari in the Southern Highlands District as circuit magistrate. My base of court operations was the Tari court house and my circuit included scheduled visits to Koroba Sub District, Komo and Lake Kopiago Patrol Posts. This was the western side of the District. The eastern side – Mendi, Ialibu, Kagua, Nipa sub districts, was the responsibility of District Court Magistrate Harley Rivers Dickenson, who we met briefly as OIC Imonda in Chapter 33, when bags of rice were parachuted onto his airstrip. My magisterial duties included District Court, and Local Court summary jurisdiction hearings in criminal and civil matters as well as committal hearings of indictable offences for the Supreme Court. I was also the Coroner.

After three months, I had a visit from acting Deputy District Commissioner Mr. Noel Cavanagh. Until recently Mr. Cavanagh had been the ADC at Koroba. Apart from meeting him on my circuits, we had in common previous postings to the Sepik's Green River Patrol Post. He asked whether I would consider a transfer back to field duties – as ADC Koroba. Active field work rather than a sedentary court room existence suited me, so I agreed. Mr. Cavanagh was pleased and said, as if an after-thought had just occurred to him ... “*Oh there is something else...*”

He then explained that there had been a murder in the North Hewa area of the Koroba sub district; a government official had been killed and his badge of office sent back across the Lagaip River with a challenge to the “*papa bilong bras*” [‘Father of the badge’ – the Administration of Papua New Guinea] that anyone who crossed the Lagaip River to investigate would be killed.

This challenge to the Administration from the people of North Hewa was serious in itself, but it was made more so by the fact that PNG had been a self-governing country since 1973 and the flexing of political muscles by elected parliamentarians had made “Kiap” a four letter word as discussed in Chapter 50. Late 1974 was a very inappropriate time for an expatriate Australian field officer to defend his patrol with firearms while under attack from primitive national PNG archers. I asked Mr. Cavanagh for written instructions specifically addressing the action to be taken in the event that the patrol was attacked, as I expected it could be. Mr. Cavanagh provided the instructions overleaf. As far as I was concerned, this was evidence I would need in the event someone was shot and I found myself answering charges in the Supreme Court.

The facts I assembled concerning the alleged murder were recorded in Koroba Patrol Report No 5/1974-75 – Situation Report 1 – as follows :-

On or about 1st September 1974, about half a dozen men of Wusai in the South Hewa aided by the whole male population of the Mali River Tarei group of the North Hewa raided Tawalibe, an Urei River settlement killing a woman and a man. The woman was stated to be a sorcerer. This raid was instigated by the Wusai, with the Tarei group being more or less observers. Only one arrow fired by a Tarei man hit either victim. The actual killing was [allegedly] done by the Wusai men Pinguwapa, Alualu, Ialupeni, Luiaba and Liauwi; none of whom have yet been apprehended.

Tultul Aria of Folini [in the South Hewa] heard about this raid on about National Day 16th September 1974 and immediately set off for Tarei to investigate.



DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

TELEGRAMS:
TELEPHONE:

District Office,
MENDI. S.H.D.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Mr. L. BRAGGE,
Assistant District Commissioner,
KOROBA.

Date: 11th November, 1974.

Our Reference: 67-2-6

Action Officer: NC/EL

Designation: DDC

Your Reference:

Date:

PATROL INSTRUCTIONS - NORTH HEWA CENSUS DIVISION.

1. As discussed verbally please be prepared to depart on patrol to the Tolini area of the North Hewa c/d on Tuesday 12th November 1974.
2. You will be accompanied by six members of the R.P.N.G.C. and an Hospital Orderly plus permanent line of carriers to transport the patrol. I estimate the patrol should cover a duration of about one month.
3. A set of Squadcal portable radio transceivers have been supplied in order that your patrol can maintain a radio schedule at 4.30p.m. daily with Koroba.
4. An Aerial supply drop has been arranged for Monday 25th November 1974 at the site which has already been selected by yourself.
5. The objects of this patrol are:-
 - (a) Investigate the report of the murder of the Tultul of Tolini village and endeavour to apprehend those involved.
 - (b) Exploration and consolidation of government influence in the general area between the Lagaip and Mali River.
 - (c) Contact and census of any people living in this general area.
6. As it has been reported that the people involved in the alleged murder may attempt to repulse the patrol, ensure that patrol security is maintained according to the normal standards in areas of limited contact: I refer you to Chapters VI - "The Management of Patrols" and Chapter VIII - "The Use of Force" of the Departmental Standing Instruction Volume I. I attach copies of these two Chapters. Ensure you are completely familiar with these instructions.

G. Gomara
.....
G. GOMARA.
District Commissioner.

Aria was married to Inubei/Saueinen, a Tarei woman. He thus had [a right of] entry into the otherwise hostile Tarei group. In addition to this, Aria seemed to be motivated by his official appointment as Tultul. He was apparently under the impression that he was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the North Hewa. This could be taken as a reflection of the Administration neglect of the North Hewa. The last patrol to enter this area was that of PO Chris Makin in 1970, then the North Hewa area was still Restricted.

According to Tarei witnesses, the Wusai and Tarei people had long decided to kill Aria if the opportunity arose as his interference in their affairs was not appreciated. The Wusai observed Aria en-route to Tarei and followed him there. Aria talked with the Tarei/Wusai gathering and inquired into the raid, which was admitted. Their plan was to walk with Aria as far as the Lagaip River on his homeward trip, kill him there and throw his body into the river. This was done.

Yasana struck the first blow with an axe to the base of Aria's skull probably killing him. Andi and Lenku of Tarei both then fired arrows into the body. The Tultul's badge was removed and the body was thrown into the 'Lagaip River. Andi then claimed Aria's wife Inubei [who apparently accompanied Aria to Tarei] as his own second wife...

Back in Folini, Aria's non-return caused concern, so men led by Pania the ex-government interpreter went to the Wagabi camp of the Tarei people in the Waru valley and inquired as to Aria's whereabouts. As the Wagabi people, being Tareis, had safe access to the Mali valley, two of their women - Kwelei and Tsawama - went to the Mali valley where they were given Aria's badge and told by Yasana to send it back 'Papa bilong Bras' (His vague idea of the Government).

The two women returned with the Tarei, warning that if the Government was informed of the killing they would kill the following South Hewa leaders :-

*Sawupa of Wanikipa
Papa of Wanikipa
Alulu of Wanikipa
Tama of Wanikipa
Ainama of Folini
Taindei of Hiranei, and
Kwaba of Hiranei.*

In addition, the warning was issued that anyone coming to investigate the murder would be killed. The Hewa warning spread throughout the Lake Kapiago area that the patrol would be attacked. Corporal Kuningi of the Lake Kapiago police detachment is reported to have been instrumental in this. The cry was taken up by Local Government Councillors and committee men who told their men not to carry for the patrol because Hewas would kill them.

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It was not completely without regret that I left the Tari court house. I had set up the law library and office furnishings to my satisfaction there. Packing up and moving from one station to another also takes time. In Koroba Mr. Cavanagh had handed over to Patrol Officer Bill Van Rikxoort. Bill and I signed the handover of the sub district to me on 28th October 1974. Also stationed at Koroba at that time was John Kabisch, who we met at Telefomin in Chapter 36 . Lake Kapiago Patrol Post was unmanned at that time.

With the aid of discussions with Hewa people at Lake Kopiago and Chris Makin's 1970 patrol map, and in company with Mr. Kabisch, on 1st November I conducted an aerial survey of the North Hewa area. We were able to identify the Mali and Waru valleys and pin point the layouts of the centres of population in each. We also identified and flew low over a suitable site that an airdrop could be taken if the need arose.

As I was in Lake Kopiago, I had other duties in my role as ADC. I met District Commissioner Gomara and the New Zealand High Commissioner who flew in for a visit. There was also a meeting of the Lake Kopiago Local Government Council to attend before I flew back to Koroba that afternoon. While at Lake Kopiago I saw a copy of Steadman's Hewa draft thesis "*Neighbours and Killers*". I took that back with me to Koroba as essential reading. It was very important to read every word written on "new" or semi explored areas before a patrol went in. Steadman's writing related to South Hewa with wider references. I was familiar of course with Professor Hatanaka's writings on the Saiyolof Hewa, and I was interested if Steadman's fresh set of eyes offered a different perspective - the title of his work certainly suggested so.

While it is not intended to write about Koroba at this point, Sister Anselm, a Pakistani nun at the Koroba Catholic Mission requires mention. Sister Anselm was a happy, engaging and entertaining person. As might be expected, the forthcoming patrol and the threats against it were news in Koroba as they were in Lake Kopiago. Sister Anselm came to tell me something and I could see it was serious because she was not her usual laughing self. She told of a very vivid dream about the patrol, but late one afternoon the dream went blank and then there was nothing. She feared it was an omen and she felt compelled to tell me about it. I recall that I did not know what to think of this.

ooo000ooo

I took Mr.Kabisch with me to Lake Kopiago. He would pack and arrange airdrops and maintain a listening watch on the radio. While the patrol needed to be conducted as a matter of urgency, several matters had first to be attended to by the District Commissioner and headquarters staff :-

1. Rations for 68 men for a month were required. Koroba had no funding authority to acquire these. Three light tent flies were needed and could be borrowed from Komo Patrol Post.
2. A patrol transmitter plus batteries sufficient for a month were required.
3. Neither the Koroba nor the Lake Kopiago files held a complete copy of Patrol Officer Chris Makin's Lake Kopiago Patrol Report No 5/1969-70; the last patrol into the North Hewa. It was important that I read this report in its entirety.
4. Six pounds of small glass trade beads, preferably red, yellow and black needed to be purchased in Mendi and delivered for the patrol at Lake Kopiago.

The patrol preparations commenced in earnest on 10th November 1974 when the patrol police were taken to the Koroba rifle range for shooting practice. I needed to establish an idea of the capabilities of these police, all of whom were new to me [and me to them]. Senior Constable Pogei was the NCO. The others were Constable First Class Kilaosi and Constables Bavi, Nabur, Laulau and Nime. The Interpreter was Himau of Wanikipa.

So there would be no doubt as to what the standard firing orders were, I typed them out and read from the document. This would be another piece of important evidence if something went wrong. When the time came I issued each policeman with ten rounds of ammunition; five to be in the rifle's magazine and the other five to be within easy reach.

On the 11th November the patrol was moved in two long wheeled Toyota Landcruisers from Koroba to Lake Kopiago. Upon arrival it was found that the requested carriers had not assembled. Word was sent out again. The patrol radio had arrived from Mendi, but when it was assembled and tested – no radio contact could be made. A fresh set of batteries were installed and the radio was tested successfully. The patrol remained at Lake Kopiago Patrol Post overnight.

On 12th November the difficulty in obtaining carriers continued; the local Duna people had heard that the Hewa would attack the patrol, a rumour they believed and consequently they did not want to go. With most of the carriers assembled, the patrol departed from Lake Kopiago at 10.50am, leaving two police and five carrier loads behind. Once an additional five carriers had been recruited, they and the police would catch the patrol up at Folini, if not before – see patrol map later in the chapter.

The patrol climbed to the north out of Lake Kopiago. The crest of the divide was reached at 2.20pm and an altitude of 6,600 ft. was recorded. The patrol descended along the left bank of the Daro Creek to reach the ‘Kerosene Creek’ camp used by Makin in 1970. The last carrier arrived at 4.45pm. Camp was set up and rations issued. ‘Kerosene Creek’ is known locally as Bawa Creek. The area smells of kerosene and a film of clear oily hydrocarbon product seeps from the rock structure and can be trapped on the surface of the creek water. Testing in kerosene lamps produces poor light and foul smelling smoke. As the patrol was to next descend into the lowlands, anti-malarial tablets were issued by the medical orderly to all patrol personnel.

13th November 1974.

Broke camp and departed at 7.10am. Descending along Kerosene Creek and parallel ridges. Passed Suagoropi abandoned settlement site and continued on to cross the Wanikei River and entered an area of difficult broken terrain. At 11.15am arrived at a Hewa fortified residence of the type I knew from patrols out of Oksapmin in 1966/7 and Ambunti in 1970/71. The patrol arrived at Folini at 12.20pm. It was noticeably hot and humid at this lower altitude. The two police remaining behind at Lake Kopiago arrived with five carriers in the late afternoon. The Folini people welcomed the patrol and traded sufficient fresh foods to save the patrol a full day’s rice. Tultul Aria’s badge of office was handed over and would be presented as evidence – **below** - in the District and Supreme Courts at later dates.



In anticipation of the patrol’s arrival, the Folini people had built a cane suspension bridge across the Lagaip. There were no secrets in the Hewa country. The Tarei people became aware of the bridge and the reason it was built, and threatened to cut it.

The Tarei also stated their intention of killing whoever leads the patrol, be it a guide, interpreter, policeman or kiap. Word was sent for the Tultul of Wusipa to come and meet the patrol. Wusipa is a North Hewa community reportedly friendly with the Folini people.



14th November 1974.

Broke camp and commenced descending a poor track to reach the left bank of the Urubwa River at 8.25am. The Urubwa was followed downstream to its junction with the Lagaip River, which was reached half an hour later. The cane suspension bridge – opposite – which the Folini had built at that site was 210 feet long. The patrol commenced crossing and everyone was safely on the north bank of the Lagaip by 11am.

Some thought had gone into how to access the Mali valley without being seen and thereby, hopefully have the element of surprise on the patrol's side when it came time to make arrests. The obvious direct route to the Mali from the Lagaip River was to go straight north via the Waru valley. The problem therein was that the residents of the Waru were allies of the Tarei people of the Mali valley; effectively their early warning system.

Clearly the patrol needed to avoid the Waru valley. The aerial survey indicated that both the Mali and Waru Rivers drained from a feature which was marked on the map as 'Bamboo Mountain'. I needed to hear

from the Tultul of Wusipa whether it was feasible to climb Bamboo Mountain and descending directly into the Mali valley after skirting the Waru headwaters. As requested, Tultul Napema of Wusipa met the patrol at the bridge. He agreed to lead the patrol to the ridge crest that ran down from the summit of Bamboo Mountain. He said the country up there was trackless, but the plan would work if we cut our way.

With Tultul Napema leading the way, the patrol moved into a steady ascent in a northerly direction, then tending slightly west of north. The headwaters of the Lagimei and Aluma creeks were crossed. After an hour's break to allow the patrol to regroup, we continued climbing to arrive at the last Wusipa house at 1.20pm, and from there the patrol continued climbing until 2.15pm when a small creek was reached. As there was said to be no water higher up the mountain, camp was made. Tultul Napema brought several of his people into camp for treatment by our medical orderly. Rations were issued and guards posted. A briefing was given to all patrol personnel as to the proposed strategy and the need both for silence and for the patrol to remain close together on the march.

15th November 1974.

The patrol was underway at 6.50am and reached the crest of the Lagaip/Waru divide an hour later, and then followed the ridge crest ever upwards. About mid-morning Senior Constable Poge sent a runner from the rear of the patrol line to let me know that we had a problem. I hurried back along the patrol to find that Poge had discovered ten Folini bowmen led by ex-interpreter Pania were following us in order to participate in whatever action happened once the patrol reached the Tarei settlement. I informed them they were neither needed nor wanted and ordered them to go back the way they had come or face the consequences. I must have sounded convincing because we did not see them again.

The ridge crest soon led us into dense moss forest and matted bamboo where progress was difficult. As a result we descended across the face of the upper Waru valley in an effort to get below

the moss and matted bamboo. The patrol was now crossing the headwaters of Puami Creek, a Waru tributary. Below us was a panoramic view of the Waru valley. Then at 1.35pm the patrol descended steeply to the headwaters of the Waru River itself. While crossing it we heard Hewa voices in a garden not far downstream. Interpreter Himau listened to them talking and finally said that they were unaware of our presence. We remained at the creek and signaled for the carrier line to be careful not to make any noise and to continue up the ridge across the Waru River towards the top of Bamboo Mountain. I seemed to me that I held my breath throughout the eternity of the patrol's passing that point, and finally the last of the patrol was ahead of us without being heard by the nearby gardeners. Incredible! I am sure this achievement was due in no small part to the Duna carrier's fear of Hewa arrows.

We ascended in a westerly direction seeking to put as much distance as possible between ourselves and the Waru River Hewas. The purpose of the patrol continued to be a quest for the element of surprise by avoiding the Tarei early warning system in the Waru valley.

Our camp that night was made in the fringes of the bamboo covered moss forested mountain top. This bamboo reminded me of the endless tangles of blackberry bushes¹ that took over the riverbanks of north-east Victoria; but instead of blackberry-like prickles, the bamboo was armed with razor sharp edges everywhere it was cut with a bush knife. Simply by going a few hundred metres into it resulted in a number of patrol members receiving deep gashes. Hewa guides were sent to seek a way through, but they returned to report a huge endless tangle of matted bamboo. The mountain was well named.

I decided that next morning we would re-trace our steps until we were below the level of the moss forest and bamboo and then cut a track due north to the Waru/Mali divide, which we could see about two miles away at a lower elevation to our camp site. As the sun set it became very cold. Fires were not to be lit until after dark, so no smoke would be seen from the valley below.

16th November 1974

It was a bitterly cold night, especially as all fires were extinguished at 4am so there would be no smoke at dawn. Seven minutes' walk brought the patrol below the moss and bamboo. The track cutting to the north crossed extremely rugged and dangerously steep country for the next hour. Then at 8.20am a track was found which took the patrol to the crest of the Waru/Sibor divide. The Sibor River flows southwestward from the north side of Bamboo Mountain. The track used by Mr. Makin in 1970 was found at 1.30pm and almost immediately, Hewa voices were heard receding down the Sibor side of the mountain. The tracks indicated that they were probably an extended family group leading a pig.

Interpreter Himau and Hewa guides were sent into the Mali valley to try to locate the population. They soon returned having seen no one. The patrol was now divided in two.² Constable Kilaosi was to remain with most of the carriers and patrol equipment in hiding behind the Sibor ridge line. They were to remain there until sent for some time next morning. The strongest carriers, the five remaining police, Himau and the Hewas guides were to come with me into the Mali valley to locate the Tarei people and hopefully make arrests.

¹ An environmental disaster introduced by the well-meaning early European settlers of Australia, who also introduced rabbits and foxes from the Old Country.

² It is a long established principle that security demands patrols must not be split when in uncontrolled country. The decision was based upon my opinion at the time, that not to do so would have seriously reduced our chances of achieving the patrol purpose. It would be hailed as necessary strategy if it succeeded, just as it would be condemned if it went wrong. We had gone to a lot of trouble to position ourselves and I was not about to forfeit that.

Radio contact with Koroba was attempted without success. At 4.40pm the patrol divided - those to remain retired into the forest. The remainder commenced descending to the east into the Mali valley. In the lead was myself, Constable Nabur who was designated as my body guard³ and interpreter Himau. The patrol descended through a new but deserted garden area. Then as the light failed with the onset of evening, Himau signaled a halt.

He moved into the bush beside the track and soon reappeared. The dense bush beside the track ahead looked natural to me but it did not look right to Himau. He showed Constable Nabur and myself how a leafy sapling had been pulled down and its head fastened to the ground and how fresh leafy branches had been laid up against the horizontal trunk. Behind this structure were cleared spaces for half a dozen bowmen with lines of fire onto the track we had followed. Our luck was that we arrived apparently after the ambush party had retired for the night.

The patrol continued its careful quiet decent until about 8pm when the track brought the patrol to a fortified communal house. People were seen in the firelight on a grassy ridge crest in front of the house cutting up a pig carcass. They were making a lot of noise and calling out loudly. I signaled the patrol to retreat a couple of hundred yards from the edge of the clearing, back up the ridge and into the forest. In a whispered conference I explained that we would spend the night in the forest, making no noise and doing nothing to alert the people near the house as to our presence. At first light the police and carriers would form a cordon around the sides of the house clearing and behind it. When all was in place, Nabur, one other Constable, Himau and I would approach the front of the house and announce our presence and purpose for being there. Hopefully the people would remain quiet, but if anyone fled they would be contained by the encirclement.

It was a long cold sleepless night. Thankfully it did not rain. People coughed and talked and shone torches about. My attempt to maintain silence found my purposeful step in the direction of an offender land on someone I did not see. This made even more noise with exclamations of surprise and muttered apology. Constable Laulau explained next day – to the delight of all - that the got up to urinate during the night and moved well away from the resting patrol, and still managed to urinate on someone he did not see. Incredibly all of this noise and confusion went unnoticed by the people down at the house.

17th November 1974.

I doubt if any patrol member slept the previous night. At the first hint of dawn the plan was activated. After allowing the encircling party to get into position, the four of us walked down the ridge and into the grass clearing. My plan included the assumption that at dawn the people would be in the house. I was wrong. They were all sitting around outside and did not see us until we were among them. I do not know who got the biggest surprise. The people yelled and scrambled in every direction and we hung onto whoever we could. The encircling cordon closed and everyone was held.

The wanted man Yasana was in the fortified house and would come no further than the door. Constable Nabur and Himau entered the house with care, and captured Yasana as he was trying to break his way up through the thatch and onto the roof. I saw in passing at this time that one of the women was covered in white clay – **below** - and that a vertical timber coffin stood in the cleared area well back from the house. The people had apparently gathered for a funeral.

³ In circumstances such as those of the present patrol the “kiap” is a natural first choice target. The welfare of the patrol members as well as that of the Tarei people depended a great deal on the patrol leader remaining in a fit condition to exercise his judgement in the best interests of all. My vested interest in this protection was a secondary consideration.



In the morning light I realized that this was not the house I had seen from the air, but most of the wanted men were among the people detained. They indicated that the leader Andi and others were at another house further down the ridge. One of the detained men agreed to lead us there. The patrol was again divided with Senior Constable Poge and a small party guarding the wanted men who were now handcuffed – **below - opposite.**

I led the remainder off in search of Andi. Unfortunately the Duna carriers who had remained silent until now, were cock-a-hoop with our morning success against the dreaded Hewa, and were no doubt heard 70 yards distant from the two houses we approached. Constable Nabur and I followed by others ran to the houses where two men were held. Andi fled through a fenced garden into the forest beyond, firing arrows at the patrol as he went. The first arrow passed so close by overhead that I am sure I heard it go by. The second arrow transfixing a house post within inches of Constable Nabur's stomach as he went around one side of a small garden shelter and I went around the other.



In the shelter were two terrified women. I spoke to them through the interpreter telling them they would not be harmed and to just stay where they were. They proved to be Andi's wife and mother. Himau, Napema from Wusipa and the two newly taken prisoners called out to Andi urging him to surrender. He was told that everyone else including his wife and mother were with us and that no one had been harmed. Our only purpose for being there was to

investigate the murder of Aria. There was no response from Andi after 30 minutes of calling, but then he appeared in the garden adjacent to the garden house. He was a big man with an arrow fitted to his bow string. He was wide-eyed and calling out angrily as he danced, prancing back and forth and pointing his arrow in various directions with the bow string drawn right back. This warrior's aggressive *samsam* [war dance] was a frightening spectacle. The garden fence between Andi and us was of the Duna style – a pointed split timber palisade, but somehow we swarmed over it and disarmed him.

It was just after 7am and time to regroup – the patrol was now in three separate places and in terms of security, very vulnerable. One of the houses where the last three prisoners were taken was a fortress style Hewa community house under construction. This would be the patrol base; the incomplete house would be converted into a temporary gaol when the patrol carriers were re-assembled there to do the work. Patrol police and carriers were sent to bring the other two patrol segments in.

Constable Laulau who had gone back to the part of the patrol left in the forest reported that a concealed Bowman fired an arrow at him, which missed. A Hewa witness confirmed this. The Bowman was not caught and the patrol continued on. All three sections of the patrol were back together at 1.35pm, much to my relief, and the carriers were put to work strengthening the temporary gaol. I learned that this garden hamlet was called Utaliwai

We had detained a total of 32 people, of whom 11 were visiting Yoliapae [Sisimin] people who were here to mourn a recent death. Also among the detained was a youth called Koro from Wagabei in the Waru valley. These people were reassured that they would not be harmed. The seven men detailed were informed they had been arrested for the murder of Tultul Aria of Folini and for killings in the Urei River area.

The local women were asked to bring in fresh foods, which they did and for which extravagant payments were made in salt. The medical orderly was kept busy treating tropical ulcers, one of which was so bad that the shin bone was visible in the huge sore - opposite.



It was important that I take statements from the accused men as soon as possible, but I was too exhausted to do this, not having slept since before 4am on the previous day – it was now the evening of the 17th- about 40 hours of physical and mental stress and little if any food or water. Like me, most patrol members suffered from severe headaches and exhaustion. As the patrol settled down for an early night, a Bowman fired one or more arrows into the camp from the hill above. No one was hit and a pursuit by police and carriers failed to catch the Bowman.

18th November 1974.

Today was a well-earned rest day for the patrol. I spoke with all the people detained, but particularly to the visiting Saiyolof men of the Oksapmin area and the Waru valley lad Koro. They were informed that the patrol did not appreciate arrows being fired from the bush as happened yesterday on three occasions. It was explained that the patrol's presence and actions were lawful, as was the patrol's right to defend itself. It was explained that the next day the patrol would leave the area via the Waru valley and that if anyone fired another arrow the patrol would defend itself. Thus briefed the assembled people witnessed a firepower demonstration. An unseen observer on a nearby ridge let out a yelp of fright as the sound of the volley of shots thundered and echoed around the valley. Presents of salt, matches and razor blades were given to the Saiyolof - Oksapmin people and to the youth Koro. The latter was also given gifts for the two women of his group who obtained the Tultul's badge and word of Aria's murder, and passed both on to the Folini people. Koro was told to tell his people to expect the patrol the following day, and that we were hungry and keen to trade for sweet potatoes.



Everyone except the accused men was released. The Tarei women and children were free to go and come, which they did, and in the evening came to sleep with their menfolk in the make-shift gaol. The remainder of the day was spent taking confessional statements. The appropriate cautions were given and explained. Each defendant chose to make a statement.

All seven – opposite - were charged with wilful murder.



The alleged Urei River murders were still outstanding. Inquiries revealed there was no existing bridge across the Lagaip River near the Urei/Lagaip junction area, so I discounted any idea of investigating those murders during this patrol. We had achieved our immediate objective and another patrol from Lake Kopiago would go to the Urei River. The question arose about the welfare of the Tarei women and children now that the protection of the Tarei fighting men was being removed to Koroba gaol.

Situation Report No 2 of Koroba Patrol report No 5/1974-5 addressed this issue :-

I went to some lengths inquiring what they would do. I was told they would move east to the Mapi River where most of them were born and reside with the people there. The Mali River houses and gardens will apparently be abandoned and the community cease to exist, at least until the return of their men from gaol.

*The medical orderly wanted to remove several patients among the women and children – **opposite** - to hospital. He suggested that they accompany the patrol and the prisoners back to*

Lake Kopiago station. The Tarei people rejected this suggestion on security grounds; the women, now on their own, believed they have to move quickly to the safety of the Mapi River. There was no room in their considerations for women and children to go to hospital.

A youth belonging to the group told me emphatically that he was coming with the patrol as far as Wusipa where Tutul Napema had offered him a place in that community. The youth seemed unconcerned about the local situation. Tarei was finished and he was making the most of the opportunities on offer, or so it seemed to me.

It is unavoidable, but unfortunate that the maintenance of law and order should inflict such disruption upon a community. There would seem to be a moral obligation to maintain law and order in this area through more constant contact, and not wait another four years to strike again like a bolt of lightning out of the blue. Had there been patrols in this area since Mr. Makin's patrol of 1970, it is likely that the present murders may not have happened.ⁱ

The terrible state of health of the Tarei people was all the more sad as the benefits of access to modern health care were immediately apparent simply by looking at the nearby South Hewa people. In my new role as ADC Koroba, I initiated follow-up patrols of the North Hewa.

19th November 1974

The prisoners were handcuffed together to prevent escape and were closely attended by police guards on the march. The patrol broke camp and moved off at 6.30am retracing its steps of the 17th for 45 minutes to the house where Yasana was arrested and the funeral rites had taken place.



Decomposition of the body in the vertical coffin – **opposite** - over the intervening few days left the area putrid with the stench of rotting flesh.

The patrol was then guided in a south-easterly direction to cross the Mali River at 7.50am, and a ridge line and descent to cross the Fisalip creek at 8.25am to reach the crest of the Mali/Waru divide two hours later. The descent into the Waru valley took us in a southerly direction trending later to the south-west. The left bank of the Waru River was reached just after midday. The Duna carriers, excited about returning towards home and with our successful arrests, now hastening on, with some passing myself, Nabur and Himau.

This haste came to a sudden halt when they looked beyond the next bend in the river. “*Hewas!!*” was their cry and I suddenly found myself, my body guard and interpreter back in the lead. At the junction of the Waru and Miauwaba Rivers was the youth Koro and five Wagabei men; they were unarmed, although I am sure that their bows were close at

hand, and they had food to trade. Greetings were exchanged, while the patrol re-grouped. The Wagabei men then led the way along the right bank of the Miauwaba River in a little east of southerly direction to pass through taro gardens to a fortified house above them. The house was located about half a mile short of the crest of the Waru/Lagaip divide.

Our Wagabei hosts traded a good amount of local food, and agreed that the prisoners could be accommodated under guard in their communal house. Their attitude to us was friendly and to the prisoners [in my presence at least] one of nodding acquaintances. In the discussions translated by interpreter Himau, I mentioned that we came through the head of their valley some days earlier and would have dropped in on them if we had not been in a hurry to get to the Mali valley. To this they nodded, saying that they had seen our tracks just the day before and wondered who we were, until Koro had come from the Mali valley and explained it all to them.



I made a point of meeting the women Kwelei and Tsawama and thanking them again for retrieving Tultul Aria’s badge from the Tarei people - and, yes, they had received the gifts I sent with Koro and they were very pleased with them. A critical part of patrolling uncontrolled and semi-controlled areas such as this was to make friends for the Administration. The Wagabei – **opposite** - could very easily have become enemies of the Administration had they activated the Tarei early warning system.

20th November 1974.

The patrol moved off at 6.40am and reached the crest of the Waru/Lagaip divide at 8.15am and descended to the bridge over the Lagaip River arriving at 10.55am. South Hewa people had assembled at the bridge with freshly baked sweet potatoes which they gave to every patrol member. There was no doubt that they were pleased with the patrol action against the Tarei.

The patrol moved on at 12.25pm following the Urubwa River upstream to reach the Apostolic Mission station at 1.45. There we obtained a guide to lead the patrol towards Lake Kopiago. The track continued to follow the Urubwa River. Rain started falling at 2.25pm - the patrol set up camp for the night.

21st November 1974.

Broke camp and moved off at 6.35am and an hour later we rejoined our track on 13th November. Retraced our steps and reached our Kerosene Creek camp site at 9.50am. While waiting for the carriers to re-group, Constable Bavi arrived and collapsed. He was sick with malaria. The Duna carriers, keen to reach home, had gone ahead so there was no one left to carry Bavi..

It was 11am and I left Bavi where he was and hurried after the carriers who I found resting at the top of the range at 11.45am. I sent eight carriers back to make a stretcher to carry Constable Bavi. I sent Senior Constable Poge with the remainder of the patrol ahead to Lake Kopiago, then returned back down the range to supervise the carrying of Bavi. The stretcher bearers arrived with the patient at the top of the range at 12.40pm. I left them to follow, and went ahead to Lake Kopiago, arriving at the Patrol Post at 3pm - Bavi was carried in shortly after.

The prisoners were secured in the Lake Kopiago gaol, the ammunition was taken back from the police and accounted for to the last round, the carriers were paid off and the patrol equipment was sorted and packed away. The patrol remained at Lake Kopiago overnight.

22nd November 1974.

It was apparent that the first experiences of the outside world had a powerful impact upon the Hewa prisoners. They witnessed the relative hustle and bustle of Lake Kopiago Patrol post. They saw a plane land and take off, but the most traumatic experience of all for them was the Toyota Land Cruiser. They were helped into the back of it and shown to sit. During the four-hour drive to Koroba over the rough Pori road, they hung on as if for grim death to the vehicle's tray sides. They kept their heads down all the way. At Koroba they were delivered to the gaol and their handcuffs were removed. It immediately became apparent that as a group they were taller than the Huli prisoners, and that the Hulis appeared to be frightened of them - as it turned out the prison wardens were also frightened of them!

Post Script 1.

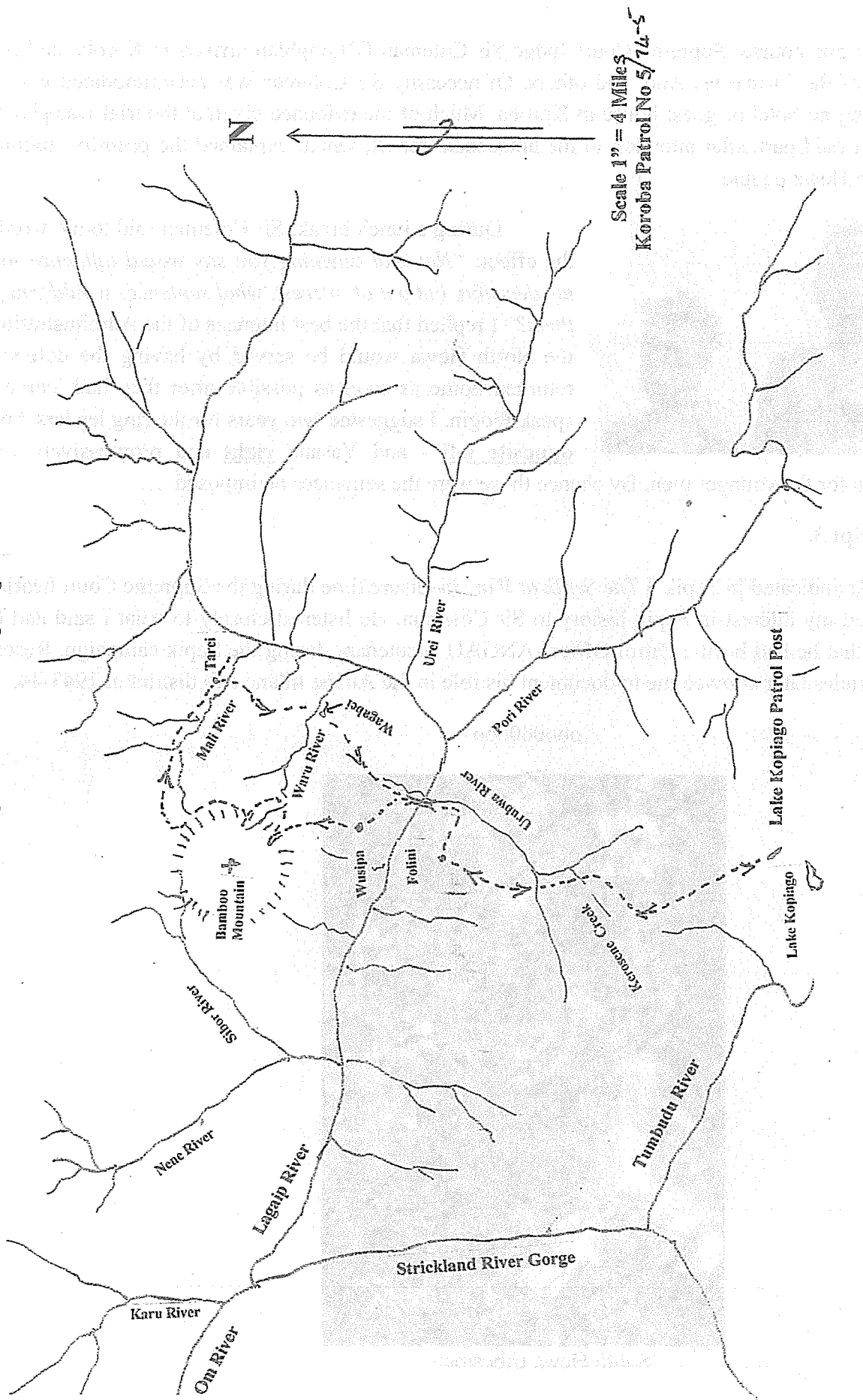
To the Hewa prisoners, the tedious legal process of a preliminary hearing of their charges in the District Court, and then waiting for the arrival of a Supreme Court judge to hear their case was incomprehensible. One day they decided they would go home. They simply walked past the gaol wardens and set off down the road. The warden arrived breathless in my office and told me of the escape. I got into the Toyota and set off after them. At Koroba airstrip I encountered some excited Huli people. They told me the Hewas had asked them a one-word question. "*Kopiago?*" In response they pointed towards Tari. I soon caught up with the escapees as they trudged along the road. I pulled up beside them and they seemed pleased to see me. I indicated for them to get into the back of the Toyota, which they did, and I drove them back to Koroba gaol!

..... cont.

Below - South Hewa people waiting at the Lagaip River to welcome the patrol back, with gifts of freshly baked sweet potatoes



Sepik-Strickland dividing Range



Scale 1" = 4 Miles
Koroba Patrol No 5/74-5

Post Script 2.

In due course, Supreme Court Judge Sir Coleman O’Loughlan arrived in Koroba and heard the case of the Crown vs. Andi and others. Of necessity Sir Coleman was accommodated with me, there being no hotel or guest house in Koroba. Much of the evidence given at the trial was given by me, and I paid particular attention to the antecedent report, which explained the primitive nature of the North Hewa people.



During a lunch break, Sir Coleman said to me words to the effect: “*Not that anything you say would influence me in my decision, but out of interest, what sentences would you give them?*” I replied that the best interests of the Administration of the North Hewa would be served by having the defendants returned home as soon as possible after they had learned to speak Pidgin. I suggested two years for the ring leaders Andi – **opposite left** - and Yasana **right** and progressively lower sentences for the younger men. By chance those were the sentences he imposed ...

Post Script 3.

As indicated in Sepik 3 *The Sepik at War*, in leisure time during the Supreme Court hearing, I mentioned my interest in Sepik history to Sir Coleman. He listened closely to what I said and then told me that he had been a Patrol Officer/ANGAU Lieutenant during the Sepik campaign. Research three decades later allowed me to document his role in the Aitape Inland sub district in 1943-44.

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South Hewa tribesman

Sepik 4 Chapter 54 Highlands Warfare 1970-74

Writer's Note: As indicated in Chapter 49, Chief Minister Somare was reluctant, when encouraged by Australian PM Gough Whitlam, to name a date for PNG Independence while serious issues remained unresolved, one of which was ongoing warfare in the New Guinea Highlands. Interestingly, as indicated in the current chapter, it was police reforms aimed at facilitating PNG Self-Government and Independence that had resulted, in the late 1960s, in tribal fighting beginning again in areas where the kiap's peace had reigned for 20 years.

Highlands Warfare is not related to the history of the Sepik per se; it is included here as a reflection of the nature and status of the Kiap System in 1974 immediately before Independence, a topic crucial to the history of the Sepik and to PNG as a whole.

The chronology of events described here follows directly from the previous chapter – the North Hewa Murder Investigation -

25th November 1974. I acquitted the North Hewa patrol's cash advance and had commenced writing the patrol report when DDC Cavanagh arrived in Koroba and we discussed the Western Highlands warfare issue¹. Mr. Cavanagh explained :-

Warfare in the Western Highlands Province had escalated out of control from 1970 to date [Nov. 1974]. This coincided with the establishment of a "Police Zone" in and around Mt Hagen in 1970. This policy change saw the regular constabulary take responsibility for dealing with tribal warfare from the kiaps and field constabulary.

The Kiap style of tribal conflict management until 1970 had kept the lid on Highlands warfare by monitoring events and defusing ugly situations before they developed out of control. If a term for this style of management was needed it might be Preventive Justice.

After 1970 the regular constabulary waited as tribal conflict situations unfolded, and then investigated after the event, when the law had been broken.

The Chief Minister, Michael Somare and his cabinet had been consulted and had approved a large-scale police and kiap exercise to address tribal warfare, and this had been approved. Part of the exercise was to re-introduce the "Kiap system" of tribal warfare management.

Mr. Cavanagh then asked - Did I want to be part of that? I had just had a somewhat hair-raising experience in the North Hewa – maybe the adrenalin was still rushing. Of course I did!

26th November 1974 ... Two university students, home on Christmas break got into difficulties in vocal exchanges in the Koroba DASF office. I mediated the discussion to a hand shake².

While this has nothing to do with Western Highlands warfare, it indicated a prevailing trend of university students returning home and seeking to apply what they had learned during the year to solve what they perceived as problems at home; a situation I would meet again in the Western Highlands in weeks to come.

27th November 1974. I completed and submitted the North Hewa patrol report, and then flew to Mendi with my patrol gear. In Mendi I had discussions with the DC and DDC before going to Mt Hagen by road. I moved into the Highlander Hotel where I had discussions with an assemblage of kiaps who had gathered there. They included Messrs. Sanderson, Fanning, Dixon, Olive and Dubois.

We met Colin Sanderson in previous chapters. I handed over to him in Telefomin in 1967 and in Ambunti in 1972. He was now ADC in charge of Mt. Hagen sub district. Des Fanning was recruited with me in 1961. R.C. "Dick" Olive, Murray Dixon and Frank Dubois were kiaps I had not met previously. Of this group Des, Murray and I were the three kiaps brought in from outside the Western Highlands for this warfare exercise.

28th November to 2nd December 1974. There were briefings by Western Highlands provincial staff, particularly Mr. Ron Hiatt, DDC and Mr. Laurie Doolan, DC. Recent reports were provided to us for the sort of in-depth reading we all did prior to engaging in any patrol or field exercise. Of particular value to me was a 62-page document by Neil Dunkerley, DO, entitled *Mount Hagen Local Government Council Ward Structure*. This provided an analysis of each of the Council's 59 wards and a complete breakdown of the descent groups in each, together with brief histories. I recognized this as being very similar to my Sepik research into migrations and settlement patterns. Although I had not met Mr. Dunkerley, I mentally adopted him as a kindred spirit.

In these discussions, I picked up on the methods that had been used to keep the lid on highlands warfare prior to 1970. Firstly, the essential raw material for a Highlands war is black palm from which bows and arrow points are made. As in the highland areas of Telefomin and Oksapmin areas, black palm does not grow in the Western Highlands' war zones. It has to be imported from lowlands of the Jimi River area, the Upper Yuat River. Surveillance involved a watch being kept on transport on the Jimi River road for truckloads of black palm. The intended recipients were then identified and field work in their areas was intensified as investigations sought to resolve the underlying issues which would otherwise have resulted in an armed conflict.

In depth communications with all groups, of the nature of what Mr. Dunkerley had done on social structure, did more than provide the reported information - it maintained and enhanced relationships, and friendships, between community members and their local kiaps. In the best kiap traditions, the information flows and reporting sought to understand and document what was likely to happen next and to put strategies in place to defuse the issues.

If this process were to be condensed into a guiding principle, it might read: *Relationships are more important than agreements*. This is because the social environment between warring groups are so fluid, than an agreement [not to fight, for example] would be defined as *a pause between fights*. Relationships, on the other hand sustain the means for kiaps to become involved in positive negotiations when ever and where ever required.

Back in Mt Hagen in late November 1974 - apart from our steep learning curve from reading reports and listening to the local kiaps, there were drives with local staff through the known war-zones - the Nebilyer valley, Jiga and Yamuga tribal areas close to Mt Hagen township and the Menga and Andakeliga tribal areas in the Tuman River in the Banz area further down the Wahgi valley.

No less than nine mobile squads of riot police had set up camp on the Mt Hagen sports field in what became known as "tent city." Just as the arrival of MacArthur's invasion fleet off Aitape in April 1944 would not have gone unnoticed by the Japanese, "tent city" forewarned the local people of the warring tribes that a major police action was about to be launched.

To my understanding two significant events resulted in the timing of the Western Highlands warfare exercise :-



1. A decision was about to be handed down by the Lands Titles Commission in a land dispute between the warring Jiga and Yamuga peoples, concerning land along the Kim River. The dispute was expected to go in favour of the Jigas. A major concern was that the Yamugas, losers in the conflicts to date with the Jigas, in their frustration might escalate the violence, for the first time, to include the use of firearms. The escalation to that time had extended only to the use of steel tipped arrows, and for traditional wooden shields to now have a backing of heavy plywood to proof them

against steel tipped arrows – *example photo above*. [This defensive equipment subsequently evolved to include forty-four gallon drums cut in halves vertically, as well as flattened galvanized garbage tins also being used as shields].

2. An attempt to mediate the Nebilyer dispute on 28th August 1974 saw an attack on a convoy of trucks carrying the Kulga people and a riot squad. For the Kulgas to get to the mediation they had to pass through enemy Ulga and Ugubuga territory. The road was narrow and lower than the gardens on each side. The attackers felled trees in front of and behind the convoy and attacked from the gardens on both sides. My report explained my understanding of what happened :-

*Six shotgun rounds were fired into the attackers at leg level [by the riot squad]. One man was killed and a number hit by pellets. The fight was immediately broken up and there has been no fight since. ADC Sanderson in his comments corrected this statement. There were no fatalities as a result of the attack on the riot squad.*³

The next problem was that although it was known the massed attackers were Ulga and Ugubuga tribesmen, the prosecutions failed as the identification of individual warriors could not be positively made and “group punishment” was not recognized by the judiciary.

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A key briefing took place in the Mt Hagen conference room and I admit I was overwhelmed at the scale of the operations. We learned that the PNG Cabinet had approved the operation and the bringing in of three experienced kiaps from outside, and the operation was to involve active intervention in an attempt to stop the tribal warfare.

ADC Sanderson elaborated on the use of us three “outside” kiaps. We were to take a tough stand¹ in our dealings with the warring tribes, before departing the scene and leaving the warriors to cry on the shoulders of the local kiaps. He emphasized that “outside men” had been chosen as each of us had about 14 years of proven experience. The big picture was that the operation would commence with “Operations Kim, Dawn and Hagen”, after which individual operations would move to the three war zones. The plans were as follows :-

Operation Nebilyer: Myself L. Bragge and 10 police to operate in the Ulga/Ugubuga² areas. B. Newell and 10 police to operate in the Kulga area.

¹ To make “Complete and utter pricks of yourselves” were his actual words – within the law of course.

² In the Nebilyer conflict the Ulga and Ugubuga tribes were the aggressors, while the Kula tribe was smaller, but had been very successful in its own defence, killing a number of its attackers.

Operation Hagen - Jiga/Yamuga war zone: D. Fanning and 10 police to operate in the Jiga area. M. Dixon and 10 police to operate in the Yamuga area.

Writer's Note: On 29th November Mr. Fanning and I went to attend a meeting in the Ulga/Ugabuga area for a proposed discussion of plans for compensation with the Kulgas. The meeting was to discuss compensation for the deaths of seven Ulga and Ugabuga warriors. The meeting failed to eventuate because of rain. In the course of the day, I obtained the following understanding of both the system of war escalation and of compensation obligations ...

The war involved four groups of people. The Ulga Kunduga, the Ulga Pinga, the Ugubuga and the Kulga. The Kulga was the smallest group and it was opposed by the other three groups. The Kulgas were not the aggressors, but they were very successful defenders, managing to kill seven attackers; three Ulga Kundugas, three Ugubugas and one Ulga Pinga. [more detail is set out below]

Tuman River: There was much less discussion of this conflict. Kiaps B. Dodd and L. Mohr, each with 10 police were to operate there.

At this point DC Doolan pointed out to us that this was a potentially hazardous exercise and there would be no recriminations if anyone decided they did not want to take part. No one raised his hand to opt out.

The next speaker was the uniformed senior officer of the RP&NGC, a European whose name I did not catch. Part of his brief was that no ammunition would be issued. As a normally reserved person, I suddenly surprised myself - as if by remote control my hand went up and I said:

We are asked to perform hazardous tasks, which we accept as we have the necessary experience. But I refuse to bluff. I have complete confidence in my own ability, but without ammunition to get myself and my team out of trouble in the unlikely event that it becomes necessary - please count me out.

Mr. Doolan stepped in and reluctantly over-ruled the police officer. He agreed that ammunition would be issued to each kiap leading a patrol. DC agreed, but apparently against his better judgement. He rang the Commissioner of Police and got the OK for the issue of ammunition.⁴

Mr. Doolan went on to say we should arrest and gaol as many offenders as possible. With regard to the use of our court powers, we were instructed that during Operations Kim, Dawn and Hagen, the magisterial work would be done by magistrates from the Department of Law. On patrols, we, as commissioned officers of police, were to be fully in command of our detachments of 10 police and were also expected to exercise our magisterial powers.

Operation KIM.

Operation Kim instructions in part: '*...our officers [i.e. the kiaps] will perform intelligence and support roles...The plan calls for three Riot Squads [squad 3, 7 and 10] to be on stand-by.*'

1st December 1974 *Reported for duty at Riot Squad hall from 5am to 11am. No action. The standby was completed in the early pm.*⁵

Operation DAWN.

3rd December *At 3.30am reported to Riot Squad Hall. 4am with Riot Squad 10 proceeded to the police camp. 5am moved into the Koglamp area [Jiga-Yamuga war zone] and commenced checking*

*houses. There were no untoward incidents. The people were very worried and a number of the houses were locked. The squad arrested 29 adult male suspected of involvement in previous fights. We left the squad as instructed and made our way back to the Riot Squad Hall, arriving at 8.30am where I observed prisoners being questioned.*⁶

My ten police were made available. As was the case with the North Hewa patrol [previous chapter] I did not know these men and they did not know me. I would have been far more comfortable with members of my Koroba detachment. However we soon knew each other well enough, and the appropriate level of authority and mutual trust developed. I later reported that :-

*Such arrangements are possibly adequate until something goes wrong. In a riot situation I would have confidently expected support from J. Konjili the senior NCO..., but would have been surprised if any of the other seven had offered any real support.*⁷



Operation HAGEN

For reasons unexplained, my police detachment and I became attached to Operation Hagen. We went to the Tega dance ground close to Kagamuga airport in the Yamuga area and set up camp - *opposite*. My immediate assessment of the atmosphere at Tega was that it was good; I sensed no immediate danger. At this point I issued standing firing orders and ammunition to the police – just in case the atmosphere suddenly changed. My patrol had been

issued with only four .303 rifles, twenty rounds of ammunition and 10 tear gas grenades. I decided that under the circumstances we were lucky to get even that. My bigger concern was that if the need arose, just how effectively these police, who I did not know, would perform.

I explained to Councillor Olik and his people at Tega that we were there to round up the remaining suspects from the recent Jiga Yamuga fighting. Olik was agreeable to this and promised to bring the wanted men in. I was surprised by the level of co-operation when Olik brought in 22 Yamuga men who had presented themselves voluntarily.

5th December. I went to Kelua school and met with Murray Dixon and handed over to him an informant who was prepared to assist with information about wanted Yamuga men.

At Tega we broke camp and moved by Toyota Land Cruiser to Mainyimp [Minimp] in the Jiga area where we set up camp with the help of a man and a youth and many women, the remaining men were in hiding. We learned that four riot squads passed through here with the arrest of only two men. I outlined my plan to the village people; the patrol would camp here and supervise village cleaning for as long as it took for the wanted men to give themselves up. This brought immediate results. The women visited gardens and remote houses with word of my plan and 18 men gave themselves up.

Minimp committee member Bona arrived, reluctantly, to inquire if he could be of assistance. Information on the whereabouts of fight-leader Miranda was obtained and radioed in; he was hiding in caves in the limestone cliffs in the Togoba area. Night guards and prison guards were posted.

At 9.45pm a riot squad arrived in our camp. Briefings were conducted between myself and the Sub Inspector in charge of squad. I released a prisoner into the squad's custody to assist with their inquiries.

6th December. In the early hours police officers Ravill and Samo and Riot Squad 1 came into camp for discussions. Intelligence information was passed on. At dawn yodeling was heard echoing back and forth around the valley as wanted men were called to come in.

My police had processed and charged 24 detainees. They were transported into Hagen to face court. With them I sent a young lady called Kuk, who was the daughter-in-law of the leader Miranda. She was willing to assist in locating him. I accompanied the riot squad to Ogelbeng to locate an arms dump which one of my prisoners had mentioned. A small quantity of spears, arrows, axes, a bow and a shield were found and confiscated.

Back at Minimp, Kuk was returned. She said the police did not go where she directed and so Miranda was not arrested. I interpreted this as a large police operation with too many things to do – they were dropping the ball. There was another aspect that I did not want to consider. There was some level of police resentment at the kiaps being called in to fix tribal warfare which had escalated as a result of the inefficiencies in the operations of the police zone.

7th December 1974. More wanted men came in and gave themselves up early this morning. In discussion with them I mentioned the names of Jiga men the Administration particularly want to interview. Their names were Miranda, Purun, Agi, Tomba, Pena and Kurup.

8th December. Village sanitation is far below standard so I commenced a village work program to improve sanitation. That morning Korowa and Agi came in and surrendered.

I had been requesting the use of a vehicle since the police failed attempt to arrest Miranda in the Tuguba caves. Today the vehicle arrived. I sent six police in civvies plus guides in search of him. The Minimp area was visible from the cliff caves at Togoba, and Miranda would have been observing what was happening in his home area from that distance. The fact that Kuk had been prepared to talk with me suggested that she knew Miranda wanted to come in. I told my police that I expected Miranda to be very worried and not to resist. This proved to be the case. Another overriding aspect was that the people believed they would get better treatment from a kiap, rather than that they might expect from the riot squads.

The vehicle returned at 6pm with Miranda handcuffed³ in custody. Then when I was giving instructions for a dawn exercise to arrest Purun and Kurup, Kurup walked into camp and gave himself up. Pena also sent word that he would surrender next morning. This he did, and I was surprised to see that he was an old man. After talking with him I radioed in to have his name struck from the wanted list and released him from custody.

9th December. A police party sent out at dawn searching for Tomba failed to find him, but did return with six young men of fighting age. Police questioning resulted in only one of the six admitting to involvement in tribal fighting. Unfortunately for the other five, when the police found

³ Because of the number of people being taken into custody was so large there was not enough handcuffs, so electrical cable ties were used as handcuffs.

them they were playing cards for money – a criminal offence. They were charged, convicted and sent into Hagen. The money and cards were confiscated.

Operation Hagen continued in this manner until 12th December when ADC Sanderson arrived at Minimp and stated that I should break camp; Operation Nebilyer was about to start.

My report on Operation Hagen included the following concerning police co-operation :-

Mobile⁴ Squad 1 worked in the same area as the writer's patrol. It was found that the squad's activities excellently complimented the activities of my patrol. Although the squad's officer complained that his squad made few arrests, its consistent movements, use of parachute flares and tear gas, kept the people on their toes. The people feared the squad...and soon they were giving themselves up to the writer's patrol...50 prisoners were taken by the patrol during this period, of whom 39 were charged.⁸

The squad officer and myself agreed that it was a joint operation and would be reported as such.

Operation NEBILYER

12th December 1974. The patrol team and equipment were transported to the Nebilyer valley where we set up camp at Dumagona in the Ulga Kunduga tribal area. We proceeded to Nebilyer base camp for discussions with Mr. Edrick Nami, the OIC, then returned to Dumagona.

Operation Nebilyer differed from Operations Kim, Dawn and Hagen in two ways :-

1. There were no riot squads moving around the countryside, and “Tent city” was too distant to be of any concern to the people of the Nebilyer valley war zone.
2. Whereas Kim, Dawn and Hagen had been someone else's operations in which I assisted, the Ulga and Ugubuga sections of the Nebilyer operation were my responsibility to plan, set in motion and to operate.

From the time I arrived in Mt Hagen, I had been thinking about the best strategy to adopt in Operation Nebilyer. The document that shaped my thinking most was DO Dunkerley's *Mt. Hagen Local Government Council – The Ward structure according to descent groups*. To get the depth of detail that he had documented, Mr. Dunkerley must have established an amazing level of trust and understanding with the people of the Mt. Hagen Council area. He had analyzed in great depth the 57 rural wards with a (1974) population of 54,330 people. If he could get that close to the people, I reasoned that I could as well.

I spoke with the Dumagona Local Government Councillor who had the unlikely name “Kiap” Kenega and arranged for him to get the leaders of the Ulga Kunduga, Ulga Pinga and Ugubuga tribes together so I could explain who I was, why I was camped on their land and what was going to happen next. Once they were all assembled along with hundreds of their warriors, I explained that the District Commissioner in Mt Hagen had brought me from Koroba in the Southern Highlands to help with a major problem he had in Nebilyer valley.

This discussion took place in the patrol camp area, which was an open flat grassy area similar to the photo of the patrol camp at Tega, only bigger. The bright colours of the PNG flag were vivid

⁴ “Mobile” squad and “Riot” squad refers to the same RP&NGC body of police

in the clear mountain air. The police had been briefed and were in uniform - looking alert in the background. The leaders and I stood in a group and talked.

I explained that the administration had lost face over the fact that when, in August 1974, an attempt was made to negotiate a peace settlement between themselves and the Kulga tribe; they had attacked the Kulgas and the accompanying riot squad. To make it worse, the courts had not been able to convict anyone because there was no individual identification of the warriors as required by the court, although everyone knew which groups had done this

My job was to help the administration regain face in this matter, by negotiating with the Ulga Kunduga, Ulga Pinga and Ugubuga tribes to each hand over a quota of the warriors who had been involved in the attack, so I, as a magistrate, could undertake the court action necessary to restore “face” for the administration. I promised moderate sentences of three months per man who came forward with a guilty plea.

I explained that as I understood that the Ulga Kunduga tribe was the leader in the war against the Kulgas, I had come to their area first. I set a quote of 30 men to be handed over next day for sentencing. I would then move to each of the remaining groups once finished with the Ulga Kundugas at Dumagona, and expect 20 men from each Ugubuga and Ulga Pinga.

What would happen if the quotas were not filled? [I hear you ask]. In that case, I explained, that I would get tough by staying in my present camp and enforcing council rules until the administration had saved face.

In addition to police and court action, I explained that I intended to re-introduce another kiap activity while I was there – census. There had been no census done here since 1970. How, I asked, without proper census records, could Nebilyer children be able to register to go to school if they did not know how old they were? [The kiap census equated to the Registry of Births, Marriages and Deaths.] The discussion ended there – there were no questions or display of anger. The tribesmen dispersed and we settled down for the night.



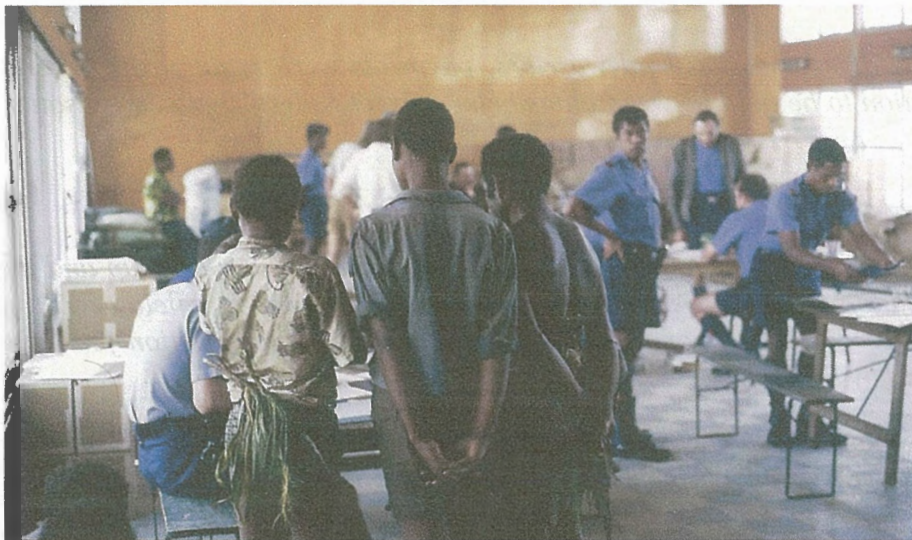
Opposite –

A typical Hagen man in traditional Melpa dress in a coffee garden

A typical Hagen young lady

Despite my brave words, I was very conscious of the hundreds of Nebilyer warriors and just how puny my small police detachment was by comparison. The confidence I had in my words that afternoon and their saving of the administration face, seemed to wither with the coming of the night. I had not been bluffing – if they did not come in, I would commence “getting tough” by enforcing Council rules. Nevertheless, my stomach had tied itself in such a tight knot that I could neither eat nor sleep as I waited to find what the dawn would bring. The police were aware of my ultimatum and were under instruction to be awake, alert and watchful at dawn.

When the day finally dawned, hundreds of Ulga people arrived – men, women and children. By mid-morning there were over 1,000 of them in the patrol camp area. Councillor Kiap Kenega presented 17 out of his quota of 30 young warriors and promised the remaining 13 would be handed over within the hour, which they were. I breathed a great sigh of relief, hopefully unnoticed. I convened the court, accepted 30 guilty pleas on charges of riotous behaviour and sentenced each to three months as promised. Transport was arranged and the 30 departed to commence their sentences.



It was only later that I learned that the real punishment for those young Highland warriors was not the three month sentence, as much the fact that upon entering Baisu gaol, their beards, the pride and joy of all Highland warriors - which had taken years to grow - were shaved off.

***Opposite-** Prisoners being processed at Hagen HQ to appear before the court.*

I made a show of congratulating Councillor Kiap on a job well done in saving face for the Administration and thus facilitating a return to normal relations with the Administration. He and I were now on the “same side” and a good working relationship was established.

I believe my “face-saving on behalf of the Administration” strategy had worked because the sudden escalation of tribal warfare since 1970 frightened the politicians and the Administration, but the people it frightened the most were the warring tribes themselves – they were accustomed to the kiaps intervening to prevent warfare – but suddenly the kiaps were not allowed to do that anymore.

Now with the beginnings of a relationship with Councillor Kiap Kenega and others, I could move ahead with addressing the issues. But what were the issues?

Background to the Nebilyer valley war zone as set out in my Mt Hagen patrol report No 9/1974-75 Situation report 1 :-

The conflict between the Kulga clan and the Ulga and Ugabuga clans has apparently simmered for generations, with the present conflict arising out of the marriage dispute in 1972. The Ulga and Ugabuga groups have been the aggressors in the fighting, with the Kulgas defending with such efficiency that they have killed seven Ulga and Ugabuga men without loss to their own fighting

men. It is the seven men killed that was the present compensation concern. The men killed and their groups are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Waguma Taiya | Ulga Kunduga Ugupugump. |
| 2. Keruwa Tembon | Ulga Kunduga Kutuga |
| 3. Maganil (?) | Ulga Kunduga Komobiamp |
| 4. Tama Tembon | Ugubuga Tebuga Kugunuga |
| 5. Timbil Kur | Ugubuga Agalimp Kobiamp |
| 6. Mendi Kanumba | Ugubuga Tabuga Kabugamp |
| 7. Kurubai Kuri | Ulga Pinga Kunamp. |

The original conflict was between the Ulga Kunduga tribe and the Kulga tribe. A major problem in this was the locally accepted requirement that once someone was killed, the first ally of the tribe who lost a warrior was called in and the war escalated accordingly. Ulga Kunduga tribe called upon their allies the Ugubugas to assist in the fighting. The next problem was for the Ulga Kunduga/Ugubuga alliance was that they failed to kill any Kulgas, instead they lost more men of their own – and so called in their next ally the Ulga Pingas and lost one of them killed as well – still without taking any Kulga lives.

Now with compensation due for seven dead warriors, payments were required on several levels, with internal compensation to be paid between allies before direct Kulga Ulga compensation could be paid.

The situation was this:

Deaths no 1 and 2 are acknowledged to be between the original aggressor's group and the Kulga so no internal compensation is due to be paid. [Never-the-less Mr. Newell's field report of 13/8/73 indicates that Waguma's death was compensated for internally]. Compensation for these men should traditionally be paid by the Kulgas.

Death no 3. Internal compensation was to be paid by the Ulga Kunduga to the Ulga Kunduga Komobiamp. To date traditional payments of pigs etc. have been completed but a cash payment of \$1,000 remains outstanding.

Deaths no 4,5 and 6 internal compensation to be paid by the Ulga Kunduga group. To date traditional payments have been completed, but cash payments remain outstanding [This amount is in dispute with the Ulga Kunduga claiming it should be \$6,000.]

Death no 7 internal compensation to be paid by the Ugubuga to the Ulga Pinga Kunamp group. [It was the Ugubugas who called in the Ulga Pingas, so internal compensation must be paid by the Ugubugas]. Traditional payments have been prepared. These include pigs, kina shells, 10 cassowaries and 10 bamboo containers of oil. A cash payment of \$4,000 is also prepared ready for payment. These payments will be made upon release from gaol in about February 1975 of Councillor Kunugul of the Ugubuga group.

The dispute over payment of direct compensation by the Kulgas. The Kulga position is that they will compensate for one Ulga Kunduga death only, while the Ulga Kundugas expect payment for all seven.

The Kulga position appears to be correct according to tradition. Allies compensate for the deaths of warriors called in. The "enemy" being the Kulgas are then required to compensate only for the deaths of the original aggressor. That is, Kulga should compensate only for deaths 1 and 2.

Or perhaps only 2 depending upon the interpretation of the internal compensation already paid for Waguma.

***An interim assessment [early December 1974]** ...Initially it seemed to me that the Kulga and Ugubuga groups were prepared to forget compensation payments and allow the present situation to continue until they had killed some Kulgas. While there may have been something in this, there was also considerable pressure for settlement of the internal compensation issues:*

- 1. The warring groups freely intermarried before 1972 and movement between the groups appears to have been fairly fluid. With the outbreak of fighting, boundaries were frozen and the younger women married into enemy groups returned home. Many such families have been separated for two years. Several men came to me requesting a "pass" to have their wives returned out of Kulga territory.*
- 2. The conflict developed a no-man's land between the Ulgas and the Kulgas. The Kulgas state that most of their coffee plantations, gardens and houses are now inaccessible to them. This further complicates the compensation issue as the coffee needs to be harvested in the next coffee flush to raise the money for compensation payments.*
- 3. There is a lot of pressure for allies to complete internal compensation processes and traditional pressure such as pig thefts or even payback killings are known to have occurred. ...During the patrol's stay at Dumagona on the night of the 12th of December, a woman, Kengena/Kubi of Ulga Kunduga heard her pigs being stolen. She struggled with the thief who assaulted her by allegedly forcing his hand into her vagina and pulling her internal organs outside her body. She was taken to hospital in a serious condition. The Ulga Kunduga interpretation of this was payback for Ulga allies being jailed over trouble caused originally by Ulga Kunduga. The offending group who assaulted the woman Kengena was not identified.*

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I concluded that in the short time I had to operate in the Nebilyer Valley, the best use of my time was to try to re-establish the kiap system by establishing relationships with people such as Kiap Kenega and to revise the census for the first time in four years.

On the afternoon of the 17th December with help of Messrs. Newell and Nami⁵ I completed the census revision of the Ulga Kunduga clan at Dumagona, a total of 1,202 people of the Ulga Kunduga sub groups: Tamagona, Ogubugrmpo, Ganiga and Roni-Waipega. The people seemed very pleased with once again "lining" for census.

18th December 1974. The patrol moved to Kongora [Ulga Pinga tribal area] and Waibip [Ugubuga tribal area] and we commenced census revision in both places. The quota of 20 Ugubuga men at Waibip was nearly met with 19 men transported to Nebilyer base camp where they were convicted and sentenced to three months gaol each.

Things did not go so smoothly at Kongora. The quota had been filled by 20 volunteers, when two young educated gentlemen intervened. Peter Pilamp, an employee of the Department of Civil Aviation and Thomas Nikinch, a student at the University of PNG, told the people not to co-operate. The discussion was in Melpa language, so I do not know exactly what was said, but a tension

⁵ Edrick Nami had not done a census revision before, so he sat with me to learn how it was done. I was pleased with how quickly he grasped the task.

suddenly became evident in the crowd, whereas relations between the patrol and the Ugubuga people at Waibip and Ulga Kundugas at Dumagona people were friendly and relaxed.

Student Thomas explained to me that he had come home from university, for the Christmas break, with a personal mission of fixing the problems in his community. He said ...

The police had given him a list of names of people the police wanted to interview. Thomas told the Nebilyer people that the DC and Police Superintendent would be coming out to see them. But when they gathered a riot squad descended upon them and arrested some 40 of their number. Thomas considers this an act of treachery of the Police and the Administration. The people seem to consider it an act of treachery on Thomas' part... Thomas confided that he is going in fear of his life.⁹

I sympathized, but warned that things might get worse for Peter and himself as I was going to inform the Kongora community that as Dumagona and Waibip communities had helped save face for the administration by co-operating with the patrol, and Kongora had not - my report to the administration would recommend focusing future police actions on Kongora and to leave the Ulga Kunduga at Dumagona and the Ugubuga at Waibip alone.

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It seemed that my every waking moment was extremely busy and spent among a seemingly endless mass of Highlanders, who no longer seemed in any way threatening; I sensed that the local atmosphere had changed. I helped Messrs. Newell and Nami with the census work and I also sat as the magistrate as required. The magisterial work also started to involve local court cases that the people began to bring forward for settlement.

In all of this I somehow found time to document¹⁰ an overview of the Nebilyer valley war zone, as it then stood. I hasten to add that this represents a snapshot of the situation as I understood it to be in mid-December 1974. The situation was very fluid and was probably changing shape before the ink dried on the documentation :-

As to be expected there is no absolute confrontation between Ulgas and the Kulgas. Sub groups have made separate peace pacts with the Kulgas through marriage, and usufractory land rights. [By doing so] these people have in turn caused division and animosity among the Ulga and Ugubuga groups.

The situation as I have pieced it together using Mr. Dunkerley's "The Rural Ward Structure according to Descent Groups" document is as set out in ATTACHMENT 2 Analysis of Relative Warfare Involvement of Nebilyer Valley Tribes.

Footnote on tribal history:

The incredible in-depth genealogical information documented by Mr. Dunkerley also interested me as it reflected elements of the impact of what is known as the sweet potato revolution. It is assumed that the South American sweet potato was brought to PNG and elsewhere in the 16th or 17th century, or perhaps earlier on voyages of Polynesian canoes or rafts.

Upon arrival, this new crop flourished in the fertile Highlands soil, and with its heavy yields of high nutrition food, the local indigenous population expanded exponentially. Land was soon in short supply and conflicts over its ownership erupted, and continues ...

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19th December 1974. It seemed that we had only just got the job going in the right direction when Operation Nebilyer was over. I drove to Pujanjibuk to speak with Councillor Maiya and to Aruwa to speak with Councillor Ugh. There was disappointment that the patrol was leaving with the census not yet complete. I noted in Report 1 of Hagen Patrol Report No 9 1974-5:

Census was conducted for the purpose of getting the people together. At no stage was it intended to complete the census of the whole division. The Ulga and Ugubuga people ...were pleased to be censused and apparently enjoyed lining up again to have the new births recorded...

It is felt that immediate census revision of the lower Nebilyer and other Hagen trouble spots would do much towards re-aligning the people with more traditional "kiap" administration. It would seem that the people are ready and willing to accept this situation and a closer relationship with their kiap.¹¹

At Tega we picked up Mr. Newell and drove into Mt. Hagen where we reported to the DC, DDC and ADC for discussions. I bid farewell to my police detachment and thanked them and handed over the patrol equipment before spending the afternoon shopping. Next morning I drove back to Mendi [via the Nebilyer valley] and from there I flew to Koroba, arriving at 4pm.

I had taken plenty of notes during the exercise in Mt. Hagen and as always after a patrol, I settled down to write the patrol report while everything was still fresh in my mind. I was very pleased that the tried and tested kiap skills I had developed over the years allowed me to immediately operate effectively in a Highlands social environment with which I was completely unfamiliar.

I did not get the chance to talk with Messrs. Fanning and Dixon before I left, so I have no idea what happened on their patrols.

Situation Report 5 of my patrol report ran to two pages in its description of the various operations and what went right and could be improved in each. DDC Ron Hiatt on behalf of the District Commissioner used my Situation Report 5 as a basis for his four foolscap pages of comments on the whole operation. His first paragraph reads :-

Mr. Bragge's assessment and criticism of the combined Police/DDA operation are both constructive and useful. It is most important that the experience gained from this new approach to settling tribal disputes is not simply recorded, but used by Departments involved to improve on what appears to have been a very successful operation.

On page 3 he noted -

8(f) The final result of the operation of arrests and prosecutions in the Jiga Yamuga in which this patrol was involved was as follows:

<i>Total number of Defendants brought before the courts</i>	<i>565</i>	
<i>Total convictions</i>	<i>427</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>- A conviction rate of nearly 80%</i>		

8(g) Because of the volume of defendants to be processed, the number of police officers involved in prosecutions and the number of court venues for hearings, confusion reigned to such an extent that on at least two occasions arrested persons who had been identified in fight photos were released unintentionally.

Mr. Hiatt gives no figures for the Ulga/Ugubuga/Kulga conflict

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The writer's patrol results in terms of arrests and convictions:

Date	Arrests	Tribe	Convictions / Result
4/12/74	22	Yamuga	Sent in, processed and released
5/12 – 10/12/74	39	Jigas	(39?) Charged and sent in for processing Result not known
9/12/74	5	Jigas	5 Gambling
11/12 – 16/12/74	6	Ulgas	6 1 x 6 month & 5 x 5 month plus fines
16/12 – 19/12/74	45	Ulga & Ugubuga	45 3 months each, riotous behaviour
16/12 – 19/12/74	1	Ulga	1 3 months, carrying offensive weapon
16/12 – 19/12/74	2	Ulga	2 1 month each, census evasion
Totals	120		59 confirmed + another 39 probable

Post Script: In 1984 when attending the Wenner Grenn Foundation Sepik Heritage symposium in Switzerland, I had the opportunity of speaking with Professor Andrew Strathern, an expert on the Mt. Hagen area. He said that the operations conducted in December 1974 had settled the Hagen area down for some considerable time. I was quite gratified.

However anthropologist Alan Rumsey, in a 2009 discussion paper, noted :-

The Highlands have long been regarded as the most fight-prone part of Papua New Guinea, and the Nebilyer Valley... as one of the most fight-prone parts of the Highlands. For as far back as anyone can tell, there have been considerable differences in the scale and intensity of warfare within different parts of the valley. Until recently, the most deadly conflict had long been the one between the two largest tribes in the valley, who live on the fertile, densely populated valley floor; the Ulka, [Ulga]and their western neighbours, the Kulka [Kulga]....

For as long as living memory or oral history can attest, these two tribes have been major enemies. Over recent decades, they fought in the 1970s, in the mid-1980s, and from 1993-1995; during the latter two periods with high-powered automatic rifles instead of bows and arrows and spears, destroying much property including a community school and police station that have never been rebuilt, and killing over a hundred people.¹²

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Conclusions:

The 1974 exercise against tribal warfare in the Western Highlands occurred in self governing Papua New Guinea just nine months before the granting of Independence. It was a time of rapid change during which not only was the kiap system being dismantled, but the individuals with the skills that Mr. Dunkerley demonstrated were accepting their golden handshake compensation and retiring to spend their old age in Australia. The colonial kiaps and their skills were described as dinosaurs – dying out fast and unable to reproduce themselves. But what of the indigenous kiaps?

Chapter 42 'Localisation of the Public Service' describes the problems faced by indigenous field officers with the sudden arrival of Independence, the dismantling of the kiap system and the threat of sorcery to which expatriate kiaps were impervious. There were also new ingredients in the Highlands scene. These included the introduction of marihuana - which in pidgin is "Spak Brus" [drunkness tobacco]. The international market knows it as New Guinea Gold. An illicit trade

developed – guns for NG Gold, and soon the police with their antiquated World War 2 .303 rifles found themselves outgunned by AK 47s and other sophisticated weaponry. The introduction of mobile phones allowed the fine tuning of human activity and movement, including criminal behaviour.

One way or another, the lid was never going to be permanently shut down on Highlands' warfare.

End Notes Chapter 54

- ¹ Bragge L.W. Field Officer's Journal entry 25-11-1974. – Bragge Sepik Research volume 12
- ² Bragge L.W. Field Officer's Journal entry 26-11-1974. – Bragge Sepik Research volume 12
- ³ Sanderson C – ADC's comments on Situation report 1 Mt Hagen Patrol Report 9/1974-75
- ⁴ Bragge L.W. Field Officer's Journal entry 2-12-1974. – Bragge Sepik Research volume 12
- ⁵ Bragge L.W. Field Officer's Journal entry 1-12-1974. – Bragge Sepik Research volume 12
- ⁶ Bragge L.W. Field Officer's Journal entry 3-12-1974. – Bragge Sepik Research volume 12
- ⁷ L.Bragge Hagen Patrol Report 9/1974-5 – Situation report No 5 page 2
- ⁸ L.Bragge Hagen Patrol Report 9/1974-5 – Situation report No 4 page 2
- ⁹ L.Bragge Hagen Patrol Report 9/1974-5 – Situation report No 4 page 2
- ¹⁰ L.Bragge Hagen Patrol Report 9/1974-5 – Situation report No 2
- ¹¹ L.Bragge Hagen Patrol Report 9/1974-5 – patrol report No 1
- ¹² A.Rumsey War and Peace in the Highlands of PNG – Some recent developments in the Nebilyer Valley – Western Highlands Province. 2009



Highlands lady working in her garden – Mt. Hagen 1961

Writer's Note: I went to bed on 15th September 1975 as District Officer in Charge [DOIC¹] of Koroba District, Southern Highlands Province, an employee of the Australian Administration, and awoke next morning on the 16th September as DOIC Koroba, a contract employee of the independent sovereign state of Papua New Guinea. Six months later I was back in the West Sepik Province tasked with establishing the Nuku District which separated the Palai/Maimai and associated tribal areas from the Wapei tribal dominant Lumi District. The "Nuku" region took its name from the patrol post that was established there by PO George Oakes in 1957.

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Context: A quick review of "Nuku" – Palai/Maimai history:

Sepik 2 – The Winds of Change 1885-1941

Before World War 2 the Wapei [Lumi], Palai/Maimai [Nuku] and Dreikikir [Urat/Urim] regions south of the Torricelli Mountains had been a largely unexplored part of the Aitape sub district.

*Little contact was made with natives prior to 1937. Odd recruiters had visited the area but with no success, and then about 1937 geologists and field parties of Oil Search Ltd. thoroughly explored the area and eventually established a large base camp at Mai Mai and constructed the 'drome there.'*¹

As the petroleum exploration undertaken by Oil Search Limited, [then known as the Australasian Petroleum Co (APC)] was focussed on the Aitape sub district, District Officer Townsend allocated Patrol Officer Jim Hodgekiss to accompany the oil company field crews as they ventured deeper and deeper into the uncontrolled country south of the Torricelli Mountains. Also in 1938 Yapunda² police post was established in the northern Palai area close to the top of the range where the patrol route emerged from the Torricelli Mountains via the Lipan Pass.

Pre-war contact with the Palai/Maimai people was turbulent to say the least. In mid-1938 PO Hodgekiss and ADO Bloxham's patrol was attacked near Mukili and G.A.V Stanley was also attacked near there. Hodgekiss and Ormsby were surrounded by hundreds of natives in the Maimai area and were forced to fire over their heads in order to disburse them³. Towards the end of 1938 the P.O. J. Hyde² was attacked near Makafum...Several months later ADO Niall settled tribal fighting between Watalu and Libuat village people.⁴

On 1st July 1939, P.O. Neil Campbell Elliott and Constable Aipaum were murdered by natives at Wanali village near Yapunda. D.O. Townsend, A.D.O. H.R. Niall and POs, Mader and Warner-Shand went to Wanali to investigate. The killers were brought to trial and convicted. Evidence of extenuating circumstances resulted in the Judge sentencing the killers to gaol terms rather than death.⁵

Sepik 3 – The Sepik at War.

Just two months later, war broke out in Europe, and then on 7th December 1941 the Japanese initiated the war in the Pacific. The Japanese invasion of New Guinea bypassed the Sepik in January 1942 and landed in Wewak only in late December 1942 when the tide of war had turned against it and the Japanese 18th Army was retreating westward along the coast.

¹ The title of the "Kiap" in charge of a sub district changed through time from Assistant District Officer, to Assistant District Commissioner to District Officer in charge

² James Robert Hyde was recruited as a CPO on 18/1/35. He enlisted in the RAF in 1939. Squadron Leader Hyde DFC was shot down over the Mediterranean on 24 July 1942.

The first known wartime involvement in the Palai/Maimai area was in late May 1943 when the combined Dutch and Fryer parties sought the “Maimai track” after being positioned by Captain James Taylor to find their way up the Sanchi River from Mino in the Waskuk Hills near Ambunti. From there they proceeded through the Palai and Wapei areas to arrive in Lumi on 12th June 1943⁶. The Dutch party was wiped out by the Japanese as they approached Hollandia, and Fryer’s party was involved in a skirmish at Seinum. After narrowly evading capture by Seinum/Lumi natives who planned to hand them over to the Japanese at Aitape, the Fryer party was evacuated via the Moss Troops at Yellow River.

The Japanese passed through the Palai/Maimai and Wapei, but did not have a lasting presence there, nor did they have as much impact there as they did in the Dreikikir⁷ area immediately to the east.

Following the ANGAU supported American landing at Aitape on 22nd April 1943, ANGAU supported patrols entered the Wapei⁸ area and received reports of Japanese patrols moving westward through the Palai region. Following the unsuccessful Japanese counter attack at Driniumor River between 10th July and 25th August 1944, the Aitape Inland sub district was established by WO2 Scholes commencing on 4th September⁹. From there the Japanese were steadily pushed eastward through the Palai and into the Dreikikir area via Tong, Balif until Maprik was captured on 25th April 1945.¹⁰

Captain Ormsby’s December 1945 Aitape report set out an array of information preparatory to handing over from military to civil administration on 26th February 1946. Concerning the Palai/Maimai area he stated :-

Palai/Maimai. With the exception of the upper Palai, this area has not had much patrolling and was just brought under control³ when the war broke out. PO Elliott was killed at Wanali in 1939. It is highly desirable that this area be patrolled as soon as possible, but it is equally desirable that this first patrol should be by an experienced officer as it is known that there are many small matters which require adjusting.

Writer’s Note: Given the 1938-39 history of murder and attacks on patrols as listed above, Mr. Ormsby’s statement that the Palai/Maimai was under control before the war appears to be a serious over-statement. So, what was considered to constitute “Control?” The Department of District Services and Native Affairs Standing Instructions issued in 1962 used four categories in assessing levels of control :-’

1. Under control.
2. Under influence.
3. Under partial influence.
4. Penetrated by patrols.

Whether an area is under control is a question of fact and the degree of control may vary from time to time, according to the prevailing situation...District Officers are to assess, as a matter of fact, which of the four categories apply¹¹. Mr. Ormsby was the a/D.O of Aitape who assessed the Palai Maimai as having been brought under control.

By the writer’s assessment - The Upper Palai in 1945 should have been listed as 3. *Under partial influence*. The remainder of the area should have been listed as 4. *Penetrated by patrols*. Another assessment of “Control”, by default, was made in 1955 [concerning the August River area] by ADO [Ambunti], Mr. Brightwell, when he noted in relation to “uncontrolled tribal communities” -

³ Given the 1938-39 history listed above, Mr. Ormsby’s statement that the Palai/Maimai was brought under control before the war appears to be a serious over statement.

Uncontrolled [was] not in a sense if you cross the line you can expect an arrow...but in the sense that we have no control there...that what we say will be taken little note of, or more usually, ignored.¹²

The Administration was not about to admit in its 1962 DDS&DNA Departmental Standing Instructions that any area of PNG was *Uncontrolled*, but back in 1945, in the writer's opinion, the entire Palai/Maimai more than qualified as *Uncontrolled* by Mr. Brightwell's definition - a total of five 1938/39 patrol parties were reported to have been attacked. It is likely that recruiters and other unofficial parties experienced similar aggression that went unrecorded.

Sepik 4 – Coming to Grips With the Future ... 1946-1975 and Beyond.

The history of Palai/Maimai in the immediate post war period was a continuation of the pre-war uncontrolled situation, as can be summed up in six patrol reports :-

1. In August 1946, PO D. Young Whitforde, OIC Dreikikir's patrol was attacked by natives from Yemberemba.
2. In June 1947 PO George Morris was attacked by Makafum natives. [Sepik 4 Chapter 3]
3. ADO Boyan conducted a patrol to investigate the attack on Morris' patrol
4. In September 1951 PO J.D. Martin [OIC Dreikikir] investigated multiple killings between Eismala and Yilui south west of Maimai. [see Sepik 4 Chapter 4].
5. In 1952 ADO G.R.G. Wearne conducted a 92-day patrol, which could be described as the one that Mr. Ormsby, had suggested was necessary – back in December 1945.
6. Lumi Patrol No 1957-8 PO George Oakes' construction of Nuku airstrip and Patrol Post. This constituted the settling influence of a permanent Administration presence in the area. Mr. Oakes considered the Nuku/Palei/Maimai region to be under control at that time.¹³

To complete our understanding of the post war Palai/Maimai region, we need to take into account the history of that part of the Sepik District adjoining the southern Palai/Maimai

7. The 1946 Kaiembi massacre [Sepik 4 Chapter 1]
8. The Swagup head hunting raid of 1952 and the attack on the Doolin/Orwin patrol which came to investigate [Sepik 4 Chapter 9]

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Back to 1976 in Nuku.

My transfer from Koroba to Nuku occurred on 4th March 1976 with two Twin Otter aircraft flights directly from Koroba to Nuku. On 5th March I signed the handover/takeover certificate for Nuku and familiarised myself with office staff, station personnel and the workload. Two things stood out :-

- The Common Roll had not been amended in preparation for the 1977 election, and,
- Little had been done towards currency conversion from \$Aust to PNG Kina.

On 9th March I issued patrol instructions for three patrols to attend to these things :-

Nuku Patrol 8/1975/76 – L.W. Bragge D.O. – Seim and Makru Klaplei census divisions.
Nuku Patrol 9/1975/76 – C. Amgapi P.O. – Wanwan and Maimai/Namblo census divisions.
Nuku Patrol 10/1975-76 – A. Giloyibulibu P.O. – East and West Palai census divisions.

In the course of these patrols, I became aware of problems at Seim some miles east of Nuku so I packed my patrol gear and Nuku patrol 4/1976-77 departed to investigate. I discovered that the immediate problem was that after being encouraged by the Administration to grow rice, the villagers were unable to sell their crop. I found stockpiles of 3,575 copra bags of paddy rice located in storages in ten of the Seim villages; some rice has been stored for over a year; over half a million pounds weight of rice which the growers expected to be purchased at 4.5 toea per pound.

The Department of Primary Industry [DPI] had been instrumental in the establishment of seven grower's societies, across the Maprik, Dreikikir and Nuku regions. About 65-70% of the Seim growers were members of these societies. The seven societies were members of an umbrella organization called the Sepik Producers Cooperative Association. [SPCA]. As of Independence-day 1975 SPCA, not DPI, was responsible for purchasing, transporting and processing the crop. SPCA was then to sell the processed rice back to DPI at an agreed profit margin. Most of the final product went into government stores to be distributed for consumption in government institutions such as hospitals, boarding schools and gaols.

[Footnote. The protein and vitamin enriched processed rice was heavily criticized by its consumers. At Ambunti, I had received complaints from the hospital that the rice contained occasional pieces of black Bainyik gravel. The grains were smaller, often broken and sometimes reddish in colour. Sepik rice was 'dry' rice whereas Australian rice was 'wet' rice grown under irrigation]. Imported Australian rice, which the home grown product replaced, was said to look and taste better. What I had not considered at the time was that an additional factor may have been Sepik conservatism and the fact that anything '+*Australian*' was regarded at that time as being superior. I ate and enjoyed Sepik rice and to this day do not know if Sepik conservatism was an issue in its local rejection.]

The seven societies-SPCA plan looked good on paper but it had immediate cumulative problems as well as longer term underlying issues :-

1. The community had built roads from Seim to Nuku and from Nuku to the Sepik highway which could carry their produce to Bainyik to be processed. There was no gravel in the Nuku area, so the roads were built of red clay.
2. The 1975/6 wet season and vehicular usage rendered the Seim-Nuku road impassable and the Nuku to highway access road not much better.
3. SPCA told growers it could not purchase their rice because of the road conditions.
4. Apart from mounting ill-will towards SPCA and DPI and the potential for civil unrest, the growers who wanted to plant for the coming season, were hesitant in doing so.
5. The people's capital was tied up in the copra bags which they purchased at 80t each and the long storage period and rat infestations was destroying these capital assets.
6. At USITAMO village in particular the people's expectations were that they would sell paddy rice and with the money earned buy back processed rice. As a consequence, they neglected subsistence gardens and now had no money to buy rice - consequently they faced hungry times ahead.¹⁴
7. Related to the rice marketing problem, I believed I could detect some cult activity at Yiriwandi which could easily affect all the SEIM communities.

My patrol report and personal visit to Vanimo Provincial headquarters convinced the District Commissioner and DPI and indirectly SPCA that something needed to be done urgently. The solution was that the stored paddy rice was flown from Seim to Nuku and trucked from there to Bainyik by a fleet of four-wheel drives. The air freight of 2t per pound was paid by combined contributions by DPI and SPCA, and SPCA would provide the four-wheel drives and covered their costs. Longer term, the National Works budget needed to address the construction of all-weather roads to and beyond Nuku-Seim.

As I worked at solving the immediate rice marketing problem I was approached by Local Government Councillor Monsini/Maniengle, better known locally as Yakob of Yiriwandi village. He requested assistance to fill out his "application". When asked what he wanted to apply for, he replied that it was to do with his "submission." It became clear that he had no idea what his "submission" or "application" related to. What did become clear was that Yakob's thinking was verging upon cargo

cultism, which had no doubt been stimulated in part by the bureaucratic mis-management between DPI and SPCA concerning the Nuku Rice project.

Yakob explained that his people were contributing money and that he wanted the Nuku Local Government Council and the Government to contribute money as well. I asked if he had a Rural Improvement Plan project in mind on which, if approved, these funds might be spent? He did not reply in terms of Rural Improvement but said the Seim people wanted :-

1. the Yakrambok road re-opened to allow direct access to Dreikikir as this would allow SPCA buyers to reach Seim more easily.
2. Thatched roofs are no good. All houses should have corrugated iron roofs.
3. This is the time of the Kina and Toea [in recent months, Australian currency had been withdrawn and replaced with the PNG national currency]. Now all work must be paid. Nothing should be done for nothing.

Qn. What is the talk about “Applications” and “Submissions?”

Ans. We are seeking the special word to open the door so council and government money can come to Seim. Mr. Gall [then the provincial planner] said “*see your kiap and he will help you with your applications and submissions.*”

Qn. Why are your people collecting money?

Ans. We know the ways of yams and mamis. If you have no seed, you cannot make a harvest. If the council breaks down, we must have an alternate money supply to keep the work going, so we started our ‘wok native’ to ensure the money is not lost.

I was shown a bank passbook with K260 shown as the balance. The amount of K1,200 was mentioned as the amount collected. I also heard that Councillor Muruk of ANGRA was approached for a contribution of K600, but refused saying that he wanted nothing to do with their wok bembu [cargo cult].

Nokoron / Misema of Yiriwandi, better known as Peter, spoke in support of the “wok native” but said that several things had gone wrong :-

1. Independence was an error and everything worked a lot better when there were Australians in the field. His opinion on localization was demonstrated by pulling up imaginary long white socks and strutting around like a rooster. After this pantomime he said that all local officer kiaps he had met were incompetent.
2. At independence SPCA took over responsibility for the purchasing of cash crops from DPI. Since then there had been trouble selling produce.
3. He equated Independence, localization and SPCA as an error like turning off the right way onto a ‘wrong’ road.

Yakob and ex-councillor Awes spoke of courses they attended and in particular one conducted by Karl Kitchens when he was stationed at Nuku. Awes was so interested that he went to Kitchen’s house that night and asked to be told more. He repeated Kitchen’s words as he recalled them :-

When Independence comes PNG will stand on its own feet economically. We [Australian staff] will return to Australia and we will take an interest in how you fare. If you progress, we will know that our work was well done.

Awes read some magical significance into this. I recalled saying similar things at different times during political education talks, and I could not see any secret message there.

While inspecting Yiriwandi village I noticed a house with bark paintings on the front of it and a large padlock on the door. Yakob said that this was his office and readily agreed to show me. He sent for the key. Inside was a large Timbuan or Dukduk figure [a traditional dance mask costume a dancer might wear] together with a collection of traditional dance decorations, a selection of ceremonial spears and a large ceremonial post.

I said that it was good to preserve such things so future generations could see them and that his display was like a cultural centre. Yakob immediately became intensely interested in cultural centres and asked what function they performed. He particularly wanted to know about the Namblo cultural centre and what councillor Ferdinand Kaum was doing there. I gained the impression that Yakob did not want Ferdinand to have access to any secrets that Yakob did not know of.

Another internal door also had a padlock on it. Inside were more traditional objects, particularly shell money and tambu shell dance decorations. Along the back wall was a large canoe-like object [nine feet approx.]. It had a lid held down and secured by yet another padlock. The “canoe” was carved and one of the designs depicted a bird of paradise identifiable with that on the PNG National flag. Arranged along a bench in front of the ‘canoe’ were the crowns of five Luluai hats. The Australian appointed Luluais were village officials responsible for village affairs before the introduction of Local Government Councils with village-elected Local Councillors. In explanation Yakob said the people did not want to forget the ‘good times’.

He opened the lid and showed me five money box like slits in it. Inside the ‘canoe’ each of five villages had a compartment, each with the village name on it. A small amount of money was in each compartment. Yakob explained that this was his ‘wok native’ centre. The people had become critical of Nuku Local Government Council and said they would not pay Council tax. They were not seeing the progress they expected from it. I did not see that as a major problem and was confident that when the rice money entered the economy they could be encouraged to pay tax,

A local store owner mentioned an odd occurrence at his store. A long held stock of small electric torches suddenly commenced selling at an extraordinary rate, even after the store ran out of the batteries for them. I did not learn of an explanation for this.¹⁵

In relation to the ‘wok native’ I concluded that as Seim has had a history of cult activity over the years, the last being associated with the Mt Turu cult/Peli Association of the early 1970s, that the current manifestations were probably the early stages of a developing cargo cult. The problem of SPCA failing to buy their rice presented the Seim community with an acute economic problem and their attempts to solve it saw them revert to reasoning with cult overtones. The leaders were currently feeling their way and were very ready to discuss issues and negotiate.

My recommendations for handling it were to maintain a low key approach, maintain close communication and information gathering and display empathy with no harassment and no prosecutions until a law of the land was broken. I recommended that Nuku LGC withdraw their K1 penalty for late payment of tax, that SPCA immediately complete the rice purchase - which they did = and that the Business Development branch send a representative to Nuku to help educate the people concerning business, budgets, making and managing wise investments etc.

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With the Nuku District established and functioning well, it was decided that my senior status could be better utilized as DOIC at Aitape. I did not realize that my Australian citizenship, my presence at Nuku and my recent success with clearing the rice problem had made me a factor in the Sepik conservatism that griped Nuku. I was packing for the transfer to Aitape when I received a letter from the District Commissioner K.O. Vanuawaru Ref 349/C7-2-2 5th November 1976, which said in part :-

...I have decided you have to work at Nuku for a while due to political pressure.

As you might have heard and seen yourself during the official opening of the Nuku District by the Minister for Provincial Affairs on the 28th of October 1976, the local MP and the Councillors indicated that they want you out there as DOIC and it seems to me in the next council meeting I would not be surprised to receive a letter of protest, demanding you stay back at Nuku.¹⁶

I stayed at Nuku for several months more. While on patrol in the Klaplei villages during the 1976 school Christmas holidays I learned of a suicide of a teenage girl. Sadly, her story reflected a growing gap between modernity and traditional customary beliefs to which she could not reconcile herself. Upon arrival home from boarding school, she was horrified to learn that through sister exchange obligations between hers and another clan, she was to marry an old man who did not appeal to her in any way. She did the only thing she knew that would ensure that the marriage did not happen. She climbed the tallest coconut palm in the village when the community was gathered there, and dived head first onto the rock hard village pavement.

A marriage dispute involving both Bride Price and Sister Exchange. I was asked to mediate a marriage dispute between Klaplei and Usitamo villages and once the negotiations were completed I recorded the issue in the Usitamo village book as follows :-

During 1973 there were two marriages between Usitamo and Klaplei No 1.

Kubai/Ewere a female of Usitamo married Wabai/Silako of Klaplei, and Glinawei/Silako, the sister of Wabai/Silako married Tambala/Masisi of Usitamo.

The customary marriage form in Klaplei was sister exchange, while the marriage custom in Usitamo required the payment of bride price. Wabai refused to pay for Kubai as all the requirements of Klaplei custom had been met...he took no bride price payment for the marriage of his sister to Tambala, even though payment was offered.

At Usitamo a dispute arose over the non-receipt of bride price for Kubai by her true brother Maksinumbo/Ewere. In discussion it was agreed that Klaplei marriage customs had been respected; Wabai had paid for his bride Kubai by providing his sister Glinawei in marriage to Tambala of Usitamo.

It was also agreed that Maksinumbo was entitled according to Usitamo custom to payment for his sister. It was agreed that as Tambala of Usitamo had been the beneficiary of a "free" wife because of compliance with Klaplei custom, while at the same time, because of Klaplei custom, Maksinumbo had lost the value of his sister. Under these circumstances it was agreed that Tambala should pay a compensatory bride price to Maksinumbo.

The amount of the bride price had apparently been set by a Nuku Local Government Council Rule, but under the circumstances I agreed that the parties could set the amount between themselves. Both parties agreed to make and to accept the payment, which was to be made by Christmas 1976

Sgd Maksinumbo His Mark, Tambala His Mark Mamendei His Mark L.W. Bragge¹⁷

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Roger Kauffmann, one of my Ambunti staff was now stationed at Maprik. During my time at Nuku, he was called to investigate murders at Bainyip. He put the facts together as follows :-

A native of Wosera was living near the Assemblies of God mission at Hayfield with his wife's family. He wanted to take his wife and two children to his own village in Wosera to live

A native of Wosera was living near the Assemblies of God mission at Hayfield with his wife's family. He wanted to take his wife and two children to his own village in Wosera to live there on his own clan lands as was the customary patrilocal practice of his people, but his wife's parents would not allow this.

He found his life under these circumstances to be unsatisfactory, particularly as his father in law would not allow him sufficient land upon which to live and provide for his family. He pleaded that if he was to stay that he be allowed enough land so he could support his family and not have to for ever beg for food. But his in-laws were content to let him beg. He was not an out-spoken man, and he seem to accept this situation...He was an easy man to whom to say "No".

He went with his wife to Bainyik Agricultural Station and purchased a three feet-long bush knife from the trade store. His wife turned the handle on the big sand stone wheel while he honed the knife's edge to his satisfaction, after which they walked quietly homeward.

He called his family together and with a sudden slash of this huge knife he beheaded his wife and immediately stepped in and cut his two children down as they stood. A woman rushed forward demanding "Why are you killing my sister?". She raised her hand as he slashed at her throat and the blade severed the arm bone and all, deflecting the knife from her throat. In those seconds another woman received a grievous wound. The man left these bleeding women to their moaning – he had no interest in killing them. He went to his father-in law's house, which was of typical low Maprik structure without windows. We went in and called "Papa" into the darkness and located his father in law by his reply and killed him.

Upon being arrested the quiet Wosera man handed over the bush knife and made a rational statement. He admitted to killing four people and wounding two. He explained his circumstances and said his situation left him with no alternative and that if his wife and father in-laws were still alive, he would do it again¹⁸.

Writer's Note: The fact that this man could so unexpectedly kill in cold-blood and with such precision astounded the investigating officer and everyone else involved. In terms of the Defence case in this murder trial it was essential that the Judge's decision was reached with all elements of "surprise" removed from his judgement. To achieve this, a thoroughly researched antecedent report would be required to explore the land tenure customs involved and the associated psychological pressures that left the defendant "with no alternatives". The writer has no knowledge if such an antecedent report was prepared or of the outcome of this case.

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My short posting to Nuku, in retrospect, came with some regrets. As always, it seemed like stepping aboard a freight train that did not slow down. I was immediately involved in upgrading Nuku to District level, in investigating and resolving the paddy rice crisis, completing the currency conversion from \$Aust. to PNG Kina, updating the Common Roll for the 1977 elections and conducting four patrols to the Seim, Klaplei and Wanwan divisions.

My regrets were that I learned of the Palei/Maimai history only after I left Nuku. I would have visited the graves of Neil Elliott, Constable Aipaum and Wally Hook had I known of them, and spent time in interviewing as many elders as possibly in order to compile an indigenous perspective on their intriguing history.

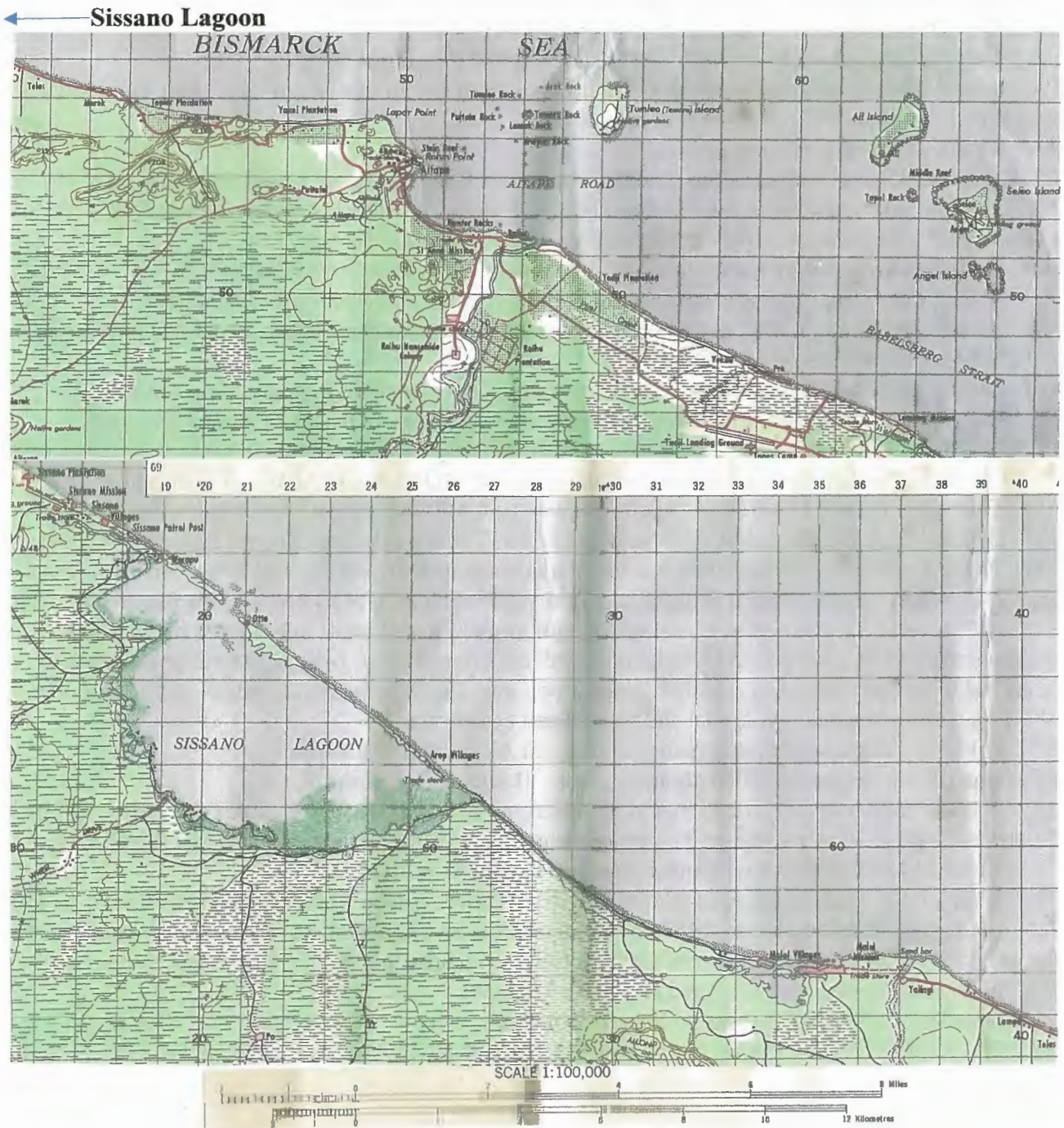
District Officer Colin Campbell went on leave from Aitape. In early 1977 I was transferred from Nuku to Aitape and took over as District Officer in charge.

End Notes Chapter 55

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- ¹ Hiall, H.R. letter to ADO Boyan dated 3rd July 1947 concerning the attack on the patrol of P.O.G Morris
 - ² DDS&NA circular 2-1-0 of 9th September 1954 – Establishment of Government stations, New Guinea
 - ³ Ormsby R.G. ADO Angoram to DO Wewak memo dated 2nd August 1947 entitled *Wogamush Incident* – Page 56
Bragge Research notes Vol 20.
 - ⁴ Hiall, H.R. letter to ADO Boyan dated 3rd July 1947 concerning the attack on the patrol of P.O.G Morris
 - ⁵ Townsend G.W.L. District Officer Pacific Publications 1968 Page 242/3
 - ⁶ Fryer's *Intelligence report: Benabena – Aitape 31st October 1942 to 2nd October 1943* . See Sepik 3 Chapter 31
 - ⁷ Ormsby R.G. Aitape monthly report December 1945
 - ⁸ Sepik 3 Chapter 46
 - ⁹ Sepik 3 Chapter 50
 - ¹⁰ Sepik 3 Chapter 58
 - ¹¹ Department of Native Affairs Standing Instructions Chapter II page 13 - 1962
 - ¹² Ambunti Patrol Report No 2/1954-55 as reported in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 22 page 106
 - ¹³ Personal communication with Mr. Oakes in 2016
 - ¹⁴ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 8–Nuku Patrol Report 4/1976-77 Situation Report 1
 - ¹⁵ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 8–Nuku Patrol Report 4/1976-77 Situation Report 2
 - ¹⁶ Personal file in Bragge Storage Unit 8
 - ¹⁷ Bragge Reference Volume 17 item No 515
 - ¹⁸ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 8 – Two page Statement between Nuku Patrol Report 4/1976-77 and Aitape Patrol Report 7/1976-77

As mentioned in the last Chapter, after PNG Independence I accepted employment as a contract officer with the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. On Independence Day 1975 I accepted a one-year contract and when that contract concluded, I was offered and accepted a two-year contract, which would extend my employment through until the end of 1978. I looked forward to spending those two years and possibly more in beautiful Aitape.

Probably because they remind me of Milne Bay stations, I thought Aitape and Vanimo were the two most attractive stations in either the East or West Sepik Provinces.



The District Officer's house at Aitape sits atop a cliff overlooking the idyllic setting of Tumleo, Ali, Seleo and Angel Islands, which were also known as the "Aitape road"¹ or Berlinhafen on older maps. In describing "Aitape" it is best to start with *Berlinhafen*, the suffix *hafen* means harbour or anchorage. When the German administration established Aitape in 1906, it was part of a maritime colony – with settlements and plantations, where ever possible, located where there were safe anchorages. The Aitape Road's reasonably safe anchorage was in the lee of the offshore islands, primarily Tumleo. However it was the lack of a harbour at Aitape which was the main reason that District Officer Townsend shifted the Sepik headquarters from Aitape to Wewak in 1934. Due largely to its history, greater "Aitape" covers some miles of the Bismarck Sea coastline.

A Brief History of the Aitape region.

Prehistory: Following the 1998 Tsunami, older males recalled that there were tsunami stories in

Sissano oral history¹. The 1998 disaster had not been the first.

May 1885 Dr Otto Finsch "discovered" and named Berlinhafen.²

July 1894 Trader Ludwig Kaernbach established a trading venture on Seleo Island³

1896. Father Limbrock established the Catholic Society of the Divine Word [SVD] on Tumleo Isl.⁴

July 1898 The Vokau SVD mission was established⁵

1903 SVD establish St Anna plantation.⁶

19th Oct. 1906. District Officer Hans Rodatz established Eitape [Aitape] remaining there until 1911⁷.

1906? Fritz Schulz settled near the Sissano village of Maindron. The last settler before Dutch NG⁸

Nov/Dec 1907 Tectonic activity - subsidence created the Sissano Lagoon⁹.

1908 D.O. Rodatz' punitive expedition against Sissano killed at least three people¹⁰

1909 SVD Father Franz Kirschbaum arrived Tumleo and opened Malol mission station.¹¹

1910 An oil seep found at Matapau, causing considerable commercial interest back in Germany¹²

1911 Sissano SVD Mission established.¹³

1914 Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force replaced German administration¹⁴.

1922 District Officer Thompson ex ANMEF first civilian District Officer of Aitape District.¹⁵

11th Sept. 1924 The Sepik District was separated from Aitape District.¹⁶

July 1933 Sepik and Aitape Districts again merged, with HQ in Aitape G.W.L.Townsend as DO.¹⁷

1934 Townsend moved HQ from Aitape to Wewak primarily because of better harbour.¹⁸

1934 Divine Word HQ moved by Bishop Loerks from Tumleo Island to Kairiru Island off Wewak.¹⁹

1935 Tectonic activity - earthquakes caused many deaths and striped top soil from Torricelli Mts.²⁰

Late 1936 Aitape trader Charlie Gough murdered while recruiting at Lihinga²¹ [Maprik area]

1/7/1939 PO Neil Campbell and Constable Aipaum murdered at Wanali in the Palei tribal region

Late December 1942 Aitape a/ADO Milligan walked Aitape, Tong, Maprik, Marui to Benabena²²

March 1943 Aitape trader and recruiter Wally Hook murdered by Yakamul natives at Mesembilem.²³

1943 Japanese forces occupy Aitape and build Tadjji aerodrome²⁴

22nd April 1944 American simultaneous landings at Aitape and Hollandia²⁵.

July-August 1944 Japanese failed counter-attack - Battle of Driniumur River.²⁶

Sept 1944 Establishment of Aitape inland sub district – post war Dreikikir, Nuku and Lumi regions²⁷

7th July 1945 W.G. Carey - Aitape Trader, and member of Rimau sabotage team and POW, was

beheaded in Singapore with other captured Rimau members²⁸

26th February 1946 Australian civil administration resumed. Aitape again replaced by Wewak as HQ

1946 Franciscan mission arrived in Aitape to replace the SVD in what would become West Sepik²⁹

June 1954 Wilfred [Bob] Parer leased Catholic Mission plantations Tadjji, Tepier and St Anna.³⁰

1962 Indonesia invaded and occupied Dutch New Guinea.³¹

16th September 1975 PNG Sovereign State established

Mid 1977 Karl [Kitchens] Stack, Aitape resident, elected as West Sepik Provincial member.³²

¹ In nautical terms, Road or Roadstead is a body of sheltered water where ships can lie reasonably safely at anchor.

17th July 1998 Tectonic activity – Tsunami struck Sissano to Malol coast killing 2,183+ people.³³

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Aitape was the largest PNG town community in which the Bragge family had lived [the Bragge family now consisting of Bev², Louisa aged 4 and Christopher aged 1, and myself]. We quickly found new friends in Brian and Elisabeth Webb at Aitape high school - Tadjji, The Franciscan missionaries, teachers and medical staff at St Ignatius high school and Hospital at Raihu, Trader Rob and Margaret Parer and family at St Anna plantation, the District office staff at Aitape, PO Dominic Tari and family, PO Peter Turner, who I first met during my District Court circuits at Komo patrol post in the Southern Highlands, the office ladies Big Lucy, Little Lucy and Rufina, former PO Karl Kitchens and his wife Francisca at Yakoi just west of Aitape, Garry Luhrs at Sissano Patrol Post and Father Urban at Sissano mission station, among many others.

Our transfer from Nuku to Aitape occurred in December 1976, and one of the first social engagements we experienced was the 1976 Christmas celebration at the Parer household at St Anna. At age 4, our daughter Louisa's best friend at Aitape was Hengaba, also aged 4, the son of our cook, Seraio. Louisa and Hengaba went to a Christmas party where Rob Parer in a Santa gown and white flowing beard handed out gifts to the assembled children.

Hengaba who was born in the Tekin valley in the remote Oksapmin highlands, knew nothing of Santa, but took him and all the wondrous new things he was seeing, in his stride. His father asked him what he thought, and Hengaba said the Christmas party was good and there was a *longlong* man³ there in funny clothes who gave everyone presents. Santa was as foreign to Hengaba as Iuanku⁴ would have been to Louisa.

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On Saturday 5th February 1977, I received a phone call from the police station that two men had been killed by a falling tree at Womsis. I called the Franciscan mission and they confirmed that they had received the same report. There was a mission plane flying to Suain at 3pm, and Suain was the nearest airstrip to Womsis, so I booked a seat. Next, I spoke to Brother Garry, the mission's Leprosy and TB control man. He knew the Aitape bush as well as anyone and he advised that Womsis was eight hours walk from Suain - through rough hill country. I was not long back at work after sick leave with a bout of dengue fever and I was not sure I was up to such a walk. I was about to find out. Being the Coroner, it was my job to investigate and satisfy myself concerning the circumstances of these reported deaths.

Suain airstrip is on the coast half way between Aitape and Wewak. It is a small grass strip in a coconut plantation, adjacent to a neat cement brick mission station. I settled into the Suain rest house after sending out word for carriers to take my gear and guide me to Womsis next morning.

After dark, I saw lights bobbing through the plantation towards the rest house. I set my Tilly lamp on the veranda and soon a large group of men carrying a stretcher were visible in the arc of lamp light. They were from Womsis. They asked if I wanted to see the victim's injuries. I was about to eat dinner and viewing a dead body did not immediately appeal.

"*He's not dead!*" they said. The man of the stretcher was the one who suffered the worst injuries from the falling tree, but he was still alive! I examined him and saw the white of his skull

² Bev's PNG experience included two years at Bolubolu patrol post – Goodenough Isl. Milne Bay, four years at Ambunti, two years divided between Koroba and Nuku

³ Longlong man – Pidgin English for mad man

⁴ The Oksapmin name for the "Min" creation deity and ancestress Afek.

showing through a severe head wound. His collar bone also seemed broken. The falling tree had hit his head and shoulder and had thrown him over a steep drop, where he fell heavily against another tree trunk. He had not moved or spoken since the accident at 11am the day before - 30 hours earlier. I said I was pleased the accident had not been fatal, as was first reported. Without saying so, I was relieved that I did not now need to walk eight hours to Womsis. The other injured man was coming along behind, but he was not so badly hurt. I sent them to the mission sister for examination and first aid. I also sent a note to the priest asking for a seat on the medical emergency flight that would clearly be required. The pain the patient with broken bones must have suffered being carried for such a distance through rough country is difficult to imagine.

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The Kiap duty roster in a place as big and busy as Aitape makes it very difficult to free oneself to get out on patrol. However to get a proper feel for my new posting, I needed to get out among the village people; I had been at Aitape three months and patrolling was now my top priority.

On 22nd February 1977, I was scheduled to chair a meeting of the Aitape District Coordinating Committee. As this meeting could have gone on all day, I delegated the Minute taking, and amazingly we were finished by 10.30am. There was correspondence to respond to and the Provincial Commissioner was coming the following week to attend a meeting of the Siau Local Government Council, but I delegated that to Peter Turner, thereby shedding yet another tie that sought to bind me to Aitape station. There was seemingly no end of such ties, e.g. there was international intrigue with Indonesian border matters concerning Sissano villagers and families members who were permanent residents in Jaya Pura⁵. There was a thick file on these people and their activities which could have given Ian Flemming his next James Bond thriller, but to me it all seemed a bit remote – I needed to visit Sissano and meet these people before it would solidify into reality.

My patrol plan was to team up with the Patrol Officer in charge at Sissano, Garry Luhrs, who we first met in Chapter 27 *Wicked Angoram*. Garry had resigned from the Administration and was now re-employed. I found him to be an unusual person who referred to himself as the *Arc-Angel Luhrs* and to his personal staff as his *Savages*. The plan was that I would conduct a census patrol of the Sissano inland region, while Garry censused Sissano's coastal villages.

To get to Sissano we went by vehicle from Aitape, westward along the coast road to where the Yalingi River flowed into the sea. From there it was a short walk to the Malol villages, the home of Brere Awol, local Member of the House of Assembly.

Linking Malol with the eastern end of the Sissano Lagoon was a four-mile freshwater channel that was fed by a number of small creeks and swamps which were blocked from direct entry into the sea by sand dunes of the Bismarck Sea coast. This waterway is visible on the map at the start of this chapter. The direction of the current flows from a central point along the waterway east into Malol and west into the Sissano lagoon. I was told that German engineers had designed this channel in order that access to Sissano was still possible when the ocean conditions were unfavourable.

Across the lagoon, located on the sand spit between the Sissano Lagoon and the ocean, and on the boundary between the traditionally enemy villages of Warapu and Sissano, was Sissano Patrol Post – see *post-tsunami photo below*. The post consisted of a residence for the Patrol Officer and a small office set beneath swaying coconut palms; a very pleasant setting. Aggie, a lady from Yankok, [between Nuku and Lumi], to whom Garry referred as “*the mother of my children*” was there to meet

⁵ Jaya Pura, was the name by which Hollandia, the former capital of Dutch New Guinea, was then known. At different times between the Indonesian takeover of the Dutch colony in 1962 and 1977 it had also been called Kota Baru, and Sukarnapura.



us. I did not meet the children, a girl and her brother, until next morning - they had long since gone to bed. Aggie had prepared a delicious meal of prawns fresh from the Sissano Lagoon. After the meal, I went straight to bed - it had been a long day.

***Left** – Twenty one years after the events described here, following the 1998 tsunami, all that remained of the Sissano Government Station office building were the foundations and part of a concrete water tank*

23rd February 1977.

I went by dinghy back across the Sissano Lagoon to Arop and from there, with the help of seven carriers, waded my way through flooded swamp and flood plains country to Po, which is a pleasant little place in the middle of no-where. Radio Wewak was broadcasting my patrol schedule, but apparently, no one at Po was tuned into Radio Wewak. The people were reported to be off hunting pigs, but finally they came in. After I had revised the census, I conducted political education concerning the forthcoming General Election. With that job done it was time to hear complaints and worries, of which there were usually plenty.

One man complained that food was being stolen from his land and he set about identifying the culprit by placing bamboo spikes in his garden. The next person he saw limping proved to be the thief. The gardener charged him, and I, in my role of Local Court Magistrate fined the thief a few kinas. The now convicted thief in turn charged the gardener with setting man traps, which was a more serious offence. I convicted and fined him K25 or two month's gaol if he was unable to pay.

24th February 1977

It took my small patrol 2.5 hours to walk from Po to Nengian. There had been heavy rain overnight and our progress was slow. Whereas Po village spoke the Warapu language, Nengian spoke the Olo language which is one of a dozen languages classified as belonging to the Wapei/Palai language stock. Over the years there had been a steady flow of migrations of Wapei speakers from Lumi towards the Aitape coast. To the east of Nengian was the Pori resettlement area, which was established to cater for these migrant Wapei people.

The administration was establishing a school for the Pori settlers, on the condition that if the settlers built the school, the Administration would provide a teacher. Being newly arrived the Wapei/Lumi people had no local sago stands, which take decades to grow. To help out, the Nengian people allowed the settlers to cut Nengian sago fronds for roof thatch on the school. A dispute arose the week before my patrol arrived. The Nengian people discovered the sago thatch was not all going to the school – some was being diverted for use on settlement houses. The Nengians said “*No more free sago*”. I arranged supervision to ensure that all the thatch cut went to the school, which was a worthwhile initiative that should not be defeated by an inevitable few people doing the wrong thing.

25th February 1977

An hour and ten minutes' walk that day took us southwards through swamps and flood plains to the foothills of the Torricelli Mountains, which we then followed to the west to reach “new”⁶ Goiniri.

⁶ “old” Goiniri, the abandoned ancestral village was located far back in the hills. No one lived there, but people still visited to harvest the fruit trees growing there.

Goiniri speaks One [pronounced “Ouney”] language, one of three languages that made up the West Wapei language stock³⁴.

Back at Sissano, Garry had shown me a small medicine bottle containing a few flakes of gold and platinum. He said it came from Goiniri. As soon as I asked about gold at Goiniri, two of the men sitting with me produced their own bottles, each with a few flakes of water worn gold. This sort of gold requires a long sluice box because despite its specific gravity, running water makes it “float”.

I asked where they got it and they said that they just pick it up off the surface of the ground after rain. Gold rushes are usually a thing of the past but not always. I spent 1964-65 in the Amanab sub district before alluvial gold and platinum were found there. I asked who had worked this gold before the war and was told that no one did. This put me in mind of a conversation at Christmas with a road builder called Dau. Paul was seriously drunk and was talking about gold he had found in a bank of alluvial gravel on the route of the Lumi-Aitape road he was building not too far from Goiniri. I took little notice, but later, while visiting Lumi, I drove out on the road works and found Paul.

“So where’s that alluvial bank you got the gold out of Paul?” I asked. “Who told you about that?” Paul seemed astounded that I somehow knew his ‘secret’. “You did Paul” I said, and when I mentioned the Christmas party he became so uncommunicative that I knew there really must be gold in a gravel bank somewhere back along the road. As I drove back to Lumi I watched the road sides and had no difficulty identifying the section he meant. At that point the road cutting had gone through compacted gravel, with rust stains at the base of it. I did not have a dish with me, so for all I know that may have represented another gold rush still waiting to happen.

Back at Goiniri, talk of gold had the people’s full attention. I agreed that if they really wanted to engage in alluvial mining, I could arrange for the Administration to provide assistance with timber for sluice boxes, tools at cost price and a visit from a Department of Mines expert to show them how to go about it, and possibly obtain a water pump for sluicing from the Village Economic Development Fund. While the talk that day indicated extreme interest in gold, no one from Goiniri took me up on my offers of Administration assistance. I think what they really wanted was a Bill Macgregor, Jack Thurston or Charlie Gough to wash a dish or two in their creek, get excited, set up camp and employ them all as indentured labourers as had happened at Yamil before the war. Although I had mined alluvial gold at Mt Garamambu, and knew the feel of gold fever, I was not about to become a latter-day Macgregor, Thurston or Gough at Goiniri.

I was at last getting the relationships I sought with the Aitape sub district people. That day was one of minor discoveries, which placed me at my ease and deep within my comfort zone. While inspecting Goiniri village, I picked up a World-War 2 Japanese cartridge. The village Councillor said that a lot of Japanese soldiers had died in the Goiniri bush. A little further along I picked up two chert scrapers – evidence of Goiniri’s stone age past which ended just a century earlier.

The people were very friendly. Different people had come up to me throughout the day with gifts of eggs, onions, bananas, sweet potatoes, cucumbers and a pineapple. No one wanted payment. It seemed they were simply happy that I was there with them talking about anything and everything they wanted to discuss. As evening fell, I made myself comfortable in the Goiniri rest house. Finally, as I was returning from a wash in the stream I heard a small voice call “Kiap”. Out of the semi darkness a small boy appeared and he said “*Tomorrow, when you go to Dromei [pronounced Dromay], I will carry your kerosene*”. I agreed and admired the young man’s initiative in ensuring that he would earn some pay as a patrol carrier.

27th February 1977.

On the previous day the 26th, we had moved to Dromei, another One language village. As I revised the census, I discovered that “old bride price” obligations were paid out by the giving away of

children, which in turn requires tedious adjustments in the census register. I estimated that 70% of the children in Dromei were “adopted”. I observed that the “adopted” children associate freely with their biological parents and siblings, but “belonged” to the new parents who fed them, clothed them, paid their school fees and bride price if the child was male, and received the bride price if the child was a girl.

I spoke with Father Morris of the Drome mission and he said that the custom was bad in cases where the adoption took the child to another village such as Sumo. Such children were lost for a long time, cut off from blood ties until they made new friends. Mental health experts could no doubt write a thesis on the harm done by such a practice. The situation was all the more intriguing because marriage in this area was traditionally by sister exchange, which did not normally involve the paying of bride price. My interim conclusion was that Drome were in cultural transition, moving away from the old marriage custom of sister exchange to the new marriage custom of bride price. Sadly, I was not in the area long enough to reach any firm conclusions.

The following day was the end of the first leg of my patrol. I needed to get back to Aitape, of all things for an appointment with the mission dentist at 5.15pm. Meanwhile, I was giving some serious thought to the next leg of the patrol – into the Rhaimbrom River area.

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‘The Mythical Mumuru people’ Garry had asked me at Sissano *‘You are not going to look for the mythical Mumurus are you?’* I had no idea what he was talking about. Mumuru appears on the map as a remote village in the headwaters of the Piori River⁷, over near the Vanimo border.

According to Garry the Mumuru people were nomads who wandered throughout the half million acres of the Vanimo timber lease. He said that no one has been there at all for years. Revising the Mumuru census was going to be a challenge. Father Morris told me he had walked eight hours in search of them and he had found only an old man with a sore leg and a dog. He waited for the Mumuru people to assemble, but no one came, then, being short of food he walked the eight hours back out. On one hand, I was very rapidly losing interest in Mumuru, but on the other, the challenge of meeting them sorely tempted me. Mumuru was not the only village in that area, and I was about to learn of the others ...

While at Po I employed a young man as my patrol cook. He did a reasonable job and seemed happy in his new job but, upon hearing that the patrol would take him into the Rhaimbrom River area, and knowing I had not brought any police with he, he resigned. His reason? *‘There are wild men over there’*. If he was alone in the police barracks at night, these wild men would certainly come and kill him by sorcery. The Rhaimbrom was a very bad place for sorcery, he assured me. While I was still pondering this, Father Morris mentioned there were also rumours of a cargo cult in the Rhaimbrom River area.

He was not at all clear about the form of this cult, beyond the fact that he had heard money was being kept in houses and obscure magical ceremonies were performed which involved the use of sacred flutes. He had also mentioned some weeks ago that it would be beneficial if there was an airstrip in the Rhaimbrom River area, so the Infant Maternal Welfare sisters could be flown in and out to perform their clinics. This suggestion had apparently caused each village to commence building its own airstrip, whereas only one airstrip was required.

As a result of all this, I informed my new cook that he need not resign after all, I would take police on the Rhaimbrom leg of the patrol when I returned from the dentist in Aitape. I did not find it

⁷ The Piori River is a Rhaimbrom River tributary

necessary to explain to him that cargo cults can be unpredictable and can involve dangers of their own. I did not want to give him another reason to resign.

I was very satisfied with this first leg on my inland Sissano patrol. I found the people to be very pleasant and interesting. There were the usual routine matters that were brought before every patrol for resolution, and the more I heard about the Rhaimbrom River area, the more I was looking forward to spending some time there. Sorcery, cargo cult, the mythical Mumurus – I could hardly wait.

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On the afternoon on 27th February I moved the patrol two and a half hours back to Nengian. On the morning of 28th I crossed the middle reaches of the Yalingi River and arrived at Pes Mission at noon. Father Leo radioed in and my vehicle came and picked me up in time for me to be seated in the dentists chair at 5.15pm. Waiting for me at Aitape was a long letter, dated 27th February, from Garry at Sissano. It was entitled SUSPECTED RITUAL MURDER. This murder investigation effectively put on hold everything that could be put on hold in my work load for the next year. The Warapu murders are the subject of the next chapter - I had little idea of the challenge which lay ahead ...

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One thing that could not be put on hold was Aitape's part in the 1977 National Elections. I found myself appointed as the Returning Officer for the Aitape/Lumi Open electorate. This proved to be no small task.

The 1977 election was Papua New Guinea's first national elections since Independence. In the five years which had elapsed since the preceding general election of 1972, the political context had changed dramatically. In 1972 Papua New Guinea was still an Australian colony. The elections of that year, however, produced a national coalition government led by Mr. Michael Somare, which successfully steered the country first to Self-government in December 1973, and then to Independence in September 1975.

The coalition government, on assuming office, had immediately commenced negotiations with Australia for a rapid transfer of powers, and had addressed a wide range of economic and social policy issues. In 1972 the then House of Assembly had established an all-party Constitutional Planning Committee to devise a national constitution. Within three years the transfer of power had been completed and a liberal democratic constitution based on a parliamentary system of government had been adopted.

On 16th September 1975, the Governor-General, Sir John Guise, declared Papua New Guinea an Independent sovereign state. The politics of decolonization of that period were characterised by a considerable degree of tension. Initially a substantial section of the community had opposed a rapid transition to independence. The proposals of the constitutional planners had created rifts within the political leadership.

The two separatist movements in Bougainville and Papua had seriously threatened the fragile unity of the new state on the eve of independence by unilaterally declaring their own independence from the rest of the country. These tensions, along with Highlands warfare [see Sepik 4 Chapter 54] however, were to a large extent accommodated, and the Somare-led coalition government continued in office until the June-July elections of 1977³⁵.

As always, electoral duties required a second ballot paper for each voter; one ballot paper for each of the West Sepik Regional seats as well as the Aitape Lumi Open seat. Within the constraints of available staff, I planned for five election patrols to be in the field to conduct the elections throughout the Aitape and Lumi sub districts within the electoral time frame of 18th June to 9th July 1977. Nuku,

which had been part of the Lumi sub district until 1976, now had an open electorate of its own - Nuku Open.

There were six Aitape Lumi Open candidates of which the leading three polled within 250 votes of each other. The winner was Stephen Sio who was probably lucky the first-past-the-post system of counting was used, as the sitting member Brere Awol of Malol may well have closed the gap had the preferential system of vote counting been used. I reported at the time :-

'The defeated sitting member took it mildly, restricting himself to a comment about the Wontok system, which was not properly understood. He then went to the club where he remained for the rest of the day. Late in the afternoon he was seen to be in high spirits. No dispute over the results is expected³⁶'. None eventuated.

Karl [Kitchens] Stack won the West Sepik Provincial seat and retained it in the 1982 PNG election.³⁷ Electoral Commissioner J.S. Mileng seemed well pleased with the Aitape/Lumi polling :-

'I wish to commend you for your performance and your report which will help the Electoral Commission with the preparation of the final report.'³⁸

The final result of the 1977 election was:

Pangu Party won	40 of the 109 seats contested.
People's Progress Party	20 of the 109 " "
United Party	24 of the 109 " "
Papua Besena	6 of the 109 " "
National Party	2 of the 109 " "
Mataungan Association	3 of the 109 " "
Bougainville Lobby	2 of the 109 " "
Independents	11 of the 109 " "
Vacant	1 of the 109 " "

Karl [Kitchens] Stack became Minister for Forests in the Somare Government. With electoral duties completed, I turned my attention, and that of OIC Sissano, back to the investigation of the Warapu murders.

End Notes Chapter 56

¹ Cvetan Sinadinovski – Computation of recurrence relationship for Australian earthquakes. Paper 23 Page 23-3

² R.M.Wiltgen Catholic Mission plantations in Mainland New Guinea; their origins and purpose. In 2nd Waigani Seminar 1968 page 3

³ R.M.Wiltgen 1968 page 3

⁴ S.Firth – New Guinea under the Germans – Web Books 1988 p 152

⁵ S.Firth – 1988 p 153

⁶ R.M.Wiltgen 1968 page 21

⁷ R.L.Welsch An American Anthropologist in Melanesia – University of Hawaii Press 1998 Vol 1 page 140

⁸ R.L.Welsch 1998 Vol 1 page 150

⁹ R.L.Welsch 1998 Vol 1 page 130

¹⁰ R.L.Welsch 1998 Vol 1 page 150

¹¹ R.L.Welsch 1998 Vol 1 page 92

¹² F.Rickwood – The Kutubu Discovery – Brown, Prior, Anderson Pty Ltd 2000. Page 46

¹³ C.Haiveta – Health care alternatives in Maindron – Sepik Heritage – Carolina Academic Press 1990 Pages 439-440

¹⁴ C.D.Rowley – The Australians in German New Guinea 1914-1921 London & Cambridge University Press 1958 Page 1

¹⁵ G.W.L.Townsend District Officer - Pacific Publications 1968 Page 55

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- ¹⁶ G.W.L.Townsend 1968 Page 117
¹⁷ G.W.L.Townsend 1968 Page 218
¹⁸ G.W.L.Townsend 1968 Page 221
¹⁹ G.W.L.Townsend 1968 Page 218
²⁰ A.J.Marshall – Men and Birds of Paradise – William Heinemann Ltd London 1938. Page 11
²¹ G.W.L.Townsend 1968 Page 230
²² L.W.Bragge Sepik 3 *The Sepik at War* Chapter 23
²³ L.W.Bragge Sepik 3 *The Sepik at War* Chapter 45
²⁴ D.Dexter – The New Guinea Offensives -Canberra Australian War Memorial Page 802
²⁵ D.Dexter – Page 802
²⁶ L.W.Bragge Sepik 3 *The Sepik at War* Chapter 49
²⁷ L.W.Bragge Sepik 3 *The Sepik at War* Chapter 50
²⁸ L.R.Silver OAM – Rimau Historic Marker – Page 6/10
²⁹ Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG Attitude. A post-war family in New Guinea: 2016 the Parers of Aitape Page 1
³⁰ Keith Jackson & Friends: 2016 Page 1
³¹ L.W.Bragge Sepik 4 *Coming to Grips with the Future* Part 2 Chapter 12
³² R.J.May & A.J.Egan ed. Political decentralisation in a New State – Crawford House Publishing 1987 Pages 270/272.
³³ Wikipedia
³⁴ D.C.Laycock Sepik Languages Checklist and Preliminary Classification ANU 1973 Pages 72-73
³⁵ D.Hegarty ed. Electoral Politics in PNG – studies on the 1977 National Elections
³⁶ L.W. Bragge – Returning Officer Aitape/Lumi Open – electoral report 11th July 1977 Page 3. UPNG 1983 Preface vi
³⁷ R.J.May & A.J.Egan ed. Political decentralisation in a New State – Crawford House Publishing 1987 Pages 270/272
³⁸ J.S. Mileng - Electoral Commissioner ref E 2. 5th Aug. 1977 and entitled *Re: 1977 General Election Report. Page 2*

In order to introduce this chapter, and connect the beginning to the end, we need to examine the volatile tectonics of this section of the north-western coastline of New Guinea. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this coastline has a long history of sometimes violent earth and water movements

In 1907 an earthquake and tsunami struck the Sissano coast causing land subsidence which created the Sissano Lagoon, an area of water about 10 kilometres long and between two and four kilometres wide – *see photo below, looking approx. east*. The 1907 event was the first recorded, but this was certainly not the first such disaster of its type in the cosmic memory of the Warapu/Sissano peoples. In 1907 the Warapu main village which was located where the Lagoon is today was totally destroyed¹. There is no record of the number of people killed, but the death toll must have been considerable. The suddenly created lagoon left a narrow strip of low lying beach between it and the Bismarck Sea. This sand strip is broken by the lagoon's outlet to the sea, an entrance known as the Otto – *left centre of photo below*.

The Warapu survivors settled on the sand spit immediately west of the Otto. There is no known record of the social interaction that allowed this settlement to happen. Immediately west of the new Warapu village and adjacent to it was the Sissano speaking population of Maindroin, Mainya, Nimas and Amsor. To the east of the Otto was the Sissano speaking villages of Arop 1 and Arop 2 and



further east again, the Sissano language villages that make up the Malol community. A serious land dispute developed between Warapu and the collective Sissano community; the primary problem being that the bulk of the Warapu lands were now located on the bed of the Sissano lagoon, so what was the status of the dry land remaining – how much belonged to Warapu and how much belonged to Sissano?

In 1935 there was another severe earthquake, but the large landslides and loss of life appears to have been in the Torricelli Mountains rather than on the coast. Then 21 years after the investigation to be described below, at about 7pm on 17th July 1998, a tsunami consisting of four 10 meter high waves came ashore over a period of 18 minutes and killed more than 3,000 people² in the Sissano/Warapu area - a higher proportion of these were Warapu rather than Sissano speakers.³

To put a perspective on the enormity of this disaster, the February 1977 census of the Sissano census division recorded a total population of 8,582 people including absentees. Of this total, the following villages are located on the coast and so could have been impacted by the 1998 tsunami :-

Six Malol villages	1,725 people
Two Arop villages	1,384 people
Warapu village	1,504 people
Four Sissano villages	1,337 people
Three Sarai villages	427 people

These communities are recorded from east to west, those in **bold** were located where the main force of the tsunami struck. The writer was not involved at Aitape in 1998 and does not have access

to post or pre-tsunami demographic data. The point here though is that a large percentage of the people were killed in the Sissano region, and the survivors were traumatized by a cataclysmic event largely beyond their understanding – and this had been happening probably for centuries.

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After completing the first leg of a routine census patrol of the Sissano inland villages in **February 1977**, as described in the previous chapter, I returned to Aitape where I received the following letter from the officer-in-charge of Sissano Patrol Post :-

DOIC Aitape,

Ref. 37-1-7

27/2/77

SUSPECTED RITUAL MURDER -WARAPU.

On the afternoon of Friday, 25th February, I was asked to go to Warapu village to view a body of a man who had been found in his garden at Pupa [south-east edge of the Sissano Lagoon]. It was suspected that he had been killed by "Sangumas" [sorcerers].

I proceeded to Warapu in company with Father Marco of the Catholic Mission Sissano and viewed the body of John Moronda Mataimon, male adult, aged approx. 30, married with three children. The body was naked. There were a number of wounds visible. They were:

- 1. A large gash across the left buttock. A piece of flesh approximately the size of a man's fist had been cut out and bone was visible. The skin had been cut away from the flesh that had been removed, and a flap of skin remained.*
- 2. The left leg was broken at the knee joint and the shin bone was protruding through the skin. Two longitudinal slashes were on the outside of the calf.*
- 3. There was a wound under the left arm into the rib cage. The wound was consistent with an iron spear wound. It would appear that this wound was the cause of death.*
- 4. The right upper arm was broken between the shoulder and the elbow.*
- 5. He body had been castrated. The scrotum was split and the testicles removed.*

The body was swollen and decomposition had set in. The wounds were all badly flyblown.

The deceased's family requested permission to bury the body and I gave it to them as it would have been virtually impossible to have arranged for a post mortem examination before further rapid decomposition set in. The body was in its third day after death. (?)

The known facts concerning the murder are:

- 1. The week before the killing, foot marks of a group of eight to ten people were seen near a number of Warapu villages [and] in the bush between Araporo [The road head on southern shore of the Lagoon – see Map in Chapter 56] and Pupa. It was believed by the people that sangumas were abroad. Very few people had gone to their gardens since the footprints were seen. Most of the people in Warapu have been subsisting on coconuts and fish that are available in the actual village.*
- 2. On the morning of 23rd February, the deceased went to his garden to collect some food for his family. He apparently had no apprehension about going into the area which was supposedly*

frequented by “sangumas”. He did not intend to spend any great length of time there as he did not take any betelnut etc. with him.

3. He failed to return to Warapu that same night. The following morning his brother Alois Sisinda Mataimon, was sent to find him.
4. Alois went to Pupa and found the deceased’s canoe. In it were the deceased’s bow, fishing arrow and paddle. The canoe was moored to the creek bank. Alois was afraid to go into the garden; approximately 50 yards from where the canoe was moored. He returned to Warapu. The deceased’s father together with all his sons then went to the garden where they found the body of the deceased.
5. The body was found lying face down in the garden. It was naked and the clothes were not discovered. Also missing was the deceased’s bush knife. The wounds described above were on the body. Riga Mortis had set in.
6. The names of those who found the body were: Mataimon/Urin (father), Alois Sisinda, Simon Planus, Linus Aronake, Steven Wikoi, Jacob Skuwawa, all natural brothers of the deceased.
7. The grass in the garden had been flattened and the disturbed state of the ground etc. indicated that a vigorous struggle had taken place. The area of flattened grass, roots, plants etc. was a rough circle of perhaps 20 feet in diameter. Footprints indicated that about eight to ten persons were involved in the struggle. Seemingly to verify point 1 above.
8. Only a small amount of pitpit had been cut [presumably the food the deceased had come to the garden to collect], possibly indicating that the murder took place within minutes of the deceased arriving in his garden.
9. There were no signs [dead grass, flattened grass, dead fires, missing vegetables etc.] to indicate the attackers had spent any time in the garden prior [or after] the attack.
10. Foot prints indicate that the attack came from four directions simultaneously. Dispersal of the attackers *ibid*.

Apart from the possible motive mentioned in the dead man’s father’s statement¹, no plausible motives for the killing have come to light. The *modus operandi* indicated that the killing was done in the tradition of the Upper Rhaimbrom River villages. The Sanguma’s footprints came from the direction of the Ramo bush.

There is a reluctance on the part of the villagers to give information on this matter. It should be noted that this is the seventh ritual murder ?? to take place in Warapu in the last eight years.² [both male and female victims]. It is also the first to be reported. They also had pieces of flesh cut out – possibly indicating that ritual cannibalism is also involved. I am currently investigating these past murders as well as the present one. There may be a link up.

I have instigated a course of action that I will discuss with you when you arrive here. There are a number of aspects of this case that do not gel with logical behaviour – these I will also discuss with you. I will submit a more detailed and lucid report when more facts come to light.

G.F. Luhrs OIC.

¹ No copy of Mataimon’s statement is held with the murder investigation papers in the Bragge Archive Vol 9.

Writer's Note: At this time Mataimon, the father of the deceased in his distress was quoted as saying "*The other six were OK, but this was my son.*" Almost immediately afterwards, as the Patrol Officer commenced taking down written statements, an impenetrable silence descended upon Warapu and Sissano. People who had been very vocal in their immediate anger and frustration, suddenly had very little if anything to say! This short unguarded outburst by the grief-stricken father of the murder victim was to be crucial in the following investigation.

1st March 1977. [Bragge diary continues ...]

Upon reviewing the information in this report, I realised that on the day of the murder, the 23rd February, as I waded with my patrol from Arop to Po, I must have passed very close to where the murder took place, and possibly within an hour or two of it happening. Certainly, there was no indication from my patrol carriers that they were concerned about sorcerers.

Also, if the report was correct about only a few people were leaving Warapu at that time because of fear of *sanguma* sorcerers, why had we not heard about it at the Patrol Post? That, after all, is why the post is there – to allow the officer there to stay abreast of village happenings. Or was this part of the people's reported reluctance to speak out? Now I better understood why my cook wanted to resign unless I took police on the next leg of the patrol.

The first indication of sorcery involvement.

Peter Turner had Karl and Francesca Kitchens over for dinner on 28th February. Peter was a PO serving with me at Aitape, and Karl was an ex-kiap. Francesca was an Aitape girl and she claimed the removal of flesh from the buttock, the forearm or the calf relates to local sorcery customs. She had heard that the flesh was used with herbs to make special potions. Francesca did not believe the removed testicles had anything to do with such ceremonies. She also said that such killings were usually done by close relatives of the deceased. Peter placed some weight on this. I was not so sure, but would keep it in mind as we assembled more evidence.

About two months later Francesca secretly confided in me that the reason why testicles and flesh from buttocks was removed was for the preparation of a special potion that was needed for the training of *sanguma* sorcerers. The potion when consumed by the trainees, with the casting of appropriate spells, reportedly giving the powers of flight and invisibility. The flesh taken from victims had to be carefully removed to ensure it was 'uncontaminated'. If the victim was male, the flesh was taken from under a flat of skin from the buttock as a male cannot urinate on his buttock. Flesh taken from female victims is taken from under the skin on the top of the thigh, also for the reason that she cannot urinate there. There was no evidence that thigh flesh had been removed from the female victims in 1973 or 1974.

A formal autopsy.

I made arrangements for Dr. Regis from Raihu hospital to go to Warapu to conduct a formal autopsy on the body. As Coroner, I issued Garry with an authority to re-open the grave. This was done and an autopsy report was provided as evidence for the Supreme Court in the event we made arrests and charged anyone. The actual autopsy was conducted in the first week of March 1977.

On-going investigation plans.

I flew to Sissano with my patrol gear and police. Mr. Luhrs and I met and discussed the case. The Mataimon family, who were our best lead, had made their statements and had nothing to add. Given the deceased's injuries, it seemed possible that one or more of his attackers may also have suffered an injury. We needed to visit the whole community to look for such injuries and to establish if a group of eight or so men were, or had been missing from their village around 23rd February, and if anyone had any information that might be of use. The best way to do this was to continue our

census patrols. Time was of the essence. Mr. Luhrs would also look into the other seven reported Warapu murders.

The Sissano inland patrol diary 1st March 1977 continued:

I crossed the lagoon with my patrol to the southern shore and walked for an hour through flat forested country to arrive at Ramo at 6pm. To my surprise, we found the village in mourning for a strong fit young man who had died mysteriously that afternoon. I looked around the village before settling into the rest house for the night. I talked to the Ramo councillor about the murder at Warapu and the apparent links to sanguma sorcery. The Councillor listened tolerantly before pointing out that the death in Ramo that very afternoon was also a sorcery death – young men do not just die!

I sent Constable Munde to examine the body, looking to identify any injury that could indicate the cause of death. Munde later reported back that there were no marks on the body, so without evidence of foul play I had to assume some internal medical cause of this otherwise unexplained death. The Ramo people of course were not going to believe anything but sorcery was the cause. A huge gulf existed between what the people believe and were willing swear to, and that which complied with the laws of evidence in a court of law.

My cook, who was now satisfied he was safe in the barracks with my patrol police and the five Warapu vigilantes Garry had appointed as my patrol carriers, pointed out what he saw as my personal insecurity. I was to sleep alone in the rest house - isolated remotely at the end of the village. *'Close that door, you are all alone here you know!'*, he said. It was indeed a restless night because the haus krai [mourning house] for the young man who died that day was about a hundred yards away and his relatives wailed all night long.

2nd March. During the census revision of Ramo that morning, I looked for and failed to find any new injuries on any of the village people. I also listed everyone who was absent and the reason why. Among them were 20 young men, who the Councillor explained had gone to Aitape to collect pigs for the vocational school. He agreed to take them to Sissano for Garry to speak to when they returned. Upon learning of my investigation, the people explained that they, like Warapu, had been afraid to go very far afield for the last month or so, since the rumours started about sanguma men roaming through the bush. Beyond rumours however, no one had any hard evidence to offer. At the Ramo aid post I checked the orderly's files, but found no record of any injury of interest.

At 11.45am the patrol left Ramo and headed for Sumo, another Warapu language village. To get there we had to cross the Rhaimbrom River which was wide, but we were able to wade it at thigh depth. As we arrived at Sumo at 2pm, a sudden storm struck which resulted in me putting off the census revision until next morning. I had met the Sumo Councillor in Aitape a couple of weeks ago and mentioned this patrol as coming his way. He had his people build a new rest house for my visit. I thanked him and his people and moved in.

He confirmed that his people had also been afraid to go far from the safety of the village for the last month due to sanguma rumours. He surprised me when he said that the sorcerers had come from the Imonda area. Imonda was 70 miles from there on the other side of the Bewani Mountains! I asked where this information came from and he said the people of Mafoka, the next village upstream, had told him. I asked myself if there were clues to Imonda's involvement in the local languages, which cross the Bewani mountains into the Imonda area?

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Prima facie relationships between the languages, and their relevance to the Warapu murders.

See the table on the next page. The coastal languages **Sera and Sissano** are spoken by people of the villages which belong to the Austronesian language family. Their language and culture as sailors, potters and fishermen relates back to the Polynesian migrations that passed through northern New Guinea to populate the Pacific about 3000 years ago. The **Warapu language** had links to the Vanimo area and Indonesian New Guinea. Warapu village was destroyed by the marine subsidence of the Sissano Lagoon in 1907. The establishment of "new" Warapu on the sand spit edge of the lagoon created a serious dispute with the four Sissano villages immediately to their west. The ill-feeling in this dispute was noted as a possible cause of the murders. Three other Warapu language speaking communities were located inland from the Sissano Lagoon: - Po, Ramo and Sumo. No suggestion was made that they might be involved in the murders.

Then there are two separate inland languages: **Olo and One** languages of the Wapei language stock, and Fas language of the Kwomtari language phylum. The Olo and One speaking peoples were part of a long-term movement of Wapei language peoples from the Lumi district south of the Torricelli mountains north towards the Aitape coast. The coastal people generally did not regard this migration as a problem. The Wapei people tended to do the jobs in and around Aitape that the coastal people preferred to leave to others. With regard to the Warapu murders, there was no suggestion that the Wapei might have been involved.

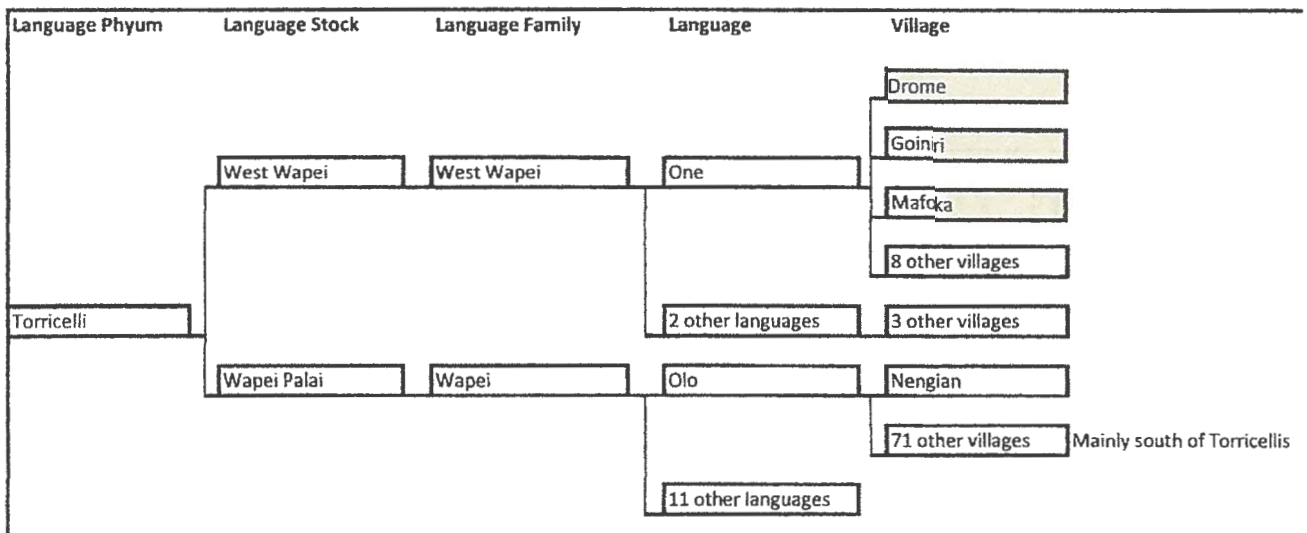
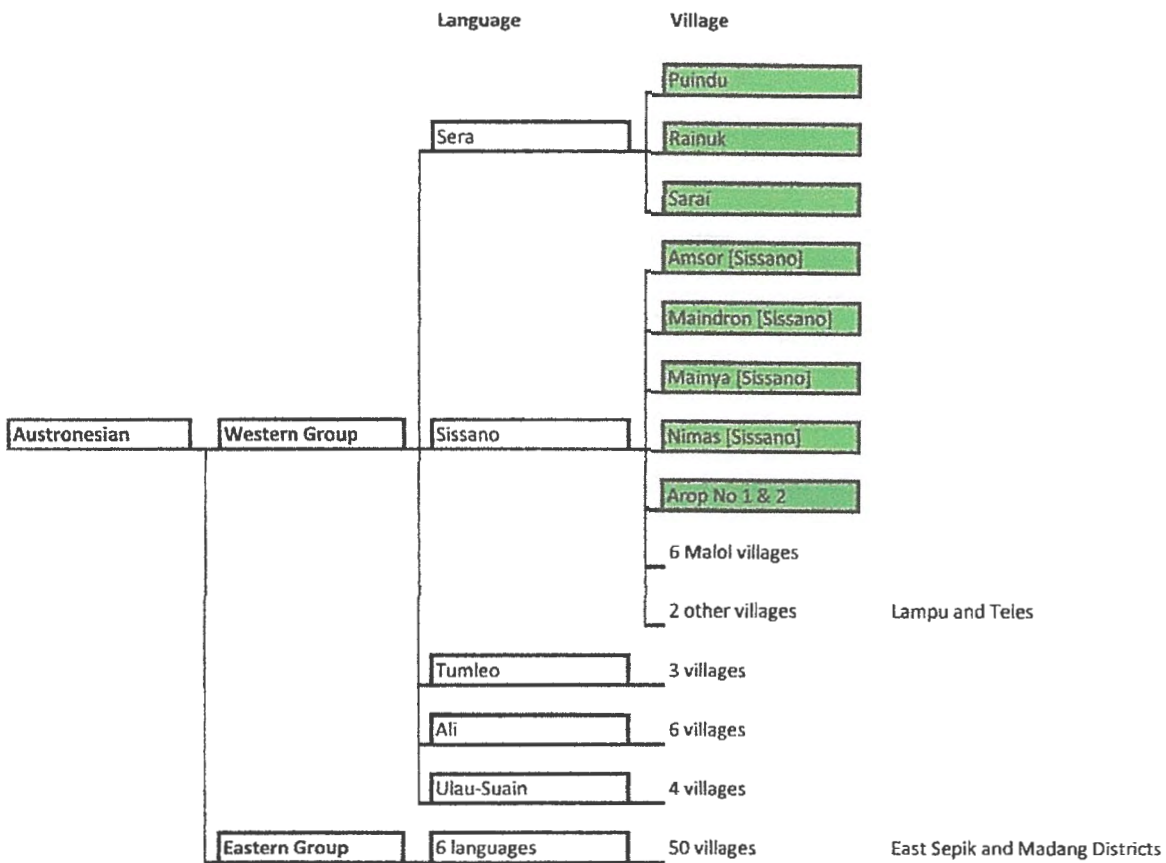
The Fas language group on the other hand, were feared sorcerers and the group most suspected by the coastal people to be the murderers, possibly at the request of a third party. There was also a sense of mystery concerning the Fas people. North of the Bewani Mountains there were only four Fas speaking village communities who lived mainly along the Piori River, the headwaters of which pointed like a signpost to the lands of the Fas language stronghold south of the Bewani Mountains. Little was known of these people who were administered from Imonda, but who lived far to the east of the patrol post.

THE LANGUAGE STRUCTURE OF THE SISSANO COASTAL AND SISSANO INLAND AREAS

Language Phylum	Language family	Language	Village
Kwomtari	Kwomtari	Kwomtari	11 villages all south of the Bewani Mountains
		Fas	15 villages south of the Bewani Mountains
		Mori No 1	Sissano inland - North of the Bewani Mountains
		Nehike	Sissano inland - North of the Bewani Mountains
		Savimui	Sissano inland - North of the Bewani Mountains
		Vumuru	Sissano inland - North of the Bewani Mountains

Language Phylum	Language Stock	Language Family	Language	Village
Sko	Sko	Vanimo	4 languages	12 villages
				six of which are in Indonesian NG
		Krisa	3 languages, plus	7 villages
		Warapu	Warapu	
			PO	
		Ramo		
		Sumo		

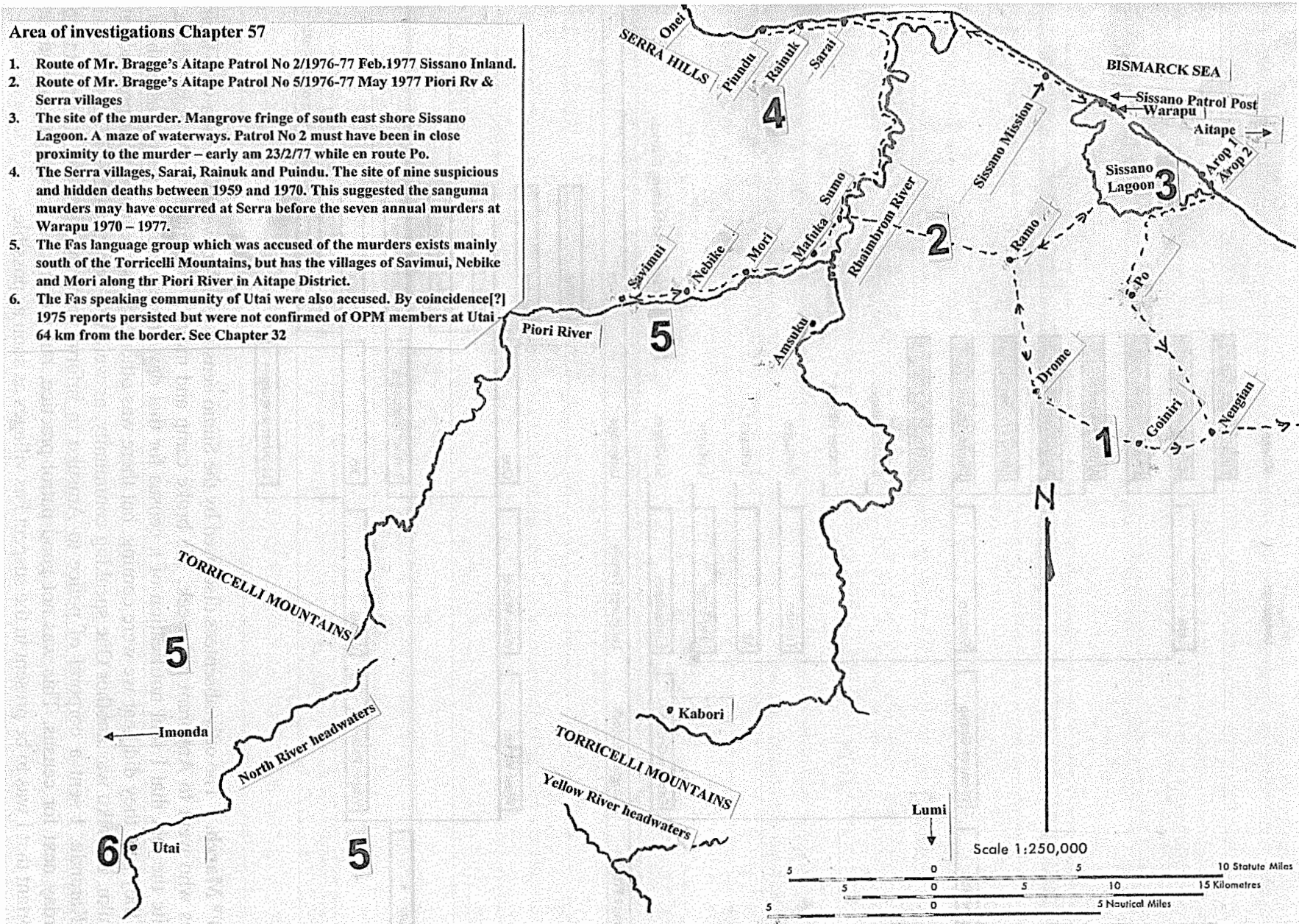
THE AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGES OF THE SEPIK DISTRICTS



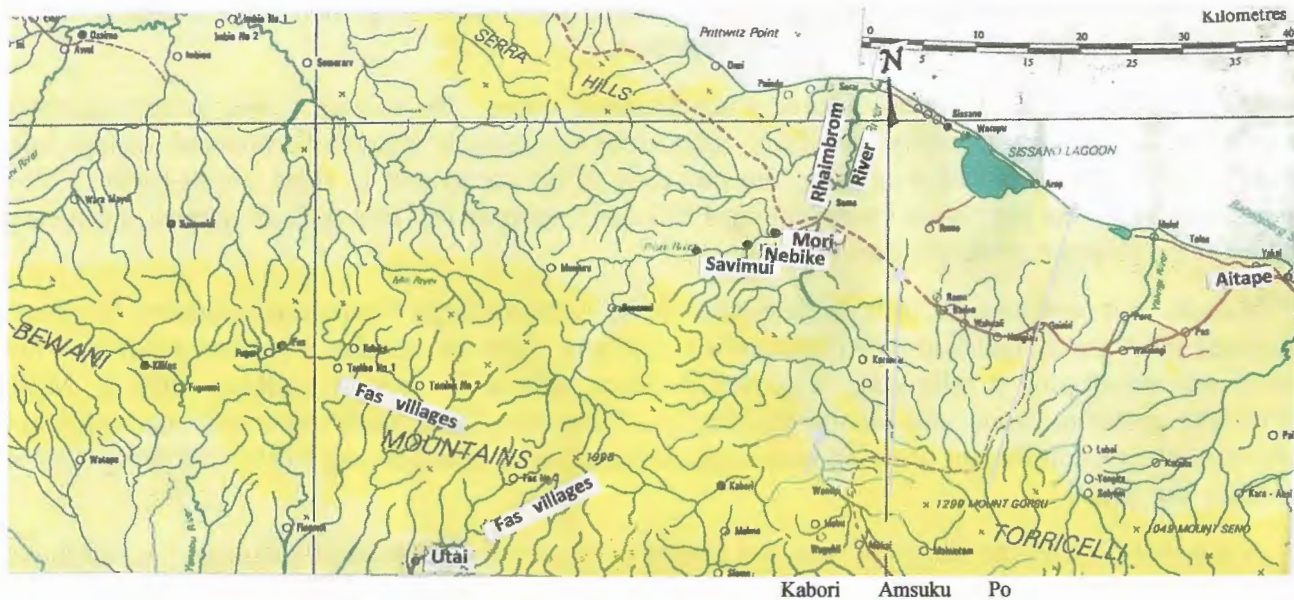
3rd March. The only absentees disclosed by the Sumo census revision were four men with their wives who went to Angoram last week. We broke camp and moved 45 minutes to Mafoka where, despite the fact that I sent notification of a census for that day, there were few people assembled. Yes, they said they did hear we were coming, but there was other talk that required their presence at Amsuku. Amsuku was another One speaking community, as were two other nearby villages – Kaiiai and Karandu. I sent a corporal of police to Amsuku to inform them to assemble at Mafoka on Saturday next for census. This was not good patrol practice, but the murder investigation made it important that I was to be present in the suspect Fas villages as soon as possible.

Area of investigations Chapter 57

1. Route of Mr. Bragge's Aitape Patrol No 2/1976-77 Feb.1977 Sissano Inland.
2. Route of Mr. Bragge's Aitape Patrol No 5/1976-77 May 1977 Piori Rv & Serra villages
3. The site of the murder. Mangrove fringe of south east shore Sissano Lagoon. A maze of waterways. Patrol No 2 must have been in close proximity to the murder – early am 23/2/77 while en route Po.
4. The Serra villages, Sarai, Rainuk and Puindu. The site of nine suspicious and hidden deaths between 1959 and 1970. This suggested the sanguma murders may have occurred at Serra before the seven annual murders at Warapu 1970 – 1977.
5. The Fas language group which was accused of the murders exists mainly south of the Torricelli Mountains, but has the villages of Savimui, Nebike and Mori along the Piori River in Aitape District.
6. The Fas speaking community of Utai were also accused. By coincidence[?] 1975 reports persisted but were not confirmed of OPM members at Utai - 64 km from the border. See Chapter 32



It was not only the attitude displayed by these people that was different – they looked different as well. The Sissano inland people seen to date looked healthy, whereas this small sample of Mafoka people were infected with *grile*³ [an unattractive skin disease – *tinea imbricata*]. We moved to the first of the Fas language villages - Mori⁴, a walk of 35 minutes.



Above – Aitape and Sissano coastline and hinterland

In discussion with the Mori people, I obtained a good idea where the Mumuru people were located. It seemed clear they were well inside the Vanimo District. I sent two men to find them and bring their men to Savimui the following day or to Mafoka on Saturday. The Mori Councillor was well aware of the rumour of sanguma men in the bush. However he said they were Kabori men, not Fas speakers. He said the sanguma men were camped on Sugai Creek near Mt Kambuburum. They reportedly conduct their Warapu [and other?] killing raids from there.

There was a reknown sorcerer at Savimui and I had an appointment to talk with him the following day. He was known as *the Glassman*. At this point I assumed the Kabori were traditional enemies of the Mori and related Fas speaking communities. Was I to believe him, or was this a diversionary tactic? I did not need to decide either way - I made a note of it as I had other things to check against whatever rumours, or hopefully evidence, came my way.

Joli's cargo cult: In Mori village, the cult's money house was pointed out to me. It was by far the most impressive building in the village. Cult leader Joli was not there, but his local representative Sepia/Pwoiasi was. Among Joli's claims were :-

1. He pays the salary of the District Officer in charge at Vanimo.
2. He works with a European in Vanimo who has the secrets of the cargo.
3. He [Joli] will replace Michael Somare as Prime Minister.
4. He will send a metal trunk full of cash to Mori – the interest on Mori's investment.

Periodically the people had made offerings of food to the dead, as it was the dead who had the secrets of the cargo. The custodian of the money house said – *We make a show of it, but it is us not the dead who eat the food.*

³ Grile – pronounced 'grill-ee', is the Pidgin word for *tinea imbricata*

I was told that the amount of K1,030 was the Mori people's contribution to the cult thus far. Mori and other local villages received six monthly lease payments for their share of the Vanimo timber lease. The local agent who received the money for distribution was none other than Joli's man Sepia. As a result, the people receive no money, apart from a small amount set aside for the payment of Council tax – the remainder goes to Joli. After I had spoken to Sepia and the Mori people about the cult, they agreed that they would confront Joli and demand their money back. I explained that at Aitape we had access to business development people who could help them invest wisely, and I would arrange for them to meet if they came to Aitape.

Writers Note: Based upon evidence I accumulated during this period, I was to subsequently recommend to the Port Moresby Law Dept. authorities that treason charges be pursued against Joli, as the evidence indicated he was using the proceeds of his cargo cult to fund across-border OPM operations. This was just when I was leaving PNG and I suspect that this did not happen. I have no copies of the relevant correspondence.

4th March. It took an hour to walk from Mori to Savimui, through flat forested country. We were informed upon our arrival that the Glassman was not here. Also on that day I became aware that the patrol was developing a following. It started at Ramo with a few people walking with us. More joined the group at Sumo and on the 4th nearly all the men from Mori came with us. I did not determine the reason for our growing entourage but assumed it could be any of the following – most probably the first :-

1. A fascination with the sanguma saga and a hope or expectation that the investigation would make a break through and expose the culprits. I was beginning to believe that almost all of the sanguma rumours were as much a mystery to 99% of the community as they were to me - except for them it was literally a matter of life and death
2. Fascination with the cargo cult and the expectation that Joli would finally be brought to account.
3. Neither of the above. The expectation of consequences resulting from the patrol probing matters which should be left well alone.

I recall that after I spoke with the Mori Councillor about the *Glassman* Mebuke at Savimui, I had the unfamiliar sensation of realising that what was "reality" to my western thinking, was far from what the Fas speakers of the Piori River thought they "knew" to be true; my reality and theirs were miles apart. I sought to capture this by recording what I noted in an official Government report, which reads as follows :-

Situation Report 4 Aitape Patrol Report 2/1976-77 in the course of the murder investigation I noted the following :-

...All deaths and illnesses plus all natural occurrences are believed by the people to be caused by sorcery...without doubt fear of sorcery is the dominating influence in the lives of the people...Whereas we differentiate between crimes of violence and mysterious deaths where the body is unmarked, the Sissano people lump them all together as caused by sanguma.

The intricate interweaving of what we see as fact as differentiated from superstition is evident from the following statement made by the Councillor from Mori, who would have been prepared to swear on the bible that this story is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help him God:

A man from Kabori called Ou and his wife settled at Mafoka in 1973. A Mafoka man committed adultery with Ou's wife and Ou demanded compensation, which was not paid. Ou then left Mafoka and returned to Kabori where he arranged for three sanguma sorcerers to go and kill the offender at Mafoka.

Kiaru an old man of Mori saw the three men from his garden as they followed the Piore River. They killed Kiaru by breaking his neck and his arms. Upstream at Savimui the Glassman Mebuke was sitting with his assistant Saifei. The Glassman sensed the trouble and despatched Saifei. Saifei saw the three killers standing over the body. (Westerners would start to have difficulty with this, as Savimui and Mori were five kilometres apart). Saifei fired an arrow which struck one of the Kabori's, wounding him. The other two ran upstream while the wounded man made his way into the bush.

Mebuke the Glassman came and attended to the body of Kiaru, repairing his wounds, and although Kiaru was dead, the wounds vanished and Kiaru got up and walked back to Mori. Mebuke told him that he was really dead but that he would 'live' for three days.

The Amsuku Aid Post Orderly was called to ease Kiaru's suffering. As he came upstream he chanced to see the wounded Kabori man limping downstream. He discharged his shotgun, further wounding the man, who continued limping downstream. When he reached Amsuku, Yagi of Amsuku saw him and killed him completely with his bush knife. The glassman made him whole again and sent him off in the direction of Kabori knowing full well that when three days were up he would die in the bush.

Kiaru duly died on the third day after his revival. Time passed and the Kaboris came back in January 1977. The two of them flew like pigeons and picked up Saifei's daughter Mise, aged 8 from where she was sleeping through the heat of the day between her father and mother in their house. There were people all around but no one saw what happened, no one that was except the Glassman Mebuke who went to the girl's body where it was lying by the ladder into the house. Mebuke brought the dead girl back to life and woke her parents, telling Saifei to chase the Kaboris. The girl finally died three days later. The damage Mebuke repaired included a dislocated hip.

Mebuke's daughter was killed the same week. She was by the river. She had been cut open and her internal organs removed. The body cavity was then stuffed with leaves and the wound repaired so as not to be visible. The body looked normal, but Mebuke knew. When the girl died leaves and rubbish came out of the child's anus. Mebuke saw that the death of the two girls as a reprisal for the death of their Kabori man at Mori.

The problem for a magistrate with a statement like this, is that although the village people believe every word to be the gospel truth, the lack of physical evidence and Western credibility would prevent the case ever coming to court. If it did, it would be immediately dismissed on appeal. Sepik 4 Attachment 7 relates to Chris Haiveta's excellent paper concerning 'Health Care in Maindron', which describes in detail the beliefs concerning the cause of disease and the use of - and beliefs in - the powers of Glassmen.

Writers Note #1

All the time I was at Savimui rest house taking these notes, the village committee member Yaru/Mu sat with me on the veranda of the rest house – overtly to be there if I needed him for anything, but covertly apparently listening to whatever was said by whom and to whom. My memory of his involvement and interaction was that he periodically asked me for small amounts of table salt, which he took away wrapped in leaves.⁵ I judged him to be a 'simple' person – my diary in fact described him as Neanderthal-like. I thought little of him or of a dozen or so other people from my "entourage". In retrospect, the fact that I was getting no useful information may have been attributed to Yaru's presence. He became a person of interest in our investigation, and I learned that as Yaru

was a simpleton, he was feared locally as it was believed that the powers of the supernatural reside in such people⁶.

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Cargo Cult in Savimui.

The money house in Savimui, as in Mori, was the best building in the village. There was a lock on the door which was opened so I could inspect the building. The door opened to reveal a colourful cloth curtain that was hanging so as to obscure the rear of the building. The curtain was swept aside to reveal the walls were decorated with an array of political education posters concerning the need for National Unity, Independence, currency conversion and more.

In the centre of the rear wall was a shrine with a cloth draped over it. In the shrine was an open empty cash box. On a nearby shelf was a metal ammunition box – also empty. With it was a large envelope that was filled with papers and some bank books.

There was a doorway to the right which opened into another room. The only thing in there was a wooden box on four legs. The open front of the box had another cloth curtain hanging over it. Inside was a one-gallon tin and a cake tin – both were sealed. I checked the weight of each – and found them to be very heavy - both were nearly filled with coins. Joli's representative at Savimui was Seki Fukuvei. He said that the Savimui people were followers and contributing to it for seven years.

In the midst of my discouragement of the cult, Seki refused to return the money to the people as he "*needed to keep the work going*". He then surprised me by asking permission to purchase a shotgun. I suggested that he ask Joli to deliver him one from the cargo that was expected, but which would never come. I knew that I needed to provide a proper response, so I added that I would not consider such an application while a cargo cult was operating there.

The 'Mythical' Mumurus.

Four days after I sent two runners to bring the Mumurus in, they returned without the Mumuru people. They had found the Mumuru village deserted except for one man. The investigation seemed to be going nowhere. What should I do about the Mumuru? If I had any evidence to indicate Mumuru involvement I would have done whatever it took to bring them in. However I had no such evidence, and I could see my time could be better spent elsewhere.

5th March. I realized that the only person of interest I had not seen of the Savimui and Nebike communities was the Glassman Mebuke. I was told he attended the death and burial of an old man called Sone on 16th February. In the long discussions about the case, the Sumo Councillor, who was part of my entourage, made the point that the Lagoon and mangrove country where John Mataimon was killed is not the sort of place that bush people [such as the Fas speakers] would go. It was where coastal people go in their canoes. I said nothing, but I was beginning agree with him.

He said there had been a similar case in 1964 – 13 years earlier - and the bush people were investigated then as now. There had been a big meeting at Sissano and it was decided that the source of the trouble had been within Sissano/Warapu on the coast, not in the bush. After all, the intense land dispute between Sissano and Warapu could possibly have provided the motive. Interesting, but where was the hard evidence?

We left Savimui, and at Mafoka I saw the people I had asked to assemble. Their responses to my questions indicated no involvement with the murder case. The patrol moved on to Sumo. Our journey from here was down the Rhaimbrom River to the Serra villages. The Sumo people had built a large raft to carry the patrol downstream. We stayed a couple of nights at Sumo as heavy rain had raised the river level four feet. I used the time to write sections of my patrol report.

Writers Note #2 The patrol's return journey and a sense of local relief?

It was only with the belated entry of Writers Note #1 above [concerning Yaru Mu] that I found it necessary to go back over my patrol diary notes and draw out the following additional information that initially seemed irrelevant to the murder investigation – and might still have been irrelevant.

My travelling companion, the Councillor of Sumo village, seemed visibly pleased that we were returning downstream towards his village. He said we would celebrate in Sumo. Celebrate what? I failed to note any attitude change among my entourage who returned with us, but assumed they were also pleased. As we walked back down along the Piori River, he spoke of the Europeans that he listed as being among his friends. Garry Luhrs, Karl Kitchens and someone else I had not met. By implication I assumed that I was now listed as his newest European friend.

That evening my new friend asked if I would like to hear the local string band. Why not? I sat at the edge of the lamp light and listened. A Sumo girl came and said “*excuse*” – I was being asked to dance. My “new” friend then pointed out to me a plumpish girl among the dances. He told me her name and added. “*She is my relative – nice girl, and she is available.*” The penny dropped – all his named European friends lived with local girls. “*Thanks all the same*” I said “*but I have a family in Aitape*”.

In retrospect, the important point in all this was not the offer of the girl. It was the unexplained gathering of the entourage and the sense of expectation among them as we went to Savimui, the ever present Yaru in my discussions at Savimui, and then the sense of relief as I brought the patrol out of Savimui. I missed it at the time, but apparently, there was something special about Savimui. Time would tell.

8th March. The river level receded and the Mori people suggested it was now safe for rafting. At 10am we started to drift, a large raft carrying the patrol equipment and a crew of eight, a smaller one the Mori people had christened “the spy ship” [to spy the way ahead] and me on my air mattress. The river was swift and we were soaked by cold driving rain. There were many snags, but the “spy ship” navigated our course and the big raft followed without mishap. We landed and unloaded the rafts at 1.20 pm then waded through waist deep flood waters for an hour to Sarai village, the first of the three Serra villages. I moved into the rest house. The Serra Councillor came and we talked and shivered in the icy wind. “*Onei village is doing it*” he said – referring to the weather. “*I sent them a letter yesterday to stop it.*”

9th March. We moved to Rainuk soon after 8am, and to Puindu. The census was revised, but no information relevant to the murders was acquired.

10th March. My patrol left the Serra villages at 7.40am and covered the twelve and a half map kilometers to Sissano, ⁴arriving at 11am. Mr. Luhrs was just completing the Warapu and Sissano census revision. There were 1,524 Warapu people and 1,412 Sissanos and no additional murder information. That evening Mr. Luhrs and I went over the details he had learned during my absence in the Sissano inland.

The autopsy report ... [in part]

The autopsy report revealed that three ribs had been broken by a blow from a heavy blunt instrument resulting in damage to the underlying liver. A sharp object had passed through the chest cavity between the 9th and 10th rib – passing through the lower lobe of the left lung and into the

⁴ While I was unaware of it at the time, I walked beneath the few remaining palms of Friz Schulz plantation, dating from around 1907, shortly before reaching the first of the Sissano villages

spleen. A section of muscle was absent from the left buttock. The deceased had been castrated and there were other injuries to his legs and body to indicate that the deceased met with an extremely violent death.

The other Warapu murders, as determined by our investigations :-

1. A named male adult of Moriri hamlet Warapu was found dead in his garden in mid-1970. His jaw and both legs and several ribs were broken. He had been castrated and flesh was missing from both buttocks. [I kept the names out of this chapter as I see no reason to invade their privacy.]
2. A named male adult of Araporo hamlet, Warapu who was found in the bush where the body had been positioned, lying on its right side with the head supported by the right hand in propped position. His neck and jaw were broken. One testicle had been cut out and flesh had been removed from both buttocks.
3. On 23rd June 1973 a named adult female and her 3 year old son of Moriri hamlet Warapu were found dead among mangrove roots at the edge of the Sissano Lagoon. She was in a sitting position in waist deep water. The body of the son was on her lap and held in place by her hands which were crossed over it. Her left shoulder was either broken or dislocated. Her jaw and a number of ribs were broken. Her left leg was broken at the knee and a sharp stick had been driven through her vagina into abdominal cavity. The child had a single knife or spear wound through the base of the throat.
4. During 1974 the body of a named female of Moriri hamlet Warapu was found positioned atop a sago washing sluice trough in the bush known as Tamoni. Her jaw, left arm and both ankles were broken and a sharpened stick had been forced through the vagina and up into abdominal cavity.
5. In January 1976, the body of a named 14 year old boy of Warapu hamlet, Warapu village was found in the Warapu bush. His jaw, both arms, both legs and a number of ribs were broken, both hips were dislocated and he had severe abrasions to his back and sides.

All the bodies were buried in the Warapu cemetery and recorded in the Catholic Mission register. It was understood that Father Eugene viewed the bodies. I made a note to locate Father Eugene and ask him about all this, as none of the killings had been reported to the authorities. I was never quite able to determine why the Mission had behaved in a manner they must have known was unlawful. For more on Father Eugene, see diary entry of 7th May 1977.

A possible involvement in the Serra Villages

A document found in the Catholic Mission by Father Urban was traced back to an Aid Post Orderly called Tamako of Serra. It lists mysterious and otherwise unreported deaths there allegedly killed by a crocodile⁷ in the area of the Serra villages. They were :-

1. A named adult male from Rainuk in 1957
2. A named adult male from Sarai in 1959
3. A named boy of 12 years from Puindu in 1962
4. A named young girl from Sarai in 1964
5. A named adult male from Rainuk in 1965
6. A named boy from Sarai in 1966
7. A named adult female from Rainuk on 25/4/1968
8. A named young girl from Sarai in 1968
9. A named adult male from Sarai 19/8/1970

Given that this sequence of dates ends roughly when the killing started in Warapu, the question arose as to whether *pukpuk* (crocodile) was used here as a euphemism for *sanguma*. In the bigger picture, could there have been a longer period of more or less annual killings, which commenced in the Serra villages and then shifted to Warapu? Inquiries resulted in no firm conclusions. An Omerta

– a code of silence - had descended, and no one was talking. In western thought, there is a total difference between sorcery and a crocodile attack. In Serra and Sissano thought, there are “Parak’s,” [Tambarans – God spirits] which the people believe have the power to direct crocodile attacks, direct storms, create earthquakes – you name it. The question of a pukpuk/sanguma euphemism remained an open question.

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An enforced break in the investigation – an opportunity to review the status quo.

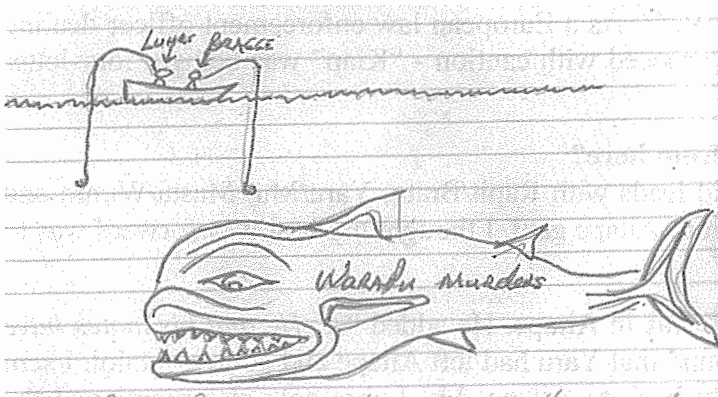
It was time for the Bragge family’s annual leave back to Australia. We needed to go then in order to return in time for me to manage the PNG National elections as Returning Officer for the Aitape- Lumi Open Electorate - the 1977 Aitape-Lumi Open election is described in the last chapter.

In late March 1977, what we thought was a single murder reported on 27th February, was beginning to look like an annual sequence of 16 murders in total [that we knew about] - nine Serra people and seven Warapus had been dispatched in very disturbing circumstances. Under confidential cover, I documented the status of the on-going investigation for the Provincial Commissioner in Vanimo. I was shocked at the apparent enormity of what we had uncovered, and I expressed to Mr. Luhrs my concern for his safety at remote Sissano. The situation was all the worse because we had no idea with what we were dealing, except that it got people killed in terrible ways. The reason for the brutality perpetrated on at least some of the victims during their killing was to remain unknown.

In 1977 the writer was in his 17th year as a field officer and the veteran of many murder investigations, but the investigation into this murder was completely different from any I had previously conducted⁵. Usually people were quick to identify the killer(s). There would be a pursuit and eventual capture. Once captured, the killer(s) invariably confessed and explained why he or they had done what they did. These explanations were usually presented to the Supreme Court as antecedent evidence in order to obtain a just, usually reduced sentence based on age-old traditions of the community that required the defendant(s) to kill.

Mr.Luhrs would continue his investigations while I was on leave. What we needed was to get someone to talk. Research revealed that there were about 50 people in the families of the seven Warapu murder victims; people who failed to report the murder that affected them. Our sympathies were with the bereaved families, but they had information we needed, and they were in breach of Section 316 of the Queensland Criminal Code for failing to report a murder[s]. Mr. Luhrs would try to get them to talk. There was also the need to arrest cargo cult leader Joli. Mr. Luhrs had enough to go on with.

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18th April 1977. The Bragge family returned from leave after a month in Australia. I was tied up with election matters so I called Mr.Luhrs down from Sissano to provide me with a murder investigation update. He started with the bad news first :-

The content of my March confidential update on the murder investigation had

⁵ Over the years I have spoken with many of my colleagues. The Warapu murders were unique to them as well.

been made into a press release by Provincial Office. It made news in PNG and Australia and of course throughout the Sepik and the Aitape sub district over Radio Wewak. To say I was displeased would have been a monumental under-statement ...

Mr. Luhrs arrested Yaru and sent word for Masta to come to Sissano. When questioned, Yaru said...*I will tell you the whole story, but I will wait for Masta to come first.* Foolishly, in my opinion, Mr. Luhrs agreed. At this point, I remembered that Yaru had attended all my local discussions at Savimui. Masta duly arrived at Sissano. He appeared to be a much more intelligent person than Yaru. It was assumed that he instructed Yaru to say nothing, and from then on, the information flow ceased. Mr. Luhrs questioned other Savimui men who were reported to be in the bush that day, but failed to gain any information of value other than accusations against one Joseph Mentson.

Joseph Mentson was a native of Warapu and he was serving as the Aid Post Orderly at Ramo. Rumours came in from several people that Mentson was taking tuition on sorcery matters from people of the Piori River area. More to the point, he was not in Ramo on the day of the murder, but reportedly had gone to the bush the same morning that John Mataimon did.

Upon questioning, Mataimon said he went to the bush in the afternoon, not the morning. He said he went with a Committee member and eight other witnesses. He denied taking sorcery lessons from the Piori River area or anywhere else. Mr. Luhrs reviewed the evidence and found that he had insufficient justification to detain Menson, Yaru or Masta, and all were released to return home. It seemed that the investigation had hit a brick wall.

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28th April.

I went to Vanimo to attend a conference of West Sepik DOICs. When I had the Provincial Commissioner alone, I told him not to make any more press statements concerning the Warapu situation. Such discussions with one's boss can be difficult, but this did not go down as badly as it might have – there had been a recent changeover of Provincial Commissioners and it had been he, but his predecessor who released the press statement.

He agreed there would be no further press releases. He said that I knew best about the Warapu situation and he would leave decisions on tactics to me. He said he wanted to properly understand the situation, and would familiarize himself with my patrol reports and confidential documentation.

I had achieved what I needed with the Provincial Commissioner. However, I realized that I was in a similar politically delicate position that I had been when I embarked upon the North Hewa murder patrol in November 1974⁸, and that I certainly could not engage in the sort of tactics I had been asked to use in Mt Hagen in December 1974⁹, As a European law enforcement officer dealing with New Guinean communities, I needed to proceed with caution - "Kiap" was being a four-letter word in those days.

Where should the murder investigation go from here?

Mr. Luhrs seemed to have uncovered solid leads with Rapi/Brata, Yaru/Mu, Masta/Wunin and Joseph Mentson. Although he released them from Aitape gaol, I thought my best way forward was to re-examine each of them.

4th May 1977 Mr. Luhrs reported that Yaru was in Aitape. He added "... *He and his mates have got the locals here terrified*". I checked and found that Yaru had left Aitape and gone to Malol. I sent police there and had him arrested and brought back to Aitape. Mr. Luhrs note also mentioned the

arrest of cult leader Joli, who he sent to Aitape goal instead of taking him to Vanimo as I had suggested. He did this because ‘...Every time I turn my back, another body appears’.

Mr. Luhrs note continued ...’*John Paka of Sumo, one of the only two witnesses [presumably to Yaru and Masta passing through their area after the Warapu murder] is alleged to have collapsed and died last Thursday [28/4], apparently, the victim of sorcery. However, the news is third hand. The other witness Rapit Brata who I asked to come in last Monday has gone down with a mysterious illness. I am getting him here today, on a bier if necessary, to get a statement from him.*’

Rapit’s pidgin statement¹⁰ continues thus: [Bragge translation]

‘My name is Rapit Brata and I am from Ramo village. I saw the two men, Masta Wunin and Yaru Mu with three other men from the bush when they came and slept with us in the men’s house at Ramo. They told us they were walking to Aitape, expecting to arrive there on Friday.

They slept with us in the men’s house on Tuesday night and at dawn on Wednesday while we were still sleeping they got up and left our village. We do not know exactly what time they left, but we thought it must have been in the middle of the night.

And on Wednesday, the day John of Warapu died, I saw the two of them again [meaning Masta and Yaru] soon after noon.

I saw them by a stream in a coconut stand close to Ramo. Yaru was standing on the ground while Masta climbed a palm to get kulaus [drinking coconuts]. That was how they were when they saw me and fled through the bush. I called the Ramo people – some men came and we pursued them.

At this time Masta and Yaru were wearing old trousers and each was carrying a small bilum. They had red croton leaves in their headbands so their faces were covered. Their skins of their bodies, arms and legs were painted black.

We chased them as far as the Sumo boundary. It was the same day as the murder at Warapu.

That is all I have to say. Rapit/Brata His X Mark

Statement made before me at Sissano 4th May 1977 Sgd G.F. Luhrs Officer in Charge’

Saturday 7th May 1977.

I took my wife Bev and the children to Malol, to catch a boat for a weekend in Sissano, and we met Father Brian the dentist on the way :-

“Off to Sissano?” he asked.

“Yes Father”

“Something going on there?”

“Just a break to catch some fish and to show the family the place Father.”

“I thought it might be something to do with... the other business.” This in a confidential whisper.

“Well...that as well Father.” I said. This brought a knowing nod from Father Brian.

The Franciscan mission has taken a strong interest in this case since it became known that Father Eugene appeared to have concealed crimes by burying murder victims without reporting them to the police. Also, one of the Sissano Sisters reportedly saw one of the victims and treated him 10 minutes before he died and also failed to report it. The mission had two lawyers – Father Peter Frazer at Klaplei and Father Urban at Sissano. Both had been in contact with me and talked around the edges of the problem¹¹.

At Sissano we caught a few fish, and on Monday morning 9th May, I drove the dinghy out through the Otto [the mouth of the Sissano Lagoon] and headed along the coast to Aitape. Duty

called - I needed to be back in Aitape at noon to close the nomination period for the forthcoming election. The names went into a hat and Rufina, one of our office ladies, drew them out one at a time to determine the order in which they would appear on the ballot paper.

That afternoon I had planned to return to Sissano and go inland to arrest the sorcerer Masta at Savimui. While I awaited the patrol police and a Medical Orderly, I decided to interview Yaru, who had recently been taken into custody at Malol. It was only then that I learned from Dominic Tari, my second in command ... *'Oh he escaped at noon on Saturday – while I was driving you out to Malol.'* *"Why didn't you tell me?"* I demanded. This brought no reply.

Purely by chance I had learned that an important murder suspect had several days start on me, and I could have walked unsuspectingly into an ambush or anything else he could have arranged for my patrol's arrival in Savimui. The incompetence of the police in allowing him to escape was matched only by the incompetence of the District Office staff in not informing me of the escape! I felt my blood run cold at the avoidable danger into which this put me.

My patrol reached Sissano late that afternoon. Mr. Luhrs shared my concern about what may have been waiting for me in the Rhaimbrom and Piori River areas. At least by then I was aware that there was a problem, so I informed my police and issued them with cartridges and firing orders. Once again, the enormity of the Warapu murders hung heavily over us. We were working on leads that may have taken us nowhere, or possibly have gone straight to the heart of the matter and sparked a reaction of an unpredictable scale.

10th May. At 10.10am the patrol of myself, nine carriers and two police was at Araporo on the south side of Sissano Lagoon. Also with us was Joseph Mentson who had agreed to return to Ramo to go over his statement with me there. At Ramo I sent Constable Dendena ahead with the patrol gear while I interviewed Mentson. Constable Bensik suddenly hurried back to where I was sitting on the rest house steps. There was a huge grin on his face. He said *'Yaru just walked into the other end of the village'*. *'Go get him!'* I instructed, and Bensik needed no second invitation. He was soon back carrying a bow and four steel tipped arrows as well as his own armament, a 12-gauge shotgun. Yaru limping along with him, with a huge boil was visible on his right thigh. That was why he made such poor time on his escape from Aitape. Constable Bensik described the arrest. Yaru had been sitting under Joseph Mentson's house. When he saw the policemen approaching, *'... He went for his bow and arrows, but thought better of it when he saw the shotgun.'*

Joseph Menson now looked very unhappy - he had just told me he had not seen Yaru for six years. It was quite a coincidence then that Yaru chose his house to sit under. I told Joseph that I would talk some more with him when I returned to Ramo. He was instructed to remain here until that time. I then commenced interviewing Yaru. He said he ran away from Aitape because the police called him a bush kanaka and he was ashamed. I did not have time to interview him in depth, so I arranged four Ramo trustees to escort him back to Sissano. He said he wanted to go to Savimui to see Masta. He was emphatic about this and when I said *NO!*, he said he was going to kill himself.

I thought to myself that at last we were getting somewhere. I was about to continue my walk to Sumo when I happened to look at Joseph Mentson. He was gazing very intently after Yaru. I realized it would be a mistake to leave him there, so I told him to accompany me to Sumo. That would prevent him running after Yaru and putting together a joint alibi.

The patrol left Ramo at 1.30pm and reached Sumo at 4pm. I spoke with my friend the Councillor about the death of our witness John Kapa. He had gone from fine health to death in five days immediately after Yaru and Masta were released from Aitape gaol. The Councillor said the death was caused by sorcery although there were no marks on John Kapa's body. He asked if I

would like to hear some more string band music. I said that I thought under the circumstances it would be inappropriate.

11th May. The patrol started walking from Sumo at 8.45am and passed Mafoka at 9.30am, arriving at Mori half an hour later. I noticed that a lot of grass had been cut along the tracks and around these two villages in the last few days. Clearly the people were trying to keep me happy – a good sign. At 10.10am we started walking again and arrived at Savimui at 11am. Grass cutting had been done there as well. Masta Wunin was in the village. The police asked him to accompany them to the rest house where I was waiting to interview him. It immediately became clear that he did not have any good words to say about Yaru. He called him a sorcerer and urged me not to believe any words he said.

I set about creating the impression that I would be in Savimui for an extended stay. I asked that four windows be cut in the rest house walls to let more light and fresh air in. I was going to be there for some time and I needed to be comfortable. I spent most of the afternoon interviewing Masta. He was unhappy to learn that he was under arrest and would be sleeping under guard here, and not in his own house. Under interrogation he said :-

1. He had not seen Joseph Mentson for five years.
2. He had received food and cartridges from Joseph Mentson
3. He has sent smoked tree kangaroo meat to Joseph Mentson
4. He ended his statement by saying the source of the trouble was the Warapu/Sissano land dispute. But under closer questioning it became clear that he had eaten with the Mentson family recently
5. Masta denies that he is a sorcerer, but claims to be a “newsman” [a clairvoyant] and “glassman” [a curative sorcerer] who can identify the work of evil sorcerers. He says Joseph Mentson sent a request in 1975 – two years earlier - that he be shown the Glassman secrets. Masta said that for \$50 he would teach him. No money came, and so no tuition was provided.
6. The Glassman Mebuke who featured in my Situation Report in this chapter concerning my last visit there, died in March soon after my patrol left.

Masta and I talked so long together that after a time relations between us became relaxed. During one such period he spoke of ingredients for the potion required to train someone to become a Glassman or a Newsman and it took me back to Macbeth’s *bubble, bubble, toil and trouble*. Masta proscribed -

*Wing feathers of the white breasted eagle and talons for strength...
The meat and feathers of an owl for sight at night and in dark places
The leaves of... but only Mebuke knew about those leaves...*

I believed that I had heard part of the sanguma potion or something similar to it. *Untainted human meat to give the power to... perhaps?*

12th May. At 2.00am I checked the guard. My quiet call to Constable Dendena went unanswered. I moved through the darkness to the police barracks and tripped over an unseen bucket of water – a shocking din fit to wake the dead. Dendena, with the rest of the village, was presumably now awake;

How is your prisoner Corporal?

He is fine sir!

How would you know – you were asleep?!

Masta was indeed fine, and he was where he should have been. The night guards were more in evidence for the rest of the patrol, as I had apparently awoken forgotten memories of what *real* police work was all about.

12th, 13th & 14th May 1977.

There were days spent interviewing and re-interviewing witnesses and of endless hand writing – the tedious stuff of which most police work consists. I talked with Masta on each of these days and cross examined people who vouched for where he was at critical times. By the third day I detected a change in the attitude of the witnesses. The blanket of silence had begun to lift – people were telling me things. They spoke about Yaru in particular.

I took down details of five people he had reportedly killed by sorcery over recent years. People would only speak if they were certain that Yaru would never return here because if he did he would certainly take revenge against his accusers. This threw the ball firmly back into my court. As a magistrate of the District Court I could hear cases that happened over the last six months only – unless there were special circumstances. Also, I did not have a copy of the Sorcery Act with me and I did not know off hand all of its provisions.

Part of what was revealed about Yaru was that on one occasion he brought out the skull of a snake, a small knife, ginger and nettles and showed them to the people, explaining how he made spells over them and blew it towards his victim. Then he said, after a few days he would make himself invisible and spiritually breaks that person's neck. He explained his victim, already weakened by his magic, would return to his village as a living person and would mysteriously die soon after.

Through these days at Savimui I came to see that Masta could not have been involved in the Warapu murder of John Mataimon. By now Masta and I knew each other very well. I told him that I did not have the evidence to take him to court, so I was releasing him. I warned him that I understood what he said about his Newsman and Glassman status, but I also suspected he was a sorcerer and that if he ever came to my attention again, I would do whatever it took to see him in gaol. We parted on good terms.

Postscript: In 1993 I found myself working as field manager for a petroleum exploration company. As fate would have it we were working in the Sissano Inland and I was dropped by helicopter in the headwaters of the Piori River. The plan was that I would make my way down stream and be picked up in the afternoon at Savimui. I walked into the village, explained what I was doing and asked for a place to rest until the helicopter arrived to collect me. I was made welcome.

Do we know you?, I was asked

Possibly – I used to be the Nambawan kiap in Aitape.

Were you the one who came and questioned Masta?

I was now told the Savimui community had been extremely relieved that I had not arrested Masta and taken him away at that time, because his wife was in labour. A boy was born and they named him after me. Except they did not know my name. So how did they name him after me?

They called him Kiap, and now they wanted to know my name so they could change his name to mine. I said that “Kiap” was a very fine name and they should continue to call him that. The boy was not in the village so I did not meet him. Masta had died some years before my visit.

The patrol arrived back in Ramo where I re-interviewed the witness Rapit/Brata. He told again the story that Mr. Luhrs had taken down on 4th May - with minor variations. I took notes for later reference. Then I said :-

'I was here six days after the murder, asking questions about anyone who saw wild men in the bush or anyone who saw unexplained tracks. Why did you not speak out then?' After some hesitation he said '...The Councillor told me not to.'

I sent Rapit to go and sit under a coconut palm and sent for the Councillor and asked him :-
'.. On the Wednesday that the Warapu man was killed, did Rapit come and tell you something?'

'Yes' he replied. 'About 2 pm that day he came and said he saw Masta and Yaru in the bush'. 'Why then did you not tell me this when I was here just days later asking about it?'

'Because we wanted to check it out first'.

'Councillor, you are now in deep trouble. You did not tell me before because there was nothing to tell. You and Rapit cooked up this lie after my patrol had been through here!'

'No!', he said. 'It is true and I can prove it. I wrote it all down at the time. I will show you'

This set me back on my heels. I engaged my mental reverse gear. Was I wrong in my conclusion that Masta was not involved? – if Masta was involved, the Councillor's note with Rapit's testimony would be a rare piece of solid evidence in this case. I instructed the Councillor to go and get the book he had written in. I was now again in mental forward gear. *'Wait, I will come with you.'* We walked through Ramo with the village people all watching.

The Councillor went up into his house. There was a delay and I followed him upstairs. He had a piece of paper in his hand. There were four words written on it *drinde emi lukim tpelo*. This was bad pidgin for *Wednesday he saw the two*. I asked for the pen he had used to write this – he ink was still wet. He said he had no pen and that he had not just written it. I searched the house and in the process noticed the Councillor's foot go into the ashes in the fire place. I picked the pen from the ashes and told the Councillor :-

'You are under arrest, this is your second charge...I expect you might get four years...' The most he was likely to get was six months, but it did not hurt to put some fear into his mind. I marched him back past his village community and put him into the custody of Constable Bunsik with instruction to take him and Rapit⁶ to Sissano.

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I immediately turned my attention to Joseph Mentson, I informed him that he was under arrest for seeking to procure sorcery training, cautioned him when he agreed to speak, listened to him for the next three hours. His statement was more of the previous story, which I did not believe. We went to Sissano and I sent him with the other prisoners to the gaol at Aitape. I stayed some days at Sissano helping Mr. Luhrs with more witness interviews before returning to Aitape.

As I arrived at the office at 8am on my first day back, I saw Joseph Mentson standing nearby and looking very unhappy. He came to me and asked what was going to happen to him [he was a Public Servant and a court appearance would not look good on his record – and gaol time could see his employment terminated]. I said I was very busy, but would try to fit some District Court time in that day and hear his case. He looked around to see if anyone could hear, and then asked :-

'If I told you something, would it make any difference?'

⁶ While my patrol diary made no mention of the arrest of Rapit, it was a given. There was no way that I would not have arrested him under the circumstances.

I said that would depend upon what the “*something*” was. He started talking about some edible greens floating in some water. I raised a hand to stop him. I had no idea what he was talking about. I took him to the Training Centre, where I sat him down and asked him to start at the beginning. What he told me, if true, was quite shattering and indicated that for the whole three months of the investigation to date, we had been based on false information. Joseph said that John Mataimon’s body was not found in the garden, as his family reported, it had been found under water in the Pupa channel some distance away. Joseph Mentson’s new statement was as follows:

‘On the morning of the murder, men paddled up to Pupa. There were also Warapu men who paddled out to go fishing at that time.’ ‘Who?’

‘Akota/Rempen and Godfried/Pusane and others they could name. They all went out with John. They fished together. Then after fishing for a while John went up to Pupa. He landed at a place called Paragon. The enemy killed him near the edge of the water there after he [John] had collected some aibika, tulip [edible greens locally known collectively as “saior”], pitpit and two dry coconuts. The men who killed him brought his body downstream. They left his canoe and brought the body on a raft made of dried fronds and brought it into the channel called Tenepis which goes up to Arop. This is the channel the Arops use when they go up to Po.

Two Malol women, whose names I do not know, were on that channel. Raphael/Bilon of Warapu’s Pupa area, is married to a Malol woman and they were visiting her. Early that Wednesday they were paddling upstream to fill buckets with fresh water. They saw the body on the raft drifting at the junction of Tenepis and Pupa channels. They saw a man was guiding the raft. He was not in a canoe, but apparently following the bank of the channel. When he saw the Malol woman he fled into the bush. The body fell from the raft into the water and the raft drifted on with the dry coconuts, saior and pitpit still aboard. The women were afraid, but they paddled over to the raft and took the saior greens. By then the body had sunk. They came to Raphael’s house in the mangroves and told Raphael what they had seen.

Raphael had seen John go up stream in the morning, but he had not come back down Akota and Godfried and their children came with the full tide. They came to cut a sago palm and float the trunk back out on the Romantiyu channel. They did not know of John’s fate and when they saw his canoe they called out but received no reply. It was when they floated the sago downstream they heard the talk. They sent talk to John’s brothers on Thursday to come and find him.

When John’s father and brothers came, Raphael asked if John had returned. When they said No, Raphael said “I think he has gone down into the water – This is his saior.” The Malol women’s story was then revealed. The family went to where John’s canoe was and where John had been killed. They looked for tracks but found nothing.

They followed Warapu custom and made an image of flowers. Takora, John’s cousin held the image and it pulled him to where John had ran. Then it followed the channel down, now presumably floating. They followed it in their canoe and it led them into the Tenepis channel where it went around and around a sago palm there before it came back and went down the Pupa Channel to the junction where the Malol women saw the body.

The image marked the place where the body was under the water by going down into the water to show them. They probed with long sticks until the stick Wikoi was holding seemed to locate the body. They dived but could not locate it.

Sisinda now spoke to his dead brother “We know you are dead, but you must float to the surface so we can see you” It was then that Salum/Navoto saw the body floating. It was further

upstream. Salum called out. They lifted him [John's body] into the canoe and took him to the beach. [meaning Warapu village].'

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I called Mr. Luhrs and instructed him to again interview Mataimon and each of his sons. I told him to have a witness present and to make each of them swear on the Bible to tell the truth, the whole truth – so help them God. They each again swore to finding the body in the garden. I returned to Sissano and gave Mr. Luhrs a copy of Joseph's Mentson's statement. He then interviewed Mataimon and his sons again, drawing their attention to the accusation that the body had actually been located in the Pupa Channel and asking them if that was true. They each then agreed that the body had been found in the water.

We pondered what could be so terrible in the background of Warapu society to make the Mataimon family falsify their testimony in order to lead the police investigation away from arresting and punishing those who were responsible for killing their brother and son? Three things seemed to be evident:

1. Someone had got to Mataimon immediately after he mentioned the other six annual murders.
2. That someone had been in Warapu the day the body was brought in, presumably a Warapu local.
3. Whatever was behind the murders created such fear that no one was talking.

Although we were in sympathy with this bereaved family, I convened a hearing of the District Court. Mataimon and his sons were each charged with spreading false reports. I sentenced each of them to six months hard labour. It was suggested to them that I would make an approach to the Department of Law for their early release if they come forward with evidence that led to the conviction of who was responsible for the Warapu murders. They each served their time without revealing anything.

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Mr. Luhrs and myself continued our investigation for the next 12 months. We accumulated a file which ran to around 360 foolscap pages. The closest we came to breaking through the code of Omerta that settled over the Sissano/Warapu region was with Joseph Mentson's statement which revealed the deceased's own father and brothers purposely set out to de-rail the investigation from the very start. Why they did that we shall never know.

The legal standpoint. Although sorcery was a criminal offence against the Native Administration Regulations (NARs) 1924 and the Sorcery Act 1971, there were and are major problems with applying the laws of evidence in sorcery cases. Convictions in sorcery cases are usually limited to those cases where 1/ ... a person is found in possession of identifiable sorcery implements, or 2/ ... there are witnesses to a threat made to use sorcery, or 3/ ...to the fact that an attempt was made to procure the services of a sorcerer.

In the light of the special circumstances of the sorcery aspects of the Warapu murder case, the writer rang the Public Prosecutor's Office for a legal opinion as to the statute of limitations, i.e. the maximum period allowed between the committing of an offence and it being brought before the court. The statute of limitations for the Local Court was three months and for the District Court six months. I was advised that as an indictable offence, the statute of limitations would go back six years. Interest was expressed in the Warapu case, as the reluctance of people nation-wide to lay charges had made sorcery a seldom prosecuted offence.¹²

From the stand point of any village person in the Sissano region, the statement made by the Councillor of Mori would be regarded as true, relevant, credible and reliable fact. From the

perspective of British justice and the laws of evidence as required to be applied in the Territory of New Guinea District Court, the statement would be inadmissible, irrelevant and unreliable. Any Magistrate who did not dismiss such evidence out of hand, might apply the test of whether the evidence would be generally accepted in a scientific community. He would quickly conclude it was not acceptable and dismiss the case.

The vast majority of sorcery cases do not come to court because the people involved fear sorcery reprisals. Of those cases that do come to court, the majority are dismissed because the requirements of the laws of evidence cannot be met. In the event that evidence was found to convict a person of a sorcery offense, the maximum sentence under the NARs was a six month jail term. As we shall see in the next chapter, the people of the Middle Sepik (like indigenous people throughout PNG) saw killing as killing without differentiating sorcery cases. Before World War 2 head hunters brought to court received the death penalty and were publicly hanged. The Sepik consensus was that convicted sorcerers should receive the same sentence.

Concerning sorcery, the introduced Western justice system fell and continues to fall far short of PNG indigenous expectations of it. As mentioned above, the documentation of the Warapu murder case runs to some 360 pages, and can be found in Bragge Sepik Research Notes Volumes 8 and 9.

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Conclusion 1 - Attachment 7: Haiveta's paper on Maindron, with the exception of the *Glassman cult*, describes what the writer accepts as the typical situation in any Sepik village in the 1970s and equally applicable today. In summary, no illness or death is regarded as a natural event; all are the result of human intervention as some form of social regulation. There are people who are believed to have curative powers that are believed to be capable of lifting the spell or cause of the illness. In their perception of the cosmos, these ancient beliefs remain as strong as they ever were. Christian intervention has in no way displaced the foundation of these traditional beliefs, but, as in the case of the *Glassmen*, they have been adapted to strengthen the traditional viewpoint.

Conclusion 2 – what we know of the deeper situation in Warapu: A spontaneous outburst by Mataimon in his distress over the murder of his son John revealed a long standing annual sequence of brutal murders in the Warapu community. The precedent of six previous murders between 1970 and 1976 may not have been identified if it had not been for his grieving father's brief revelation. Like the other murders, John Mataimon's body most probably would have been quietly buried and his murder would not have come to light.

The murder investigation demonstrated the on-going community belief in and fear of sorcery and the inability of the western justice system to resolve sorcery issues to the satisfaction of the Sepik and wider PNG indigenous satisfaction. There is something unidentified in the Warapu cosmos that instills such great fear in the village people that annual violent murders of people's loved ones were covered up and not reported to the authorities who were resident among them at Sissano patrol post.

Conclusion 3 – what we think we know of the deeper situation in Warapu: Although not proven beyond reasonable doubt, the sequence of murders in Warapu appears to be related to *Sanguma* sorcery and the annual training of *sanguma sorcerers*. *Sanguma* sorcery is reported to be the custom of the *inland* Fas language speaking peoples rather than the Austronesian language speakers of the coast. Warapu itself is classified as *inland* because of its linguistic and cultural ties, even though it is now physically located on the coast.

Conclusion 4 – a cosmic hypothesis. The only support for the following hypothesis is that it is a logical deduction. This logic suggests there is something behind the annual sequence of murders of

Warapu people that the Warapu themselves keep as their own terrible secret. Could it be they believe that :-

An extremely powerful deity lives on or under the Warapu/Sissano lands or in the Sissano Lagoon; a deity which periodically wreaks Armageddon-like havoc upon the Warapu people and lands, as was done through history and more recently in 1907, 1935 and 1998, unless it receives annual sacrifices from within the Warapu community. The Warapu community accepts this brutal loss of loved ones as part of the religious ritual required to placate the hunger of the deity, and as a necessary part of the price of their cosmic existence.

If this hypothesis is anywhere close to the truth of the matter, it seems likely that the advent of the unique *Glassman cult* as an open and powerful instrument of community *good*, may have some of its foundation as a social counter-balance to, and defense against, the hidden *sanguma cult* of social *evil*.

End Notes Chapter 57

¹ Swadling 'Sepik Pre-history', in Sepik Heritage 1991 Carolina Academic press ed Letkehaus et al p 74

² Pararas-Carayannis George Dr. 'The Earthquake and Tsumani of 17th July 1998 PNG' – Internet.

³ Personal communication with Raymond Moriri, a Chevron employee on the writers then staff. Raymond lost 20 family members in the tsunami

⁴ Mori village was mentioned in Sepik 3 Chapter 31 – the place from where the wartime Dutch Party sent their guides back to Fryer in Lumi.

⁵ Salt is a valuable commodity among people remote from the sea and I have often used it as trade.

⁶ Bragge Sepik research notes Vol 9 – part of diary entry 10th May 1977

⁷ Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 8 – Notes attached to Aitape Patrol Report No 3/76-7

⁸ See Sepik 4 Chapter 52

⁹ See Sepik 4 Part 2 Chapter 16

¹⁰ Bragge Sepik research notes Vol 9 – page opposite diary entry 10th May 1977 – statement taken by G.Luhrs at Sissano on 4th May 1977.

¹¹ Bragge Sepik research notes Vol 9 diary page 9th May 1977.

¹² Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 8 – Situation report 1 Aitape Patrol 3 1976-77

Sepik 4 Chapter 58 **Sepik Political Conservatism.** – Sepik commitment to traditional values including cargo cult beliefs, and opposition to change.

The years 1970-74, during which I served as Assistant District Commissioner of the Ambunti Sub District, East Sepik District, coincided with the period in which PNG was preparing itself for Self-Government in 1973 and Independence in 1975. There was uniform opposition to these political changes, with the Sepik’s political conservatism on display both overtly and covertly.

I. Overt demonstrations of Sepik political conservatism

All patrols in the period leading up to Self-Government and Independence were under instruction to conduct political education discussions and to report on local attitudes. There were also rural visits by the Select Committee on Constitutional Development, seeking the views of the people on what they wanted in the PNG Constitution as well as their views of Self-Government and Independence. I have reviewed reports of 100 Sepik patrols in this critical time frame, covering the whole of the Ambunti sub district as per the following table:

Station	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73
Ambunti	17	18	19
Pagwi	4	5	2
May River	6	6	10
Yellow River	9	13	1
Totals	36	32	32

All reported community feedback was of a politically conservative nature, identifying opposition to the introduction of Self-Government and Independence in the short term [if at all]. The responses fell into three categories :-

- Responses to the meetings of Select Committee on Constitutional Development,
- Confusion,
- Fear, plus a fourth category, to be discussed under **II The covert demonstration of Sepik Conservatism:**
- Responses related to Cargo Cult.

My experience of the wider Sepik [East & West] at that time indicated that what I found at Ambunti applied to the entire Sepik region.

A. Responses to meetings of the Select Committee on Constitutional Development

The best measure of what the Sepik people, and indeed the whole PNG population thought about the political changes associated with approaching Self Government and Independence, as well as what should go into the PNG Constitution, were summed up for the writer in two documents and a meeting of the Select Committee at Ambunti.

Document 1. Post Courier 17th January 1971. ***Committee Told: “People cannot fathom changes”:*** *The Select Committee on Constitutional Development has been told it is wasting its time trying to base constitutional change on the views of the ordinary citizen.*

The man in the street and the man in the village were not qualified to decide such things as a date for self-government, a speaker told the committee at a meeting this week in Samarai.¹

The view expressed in this media item would appear to have accurately reflected far more than qualifications to determine dates. As Document 2 suggests, the Select Committee was unable to elucidate coherent community opinion on Self-Government and Independence or the desired content of the Constitution. In the writer's opinion, this was not surprising as the political push for Self-Government and Independence was not coming from within PNG; it was coming from Gough Whitlam, leader of the Australian Opposition and later Prime Minister. Not surprisingly Mr Whitlam's push for Self-Government and Independence in PNG made him unpopular with the Kiap's of the day, among whom the prevailing opinion was that PNG was not ready and that in line with the Liberal Government policy – Australia should remain in PNG for as long as the PNG people wanted them, and the prevailing PNG attitude was that they wanted Australia to stay.

Mr. Whitlam's view of things was expressed in his introduction of legislation in the Australian parliament to grant PNG Independence, where he commented:

'By an extraordinary twist of history, Australia, herself once a colony, became one of the world's last colonial powers. By this legislation, we not only divest ourselves of the last significant colony in the world, but we divest ourselves of our own colonial heritage. It should never be forgotten that in making our own former colony independent, we as Australians enhance our own independence. Australia was never truly free until Papua New Guinea became truly free!'

Document 2. As quoted in Sepik 4 Chapter 50: In the House of Assembly on 27th June 1974 *the five goals which were tabled by the Constitutional Planning Committee wrongly claimed that the vision for the National Goals and Directive Principles originated as a result of public consultation¹. [they were in fact] based upon the eight aims of 1973 – [which themselves were] originally drawn from the African colonialization experience and the UN declarations on the rights of all people to be free...²*

Had the five goals that were tabled in the House of Assembly on 24th June 1974 actually originated as a result of public consultation, it would be reasonable to conclude that the Papua New Guinea population [Sepik included] viewed the national future with an inter-active healthy optimism and that the constitution was genuinely home grown, rather than being cobbled together in response to the political needs and time frame dictated by a foreign politician.

A meeting of the Select Committee at Ambunti. The writer attended this meeting. My observation of it was of a group of sophisticated visiting politicians and academics addressing an audience of wide-eyed villagers who were not on the same wave length on the topics under discussion. Most of the talking was done by the visiting committee members with very little audience response. The only meaningful response the writer recalls came from Ambunti Council President Ambuningi. *Noken kolim Pagini. Em olsem Pakin – Pakinyu* (Do not call [the country] Pagini². This sounds like “fucking” or “fuck you!”)

B. Responses reflecting confusion:

Some brief idea of the level of confusion can be seen from the following :-

- The man from Self Government – who is he? Is this one of Mr. Somare's ideas?³

¹ Bolding and underlining inserted by the writer

² “Pagini” – a combination of Papua and New Guinea, was one suggestion the Select Committee was considering for the name of the Independent nation. In Pidgin, the letters “P” and “F” are frequently interchanged.

- *I think it is worth having a look at Self-Government; if it does not work we can always ask Australia to come back and straighten things out*⁴. [this after a general village consensus concluded that at Self Government, everything would collapse and tribal fighting would re-commence].
- *When Self-Government arrives, whatever man refused to allow his wife to have intercourse with the new arrivals... would be hanged by the neck. Self-Government would then take a small knife and stab the woman in the chest and cut down to her stomach.*

This community was also reported by MHA Anskar Karmel to be ready to kill off their livestock and flee to the bush. This matter was investigated, the people's minds were set at ease and a man called Kahibe was sentenced to four month's hard labour for spreading false reports.⁵

- Patrolling officer's assessment: *It is my opinion that these people are too involved in their own trivialities to become concerned with larger and more important facets of Government.*⁶

C. Responses reflecting fear:

- *Will Self-Government and Independence mean war for us all? Is Australia just going to get out and leave us? Australia must stay! New Guinea has not yet got a factory to make guns and ammunition.*⁷
- After describing the arrest, torture, rape, mutilation and murder of 26 Sawos women accused [but not proven] as, being sorcerers during the Japanese occupation [see Sepik 3 chapter 39], Marap village informants explained; *that is why we feel with Self Government, the natives, if given control, will do this sort of thing to us again.*⁸ These atrocities were conducted by Sepik men appointed by the Japanese as their officials, but apparently without the knowledge or approval of the Japanese.
- As self-government approached] *Malingai [village community] was stockpiling sago and other food in their houses*⁹ as a precaution.
- *The National Day poster showing clasped [shaking] hands, was interpreted at Kanganaman as meaning "the man" would come on 1st December [Self-Government day] and take them into custody.*¹⁰

Interim conclusion to the overt demonstration of Sepik political conservatism

The average Sepik villager, or PNG villager, in the years leading into Self-Government and Independence were not attuned to matters of nationhood and/or PNG self-determination. In the case of the Sepik, this conservatism had two main drivers.

The first being reflections upon the Sepik's tumultuous and at times brutal past history, which made them fear what the future might hold.

The second being the rumours and evil omens that tend to crowd into the void that exists where there is a lack of knowledge and people grapple with the unknown.

The overt demonstration of Sepik political conservatism related primarily to topics upon which outsiders sought Sepik opinion. The topics of discussion were not of Sepik choosing, nor were they of great interest to the people. It should not have come as a great surprise, therefore, that the Sepik responses failed to provide much in-depth enlightenment on the topics of interest to Select Committee.

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II. The covert demonstration of Sepik political conservatism

Writer's Note 1: Concerning Sepik conservatism *responses related to cargo cult*, I need to explain why I listed them as "Covert".

To the Sepik people, the meaning of these responses is obvious – "Overt"; but to most western readers that they are far from obvious, for that reason I have classified them as "Covert". The meanings of these cult references are not easily understood, except from the perspective of an understanding of Sepik Cargo Cult beliefs.

The link between "Conservatism" and "Cargo Cult." Was that the Sepik community did not want any changes that might see "Small brother" the Europeans leave before they revealed secrets the Sepik community believed the Europeans were keeping from them: the secret that would allow them access to the "cargo."

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Returning to the text:

D. Responses relating to Cargo cult. A typical example and explanation:

Australians are the small brother and we are the big brother¹¹ ...As we approach Self Government...small brother is nearly ready to leave us...Australians should not all go and leave us...we do not know everything...When we have all the knowledge Australians can go back to their place.¹²

Explanation/Interpretation in simple terms of Sepik beliefs:

The universe was created at Mebinbit – north of the Sepik River near Nogosop and Gaikarobi. The creation saw two brothers emerge from a hole in the ground – birth from Mother Earth. The younger brother, a European with a white skin, emerged first and saw before him two separate sets of material goods. He selected the western goods – the shot gun, the boat with its engine, the books and everything else associated with modern civilisation. He sailed away and settled in Sydney.

When elder brother, a New Guinean with a brown skin, emerged all that was left for him was the second set of material objects, a spear, bow and arrows and canoe with a paddle and associated stone-age technology. He remained in the Sepik and used what was available to him to live his life.

After the passing of time, the younger brother returned again to his ancestral lands where the universe including all worldly goods had been created. Yet younger brother refused to share with his big brother, the western technology which at the time of the creation was intended for them both!

The brothers witnessed the passing of history – German colonialism, World War 1, Australian Colonialism, World War 2, Japanese occupation and final defeat, More Australian Colonialism, until, with the approach of Self Government and Independence, younger brother was making his plans to again leave The Sepik and New Guinea – taking with him his superior knowledge including the all-important secrets of the origins of the cargo.

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Writer's Note 2 – A wider perspective. Books Sepik 1 - 5 seek to review Sepik History from the perspective of many Sepik elder informants, all now long dead. Ideally the words of the elders should allow the readers to view Sepik cosmos as the elders saw it half a century ago; a key part of which

involves their religious beliefs including what is commonly called “Cargo Cult.” The writer’s challenge is to find the words that allow my readers to do this. A quick review shows that “cargo cult” and its foundations are described in a number of chapters listed below.

At the very least, the time span of these chapters and the nature of their content, demonstrates that Sepik elders have struggled since first contact with the outside world, to find an explanation in their traditional religious beliefs, that explains the origins of the “Cargo” – Western goods and technology. The chapters in question are:

Sepik 1 Beginning of time to 1885

Chapter 5 *Anthropology of Religion.*

Chapter 16 *The Creation Myths of the Ndu*

Chapter 34 *The Creation of the “Min” World; The Story of Afek.* [To be read in conjunction with

Indirectly, all Chapters in Sepik 1 describe the Sepik, its people and their beliefs prior to the influence of Christianity.

Sepik 2 The Winds of Change 1885-1941.

Chapter 15 *The “Sepik Old Testament” – Genesis and more*

Chapter 16 *The “Sepik New Testament” – Revelations and more*

Chapter 40 *Case Study – The birth of a new Religious Movement: A comparison of Melanesian Cargo Cults and Early Christianity.*

Sepik 3 The Sepik at War.

Chapter 31 *Aitape and Hollandia expeditions living dangerously – Betrayal and Retribution.* [only that part of this chapter dealing with Japanese agent Teni of Tauwetei – the self-proclaimed “Black King of the Wapei”.]

Chapter 53 *Captain Neptune Blood’s patrol to Bagasin to defuse the Gomaip Movement – Stamping out Serious Subversion. Oct-Nov 1944.*

Sepik 4 1946-1975 and beyond.

Chapter 6 A history of Sepik Cargo Cults and Nativistic Movements

Attachment 1: A collation of notes on 37 Sepik Cargo Cults and Nativistic Movements in the order of occurrence.

Chapter 20 *Kavan of Arinjone – Business Cult March 1956 =>*

Chapter 21 *Kero of Malingai 1958 =>*

Chapter 22 *Cult Leader Numbuk of Korogo 1959/60*

Chapter 43 *The Bien River community’s traditional revival – early 1970s* [this is a continuation of the story told in Sepik 2 Chapter 13 *The destruction culture and religion in the Bien River area.*]

Chapter 47 *The Mt Turu Cargo Cult. 1971 =>*

Sepik 5 Department of District Services & Native Affairs Instructions, Policy and Support.

Chapter 6. Policy – The handling of Cargo Cult, Vailala Madness and other.

Chapter 13 *The “Min” Cosmos in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries.*

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As a test of whether the lessons of the above chapters were understood, is to be found in the next chapter in which Sepik Philosopher Kolion describes the Sepik cosmos from his perspective. For him, and indeed for all of us, the perception of the cosmos consists of deeply held beliefs that describes the universe around us in light of our personal worldly knowledge; in Kolion’s case, this was a blend

of traditional religion and Christian teachings and his own interpretations of aspects of the Sepik environment.

A “pass” mark can be earned by those who find the next chapter interesting.

A “A credit mark” for those who found food for thought.

A “High distinction” for those who can see a way to implement a lasting solution to cargo cult problems. [No high distinctions have been awarded to date.]

Alternatively: Is the writer reading too much into cargo cult? Is it perhaps just one of an array of factors contributing to Sepik Conservatism? Is the writer making a relatively simple subject overly complex? Is the Sepik actually conservative at all?

Writer’s note. Throughout my period of Sepik research, I was amazed at the willingness of the elders to confide in me, and I continually asked myself why this was? What was clear to me, was that they wanted me to understand their views of the cosmos. It was abundantly evident that they were concerned about approaching Self Government and Independence – for whatever reason things were coming to a head.

Ever since the arrival of the first Europeans the Sepik elders had examined their myths and legends for an explanation of why “small brother” had European material wealth and the PNG “big brother” did not. The writer’s firm conclusion was, and continues to relate to a quest for the Sepik’s holy grail – the secret that will give them access to the cargo.

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End Notes Chapter 58

¹ Post Courier 17th February 1971.

² Sam Siros Kari – Thesis -*The Origins and Settings of the National Goals and Directive Principles in the process of writing the Constitution of Papua New Guinea – Queensland University of Technology 2004 (?) pages 73-74*

³ Ambunti patrol report 7/1969-70 Numau Ablatak Division – extract on page 114 Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 20

⁴ Ambunti patrol report 16/1970-71 Waskuk Hills Division - extract on page 119 Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 20

⁵ Ambunti patrol report 11/1971-72 Worio-Sio Division - extract on pages 130-131 Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 20

⁶ Pagwi patrol report 2/1971-72 Main River and Chambri Lakes Divisions - extract on page 138 Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 20

⁷ Ambunti patrol report 3/1973-74 Main River Division - extract on page 217 Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 20

⁸ Bragge Sepik Research Volume 18 page 250

⁹ Ambunti patrol report 3/1971-72 Main River Division - extract on page 217 Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 21

¹⁰ Ambunti patrol report 3/1971-72 Main River Division - extract on page 217 Bragge Sepik Research notes Vol 21

¹¹ Bragge Reference Volume 18 Page 218 – informant Mondji/Kindali of Torembei

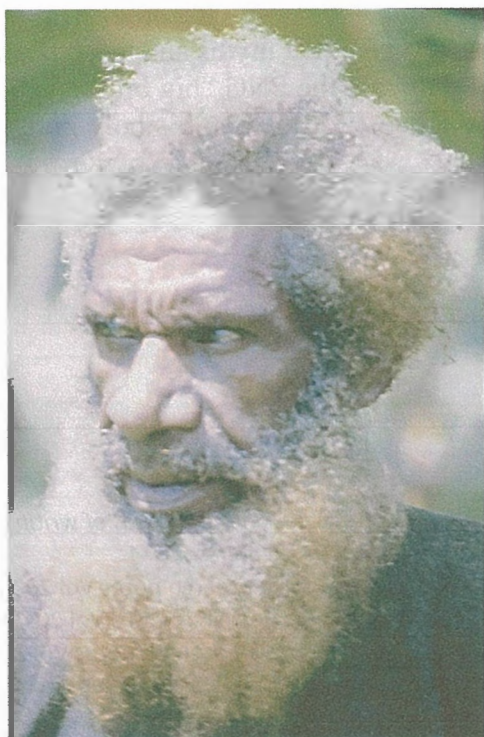
¹² Bragge Reference Volume 18 Page 218 – informant Mondji/Kindali of Torembei

Sepik 4 Chapter 59 A Sepik Philosopher Explains the Meaning of Life

Writer's Note:

I spent the 21st and 22nd February 1973 at Nogosop village in the Burui Kunai census division. The setting was significant; Nogosop and nearby Gaikarobi were, and probably still are regarded as being near legendary Mebinbit – the place of the creation according to Iatmul and Sawos belief. Speaking to a philosopher there is perhaps akin to speaking with a Moslem, Jewish or Christian holy man at Jerusalem. At Nogosop, an elder - Kolion of the Niaui moiety - visited the rest house in the evening to tell this story:¹

When it came time for me to subsequently write my patrol report, I intended to edit Kolion's statement to a reduced sized appendix to my report, but upon re-reading his statement, I left his words unedited. His statement is a fascinating blend of traditional religious belief as influenced by the impact of Christian teachings, including the adaptation of Jesus and the Sawos cult hero Mai'imp. It also incorporates many agencies of change on the Sepik as a consequence of Western influences, from the time from first contact through until that day [late February 1973].



Sepik Philosopher Kolion – **opposite** - had invited me into his mind, for me to view the Sepik cosmos as he truly believed it to exist.

The statement of Philosopher Kolion of Nogosop

Before Mai'imp² came to the market the women were already there. There were two kinds of women; women with hair on their bodies and women without hair on their bodies; Boimandalagu were the group with hair on their bodies and Kwanigalaktu were the group without hair. Mai'imp came in a canoe and the women heard him and called out a half sign half cry noise. They all lay down. Mai'imp came to the market place and his child Gumai'imp stayed in the canoe.

Mai'imp (also known as Mai'impdimi) had intercourse with all the women with hair on their bodies and when he had finished them he went to the women without hair on their bodies and had intercourse with them. When he had finished, he went back to the water and gave all the women fish. The women took their fish and went home.

The men did not go to the market meetings the women arranged for themselves. Mai'imp came to them again and again and had sexual intercourse with them. The men did not know how their wives got the fish at the market so they sent a child to go and spy on its mother and the other women. '*You go and cry and they will let you in.*' the child did so and the women took it with them. The women reached the market site and took off their grass skirts and Mai'imp came ashore. The women heard his rumbling noises as he approached and they made their own noises in reply. The female child with them was hidden under the heap of grass skirts.

The women with hair on their bodies were again first and the women without were again last. The girl moved the skirts aside so she could see and she gasped '*Ahh, all our mothers have come for this wrong (sin). So, this is how they get the fish and water food we eat. Why did we not know of this?*'

Mai'imp finished both lines with sexual intercourse and he went down to his canoe and down into the water. The fish and all the food of the water came up and the women again had their fish to

take home. The child came to light as the mothers retrieved their skirts. This was the start of fighting. The child went into the house and the father followed the child and asked.

'What happened at the market and what did you see there?'

'Oh Papa, a good man, he was not like you, he was very nice; a nice face...he lay the women down and had sex with them and then he went to the water and got the water food and gave it to them and then he went back into the water.'

The man heard this talk and went to the haus tambaran and beat the garamut and held a meeting to discuss the matter. *'Ah men now my child has spoken out down below with Mai'imp. Mai'imp does not give the fish away for nothing. He has sex with our women as payment, and we eat these fish! What are we to do?'* There was much talk about it and then they decided to carve two wooden images, make magic over them and bury them in the earth upon which he walks. The images would then spring up and kill him like a crocodile would. They carved the images and they had their sing sing and they buried the images in holes and they put water down in the holes also. The carvings were left there. Mai'imp approached and made his noise and the women lay in their separate groups. Mai'imp came up into the market and stepped over the two buried images. The images got up and fought him and Mai'imp fell down. His child Gumai'imp dived into the water and hid. The images cut him and Mai'imp was dead and that was the end of that market arrangement.

This is the story of Niaui. Before there was no land; there were no men or woman. The ground appeared above the water, a small area of land. Sago grew on this small island. The women came and cut the sago.

This is the story of the change in the markets; first there was the story of Mai'imps market and now we are talking about the sago market. This is the alternative the people found when Mai'imp was dead and his market finished. One woman cut the sago and it fell and the ground grew longer, another woman stood in the middle, one woman stood at the foot and another woman stood at the head of the fallen sago palm. They took the bark off and they beat the sago. They took the sago pith to the water and washed and the sago we know came up. They took lap lap (fibre fabric) of the coconut and the sago was deposited in limbum (bark) containers. They took it to their houses and later they took it to the market.

The Mai'imp bung [market] was an Old Testament law and the sago bung is of the New Testament. Now we people are of the New Testament. The people of the Old Testament are once again ground. The sago they made they exchanged for fish as we do now. This is the New Testament as we do it now. Before there was no enemies, no death, no poison and no sorcery, but now in the New Testament we have all these things and we follow all these fashions [ways].

Do you understand what I am saying? Now it is his [Mai'imps] body we eat. It is like this *'now you eat my body'* and his blood became the fish and all the things edible in the water. Now (as) you eat me think of me and you wait – I will return. Wait for me. This part of the Father's talk. Are you still with me? Now we eat sago and we eat fish. We call his blood in our language *'Kami'* and his body we call *'Nau'*. Nau is the word for the sago which we eat.

Now what about this ground? You are a white-man and I am a black-man. Now what about this ground? It is the same (as us) there is white ground and there is black ground. The sago grows on this ground. The mother of the ground will not go far away; she stays at the base of the sago. We men are different, we get up and walk around, but she stays. You (white-men) went away and now you have come back. I stayed here and now you have come to see me and to teach me. You have books to hold your knowledge. We keep it in here (stomach indicated – popularly believed to be the mind;

the repository of knowledge). I cannot write like you can and I cannot read. I remember it all and I store it in here. My book is filled (again stomach indicated).

I am black and you are white. When I was born and I lay on my mother's lap, I was the same as you. I stood on this (black) ground and I became a black-man. It works the same with white ground, or red ground or yellow ground. Who changed it? Are you the big brother and am I the small brother? Our skin colour follows the colour of the earth we break.

We all [mankind] started here in New Guinea Papua on this ground.

'Have you another ground?'

'Yes there is ground in Australia'

'Yes and where do you think the islands and other ground broke away from?'

'Please tell me'

You know the sea? Where did it come from? It was the sea that was here in the beginning.³ Later it went with men and ground to be the sea as we (now) know it. This was how the people got to other countries. Who cleared the ground? In the beginning, it was just water. We can say that God was the creator; we will call him God as the Bible has it is written. But the Bible story follows our story. There are no mountains here. The place here is the bottom of the hole, no mountains; we have only sago. We have no stone. The mountains are distant and they serve to keep the sea out.

You know the moon? It is not the moon. It is a woman⁴. You have a calendar January, February, March...August. That is how you count the months. But they are not months they are a woman who is Santa Maria; she is all of us - our mother. The phases of the moon are:

New moon – mother with child (pregnant)

Next phase – mother with small child

Next phase – child becomes a woman

Next phase – the child/woman menstruates (Karim blud) – but it is not blood, it is flowers

Next phase – she has a man

Next phase – the birth of a new child.

Next phase – the woman is old.

Next phase – the woman dies

Black women and white women alike have babies. If the child is of the left hand it is a girl and if it is of the right hand it is a boy.

The moon gives the light and without this light we would be like wood – inanimate; we could not go to distant places, (by pointing, Kolion equated light with our eyes.) Without this light, there would be no life. Women would not become pregnant. But women in fact do not get pregnant, they just have a stomach pumped full of air⁵. We are following the life of Mai'imp as you will hear. It is not a child in the stomach. It is wind like a pumped ball. Only one woman gave birth to us all. She made us from fire. You can feel your skin, it is warm. When it goes cold and the light (sight) goes from your eyes you are dead. Later a new child will replace this man who is now dead. Are you following me? Our mothers have children in varying numbers. When they have replaced all the dead outstanding they have no more children. This is the belief of Niauinimber.⁶

The sun is the father and the moon is the mother. You can say you are not your father's replacement for instance if your father is still alive. But where did you get the eyes or the light (life)? It is from your grandfather; you have his eyes and his light. He⁷ continues to reappear with new births, we are all his descendants. This is how he arranged it; the father dies and the child takes his place. The book says 'Jesus'. It was not Jesus, it was Mai'impdimi. The moon died and comes back as a child. The man died and the women would stop menstruating if there was no light. The women bleed

and give birth to flowers. This is the secret way of black and white women; they put flowers on the table and they wear red paint like lipstick. They do it for this reason only⁸.

The moon is dying now and when it comes back people will continue to have children. It the moon died so would all the human mothers. The woman called Ave Maria is in the water. Do you know the water nuts? (lotus?). Have you broken one and seen the milky sap? Ave Maria is there and it is the work of Santa Maria again giving birth (being fruitful).

You think this is the sun while we are sitting here ('sun' here meaning day light). It is not the sun, it is the white water⁹. The white water is in the big river (Sepik) and now we are with the white water. It is the whitewater that provides the (day) light. You can see the white water had life; it moves and had eddies and whirlpools. It made this ground. When it makes a whirlpool, it is making ground. The white ground it carried to another place to make you white-men. The black ground it leaves here is to make us black-men.

Now have you seen the black water? It is dead - Malimajon¹⁰ It does not work. The white water gives us the light (life) to do what we will; to go to distant places, to have sex with our women. That is the white water working. It starts work when the Government puts its flag up and stops work when the Government flag goes down again and the sun keeps to the same cycle.

The little stars we know, (and we know) the sun is a big star. I have counted the flag's stars. When the sun goes down it gets dark. Now what about darkness? Darkness comes from the black water. The white water brings the light. The sun goes down to the place under the water and makes it clear there while the black water comes and works on us here. We sleep; the sun is gone. Black water covers the ground. What is the sun like and what is darkness like? The people do not know because they sleep. White water made this ground, but we did not see it because we were somewhere else.

Now have you seen clouds? They are the mark of this water. Day time is the work of the right hand and night darkness is the work of the left hand. In the darkness, we sleep, we do not work; we cannot do anything, even read and write. The fashion of reading and writing is ours; it started here. Kwaru and Sangi worked. They are of my clan and of Mai'imps clan. Kwaru and Sangi worked and made the pidgin English language. They were following the work of Mai'impdimi. This is not the story of all men; it is the story of the Nogusimei clan.

The water pumped the ground and it came up. Then came Mai'imp, then they killed Mai'imp and the sago came as the ghost (spirit) of Mai'imp. We eat the sago, his body. We eat in fact our own bodies. His blood is the fish and eels – Kami. This is the true story. Other places can tell stories, but they speak without foundation. The story is here and now at Nogosop; Mai'imps place. Gaikarobi (people) were Mai'imps enemies – they lie. Mai'imp who the missionaries call Jesus provided both the fish and the sago. They marked a day, they came and got him and killed him. Next day he was in the hole and on the third day he had risen. They made the markets then. On Monday, they killed him. Tuesday, he was in the hole and on Wednesday, he got up and called the people together and said

“Now eat my body and my blood; my body will be sago and my blood will be fish. Now I will arrange a market for you. When you eat the fish and sago you trade you must think of me. Later I will come back.”

He went and we did not see the mountain he is hiding in. He has not come back yet. When the mountain goes (Klia nau) he will return and the moving waters (the Sepik) will come back. Now the Sepik flows to hide at Manam (volcanic island off the mouth of the Sepik River). Who is hiding at Manam? When Manam goes all the current and tide water will shoot back towards Ambunti. All the places Aibom and Chambri and Ambunti will be covered. Then this man will come back. The ground

will become short and few children will be born. Our families and clans will come to an end and the ground will be short. (i.e. little land will exist).

We will sleep with our women and the children will come, then one day a woman will give birth to a child which will have formed teeth at birth and it will have hair. Children will be born the size of babies, but with fully developed breasts. Then the children will finish. Then we will start over again; it is not long off now. Everything is changing now. Soon Mai'imp will return. Soon we will see a baby with teeth and that will be a sign (of his impending return).

Of Niauwi we are the Nogusumei clan, within which are Kwaru and Sangi. Kwaru we know as the bird we call Marik and it makes a sound like Yoliyoliyoli yoliyoliyoli. We do not know Sangi. He is still under the water and we have not seen him. He is hidden. Later the women will meet him, and he will be as Mai'imp was with the women, then the men will rise up and kill him. The white water gives the light. The black water [is still, it] does not go as the white water flows away. The black water has always been here. Then Mai'imp came and made the white water (and) light came and changed the eternal darkness. People could see instead of being blind. Before there was no food and no talk. We just ate earth. Then the white water came when Mai'imp died and the light came to make things clear. Do you understand me?

No one can alter our stories. We are of the place of origin. Before we used to go and fight but people did not come and fight back against us because this is the place of origin. We of the place of origin have our own dialect; the others do not speak it. When we go to other places, we speak to them in their dialect.

The alphabet is in our language; each letter is here...One number, the number 7¹¹ is ours. Mai'imp was a man of knowledge. He could read and write and he taught people to read and write. The people said '*This is the knowledge of this man and it is not good that we obtain the knowledge of just one man. Is he better than us? Let us go and kill him.*' Seven was Mai'imps personal number and when he died and became sago he put his number on the sago. Have you seen the designs on the sago fronds? It is his seven. The spikes on the sago indicate his number.

They killed him and the people disbursed. After this first killing, the people fought and killed and stole. He will come back to here and take back his seven number. He will not return to another place. He will come back here. All the languages will change. He will come when the ground is short... All the people, black and white will come and change their languages. When they killed Mai'imp, the enemies came from Gaikarobi to kill him. They were a combined force of black and white. His mother Maria was black Santa Maria and Ave Maria. The disbursal of the people after Mai'imp's death was done by Maria. As the people left they each went to Maria and she said '*You go, take this language with you and speak it*'. Santa Maria disbursed the people.

Ave Maria is down in the water. Do you know the clam shells in the water? That is the true mother of the water. Ave Maria (this next section was done in whispers). The meat of the clam is as good as (seken wantaim) a woman's vagina. It is down in the water. If it is closed there is no high water but if it is open the high water comes back.¹² This is Ave Maria. The flowers are Ave Marias menstruation or children. If the white water flows she is open and fruitful. If the black water comes she is closed.

Mai'imp died and through his death knowledge was hidden from us black people. Santa Maria also withheld knowledge. Where is the number 4? The knowledge is hidden and we do not know of it. 8 number is the same. Our mother's vagina was closed against us and we obtained no further knowledge from her.

We had no way to get knowledge, and then you white men came back and you had books with knowledge and you gave more knowledge to us. She was cross with the killing of her son and hid his knowledge¹³. Before both the black and white people had books, but ours the black people's book was burned in a fire in a house. It did not burn without reason; it was over anger and loss of knowledge. The book burned and now we are without the knowledge that was in the book. You have the knowledge that was in the book. You teach us but you do not give us all the secrets of the book.¹⁴

Writer's Note: Father Leo was in Nogosop during the time of the patrol's visit and I mentioned this to him. He said in his experience every high school and tertiary student believes this. The instance he quoted was in a lecture when the lecturer skipped a number of pages of a book to pick up relevant lecture material. The students marked the pages, as to them it seemed obvious that the European teacher knew the secret of the cargo was hidden there, and he did not want to reveal it to the students.

Kolion continues: Look at yourself and look at us. We are the same. Five fingers etc. Our difference is in our knowledge. Some knowledge is hidden from us. We fight and we steal.

The name Nogusime, our sago clan, is derived from our village name Nogosop. We will never leave this place. It is the place of our origins. We will always have the name Nogosop, Nogusimeri. It was very good talk you gave us this morning (political education on Self Government and Independence). Later we will change the laws and change our language and this man will come back. There will be talk of who killed him and who did not kill him and everyone will cry. Then we will change our language to a single language. Australia, India and England will all come for this. This gets back to your talk on Self Government and Independence. The people were worried that the Australians should not all go and leave us. Now we do not know everything; we do not yet have the full knowledge and we do not know every law. When we have all the knowledge, the Australians can go back to their place.

Stone does not rot, everything else rots – coconuts, trees, us. If stone exists, stories can exist also. Why does stone not rot? Whose skin is it? I think the white man knows this? The stone stands up, who broke it before and stood them up around the places.¹⁵ It is the skin of Mai'imp. Mai'imp lives forever. He would not die, there was no death. They wanted to kill him but they could not. He was impregnable because he breathed through his armpit and his arm protected his air intake. He kept this a secret but when the two carvings knocked him down, he threw his arm wide as he fell and they were able to kill him.

Bragge question: Why do you put stones[monoliths] in the middle of the place?

Answer: There is no reason¹⁶. The stones came from Aibom. There were plenty of stones at Gripma. We took stones from there and came here, and Gaikarobi took some to Gaikarobi as well. *(Both villages apparently lived together at Gripma, which is east of Nogosop about five generations ago)*¹⁷ All the stones and mountains have gone a long way from us. We are a very low place in the middle; we are at the bottom of the hole¹⁸

We have no stone naturally occurring here. All we have is plenty of sago. There is no wild sago, only planted sago for eating. The mountains have gone a long way off to fence off the salt water from coming back here. Later the mountains will break down and the sea will flood back in on us. Manam (Island) has not much time to go. It is already broken, but there is still some of it still there. It has its back to the Sepik at present, but when it turns to look at the Sepik, the tide will turn when Manam turns.

The sago tree is just a tree; its skin is of no use. So why is it when we wash the sago and put water on it that it fills up with food in the bark container? It is Mai'imp. They cut down a sago tree;

it dies and falls with a thud. They cut the skin and pulverize the pith and process the sago; it is the body of Mai'imp. Add water and it comes up. Your body has water in it and so does ours. There are different colours of earths. Nothing will grow without water – plants or anything. Mai'imp gave life to the water and now everything grows if it has water. We wash in water and we become clean because of Mai'imp. If Mai'imp did not exist, the sun would burn us all to death.

Gingu and Songu are our words for night and day; the black and the white water.

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End Notes – Sepik 4 Chapter 59

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- ¹ L. Bragge – Ambunti patrol report 13/1972-73, Appendix “A” Anthropological Notes as transcribed from Bragge Sepik Research Notes Vol 18 pages 253-257
- ² Sepik 1 Chapter 43
- ³ Sepik 1 Chapter 4 – the Ndu creation myth – in the beginning there was only water.
- ⁴ The moon and menstrual cycles are closely associated in indigenous thought. In Pidgin “Mun kilim em” is a typical reason given for a woman’s absence from census – “She is menstruating”
- ⁵ My understanding of this is that human birth is believed to be process controlled by a higher being and that the mothers involved are merely the means by which the higher being achieves human reproduction.
- ⁶ Niaui is one of the two moieties. The suffix Nimber is taken to mean group or enclosure, in this context meaning moiety.
- ⁷ Meaning Mai'imp. Niaui moiety beliefs are that there was only one death in the beginning and that was the death of Mai'imp.
- ⁸ This is understood to describe femininity.
- ⁹ “White water” – The Sepik River water is grey in colour with the sediment it carries. The Sepik current equates to light and life, whereas the Tea Coloured tannin stained water of the lakes and swamps lies still and is equated death and darkness.
- ¹⁰ This is presumably a Sawos language word meaning dead.
- ¹¹ In the early 1970s, when Kolion told this story the Yangoru cargo cult went through several stages one was known as the “Seven association”. It is not known whether cult leader Yeliwan was influenced by Sepik stories concerning the number 7, such as that of Kolion, or whether Kolion was influenced by Yeliwan.
- ¹² High water refers to the seasonal floods which bring a time of plenty to the river and plains people.
- ¹³ This reference to lack of knowledge relates to the secret knowledge of the cargo that white people have and keep secret from black brother, so as not to have to share the cargo.
- ¹⁴ The secrets of the cargo are believed to be withheld
- ¹⁵ This refers to the monoliths that stand around the haus tambarans.
- ¹⁶ We know from other sources that there is deep meaning in the stone monoliths. I suspect Kolion did not want to be diverted from his main theme.
- ¹⁷ If we allow 25 years per generation $x 5 = 150$ years prior to 1973 = 1823 +/-
- ¹⁸ The repeated reference to “the bottom of the hole” obviously refers to Mebinbit, the place of the creation from where man emerged from a hole in the earth. The original birth from the Earth Mother and the Sky or Sun father.

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As the end of 1978 approached, the writer had a major decision to make. I was about to complete a two-year employment contract as District Officer with the PNG Government, and had been offered continued employment - a three-year contract through to 31st December 1991.

In 1974, in preparation for the eventual transfer of myself and family back to Australia, and in expectation of my loss of career compensation at Independence in 1975, I did some thinking about what I would do *After PNG*. I concluded that my kiap days had provided me with practical experience to take on almost any job, while qualifying me for none. This suggested self-employment.

My wife Bev and I looked at farms in her home area; the Ovens valley in north-east Victoria – tobacco land at that time was bringing \$3,000¹ per acre. We looked in my home area, the Kiewa Valley - land there was not only very expensive, there was little of it for sale. Whenever Kiewa valley land did become available, it was often sold privately - usually to a farming relative.

I saw an auction advertised for 1,000 acres at Koetong in the Upper Murray, not all that far from the Ovens and Kiewa valleys – the auction was for that very day so we drove immediately to



Koetong and found the farm, but no auction. The auction was held in Wodonga and we had missed it. However the property was passed in, so we negotiated and bought it for \$90 per acre.

Opposite - Koetong farm house

My father had recently retired and was looking for something to keep himself occupied. He and Mum would run the farm while we stayed in PNG. However by the end of 1978 the farm was becoming too much for my parents. What had been our ‘nest egg’ was now becoming *the tail that wagged the*

dog. We needed either to sell the farm or come back to Australia and manage it.

Two things happened in the Bragge family in late 1978 that influenced our decision. There was a tractor accident on our farm that killed my mother, and soon after, our third child, Jane was born. We had recently purchased an adjacent 470-acre property; the farm now had a total of three houses – Dad would live with us in one of these. All these things weighed heavily in our decision making.

The other part of the late 1978 decision was the PNG factor. While I continued to love PNG and its people, my job satisfaction was diminishing as I witnessed the kiap system erode away. For me, the “Kiap System” consisted of the tight cohesion of four fundamentals :-

1. Field officers who lived on outstations among the community, and who spent much of their time on patrol, living in the villages. Ideally such field officers stayed closely in tune with the people’s needs and aspirations to a point where they could anticipate issues and defuse them before they became problems. Most of the work was routine, but occasional tasks involved personal risk and the need to intervene in tribal warfare and the like.

¹ What a mistake that would have been – as tobacco went out of fashion, so the value of Tobacco land fell dramatically.

2. A Departmental Director, District Commissioners, Deputy District Commissioners and District Inspectors; senior officers who in their earlier years were themselves field officers with practical experience of what their junior staff experienced in the field. They oversaw and closely monitored field operations.
3. Departmental Standing instructions, policies and guiding principles that supported the best traditions of the Department. These condensed Departmental history and expectations into words that field staff were expected to read, understand and apply to the best of their ability, within the oversight of senior officers.
4. The incredible esprit de corps shared by all kiaps was particularly strong among those who served in the Sepik.

It was the effective combination of these four elements to which Dame Rachael Cleland (wife of a former PNG Administrator 1953-1967) referred when she said :-

*After all, when you saw a twenty-year-old boy with perhaps five policemen keeping 30,000 warring tribesmen in happy harmony, you were just astounded and thought "How does he do it?"*¹

Another astounded outside observer, Ramsay Barrett, then of Mobil was similarly impressed with the Kiap system. It was 1992 and I was the field manager for Mobil's Petroleum exploration of ten million acres of the Sepik and Madang provinces. For over three months of the exploration of PPL²s 144, 145 and 146, we found ourselves sitting around evening camp fires and I told the stories of my kiap exploits as described in the present pages.

I saw this gel into a *once in a lifetime experience* for Ramsay one afternoon in 1992. We were



travelling by helicopter close to the Indonesian border in the Amanab sub district. We landed on a knoll by a bush material church at Petaineri. I walked down to the village to request permission for us to overnight in the church building. The village women thought it would be fine - they would bring vegetables to sell, and later maybe some fresh meat; the men were all out hunting.

Late in the afternoon from afar but coming ever closer, we heard chanting. To me this meant a successful hunt. I am not sure what it meant to Ramsay, but his body language told me he was alert to whatever was going to happen next. A dozen or so men, daubed with pig blood as badges of honour and still chanting, stomped their way into camp carrying their bows and arrows. They looked questioningly at the helicopter and at us, then nodded and squatted down – **opposite** - to relate the exciting adventure of the day's hunt.

They told in a mixture of Pidgin and local language how... *'That fellow's arrow wounded the pig! It charged him! He dropped his bow and scrambled up a tree'*. Apart from the verbal description, this was played out with animated facial expressions and an action-packed pantomime, which was presented mainly for the benefit of the audience of village women and children, who were now with us. We were all totally engrossed, watching how such hunts must have been described throughout the history of primitive man.

² PPL Petroleum Prospecting Licence.

I saw Ramsay sitting, big eyed, his mouth agape in awe at what he was witnessing. Without doubt, at that moment, he was somewhere far back into the stone age, experiencing primitive New Guinea as few outsiders, apart from some kiaps had seen it.

Ramsay, who by now referred to me as “The Legend”, asked if I had read Michener’s *Texas*. To Ramsay, what he had heard and now seen of the Kiap System reminded him of the Texas Rangers – exercising very wide and occasionally unorthodox powers, often as isolated individuals, to bring peace and good order to a hostile land. Kiaps – Texas Rangers of the Western Pacific? An interesting idea!

However all such things come to an end. For the Texas Rangers, it reportedly ended like this :-

‘Famous in tradition as the Southwest’s most picturesque and most fearless law-enforcement group, the Texas Rangers as now constituted will pass out of existence on August 10. [1935]... It is safe to say that as time goes on, the functions of the un-uniformed Texas Rangers will gradually slip away and those of the highway patrol will increase. Curiously enough this abolition of the force has occurred exactly one hundred years after the force was created...on October 17 1835.’²

There was no final curtain *Texas Rangers August 10th 1935* event for the Kiap System. Rather its end was more of an erosion through time as it sought to modify itself to keep pace with a rapidly changing social and political environment. The “erosion” was most evident when the field officers sought advice from senior officers as to how they should address situations for which they could find no precedent. The following list is far from exhaustive :-

1. **The Navuneram Incident of 4th August 1958.** As a prelude to expected Tolai resistance to the attempted collection of tax, the District Officer of New Britain wrote to the Director of DS&NA on 19th December 1957 stating ‘... I must, in conclusion, ask for your written instruction, Sir, to use what force is necessary in 1958 to affect the new capitation tax in these dissident groups of the Tolai area...I consider there will be...incidents...’

Indeed, there were incidents. Two natives were killed and a third wounded by gunfire when a patrol was forced to defend itself at Navuneram. A Commission of Inquiry was immediately appointed, which exonerated the field staff involved, but did place the kiap system under close scrutiny. In 1959 to Minister for Territories Hasluck appointed Professor of Jurisprudence Durham of Melbourne University to report to him on the administration of justice in PNG. To this point it had always been accepted that the powers and duties of Native Affairs officers to act as magistrates, police officers and administrative executives – all under the one hat – had to be exercised with the restraint and good judgement for which the service was known. Now the separation and limitation of executive, police and magisterial powers held by the officers of the Native Affairs Department became a ministerial objective.³

DDS&NA Director J.K. McCarthy commented in 1963 on the Kiap System in words with which most field officers would identify :-

The Derham report, written by a man who had no practical experience of the country...was accepted without question...As a result of it, the multiple powers once necessarily held by a D.O. are now, or will be split between several officers – and this ‘compartmenting’ is fatal to good government. The Director then listed 31 officers who had resigned or transferred out of the Department between July 1962 and April 1963...Thirty-one men are too many to lose, and they are being lost because the Department is having its throat cut.’⁴

Mr. McCarthy's letter of April 1963 epitomises the difficulty of differentiating between Good Government and Self Government...the [kiap] system had to be dismantled and centralised to prepare the way for parliamentary and ministerial government.⁵

Writer's Note: In practice, the changes to the separation of powers did not happen quickly. The writer and most other senior expatriate field officers, although conscious of sensitivities, still held concurrent police, magisterial and executive powers in late 1978.

2. With the approach of Self Government, the localisation of the Public Service saw senior positions, particularly the District Commissioner positions, taken over by Papua New Guineans of 10 or so years of experience replacing seasoned expatriates with at least three times their seniority. This had unavoidable and unfortunate consequences – the application of many years of experience was fundamentally wasted or lost. Additionally, it was no longer certain how self-governing PNG would accept some of the potential outcomes of the application of kiap system in extreme situations. Some examples from my own experience :-

a/ The North Hewa Murder Investigation November 1974. [Chapter 53] I was very conscious of my status as an expatriate officer going into a situation where the North Hewa people had openly threatened to kill anyone who came to investigate the murder of Tultul Aria of Folini. I asked for written instructions in the event that the patrol came under attack [which it did on three occasions]. I was referred to the Departmental Standing Instructions of 1962, which I considered to be out of date. I planned and documented my every step on that patrol on the basis of the defence I would need if I found myself facing charges in the Supreme Court. This was unfamiliar territory.

If it was not for the particular politics of the day, the standard approach to this patrol would have included the following steps :-

- Review all available information [which I did]
- Proceed with caution and take the time necessary to best achieve the objective [which I did]
- Use only the force necessary to overcome the force used in resisting the lawful functions of the patrol [we were lucky the arrows fired at us had missed, and we did not have to use any force against the North Hewa people.]

b/ The Highlands warfare patrol December 1974. [Chapter 54] My success in the North Hewa, in November 1974 saw me chosen as one of three kiaps from outside the Western Highlands to participate in this exercise. There were two important background issues to this exercise:-

- In 1970 in preparation for Self-Government, Highlands warfare was taken from the kiap system and made the responsibility of the uniformed RP&NGC. This involved a change of policing tactics. The kiaps used "preventative justice" a system of intelligence gathering and related responses – identify where warfare was about to break out, then move in and defuse it before it erupted. The uniformed RP&NGC response was to investigate after the event. The outcome was that in the period 1970-74 tribal warfare flared out of control in the Western Highlands.
- Chief Minister Somare was reluctant to accept responsibility for PNG Independence until Tribal warfare was under control. The DC of the Western Highlands was instructed to deal with the situation. He in response obtained permission from the Chief Minister to use traditional kiap system techniques in a joint RP&NGC/Kiap exercise – on condition there would be no external interference. This was agreed.
- The first test of this came when the RP&NGC stated the kiap parties would not be armed. I asked to be excused - if I was expected to take the risks necessary to achieve the objective, I needed the means to get myself out of trouble if trouble came my way. An important kiap principle was "Never Bluff." The result was that the kiap parties were armed.

- The short term outcome was that objectives were achieved, in part because many of the combatants respected the intervention of the trusted kiaps. The long-term outcome of the lack of a functional Kiap system to manage Highlands warfare is that once stable sub districts such as Koroba in 2016 are classed as permanent war zones.⁶

c/ The Warapu Sanguma Murders. [Chapter 57] Several issues arose during this investigation that made it clear to me that the best traditions of the kiap system were coming to an end.

Firstly, the Provincial Commissioner released a press statement containing confidential information relating to the on-going murder investigations. The PC's staff had a responsibility to report to him, and it was the PC's prerogative to issue press statements as he saw fit. In this case however, I felt greatly disappointed. My anger at the divulging of confidential information which damaged my investigation was mitigated by the realisation that the individual PC lacked the depth of experience I would have expected for instance from a John Wakeford, a former PC of the West Sepik, who as shown in Sepik 3 Chapter 65 was a patrol officer in Vanimo in 1947.

Secondly, I was disappointed when my Aitape station staff failed to inform me that a key sorcerer/murder suspect had escaped from custody, and that as a result my patrol which was leaving that day could have walked, unawares, into an ambush or similar unpleasantness. I was equally dissatisfied with my patrol police who proved themselves incapable of standing guard without falling asleep. Again, I concluded that the time had gone when the kiap system automatically snapped discipline into junior officers and police. Was it their fault that I still expected the standards of days gone by?

ooo0ooo

I remember sitting with my pen poised over the signature line on my new three-year contract as District Officer, but I knew this was not for me. I was age 36 and I had been in the PNG Administration for 18 years – nearly half my life. I knew I was too inflexible to adjust myself to what I saw as the malaise of the West Sepik administration of the late 1970s.

There would always be emergency situations, such as North Hewa, Highlands warfare and the Warapu murders, into which I would throw myself, or be thrown. However, at some stage in the not too distant future, the kiap system backup which I would need to rely upon would fail to materialise, with possible dire consequences. I knew my time in the kiap service was at an end.

I pushed the contract aside, and wrote out my resignation.

End Notes Chapter 58

¹ Hank Nelson – Taim Bilong Masta. ABC Book 1982 Page 33

² New York Herald Tribune story of 4th October 1935 *Texas Rangers Lose Name, Keep Glory*. As quoted by Walter Prescott Webb *The Texas Rangers, a century of frontier defense*. University of Texas University Austin. 1935 page 567

³ Ian Downs. *The Australian Trusteeship of Papua New Guinea 1945-75* – Australian Government Publishing Service Canberra 1980 Pages 143-146

⁴ Ian Downs 1980 Page 160

⁵ Ian Downs 1980 Page 160

⁶ Personal communication with former kiap Deryck Thompson, who currently (2016) works in the sub district with a mineral exploration company.



Left above - Myself with wife Bev, daughter Louise and baby Christopher – Xmas Koetong 1978/79 – after resigning from PNG Administration

Right above - The 'Legend' Masta Loribrek – now a Victorian farmer - a long way from PNG

Sepik 4 - Attachment 5 - 1968-70 Marriage and an Interlude in Milne Bay's D'Entrecasteaux Islands.

After two terms [four years] in the Sepik I was due for leave. On 1st January 1968 Beverley Smith and I were married in Myrtleford, Victoria. Upon our return to PNG we were posted to Bolubolu Patrol Post on Goodenough Island, D'Entrecasteaux Islands - Milne Bay District. This is one of the most beautiful places on earth, with fascinating history and anthropology, which is a story for another time.

At the end of our two years in Milne Bay we were posted to the East Sepik's Ambunti sub district. It is only now, four decades later, as I write these pages, I realise that during the time I was away from the Sepik [1968-70] there appears to have been an explained increase in the rate of transition from the past towards the future.

On one hand the time frame relates to the external pressure of Australian politician Gough Whitlam's plans to rid Australia of its colonial obligations by pressuring PNG into early Self Government and Independence. Quite independently of this, however, there appears to have been an increase in the rate of change on cultural fronts in separate parts of the Sepik. These include:

1. Cultural revivals occurred in both the Bien River area of the Angoram sub district [Chapter 43] and in the Kwoma area of the Ambunti sub district [Chapter 45]. The Bien River revival was in part a reaction against Catholic Mission influence half a century earlier [Sepik 2 Chapter 13], and the Kwoma Revival was in part, a reaction against SDA mission influence.
2. Initiation ceremonies increased in number and adapted themselves to accommodate the school calendar – as the candidates for initiation were mostly absent from the Sepik at boarding school during the dry season. Also the traditional initiation duration was reduced from month to weeks so the boys could resume their studies on time after the Christmas holidays [Chapter 51]
3. Although unrelated to initiation, Sepik teenage girls, resentful that their parents were no longer “beautifying” them by skin cutting, secretly cut their own skins in two separate unrelated cultural groups. [Chapter 52].
4. Cargo cults, which had been a feature of Sepik pre-war history and which increased in numbers throughout the post war period, in 1971 produced the largest and most far reaching cargo cult that the Sepik, Melanesia and presumably the world had ever seen. [Chapter 47]
5. On a political front the second House of Assembly [1968-72] saw the perception of “Government” begin to change in the eyes of rural PNG, from the function of the Kiaps to that of the elected members of parliament.
6. In association with all of the above there was a decline and ultimate end of the kiap system of indigenous administration in PNG. [Chapter 60]

Sepik 4 Attachment 6 Analysis of relative warfare involvement of Nebilyer valley tribes.

The sub groups shown in **bold** as having good relations with the Kulga tribe. [The tables are shown here as a visual reflection of the complexity of the situation.]

Residential Ward 44 – AROWA (Population 857) Councillor Ugh Egil.

Group	Sub Group	Sub SGroup	SSS Group	SSSSGroup	Comments
			Angump	} Friends of the Kulga clan	
			Monakl		
		Komp	Temambo		
			Waltebuga		This group is not known
Ulga Pinga	Kenamp				
			Nubugumbo		
			Galgembo		
		Agilimbo	Kugump		
				Wi-imp	
			Turugumbo	Kaugumbo	

Note 1: Some people here from Kelua No 1 who will join the new Kunguma Ward (ward 16). They are from the Paragemo lineage of that ward.

Note 2: There is a group here who moved to Malda (Ward 50) in pre-European times, including Cr. Kanomba, but will not return here.

Note 3: About 20 men live this ward who Tax, Census and conduct elections at Kongora (ward 45). Wards are adjacent.

Residential Ward 45 - KONGORA (Population 813) Councillor Tomba Kama

Group	Sub Group	Sub SGroup	SSS Group	SSSSGroup	Comments
				Kurugilimaigilimai	
			Wanagamp	Gombimaigilimai	
				Palingenbo	
			Kundulimbo	Garabaragembo	
		Komp			
				Nigimagamil	
			Kaimbimp	Lanuamagamilik	
			Punjembo		
Ulga Pinga			Gogobamp	Jigamp	Living
				Kamulgamp	At
				Penambimp	Kulga
		Agilimbo	Poi-imp	Manugamp	Some live at
				Turugup	Kulga
			Miligamp		
			Oiemp		
		Tugumbu	Memugambo		

Note 1: About 30 men from the Kundulimbo-Palingembo lineage moved to Mul Council area in pre-European times. Doubtful if they will return.

Note 2: A portion of the Nogobamp-Jigamp, Nogobanp-Kamulgamp and Poi-Imp-Turugup lineages moved to Tega (Ward 53) area many years ago due to a land shortage, (including Cr, Tomba). Living on Tega land – unlikely to return here.

Note 3: Majority of the Oiemp lineage now absorbed at Beaberi (Ward 24) See note ward 24

Residential Ward 46 WAIBIP (Population 886) Councillor Kunugul Tomba

Group	Sub Group	Sub SGroup	SSS Group	SSSSGroup	Comments
		Kunugembo	Galgembo		
			Mugembo		
			Maikoga		
		Komp	Komal		
			Agelel		
			Waibugamp		Resident at Kulga
Ugubuga		Agilimbo	Kopiambo		
			Kilimbambo		
			Kutugambo		
		Topoga	Kenganembo	Iamugamp	
			Rapukambo		
			Kutugump		

Note 1: All of this ward live relatively close and no movements of any significance.

Note 2: About 6 men of the Ugubuga- Kunugembo-Galgembo lineage living with Cr. Titip – Ward 35 (Committee man Raim Pera). Advised too late for 1974 constitutional change. To be changed after the 1974 (Council) elections.

Residential Ward 51 PUNGANJIBUK (Population 682) Councillor Maia Kil

Group	Sub Group	Sub SGroup	SSS Group	SSSSGroup	Comments
		Paumuga	Komuga	Jigembo	
				Waibugamp	
	Kamilga				At peace with Kulga
		Agiliga	Palgemp		
			Kugump		
			Timinlgil		
Ulga			Pagimp		
			Kaimilgamp		At peace with Kulga
		Kagemp	Nugubamp		
			Kundulipmugmug		
			Kamugump		
	Kundugu				
		Kombiamp	Nogubamp		Fought the Kulgas in 1972 losing one dead.
			Megupapi		
			Kegaimugmug		Present situation is in balance between Maia Kil [pro Kulga] and Kiap Kenega [anti-Kulga]
			Kundugugumur		

Note 1: 8 men of the Agiliga-Timingil live at Pariga, but assimilated into the Tipullga-Kolaimp lineage at Alimp [Ward 57]

Note 2: Some of the Kobiamp-Kegaimugmug lineage assimilated at Alimp

Residential Ward 52 Dumagona (population 1268) Councillor Kiap Kenega

Group	Sub Group	Sub SGroup	SSS Group	SSSSGroup	Comments
		Kutiga	Agilimbo		
			Kaimump		
		Ugubugemp			
			Ongump		
		Waibuga	Kumungamuma ilil		
			Komunka		
			Iamump		
		Tugumbo	Penambimp		
			Nenkamp		
			Ungump		
		Tona	Kunugamp		
Ulga	Kunduga		Paitemp		
		Elmigemp	Kungamp		
			Palgemp		
			Pinambimp		
		Mobomp	Melagemp		
			Ongump		
			Agil		
			Kom		
			Yum		
			Kondolimp		
		Kaneka	Waningamp		
			Digamp		
			Iamugamp		
			Penambimp		
			Kundulke		
Ebuga	Rone	Pingeri	Waipuke		

Notes: The Ebuga-Waipuka lineage have long residence here, originally from Ward 12. See Note 1 that ward

Sepik 4 Attachment 7 Health care in Maindron – Chris Haiveta

This Attachment seeks to examine the Sissano/Warapu view of their cosmos particularly in relation to sorcery and healing and the impacts of change as induced by contact with Christian Missions. As the foundation of this discussion I have examined Chris Haiveta's research into "Health care in Maindron¹" Haiveta conducted six weeks of field research in early 1982 in Maindron, one of four Sissano language speaking villages located near the Sissano Lagoon and on the beautiful coconut shaded beaches of the Bismarck Sea. Mr. Haiveta's research shows that the Maindron people identify three causes of illness in their communities:

The first is the *Parak*, the guardian spirit of each clan. The function of the *Parak* is to regulate reciprocal relations and to ensure egalitarianism by the use of rewards and punishments. A person may be made ill by the *Parak* for not following the rules². The *Parak* equivalent in the Middle Sepik is the *Tambaran*.

The second cause of illness is by an enemy through the application of *Poisin*, a form of sorcery. During his short research stay Haiveta states that he obtained no firm evidence about sorcery, but he was aware that sorcery was used as a social control on village life.³ In other parts of the Sepik and throughout Papua New Guinea generally sorcery is regarded as the *Village Policeman* in the performance of this regulatory role. As it is believed that children are more vulnerable to *poison* than adults, so the population is doubly vigilant, not wishing harm to come to their children to correct misdeeds of theirs.

The third cause of illness was through the use of a more potent form of sorcery known as *Sanguma*. Haiveta reported only that *Sanguma* is acknowledged to exist and is reported to be practiced by inland people⁴, whose services the Sissano people employ when required. *Sanguma* is reported to be used for the same purposes as *Poisin* but its use was reported to be rare and the outcome usually fatal.⁵

Sissano had traditional healers who combined their knowledge of the curative powers of certain plants with ritual. Traditional healers claimed their curative powers came from their clan *Parak*. Illnesses were also regarded as *clan illnesses* caused by specific clan *Paraks*. For example:

The Raintenien clan, which has the clan totem *Troklau* (the eagle) and the *Parak* called Nisawain is regarded as responsible for causing headaches.

The Airoin 2 clan, which has the clan totem *Sutun* the croton plant and the *Parak* called Melai – Ginger is said to cause bodily aches and diarrhoea.

The establishment of the SVD Mission at Sissano in 1911 saw the commencement of the use of modern medicines among the Sissano people. The mission at Sissano, as it did elsewhere in the Sepik destroyed the *Parak* sacred houses and men's houses and all the physical paraphernalia of clan identity, which they considered to be harmful to their Christian teachings. In response, the Sissano people then built their sacred houses in hidden places in the forest, but the Missionaries found these as well and destroyed them. The sacred ceremonial objects were brought back to the church to be publicly burnt in front of all the villagers in order to show that the power of the Christian God was stronger than the *Parak*.⁶

Another type of traditional healer appeared in Maindron soon after the Second World War. He was and is known as the *glassman*. The original *glassman* experienced what he described as a religious and spiritual awakening while looking after a sick child at Aitape hospital. He commenced speaking in tongues and experienced a vision in which he was able to see what was happening back in the village. He returned home when the child was well and there he discovered that he had the power to cure

people. *Glassmen* believe that illnesses are caused by *Parak*, *Masalai* (Evil spirit), *Sanguma* or *Poisin*. The *glassman* like that of the traditional healer does not question whether the cause of the illness is anything other than what the Sissano people always believed. His function is to identify the cause the illness (*Parak*, *Poisin*, *Sanguma* or *Masalai*) and then to drive the spirit or spell out in the appropriate manner.

Mr. Haiveta saw a *glassman* at work and described how:

The *glassman* seems to enter into a trance that symbolizes an open line of communication with God. The ultimate causes of the illness they cure are always phrased in terms of human actors and their social relations, the physical environment, and the spirits. The code of ethics to which they must adhere to retain their healing power s rigidly biblical including strict observance of the Ten Commandments, regular attendance of mass, refusal to accept payment and availability to any needy person at any time day or night.

Mr. Haiveta described how the success of the original *glassman* was greatly admired and resulted in others following him, seeking to learn and emulate his ways, and so it was that a cult of glassmen developed in the Sissano area. They were regarded as a force for good in the community. At the time of the investigation below Hospital authorities allowed *glassman* to perform their function within the wards. Health services in the Aitape District at that time were managed by the Catholic Mission.

Mr. Haiveta's detailed description of the causes of illness and sorcery in Maindron, with the exception of the *glassman cult*, seems to the writer to reflect the normal status quo in any Sepik village. But Maindron and the other Sissano and other nearby villages differ from other Sepik villages. To the writer's way of thinking the local perception of their cosmos must be a deeply secret daunting and bitter experience filled with prophesies of doom. The writer and one fellow officer spent most of 1977 trying to unravel some of its key secrets and while we did not solve the problems we set out to solve, we learned some additional facts that make Mr. Haiveta's excellent description look like the tip of a cosmic iceberg.

End Notes Sepik 4 Attachment 7

Haiveta C Health Care in Maindroin – Sepik Heritage 1991 Carolina Academic Press ed Letkehaus et al pages 439-446.

² Haiveta 1991 p 442

³ Haiveta 1991 p 443

⁴ "Inland people" refer to all non-Austronesian language speakers living back from the coast – The Warapu, Fas and related language groups.

⁵ Haiveta 1991 p 444

⁶ Haiveta 1991 p 441

Acronyms used in Sepik 4:

1812	Ex-War time 40 ft work boat.
7.A	Seven Association
ABSM	Australian Baptist Mission Society
ADC	Assistant District Commissioner
ADO	Assistant District Officer
AIB	Allied Intelligence Bureau
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ANGAU	Australia New Guinea Administrative Unit
AN&EF	Australian Naval and Expeditionary Force [WW1]
AOG	Assemblies of God
APC	Australian Petroleum Company
APP	All People's Party
ARM	Assistant Resident Magistrate [Papuan administration of ADO]
ASL	Above Sea Level
AWCU	Australian War Crimes Unit
BEM	British Empire Medal
BGD	Bulolo Gold Dredging Limited - employer of Sepik Labour
BMR	Bureau of Mineral Resources
Capt.	Captain
C in C	Commander in Charge
CCND	Christian Committee for National Development
CI	Circular Instruction
CILM	Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters
CLTC	Christian Leadership Training Centre
CM	Catholic Mission
CM	Circular Memorandum
CMML	Christian Missions in Many Lands
Const.	Constable
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
CPO	Cadet Patrol Officer
CSB	Commonwealth Savings Bank
DASF	Department of Agriculture Stock and Fisheries
DDC	Deputy District Commissioner
DDS&NA	Department of District Services and Native Affairs
DLO	District Labour Officer
DNE	Deceased Native Estate
DO	District Officer
EMA	European Medical Assistant
EPL	Exploratory Prospecting Licence.
FOJ	Field Officer's Journal
FORMIL	Four miles to the inch – Map scale
HQ	Headquarters

HQ 8 MD	Headquarters 8 th Military District [PNG]
JP	Justice of the Peace
KM	Kilometre
LGC	Local Government Council
Lieut.	Lieutenant
LL	Luluai
LTC	Lands Titles Commission
MA	Mataungan Association
MAF	Mission Aviation Fellowship
MAL	Mandate Airlines
MHA	Member of the House of Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
MTCDA	Mt Turu Christian Democratic Association
MTT	Medical Tultul
MV	Motor Vessel
NARs	Native Administration Regulations
NCO	Non- Commissioned Officer
NGAU	New Guinea Administrative Unit
NGIB	New Guinea Infantry Battalion
NGRU	New Guinea Research Unit
NLGC	Native Local Government Council
NLO	Native Labour Ordinance
NMO	Native Medical Orderly
NORCOM	Northern Command
NPP	National Progress Party
NTM	New Tribes Mission
NWPO	Native Women's Protection Ordinance
NVC Ord.	Native Village Courts Ordinance
OFM	Ordo Fractum Minorium – Franciscan Friars Minor
OIC, O/C	Officer in Charge
OPM	Free Papua Movement [West Irian]
OR	Other Ranks [Non commissioner]
OSL	Oil Search Limited.
OTML	Ok Tedi Mining Limited
PA	Prospecting Authority
PA	Peli Association
PANGU	Papua New Guinea Union
PCB	Production Control Board – a Rabaul employer of Sepik Labour
PIR	Pacific Islands Regiment [of Australian army]
PMV	Passenger Motor Vehicle
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PNGVR	Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles
PO	Patrol Officer

POIC	Patrol Officer in charge
PSC	Public Service Commission
Pte	Private
QCC	Queensland Criminal Code
R&R	Rest & Recreation
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
REV	Reverend
RN	Royal Navy
RM	Resident Magistrate [Papuan administration equivalent of DO]
RPC	Royal Papua Constabulary
RP&NGC	Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
R/T	Radio Transmission
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SGT	Sergeant
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SIV	Stores Issue Voucher
SLGO	“SLUGO” Senior Local Government Officer
SM	Stipendiary Magistrate
S/MJR	Sergeant Major
SPCA	Sepik Producers Cooperative Association
SPOS	Small particle of shit [senior kiaps’ reference to CPOs]
SSEM	South Seas Evangelical Mission
STANVAC	Standard Vacuum of New Jersey
SVD	Society of the Divine Word – Catholic Mission
TNG	Territory of New Guinea
TPNG	Territory of Papua New Guinea
TT	Tultul
USS	United States Ship
UDP	United Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UPP	United Progress Party
VOC	<i>Veernigde Oost-Indische Compagnie</i> Dutch East India Co
WNG	West New Guinea
W/T	Wireless Transmission
WW 2	World War 2

Sepik 4 part 2 Names of People, Spirits and Gods in the order they appear

Chapter 34 Tribal art integration into Sepik cultural identity & protective law

James Edge Partington and Charles Heape
Heinz Kelm
Sarah Chinnery
Ernest William Person Chinnery
George Dorsey of the Joseph N Field Museum
Albert Buell Lewis of the Joseph N Field Museum
Dr. Richard Thurnwald
Oliver Thompson Aitape District Officer }
Mr Appleby Deputy District Officer } 1921-22
Crane expedition 1928-29
Virginia-Lee
E.J.Wauchope
Comte de Ganay – Trocadero Museum Paris
Walter Ramsay McNicholl New Guinea Administrator 1935
J.K.McCarthy Patrol Officer 1935
Barry Craig, and Anthropologist Museum curator
Erik K Silverman art critic
J.Clifford – Cambridge MA Harvard
Afek “Min” Cultural hero
Mai’imp Sawos Cultural hero Gawatuk Bisis Cultural hero
Kolion of Nogosop – writer’s informant
Satan – Mission reference to objects of traditional religions
Alfred Buhler Anthropologist
M.V.O’Regan Patrol Officer called for protection of the Karawari caves
Paul Gorecki and Jennifer Gabriel – archaeologists
Magisaun cultural hero of the Nyaula latmul people
Tangweiyabinjua cultural hero of the Nyaula latmul people
Crispin Howarth Curator of Pacific Arts – Australian National Gallery
The late Douglas Newton
Theo Aerts of the Catholic mission
Geoff Liversidge
Sir David Attenborough
Rockefeller collection
Rothschild collection
Goldman collection
Bonjui of Korogo respected late elder

Chapter 35 The Rise and Fall of a One Man Christian Mission 1966

John James Smith – not the one man mission’s actual name
Barry A.Ryan ADO Ambunti
Father Padlo – Catholic missionary
E.G.”Ted” Hicks District Commissioner
H.W.Andrews – Inspector 3/c Special Branch
Stan Dale

Chapter 36 A Posting to the Telefomin Sub District

John M.Wearne Assistant District Commissioner Telefomin
Michael Edgar Patrol Officer
John Kabisch Cadet Patrol Officer

Gerald Leo Szarka
 Geoffrey Brodribb Harris
 Constable Buritori
 Constable Purari

} Names of those killed on the flag staff monument

Afek cultural hero of the "Min" people
 Paul Quinlivan – See Sepik 4 part 1 Chapter 13
 Robert Brumbaugh Anthropologist
 Iunku – the Oksapmin name for Afek
 Babasebai – the Leonard Schultze headwater's inhabitants name for Afek
 Dan Jorgensen – Anthropologist
 Harry West Patrol Officer
 Pat Russell Patrol Officer
 John Cochrane Patrol Officer established Oksapmin patrol post in 1961
 Constable Yanopa
 Constable Marregori
 Constable Wari
 Tandet interpreter
 Saling Interpreter
 Wuniot Interpreter
 Mangatipnok Interpreter
 Corporal Nuwungot
 Tjiong – escaped prisoner
 Sachiko Hatanaka Anthropologist
 Ernest Mitchell Patrol Officer
 Harry Roach ADC Aitape & Enumerator for the 1966 PNG Census

Chapter 37 The Exploration of the Strickland Sepik Divide 1966

J.R.Black 1939
 Harry West 1951
 Laurie Nolen 1952
 F.Jones 1954
 Dave Wren 1955
 Ron Neville 1957
 Bill Brown 1960/61
 John Cochrane 1961
 Arthur Marks 1962/3
 Peter Lancaster 1964?
 Norm Wilson 1964/5?
 Wayne Heathcote 1965?

} Officers whose patrols entered parts of the Om River area of the Sepik Strickland Divide area

Masadien of Kamagoiana – appointed Luluai
 Corporal Nin } Accompanying Marks' 1963 patrol
 Constable Mandakai }

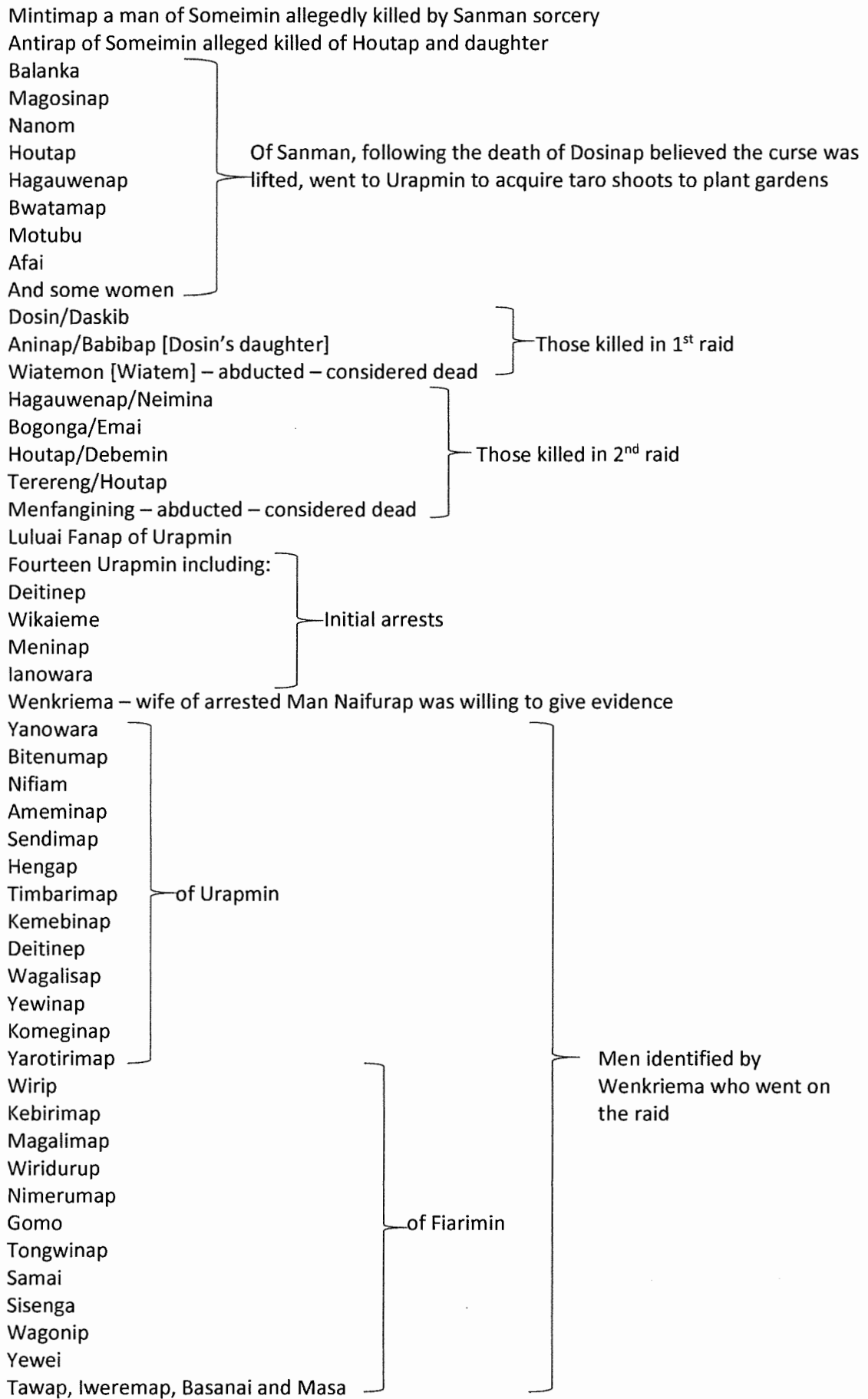
} Attacked by a cassowary 1966
 Constable Maregori
 Constable Amatus }

Feiyau – leader of the "Sisimin" [Saiyolof]
 Nai, a man reported murdered
 Gordon Brown – Officer in Charge Lake Kopiago Patrol Post
 Constable Forbiyuk
 "Taffy" Marcus Watkins Patrol Officer drowned in the Om River early 1970s
 Robin Barclay Patrol Officer } Ambunti patrol 1/1965-66 into the Leonard
 K.J.Taylor Cadet Patrol Officer } Schultz River headwaters
 Samade – headman of Auyumo

"Hapi" the local name for the upper Leonard Schultze River
 "Walio" the local name for the lower Leonard Schultze River
 "Nene" the local name for the Upper middle Leonard Schultze River
 Tafiana head man of Kabian
 Pat Wearne – ADC's wife sent a magnificent fruit cake in the airdrop re-supply
 "Pume" a group of raiders and cannibals to the west – turned out to be Unamo
 "Paiemo" constantly raided by Unamo – just 4 Paiemo survivors in 1966
 'Nuwepmin" the Unamo name for the Paiemo
 "Nena" – The Telefomin name for the Frieda River
 "Niar" – The Mianmin name for the Frieda River
 Mangatipnok – my interpreter recognized by women captured by Unamo from Duranmin
 Solisep/Tenyieng, a 14 year-old boy captured as a child from Akiapmin
 John Hartley 1970 told me Carpentaria Explorations found copper on some of my camp sites

Chapter 38 The Mianmin Murder Investigation of 1966-67

Ernest Mitchell's East Mianmin got word of killing in West mianmin
 Tony Try OIC Imonda chosen as Second officer
 Constable Yanopa
 Constable 1st Class Ganim and 11 constables
 D.J.Clancy District Commissioner issued the patrol instructions
 Kwifam – convicted killer 1956 was our Mianmin interpreter
 Cess – Telefomin language interpreter
 Anterapnok – Medical Orderly
 John Wearne ADC
 Martin Kerr Cadet Patrol Officer } 1965 patrol of West Mianmin Restricted area
 Luluai Babaksep of Bovaripmin
 Don Gardner – Anthropologist
 "Ulabten" is the name by which the Urapmin call themselves
 Balanka } Sanman survivors brought in
 Motubu }
 Dosin a woman of Sanman was killed
 Mr D.A.McCabe DDC issued exhumation orders in case we needed them
 Habiap – Dosin's husband
 Wiatemon a young girl missing presumed abducted
 Amokep of Fiarimin admitted holding Wiatemon
 Nemandieng – a Sanman woman
 17 Sanman survivors came in, but fled during the night
 Constable "Pius" Yaregawa
 Yamsap Luluai of Ivikmin
 Hagauwenap of Sanman one of the reported nine killed
 Corporal Kusimnok stationed at Atbalmin base camp
 Beita }
 Wasei } all of Sanman - moved Hagauwenap's body from the creek bed and took his
 Totirimap } Skull to the Sanman haus tambaran
 Bogonga – a Sanman youth murdered
 Pusap of Sanman
 Warimap/Sobwi – female Sanman witness
 Hengafi of Urapmin? In the Aki valley
 Houtap – Warimap's husband murdered
 Terereng – Warimap's daughter murdered
 Menfaganing – Warimap's daughter reported murdered, then reported missing [abducted?]
 Bwatanap of Sanman



Nanigin/Sabaringap, a lad } Did not go on the raid
 Luluai Fanap of Urapmin }
 Noel Cavanagh – former Patrol Officer in charge Green River
 Constable Gomba
 Constable Bisambi
 Wemben Baptist mission Infant Maternal Welfare sister at Telefomin. Cared for Wenkriema
 Who was found to be pregnant

Chapter 39 A threatened tribal war in Oksapmin, Supreme Court Mianmin trial & making peace

Keith Bricknell Baptist Missionary Tekin mission station
 Neil Rob Robinson Cadet Patrol Officer
 Victor Emmanuel range crossed at 11,792 ft ASL
 Alanterap – Sanman girl witness – two arrow wounds in her back
 Houtap
 Hagauwenap
 Garry Keenan Stipendiary Magistrate – Preliminary hearing 13 to stand trial
 Constable Yaregawa
 Sir Sydney Frost
 Naifurap’s case set aside so his wife Wenkriema could give evidence
 Wenkriema gave birth 4th May 1967
 Voir dire hearing [trial within a trial] on admissibility of confession statements.
 Ruled admissible.

Waglisak }
 Nefiam } Defence argued } Judge acquitted these two
 Yanowar } no case to answer } Judge convicted these two
 Wikaiema }

Antecedent report – I argued for clemency. Justice Frost disagreed – 10 years each

L.W.Bragge ADC
 Chris Van Lieshout Cadet Patrol Officer
 Six police
 1 Interpreter
 1 medical orderly
 Wenkriema and baby
 Nefiam, acquitted prisoner
 Waglisak acquitted prisoner
 92 patrol carriers
 Luluai Yamsap of Urapmin
 Wenkriema and baby – our ambassadors
 Luluai Ambep of Ivikmin No 2
 Roger Claridge Stipendiary Magistrate
 Prosecutor Mr W.Weir

The peace making patrol departed on 7th July 1967

Naifurap committed to stand trial – convicted, but sentence suspended due to poor health

Chapter 40 Discovery and Exploration of the Frieda River Copper and Gold Deposit.

Behrmann expedition 1912/13
 Ward Williams expedition 1936/37 } were in the area but did
 Jack Thurston 1942 thought the area might warrant investigation } did not find the deposit
 Bulolo Gold Dredging 1949 }
 Australian Bureau of Mineral Resources [BMR] 1966/67
 Dow D.B, Smit D.B. } conducted the BMR survey
 Bain J.A.J, Ryburn R.L. }
 John Hartley of Carpentaria Explorations told the writer they found copper on my camp sites

Bob Hall, Peter Simpson, Russ Lord,
 Bob Schulz, Horst Schmidt, Ray Langford,
 Bill Dossett [pilot] } Of Carpentaria Explorations
 Warren Hansen – Laskompani Ambunti
 John Pasquarelli
 Bill Wallace Pilot
 MacIntyre and associates o Townsville
 Frank Martin MP
 Tony Friend ADC Telefomin

Chapter 41 Deaths of six missionaries resulting from their zeal & evangelical policies.

Reverend Stan Dale – Rejected by UFM and CMML missions in PNG
 Harry West – Telefomin 1950
 Ian and Jill Flatters retired Baptist missionaries from Tekin
 Patricia – Stan Dale’s wife
 Don Richardson author of *Lords of the Earth*
 Bruno deLeeuw } established a Region Beyond Missionary Union
 Mr and Mrs Dale } [RBMU] Ninia station in Irian Jaya’s Heluk valley
 Costas Macris relieved the Dales when they went on furlough in 1965
 Jeikwaragu and Bingguok went to the Lower Heluk, were killed
 Dale investigated received several arrow wounds
 Dale flown out by MAF 13th June 1966
 Dr Long and medical staff at Karubaga
 August 1968 Dale intended to explore the Solo and Seng valleys
 Mr Dale, }
 Phillip Jesse Masters } Both killed with arrows and flesh cut away for feasting
 Yemu, a Dani helper }
 3 Dani carriers } wounded with arrows – fled two got back to Ninia mission
 John MacGregor Patrol Officer Olsobip heard the news and reported to Kiunga
 Robert Hamilton – Pilot cleared by DCA to help in air search
 Frank Clark a UBMU field leader
 11 prisoners taken – five shot dead while trying to escape
 MAF pilot Menno of call sign MPH
 Gene and Lois Newman and four Newman children
 Plane crashed all were killed except Paul Newman aged 9 years
 Kusaho, a Yali elder helped Paul and he was rescued

Chapter 42 Doctor Hatanaka and Further Hewa Exploration 1967 =>

Sachiko Hatanaka Anthropologist
 Norm Wilson Patrol Officer
 Taylor and Black Hagen Sepik Patrol 1938/9
 Brian McBride Patrol Officer } 1960 patrol – south Hewa
 Ross Henderson Patrol Officer }
 David F.Permezel Patrol Officer 1962/3 patrol – south Hewa
 D.J.Hook and W.Cawthorn Patrol Officers 1964 patrol – south Hewa
 Norm Wilson Patrol Officer 1965-66 patrol – south Hewa
 L.W.Bragge ADC Telefomin } North Hewa Restricted area March 1967
 Neil Robinson Cadet Patrol Officer }
 Mo of Nafiafi North Hewa
 Yamia of Suwiyafi North Hewa
 Ian Smalley OIC Lake Kopiago
 D.J.Clancy District Commissioner West Sepik
 Constable Yanopa

Constable Mandakai
 Gadei/Fetateli
 Ebinei/Bagawon
 Feiau – Yoliape leader
 Masiu/Morubin
 Uwalu/Morubin

Arrested re the alleged murder of Yamia

Wuniot Interpreter
 Amufo – originally reported killed was still alive
 Miamai – Yoliape woman reported killed remained dead

L.W.Bragge
 Chris van Lieshout Cadet Patrol Officer
 Rick Hutchings Cadet Patrol Officer
 Wuniot Interpreter
 Dr Hatanaka
 Dr Roger Ivar Lohmann

The patrol to establish Dr Hatanaka at Yoliapi in November 1967

Chapter 43 The Bien River community's traditional revival early 1970s

Ninga of Lower Bien river – resident at Oromai - cargo cult leader
 Father Lena of Marienberg
 Father Kwas of Marienberg
 Gumuk – female ancestor
 Aium – ancestor of the Jimi clan
 Ukuyjok female ancestor, remembered as being dumb
 Aigat – an ancestor remembered as always being hungry
 And many other figures
 Mark Busse PNG Museum

figures depicted on the haus tambaran [posts]

Chapter 44 The Ambunti Sub District 1970-74

Frank and Mrs Faulkner ADC Angoram 1970
 John Corrigan ADC Ambunti – from whom I took over
 Peter Janguan – of Yambunumbu – canoe driver
 Murray Tomlinson ADO
 Henry Veratau Trainee Patrol Officer
 Bill Dowd – Patrol Officer
 John White Patrol Officer
 Frank den Ousten Cadet Patrol Officer Pagwi Patrol Post
 David Pennefather Patrol Officer May River Patrol Post
 Luke Rahu – clerk

Mrs Gorton – Australian Prime Minister's wife
 Mr Anthony – Cabinet Minister
 Mr Barnes – Cabinet Minister
 Mr Nixon – Cabinet Minister
 David Attenborough and Documentary team
 Many Others

VIP Visitors to Ambunti needing to be met and entertained

Garu Jam of Yambon
 Nauwi Sauinambi of Bangwis
 Karandaman of Malu
 Baras of Japandai
 Nonguru of Japandai
 Kwonji of Burui

some of the first village elders I interviewed of the 200 + I talked with over 1970-74

GWL Townsend PO and DO Sepik pre-war
 Kemerabi of Japandai – headhunter and Luluai
 Dr Christian Kaufmann Anthropologist

Deborah Gewertz Anthropologist
 Ex- Luluai Baipwon of Swagup – murdered
 Kevin Packer investigated
 Robin Barclay Patrol Officer
 L.W.Bragge & Bruce Robinson – April River headwaters exploration 1970
 David Attenborough and documentary team } Filming “A Blank on the Map.”
 Ray Langford geology field assistant }
 H.Thomas 1951 }
 R.Orwin 1951 } Patrol Officers on record as having tried to resolve the Timbunmeri
 Gilbert no date } Island land dispute
 A.Zweck 1952 }
 P. Wenck 1954 }
 N.Grant 1954 }
 Susan Karike [now Mrs Huhume] designed the PNG national flag
 Dr John Gunther Assistant Administrator
 Mr. Justice Clarkson – PNG Supreme Court
 Colin Sanderson ADC, while I was on leave 1972
 Dr. Gobius – District Medical Officer
 Colin McDonald ADO Ambunti – murdered February 1935
 R.R.Cole former DC and former Commissioner of Police
 Councillor Bowi of Aibom re annual census being the registry of births marriages & deaths
 Barry Fischer ADC Telefomin 1970s
 “Taffy” Marcus Watkins – I was a pall-bearer at his funeral in Wewak
 Anskar Karmen MP 1972 replaced Nauwi Sauinambi

Chapter 45 The Kwoma cultural revival 1971

Nauwi Sauinambu MP and writer’s informant
 Nameiangambu of Yambon 1965 cargo cult leader – destruction of important relics
 Tundimi of the SDA church – bell ringer in a time Traditionally requiring silence
 Ross Bowden Anthropologist
 Mr Lundstrom SDA Mission Ambunti
 Mr Gordon Taylor temporary relief in Mr Lundstrom absence
 Douglas Newton – curator New York Museum of Primitive Art
 The late Walasaka/Sauinambi of Bangwis
 Apkwina elder of Bangwis

Chapter 46 A Blank on the Map – In front of the Cameras with David Attenborough.

Senior Constable Boma
 Constable Kaius
 Constable Eukuma
 Constable Bagindo
 Constable ist Class Paino
 Ray Langford – Carpentaria Explorations
 Hugh Miles Photographer
 Laurie Bragge ADC Ambunti
 David Attenborough Naturalist
 Ian Samson sound man
 Keith Adam of the ABC
 107 patrol porters

} “A Blank on the Map” documentary
 film expedition 1971

Chapter 47 The Mt. Turu Cargo Cult

Paul “Jim” Roscoe Anthropologist
 Father Eberardt Limbrock – Mission founder
 Father Francis Kirschbaum

King George VI's Coronation celebrations
 Helo
 Hombinei of Ambukanja
 Paulus Hawina [Also spelt Howina and Hauwina in these pages] Paramount Luluai
 Queen Elizabeth II Coronation celebrations
 Ex Sgt Yauiga of Nagam
 Nindepolye Rural Progress Association
 John Wearne Patrol Officer Yangoru 1954-55
 Angoram Ex-Servicemen's club
 Angoram Sports Club
 Mathias Yeliwan – spiritual leader
 Daniel Hawina
 Pita Lus – Pangu MP opposed the cult
 Mike Thomas – Superintendent of Police
 Bishop Arkvelt [Arkfeldt]
 Michael Somare
 Mr. Johnson, Administrator
 Peter Maut -Vice President Wewak Local Government Council
 Kumasi – Wewak LG Councillor
 Kerry Lean a/District Commissioner Wewak
 Peter Lawrence Anthropologist
 David Steven a/District Commissioner Wewak
 Cain and Abel
 Mr Pearce – South Seas Evangelical Mission
 Simon Kaumi – Chief Electoral Officer
 Mathias Yeliwan elected to the seat of Yangoru-Saussia Open – later resigned
 "Flowers", "Workers" and "Money Houses"
 W.Graham magistrate sentenced Daniel Hawaina to 5 months hard labour
 Marcus Yaklesnbi sentenced to three months
 Jimmy Simba
 Barry Holloway – Speaker of the House of Assembly
 Mathias Yambumbe a delegate from the Gaui Local Government Council to Yangoru LGC
 Moved Gaui LGC not to associate with the cult.
 Geimtok/Veliagen
 Ginjiwaiku/Krapas
 Maikanjin/Banjiwan
 Tungui/Kanu – of Yambon at Yangoru he trained others
 Joseph Katabi Dulai – Peli Assn committee member of Bensim

Chapter 48 The House of Assembly election 1972 - Upper Sepik Open

Nauwi Sauinambi MP
 Wesani lwoksim MP
 Mrs Lundstrom – drew up Ambunti's part of the common roll from tax/census registers
 Wayne Cross OIC Amboin Patrol Post – excluded as a polling officer on the basis of media
 Barry Fischer – Returning Officer Upper Sepik Open – position terminated by lwoksim MP
 Tony Hazlewood PO appointed Returning Officer in Fischer's place
 Dan Van Claasen – Returning Officer West Sepik Regional electorate
 Tampsen/Yambundu of Avatip
Loribrek was the name by which the Sepik people knew me.
 Tom Ellis – Director, a personal friend of sitting member Nauwi Sauinambi
 Harry Weldon a distant relative of Nauwi Sauinambi
 Garu Yam of Yambon, his candidacy lapsed when his nomination fee cheque bounced

Livai Binjari Trainee Patrol Officer

Melisa – Naui Sauinambi's secret Papuan girl friend arrived to Naui's embarrassment, ending His chances of being elected in 1972. She soon left – damage done

Ray Lenaghan OIC Edwaki Base Camp [Yellow River]

Chapter 49 Leading the way into Self Government and Independence.

Mr Jones Director

John Gorton Australian Prime Minister

Tony Voutas and Peter Hastings

Sir Hugh Foot

Ian Downes

Paul Hasluck – Minister for External Territories

Barry Holloway

Tony Voutas

13 "angry young men"

} formed the Pangu Party

J.Fenton injured in Mataungan attack

Rakunat/Dimani

Vin Tobaining

Ishmael Towalaka

And others

} Tolai leader

E.G.Whitlam – Labour leader of opposition and later Australian Prime Minister

"Uncle Toms" – Whitlam's reference to local leaders supporting the Administration

Oscar Tammur

Harry West – District Commissioner handed over to Jack Emanuel – murdered on 19/8/71

Mathias Toliman

Julias Chan – coalition with Michael Somare

Josephine Abaija – Papua Besena

Bonjui of Korogo former Legco member

Joseph Anganjuan – of Japandai

Gau of Indabu

Kolion of Nogosop

Mondi of Torembei

Tang Mow

George Seeto

Burns Philp

Jack [Bagita]

} Locals who expressed conservative views on Self-Government and Independence

} How Wewak traders impacted by approaching Self-Government

Sam Sirox Kali – quote from his thesis

Chapter 50 When Kiap became a Four-Letter word

Harry West – First Assistant Secretary on Somare's plans for the kiaps

Mr. Miles Manager of Radio Wewak

Colin Sanderson ADC Ambunti

E.G.Hicks District Commissioner

David Stevens District Inspector

Anskar Karmel MHA

Yangas Wikapa Vice President Ambunti Local Government Council

Amboningi Yamban

Wimbosi Nanget school teacher

Camillus Kami – Storeman

Mambi Gawi power house operator

John Corrigan previous ADC

Kontrak Nagwan – petition against Corrigan – déjà vu

Chapter 51 Iatmul initiations 1933, 1961 and 1973 – a comparison

G.W.L.Townsend Patrol Officer and District Officer pre-war
E.D."Sepik Robbie" Robinson Patrol Officer and District Officer pre-war
Win LG Councillor of Kandingei
Mr Gilbert Patrol Officer 1950s
Mr. Walsh European Medical Assistant – pre-war
Gregory Bateson Anthropologist
Ex-Constable Managun
Albert Borok Trainee Patrol Officer

Chapter 52 Female skin cutting at PeliAugwi Island 1974

Maribika LG Councillor of Mensuat - PeliAugwi Island
Paul Banji – Writer's informant
Niaetbandiaugwi – Japanaut girl who her skin cut

Chapter 53 The North Hewa Murder investigation Nov. 1974

Noel Cavanagh – Deputy District Commissioner – Southern Highlands Province
Harley Rivers Dickinson – District Court Magistrate

Pinguwapa
Alualu
Ialupeni
Luiaba
Liauwi

} Men of Wusai alleged killers of a woman and a man of Tawalibe

Mali river men of Tarei – North Hewa

Aria – Tultul of Folini village South Hewa – murdered

G.Gomara District Commissioner Southern Highlands

Inubei/Saueinen – Aria's wife

Chris Maken – Patrol Officer 1970 – last patrol of North Hewa

Yasana of Tarei

Andi of Tarei

Lenku of Tarei

Sawupa of Wanikipa

Alulu of Wanikipa

Papa of Wanikipa

Tama of Wanikipa

Ainama of Folini

Taindei of Hiranei

Kwaba of Hiranei

Corporal Kuningi of Lake Kopingo Patrol Post

Bill van Rikxoort a/ADC Koroba from whom I took over

John Kabisch Patrol Officer

Lyle Steadman's thesis Neighbours and Killers

Sachiko Hatanaka Anthropologist

Sister Anselm -Pakistani nun at Koroba mission

Senior Constable Poge

Constable 1st Class Kilaosi

Constable Bavi

Constable Nabur

Constable Laulau

Constable Nime

Interpreter Himau of Wanikipa

Napema Tultul of Wusipa

Ex-Interpreter Pania

} Actually killed Aria – body into Lagaip River

} South Hewa leaders the Tarei killers also threatened to kill

} North Hewa patrol members other than myself and 60 or so patrol carriers

Constable Nabur – appointed as my body guard

Yasana

Andi

Koro, a youth of Wagabei – Waru valley

Kwelei

Tsawama

} The Wagabei women who delivered Aria’s Tultul badge to Folini were met, thanked and richly rewarded

Constable Bavi collapsed and had to be carried back to Lake Kopiago.

Sir Coleman O’Loughlan of the Supreme Court heard the case

Chapter 54 Highlands Warfare 1974-75

Colin Sanderson

Des Fanning

Murray Dixon

R.C. “dick” Olive

Frank Dubois

Laurie Doolan District Commissioner

Neil Dunkerley

B.Dodd

L.Mohr

Operation Dawn

Operation Kim

Operation Hagen

Constable 1st Class Konjili

Councillor Olik of Tega

Bona of Minimp

Police officers Ravill and Samo and a riot squad

Kuk, a young lady – daughter in law of wanted leader Miranda

Purun

Agi

Tomba

Pena

Kurup

} Jiga leader along with Miranda the Administration wanted to interview these men were nervously hiding in Togoba caves wanting to surrender

Operation Nebilyer

Kiap Kenega LG Councillor of Dumagona

Waguma/Taiya of Ulga Kunduga Ugupugump

Keruwa Tembon of Ulga Kunduga Kutuga

Magani/? of Ulga Kundugu Komobiamp

Tama/Tembon of Ugubuga Tebuga Kugunuga

Tambil/Kur of Ugubuga Agalimp Kobiamp

Mendi/ Kanumba of Ugubuga Tabuga Kobugamp

Kurubai/Kuri of Ulga Pinga Kunamp

} Outstanding kills by Kulga warriors to be avenged or Compensated

Bernie Newell Patrol Officer

Kunugul LG Councillor for the Ugubuga group

Kengena/Kubin- female of Ulga Kunduga – assaulted

Edrick Namik Patrol Officer trainee

Peter Pilamp – Dept of Civil Aviation

Thomas Nikinch student UPNG

} Home on leave to fix the problems of their people

Councillor Maiya of Pujanjibuk

Councillor Ugh of Aruwa

Ron Hiatt Deputy District Commissioner

Professor Andrew Strathern

Alan Rumsey Anthropologist

Alan Rumsey Anthropologist
"Spak Brus" Marihuana

Chapter 55 Nuku Sub District 1976: A Glut of Paddy Rice and cult tendencies

George Oakes Patrol Officer established Nuku Patrol Post 1957
Oil Search Limited established Maimai in 1937
G.W.L.Townsend District Officer
Jim Hodgekiss Patrol Officer
Yapunda police post established 1938
PO Hodgekiss and ADO Bloxham attacked near Mukili mid-1938
G.A.V.Stanley of Oil Search also attacked in the same area
Robert James Hyde Patrol Officer attacked near Makafum late 1938
Neil Campbell Elliott and Constable Aipaum murdered at Wanali 1/7/1939
H.R.Niall ADO settled fighting between Watalu and Libuat villages late 1939

Brief history
of contact
PalaiMaimai
region

G.W.L.Townsend District Officer
H.R.Niall ADO
Mr Mader Patrol Officer
Mr Warner-Shand Patrol Officer

Those involved in investigating Neil
Campbell Elliott and Aipaum murders

Fryer and Dutch parties passed through Maimai/Palai area 1943
Capt Ralph Ormsby

Mert Brightwell ADO Ambunti 1950s

Dudley Young-Whitford attacked at Makafum August 1946

George Morris patrol attacked at Makafum July 1947

J.D.Martin OIC Dreikikir investigated multiple killings Eismala area Sept 1951

Monsini/Maniengle – also known as Yakok of Yirwandi village

Peter Gall quoted

Mokoron/Misema also known as Peter of Yirwandi

Karl Stack – [Kitchens] Patrol Officer and later MP

Ferdinand Kaum LG Councillor

Nablo Cultural Centre

K.O.Vanuawaro District Commissioner West Sepik

Kubai/Ewere female of Usitamo married Wabai/Silako of Klaplei

Glinawei/Silako – sister of Wabai married Tambala/Masisi of Usitamo

Maksinumbo.Ewere Kubai's true brother

Roger Kauffmann Patrol Officer

Neil Elliott's grave

Wally Hook's grave

Colin Campbell ADC Aitape, from whom I took over

More
history

Bride price vrs
sister exchange
dispute arbitrated

Chapter 56 Aitape Sub District 1976-78

G.W.L.Townsend – District Officer moved the Sepik HQ from Aitape to Wewak in 1934

Dr Otto Finsch 1885

Ludwig Kaernbach trader 1894

Father Limbrock 1996

Vokau catholic mission established 1898

St Anna Plantation established 1903

Hans Rodatz District Officer established Eitape 19/10/1906

Fritz Schulz settled in Sissano at Maindron 1906?

Tectonic activity created Sissano Lagoon Nov/Dec 1907

Rodatz punitive expedition against Sissano 1908

Fr Francis Kirschbaum arrived Tumleo and opened Malol mission

Oil seep discovered at Matapau 1910

Sissano mission established 1911

Aitape History
cont. Next page

Angoram Government station established 1913
 Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary force replaced German administration 1914
 Angoram station closed 1915
 1922 Oliver Thompson DO Aitape
 Sepik District separated from Aitape District – Ambunti established 1924
 Sepik and Aitape districts again merged July 1933 GWL Townsend as DO
 Bishop Loerks moved mission HQ from Tumleo to Kairiru Isl. 1934
 Major earth quake 1935
 Charlie Gough, recruiter murdered 1936
 Neil Campbell Elliott and Constable Aipaum murdered
 a/ADO Milligan walked Aitape to Sepik to Benabena Dec 1942
 Wally Hook murdered March 1943
 Japanese occupy Aitape and build Tadjii airstrip
 American landings Aitape and Hollandia 22/4/1944
 Japanese failed counter-attack Driniumur River July/Aug 1944
 Aitape inland sub district established Sept 1944
 W.G.Carey – Aitape Trader and member Rimau/Singapore beheaded
 Civil admin took over from Military 26/2/1946
 Franciscans took over from SVA at Aitape 1946
 Wilfred [Bob] Parer leased Mission plantations Tadjii, Tepier & St Anna June 1954
 Indonesia invaded Dutch NG 1962
 PNG Independence 16/9/1975
 Karl Kitchens {Stack} elected West Sepik Regional Mid 1977
 Tsunami killed 2,183+ people 1/7/1998

Laurie
 Beverley
 Louisa aged 4
 Christopher aged 1
 Seraiook – servant
 Seraiook's family

Bragge family arrived Aitape Dec. 1976

Brian and Liz Webb
 Rob and Marg Parer
 Karl Kitchens and wife Francisca
 Dominic Tari – and family
 Peter Turner
 Big Lucy
 Little Lucy
 Rufina

Office staff

Gary Luhrs and Aggie at Sissano
 Paul Dau – Public Works road builder
 Father Morris of Drome mission
 L.W.Bragge – Returning officer Aitape Lumi Open electorate 1977
 Sir John Guise – Governor General of PNG
 Steven Sio won Aitape Lumi Open
 Karl Kitchens [Stack] won West Sepik Regional became Minister for Forests
 J.S.Mileng Chief Electoral Officer – well pleased with Aitape Lumi pollijng

Chapter 57 The Warapu Sanguma Murders < 1977 >

Gary Luhrs Patrol Officer – Sissano Patrol Post
 Father Marco of Sissano Mission
 John Moronda Mataimon – deceased
 Mataimon/Urin – deceased's father

Alois Sisinda Mataimon }
 Simon Planus }
 Linus Aronake } All brothers of the deceased
 Steven Wikoi }
 Jacob Skuwawa }

Francisca Kitchens, an Aitape girl indicated the removal of flesh relates to sorcery customs
 Dr Regis of Raihu hospital conducted an autopsy
 Constable Munde

Joli – suspected cargo cultist
 Mebuke a reputed “Glassman” – clairvoyant/healer }
 Ou of Kabori killed } A Piori River saga of long
 Kiaru an elder from Mori killed } distance Sanguma killings - while
 Saifei – assistant Glassman } totally believed locally would not
 Yagi of Amasu } stand up as evidence in court
 Mise – Saifei’s daughter killed
 Meduke’s daughter unnamed killed

Yaru/Mu, a simpleton, but greatly feared sorcerer of Savimui
 Sek/Fukuvei – Joli’s cult representative at Savimui money house
 The “Mythical” Mururu people

Details of five earlier sanguma victims 1970-1976 – all Warapus

Father Eugene reported viewed the bodies and entered the deaths in his register – no report
 To authorities.

Tamako – Medical orderly at Serra letter found Father Urban – lists nine suspicious deaths
 In Serra villages 1957-1970

Masta/Wunin – reputed sorcerer of Savimui }
 Joseph Menson – Aid Post Orderly at Ramo, a native of Warapu } Apparent new leads
 Rapit/Brata of Ramo }

John Paka of Sumo – passed away }
 Father Brian [dentist] } Each contacted me asking questions
 Father Peter Frazer at Klapei – a lawyer }
 Father Eugene at Sissano – a lawyer }

The Otto – the mouth of the Sissano Lagoon into the Bismarck Sea

Yaru/Mu escaped custody May 1977

Constable Dendena

Constable Bensik

Yaru/Mu recaptured sitting under Joseph Menson’s house in Ramo

Masta Wunin’s evidence on Joseph Menson

Masta Wunin – denied glassman status claims to be a “Newsmen” clairvoyant

Mebuke – now dead

Masta’ son “Kiap” named after the writer

Akota/Rempen }
 Godfried/Pusane } of Warapu went with John Mataimon and fished with
 And others } fished with him the day he died. John went on alone

Raphael/Bilon Malol wife – saw the body on a raft – it fell into the water

“Saioi” local edible greens

Sisinda spoke to his dead brother

Salum/Navoto saw the body surface and John’s body was recovered

Mataimon and his living sons convicted of spreading false reports

Chris Haiveta Glassman research at Maindron See attachment 7

Chapter 58 Sepik Political Conservatism

Ambuningi – Ambunti LG Council President

Anskar Karmel MP
Kahibe – jailed for spreading false reports
Kolion – philosopher of Nogosop

Chapter 59 A Sepik Philosopher explains the meaning of life

Kolion – Sepik Philosopher and writer's informant
Jesus equated with Sawos cultural hero Mai'imp [Mai'impdimi]
Boimandalagu – women with hair on their bodies
Kwanigalagu – women with no hair on their bodies
Gumai'imp – Mai'imp's child
The "Sepik old testament"
The "Sepik new testament"
Santa Maria The sacred mother of mankind – she is also the moon
Niauinimba – The Niaui moiety
Ave Maria – a woman in the water
Kwaru and Sangi – mythical cultural heroes
Father Leo
Gingu – night – dark - black water
Songu – day – light – White water

Chapter 60 The end of the Kiap System

Beverley – my first wife
Jane Bragge my third child born late 1978
Esprit de Corps among kiaps
Dame Rachael Cleland – Administrator's wife quoted
Ramsay Barrett – then of Mobil Oil – equated Kiaps with Texas Rangers.
The importance of the Navuneram incident of 4th August 1958
Paul Hasluck – Minister for Territories
Durham – Professor of Jurisprudence – Melbourne University
J.K.McCarthy Director reflected on the dismantling of the "Kiap" system – 1963

For Attachments 1 – 4 – See Sepik part 1

Attachment 5 1968-70 Marriage and an Interlude in Milne Bay's D'Entrecasteaux Islands.

Beverley Bragge nee Smith.

Attachment 6 Analysis of relative warfare Involvement of Nebilyer valley tribes.

This attachment is self-explanatory – no need to extract names

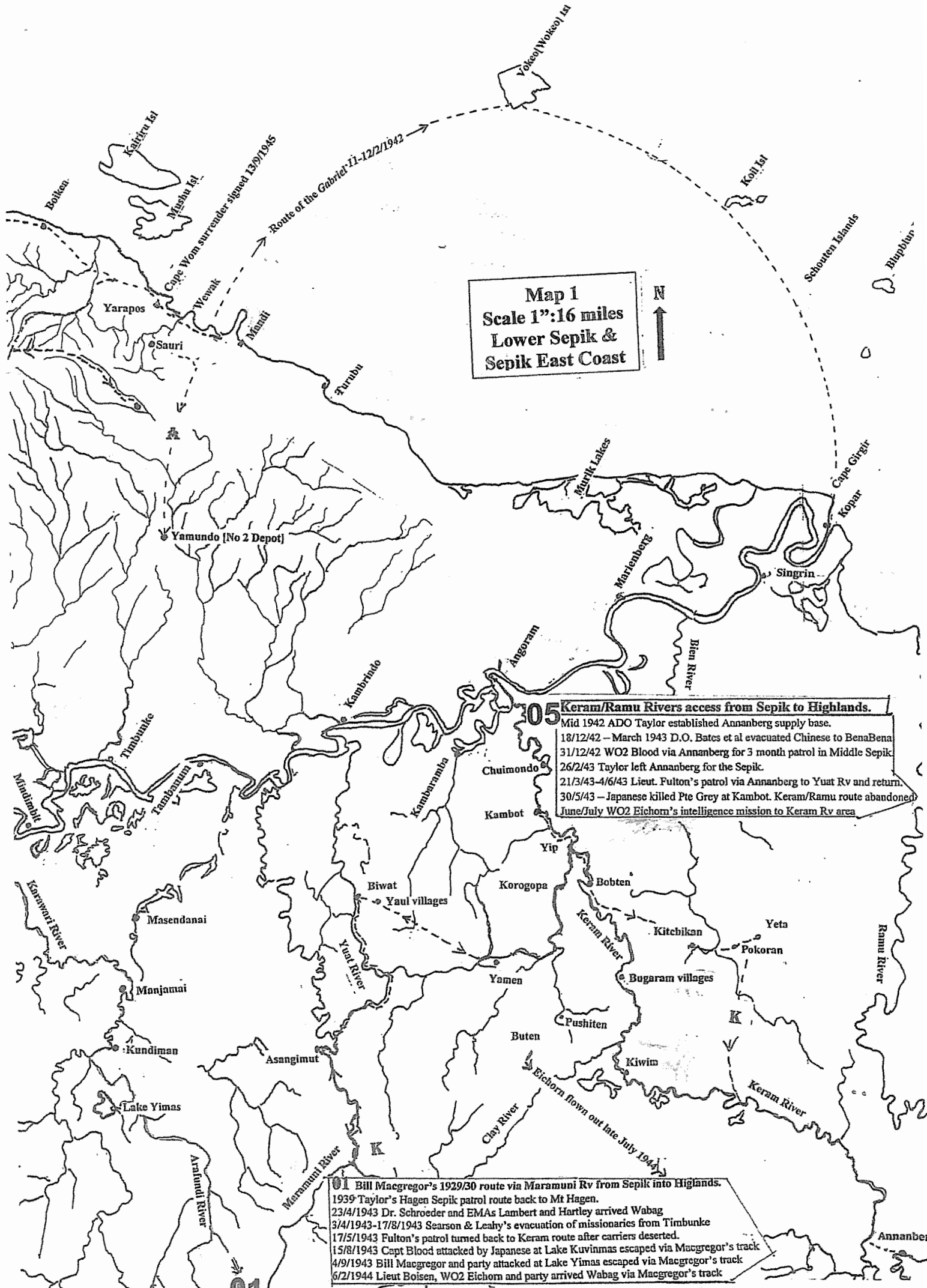
Attachment 7 Health care in Maindron – Chris Haiveta

Chris Haiveta
Parak – equivalent to a Sepik River tambarans
Nisawain – The Parak of Troklau [eagle] clan
Melai – the Parak of Airin no2 clan
Glassman - healer
Masalai – evil spirit

List of Acronyms used

Names of People, Spirits, Gods in the order they appear

Sepik Maps 1-6 adopted from Sepik 3

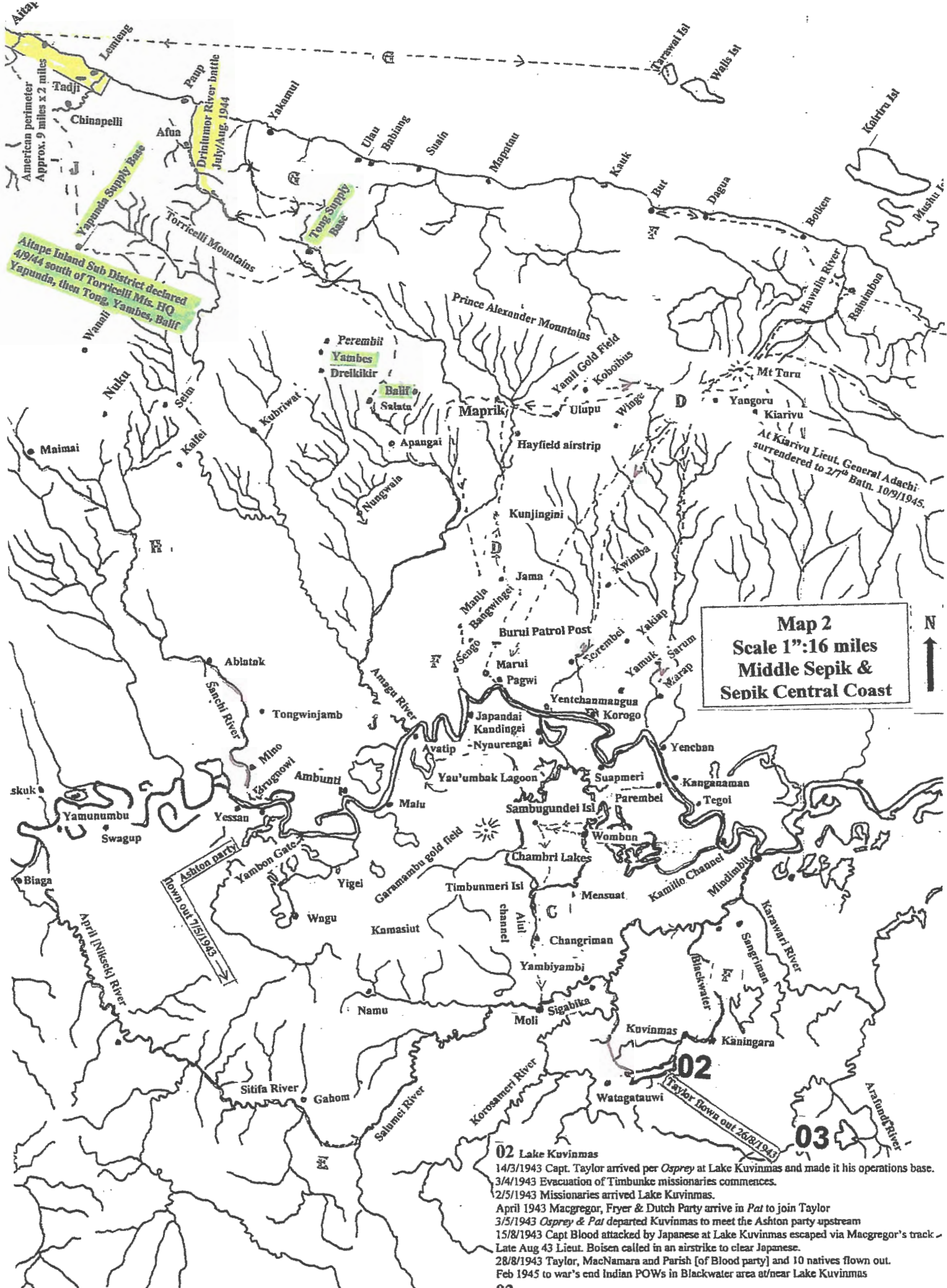


Map 1
Scale 1":16 miles
Lower Sepik &
Sepik East Coast



05 Keram/Ramu Rivers access from Sepik to Highlands.
 Mid 1942 ADO Taylor established Annanberg supply base.
 18/12/42 - March 1943 D.O. Bates et al evacuated Chinese to BenaBena
 31/12/42 WO2 Blood via Annanberg for 3 month patrol in Middle Sepik
 26/2/43 Taylor left Annanberg for the Sepik.
 21/3/43-4/6/43 Lieut. Fulton's patrol via Annanberg to Yuat Rv and return.
 30/5/43 - Japanese killed Pte Grey at Kambot. Keram/Ramu route abandoned
 June/July WO2 Eichorn's intelligence mission to Keram Rv area

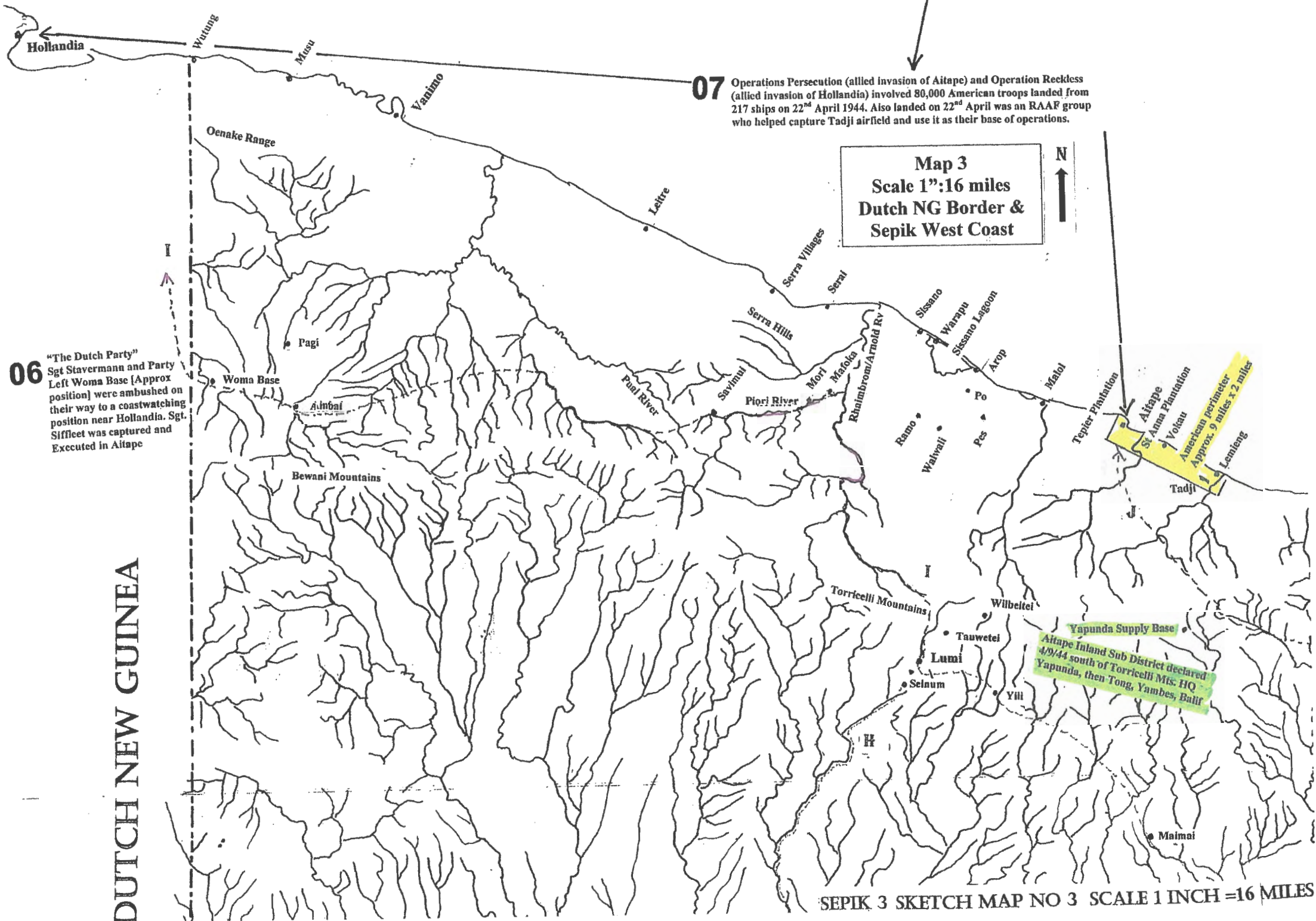
01 Bill Macgregor's 1929/30 route via Maramuni Rv from Sepik into Highlands.
 1939 Taylor's Hagen Sepik patrol route back to Mt Hagen.
 23/4/1943 Dr. Schroeder and EMAs Lambert and Hartley arrived Wabag
 3/4/1943-17/8/1943 Searson & Leahy's evacuation of missionaries from Timbunke
 17/5/1943 Fulton's patrol turned back to Keram route after carriers deserted.
 15/8/1943 Capt Blood attacked by Japanese at Lake Kuvinmas escaped via Macgregor's track
 4/9/1943 Bill Macgregor and party attacked at Lake Yimas escaped via Macgregor's track
 6/2/1944 Lieut Boisen, WO2 Eichorn and party arrived Wabag via Macgregor's track



Map 2
 Scale 1":16 miles
 Middle Sepik &
 Sepik Central Coast

02 Lake Kuvinmas
 14/3/1943 Capt. Taylor arrived per *Osprey* at Lake Kuvinmas and made it his operations base.
 3/4/1943 Evacuation of Timbunke missionaries commences.
 2/5/1943 Missionaries arrived Lake Kuvinmas.
 April 1943 Macgregor, Fryer & Dutch Party arrive in *Pat* to join Taylor
 3/5/1943 *Osprey* & *Pat* departed Kuvinmas to meet the Ashton party upstream
 15/8/1943 Capt Blood attacked by Japanese at Lake Kuvinmas escaped via Macgregor's track
 Late Aug 43 Lieut. Boisen called in an airstrike to clear Japanese.
 28/8/1943 Taylor, MacNamara and Parish [of Blood party] and 10 natives flown out.
 Feb 1945 to war's end Indian POWs in Blackwater area at/near Lake Kuvinmas

03 Lake Yimas.
 21/1/1942. DO Jones ordered Jack Thurston to establish the rear supply base at Lake Yimas.
 21/3/1942. PO Studwick ordered from Lake Yimas to Timbunke, where he was murdered.
 1/4/1942-10/4/1942 *Thetis* & *Fanny* Timbunke - Yimas - Timbunke



07 Operations Persecution (allied invasion of Aitape) and Operation Reckless (allied invasion of Hollandia) involved 80,000 American troops landed from 217 ships on 22nd April 1944. Also landed on 22nd April was an RAAF group who helped capture Tadji airfield and use it as their base of operations.

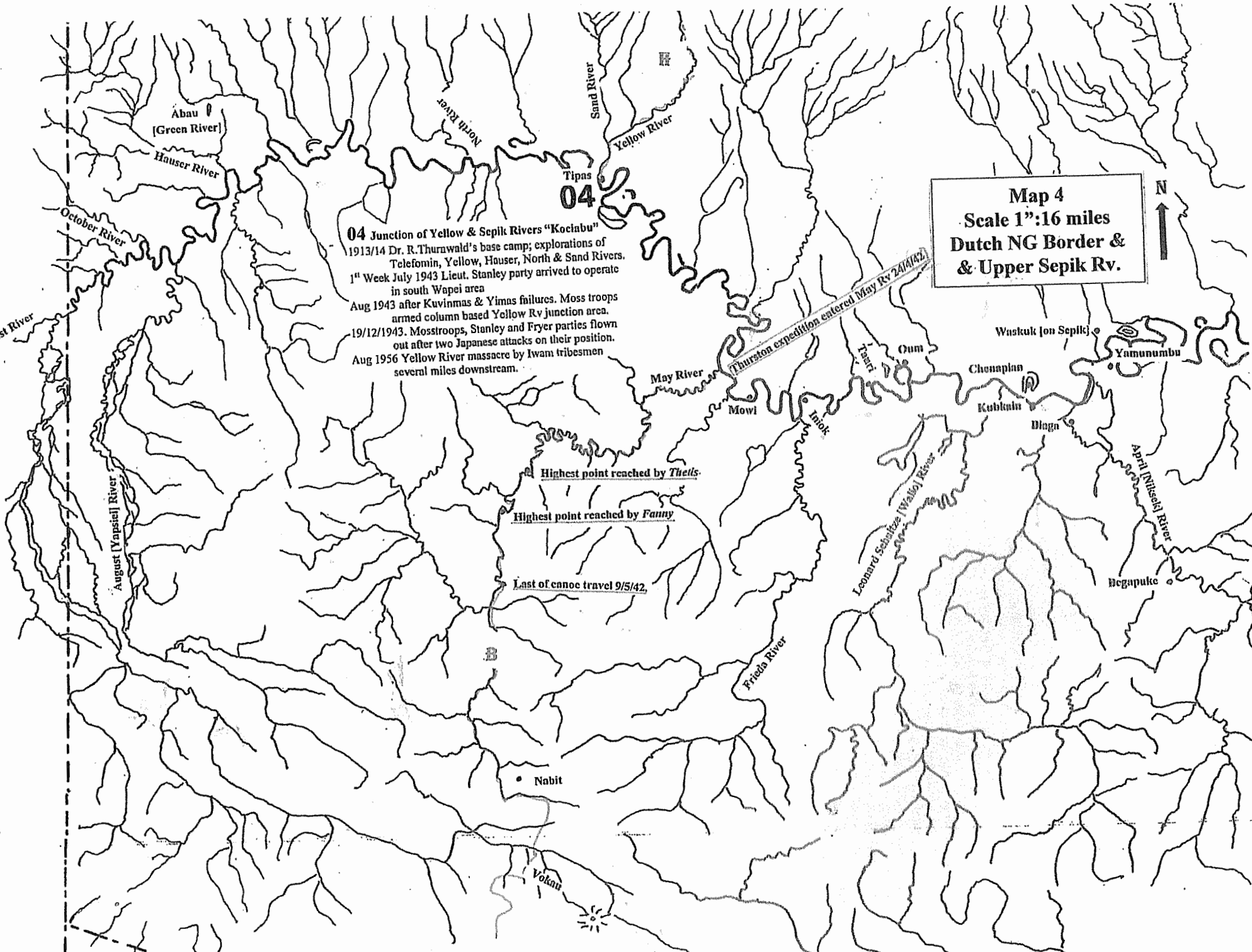
Map 3
Scale 1":16 miles
Dutch NG Border &
Sepik West Coast

06 "The Dutch Party" Sgt Stavermann and Party Left Woma Base [Approx position] were ambushed on their way to a coastwatching position near Hollandia. Sgt. Siffleet was captured and Executed in Aitape

Yapunda Supply Base
 Aitape Inland Sub District declared 4/9/44 south of Torricelli Mts. HQ Yapunda, then Tong, Yambes, Balif

DUTCH NEW GUINEA

DUTCH NEW GUINEA



Map 4
Scale 1":16 miles
Dutch NG Border &
& Upper Sepik Rv.

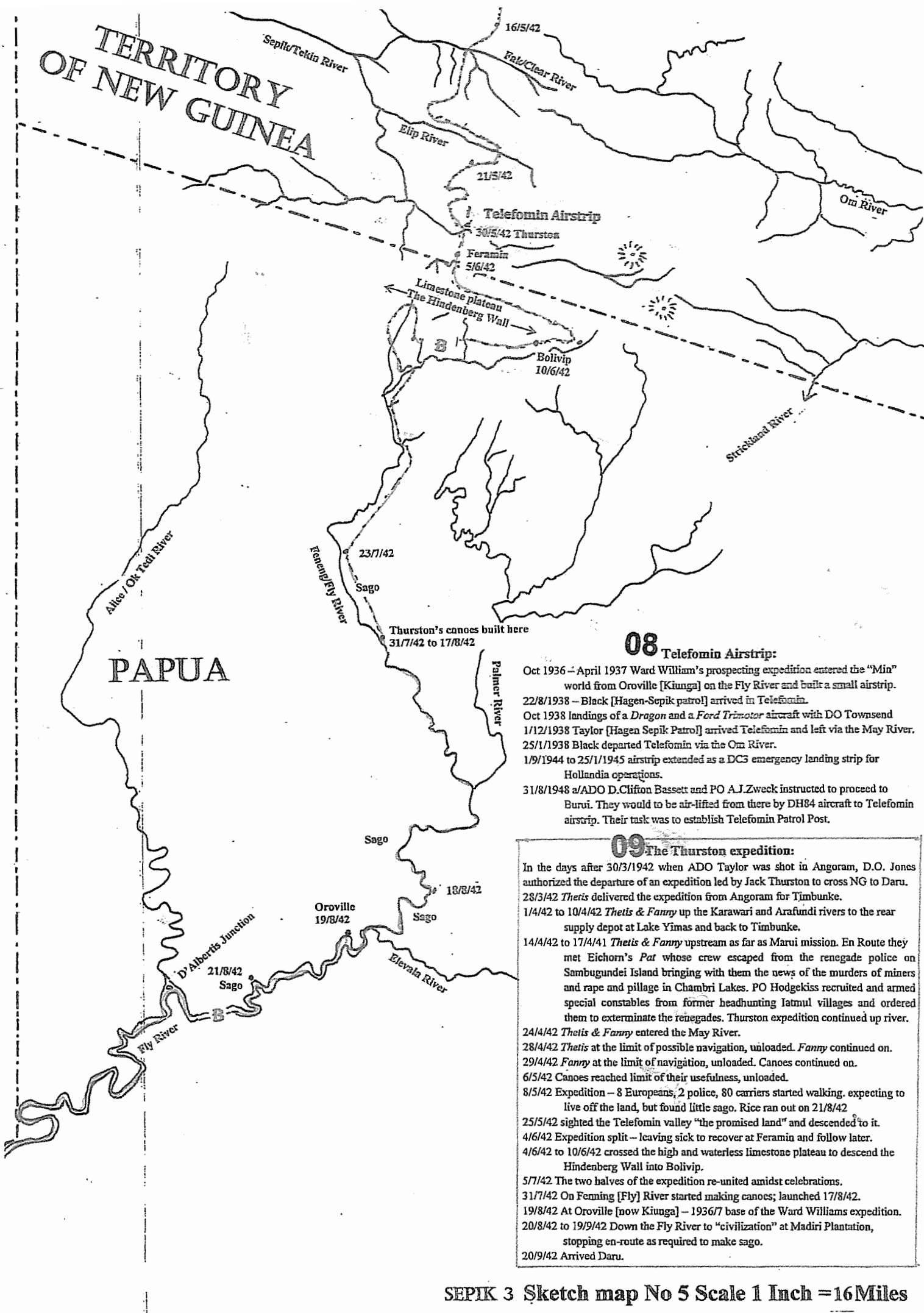
04 Junction of Yellow & Sepik Rivers "Kociabu"
1913/14 Dr. R. Thurnwald's base camp; explorations of Telefomin, Yellow, Hauser, North & Sand Rivers.
1st Week July 1943 Lieut. Stanley party arrived to operate in south Wapei area
Aug 1943 after Kuvinmas & Yimas failures. Moss troops armed column based Yellow Rv junction area.
19/12/1943. Moss troops, Stanley and Fryer parties flown out after two Japanese attacks on their position.
Aug 1956 Yellow River massacre by Iwam tribesmen several miles downstream.

Highest point reached by Theills.
Highest point reached by Fanny.
Last of canoe travel 9/5/42.

Thurston expedition entered May Rv 24/1/43

SEPIK 3 SKETCH MAP NO 4 SCALE 1 INCH 16 MILES.

TERRITORY OF NEW GUINEA



08 Telefomin Airstrip:

Oct 1936 - April 1937 Ward William's prospecting expedition entered the "Min" world from Oroville [Kiunga] on the Fly River and built a small airstrip.
 22/8/1938 - Black [Hagen-Sepik patrol] arrived in Telefomin.
 Oct 1938 landings of a *Dragon* and a *Ford Trimotor* aircraft with DO Townsend
 1/12/1938 Taylor [Hagen Sepik Patrol] arrived Telefomin and left via the May River.
 25/1/1938 Black departed Telefomin via the Om River.
 1/9/1944 to 25/1/1945 airstrip extended as a DCS emergency landing strip for Hollandia operations.
 31/8/1948 a/ADO D.Clifton Bassett and PO A.J.Zweck instructed to proceed to Burui. They would to be air-lifted from there by DH84 aircraft to Telefomin airstrip. Their task was to establish Telefomin Patrol Post.

09 The Thurston expedition:

In the days after 30/3/1942 when ADO Taylor was shot in Angoram, D.O. Jones authorized the departure of an expedition led by Jack Thurston to cross NG to Daru.
 28/3/42 *Thetis* delivered the expedition from Angoram for Timbukne.
 1/4/42 to 10/4/42 *Thetis & Fanny* up the Karawari and Arafundi rivers to the rear supply depot at Lake Yimas and back to Timbukne.
 14/4/42 to 17/4/41 *Thetis & Fanny* upstream as far as Marui mission. En Route they met Eichorn's *Pat* whose crew escaped from the renegade police on Sambugunde Island bringing with them the news of the murders of miners and rape and pillage in Chambri Lakes. PO Hodgekiss recruited and armed special constables from former headhunting Iatmul villages and ordered them to exterminate the renegades. Thurston expedition continued up river.
 24/4/42 *Thetis & Fanny* entered the May River.
 28/4/42 *Thetis* at the limit of possible navigation, unloaded. *Fanny* continued on.
 29/4/42 *Fanny* at the limit of navigation, unloaded. Canoes continued on.
 6/5/42 Canoes reached limit of their usefulness, unloaded.
 8/5/42 Expedition - 8 Europeans, 2 police, 80 carriers started walking, expecting to live off the land, but found little sago. Rice ran out on 21/8/42
 25/5/42 sighted the Telefomin valley "the promised land" and descended to it.
 4/6/42 Expedition split - leaving sick to recover at Feramin and follow later.
 4/6/42 to 10/6/42 crossed the high and waterless limestone plateau to descend the Hindenberg Wall into Bolivip.
 5/7/42 The two halves of the expedition re-united amidst celebrations.
 31/7/42 On Fenning [Fly] River started making canoes; launched 17/8/42.
 19/8/42 At Oroville [now Kiunga] - 1936/7 base of the Ward Williams expedition.
 20/8/42 to 19/9/42 Down the Fly River to "civilization" at Madiri Plantation, stopping en-route as required to make sago.
 20/9/42 Arrived Daru.



