

JOHN GROENEWALD'S DIARY

Part 1 – Port Moresby to Kiunga : 15-27 January 1963



Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

TUESDAY 15

15-350

After last minute rushing around Beverley took me to Melbourne Airport and we left at about 6 p.m. Met in Sydney by Mrs. Harrison and Gay - went home with them for a short while and then continued journey touching at Brisbane.

Sitting next to an army captain heard about an engine on road being built near Newak.
Restless night.

JANUARY, 1963

WEDNESDAY 16

16-349

Over Port Moresby about 6.00 a.m. Circling for about 40 minutes because of fog. Country very green. Sighted 2 Jap planes crashed in shallow water during World War II. Also the wreck of a ship.

Met at Jackson's by Dave Cook (D.O.I.C. Natunap in New Guinea). - introduced to Major Nicholas of U.S. Army and Brian Richardson (heads Dept. Survey).

Home with Dave for coffee and then looked in at DCA mess where I spent the morning sleeping.

Natives to be seen everywhere - reminds me of home. Rather warm and humid.

Native villages built out onto the sea on stilts. in places, also saw several sampan ^(double pulled canoes) type house-boats.

Spent this afternoon meeting various people. Went into the town to buy a few things and then started making list of things still needed. I then had a bit more sleep and this evening have been writing letters.

[Dave tells me the shipwreck seen this morning was an Austl. ship which tried to dodge the Jap bombers during the war but it was eventually hit and ran onto a reef. Evidently very little of Port Moresby remained standing after the war]

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

THURSDAY 17
17-348

Fairly heavy rain from thunderstorms during the night but had a good sleep although it was very hot.

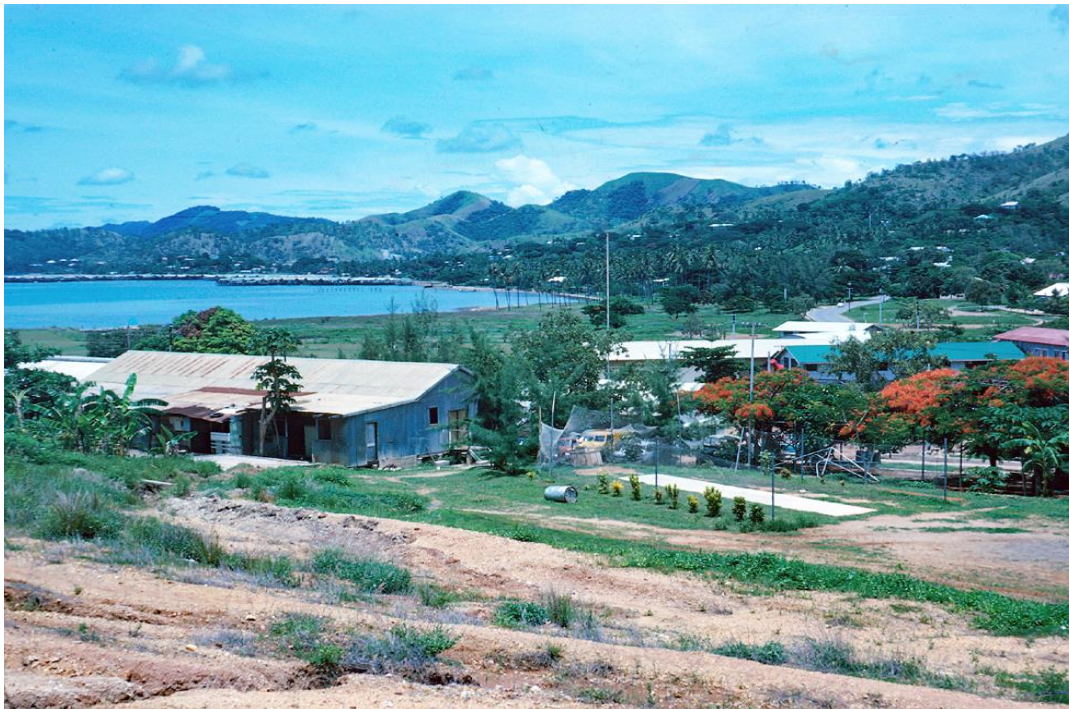
Spent today buying camping equipment, medical supplies etc. Am slowly getting to find my bearings and find my way about Port Moresby which is very spread out but not a very big place.

At present it looks as if I'll fly to Daru on Tuesday and from there to Kiunga on Wednesday, where one of the patrol is waiting for me and we'll then catch up with the patrol.

Tonight I'll write a few more letters and have another early night.

Extract - Patrol Report Kiunga 9/1962-63 (17/01/63)

With Corporal Beroro departed Daru per Catalina for Kiunga station. On arrival Kiunga informed Mr Patrol Officer Henderson advance party and initial canoe load of supplies had left for Garandimok on the Alice River.



096-001 : Konedobu in foreground and Hanuabada in middle distance)

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

FRIDAY 18
18-347

Had my final typhoid injection this morning and have started packing things to be ready for carrying. The weather is still very humid and hot. After tea I walked into town and had a look around but there wasn't much doing so had another early night after writing some letters.

Extract - Patrol Report Kiunga 9/1962-63 (18 - 25/01/63)
Checking patrol stores and supplies and awaiting return of Mr Henderson to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

SATURDAY 19
19-346

Spent the morning shopping in Port Moresby. It was awfully hot. Hordes of people in town - a lot of different kinds of natives.

This afternoon has still been very hot and I have been reading and sleeping. It is now fairly overcast and a bit cooler and I expect it to rain before long.

It rained heavily just after dinner and cooled things down a bit so that it was quite a nice night for sleeping.

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

2nd AFTER EPIPHANY

SUNDAY 20
20-345

This morning was spent writing more letters and this afternoon Dave, Marion + Susan took me for a drive. We went into the mountains near Port Moresby seeing some beautiful spots. First we passed the Rouna Hydro-electric power-station - a real small one compared to the Snowy Scheme's stations. There is quite a big gorge with big cliffs and the Rouna Falls are an impressive sight. We climbed to the top of the escarpment and travelled through several rubber plantations round Sogeri where there is a native high school run on the lines of an agricultural college. (It was the first time I had seen rubber). We went quite a bit further till we were really in the jungle - if this is the look of things to come it is going to be pretty rough! I'm particularly struck by the number of different native races.

Had dinner with the Cooks and Dave showed me some

Continuing 36 Exp. Film started in Snowy.

Exp. 11. Konedaba - Port Moresby.

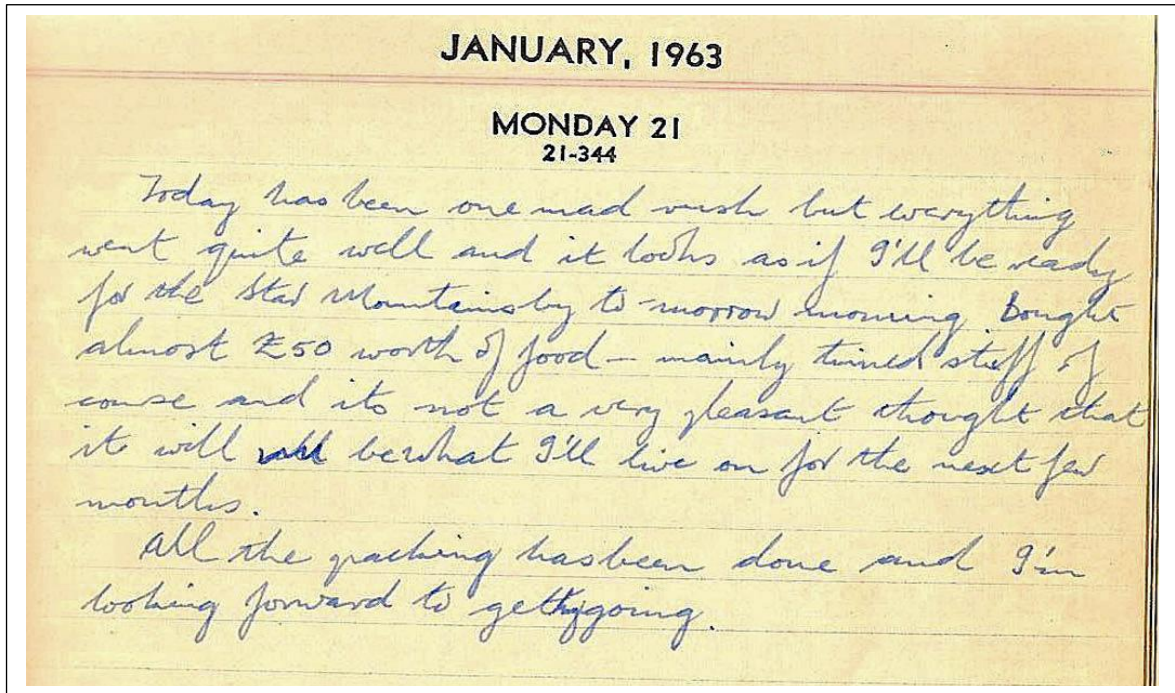
12. " " "

13. Escarpment near Rouna - Port Moresby.

14. ROUNA FALLS - near Port Moresby.

of his slides which make things look very interesting.

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

TUESDAY 22
22-343

Writing this while in the air between Port Moresby and Lae. We left Moresby at about 10 a.m. but the flight is rather uninteresting as we are over the sea all the time.

It's nearly 6 p.m. and I'm writing this in the Lae "Hotel". Lae is on an island and has about 2,000 natives and ±150 Europeans. It's really not much of a place but quite interesting to see - very flat with plenty of coconut trees. It has been overcast all day so not so unbearably hot which is a welcome change.

I was met by the D.O. Eric Howes who has been very helpful as far as arranging for air-drops etc. Also met Warren Sutton a cadet-patrol-officer who is going to Kiunga. Weather permitting I'll fly to Kiunga tomorrow and join Des Fitzel and we hope to leave for the Star Mountains the following day.

It has just started raining outside but hope it won't interfere with our plans. Haven't seen any mosquitos yet although there are plenty of flies in the room.

Exp. 15. Port Moresby Airport on take-off for Lae.
16. Native huts on Lae Island.

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



002 : The township of Daru from the air

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

WEDNESDAY 23

23-342

Had quite an entertaining evening in the pub last night with a few of the locals. They were typical of the sort one expects to find in the tropics especially one by the name of New Jones who has been here over 2 years.

Today has been a most frustrating one — because of yesterday's rain the airstrip here was closed. Two Lesnas did however land today but neither was the one with my things so I'm still in Klam tonight and can only hope the aircraft will arrive to-morrow.

I have spent most of the day reading. This is really a dump and how anybody can live here more than a few weeks beats me. The hotel is pretty rough-and-ready and last night there were several huge beetles in the showerroom and even a big green frog sitting on the towel rack! Anyway there are sure to be worse things and places to come.

The Stol Lesna arrived at about 6 p.m. and we're set to go to-morrow.

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

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THURSDAY 24
24-341

This morning at 8.15 we left Hara in perfect weather and
began piloting the Star Lesma. The Fly River valley is flatter
than anything I have seen before and the river has a
rather impressive delta. There is water everywhere and the
country is very swampy. After about an hour flying the jungle
really starts and it certainly is thick! Kiunga is on the Fly and
is just a little clearing in the jungle. We arrived here at 10.00am
and almost immediately Leo Fitzgerald, Ross Henderson and I set out
on the Pataid Lesma on a reconnaissance flight of the Star Mountains.
At the first bit from Kiunga it is still flat but gradually it
goes to hills and one finds the so-called sink-hole country and
then the Star Mountains. The mountains are a fantastic sight
and make the Snowy Mts. look like hills. There are razor-back
ridges falling away into sheer cliffs and the country looks
rather frightening. Kapella, the highest mtn. in the area is
also a most impressive site with huge rock-faces. This is all
very hard to describe because I haven't seen anything to compare it with.
We found the pocket in the mountains where we could see
a fair amount of huts and also a lake up in the mountains
which we may use as a base.

[Leo Fitzgerald A.D.O. in charge of Patrol, Ross Henderson P.O.]

20. Hara, 18 & 19 Fly River Delta 20. Swamp country around Fly River.
21. Kiunga 22. Jungle at Kiunga 23.-29. Star Mts. 30. Kiunga.
31. Kiunga-huts. 32. Fly River at Kiunga 33. Fly River at Kiunga.
34. Huts - Kiunga.

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



104-003 : The Meandering Fly River



104-004 – Arriving Kiunga on the Fly River

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



104-005 : Recce 1- Impenetrable Jungle

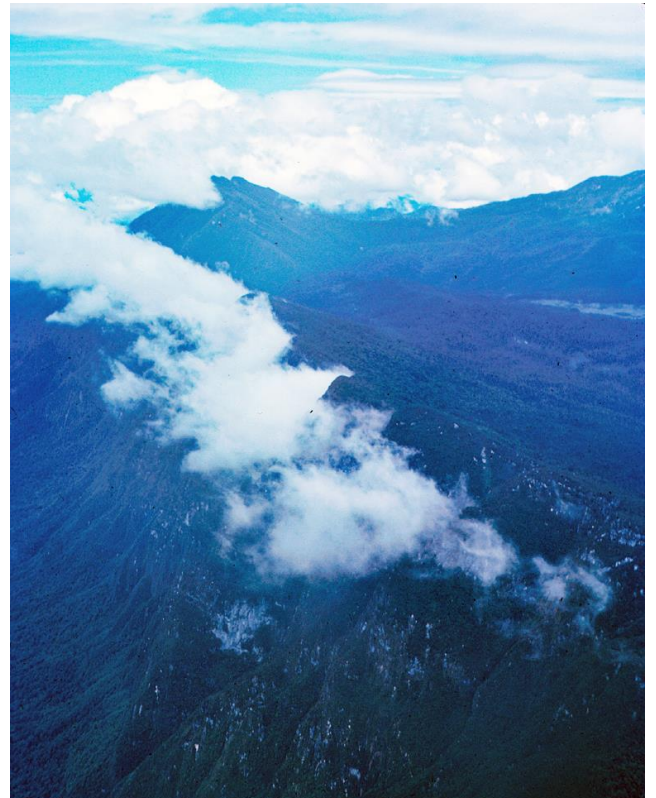


104-005 – Recce 2 - Mountainous Country

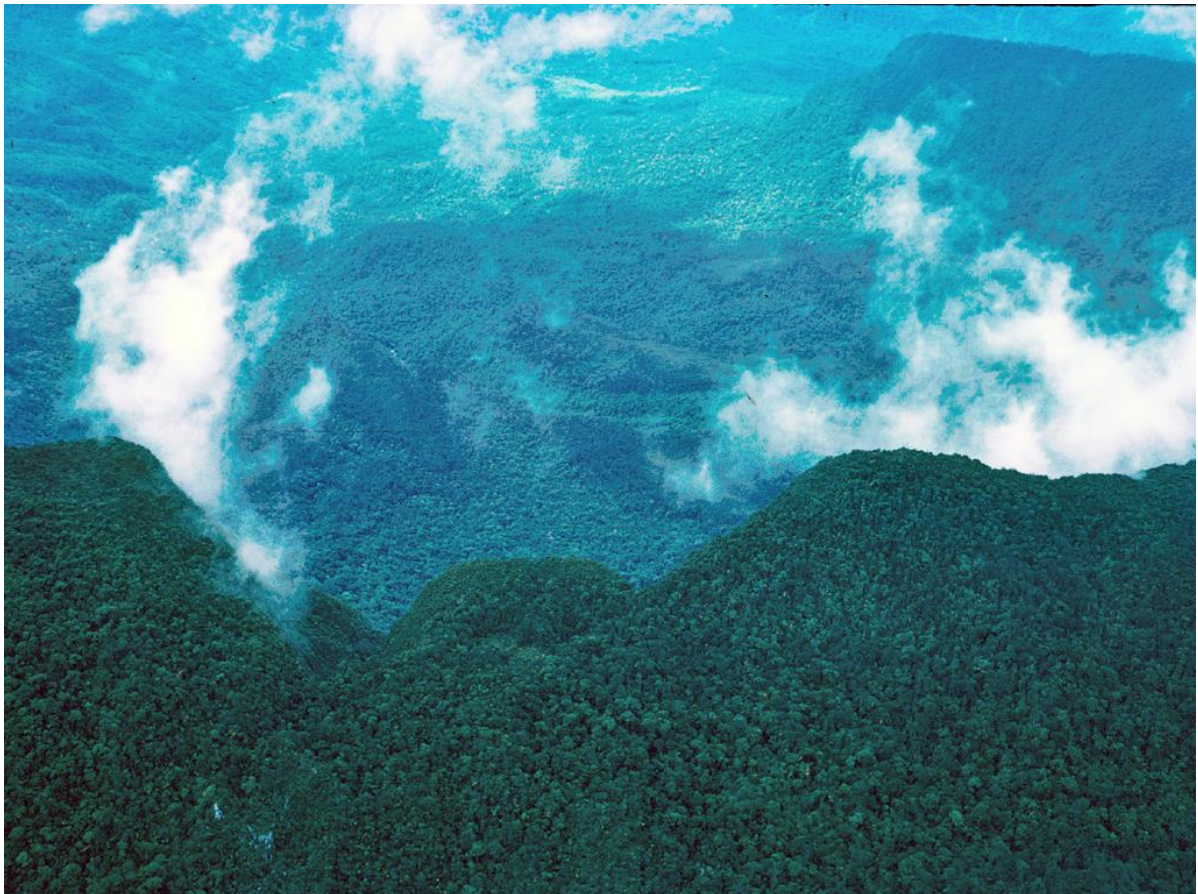
Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



104-005 : Recce 2 – Bensted Bluff (1)



104-005 : Recce 2 – Bensted Bluff (2)



104-005 – Recce 2 – Bensted Bluff (3)

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



104-006 : Bensted Bluff



104-007 : Capella Bluff

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



104-008 : Recce 5 - North of the main range (towards Telefomin)

JANUARY, 1963

FRIDAY 25
25-340

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

Had a bit of fun last night when the Lymada (a barge) arrived with earth-moving equipment to improve the Kiunga airstrip. It first got stuck on a sand-bank and they had a lot of difficulty off-loading it. This morning one of the graders was almost underwater as the river had risen several feet during the night when very heavy rain fell.

Today was quite a pleasant day as far as weather goes and I spent most of the day repacking things to make even carrier loads. This afternoon I wrote some letters.

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

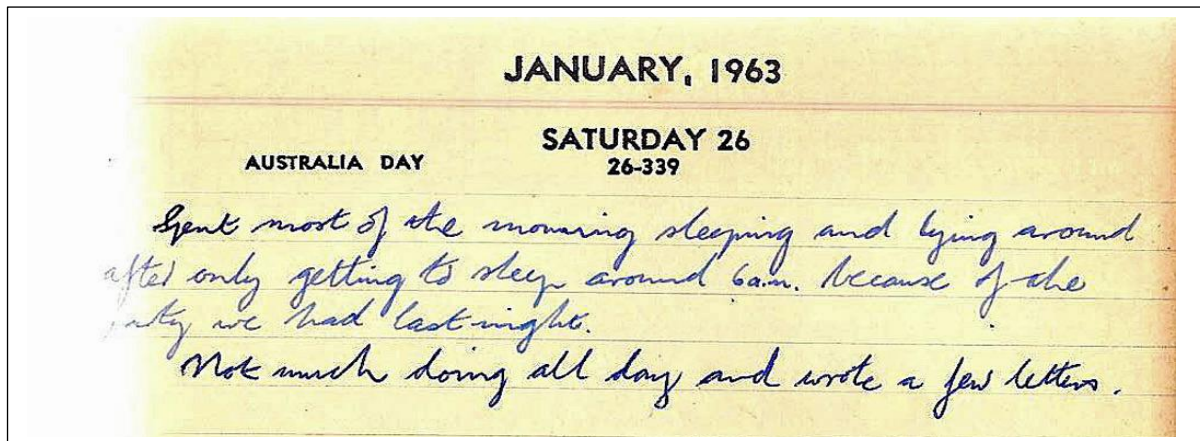


105-011 : Fly river at Kiunga



105-012 : Flooded Grader (Kiunga)

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



*Extract - Patrol Report Kiunga 9/1962-63
(26/01/63)*

All preparations completed with Mr. P.O. Henderson and Mr Surveyor Groenewald. Departed per canoe and outboard for the Alice, considerable electrical-field trouble encountered and party camped at Karvok village, where in company with Mr Henderson efforts made to improve outboard. Camped.



106-010 : Cassowary (Kiunga)



106-009 : House at Kiunga

Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga

JANUARY, 1963

3rd AFTER EPIPHANY

SUNDAY 27
27-338

This morning we are loading and hope to start off in the canoe within a few hours. It is now 8.30 and it is raining lightly. We started off at 10 a.m. with a rather heavy load in the canoe but the outboard motor wouldn't start so we had to return to shore and found the motor couldn't be fixed. So again we have been delayed and will not only leave tomorrow morning using a smaller outboard motor - this means we'll be having a bit more walking to do as we can't get so far up the river in it.

Tonight it is raining heavily again.

[Most of our equipment sent off in the MEWA to await us in SENARE].

Extract - Patrol Report Kiunga 9/1962-63 (27/01/63)

All efforts to improve outboard performance futile. Party returned to Kiunga where Evinrude stripped to find key all but worn through thus throwing timing out. New key cut but proved of insufficient strength so work commenced on Archimedes; second Archimedes functioning just by 1630; slept at Kiunga.

107-013 : Departing Kiunga (or trying to!)



Part 1: Port Moresby to Kiunga



107-103 : Departing Kiunga (still waiting)

This concludes Part 1 of John Groenewald's description of his Star Mountains Patrol.