

PNG Kundu

JUNE 2024



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

www.pngaa.org



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PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

(Formally constituted in 1951—incorporated in 1996)

Mail: PNGAA, PO Box 250, Kilcoy QLD 4515 • Website: www.pngaa.org

2024–2025 PNGAA Office Bearers

PRESIDENT: Position vacant (please see page 3)

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

EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR: Position vacant (please see page 3)

GENERAL COMMITTEE: Phil Ainsworth, Steven Gagau, Christine Leonard, Cheryl Marvell, Chris Warrillow, Max Uechtritz & Andrea Williams

RABAUL & MONTEVIDEO MARU GROUP: www.montevideo-maru.org

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PUBLIC OFFICER: Jane Rybarz

PNGAA Membership: www.membership@pngaa.net—This is available to anyone with an interest in PNG. Members, who receive four issues of our journal per year, have access to all parts of the website and are encouraged to explore and become actively involved with all aspects of the PNGAA. Please refer to the *Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form*, at the back of this journal, for more details. Application forms are also available from the Membership Officer or our website. For members receiving a printed journal, the address label shows the current status of your membership. Digital members can check their status by logging on to the website and clicking on *Membership* then *My Subscription*. Username is your email address. A list of the names and addresses of PNGAA members is now available on our website.

Please go to: <https://pngaa.org/membership-directories/>

PNGAA Store: www.pngaa.org/store—If you are interested in the history, adventure and stories of Papua New Guinea, and those who helped build the nation, then please view the selection of books and DVDs available in our store. Details are on our website or on the *Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form*, which can also be used to renew your membership, introduce a friend or family member who wishes to join, book for a PNGAA function or make a donation.

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

INSTAGRAM—https://www.instagram.com/png_association_of_australia/

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Kundu is the *Tok Pisin* word for the hourglass-shaped drum that forms part of Papua New Guinea's Coat of Arms, and after which this journal is named (formerly called *Una Voce*). The *kundu* has told fascinating stories for centuries, and through our PNGAA journal we will continue documenting history and the evolving special relationship between the two countries this association holds in its heart. Whilst *Tok Pisin* is one of the three official languages of PNG, please note that some authors still use the term *Pidgin* for *Tok Pisin*, and *PNG Kundu* supports both terms.

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Guidelines for contributors are available on our website: www.pngaa.org

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PNG Kundu is published four times a year for the information of members of the PNGAA. It is written with care, and every effort is made to publish free of factual and typographical errors. However, readers should not act, or refrain from acting solely on the basis of information in the journal about financial, taxation or any other matter. Please note that some of the photographs have been digitally colourised whilst maintaining historical accuracy, and all enquiries should be made to the publishers. Acknowledgement and thanks are given to all contributors, creators of images and information used in the public domain and under non-profit and fair-use guidelines and to the various sources referenced in this publication.



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Front Cover Feature:
Tubuans, East New Britain, PNG
© Eric Lafforgue, 2009



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

2024 PNGAA AGM

The PNGAA Annual General Meeting and Lunch on Sunday, 5 May 2024, was a happy, friendly, successful day for PNGAA.

The guest speaker was Joanne Sharpe, the Director for Justice and Strategy for Papua New Guinea within Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

She recently co-led consultations and drafting of the new Australia-PNG Development Partnership Plan 2024–2029, supports our policing, law and justice partnerships, and is leading the coordination for celebrations of PNG’s 50th anniversary.

Joanne has worked in international development for 20 years with DFAT, the World Bank and UNDP, with postings to Jakarta and Bangkok.

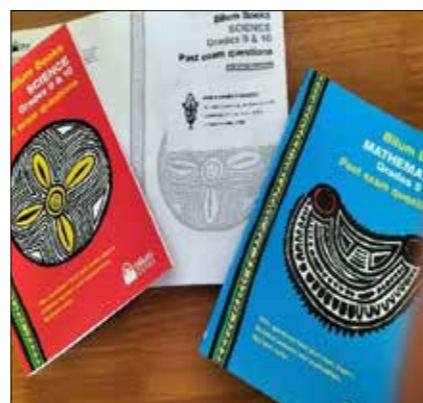
She holds an MA in International Development from the University of Sussex.

Kylie Adams-Collier’s spontaneous a cappella renditions of the two nations’ anthems was very moving. Those present also enjoyed hearing about Rod and Sandy Miller’s recent trip to PNG.

All documents related to the Annual General Meeting are in the Members’ Only area of the PNGAA website at <https://pngaa.org/documents-relating-to-2024-agm/>

Scholarship Update from Glenda Giles

The scholarship money is now with the schools and I am in the



process of sending their book packs to them (above). Now that the money has been received at the schools, the two school principals are working on sending some photos of the students and more detailed information.

I haven’t visited Anguganak lately, but I see Anguganak people here in town when they travel in and out of Wewak by truck. The road is often flooded and a bit dangerous because of hold-ups.

MAF flies there from time to time, but they are facing difficulties because of a country-wide fuel shortage due to the lack of funds in PNG Treasury to meet its foreign exchange commitments. This impacts on importers who can’t pay their overseas suppliers.

PNGAA Scholarship Fund Representative, Wewak

PNGAA New Members

The committee welcomes the following new members: Keeter Brown, Zarah de la Cruz, Dennis Donovan, Helen Eastburn Gowdie, Rosalie Everest, Alexandra Frost, Dave Miller, Ken Mulligan, Chris Naden, Garth Powys, John Prowse & Wendy Smith.

Positions Vacant

The PNGAA Management Committee has two vacancies which need urgent attention. These two positions must be filled to ensure that the PNGAA operations can be sustained—they are President & Events Co-Ordinator.

The President’s role includes:

- Chairing meetings of the Association and its management committee.
- Being passionate about the significance of the Association and its unique role in the Australian-PNG relationship.
- Engaging with both members and external parties whilst showing leadership and belief in the Association.

The President will be:

- Proactive and enjoy speaking with members, someone respected by the Association and associated networks and able to work independently while also supporting the team.

Events Co-Ordinator/General Committee:

- The Events Co-Ordinator enjoys getting together with others and initiates and manages social events for the PNGAA, including the AGM and Sydney Christmas Lunch, and represents other PNGAA state groups/organisations on the committee.
- Having computer skills, organisational and networking skills supported with positive phone and written communication will make this job a breeze.

The PNGAA will only remain

vital when fresh ideas and activities support our much-loved journal and website.

If you have any thoughts, please contact:

Andrea (coordinator@pngaa.net / Mobile: 0409 031 889) or

Kylee (admin@pngaa.net / Mobile: 0405 334 501)

as soon as possible.



Editorial

CHRISTINE LEONARD
editor@pngaa.net

As I put my feet under the editor’s desk I keep bumping into the big shoes John Egerton left behind. Thank you, John, for your encouragement and for being available whenever I’ve had a query.

There’s a long legacy of editors giving their all to the PNGAA journals, be it the *Una Voce* or *PNG Kundu*. Having been a PNGAA member for some years, I fully appreciate the sense of ‘family’ and connectedness we members bring to the association, and that we carry in our hearts and minds a special place for Papua New Guinea. Not only is PNG the country of my birth, it is the place of eternal rest for my parents and uncle, a country I shall return to for the foreseeable future.

The stories and articles that members and others have generously contributed serve as a valuable addition to the growing body of knowledge associated with PNG and Australia’s history with its nearest neighbour. Considering the cost of a digital membership, individuals and scholars exploring PNG’s social history, significant events, and/or specific topics, can access an extraordinary library.

In the months leading up to this issue, I became aware that some members would like to read a few more contemporary stories in the *PNG Kundu*. No matter what the topic is, we want articles to be well-informed, and grounded in fair reporting, so I plan to reach out to Papua New Guinean writers and individuals closely connected to PNG from a range of fields to submit an article on a topic that best fits their expertise and background.

Having said this, the mainstay of content for the *PNG Kundu* comes from association members; so, if you have a story sitting in the bottom drawer, shake the dust off and drop me a line, please.

Tenkyu tru



2024 Annual General Meeting



PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc. 73rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING—5 May 2024 Annual Report

Thank you and a warm welcome to all those who attended the 2024 Annual General Meeting, especially to Mr Ponabe Yuwa, Consul-General for Papua New Guinea, and Ms Joanne Sharpe, who is the Director for Justice and Strategy for Papua New Guinea within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and who is leading the co-ordination for celebrations of PNG's 50th anniversary.

Also noting Mr Phil Ainsworth, President of the NGVR & PNGVR Ex-Members Association, and Mr Steven Gagau, President of the Sydney Wantok Association—both PNGAA Management Committee members too.

I'd especially like to welcome and introduce you to our new Secretary—Kylee Andersen—who has come over from Perth. In October Kylee responded to a plea for administrative assistance on the Committee and we are delighted she has joined us. Kylee recognised the need for the Association to have Deductible Gift Recipient status as well as charity status with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission and has jumped in to start these challenging processes. Both her professional and volunteering experience is valuable on the Management Committee, assisting in many areas.

It is good to see our former president, Chris Pearsall, here today with his wife, Louise, after stepping back last year. We're grateful to Chris for his efforts on the committee, particularly with initiating the PNGAA Scholarship Fund.

In December, John Egerton advised that he needed to relinquish the role of *PNG Kundu* Editor after the March 2024 issue. John has edited fourteen issues of PNGAA's magnificent journal, with Production Manager, Jeannette Gilligan. PNGAA is incredibly grateful to John's passion, skill and endless efforts resulting in a highly-acclaimed international journal, regularly passed around and

receiving praise. His insights on the committee are regularly sought and valuable. We also acknowledge all the lovely comments that regularly come in about the journal. John has done an outstanding job for which we are truly grateful, and we thank him.

Happily, we were delighted to announce that Christine Leonard (née Wall) has taken on the editor's role for the Association. Christine had hoped to be here today from Brisbane but had a long-standing commitment.

Another new member of PNGAA's extended volunteers is Jane Rybarz, who has kindly taken on the Public Officer's role. Born in PNG, Jane's professional accounting experience has already been of great help regarding walking through the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) challenges.

Sadly, Kieran Nelson, who was PNGAA's mainstay on social media, and the Brisbane connection with the SE QLD PNG diaspora, passed away in February 2024, and is greatly missed.



In February this year members were delighted to hear PNG Prime Minister, James Marape, make the first historic speech by a Pacific Leader to the Australian Parliament.

This recognition of Australia's close connection with PNG was appreciated.

Kieran Nelson



Students from Anguganak Junior High

In the 2023 year, the PNGAA has been actively engaged in promoting cultural exchange, fostering connections, and supporting its members throughout the year. Here are some highlights of our activities:

Scholarship Initiative & Finance

Sponsorship of six students from West Sepik Province began in 2023 with fees and textbooks. One student pulled out of the program at the end of 2023 and has been replaced with a new student earlier this year. We have also heard there is a new headmistress at Anguganak in 2024.

School fees were not set by the PNG National Education Board until the start of the 2024 academic year. Once these were announced PNGAA decided to extend the school sponsorship to a further three (3) Grade 9 students from Oksapmin Secondary School in the Telefomin District in the Sandaun Province.

We thank all members and friends who have made donations to assist PNGAA in achieving this help for the students. We look forward to your further support so that we can continue to assist and broaden the education of selected PNG secondary school students.

Members might consider holding even a

small fundraising event themselves, liaising with our secretary, Kylee Andersen.

In Perth, Jill Worsley has made several quilts which have been donated to events and resulted in successful fundraising.

In June 2023 the Gold Coast PNG Club, under President Greg Pike CSM, kindly supported PNGAA's Scholarship Fund with a generous \$4,000 donation from a major fundraising event. This support was greatly appreciated.

PNGAA Treasurer, Murrough Benson, meticulously looks after PNGAA's finances with support from other committee members.

We thank Murrough for his diligence and cautious approach.

PNGAA Luncheons

The Management Committee is grateful to our event co-ordinators around the states—Linda Cavanaugh Manning, with assistance from Robyn Petricevic, Kylee Andersen, Peter Ryan and Kieran Nelson (dec'd), Belinda Macartney, Chris Warrillow and Deryck Thompson—all of whom arrange wonderful gatherings so that members and friends can meet and share a meal, whilst recounting stories that only those who share our interest can do.

It doesn't matter where you lived in PNG, or even if you didn't, there is always a connection and

something to chat about. The gatherings are always greatly enjoyed, and I encourage you to attend!

Lunches were held in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Cairns.

If you think you can hold a gathering in your area, please keep in touch with our admin—Kylee Andersen—and remember that photos for the journal and members area of the website are always welcome, as is support for PNGAA fundraising projects.

A reminder here, also, that PNGAA currently urgently needs an Event Co-ordinator in the Sydney area. Notices are in each journal with contact details.

Projects

PNGAA members continue to work on projects that promote the rich culture and connection between Australia and PNG. One of these is Steven Gagau, a PNGAA committee member, who was instrumental in the magnificent 'Bilas Exhibition' at the Australian Museum, and who continues to work on projects featuring PNG and the Pacific connection.

Steven Gagau, Kalolaine Fainu and Max Uechtritz were involved with the Tidal Kin Exhibition at the Chau Chak Wing Museum, University of Sydney, which opened on 7 October 2023.

Rabaul & Montevideo Maru

Following the successful discovery of the *Montevideo Maru* a year ago, PNGAA committee members, Max Uechtritz and Andrea Williams, attended dinners held in Oslo,



Max Uechtritz, Andrea Williams from PNGAA and Roger Turner & Michael Gooding from the Silentworld Foundation at the reception in Oslo

with the King of Norway, and Canberra, with the Australian Prime Minister, to acknowledge the wonderful achievement.

Despite Tokua Airport being semi-dug up for maintenance this year, 38 people had a successful trip to Rabaul to commemorate Anzac Day this year.

Membership and Community Engagement

After three years it was agreed to increase PNGAA membership fees by ten per cent. In the current environment of rapidly escalating costs everywhere, this seems very reasonable. We thank Roy Ranney who spent considerable time migrating the website subscribers to the new rates.

With increasing scam emails, a reminder that members need to be vigilant and check the email addresses—'if in doubt, throw it out'.

PNG Kundu

The journal is a breath-taking glimpse of both contemporary information and life before PNG gained independence from Australia. With so many Papua New Guineans born since Independence, and now around 50 years of age, they have little knowledge of what life and developing PNG was like before Independence. The Australian era in PNG is almost forgotten. *PNG Kundu* ensures that the relationship between Australia and PNG is remembered and continues.



PNGAA group at the Bilas Exhibition



Your contributions with items of interest are important in so many ways, and so is membership in this important Association. Please help our association to grow by encouraging members to join, to contribute both stories and items of interest, and to engage with and assist the committee.

As mentioned earlier, we are hearing many comments expressing pleasure at the varied stories and information contained within each issue of this quarterly journal, and the very professional presentation. The journal is shared with family and friends over and over—and it is exciting to hear it is so well-loved by our members and wider PNG/Australian friends.

Our committee is proud of the enormous effort put in by our editors, John Egerton and now Chris Leonard, proof readers, Murrough Benson and Andrea Williams, and our Production Manager, Jeannette Gilligan, to ensure it is enjoyed by you. Jeannette has contributed greatly to the quality of *PNG KUNDU* and her impact in every way is immeasurable. Thank you, Jeannette.

Following the journal publication there is always the uploading onto the website—another big job. Thank you to Jeannette Gilligan and Roy Ranney for organising and making it digitally available.

PNGAA Website

This is an extraordinary resource. The members’ area houses journals back to 1978, photo galleries and electronic books. In 2023 we were asked if some photos could be used for a large new exhibition on

WWII and its legacies at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby.

In supporting exhibitions we hope, too, that the PNGAA and its work are highlighted to those who have not heard of the Association.

There has been work on the website photo galleries and also a search reference for the Vales on the website with thanks to Roy Ranney, Claire van Bakel (who assists Roy generally, behind the scenes on the PNGAA website) and Will Muskens. In November, PNGAA doubled the capacity of the website (which also enhanced performance).

PNGAA Collection

One objective of the PNGAA is ‘to encourage the preservation of documents, historical and cultural material related to PNG, including the production and recording of oral and written histories’. Significant artefacts, patrol reports, maps, books, diaries, photos and movies have been donated by many various members and friends—*kiaps*, lawyers, medicos, midwives, *didiman*, planters, pilots, teachers, anthropologists, missionaries, mechanics, academia, etc.

This list is not exhaustive, but all items are carefully curated by Cheryl Marvell and collected and often transported by various members of the committee.

Members will know that a major and urgent goal for the PNGAA is to showcase the PNGAA Collection which is continually growing. This collection would complement a cultural centre where both Australians and international visitors could learn more about the Pacific, PNG and its Australian connection, and there is electronic availability.

A major sponsor is necessary to establish and to maintain a venture of this nature. The PNGAA needs all possible support to make this happen.

Future Projects

The PNGAA continues to advocate for recognition of Australia’s past role in PNG, for Australia taking PNG to a peaceful independence, and the close relationship with the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA), at Middle Head, Sydney.

Following the 2023 AGM, Paul Munro AM

delivered several copies of the PNGAA submission responding to the Harbour Trust’s Draft Master Plan to its Middle Head office. This was followed up with postal and electronic delivery. The Harbour Trust received 209 submissions which were reviewed for use in creating yet another revised draft master plan! Frustratingly, it simply appears to be a continuing evolving circle of draft management plans. Clearly the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) is driven to achieve commercial independence.

The proposed Australian Pacific Community and Cultural Centre is viewed as an educational resource and cultural centre located in Australia to educate Australians about our past and contemporary roles in PNG and to support all Pacific communities. Significantly, an interactive centre of collaboration between Australian and Pacific communities would strengthen understanding and relationships. It is greatly needed.

PNGAA believes that the values and principles that guided the ASOPA experience and which assisted PNG development, should be preserved, celebrated, and fostered to bring about better relationships between Australia and its nearest neighbours.

With PNG’s 50th anniversary of independence rapidly approaching in 2025, taking a nation, PNG, to a peaceful independence is something to be proud of and to celebrate. PNGAA hopes members will bear this in mind as they share special memories encouraging Australians to know this history and how it sustains our relationship now.



The old ASOPA building at Middle Head, Mosman



The radio station at Bita Paka in 1914

PNGAA believes that permanent recognition of Australia’s role in PNG would, ideally, be part of Australia’s education system, alongside acknowledgement in an Australian Pacific Community and Cultural Centre.

On 11 September 2024 it will be the 110th anniversary of Australia’s first military action suffering its first WWI casualties when Australia took the then German-controlled Bita Paka radio station on New Britain.

Advocacy and Legacy

PNGAA thanks all volunteers on the Management Committee and the wider working groups. Whilst there is a lot of expertise on the Management Committee, the PNGAA urgently needs to fill two important voluntary roles—President and Events Co-ordinator (Sydney Area Environs).

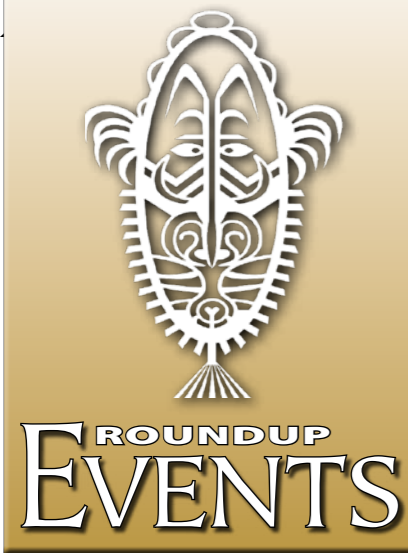
Our Association is unique, and its main goal is to strengthen the relationship between Australia and Papua New Guinea. The only way an amazing association like ours succeeds is through the passionate, proactive, dedicated and generous efforts of its volunteers! Being flexible and a team player is vital. Please put your hand up!

As we move forward, the PNGAA remains committed to fostering connections, supporting our members, and promoting cultural understanding between Papua New Guinea and Australia. We appreciate the active participation of our members and look forward to another productive year. Thank you for your continued support.

ANDREA WILLIAMS

PNGAA Management Committee





Reports of functions, reunions and ceremonies held throughout Australia and Papua New Guinea, and listings of upcoming meetings and events of interest for PNGAA members. If you and your friends have an activity to advertise or promote, or have been 'out & about' recently, please send your details and reviews to the editor by 31 July 2024, the Copy Deadline for the next issue: editor@pngaa.net

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

**PERTH
PNGAA WA
Catch Up
Friday, 3 May 2024**

The PNGAA WA meets quarterly in Perth and sometimes members catch up outside of the larger group. There was a recent get-together at the RAAFA Club, Bull Creek, a suburb of Perth. News and photos to follow in the September issue.

**BRISBANE
Ex-Kiap Birthday
Celebration
Wednesday, 17 April 2024**

The Ex-Kiap Network Forum gathered at the Ship Inn in Brisbane's Southbank precinct for an informal lunch and get-together. The group celebrated the 90th birthdays of Ken Hanrahan and Jim Fenton—both falling on Anzac Day, 25 April. The Ex-Kiap Network has regular catch-ups not limited to ex-kiaps, chalkies,



TOP: Ex-Kiaps Ken Hanrahan (left) and Jim Fenton (2nd right) celebrating their birthdays; BELOW: (L-R) Ismay Selby, Christine Leonard, Jan Sinclair and Sheryn Golledge at the Southbank precinct in Brisbane

and *didiman*. Partners, family, and friends are just as welcome.

**SUNSHINE COAST
PNGAA
Palmwoods Lunch
Wednesday,
13 March 2024**

It was wonderful to have so many people join us for lunch at the Palmwoods Hotel in the Sunshine Coast (QLD) hinterland on 13 March. A total of 38 people enjoyed the company of old and new friends in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere with good food and pleasant staff.

Our starting point for invitations was the PNGAA member listing for the Sunshine Coast and surrounding areas—as far north as Gympie, south to the northern outskirts of Brisbane and west to Kilcoy. We were delighted to see the grapevine extended the reach of our email listing, with eight non-members



1. (L-R) Beryl Beinssen, Irene & Peter Cordukes, Peter Rogers, Mike Lean, Bradley Campbell, MaryAnn Uechtritz, Susie Rogers; 2. (L-R) Lyndall Murphy, John Stanton, Mike Edgar, Graham Tuck, Chris Murphy, Bill Gornall; 3. (L-R) Otto & Jocelyn Alder, Paul & Margaret Brigg, Marilynn & Dennis Hoek

amongst the attendees. A special thanks to Paul Brigg who floated the idea of a Sunshine Coast get-together with me a few months ago, something we had thought about for some time since moving to near

Kilcoy in November 2019, but had not got around to doing anything about it, not helped by the COVID lockdowns shortly after we moved north.

The assistance of Paul and his wife Margaret in

organising the day, including preparing name tags and bringing along a huge PNG flag to guide people to the right area in the hotel, was also greatly appreciated.

MURROUGH BENSON

**EVENTS
DIARY**

**BRISBANE
PNGAA Members
& Friends' Annual
Lunch**

Sunday, 28 July 2024

Time: 12 noon till 4 pm

Venue: The Ship Inn, Sidon Street, South Brisbane (corner of Stanley Street and Sidon Street, near the southern approach to the Green Bridge)—a relaxed gastropub.

RSVP: No later than Monday, 22 July. Please use the online form on the PNGAA website to let us know you will be there!



Cost: Meals and drinks will be purchased on the day. A donation of \$10 (or more) towards PNGAA's Scholarship fund would be appreciated.

Guest Speaker: Christine Leonard, the new editor of *PNG KUNDU*. You will have met Christine in the March issue of the journal, now come and meet her in person! Christine is also keen to meet members and share her PNG experience.

**CAIRNS
Ex-Kiaps Meeting
Saturday, 27 July 2024**

EX-KIAPS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS ARE INVITED!

Time: Midday to 8 pm

Venue: Restaurant at the Yorkey's Knob Boating Club, Cairns.

There is a range of accommodation available around Yorkey's Knob, for more information please contact Peter at the Cairns Beaches Tourist



Information Centre—phone (07) 4055 7158 or email info@villamarine.com.au

Bring your favourite PNG photos or item of memorabilia for the display table on the day.

It would be fabulous if say 20 people could provide around five digital images each.

The club has an overhead screen for digital slide shows, so dig out those old photos, get them scanned, and email to us.

Contact: Along with your scans, please RSVP as soon as possible so that numbers can be confirmed—Deryck Thompson dandy51@bigpond.net.au

Anzac Day, Brisbane 2024



The memorial monument after wreaths laid

PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Association

Before the Brisbane Anzac Day March, the Association held a short memorial service in Anzac Square, to commemorate those Papua New Guineans who served in the PIB and NGIB Battalions during the Pacific War.

The PNG Consul-General, Mr Reatau Rau, began the service mentioning the service of his father as a 'Fuzzy-wuzzy Angel' and his uncle's service in the PIB.

Speakers representing PIR, 2/14 Battalion and 2/16 Battalion Associations followed before the laying of wreaths, during which Phil Ainsworth, President of NGVR & PNGVR Association, read the 'Ode of Remembrance'.

The service concluded with the PNG National Anthem led by a school choir. A short but well-attended service, growing in popularity each year.

NGVR & PNGVR Ex-Members Association

About 20 members and friends marched in a brilliant, mild, windy autumn Brisbane Anzac Day—another 5 followed in jeeps. The outstanding Brisbane City Salvation Band marched immediately in front and kept us in step—many remarked 'not once did we have to change step after march-off'—we marched well.

Our Chaplain Ron MacDonald, a trombonist, and his wife, Cheryl, the flag bearer, were in the band. Being more widely spaced between marching entities this year, gave us greater time in front of the TV cameras, and thanks to Ian Thompson and Peter Rogers (the Younger) for banner carrying in the windy conditions.

Following the march all adjourned to our usual watering hole, the Stock Exchange Hotel,

for the reunion. This was attended by about 40 members and friends. Our later march off meant the hotel was open to patrons earlier, which resulted in other patrons spilling into our booked space. Nonetheless, it was an enjoyable occasion.

Many thanks to Colin Gould and Peter Rogers for the arrangements for another successful reunion.

PHIL AINSWORTH



TOP: Phil Ainsworth with the PNG Consul-General and his wife;
BELOW: NGVR & PNGVR Association members before the march



Featuring letters to the editor along with memories and enquiries from those who require assistance with their research or finding someone from the past. Also included are book and exhibition reviews about Papua New Guinea, and items of interest to members.

Please send your contributions to the editor by 31 July 2024, the Copy Deadline for the next issue: editor@pngaa.net

Information Please

I am looking for information on a Lieut Kevin L Smith who was possibly on army service in PNG in East New Britain.

After being discharged at the end of the war, he apparently travelled throughout East New Britain and New Ireland and collected a number of artefacts which he brought to Australia.

Do any PNGAA members have any information about Smith or know of objects in private or public collections that can be attributed to him? If you do, please contact me at the following email: jdm@burrinja.org.au—Thanks for your help. Kind regards,

JD MITTMANN

*Curator & Manager of Collections
Burrinja Cultural Centre*

NRAA Research Project

Amateur historians of the National Rifle Association of Australia (NRAA) are undertaking a research project in an attempt to document the broad history of long-range rifle shooting in PNG.

The first mention found of a Rifle Club in PNG was in 1908 with the formation of the Port Moresby Rifle Club as shown in the *Australian Commonwealth Gazette* of 16 May 1908. This would mean that rifle clubs in PNG were being formed under the same regulations as in Australia (PNG being a territory overseen by Australia).

A competition held in 1909 was reported in *The Telegraph* (Brisbane) in April 1909. We

found a newspaper advertisement from 1916 looking to reform the Port Moresby Rifle Club but whether this was a result of closing down during WWI or not is unknown.

The rifle clubs we know about in PNG were in Madang, Rabaul, Lae, Kokopo, Bulolo, and Bogia.

The trigger that initiated this research project was the recent discovery that John Brooker (member of the NSW Yorkshire Rifle Club) had won the 1972 Territory Queen's Prize hosted by the Port Moresby Rifle Club at their Hohola Range near Port Moresby.

When the PNG Territory Queen's Prize was originally instituted is not clear. The 1972 prize was indicated in the newspaper as the 5th Territory Queen's Prize, however, an article in the *Papua New Guinea Post Courier* in September of 1969 tells us that Robert (Bob) Stewart had won the 1969 prize, his 'second' after winning it previously in 1960. It may not have initially been an annual competition with articles in following years from 1970 suggesting it may have been held annually from 1969. Bob Stewart was also a Silver Medallist for PNG at the 1966 Empire/Commonwealth Games in Jamaica.

We are also uncertain when the PNG Territory Queen's Prize ceased to be held, with no newspaper articles evident after John Brooker's 1972 win.

Any information your readers can share to assist this project on long-range rifle shooting in PNG will be gratefully received and can be emailed to me at bruce.scott@tmrc.com.au

Thank you,

BRUCE SCOTT

Finding Shelley

I've recently subscribed to your online publications to try and track down some information that I feel one of your members might be able to help me with.

My grandfather, whom I unfortunately never was able to meet, was Judson Linsley Gressitt, and my mother is Ellyn Brown (Gressitt). We were talking recently about her experiences living in PNG in the 1960s.

My mother mentioned a good friend she made; a girl who lived with Peter Shanahan who she assumed had been either his or a relative's daughter, whom he was raising. All the information my mother can recall is that her first name was Shelley (spelling may be incorrect), and assumed her last name to be Shanahan but this was simply due to the fact that she lived with Peter.

The only other information we have is that we assume 'Shelley' to have been born close to the year 1952, and that soon after my mother departed PNG for the last time, Shelley may have been sent to a boarding school, possibly in Switzerland.

I am greatly enjoying reading your publications and hope

that possibly someone can shed some light on the whereabouts of this Shelley, as my mother remembers her quite fondly.

People can reach me through my email: keeter@discovery-drilling.com Thank you very much for your time and don't hesitate to reach out!

KEETER BROWN

The Carlaws of Taskul

Karen (White) Wilson's letter (*PNG Kundu*, March 2024) brought back some memories of Taskul.

My parents were Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries and in 1949 we went to Mussau, in the St Matthias Group, north of New Hanover and New Ireland, for three years. Every time we came down to Kavieng, we would call into Taskul to see the Carlaws—Ray, and Flo, and their family. Ray was a registered nurse who was the *liklik dokta* for New Hanover. I used to watch him as he treated the local people, often sewing up wounds.

He had a 'surgery' in a small, open-sided, *haus win*. In it, he would be his own anaesthetist and surgeon, by himself! I remember watching him do a skin graft from a lady's hip onto a tropical ulcer that wasn't healing, and another time, an appendicectomy.

On one visit, Flo told us a story: something was taking her newly-hatched chickens and she determined to do something about it. Taking a

torch, shovel, and a chair, she went into the chook pen at dusk and waited.

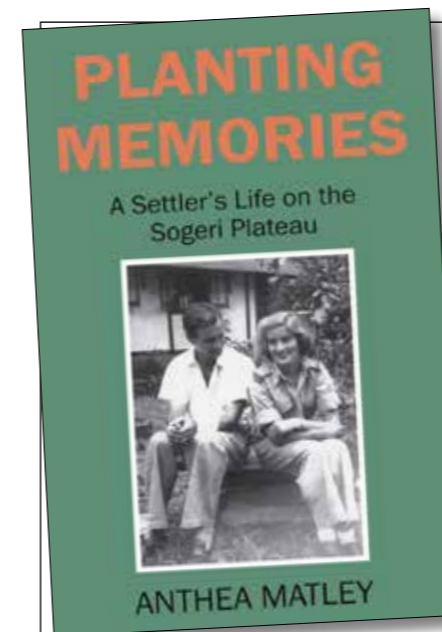
Much later, Flo heard a noise and switched on the torch, seeing quite a large snake which promptly headed back out of the hole in the netting that it had come in through. Flo was determined that the snake was not going to get away after she had gone to so much effort to catch the thief, so she grabbed its tail and pulled.

The snake immediately tried not to be pulled back. In the ensuing wrestling match in which Flo was trying to hold the snake, hold the torch, and grab the shovel, she dropped the torch, which promptly went out.

Determined not to let the snake go, and working on the theory that while ever the snake was pulling one way and Flo the other, then the snake was not turning around to attack her. With the snake's tail in one hand, Flo was desperately feeling around for the torch and when she found it she tried to switch it back on but with no success.

Ray was away touring the villages on New Hanover so Flo was calling out for some of the staff to come and assist but no one came. Flo spent six hours until daylight, holding that snake's tail when a staff member arrived and dispatched the snake with the shovel! What a lady.

WARREN MARTIN



BOOK REVIEW

Planting Memories: A Settler's Life on the Sogeri Plateau Anthea Matley

For those who enjoy a trip down an expatriate's memory lane of life in Papua New Guinea just prior to Independence, this book is easy to read, as it examines the challenges of Australian colonial life amongst the expatriate community in developing and managing rubber plantations on the Sogeri Plateau.

Anthea states her 'book is part-memoir, part creative non-fiction and part biography'. She has written the story of her parents, Culver and Margaret Matley, and her siblings. Her father spent over 30 years running rubber plantations on the Sogeri Plateau where Anthea was born, and her siblings were raised. The cover offers a charming photo of Culver and Margaret Matley.

Culver Matley arrived in Papua New Guinea from Canada in 1935, after which he enlisted in the Australian army in 1940, until 1945, the year he met his

wife Margaret, a nurse in the Australian army. The family returned to Australia in 1968, prior to Papua New Guinea's independence.

The book starts as a family history of Culver Matley tracing his English and Canadian ancestors and the extreme hardships Culver's parents suffered in Canada. Events led to Culver finding temporary employment on Waigani Plantation in Milne Bay, before securing permanent employment at the Sogeri, Mororo and Eilogo rubber plantations.

Anthea interviewed her parents and carried out extensive research on the various places, personalities, and events, that her parents experienced. Culver's involvement in World War II is detailed and illustrates the vagaries that occurred during the military campaigns. Anthea has used her parents' voices as well as her own, to tell of their lives before, during, and after, living on the rubber plantations. It may take a while for the reader to absorb Anthea's 'creative non-fiction' first-person voice, but it gives extra power to her family's experiences.

Culver Matley was a fine photographer and the photos included in the book enrich the description of the family's experiences running rubber plantations, of their Sogeri plantation home, and Culver's war service. I was disappointed that the Sogeri Plateau map was not clear.

The book details the many social, health, and economic, hardships that planters experienced on plantations, and their

strong social networks and achievements. I was particularly struck by the sadness the Matley family experienced when the promised employment back in Australia didn't eventuate. This could have affected many other Australians who struggled settling back in Australia when they returned prior to Papua New Guinea's independence.

Anthea returned to visit her Sogeri home in 2018. She describes the growth of Port Moresby; the deterioration of the Sogeri roads; and how the rubber plantations were lost among the jungle vegetation that has reclaimed the land. When she reached the now derelict Eilogo home, childhood memories flooded back. Anthea was left with the sense that the house was no longer home.

Reviewer's postscript:

I enjoyed reading this book because I have been to Samarai; the Waigani Plantation; and a rubber plantation home. I was a relief teacher at Sogeri National High School; played the piano at Woody's Rouna Hotel, and the Papua Club, and worked next to the WWII Wards Strip runway at Port Moresby Teachers College. Reading the book renewed many of my own happy memories of my time in Papua New Guinea.

KEITH STEBBINS

Published by Sevenpens Publishing, Harcourt, Vic 3453 Australia, 2024
ISBN 978-0-9954144-2-6
This book is available from the author, Anthea Matley, at <https://amatley.com/>
An extract from Anthea's book will be published in the September issue of *PNG Kundu*.



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

PNG PM Survives Vote of No Confidence

PNG PM James Marape survived a vote of no confidence in mid-February 2024.

A statement from the Australian Institute of International Affairs:

In mid-February, rather than wait for a vote of no confidence, Marape arranged for a sudden vote of confidence in the parliament. The opposition boycotted the vote allowing Marape to win 84–0 in the 118-seat parliament. The opposition had earlier filed a motion for a vote of no confidence, but the government outmanoeuvred it. Access online at:

<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/more-instability-ahead-for-papua-new-guinea/>

Cocoa

Posted late March 2024, ABC News

Papua New Guinea is hoping to take advantage of a global shortage of cocoa in West Africa by dramatically increasing exports. Bad weather, disease, and long-term deforestation in West Africa have resulted in a shortage



Processing the cocoa beans



Reatau Rau

of cocoa yields in the region. PNG farmers have been reaping extraordinary rewards from the global shortfall. Refer to a longer article:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-03-29/cocoa-crisis-poured-money-into-png-villages/103601514>

New Consul-General of PNG to Queensland

Congratulations to Mr Reatau Rau who assumed the role of PNG Consul-General in the PNG Consulate-General for Queensland in early 2024. Mr Rau has been invited to the Brisbane PNGAA social gathering in July.

Census 2024

PNG’s Census 2024, commences 17 June, and concludes 30 June 2024.

Bougainville

The Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) announced in February 2024 a five-year extension to Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) for its exploration licence for the Panguna project in Central Bougainville.

[https://www.looppng.com/png-news/bcl-exploration-license-extended-124692#:~:text=Bougainville%20Copper%20Limited%20\(BCL\)%20has,Autonomous%20Bougainville%20Government%20\(ABG\)](https://www.looppng.com/png-news/bcl-exploration-license-extended-124692#:~:text=Bougainville%20Copper%20Limited%20(BCL)%20has,Autonomous%20Bougainville%20Government%20(ABG))

PNG Security and Civil Defence Corp proposal

Dr Olugbenga Ige, Senior Research Fellow and Program Leader of the National Security and International Relations at the Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG NRI), has proposed the establishment of a PNG Security and Civil Defence Corps (PNG-CDC). The concept aims to address trends of human kidnapping and tribal clashes in remote geographical locations.

According to a NRI report, despite several initiatives being devised to address the emerging security threats in PNG, insecurity remains a current social issue in the country.

The PNG-CDC would be designed to protect and assist residents in PNG, safeguard property and the environment in the face of natural and man-made disasters in PNG in line with the mandate of the ICDO (The United Nations, 2013).

The PNG-CDC would further assist in maintaining peace and



Seasonal workers in Australia

order and protect and rescue civilians on PNG soil during periods of emergency. The article can be read in full online at:

<https://pngnri.org>

PNG Seasonal Workers in Australia

Hon. Sir Peter Ipatas GCL, KBE, MP, Governor of Enga Province, visited PNG seasonal workers in March, in Western Australia, Victoria and NSW. The scheme which commenced in 2011 is now called the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM).

Broadcast Thursday, 28 Mar 2024 at 6.30 pm:

<https://www.abc.net.au/pacific/programs/wantok/ipatas-visit-aus/103646668>



Prime Minister James Marape and His Excellency John Feakes

New Australian High Commissioner to PNG

Whilst his appointment was announced in September 2023, Australia’s new High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, His Excellency John Feakes, officially presented his letter of introduction to Papua New Guinea’s Prime Minister James Marape in mid-February 2024.

Mr Feakes, a senior career officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), was most recently High Commissioner to Fiji. He previously served in a similar role for Australia in Kenya, and as Deputy High Commissioner and Counsellor in PNG, in addition

to diplomatic postings in the USA and the Philippines.

Earthquake Hits the Sepik

A major earthquake hit East Sepik Province, 38 km from Ambunti, at a depth of about 40 km, shaking villages along the Sepik River and in surrounding areas, at about 6.20 am on Sunday, 24 March. Up to 1,000 homes were destroyed and reports mentioned at least three people having died as homes were driven underwater. The region was already feeling the effects of major flooding. Donations from the Australian government included 250 household kits.

WWII Beaufort Bomber Recovered

The mining magnate, Dr Andrew (Twiggy) Forrest financed a crack team of divers on an underwater exploration trip in 2020 to search for his missing uncle and WWII pilot, David Forrest. The search uncovered a Beaufort bomber A9-186 in the waters south of Gasmata, New Britain Province that crashed on 5 September 1943.

In 2022 bone fragments found on the wreckage were recovered and sent for DNA testing. Test results confirmed the identity of two of the four-man crew. The



Locals standing on a road which was damaged by a landslide

remains of the other two have not been located.

A RAAF memorial service for Warrant Officer Clement Batstone Wiggins, one of the two remains recovered, was held at Ipswich's Amberley Barracks on 26 April 2024 (below).

The expedition team located another Australian bomber near the coast, with a piece of fuselage and a propeller being brought to the surface for examination. After documentation was completed, the wreckage was returned to the site where it was found.

Courtesy Jemima Burt, ABC News

Qantas Direct Flights

In early April our national carrier launched its inaugural direct weekly service from Sydney to Port Moresby, the first commercial passenger flight between the two cities in more than 50 years.

P'nyang Gas Field

ExxonMobil and the Government of Papua New Guinea signed the P'nyang project gas agreement for the proposed development of the P'nyang

LNG project, located in Western Province of PNG. The gas field was first discovered in the 1990s by then operator Chevron Niugini Ltd. The field is intended to expand the PNG LNG Project as well as provide natural gas for power generation.

Currently operated by ExxonMobil Limited, the joint venture partners are Ampolex (PNG) Pty Ltd, Oil Search (PNG) Ltd, Merlin Petroleum Company, and Oil Search Ltd.

Anzac Day 2024

The Australian and PNG Prime Ministers hiked sections of the Kokoda Trail before attending the Anzac Dawn Service at the Isurava Memorial. See our report on the back cover of this issue.



Mr Albanese was welcomed by the tribes of the Oro Province with a sing-sing (ABC News)

The Road to Officialdom —Hell and Back

THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY CITIZENSHIP DEBATE

PATRICIA CHOW

This article is a very brief overview of how Australian citizenship came about in our PNGCAA community. There are some people who may still have memories of these times, and one rainy day should jot down their thoughts to fill in the gaps in the records.

As always, when we delve into our own history and personal stories, sometimes it makes for difficult reading, however, the community knowledge is important so that someone, perhaps your future great-grandchild, will appreciate how we came to be here.

The elders of our community have passed on some understanding of how their parents or grandparents, who were skilled tradesmen and workers, and their wives and perhaps a youngster or two, came from China to work and settle in a Pacific island country now known as Papua New Guinea. This process of migration of a particular group from one region of the world to another is not that unusual, and there are many examples to be found in Australia, like the post-WWI migration of southern Italians to Leichhardt, Sydney, or of a few German village families to South Australia.

From childhood days, it was always taken for granted by the writer that our Australian citizenship had something to do with being born in pre-independence Papua New Guinea when New Guinea was a mandated territory of Australia and thus it was somehow an 'automatic' right. (A half-baked notion that was! Patricia says).

Troy Lee's citizenship case (Minister for Home Affairs v Lee [2021] citation FCAFC 89), which was told in *Kundu News*, Issue 80 Spring 2021, has highlighted the fact that, typically for new migrants, citizenship begins with naturalisation—the process whereby one becomes 'a full member of the Australian community'.

In the words of the late James H Woo OBE, 'It took us a long time to be given the privilege of Australian citizenship and we prize it highly'

(Cahill, p.254). Cahill's account of the citizenship issue in this book is recommended reading for those interested in gaining a fuller understanding of the historical background of a complex issue. In other words, for those of us with parents and grandparents who settled in or were born in the former Territory of Papua and New Guinea, Australian citizenship was not 'automatic', nor was it granted without much debate at all levels of the Administration.

Colonial Times

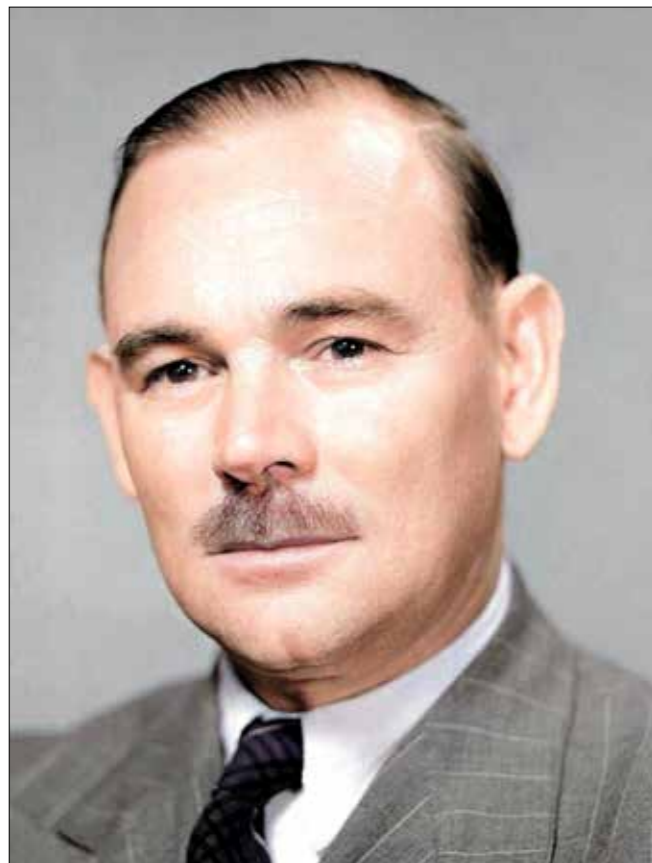
Papua, the southern part of pre-Independence PNG, in 1888 became a protectorate under British control but, by 1906, it was handed over to Australia to be administered as an external territory. New Guinea on the other hand, was the northern part of pre-Independence PNG, with a different civil administration to that of Papua, as before World War I New Guinea was a Protectorate of Imperial Germany. Indeed, the writer remembers when her grandfather, Gabriel SY Chow, had said without any rancour, that in his youth, he used to doff his hat to the Germans of that time and had learnt a smattering of the German language.

At the end of WWI, the German administration of New Guinea was handed over to the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary

Force (ANMEF) in September 1914, and this period of military administration ended when the League of Nations conferred the mandate of administering New Guinea to Australia on 17 December 1920 (p.86, *Cahill*). *The New Guinea Act 1920* came into force on 9 May 1921, which was the beginning of the civil administration of New Guinea.

At the end of World War II, the territory of New Guinea became a United Nations trusteeship. Unsurprisingly, after the turmoil of two World Wars, 'the legal position of Chinese in New Guinea after 1945 was thoroughly confused. They were denied Australian citizenship, the British citizenship status of those born in Hong Kong or Singapore was ignored by the Australian government, their movement between New Guinea centres was controlled, and they were banned from entering Papua' (*Cahill*, p.205). The New Guinea Annual Report 1947/1948 recorded the number of Chinese residents at 1,769 men, women and children; however, that number had varied greatly depending on who was in charge at the time.

Many would remember that the two territories



Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, 1953

were jointly administered and known as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. TPNG was what this writer used to write as the destination of letters sent home to Rabaul, written from the Randwick home of grandparents during the early 1970s. TPNG existed until midnight of 15 September 1975 and the next day was Independence Day for the new nation of Papua New Guinea.

The Minister for Territories

In early 1951, the Prime Minister of the time, Robert Menzies, appointed Paul Meernaa Hasluck as Minister of Territories, which included responsibility for the Northern Territory, Nauru, Norfolk Island, Cocos and Christmas Island, and Papua and New Guinea.

He was an outsider in regards to the then Territory of Papua and New Guinea as he said that initially he knew nothing of the place. The appointment however proved to be fortuitous, especially for the Indigenous people of PNG. With Hasluck's prior experience representing Australia at various United Nations commissions, he brought a fresh perspective to the local administration and in his own recollection, the 'stuffy rank-conscious' community (*Hasluck*, p.13). He carried out his duties there for the next thirteen years with a firm conviction in the UN mandate to facilitate the political development of the country as well as addressing the social and fiscal issues arising with development. His tenure as the minister was not going to be smooth sailing.

From the outset, he observed that there was an atmosphere of racial segregation and he sought to improve matters by proceeding to 'remove any discriminatory treatment of the Chinese and mixed-race people [and] to break down the social barriers between them and the Europeans' [p.32]. He estimated that there were about 2,000 of Chinese origin, 11,000 Europeans and about 1,300 of 'mixed race of various origins'.

Hasluck wrote that:

As for the Chinese, I saw at once that the only way open was to give them full Australian citizenship, with the right of permanent residence in Australia

... these ideas were quite contrary to the prevailing opinion in the Territory and in Australia at that time [p.31].

Despite his personal conviction, the question of citizenship was to remain unsettled for another six years, as there were strong opposing views.

Australian Protected Person (APP) Status

In June 1950, the New Guinea Chinese Union—executive members included Gabriel Achun, Thomas Mow and Wong Shoon, had already presented a petition to the UN Visiting Mission to the Territory detailing their grievances and aspirations; nearly a year later, they also met with the new minister, Hasluck.

The lack of domestic political support for the granting of citizenship more broadly to the Chinese in New Guinea was somewhat addressed by new legislation (October 1951) under the then *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948–1950* that introduced a class of persons, who were:

... born in New Guinea whether before or after the making of the regulation, who are not British subjects, are expressed to be within the class of 'Australian Protected Persons' [Cahill, p.246].

For the APP, this meant that they could travel under the auspices and protection of the Australian Government, however, it did not extend to including full citizenship rights to permanent residency.

Eddy Yun, now aged 84, recollected that he travelled as an Australian Protected Person when he first arrived in Australia, aged 16 or 17. Eddy makes a great story of how puzzled the immigration official was on inspecting his official papers that day so long ago, however, its validity was finally accepted and Eddy was ushered onwards for his high school studies at Bowral's Chevalier College.

The discussions about citizenship for New Guinea Chinese took place during the sunset of the colonial period when what is generally known as the 'White Australia Policy' was in force. There were, however, a number of voices speaking out against the prevailing atmosphere of exclusivity.

One of these was Father James Dwyer MSC, who supported the Rabaul Chinese and made representations to the TPNG Legislative Council, which established in 1951 that the Chinese and those of mixed descent be granted Australian



Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, handing certificates to graduate nurses at the NSW University of Technology, Wollongong division (later the University of Wollongong).
Source: University of Wollongong Archives

citizenship (Cahill, p.252). It is also noted there that Fr Dwyer might have also had his heart set on getting a new Rabaul church built with a more settled congregation. (Cheek of the suggestion! Patricia).

Taking a Seat at the Table

Finally in August 1956, with gathering support of the citizenship issue, Minister Hasluck made the recommendation to Cabinet for the granting of citizenship to Chinese and other 'Asiatics'. On 16 June 1957, *The South Pacific Post* reported that Minister Hasluck, had announced:

The Government has decided to give to those Asian residents who were born in the Territory, and to those who were not born there but were living there not under any immigration restriction, the opportunity to become Australian citizens by naturalisation [Cahill, p.254].

Prior to this momentous decision, Minister Hasluck wrote that there was what he modestly called a subsidiary incident—a visit by Prime Minister Menzies and Dame Pattie Menzies to Rabaul, when they were officially welcomed:

... by the Chinese community in their own hall. In courtesy and social grace this function far outshone any other ... and moreover at that time the Chinese hall, built by themselves, was the most pleasantly modern building in the town.

To his delight, the Prime Minister was greeted by 'a succession of ... well-mannered young Chinese men' (Hasluck, p.333) who turned out to be Wesley College Melbourne Old Boys, as was

Delegates from Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TNPG) with Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, at Kings Hall, Parliament House, Canberra
Source: University of Wollongong Archives



Menzies himself. (The gathering of well turned-out ladies pictured in 'Old Rabaul', *Kundu News*, Issue 75, now looks to have been the Ladies' function in honour of Dame Pattie).

In those times, one could imagine that the acquiring of citizenship meant that one now had a legitimate and equal voice, and that one could have a future without the anxieties of deportation to China—the far away land of the ancestors—or uncertain prospects in a future independent PNG.

The idea of the permanent residency on mainland Australia, however, was probably not uppermost in mind, as the small Chinese communities dotted around the New Guinea Islands were thriving and participating in many aspects of the good life and the good people of the tropics. •

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Thank you to Denis Chow & Davina Chan for supplying additional resources.

Editor's Note: This article was first published as Part 3 in the *Kundu News*, Issue 82 (continued from Issue 80), per kind approval of Patricia Chow, *Kundu News* Editor, for the Papua New Guinea Chinese Catholic Association of Australia.

Department of Agriculture, Stock & Fisheries, Taliligap, Rabaul

Part One THE GATEWAY FOR NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS (Didiman) TO THE PNG ISLANDS: Personal Experiences in 1967

PETER STACE & JW (Bill) GORNALL

In October 2023 I received the following email from an old work colleague from my time in Papua New Guinea (PNG). A contributor to *PNG Kundu*, he had seen some of my stories in the journal:

Bill Gornall Wed 25/10/2023 10:36 AM

PNG Days: Hello Peter, my name is Bill Gornall and I wonder if on 23 June 1967, you flew on my flight POM to Rabaul and then on to the Department of Agriculture Stock and Fisheries (DASF) Taliligap for initial 'information sessions' on Ag practices in PNG. Please just disregard if I'm barking up the wrong tree here! Cheers, BG.

A huge blast from the past! Of course I remembered the occasion. Is it possible to forget your birthday, your old school, or your first ... whatever important thing in your life? I remembered Bill because he told me it was his 21st birthday and, in retrospect, both of us were embarking on an experience never to be forgotten: being introduced to the Jewel of PNG—Rabaul.

During the following emails and phone calls old stories were exchanged, and the idea of writing a story about the Department of Agriculture, Stock & Fisheries (DASF) Taliligap, the gateway to the PNG Islands for new Rural Development Officers (RDOs), or *didiman*, was suggested. So here is an attempt to place the story of DASF Taliligap into the literature of PNG, with the personal experiences in 1967 of myself, Peter Stace and Bill Gornall.

DASF Taliligap

This was an agricultural extension station (*Didiman* station) for East New Britain. It is on the Burma or Vuruga road, which runs along the escarpment of the caldera making up Rabaul's Simpson Harbour. It is a few kilometres past the Coastwatchers Lookout and the United Church mission at Malmaluan and is the heart of Tolai country.



The Japanese Zero at the Coastwatchers Lookout (Peter Stace, 1967)

Taliligap History

It appears that Taliligap, in one of its historical roles, was an Australian army camp following the Japanese surrender in 1945.

DASF Taliligap had one of the most captivating and unforgettable views of Simpson Harbour and surrounding volcanoes, including Rabalanakaia Crater, Kombiu (The Mother), Toyanumbatir and Turanguna (North and South Daughters), Mount Tauruvur (Matupi Crater) and Vulcan. Arguably, though, DASF Taliligap has the best view of all; not only can you see Rabaul town, the volcanoes and the harbour, on a good day the Duke of York Islands, and New Ireland, could be observed.



TOP: Taliligap, New Britain, September 1945—view of Simpson Harbour with the crater of Vulcan in the foreground. This scene was taken after Australian troops occupied the area following the Japanese surrender (Cain: 2020)

CENTRE: View of DASF Taliligap from the old bungalow. The OIC's house is on the right, office on the left, with many houses and sheds down from the left (Bill Gornall, 1967)

BELOW: View of Rabaul Harbour from Taliligap, with Vulcan centre left (Bill Gornall, 1967)

Two points suggest that the land on which DASF Taliligap Agricultural Extension Station sat was a remnant of early German colonisation:

Firstly, the pyramid-shape cement foundations were part of German architecture. (From personal communications with author, Rod Miller, who noticed these foundations under the old bungalow when he visited Taliligap in 2002.)

Secondly, the name *didiman* is supposed to be a vestige of German times, describing either Dr Beidermann or Mr Dietmann, who were the German curators of Rabaul's botanical gardens pre-WWI.

These men wanted to boost copra production, and sent people out to Tolai villages to advise and encourage its production. These men were called Diddy's men, and so the name *didiman* for agricultural extension officers has passed down through time (Godbold: 2010).

After WWII, DASF Taliligap was the first stop for orientation for some new RDOs. Here was the first step before commencing work before being posted to New Ireland, New Britain, and Bougainville. There are references in *PNG Kundu* to the following personnel working out of DASF Taliligap:

Robert Leonard PULSFORD

(Vale, *PNG Kundu*, d. 22 July 2004, aged 88)

On 1958 Robert Pulsford was at Taliligap on the Gazelle Peninsula where he was in charge of a training centre with a focus on cocoa production. The following two years saw him based in Rabaul as District Agricultural Officer for East New Britain (https://pngaa.net/Vale/vale_dec2004.htm)

Barry James BEIL

(Vale, *PNG Kundu*, September 2023)

Barry's first posting was at Taliligap in 1957.

DASF Taliligap was an active station from 1957 to 1958, and perhaps for some years prior. In 1967 it was the agricultural extension station for the Gazelle Peninsula, as well as most of East New Britain, including out-stations on the Duke of York Islands, Wide Bay and Pomio. When we arrived in 1967, the permanent staff were Rod Henderson (OIC), Jim Parker and Col Briety.



Didiman recruits at LAES Keravat (1967) looking at oil palms (Bill Gornall, 1967)

Other recruits who arrived around the same time as us were Alan Pretty and Reg Hill. (If we have forgotten anyone, we apologise).

From memory, and Bill's notes, the tropical agricultural experiences for us raw recruits were with cocoa and coconut production, cocoa marketing, village-intensive livestock projects such as poultry and pigs, and the rudiments of agricultural extension patrol work. Only some of us went on patrol to outlying areas.

Part of our orientation to PNG agriculture was awareness of other agricultural organisations that would help build our knowledge for the *didiman* job. This included:

The Lowlands Agricultural Experiment Station (LAES), now known as National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI), in Keravat, where agricultural research was conducted with the many potential crops for village and expatriate-run plantations. It was at LAES that work on cocoa breeding and cocoa dieback disease was carried out as well as research on indigenous food crops.

LAES contributed over many years to world-wide research into tropical agriculture of cocoa, coconuts, oil palm, spices and tropical food crops

such as taro, tapioca and sweet potatoes. LAES (the oldest research station in PNG) enjoys a prodigious reputation as an agricultural research station.

Kurakakaul Livestock Centre near Rabaul was also on the training agenda for us recruits, to become mindful of livestock industries in the PNG Islands. These industries were essentially pigs and poultry—village-style—although there were attempts to develop cattle projects. Livestock catered for at this facility included horses, pigs, beef cattle and poultry. Staff included Anthony (Tony) Howard as OIC. At Taliligap, introduction to cocoa and coconuts was a high priority, as they were big money earners for village farmers throughout coastal PNG. Traditional food crops were also a major income source. •

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Part 2 will be published in the next issue of PNG Kundu

Muriel Larner MBE —a Mother's Legacy

ROSALIE EVEREST

Rosalie Everest plans to return to the Eastern Highlands of PNG in June 2024 with her mother's ashes.

This is Part 1 of a two-part story.

Before my mother, Muriel Larner, née MacGowan, passed away in 2019, she gave me her diaries, newspaper cuttings and incomplete memoirs, and asked me to tell her story. This is a daunting task as my mother, born in 1929 in Rabaul, was evacuated from the volcano eruption there, and then again on the eve of the Japanese invasion in 1941. She returned after WWII to Port Moresby where she married Wally Larner, my father.

In 1957 my parents Muriel and Wally moved to the Highlands to establish a coffee plantation. My father's death in 1967 left my mother with a struggling plantation to run and two children to raise. She not only successfully managed the plantation but went on to establish the Eastern Highlands Culture Centre in Kainantu, for which she was later honoured with an MBE for 'services to culture'.

When Muriel and Wally arrived at Arau plantation in the Eastern Highlands, they had a four-year-old daughter and a four-week-old baby (me). Muriel's ball gowns, the fox fur, evening bags and stiletto heels, from a glamorous pre-marriage life in Port Moresby, were soon relegated to a large Chinese camphorwood 'dress-up' box for my sister, Bronwyn, and me. Donning trousers, shirts and sensible shoes, the plantation *Missis Muriel*, supported her husband by establishing and running several village trade stores, training, supervising and working with the labour lines planting and pruning coffee trees and providing what aid she could for sick or injured villagers.

My parents persevered through physical and financial hardships but revelled in the joys of family life at Arau. Muriel gave correspondence lessons to my sister and me for the first five years of



Muriel dancing under a frangipani tree after her return to Port Moresby in 1946. Photo taken by Muriel's father William MacGowan

our primary education. Bronwyn left for boarding school in 1964, and I was due to follow when I turned ten, but in the middle of the night of 16 July 1967 my father suffered a massive heart attack. Muriel switched on the generator and sent word to the aid post orderly in the village.

He ran to Arau from the village and tried unsuccessfully to revive my father. When the reality of my father's death had sunk in, Muriel and I could only turn off the generator and wait in the dark for the sun to come up. The next morning, she sent a telegram on the two-way radio to my sister at boarding school and, as the news spread at Arau, plantation workers and local villagers surrounded the house, wailing for the loss of *Masta Wally*.

Muriel found herself a widow at the age of 37, on an isolated debt-ridden plantation with two daughters to support and educate. Her friends encouraged her to pack up and go to Australia so she could put us into a day school in Queensland. They couldn't believe that a single white woman in her circumstances would remain in the Territory. But Muriel never faltered in her determination to stay in the place of her birth, the land of her

childhood and her early adulthood up until her marriage.

Living a suburban life in Australia, a country she never considered home, was not an option. Muriel simply decided that she could run Arau on her own, despite being told that plantation workers 'wouldn't take orders from a woman'. Muriel wrote in her diary: *My staff were wonderful, and funny enough, were proud that they had a woman boss.*

Over the next few years, in addition to running the plantation with her loyal foreman, Gegesa Simalobe, Muriel rekindled an earlier interest in the arts. Due to a profound hearing loss from childhood, which caused her to wear bulky hearing aids, after her evacuation from Rabaul my mother completed her education at art school in Adelaide. Thus, she became proficient in sculpture, drawing, design, drafting, classical ballet and water ballet. While digging drains on Arau, Muriel discovered a very rich seam of high-quality clay suitable for pottery, so she resumed her hobbies of ceramic sculpture and hand-built pottery.

Graham Gilmore, an old friend and an accomplished potter, encouraged Muriel in her artistic pursuits and helped her install a kiln and pottery wheel. Muriel then took on some young apprentices from the local community teaching them pottery and screen-printing. Our guest house was converted into a bustling art studio, which was the precursor of the Eastern Highlands Cultural Centre in Kainantu. Muriel and her band of protégés, which included young Tane and Pa'a, were soon shipping their pottery and screen-printed items to towns.

In 1973, the Department of Commerce and Business Development heard of the success of Muriel's creative enterprise and made an initial offer of a job for her to be based in nearby Kainantu town. Promises were made that the provincial government would build a workshop to enable Muriel to train more potters and printers. She didn't agree until the following year, after employing a plantation manager, which made it possible for her to move the craft enterprise to

Kainantu, where she purchased a group of houses close together.

One of Muriel's houses became the Kainantu Potteries workshop and showroom, and Muriel lived in the house behind. The potters and their families resided in basic accommodation at the back of Muriel's home. However, by the end of 1974, the government promise of a workshop, a wage for Muriel, and housing for the staff, had not eventuated. Muriel continued to use her limited resources to accommodate, support, and provide transport for the potters.

She then founded Eastern Highlands Prints where more young trainees learnt printing and dressmaking. Both concerns were very successful, providing the trainees with combinations of a piece-rate income, an hourly wage and shares in the business, with career paths. Muriel's diaries illustrate the damaging social impacts of alcohol abuse, petty pilfering, regional conflicts, domestic violence and general law and order problems with which she had to contend in Kainantu town.

During this period, Muriel continued to assist her manager at Arau, with fortnightly trips over muddy roads to inspect the coffee and factory and carry out stocktakes at the trade stores. It was a gruelling, busy life but Muriel was devoted



Then PNG Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, with Muriel. (Photo taken at Kainantu Lodge, August 1980, possibly by Barry Korin when Sir Julius visited the Centre)

to developing her unquestionably talented trainees and to keep the plantation running.

She also held pottery lessons at Kainantu High School and invited local Kainantu children to join her at the Council Chambers for weekly ballet lessons, for which she provided each child with a freshly laundered pair of green and white striped football socks.

It was five years before the Government made good on their promise to properly assist Muriel and her trainees and artisans. The Office of Business Development did, however, in 1976 begin to source and support a succession of overseas volunteer technical officers, all of whom made significant contributions to the enterprise's development. The potters, printers, seamstresses and volunteers made increasingly loud complaints about the unfulfilled government promises until, finally in 1979, a vacant block of land next to a block with a tin shed was purchased as the site for the long-proposed craft centre.

Paul Frame, architect of the Raun Raun Theatre in Goroka, arrived to draw up plans for the venture. Kainantu Potteries and Eastern Highlands Prints moved into the tin shed and the building of staff quarters began. The vision of an elegant, timber, purpose-built cultural centre, with a soaring roof of wood shingles and a colonnade of carved pillars, started to take shape.

By the time it was opened to great acclaim in November 1981, the Cultural Centre had already expanded its operations to include spinning, weaving and metal sculpture. A steady stream of visitors arrived at the centre seven days a week,



Potters at work in the Eastern Highlands Cultural Centre (Photo taken early 1980s by Bruce Sowter)

through spectacular doors crafted by the renowned metal sculptor Ruki Fame. Muriel's dream was finally a reality!

Due to Muriel's life-long hearing disability, she became inspired when she learned that 1982 was to be the UN Year of the Disabled. She immediately launched a campaign to recruit disabled trainees to work at the Cultural Centre. So many applicants came forward that several had to be turned away. There was *Ia-pas* (a hearing-disabled person whom the other potters called by that name), and *Ai-pas* (as per a vision-impaired person addressed by other potters), along with recruits disabled in their legs and arms.

It was an extraordinary initiative as these workers became very skilled and successful under the tutelage of able-bodied potters. Hearing-disabled and non-verbal Tayas was a particularly gifted and prolific potter. Years later, when Muriel was no longer running the Centre, Tayas did not trust anyone other than her to speak and advocate on his behalf.

When interviewed in 1982 by Hollie Smith¹ about this feature of the Cultural Centre's operations, Muriel explained that the infectious laughter and good humour of this band of disabled potters brought a newfound light-heartedness to the workshop, as everyone admired their courage and determination.

Other initiatives at the centre included the encouragement of local craftsmen and women to bring artefacts and crafts to sell directly to the public. A coffee shop and a small museum of precious artefacts from the Kainantu area were also installed. The Eastern Highlands Cultural Centre flourished, becoming the icon of Kainantu, the 'Gateway to the Highlands'.

So now I must prepare for my pilgrimage back to Arau, Kainantu and the Cultural Centre, to lay my mother Muriel to rest and to see what memories of her legacy remain today. I will document my journey and I plan to write a follow-up article on my return. •

(1) Hollie Smith published an article 'Disabled Six Brighten up Pottery Shop' in PNG's Post Courier. Rosalie contacted Hollie but she cannot remember the date of the news report.

Crossing the Saruwageds, Easter 1976

Part Two

IAN

HOWIE-WILLIS

Part One of this three-part series described how the author and his three Papua New Guinea University of Technology (Unitech) companions lost their way in dense fog while crossing the broad plateau forming the main ridge of the Saruwaged Range north of Lae. This instalment describes their difficulties in descending from the plateau to the villages on the northern side of the range.

Guided by Matthew (Matt) Linton, the mathematician and best map-reader, who was good at mentally calculating distances, heights and angles, we decided to follow a northerly compass bearing across the tundra *antap tru* (i.e. on top of the Saruwaged Plateau). By about 4 pm we reached the escarpment on the northern edge of the plateau.

Matt pointed down the steep slope below us: 'We must follow that ridge,' he announced, 'because it will lead us down to the nearest villages.' We trekked down for maybe 15 minutes until the slope had narrowed to a ridge spine that dropped away in front of us for what seemed like hundreds of metres. Matt declared that that was the ridge we must descend.

Robin King, Hector Clark and I looked aghast at each other: 'Going down there would be suicidal!' we protested. The three of us said we would be better off clambering back up to the plateau to see if we could find another way out. But Matt was insistent: 'I'll go first,' he assured us, 'follow me and I'll show you we can do it!' We replied that we would not follow until he had reached somewhere safe and could clearly see the way forward.

Matt set off cautiously, step by step. He had only descended about five metres when his feet slithered from beneath him. He began sliding down the slope and out of view on his backside. He desperately grasped at the tussock grass to halt his descent and prevent himself from hurtling into space. Fortunately, Matt got a firm grip on a small shrub without uprooting it. He lay there shocked, grasping his shrub for a minute or two, then turned himself over. Slowly, ever so carefully, he climbed back to where we were standing, horrified at what we had just witnessed. We were only about 20 metres above him but he took 20 minutes to reach us.



The camp in a sheltered hollow on the lee side of the northern escarpment of the Saruwaged Range. Matt Linton (left) and Robin King are perhaps wondering whether the tent that Hector Clark has just erected is weather-proof (Source: Hector Clark)

Matt then sat there exhausted for about 15 minutes as he regained his composure. He knew he had had a close call, that he had escaped death by a whisker. We three others refrained from saying so, but we all realised that if the four of us had ventured down Matt's ridge the risk of someone dropping to his death would have multiplied by a factor of four.

When Matt was ready, we wearily plodded back uphill to the plateau. That took us half an hour. On the way sleet was swirling around us. By the time we reached the top we knew that night would soon be falling, so we began looking round for somewhere to pitch the tents. We soon found a sheltered hollow on the lee side of the escarpment. It offered protection from the prevailing northerly winds. That was where we camped.

What followed was the most miserable night of my entire life. I was grimy, wet, cold and depressed, uncertain what the morrow might hold. My chief worry was that we might not find a way down from the bleak, inhospitable plateau. We could die of exposure there; we could fall down some precipice; and we might run out of food. The others, I guess, were thinking much the same.

Heavy rain fell during the night. I was sharing Hector's two-man tent, which lacked a built-in waterproof floor, and which in any case he had not



(Left–right) Robin King, Matthew Linton (front), Ian Willis and Hector Clark at their campsite, looking worried after not finding a track down from the northern escarpment of the Saruwaged plateau
(Source: Hector Clark)

erected to be completely weather-proof. During the night we discovered a rivulet trickling through the tent. Despite our groundsheets, the bottom ends of our sleeping bags were saturated. After that, we sat as far away from the steady streamlet as we could, the dry portions of our sleeping bags wrapped round us like shawls. We dozed fitfully in that position for the rest of the night.

By first light, about 6 am, I was up, dressed and clambering from the tent to 'answer a call of nature'. I walked about 20 paces, looked around to see if this was far enough from the tents, when, lo and behold, to my great surprise there at my very feet was a path. To my right it plainly led down from the escarpment; to my left it ran past our campsite and back across the plateau.

'Hey, coppers, come and have a Captain Cook at what I've just found!' I yelled. (I enjoyed using such archaic Australianisms because my three companions were genteel Englishmen.) The others stumbled from their tents and joined me. In amazement and relief, they gazed to the right and the left. No doubt about it: we were on a path! If we followed it, we would surely find the north-side villages Matt had been promising us before his near miss the previous afternoon.

Breakfast that morning was a more cheerful meal than yesterday evening's gloomy and frugal repast. We speculated on where we might end up that night, but because we did not know where we were, we could not really tell. We were packed up and following our path by seven o'clock. The further we went, the easier the track was to follow. It zigzagged sharply down a knife-edge ridge with steep slopes on either side, but there was little chance of losing it. If we had stumbled off the path, however, we would have fallen hundreds of metres.

Eventually, the steep descent put pressure on our knees. We rested every hour or so, sitting on the track, relieving our sore knees, thus avoiding wobbling when we began walking again. Soaking in the sunshine was a welcome change from slogging through yesterday's heavy fog, sleet and rain. By about mid-afternoon our track took us down from the grassland and through the rainforest. The

further it went the less precipitous it became. We realised we were coming into village territory when we could see secondary growth off to the right below us. That meant old and disused gardens, and so a village must be somewhere up ahead.

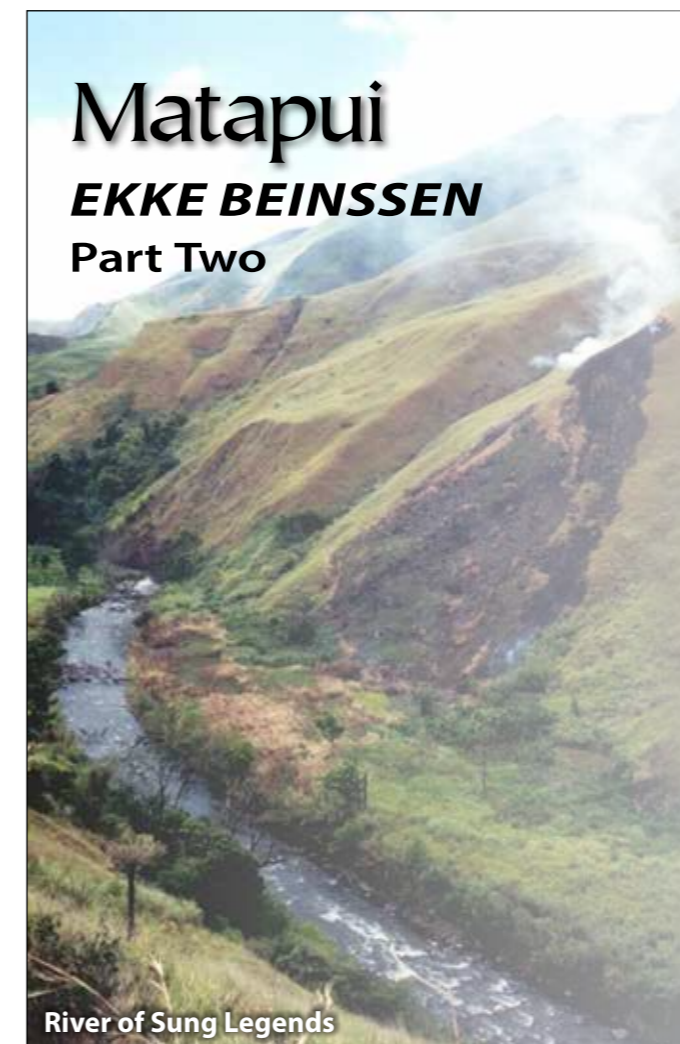
At about 5 pm the track broadened as it reached a riverbank, where it swung left and skirted the shallow but turbulent river. By this stage, we had been following our path for 10 hours. After another half hour, we saw a welcome sight as we rounded a bend. About 50 metres ahead of us was a *lapun* (elderly chap). All he was wearing was the traditional *mal*, a short tapa cloth apron held in place at the front by a G-string. 'Apinun, yangpela!' (Good afternoon, young man), I called out. He shrieked in fear, spun around, and tore off down the track. He was soon lost to sight in the gathering dusk. As night fell, we continued along the path, confident that we must be approaching a village.

Within another half hour we could see

flickering lights ahead. It was a party of village men holding aloft *bomboms* (palm branch flares). They were coming to investigate what had frightened the *lapun*. He had bolted back into the village screaming that four *masalai* (evil spirits) were chasing him. When they realised that we, harmless if dishevelled, white blokes were the *masalai*, we all enjoyed the joke.

The welcoming party then escorted us to the village, which was another 15 minutes away, up a steep ridge. Once we got there, they showed us to the *Haus Kiap*, and invited us to make ourselves comfortable. A couple of them lit a fire for us and said they would be back soon with boiling water for cups of tea and a bowl of freshly cooked *kaukau* (sweet potato). Meanwhile, we unrolled our sleeping bags so they might dry out, then lay back enjoying the feeling of relief after having reached safety at last. •

Part Three will be published in the next issue of PNG KUNDU



Matapui EKKE BEINSEN Part Two

The previous edition of *PNG KUNDU* published Part 1 of Matapui, an account written by Ekke Beinssen about a 1929 exploratory expedition that sought to find the source of the alluvial gold being sluiced out of the newly discovered goldfields of the Bulolo River and Edie Creek.

In this second part, Beinssen describes the departure of the expedition from the picturesque Buang village of Mapos, perched on the steep hillsides above the Snake River in the Morobe District south of Lae.

Our departure from Mapos takes on the appearance of a triumphal procession. Even before sunrise, the mission square is crowded, and by seven I have distributed the loads to our twenty-five boys and the sixty hired porters and paid them. It is the custom to pay for carrier services in advance and there is almost no known case where

the porter has not delivered his load to the agreed destination. There may have been occasions when a sack of rice was nibbled if the porter's hunger became too great. That should not happen to us this time because we have bought a mountain of garden produce and have distributed it to the porters. Each man must carry five days' worth of sweet potatoes on top of his load. Our provisions have been calculated sparingly because we are hoping to buy more produce on the way.

Zakharov's haversack and camera are given to Naie with strict instructions for him to remain close by. It contains the most essential scientific instruments required by our geologist to understand the geological characteristics of the areas we traverse. And if you observed Zakharov as he walks, you would be convinced that nothing could escape his sharp, deep-set eyes, be it a major formation, some layering of rock, or simply a small stone. He reads the landscape in terms of millions of years and tells the story of the living earth as if he had witnessed its evolution. But it is not just the past that he reads like a horoscope. He can spend whole nights talking about weathering, oxidation, displacement, and eruptions of subterranean volcanos; and he sees future changes in the landscape that further millions of years will create.

Soltwedel, in comparison, does not have Zakharov's scientific training to read the terrain geologically but, since the discovery of the gold-fields here, he has acquired a great deal of practical experience. Whenever Zakharov comments



(L-R) Soltwedel, Beinssen and Zakharov in camp

that there might be something of interest here or something there, Soltwedel contemplates the practicalities. Would mining be economically viable, suitable for machines and sluice boxes? For an individual or a company? Could one build an airfield nearby? How long would the preliminary work take, and how much labour and how much capital would be needed? Soltwedel always has his mind on what resources can be utilised, and if Zakharov gets carried away by something that is geologically interesting but of no economic significance, then it is Soltwedel who will redirect his attention to the practicalities of the real world.

Whilst I am fascinated by the approaches of both these men, it is the interaction of nature and man that is of greatest interest to me. Consequently, we three complement each other very well, and it is no surprise that now, as we leave Mapos, my dog, Lump, and I are the first to set out while my two comrades follow. My gaze is directed into the distance, but Zakharov's eyes will scan the ground and take note of whatever is in close proximity.

The track leads from the airy heights of Mapos down to the Snake River. In the language of the natives, it has the beautiful name *Sagae*, with a slight emphasis on the 'ae'. *Sagae* means fairy tale or legend in Mapos. Not far from here, there is the *Gangwae*, meaning song, which runs into the *Sagae*. Thus, from this point on, the river could well be called the 'The River of Sung Legends'.

From a rocky prominence which, had it been situated on the Rhine River, would certainly have provided a good site for the castle of a robber baron, I can see our expedition moving down the mountainside. There are almost a thousand people—men, women, children, and infants—like a black snake against the light green of the slopes.

Our boys, who will now be gone for some time, walk freely. Brother, sister, mum, dad, or friend are carrying their loads. They are decorated with flowers and feathers tucked behind their ears, into their hair, or under their arm and knee bands. They are brightly painted with white and coloured lime; all are wearing their best *lava-lavas* and strutting along like roosters. Boisterous yelling, calling,

and singing accompanying the procession, and the village pigs dive off into the bushes in fear.

We descend to the *Sagae* River where it is fiendishly hot compared to the cool of Mapos—the difference in altitude is 500 metres. Most plunge into the water to cool off. Only our porters stand stiffly on the riverbank, reluctant to spoil their body decorations. Just as hot as when they arrived, they continue along the narrow track by the river, while behind them the farewell party, like an army of freshly bathed mice.

It is virtually impossible to describe the magnificence of the track we now follow. To our left are the mighty grass-covered mountains, rounded and sparsely vegetated with oaks from the tertiary period. To our right, gigantic grassy walls rise almost vertically, their marble foundations awaken the sculptor within. One can imagine the outlines of grotesque heads and figures. Every now and again these walls are sliced by waterfalls that murmur new stories from other regions into 'The River of Sung Legends'. The river winds its way through the gorges of the mountain range, cascading white within the deep green of the reeds on its banks. It will flow for weeks, months, and years until it eventually pours the entire wealth of its treasure of legends into the ocean—the ultimate destination of all rivers.

It is three o'clock and ahead of us black rain clouds move across the sky. To the right, halfway up the slope, there are several natural caves that should offer good shelter for our porters and their loads. I therefore decide to call a halt. It will probably take some time before the stragglers catch up.

Our small three-man tent is pitched on the grassy cover of a small hill. It has a slanting roof and is open on three sides. Freshly cut grass, *kunai* as the natives call it, serves as bedding. Night falls, the rain passes, and above us there is now a cloudless, pitch-black, starry sky. All around us there are a hundred small fires where our porters are camped with their friends and relatives. A large group has gathered at one place, and they are singing the same melodies that we heard in Mapos.

A few young, high-spirited lads have climbed

the hill opposite our camp and set fire to the *kunai* grass. Soon the entire slope is alight. The background is now glowing red, and the fiery tongues that leap into the night sky are bright yellow. It is not dangerous as the river lies between the fire and our camp.

From our beds in the tent, we can make out three figures silhouetted against the fiery background. They are standing on a little rise and singing with high shrill falsetto voices. I am reminded of the mullahs in Persia and Arabia when they call the faithful to prayer from mosque towers. Like them, our singers incline their heads and cup their hands over their ears. All others are now silent and listening.

Throughout the night the drums continue to accompany the singing with their threatening, evocative monotone. The burning mountain, the murmuring of the river, the monotonous melancholy song, the rhythm of the *kundu* drums, and the black, naked figures squatting around their campfires or walking noiselessly through the night, all merge to create an unforgettable dream which has magically become reality.

The three of us sit in silence on our beds of grass. The atmosphere is too powerful and too moving to allow for conversation. But behind each of our separate silences there are probably much the same thoughts: Who are we three men in the middle of this foreign world? Three men from different continents who now find themselves dependent upon each other in this wild land. Three white men amongst dark exotic people! If only it were possible to untangle the threads of fate. Why us three? Why here?

The fires have now burnt down, the singing has ebbed, and the cloudless, pitch-black, starry sky stretches above us. Only the *kundus* beat on until dawn, like the beat of excited hearts.

Part Three will be published in a subsequent edition of *PNG KUNDU*. It will describe the frantic attempt to get the critically ill geologist Zakharov to hospital. The full story of this expedition can be accessed via the PNGAA website.

The descendants of Ekke Beinssen welcome any comments from readers: (E) beinssen@gmail.com

Part-Time Journalist in Rabaul

MICHAEL WHITE

I arrived in Rabaul on Christmas Eve 1967, a newly-minted adult at 21, to take up a position as Station Clerk, Rabaul Police Station. I had spent the previous two and a half years as the District Agricultural Clerk in Wewak, where I had first arrived in 1965. Whilst there I had helped establish a new Aussie Rules competition, where I had my first journalist experience, having my article on a match between the visiting HMAS Anzac (II) and a combined Wewak side, published in the *Post-Courier*.

I was a natural for exploitation, and Graham Bowden and Henry Bodman from Maltech, and John Waters from Radio Bilong Yumi, wasted no time roping me in to be secretary of the local football league. With such a strong force in the town, and with the newly-established training facility at Tomaringa, the police were an obvious source of personnel for an additional team, and so the Police Aussie Rules teams came into existence, fully kitted out by the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC).

In the off season, cricket was the game of choice, and it was only natural that a police team was formed and entered into the local competition. Around this time, I met with Ron Antoine, a 'chalkie' who ran a twice-weekly sports program on the local ABC station—Radio Rabaul.

Ron asked if I would help him out, collecting

and giving the cricket scores each Monday night, and the itinerary with some forecasts of the weekend's games, on the Friday evening. We continued this relationship through the following football season and then added a general sports show on Wednesday evenings filled with interviews and reporting of sporting events around the world.

We were approached by the manager of the RSL Club, a Mr Dougherty I think his name was, to record and/or broadcast a boxing tournament he was organising. We had never done an outside broadcast before and our collective knowledge of boxing was minimal, at best. But we agreed and arranged to record the preliminary bouts and broadcast direct the main event on the card held over three two-minute rounds.

We never imagined how difficult it is to record

six minutes of two guys punching each other in the head, without repeating yourself incessantly. Needless to say, it was not a roaring success, and we were never asked to relay the bout, or play any of the supporting bouts we had recorded but not broadcast.

Not long after this Ron retired from broadcasting—I think he was transferred—and I was asked, as a 'seasoned reporter', to take over his role. Being almost 23 at the time, I was pretty chuffed at the invitation and continued the programs for about two years.

It was later that year that the New Britain Open came to town. I knew as much about golf as I knew about boxing but, undaunted, I approached the Rabaul Golf Club, suggesting that, as there were so many professional golfers coming to town, it might be a good opportunity to tap into their knowledge of the game, to assist our listeners. It was agreed that each visiting professional would give a three-minute talk on his club of choice and how to use it.

I took my trusty tape recorder down to the golf club each afternoon of the tournament and recorded ten segments. I cannot remember who all the pros were, although I seem to recall Stuart Ginn being one, very early in his career. The segments were very popular and we played one each Wednesday night on repeat. I believe they were also broadcast on the ABC in Port Moresby.

In the footy season I would often be seen at the Aussie Rules games, in my folding chair with my portable typewriter on my knees, getting my copy done of the match for publication in the *Post-Courier* the next week, and as an *aide-memoire* for Monday's broadcast. The pinnacle of my broadcasting career occurred when in 1970 we decided that it would be a good idea to broadcast the Aussie Rules Grand Final match, I think between West New Britain and the Matupit Eagles on Queen Elizabeth Oval, with the commentary both in English and *Pidgin*.

We set up on the halfway line on the back of a ute, with two mikes for the broadcast and a field telephone connection back to the station for any

communication between them and us. *What could possibly go wrong!*

All went swimmingly with my co-presenter doing the *Pidgin* commentary and me doing the English portion. At the breaks we telephoned the station, who would fill in the time until we called to say the game had recommenced. With just a few minutes to go and the game very evenly poised, down near the WNB goal all hell broke loose with, what we later discovered, was a very dubious call by the goal umpire. With both teams and most of the spectators now involved, we tried to call the station to switch back, but the line was dead, and so we dispatched one of the tech assistants to run back to the studio to get the broadcast cut.

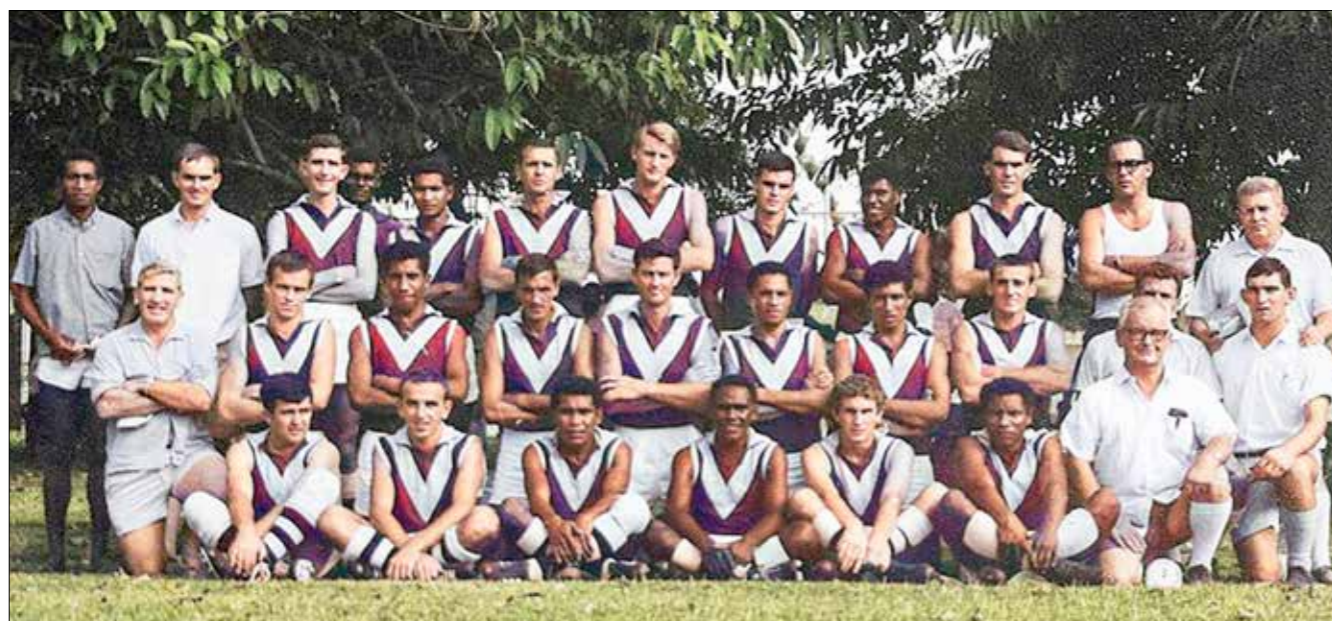
The game was abandoned but we continued to broadcast. I have to admit describing a riot presented a lot more opportunities than a bout of boxing. We continued until we got word that the broadcast had been cut, by which time things had started to settle down. Quite a day—quite an experience.

On the Monday evening when I turned up for my show, I found a telegram addressed to me on the desk. It read something like: *'Congratulations. Loved the broadcast, particularly the last 5 minutes.'* I cannot recall the sender's name but I will always remember that it was sent from Port Hedland, Western Australia, where the sender had been listening to our shortwave transmission.

My crowning glory. An international broadcaster! Shortly after this I met a girl who was to become my wife, and my focus shifted. Shortly after my 24th birthday, I retired from broadcasting and other journalistic pursuits. It was a fun time indeed. •

Editor's Note: If Michael's story has prompted some of your long-held memories, please jot them down and send them to editor@pngaa.net.

Post-Courier clipping of author and fiancée, Christine Roberts, 1970



Papua Australian Rules Team in the 1967 Football Carnival in Rabaul between Papua, New Guinea and the New Guinea Islands

Honouring Max

Part One

MAX MACGOWAN & JOHN MAY, RABAUL, 1941

TEMPE MACGOWAN (TM) & MARIAN MAY (MM)

This article was co-written by Tempe Macgowan and Marian May, honouring the life of Max Macgowan, one of the 1,054 prisoners who lost their lives on the *Montevideo Maru* in 1942.

This story also celebrates the friendship between Marian's father, Padre John Lovette May, and Tempe's uncle, Max Macgowan who perished at age twenty-six.



ABOVE: Max Macgowan and John May, September 1941, Rabaul
Courtesy of Marian May

MM: Sergeant Maxwell Harcourt Glover Macgowan, VX14699, and my dad, Padre John Lovett May, TX6004, became mates in Rabaul in 1941. The padre's role was to maintain morale and provide diversions for the troops, and Max looked out for the padre. In 1992, after revisiting Rabaul with a Lark Force party, Dad spoke with tears in his eyes of his friend, who died on the *Montevideo Maru*.

As Dad got older, Mum tried to track down Max's family, with only the old St Kilda address, and the names of Max's mother, Mollie, and fiancée, Joyce Williams. The trigger for my search came from a visit to Hobart in 2022, when I met Claire, the daughter of Dad's long-time girlfriend, Charlotte ('Lot'). Lot had long since died, but a trunk in Claire's garage contained her papers, including undiscovered letters and photos from Max and John.

The letters to Lot revealed more about Max than those written to Dad's parents. Hearing Max's voice through his writing was unbelievably moving. Surely Max's family should have this information about the time before his tragic death. I decided to make a last attempt at finding a family connection through *Ancestry.com*.

The six or so *Ancestry* family trees noted only that Max died at sea as a POW on the *Montevideo Maru* in the South China Sea, on 1 July 1942; the information was recorded by official sources. Not feeling very optimistic, I contacted the family tree owners. Replies came back quickly from four. Most promising was a call from Laura Bennett who told me that Max's grandmother and her grandmother were sisters; she thought that she might have contact details for Max's niece.

I'd found Tempe!

TM: One Friday evening in July 2022, I received an unexpected text. It was from Laura Biffin, née Bennett, the granddaughter of our dad's cousin, Margaret Helen Beatrice Tulacko née Macgowan.

The text read in part:

...she [Marian May] found that I was a relative of Maxwell Harcourt Macgowan. Her father was his good friend and they served together in Rabaul

(PNG) 1941–1942. She has letters and photographs she is hoping to give to someone in Maxwell's family. I felt that there may be a closer relative for her to pass on these lovely historical memories.

Little information had been passed on about what had happened to Max except something from our aunt Shiela, Max's sister. My recollection of what she said was that he was shot down in a hospital ship off PNG. As it happens, in October 2019, some friends and I were visiting PNG and went to several war cemeteries including the one at Kokopo where there is a memorial to *Montevideo Maru*. It was such a sad yet gratifying experience to see his name on the plaque. There was a connection there despite the time-lapse.

From that one text from Laura, expressing Marian May's generosity and goodwill, a wonderful new connection has evolved. It embraces not just the two soldiers, but the broader Macgowan family.

MM: In July 1941, John wrote:

There is a sergeant here, a cousin of the Macgowans in Hobart. (The Hobart man was a doctor—or is, for all I know—and Ian, his son, was at Hutchins.) This chap is Max, aged 25, and a very decent type of chap. He has been dropping in quite often. One day this week we took some photos of frangipani.

From then on, Max figures in most letters. They played table tennis, bridge, billiards, and snooker, saw films at the local theatre, shared cakes, and shortbread, from food parcels, and spent many evenings yarning and visiting the New Guinea Club.

In August John wrote to Lot:

Max is quickly becoming a friend ... I realize that I have missed having a friend among so many good acquaintances.

Max, like John, enjoyed music, and they made use of the piano housed in the padres' tent:

Max is very keen [on] things like the Messiah and the Elijah, having been a choir boy, & as I've pinched a couple of copies from St George's (on loan!) we've had some good sessions. He has a fair baritone with a good range.

An important event, particularly in retrospect, was the 'photoshoot' on 13 September when Max

and John '... ran off a film on ourselves' in the grounds of St George's Anglican Church, where John was acting rector in addition to his military role. The photos taken of Max may be his last; Max took the best-ever photo of Dad.

Later in September 1941, Max added to the middle of John's letter to Lot:

Lot! This man here again. I've just arrived in after quite a night of snooker and a few - liquids of course and found John hard at it - Don't take any notice of me ... but as you're almost a pal of mine I just couldn't refuse the chance and must say How dee and all that. Regards - chin up - Max.

In a separate letter to Lot, who was running National Fitness camps from Sydney, Max wrote:

...we are building up a good friendship which I for one hope will last, as he is a good refuge in a camp such as this. You seem to have lots to do with camps, but Army ones would break your heart.

John wrote on 23 September:

... Max, who is an instructor in a bullring—a 'school' [for tutorial work]—has just come in, and we are to have a session of letter-writing The plane came in, dead on time ... and we are all at the peak of excitement awaiting mail. The morale of the place has just about jumped through the roof ... Max often drops in—awfully decent chap—very fond of him.

In October John planned a much-needed day away in the parish car for Max and a fellow Tasmanian:

It should be a good break. The other two ... need one. Max is having a busy week as his company is responsible for all camp duties, and that means that he is kept on the go.

Max unfortunately drove a truck in an emergency—and caught a bit of trouble—he is, like me, not supposed to drive except in (such) an emergency—he has been refused leave for Saturday, so the trip may not come off...

A few days later Max wrote a three-page letter in reply to a note from Lot:

I am at present in a place the name of which I can't use ... for the purpose of a rest ... spine drill all day. They are trying to cure me of a flash of minor ailments which have beset me in diverse places tho'



Max, with his sister Shiela, and younger brother, Tempe
 Courtesy of Tempe Macgowan

by themselves they are very petty but altogether they become annoying. ... I have had all my life a desire to keep fit but find that in this climate it's darned near impossible.

... Has John told you I have a wonderful girl. If he hasn't, I've failed miserably because she's simply grand & will the four of us have times when things settle down again....

Well, I hope this isn't too impertinent & also that you can read it – Regards, Max

John describes Max to Lot:

Max is very much like R--- C---, a little impetuous, fond of doing things, restless, still intolerant, very much in love; but he is a R--- more mature; and ... we seem to have struck some kind of affinity.

On John's birthday on 1 November, the two men celebrated:

...Max and I went off by ourselves and dined at the N.G.C. After kaikai we played snooker, then, in a wild mood, hopped into the car and did the deck-chair trip. It was brilliant moonlight, and we just hummed pleasantly along the road and watched the sea. The moon was right overhead, so there were no moon-paths, but the night was soft and still and I loved getting out into the calmness.

Late in the year, the pressure of work and life in the tropics were affecting Max's health:

Max ... is by no means well, as he has had a nasty run of ulcers and tinea ... and it seems that he is generally run down. ...he's the only sergeant in his coy. at present, the others being out on duty or in hospital.

To Charlotte (Lot), John added:

... the M.O. has put him on to sulfanilamide tablets and he is as dopy and out-of-sorts as a seasick drunkard ... [he] should be fit—really fit—in a short time...

Because Max was 'scarcely capable', John wrote his letters for him, asking Lot and his parents to drop Max a line. To call it quits, when John was rushed, Max finished some letters for him so as not to miss the mail plane.

With the looming invasion, life became more tense. On 3 January 1942, Max, John, and others celebrated a birthday at the club, telling Lot how they let off steam:

...we talked, sang and shattered the still night with raucous abandon. It was great fun. We derived not a little help from Abbot's beer, sherry and liqueurs, in generous quantities, and finally left the place rather later than any of us intended and also later than any of the leave passes had provided. That, however, didn't trouble us one little bit. It was just plain fun and games repartee & priceless remarks ebbed & flowed as freely as the tides of beer. It would have rejoiced your heart to see us. When we broke up ... a bit of reaction set in. ... The moon was brilliant. The hills, the stars, the pure velvet of the sky ... the water — it was too much.

John's last letter to his parents before the mail ceased was dated 15 January 1942:

Max is now in hospital. He went in yesterday, as his tinea is showing no signs of improving. Perhaps now he may have a good rest, and so get rid of it. ... He's an awfully nice chap... I think he'll be in hospital for a couple of weeks at least ... I do hope you may be able to scribble him a note, now that he's in hospital. It would cheer him up a lot.

On 22 January, the day before the invasion, the 90 or so patients, including Max, were moved some 20 miles from the military hospital in Rabaul, taking over the Boys' Hospital on the slope above Kokopo, run by the Sacred Heart Mission at Vunapope. Some of the more fit patients escaped into the jungle with the fleeing troops. In action, a padre's place is at the hospital and, as the most senior officer remaining, John surrendered the hospital when the Japanese came up the slope the next morning. •

Part Two continues in the next issue

Panguna Mine —A House with a View

SIMON PENTANU

PANGUNA on Bougainville Island has many stories to tell. There is a *helluva* lot to see—enough beauty and destruction to boggle the mind whenever you visit up here.

Once upon a time, this was a place barely known outside the local area, thriving on its own, peopled with scattered villages and hamlets in the green alpine, unscathed mountains along the island's Crown Prince Range. All travel to and from the coast was on foot. I spent time in Panguna in pre-mining days during construction of the mine, and also during the early years of mining on university vacation employment, working. I still travel up there to show friends what's left of one of the biggest open-cut mines in the world, and share some of Panguna's history before the mine started.

My daughter took the photo (*above*) when our family travelled to Panguna with our grandchildren and their friends, while on an end-of-year school vacation from Port Moresby. The photo focusses on a young man reminiscing in an open *haus win* offering a clear view of his immediate surroundings. When I saw the photo I wondered what he was thinking as he gazed across the desolate and denuded landscape that is his Panguna today. Maybe he was thinking about what the future holds for him. Like all active youngsters, he walks around the perimeter of the old minesite. Perhaps he wonders whether the mine will ever be resurrected in his lifetime.

This was once a forested valley, the rich hunting grounds of his ancestors. But he is from the generations who were born post-conflict,



well after the mine was closed. Perhaps he is too young to fathom what went on here on such a massive scale, and why it all stopped; maybe he is asking himself why it all stopped when he sees alluvial miners are now scurrying around all day long, trying to extract gold, using manual methods, and in conditions bordering on slave and child labour. Some children who are caught up in alluvial mining may never see the inside of a classroom. Others may pay their way through some of or all their education.

Many of this young man's generation have missed out on the stories and tales shared by family gathered around the fireplace, about how their great uncles kept the clans over the hill at bay from encroaching on their land. Our young man in the photo probably cannot imagine the enormity of the BCL mining operation and why his uncles could not keep the company out of his ancestral lands (as they did with other clans), before the company came and exfoliated their forest trees and denuded the landscape to dig up Panguna. He will not be able to remember how his ancestral village and other villages were relocated, dislocated, and displaced.

On bus rides to Arawa, the youngster might notice other villages on the hills nearby that are thriving, where people are still interdependent, cultivating their land, and taking what is on offer from their forest. This is not his experience. He

can only imagine how his village might have once been like this.

The damage to the land and the river systems—right down to the deltas on the coast and into the sea, caused by alluvial mining in Panguna and elsewhere—is perpetuated by the lifting of the moratorium on mining activities. It is causing, debatably, worse environmental damage than mining by BCL at Panguna. The downstream lower tailings areas continue to bear the brunt of the effluent and sedimentation, but the worst culprit is mercury. Yes, solid liquid mercury.

Since Panguna closed, the prevalent use of mercury has left a terrible long-term toxic legacy, as alluvial miners use it indiscriminately, dumping it on land, and into creeks and river systems. We may deny, dispute, or ignore this, but we all do so to our detriment. We will reap a bitter harvest of lung, liver, and kidney damage, not to mention fish kills, and other environmental harm, if we do not accept our collective responsibility and take firm action locally and through legislation.

The following words are attributed to the late Mr Francis Ona, who is often quoted and touted as Panguna's and Bougainville's environmental

warrior: 'The duty of man is to protect his land.' Ona is probably turning in his grave when he sees what is going on at Panguna, especially when it comes to the destructive methods being employed in alluvial mining, particularly with the use and abuse of mercury. The contamination and pollution of river systems and creeks that find their way to the seas surrounding Bougainville Island stands to be the biggest disaster. The people and the Island will suffer in the long-term if nothing is done now.

This is one of many stories about Panguna. It may sound gory, but sadly it is a true story. And as stories go, if we miss the lessons of the tale, the repercussions and consequences can be disastrous. Bougainville and its future generation will pay for our apathy and ignorance.

The words of Francis Ona would ring even more true if he were here today and rephrased what he said to: the duty of every Bougainvillean today is to protect their land from themselves. •

Editor's Note: This article was written especially for *PNG Kundu* by the Hon. Simon Pentanu MHR, Speaker, Bougainville House of Representatives, and the photograph on the previous page is courtesy of Laurelle Pentanu, 2023.



The Panguna Open-Cut Mine site and alluvial miners on the site, 2015
Source: Christine Leonard

The Kiap Memorial: or How We Got Promised One

A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE BILL SANDERS

Between 1878 and 1977, 85 kiaps died in Papua, New Guinea, and the Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG). Various, hostile inhabitants, disease, executions by the Japanese, volcanic eruptions, vehicle accidents, drowning, air crashes, and for some, the overwhelming nature of the job, took their toll. Statistically, PNG was four times more dangerous than the Vietnam War. The Kiap Memorial is for them.

Any errors, historical or of fact, are mine and will be willingly corrected. My experience as a kiap was mostly in Simbu, with brief stints on the Sepik, then Madang, and Namatanai. Each of my colleagues and those who had served over many years had a unique experience that set their view about PNG.

KIAPS: Since 1878, field officers had the titles of Patrol Officer, Assistant Resident Magistrate and Resident Magistrate, and provided law and order in British New Guinea or Papua.

Not until 1914, when Australia captured Rabaul, the word went out for patrol officers to replace the German administrators in German New Guinea (GNG), and the term *kiap* came into use. The locals of GNG knew what it meant, so the Australian administration used it.

World War I, the time between the two wars, and then during WWII especially, tested the *kiaps* in the field. So many got hurt, ill, taken as POWs, or were executed.

In 1948, Papua and New Guinea started the return to civilian administration. On the first day, the first intake of cadets at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA), were told by the Administrator of the Australian territories of PNG, Colonel JK Murray: *'Time is moving faster in New Guinea than the Europeans. Our aim and obligation in native administration are to work ourselves out of a job.'* (ASOPA Archives, Keith Jackson, PNG Attitude).

Thirty *kiaps* who trained at ASOPA did not come home. Several of us are having a conversation with Harbour Trust about placing a memorial there, to remind visitors of those who went to PNG from that site, on our country's behalf.

COLONIALISM: Was Papua New Guinea a colony? 'Yes and no'. British New Guinea—the Territory of Papua—was eventually annexed by Britain under protest in 1888, and formally handed over to Australia in 1906. A colony.

German New Guinea was a colony until it fell under Australian military control on 11 September 1914, and remained so until 9 May 1921. The League of Nations gave Australia the Territory of New Guinea (TNG) as a mandate in April 1921, to administer and determine what could or could not be done.

In the 1960s, during the United Nations' decolonisation period, TPNG came to notice, and pressure was applied on Australia to get moving on self-government. Sir Hugh Foot was a regular visitor over many years and commented adversely on, for example, the provision of education in 1962.

I mention all this as *kiaps* were seen to be the face of Australia in TPNG and part of Australia's 'colonialism'. I believe though that *kiaps* usually had the best interests of Papua New Guineans at heart. I think of my personal experience in the Highlands, but I am very mindful of Bill Brown's involvement with the takeover of land for CRA on Bougainville. His account, *A Kiap's Chronicle*, is available on the PNGAA and PNG Attitude websites and provides

grounds for criticism of the TPNG Administration and the Australian Government. Bill did his best to help the people who were about to lose their land at the mine site.

As a result of *kiaps* being part of the 'system' in Papua, New Guinea and TPNG, I am of the firm belief that some Australian politicians, bureaucrats, and some academics were not enthusiasts of *kiap* administration. Therefore, there was going to be no formal recognition, vote of thanks, or memorials, in the 1980s or 1990s.

Around 2000, an online conversation started, about remembering those *kiaps* who died on the job. The consensus amongst the *kiap* 'community' was that: 'yes,' there should be a memorial of modest dimensions (totally, totally, unlike the Strzelecki Monument at Jindabyne—five metres in height, with a three metre, 3-tonne, bronze statue pointing at the mountains, donated by Poland. It cost them \$1.5 million!).

In 2009, Chris Viner-Smith OAM lobbied the Federal Government for official recognition which resulted in the award of the Police Overseas Service Medal. The words said at the time were very positive and recognised the nature of *kiaps*' work in the bush. But not all *kiaps* lived in the bush or had police duties, so, a number of *kiaps* did not accept the medal. Quite a few were just not interested.

Moving on, in 2016, a group of *kiaps* started to consider an area in Kings Park in Canberra, and the conversation about a memorial continued on the *ex-Kiap* website, with ideas being considered.



Mr Marape planting the memorial tree

Being unable to fund any memorial we next approached several politicians, and received a positive response from Luke Gosling MP, member for Solomon in Darwin. After several years of work by him, and David Smith MP, the member for Bean in Southern Canberra, the idea was promoted within government—but the outcome of that was unknown to us!

The Honourable James Marape, Prime Minister of PNG, visits Canberra in February 2024

After our Prime Minister addressed the PNG House of Assembly in 2023, at the subsequent press conference, the PNG PM made an aside to our PM. Roughly it went something like this:

I want to appreciate the help of Australia and acknowledge the missionaries, and the kiaps. We remember the soldiers, but I want to remember the kiaps, those very young men who walked the hinterland of this country and helped develop our Nation.

A return invitation was issued to Mr Marape to address our Parliament, and the PNG PM arrived on 7 February 2024. Listen to what he had to say in his address to Parliament; it was historic:

Thank you, Australia, for what you did, have done, and continue to do: we are family and joined at the hip!

The concept of a Kiap Memorial was then picked up by DFAT for the visit. There is little public information available, however, I would say that from the PNG PM's words, he was the prime mover, with our own MPs in there.

The itinerary for his February visit was:
 DAY 1: *Welcome to Country, Visit the National Archives, Plant a tree, Parliamentary Dinner.*
 DAY 2: *Address to Parliament.*

We had no idea about what was coming!

I thought that the invitation was pretty open. So, I said: 'no' to the Welcome to Country, and was going to say 'no' to the tree planting. DFAT asked me to say a few words at The National Archives, and I was standing there trying to be inconspicuous when the PNG PM sidled up and said: 'Aah, *wantok.*' 'Yes,' I said. The Director of National

Archives spoke, then me for two to three minutes:

Welcome ol leader man. These archives hold the story of PNG and Australia's part in it. In 100 years' time, when people want to learn about the PNG—Australia relationship, they will come here to read the original letters and documents.

I note that the PNG PM used that last bit in his address to Parliament. Then we looked at letters and files ...

Off to the tree planting; originally I'd said: 'Nah, not really.' The message came back: 'You've got to be there, this tree is for you *kiaps*.' 'Oh, sh*t! OK, I'll be there.'

The drive to Commonwealth Park was surreal, with police stopping traffic at the lights, down Kings Avenue onto Parkes Way, then Commonwealth Avenue. This was all about 4.30 pm when traffic was building! Never been in a motorcade before!

Through all the locked gates in Commonwealth Park down to the foreshore next to Regatta Point. Walked over to where the tree is waiting ... speech ... a bit more of what had already been said. Mr Marape mentioned that Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare had planted trees in PNG for the shelter of future generations; and that he was now doing the same in Australia.

The tree kept falling over in the wind, so Mrs Marape pushed the stake through into the ground to hold it while the talking was going on!

It's a Brittle Gum by the way. And I look forward to a plaque there, irrespective of where the National Memorial goes. Mr Marape indicated he expected the memorial to be nearby.

That evening was the Parliamentary Dinner—upstairs in one of the smaller dining rooms—120 people—a who's who of those with a connection with PNG. I shared a lift with Mal Meninga, and sat at a table with another *kiap*, Graham Watts, David Smith MP, a banker, and a PhD student from Manus at ANU. Spotted in the distance, were Penny Wong, Julie Bishop, the US Ambassador, Pat Conroy, the Chief Justice, and more!

Then our PM spoke, the Opposition Leader spoke, and then Mr Marape spoke. It was a

scaled-down version of what he said the next day in Parliament; thanking Australia. But, at the end, he asked Graham Watts, John Hocknull OAM, ML and me, to stand. 'Thank you for your contribution to PNG.' Applause! Sat down, completely nonplussed. The food was fabulous and the wines—to die for. Then suddenly, it was all over. We were the last to leave!

The next day, Thursday, 8 February 2024, was the address to our Parliament. Sitting waiting from 9.15 am, it was 'spot the politician': Bob Katter, senators, our PM, lots of familiar faces. Mr Morrison made it by the skin of his teeth, as the Clerk of the House announced Mr Marape. The seniors in his delegation were already seated—left rear, along the wall.

Our PM welcomed Mr Marape. The Opposition leader welcomed him. Then the PNG PM was invited to speak. He spoke of the last PNG leader to address Australia's parliamentarians, Kondom Agaundo, from Simbu, many years ago. That Kondom Agaundo was laughed at, and he responded by saying: 'One day my sons will come here and address you in your language.'

Mr Marape said: 'That day has come, and I address you in the language you have taught me.' He thanked Australia for all that it had done, that



Bill Sanders second from the left (top), and leader and politician Kondom Agaundo MLC, Simbu, early 1960s (left) Photo copied from Facebook per the 1966 book by American explorer and writer, Lewis Cotlow, titled 'In Search of the Primitive'

we are neighbours, family, and asked that Australia not give up on PNG. He then thanked missionaries and *kiaps* for what they had done. In the next breath, he named John, Graham and me.

Being in Parliament was special, but to be named and have senators and MPs look up at you, applauding! That was another surreal moment. We should have known it was coming, we should have stood. I was really quite stunned. It was a very emotional moment and it has had an impact on me.

The acclamation from the leaders of our nation was, for me, accepted on behalf of all those *kiaps* who did the hard yards over many years; who broke bush, patrolling in atrocious conditions, going to places where people just don't go—those who came home ill, those who to this day bear scars from being on the receiving end in tribal fights; but especially for those who didn't come home, and for those for whom it all became too much.

For those people I knew, and who I look up to with respect: Laurie Doolan, John Frew, Noel Walters, Morrie Brown, Jack Karukuru, Sir Jerry Nalau, Bernie Maume, Laurie Bragge, Wilhelm



John Hocknull OAM, ML is being interviewed by the ABC. Graham Watts is in the background speaking to Jack Emanuel's son (Photo taken by Bill Sanders)

Speldewinde, Lee Clayton, Garth Donovan, Alan McLay, Dave Bawden, Peter Salmon, Steve Daniels, Edward Konu, but my memory grows dim ... they all had an impact on my life.

After the Parliamentary Address was delivered, the assembled senators and parliamentarians spoke to Mr Marape. John Hocknull and I were interviewed by the ABC *Tok Pisin Service*. Then we went and had coffee. 'Thank you Luke Gosling, MP.' We just looked at each other: 'What just happened?' Off to lunch and to show our respective families the Kiap Tree. And finally, home, feet up.

It's 8 pm that night—the phone rings. A PNG number: 'Hello, this is Grace. Sorry about the late notice, but the PM would like you to come to dinner.' 'Of course! love to.'

I was seated with the PM and Mrs Marape; they asked me about my life in Simbu. I spoke at length to Sir Nambuka Mara, the first Premier for the Western Highlands, and who knew Noel Walters well.

At one stage I'm listening to the Governor of Western Highlands speaking to the PM about the day: '... you were the first PM who could do that address today. Your predecessors couldn't have.'

Then young Marape Junior drops by to say hello to Mum and Dad. And again, suddenly it was done. The PM stood up, a signal that the gathering was over.

In the joint statement made by the two Prime Ministers is an undertaking to have a memorial, with ground turning to occur in 2025.

To end: It took a Papua New Guinean Prime Minister to get Australia to acknowledge the work of *kiaps* in PNG and to get us the memorial. To this day, the goodwill in PNG towards Australia and us *kiaps* is enormous. I find the acclamation from young Papua New Guineans who I come across sometimes, a tad embarrassing. They say things like: 'My dad, my bubu, granddad, told me stories about what you *kiaps* did for us and how you brought us to independence. Thank you.' My response is: 'Well, it was a team effort, but your thanks are accepted on behalf of all those who were there ...' •

The Fish Trap Builders of Raluana Village

JOHN F BENT

Sixty years ago, I had the privilege of being employed by the Papua New Guinea Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries as an agricultural extension officer. To my local colleagues and villagers, I was a *didiman*; a title believed to be descended from Herr Beidermann, the first director at Rabaul's botanical gardens, who made a great impression on the people and his name was attached to all officers employed in the agricultural business.

It was a mighty interesting job as the administration was under pressure from the League of Nations to fast track the agricultural and business development of Papua New Guinea in preparation for independence from Australia. Other departments were also preparing for decolonisation. In the course of my work, I became enthralled by the country's history and spent many hours in conversation with old men who had been boys when the Germans occupied

New Guinea. These old men also recalled the stories they had heard from their grandfathers, from before the arrival of Europeans in the islands. This may seem fantastic to a modern reader, but my grandmother was born in 1878, so I was a fascinated listener to the tales they told. This account concerns the ancient art of building fish traps, but it digresses from time to time which I hope survives the editor's bush knife.



Raluana village with Mt Tavurvur and other volcanoes near Rabaul at the background

Location

Raluana is a sprawling village on the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain. Many of its people live high up on the cordillera that surrounds Blanche Bay. Others live along the shore but have gardens in the hills. They are excellent fishers and have developed techniques over the centuries that differ from villages with access to coral reefs. During the course of my investigations into the agricultural and maritime techniques of the people, I came across the ancient art of building fish traps. I was spear-fishing at night off Watom Island on the north coast and had joined fishermen along the beaches at Nonga and Pila Pila. There, an experienced herring fisher from Latvia was teaching fishers how his people used nets in the cold waters of the Baltic Sea. He too was fascinated by the local knowledge and was learning as much as he was sharing.

The People

The people of Gazelle Peninsula are Tolais. Some say they were immigrants from New Ireland who drove the indigenous inhabitants into the Baining Mountains. The Tolai are a vigorous and intelligent people who quickly adapted to the culture of Europeans arriving in the 19th century. I heard many stories that were handed down, but my primary focus in this article are the fishermen of Raluana. I was based at an agricultural department centre at Taliligap, a mile or so west of Raluana from 1962 to 1965. There are a string of villages along the ridge above Blanche Bay. My immediate neighbourhood started at Navuneram village, and then went through Malmaluan, Taliligap, Nanga Nanga, and Raluana.

As my interest in the history and culture became evident, people were eager to share their stories. One, told in the hushed tones of shame, was about a chief named Talili who arranged the murder of three Fijian missionaries at Taliligap. They were cannibals at the time and the shame of that crime exists today.

An employee of the department was a clerk name Gaius Lali. He was an elderly grey-haired

man and a marvellous raconteur in his quiet way. Gaius became my close friend and confidante and it was through him that I met the fish trap builders along the shore of Blanche Bay. Most men of that group have the prefix 'To' to their name. The women have 'Ia', so if you were introduced to a man, his name might be Tolongbut, or a woman whose name might be Iambata.

Gaius invited me to join him at the beach one Sunday, and there I met his old snowy-haired friends. They were engaged in building a Tolai fish trap which I describe here. It is a dying art and worth recording. Gaius and his friends reminded me of old farmers I knew in Canada and the USA, who liked to congregate at Jimmy Taylor's blacksmith shop, or a local garage where they could spin yarns and exchange gossip around the stove.

The Fish Trap

To picture a Tolai fish trap, imagine a giant rugby ball standing on end and reaching two and a half metres into the air. If you picture this big ball with the pointy ends pushed in, that is the shape of the trap. The girth of the ball, or diameter, is close to two metres. The frame is made of split bamboo lashed together with Kunda vines that



Tolai fish traps

were split to make string. Kunda is a climbing variety of Liana vine that grows in tropical rain forests. It is immensely strong and can be bent, plaited, and split into string. New Guineans are artists with this product. Many people are familiar with the famous Buka baskets.

The trap works on the same principle as a crow trap. The fish come in at the pointy ends of the ball, swim through the bars and then can't find their way back out, including the way they came in.

On the frame and end funnels, finely split Kunda is woven into place creating an even mesh of about 30mm squares. Imagine the intricate patience and skill it takes to split and smooth the cane and then weave it into place over the frame. When it is finished it looks like a giant rugby ball and is very strong and flexible.

Deployment of the Trap

The harbour of Blanche Bay is a deep and broad extinct volcano with extinct and active volcanoes on the northside, and a cordillera of old volcano rims around the west and south. It is open to the east, but is protected by the ancient volcanic atolls of the Duke of York Islands.

When the trap is complete it would be loaded onto a large outrigger canoe and taken out to the bay. There it is tipped overboard and secured to a floating raft of bamboo poles. The trap is anchored in place with about 100 feet of lashed Kunda vines to make a strong hawser, and a large basket of rocks forming an anchor. In the side of the trap is a door made of lashed bamboo and Kunda mesh that is tied shut with more vines.

People familiar with tropical waters will have seen schools of baitfish boiling on the surface while larger fish, such as tuna, cobia and sharks, would swarm in to eat them. Seabirds would dive and swoop to also feed on them. In a desperate search for shelter, the little fish would swim into the funnels at each end of the trap only to be followed by the fish mentioned above, as well as Spanish Mackerel and Barracuda. The mesh is

large enough for baitfish to escape, but not large enough for the target fish. These larger fish swim aimlessly to and fro like goldfish in a bowl but never think to escape through the bars in the centre.

Early in the mornings, Gaius and his friends would paddle out to their traps and briefly disconnect them from the float. They would roll the trap up onto the outrigger and position the door over the hull of the canoe. Then they would undo the latch string and the catch would tumble into the canoe. Then they would tie the door, reattaching it to the float, and head for shore with their catch. Once on land, they would sell some to the village, and take a pick-up truck into town to their Chinese customers who ran stores and restaurants. There was no haggling or dickering over price. Long-established prices ruled, and everyone was happy.

These ancient arts and trade are probably obsolete now as people have access to power boats and modern equipment, but the fish traps may still exist. On a split bamboo frame however, the intricate mesh has probably been replaced with fish netting and zip ties. But it is a unique and beautiful part of Blanche Bay's history and the people of Raluana village.

Postscript on the Original *Didiman*

The curator of German New Guinea's Botanic Gardens in Rabaul was a botanist who initiated many projects. The original cocoa trees at Aropa (Bougainville) were imported by the Germans. We used them as seed trees but, on the initiative of Leon Bridgland, we planted them at double spacing and then thinned them out as we identified the most prolific bearers.

I heard that the Giant Ficus Tree that grew along the Siang River through Aropa was promoted along river systems to prevent erosion in flood times.

Another famous *didiman* was Francis Xavier Ryan, who was the early promoter of the Tolai Cocoa Project which had a huge economic impact on the Gazelle Peninsula. •

The Story of the Wartime Kokoda Trail: Sorting Fact from Fiction

PETER JESSER

The battle for the Kokoda Trail occupies a significant place in Australian military history. Much of the fighting to stem the Japanese advance across the Owen Stanley Range was intense, close-quarter combat fought in thick jungle and on steep slopes. Frequent rain made conditions worse. The days were hot and steamy and the nights in the mountains could be bitterly cold. Troops on both sides were weakened by disease and illness. In the first battles, the Australians lacked the supplies or weapons needed to fight effectively. But after initial setbacks during which control of the track hung in the balance, the Australian and Papuan defenders prevailed—and a legend was born.

Because of its proximity to Australia, many Australians have come to view Kokoda as a key battle that turned the tide of war against Japan. That, and the significant physical and mental challenge presented by walking the track, have encouraged many individuals, both young and old, to complete the Kokoda Trail as a means of gaining a better understanding of what soldiers had to endure in 1942. That the conditions experienced today are nothing like those endured during the war is not the point. The Kokoda Trail has become a place of contemplation for walkers struggling across the same steep ridges and slippery log river crossings that their forebears did.

Various histories have been written which tell the story of Kokoda from different perspectives.

But as the battle for the track has taken hold in the public imagination, several new accounts of the conflict have been written to target wider audiences. Where they describe the track, these new accounts reflect less rigorous research. Several make baseless assumptions to support the argument as the writer wants to tell it. Increasingly, descriptions of the prewar track have relied on fictions invented by later authors and—regrettably—the inadequate or faulty research of professional historians.

This account will correct some common misperceptions about the knowledge in New Guinea [1], of the track from Port Moresby to Kokoda in early 1942, and will describe the origins of the track and its evolution, drawing on reports dating back to the late nineteenth century.

For the wartime track, this account will rely on the actions and recollections of the only men who can speak with authority—those who were there at the beginning.

Early Ventures into the Mountains

The earliest European ventures into what would become British New Guinea (later to be known as the Territory of Papua) involved missionaries who were active along the coast. The London Missionary Society established a mission at Port Moresby Harbour under Reverend Doctor William Lawes in late 1874 [2]. Lawes was not an explorer, but he penetrated inland as far as the Bluff and did his utmost to establish amicable relations with the ‘natives’.

Lawes was followed in 1875 by the geologist, Octavius C Stone, who made several trips to the interior penetrating, perhaps, as far as Uberi [3].

In 1876–77, Andrew Goldie, a Scottish naturalist, arrived to collect botanical specimens. Goldie covered considerable ground and, in addition to botanical specimens, found unmistakable traces of gold in what he called the Goldie River—whether named for himself or the gold is not known [4]. Goldie appears to have been the first to penetrate any substantial distance inland from Port Moresby and he added to knowledge of both the mountain tribes and of the vegetation.

The news that traces of gold had been found encouraged further exploration and prospecting. No payable gold was found but definite views were formed as to the inhospitable nature of the mountains of the interior [5]. As a result, by the early 1880s, there was good knowledge of the areas that the Kokoda Trail would traverse.

Sir William MacGregor and the Vanapa Track

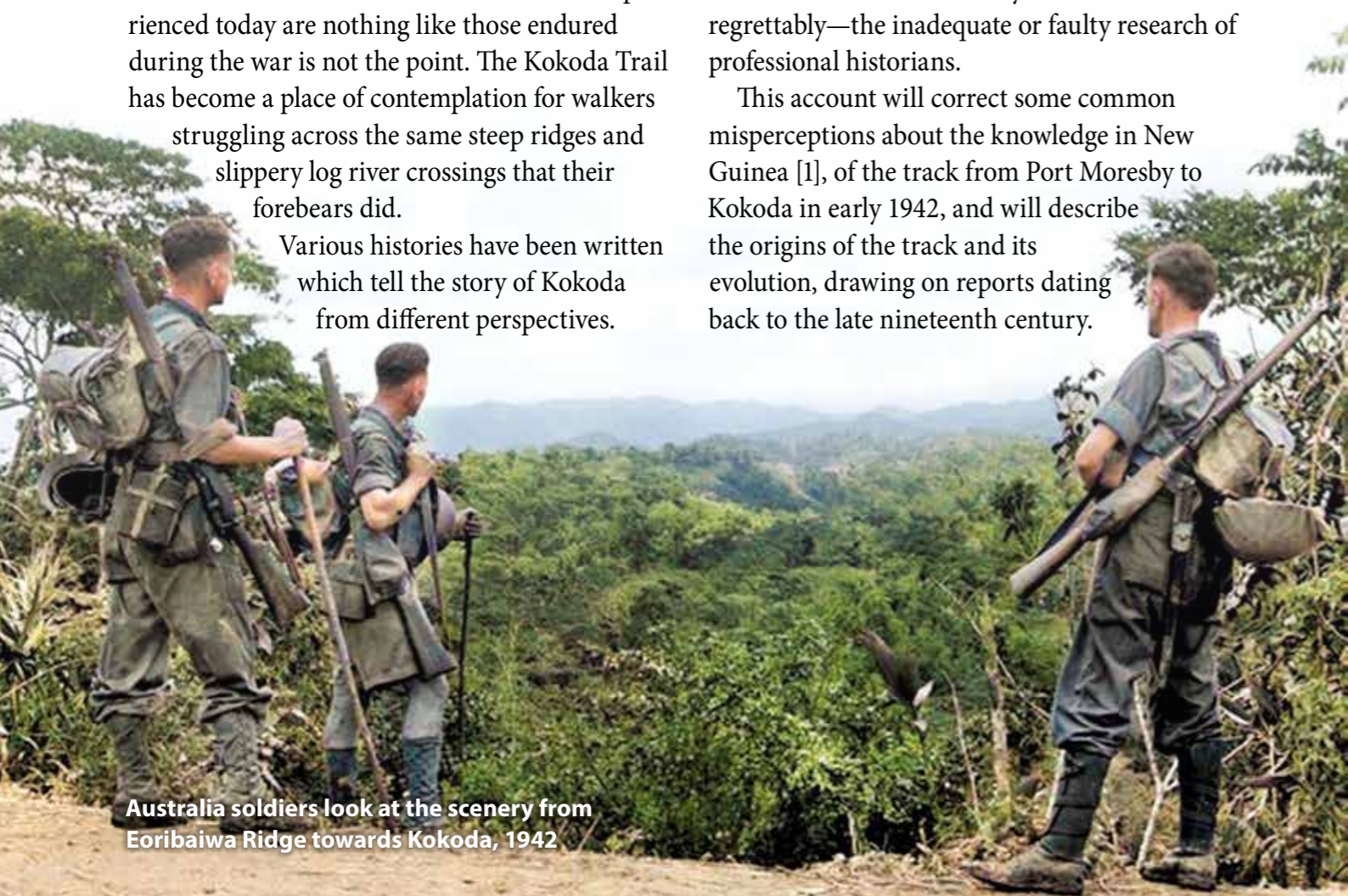
Sir William MacGregor [6] was the first Administrator of British New Guinea. MacGregor was a remarkable man more given to exploration than sitting behind a desk. He was intent on establishing law and order but also concerned that the ‘natives’ should be treated fairly.



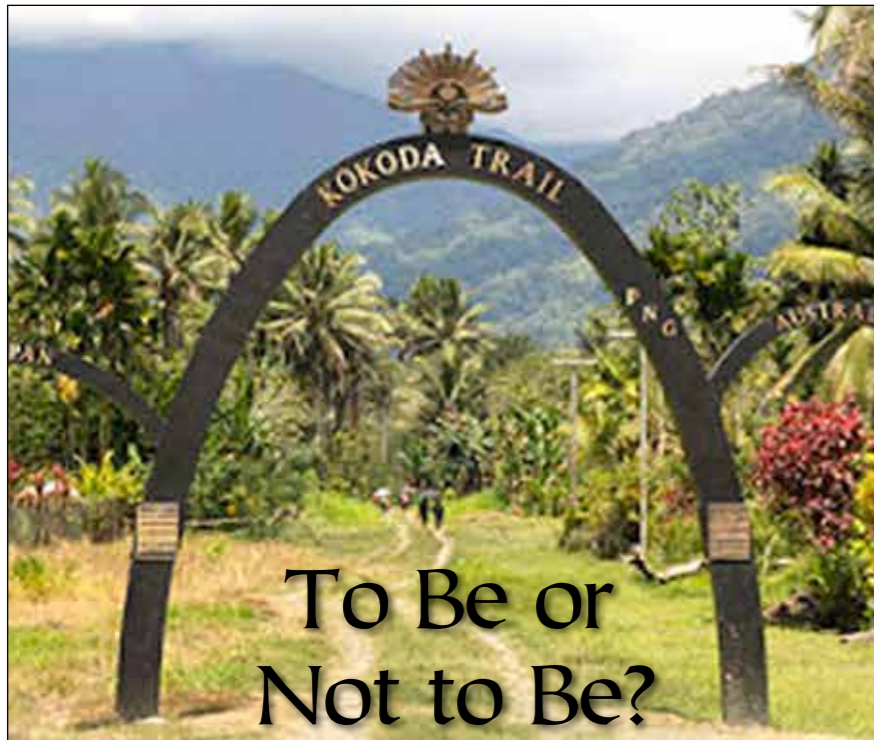
Sir William MacGregor GCMG, CB, AM, PC, FRSGS

One of his earliest ventures into the interior arose from a visit to the north coast to inspect the developing Yodda Valley gold prospects along the valley of the Yodda (Mambare) River around Mount Stapylton. Along the way, he dealt with a cannibal raiding party on the Mambare and then proceeded to cross the island from north to south—from the mouth of the Mambare to the mouth of the Vanapa River. This was the first such crossing by a European. The events of this expedition are recorded in the *Annual Report on British New Guinea* (1 July 1896 to 30 June 1897) [7].

As part of his journey, MacGregor made a deviation to climb the highest peak in the Main Range to more accurately ascertain its height. He approached the high point via Mount Musgrave and Mount Knutsford and named the peak Mount Victoria in honour of Queen Victoria. While making this ascent MacGregor observed:



Australia soldiers look at the scenery from Eoribaiwa Ridge towards Kokoda, 1942



To Be or Not to Be? Track or Trail?

The military historian Dr Karl James was commissioned by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) in 2009 to undertake a historical desktop study titled: ‘The Track’—a historical desktop study of the Kokoda Track’. It’s worth reading at <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/awm-kokoda-report.pdf>

Following is an excerpt from an article Dr James subsequently wrote for the Australian War Memorial:

In recent years, many hours have been wasted and much ink has been spilt debating whether the foot route across the Owen Stanley Range, in Papua New Guinea, should be called the ‘Kokoda Trail’ or the ‘Kokoda Track’. Both terms were used interchangeably during the war, and at the time they were not considered to be mutually exclusive.

Now, though, as Kokoda takes on an ever-increasing prominence in Australia’s military pantheon, second only to Gallipoli in the nation’s sentiment, the ‘track’ versus ‘trail’ debate has become an impassioned, and at times almost belligerent, argument. Supporters of ‘Kokoda Track’ object to the use of the word ‘trail’ on the grounds that it is considered to be an American word, whereas ‘track’ is strongly associated with the language of the Australian bush.

Those who favour ‘trail’ are quick to point out that the ‘Kokoda Trail’ is the official title of the Australian Army’s battle honour, the name gazetted for the route by the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Government and the name used by the Australian War Memorial.

From about 5,500 feet there was a good view to the gap or depression in the main range some ten or twelve miles east of Mount Victoria, but it did not seem to offer an inviting route by which to cross the mountain chain.[8]

MacGregor’s observation is revealing and confirms that no one had crossed the mountains from Port Moresby via the Gap and thus there was no first-hand knowledge of the topography. From the top of Mount Victoria, MacGregor also observed that there seemed to be a feasible route from Mount Knutsford to the south coast. This route MacGregor took, following the valley of the Vanapa River.

MacGregor’s party thereby completed the first crossing of the island. The trail that the party blazed would be referred to as the Vanapa Track, leading from the south coast into the Yodda Valley. MacGregor believed that prospectors using the track would have an easy journey of fifteen days, with the benefit of waypoints and shelters that he established for the use of travellers.

Later that year, about 400 hopeful would-be prospectors landed in Port Moresby. According to the Annual Report: *They travelled thence generally in three or four directions, on the Vanapa track, inland from Port Moresby, by the Rigo Station, and along the Angabunga river [sic—Angabanga]. In most instances they carried their own effects and tools, and in a very few days became*

quite unfit for the road. Unfortunately, most of them seemed unable to make for themselves suitable camping arrangements, ... [most were] ... ill-provided with food, and in too many cases with no medicines whatever.

The result was that after a very short time, large numbers became very weak and gave way to fever and dysentery.

Of some 130 men that started inland on the Vanapa track, the majority did not get past the Evelyn Creek, two days inland from Doura. Only two small parties from the South Coast seem to have reached the eastern side of Mount Scratchley and they consisted of or were conducted by, men already accustomed to travel in the country.[9]

MacGregor was left to lament that almost all the prospectors ignored the track and the shelters provided to assist them. Instead, they took to the bush in the hope of finding new prospects. None succeeded. Several died subsequently of illness and most of the remainder gave up, beaten by the country. But the situation in 1897 was that—for those willing to use it—the Vanapa Track, which had been established by the Administrator of the Territory, offered a way across the mountains to the Yodda goldfields. No other track existed in closer proximity to Port Moresby. MacGregor’s observations on the difficult nature of the terrain in the vicinity of the Gap, where any alternative track would likely run, is notable.

This was the situation as demonstrated by official records. But in 2003 historian, Hank Nelson, made the astonishing claim that the ‘Kokoda track’ was first used by Australians in the 1890s to reach the Yodda goldfields [10]. Nelson cited no references to support this claim, but in his earlier (1976) book, *Black, White and Gold*, he stated that, by 1897, of several hundred men who set out for the goldfields from Port Moresby, only two parties made it across the mountains [11]. Nelson’s association of this with a supposed ‘Kokoda track’ seems to be nothing more than a loose appropriation of MacGregor’s official report which referred to the Vanapa Track. The lack of references is an indication of the worth of Nelson’s claims. •



Australian infantry patrol crossing the Brown River, during the Kokoda Campaign, 1942

NOTES

1. The country which is today called Papua New Guinea comprised the Territory of Papua and the Territory of New Guinea in the years prior to World War II. However, under military rule, from early 1942 it was referred to simply as New Guinea. This book will follow the war-time convention of referring to the theatre of war as New Guinea, except where it is necessary to make a distinction between the Territories of Papua and New Guinea. (Hank Nelson, ‘Report on historical sources on Australia and Japan at war in Papua and New Guinea, 1942-45’, ajrp.awm.gov.au/ajrp/ajrp2.nsf/437f72f8ac2c07238525661a00063aa6/2f3b86921669c57e852565b000499e78? Accessed 25 February 2019.)
 2. Hawthorne, Stuart, *The Kokoda Trail: A History*, Central Queensland University Press: Rockhampton (2003), pp.1–17. Lawes was preceded by four Polynesian missionaries who had established themselves at the nearby village of Hanuabada.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
 4. *Town and Country Journal*, 1 February 1879.
 5. *The Sydney Mail*, ‘Gold Prospecting in New Guinea’, 10 August 1878. *The Mercury Supplement* (Hobart), ‘Recent Exploration and Discoveries in British New Guinea’, 14 January 1892.
 6. See William MacGregor—Wikipedia for a concise biography of the first Administrator of British New Guinea (which later became Papua).
 7. *Annual Report on British New Guinea, 1 July 1896 to 30 June 1897*, (with Appendices), 1898.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.
 10. Nelson, Hank. ‘Kokoda: The Track from History to Politics’, *Journal of Pacific History*, 38 (1), (2003), pp. 109-127.
 11. Nelson, Hank, *Black White and Gold*, Australian National University Press: Canberra (1976), pp. 115-6.
- Editor’s Note:** This article is an excerpt from the PIB NGIB HQ PIR Association website and can be read in full at https://www.soldierspng.com/?page_id=5390. It is reproduced in two parts in the June and September issues of *PNG KUNDU* with the author’s permission. Featured on the back cover of this issue is a report on the historic walk of the Australian Prime Minister on the Kokoda Trail for Anzac Day 2024.



The recent history of Papua New Guinea is intimately bound up with the people who made PNG their home and, in many cases, their life's work —it is therefore fitting, but also with deep regret, that we record the death of members and friends.

Please send any obituaries and tributes for the next issue to the editor by 31 July 2024, the Copy Deadline for the next issue: editor@pngaa.net

ANDERSSON, Lars OAM d. 17 January 2024

Lars Andersson, who with his wife Ann, worked in PNG for two stints during the early 1960s and the 1980s, has passed away.

Lars was born in Malmo, Sweden on 28 February 1938, and lived there until emigrating to Australia in 1957. He moved directly to Bundaberg in Queensland, and began cane-cutting and doing odd jobs in the Alloway district.

Over the next two years Lars worked in Bundaberg, and also for a time in Muttaborra, Western Queensland, where he was a gardener. When he returned to Bundaberg in 1958, he commenced share farming tobacco in Alloway. It was during this time that Lars did some casual work on Ted and Olive Wolfenden's farm where he met their daughter, Ann, to whom he quickly became engaged.

Lars then decided that he wanted to go the Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG) and prospect for gold. Prospecting didn't eventuate because he soon accepted a proposal to manage a rice and coconut farm called Angabanga, near Bereina. During this time, Lars and Ann were married and their son, David, was born in 1960.

In 1961, Lars was made an officer in the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries and accepted a post at the Epo Agricultural Experimental

Station supervising the labour line.

Their time in the Bereina district was filled with many wonderful experiences. Not only was Lars and Ann's second child, Christina, born in 1962, but in his unpublished autobiography, Lars recounts the great social lives they had, particularly at the Bereina Country Club. Life in pre-Independence PNG was quite special according to Lars and he recounted quite a few amusing anecdotes like the one below.

Ann liked to set a nice table with a white tablecloth and nice cutlery and crockery and most of the time we ate by candle light or by the gentle hum of Tilley lamps.

We tried to teach Mopio (the house servant) to serve at the table and to serve the right way at that. One day he brought in the leg of lamb and, as usual, began to serve from the wrong side. I kept chiding him about doing the right thing and he kept getting sourer. Eventually, I said to him: 'I thought you'd told me you were a trained waiter. Where were you trained?' He replied: 'In jail.'

Taken aback, I asked him how long he'd been in jail and what he'd been in for. 'Twelve years, because I murdered my wife,' he told me. Taken back again, I enquired why had he killed his wife and he said: 'Because she talked too much.' I decided it did not really matter from which side he served after all!

One night after we had finished eating and the dinner had gone very well and everything looked great, we could hear a muted clapping of hands from the outside

darkness. I got my powerful torch and shone outside, and on a grassy ledge outside our house sat a dozen or so village people watching the night's procedure.

After a good dinner and a fine spectacle, they gave a discreet clap in appreciation. This had apparently been going on for weeks. However, they were getting bolder in as much as they now wanted to clap after each course. Mopio started to play up to the audience and took longer and longer to serve, so I had to bring the curtain down on our audience.

Many opportunities existed in TPNG at the time, but Lars was also assessing options in Queensland and, in 1964, he heard that he had been granted a sugar cane assignment which he could farm on a 140-acre block of land that he and Ann had bought on Coonarr Road, Alloway, outside of Bundaberg. Thus, their first stint in PNG came to an end.

While they farmed in the Alloway district Lars began a second career as a production supervisor with Sou'West Frozen Foods, liaising with visiting farmers whose output had been contracted to the company and giving them advice on fertilisers, pesticides, etc. This sideline



Lars with the Governor, 2001

eventually became Lars's career. Through the '70s Lars worked for Wattie-Pict, then General Jones, in crop production roles and gained tremendous managerial experience.

By the end of the 1970s, with both children away from home, Lars and Ann decided to return to PNG and he accepted a position as manager of the Bonis plantation on the northern tip of Bougainville Island. They had three eventful years there and made many friends before Lars decided to accept the position of manager at the nearby Tinputz plantation. From Tinputz, Lars moved on in 1987, becoming the General Manager of the Bali Corporation, stationed in Rabaul.

It was in Rabaul that Lars developed a love of golf, eventually whittling his handicap down to 13. But as he said himself, he was a better official than player. During his time there, Lars would serve as secretary of the Rabaul Golf Club as well as caretaker.

With various ownership changes afoot, Lars and Ann suspected their time in PNG was coming to an end so they elected to return to Australia. They had purchased 150 acres of land at Baffle Creek near Rosedale, and set about making it into a hobby farm growing lemons and limes. While developing their farm Lars joined a local, privately-owned golf club.

After a year, a group of dissident members from the club decided to form a community

golf club which became the Mount Mariah Golf Club. Lars was, of course, a driving member behind the establishment of the club and worked tirelessly, securing a location for the course, negotiating the gift of land, organising working bees, and submitting applications for grants. Before long, the golf club had a decent nine-hole course, and a club house, which became a social centre for all in the district.

The hard work Lars put into this community club was rewarded in 2001 with the news that he had been awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to local community. The investiture was carried out by the Queensland Governor and was a proud day for the entire family.

By the late '90s, Lars and Ann's children and grandchildren were all living on the Sunshine Coast, so they made the decision to relocate to Nambour. They both lived happily there for another 10 years until Ann entered aged care having been diagnosed with early-onset dementia. She passed away in 2015, her loss deeply felt by all the family.

Lars spent his final years enjoying a punt on the horses and visits from family, a few old PNG friends, and especially, relatives from Sweden.

Lars is survived by his two children and four grandchildren.

David Andersson



Bryan Beattie

BEATTIE, Bryan Alan QPM

d. 5 January 2024 aged 90

Bryan was born in Newtown, New South Wales, on 15 September 1933. After joining the New South Wales Police he was posted to serve with the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary where he remained from 1955 to 1975. During that time, he was stationed in Lae, Mumeng, Goroka, Wewak and later Port Moresby, where from 1972 to 1975 he was Superintendent-in-Charge of training at Bomana Police College.

Prior to his marriage to Jacqueline, Bryan ran the prison at Oomsis in the Morobe Province. He met Jacqueline in Lae in 1957, to whom he was married for 67 years, and was father to three sons, Bruce, Kerrod and John. He was a grandfather to Brook, Kathryn, Sam, Jack and Olivia.

In 1975 Bryan was awarded the Queen's Police Medal (QPM), and in 1977 the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Bryan's recollection of his time in PNG was sometimes

shocking, often humorous, but always with immense respectful fondness for the people and the country.

Lisa Bleijje (née Turner)

BECKHAUS, Ian Bennett

d. 16 October 2023

Ian passed away in Auckland on 16 October 2023, aged 78, following a determined two-year fight against cancer.

He was the third and youngest of three children of Grace and Laurie Beckhaus. Born 2 July 1945, at Hornsby NSW, Ian matriculated in 1962 from the selective Homebush High.

After a disappointment in failing selection for RAAF pilot training due to partial colour blindness, Ian was appointed a Cadet Patrol Officer (CPO) in early 1964. His initial *kiap* posting was to New Ireland District.

He worked in the Kavieng Sub-District with postings to Taskul and Konos Patrol Posts. On his second tour of duty, Ian served in the Namatanai Sub-District with extensive patrolling and road building along the remote New Ireland southern coast.

In October 1964, Ian, along with ADC John Frawley, and PO Laurie Meinjies, gained a measure of public attention when the Australian press reported on how their Lokono tax patrol on behalf of the Lavongai Local Government Council suffered an armed attack. The Lokono villagers

were followers of the nascent and so-called Johnson Cargo Cult. While there were cuts and bruises, including to CPO Beckhaus, who suffered a thigh wound when a small bridge collapsed, fortunately, there were no serious injuries.

The incident defined the start of long-running tensions between Lavongai Council taxpayers and the central government—a tension that eventually resolved itself when the Johnson Cult morphed into a useful business cooperative that fostered social and economic development.

Returning from his second recreation leave in 1968, Ian was posted as a patrol officer and Local Court Magistrate to Kikori in the Gulf District. It was here that he conducted extensive patrolling into the little-known areas of the hinterland and the headwaters of the Kikori and Purari River systems.

It was in Kikori in 1969 that Ian met his wife-to-be, and life-long partner, Christine. Chris hailed from Auckland and at the time was living in Kikori managing the local tavern, guest house, and business interests of a local trader. Ian and Chris were married in Auckland in 1970. After taking leave they returned to Kerema where Ian served as District Officer, Local Government Officer, and as District Court Magistrate.

Ian's particular contribution during his time in the Gulf District was to develop

several council-managed business ventures including the very popular Kikori Council local marketplace. During their time in Kerema, Chris worked as secretary to the Deputy District Commissioner and was very active in the social life of Kerema.

Ian became involved in the running of the Kerema Club and it was here too that his entrepreneurial skills were evident, as the club boomed under his stewardship and became the social focal point of Kerema.

Ian and Chris left PNG in 1972, and settled in Auckland where in December their first child, Leigh, was born, followed by son Michael, several years later.

Working initially in business with service stations, then in motorcycles, Ian went it alone and after several false starts, his innate business acumen led to his successfully building a motorcycle import business.

In dealing initially with the British manufacturers

of Triumph and later with his German, Japanese, and Italian suppliers, Ian built an international reputation for business integrity. His reliable support over many years to his domestic retail network brought him a well-earned reputation for honesty and sound business practice, and he became known in New Zealand as 'Mr Motorcycles'.

Ian came to be regarded as a mentor not only to his two children as they took over the family business, but also to many young people seeking to start as entrepreneurs in the tough and unforgiving small business sectors.

As Michael and Leigh took more responsibility for the family business, Ian and Chris enjoyed overseas travel, not to mention his love of Australian deserts where he and Christine managed to cross every major and many smaller deserts in the country.

Ian returned to his life's passion of flying, where he had advanced licences for both fixed

and rotary wing aircraft and owned a helicopter with which he and Chris would fly from Auckland to their special place at their cliff-top second home at Wyuna Bay on the Coromandel Peninsula.

Ian's passing is much felt by Chris, Michael and Leigh, their grandchildren, Ethan and Lucy, and by the family of his surviving brother, Paul. Ian is missed also by his many friends gained over years in business and more recently in the Auckland flying community.

He will be fondly remembered by many from his PNG years, and not the least by Tony Beard, who served with Ian in New Ireland, and Allan Johnson, who later was with Ian and Chris in the Gulf.

Rest easy Ian. You lived a worthwhile life and will be remembered by many with respect and affection for your dry wit, intelligent comments, and support. On this last patrol, we wish you dry feet, an ample supply of mantles for your Coleman lamp, a mosquito net with few holes, and unlimited onions and Tabasco Sauce to flavour the tinned bully beef.

Tribute by Christine Beckhaus, Allan Johnson & Tony Beard

CLARKE, Prue OAM

d. 25 August 2022

Some errors in the June 2023 issue of PNG KUNDU's Vale for Prue, who was born on 21 September 1939, need correcting. The vale noted Prue's mother as Eileen Clarke, and her father as Patrick



Ian Beckhaus in New Ireland with a police constable and his driver

Harold Clarke, who at one time was District Finance Officer Samarai.

Prue's mother was Agnes Prudence Alexandra Frank, neé Jeffrey, and her father was Kendall (Ken) Thomas Frank, who is mentioned in *The Coast Watchers* by Eric Feldt, as a 'wizard' during WWII. Ken Frank had a workshop in Port Moresby where he repaired all

the coastwatchers' communication radios.

A longer article on Prue's family will be included in a future issue.

POTTS, Guy St Clair
d. 13 February 2024, aged 82

Guy was born in 1941 at Broken Hill and spent his early years in Junee, NSW. Much-loved son of Lloyd and Mona (both deceased) and

much-loved brother of David, Ernestine, Hugh and Tony.

Guy was an enthusiastic student at Yanco Agricultural High, where his lifelong interest in and love of plants was developed. Guy was a horticulturist, botanist, philatelist, yachtsman, lifesaver, musician, fisherman *par excellence*, and a marvelous cook.

A kind and generous man,



Vale Kieran Nelson

The PNGAA is sad to advise that Kieran passed away at Greenslopes Hospital in Brisbane on 7 February 2024.

He was a wonderful wantok/friend to many of us, to our association—PNGAA, and to PNG and our Australian—PNG community generally. He proudly wore his PNGVR uniform on Anzac Day and contributed greatly to that association, closely affiliated with PNGAA, as its recent treasurer. He was also active within

the PNG Federation QLD Inc as its treasurer and involved with its major event for PNG Independence Day each year.

Always kind and willing to help, Kieran arranged the annual PNGAA gathering in Brisbane at the Ship Inn, ensuring it was the easy, friendly gathering that we all enjoy.

Kieran was also the administrator on PNGAA's Facebook site as well as other PNG reunion sites. He always ensured timely news of any PNG events and had a library of items of interest such as those legendary recordings of 'Tripela Liklik Pik' and 'Liklik Retpela Hat' along with his *tok pisin* translations of 'Twas the Night before Christmas' and 'The Ode' in *Pidgin*, along with occasional others, which he enjoyed reminding us about each year, and we thoroughly enjoyed hearing and seeing.

Kieran was born on 1 November 1950 and grew up in Maprik and Lumi, then spent some years in Kavieng, Sohano

and Wewak, later moving to the PNG Highlands and back to Wewak after joining the PNGBC and CBA.

He was, like many, an Australian whose early years and experiences influenced a great love of the people and his homes in PNG.

His strong Christian values shone through. Reunions organised by Kieran—whether they were related to his secondary schooling in Lismore, the bank, or with PNG friends he'd made over the years, ensured happy, friendly gatherings.

Despite being diagnosed with cancer five years ago, Kieran continued to give generously to the PNG/Australian community.

Kieran will be greatly missed by all of us who have known him either personally or through social media.

Our condolences go to Kieran's supportive wife, Margot, and to his family.

Andrea Williams

with a great sense of fun and a wonderful quirky sense of humour, Guy began his life-long love affair with Papua New Guinea in the early sixties, taking up duty as a plantation assistant at Sangara Rubber Plantation in the Northern District of Papua. After a spell there he became interested in education and gained a place in the 5th E-Course in Rabaul in 1963. After graduating, he worked in Anglican schools in the Northern District, at both Popondetta and Gona.

Guy then returned to the agricultural sector and managed plantations of coffee, rubber, cocoa and copra, as well as running a cocoa fermentary, and buying coffee and cocoa from growers. He also worked as a shipping agent and manager for NAMASU in Lae, and later was involved in the developing barramundi fishing industry on the Fly River. Guy worked for over 30 years in Papua New Guinea, in agriculture, education and commerce.

As a friend and helper of the people of PNG, many benefited greatly from Guy's knowledge and expertise in cash crops and marketing. He constantly supported local enterprise, assisting schools with equipment and labour, and was instrumental in bringing the Orokaiva Coffee Growers Cooperative into productivity and profit for its members. His involvement in agricultural,

commercial, sporting, and community life was recognised by the PNG Government with the award of the Independence Medal in 1985.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to Ingram Jung for his care of and for Guy during his decline, and to the ladies at Bolton Clark Nursing Home in Cairns, who said that during his tenure Guy had greatly embellished their cooking skills! Such was the man.

Rest in peace, old mate, you are sorely missed.

Note: The 'E' as in E-Course was, I think for 'Emergency'. The Australian Government initiated a scheme in the 1960s to provide a great number of teachers very quickly for work in Primary T-Schools—'T' being for Papua New Guinean students. Training ran for five days a week over eight-hour days for six months. It was very successful. The retention rate was higher than the ASOPA graduates. There were eight intakes with around 60 per course. Guy and I were in the fifth round. The missions sent people as well. **Mike Lean**

TATE, Robert (Bob) Edward
d. 19 March 2024

This tribute comes from an obituary published in the *PNG Australian Foresters Magazine* of April 2024. It was written by Kanawi Pouru, President of the PNG Forest Industry Association (PNGFIA) and



Bob Tate

Dick McCarthy of McCarthy & Associates (Forestry) Pty Ltd, and reproduced in an edited form in *PNG Kundu* with their permission.

PNG Lost an Icon of Its Forestry Industry with the Passing of Bob Tate, PNGFIA Executive Officer

Robert (Bob) Edward Tate, who was born in 1954, passed away at around 5 am on Tuesday, 19 March 2024, at his home, Le Hunte Road, Koki, NCD, after suffering a short illness. A memorial mass was celebrated at the Koki United Church in Pt Moresby on 28 March 2024. He is survived by his family—partner Betty Oauke-Tate, the Tate brothers, Allan and David, their sister Christen, and their extended families in Australia and PNG.

Since 1996, as Executive Officer of the PNGFIA, Bob has represented the Papua New Guinea Forest Industries nationally and internationally on all issues affecting a



Bob Tate speaking at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London 2011

profitable and sustainable PNG national forest industry, (with his signature cigarettes, and rum and coke drinks).

The PNGFIA is a non-profit organisation of many interest groups participating in the Papua New Guinea forest sector including major foreign investors, small local companies, landowner groups, manufacturers, and service and associated entities sharing the common interest of a sustained forest industry for the country.

Bob was born on 1 February



- KOHNKE, Glenys**
d. 8 May 2024, aged 75 years
- MAYNARD, Peter**
d. 16 April 2024
- NEEDHAM, Terence**
d. 2 May 2024
- TROY, Clive**
d. 15 April 2024

1954, to Alf and Flora Tate of GyMEA NSW. After completing his secondary education at GyMEA, he attended Sydney University and graduated in 1973 in Economics, majoring in accounting.

He moved to PNG in 1976 and worked for Coopers and Lybrand in Port Moresby and Rabaul until 1981. From 1981 to 1990, he was the Financial Controller and then General Manager of Ulabo Timber Company Pty Ltd.

In December 1990, Bob became Financial Controller of Pacific Alliance Pty Ltd with branches in Lae and Rabaul.

From July 1994 to October 1995, he was the Manager of PNG Market Strategies Pty Ltd.

From November 1995 to July 1996, he was an accountant and administrator of L & A Construction Pty Ltd. In July 1996 Bob was appointed Executive Officer of the PNGFIA until his passing in 2024.

In 2004, in conjunction

with the curator of the National Botanical Gardens and the head of the Office of Environment and Conservation, Bob was instrumental in establishing the National School Tree Nursery Project 'Trees For Survival'. Under the sponsorship of the PNG Forest Industry Association, Galley Reach Holdings, Port Moresby Rotary Club, Bulolo Rotary Club, the Office of Environment & Conservation, and the National Capital Botanical Gardens, a major revegetation project was undertaken involving Port Moresby schools based on the Rotary model of trees for survival.

The benefit of the project 'Trees For Survival' was to allow school children and school communities the benefit of studying environmental concerns and, particularly, the vital role that trees play in the PNG eco-system.

The project involved the development of a plant nursery at each school, with the provision of seedling tubes, seeds, and information both written and pictorial on how to raise seedlings and plant them out and support visits from nurserymen (Dept of Environment extension staff) visiting schools. Plants raised included trees for all purposes, from food production to medicinal purposes to firewood to timber production.

Dick McCarthy

MEMORIAL NEWS
RABAU & MONTEVIDEO MARU GROUP

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

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

For more information, please contact Andrea Williams on admin@montevideo-maru.org

ANZAC DAY EVENTS, RABAU 2024

As I landed in Rabaul, the skilled, female Air Niugini pilot slammed on the brakes. It was effective because we then cruised into the terminal in fairly leisurely fashion. Passengers arriving the day before had warned me to have the camera out. They had narrowly missed the safety cones announcing the end of the workable runway. Same the next day apparently. There were 11 people arriving on our 50-seater Dash 8-300.

Maintenance. It's always needed if something is to operate smoothly, and so Tokua Airport is undergoing months of repairs by the National Airports Corporation, PNG. Whilst this meant severe weight restrictions on aircraft, it also meant an endless juggle of changing schedules and people being bumped at the last minute.

Planning the trip had been a challenge. With special thanks to Air Niugini's Marie Ozaltin and David Glover, a group of 38 travellers, consisting of both PNGAA members and descendants of Lark Force, visited Rabaul for Anzac Day 2024.

To kick off the week there were some villagers fighting between Rabaul and Kokopo but, thankfully, this eventually calmed, allowing the travellers to attend several services remembering those sacrificed in war and to enjoy the trip visiting places with special memories.

ANDREA WILLIAMS

Tol Memorial Plaque

Tony Webster had arranged for a memorial plaque/storyboard to be taken to Tol to be presented to the community at the local school—named the 2/22nd Battalion Lark Force High School in honour of the 160 Australians brutally massacred there on 3 and 4 February 1942.

About 25 people travelled to Tol and back on 23 April 2024 by boat. It took 7 hours each way with three special hours at Tol.

School children in local dress provided a spectacular welcome and wonderful dance and song performances. Renewals of friendship and speeches were made.

The plaque, in English and *Tok Pisin*, is to be



Descendants of Lark Force (centre) during the presentation of the plaque; welcome from the schoolchildren; the face of the plaque, honouring those killed in the Tol Massacre, February 1942



placed near the Tol Memorial Cairn erected in 1987 by Bill Harry and friends. See <https://pngaa.org/lark-force-trek-tol-memorial-frazer-harry/>

Montevideo Maru Memorial Service

With thanks to Susan McGrade OBE and the Rabaul Historical Society, a dusk service was held on 24 April 2024 to remember the 2/22nd Battalion at the Montevideo Maru Memorial.

As the sun set, providing rich colours over the harbour, a rainbow arched over Namanula, and the singing of 'You Raise Me Up' and the PNG Anthem by the local school students was magnificent.

The service was attended by Australian Defence officials from Port Moresby.

Following the service, dinner and drinks were enjoyed at the New Guinea Club, home of the Rabaul Historical Society.

PNGAA and the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group are eternally grateful to the Rabaul Historical Society and Susan McGrade, along with Dave Flinn, Rod Rawlinson, Rod Pearce, Lily Blake, Rory Stewart and all those assisting who host these special services.

Dawn Service, Anzac Day 2024

Always a beautiful service in Rabaul, guests travelled along Mango Avenue, lit by flares, to the Rabaul Cenotaph. Each person was given a candle and handed wreaths and flowers which were kindly supplied by the Rabaul Hotel and Kulau Lodge. Chairs were placed in a semi-circle around the Cenotaph and everyone sat in silence, waiting for dawn. It's quite special watching the first tentative rays of the day appear behind Mother, as we remember those who have given their lives for our freedom. It is an experience not to be missed!

We had woken, earlier, to the loud heaviness of tropical rain in full pelt, which fortunately dissipated before the service.

The service was solemn and respectful. Commander Jonathan Corker, RAN, and Frazer Harry from the 2/22nd Battalion, both gave addresses. We hope to have these on the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru website soon—www.montevideo-maru.org

Following the service, a Gunfire Breakfast was held at the Rabaul Yacht Club with the assistance of staff from Kulau Lodge.

Bitapaka War Cemetery Commemoration, Anzac Day 2024

At 11 am guests gathered at the peaceful and spacious Bitapaka War Cemetery, which appears well kept. The introduction and welcome was given by Commander Jonathan Corker, RAN, a commemorative address was given by Lt Col Tony Evans and the Ode by Commander Graham Lebitina, PNGDF. Rabaul's George Cheng, PNGDF also participated in the service.



1 & 2: Montevideo Maru Service, 24 April 2024
3: Grave at Bitapaka Cemetery for the first six fallen soldiers in the First World War
4 & 5: Anzac Day Dawn Service, Rabaul, 25 April 2024
6: Schoolchildren at the Bitapaka Commonwealth War Graves Service, Anzac Day, 25 April 2024



Rabaul Memorial at the Bitapaka War Cemetery, Rabaul



Tributes at the Montevideo Maru Memorial, Rabaul

Bitapaka Primary School gave incredibly beautiful renditions of the three national anthems—Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. These will be remembered forever!

The Bitapaka Scout Group raised the flags for the Reveille. A lunch followed at the Ralum Club, Kokopo.

All were special services in historical parts of East New Britain and the visit by the Australians, generally, was enjoyed by all.

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS FOR SHARING THEIR STORIES AT ANZAC DAY

In Memory of Lost Women of Rabaul

Reinhard Minong of the *Post Courier* interviewed Rod Miller in Rabaul. The following is an excerpt, with thanks to *Post Courier*:

As remembrances of the World War II dead resonate on ANZAC Day, it is crucial to bring attention to another group whose bravery frequently goes unacknowledged, 'The Internees'.

Rod Miller, a member of the team gathered to mark Anzac Day in Rabaul, stands amid the solemnity of the occasion in Rabaul town.

Miller has left a lasting legacy of recollection with his moving novel, Lost Women of Rabaul, which tells the story of the unsung tragedy behind the critically acclaimed ABC television drama, Sisters of War.

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

General email: admin@montevideo-maru.org (Andrea Williams)

Send stories to: stories@montevideo-maru.org (Andrea Williams)

For education information email: education@montevideo-maru.org (Patrick Bourke)

Kathleen Bignell is one of the heroines immortalised in Miller's epic; her terrible tragedy is echoed throughout history. Miller says, 'Kathleen survived till the end of the war, but her son ... was killed ... it was very tragic.'

Remembering the Montevideo Maru

Patrick Bourke wrote to his local paper, the *St George Leader*, to remember six men from the St George area who were on the *Montevideo Maru*. Patrick's father's cousin, Lloyd Sibraa, was with the 1 Independent Company. Four were with Lark Force and there was one civilian.

The other men were Neil Callaghan, great-uncle of Andrew Hastie, present Shadow Minister for Defence, Richard Grimshaw, Frederick Hopkins, John Manyon, Henry Wyatt and John Poole

We thank Rod and Patrick for reminding the local community about their loss on the *Montevideo Maru*, and keeping the story in the public consciousness.

Montevideo Maru Service, Brisbane: 1 July 2024

The annual Montevideo Maru Memorial Service, held by the NGVR & PNGVR Ex-Members Association, for those 1,053 lost Australians, military and civilian internees, on the MS *Montevideo Maru* in 1942 will be held in the Memorial Galleries located under the Brisbane Cenotaph at 10 am 1 July 2024. Anzac Day dress with medals as appropriate. Everyone welcome, please arrive by 9.45 am. Morning tea will follow the service. Enquiries to admin@montevideo-maru.org

Australian War Memorial, Canberra: 1 July 2024

The Last Post Ceremony, at 4.30pm, will commemorate the 82nd anniversary of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* and William John Olney VX30074. If you would like to attend please email admin@montevideo-maru.org.



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PNGAA Membership Directory: 2023 Edition

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

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PNGAA Membership

Annual membership within Australia is \$50.00 (overseas extra) and available to any person with an interest in Papua New Guinea. Members receive four issues of our journal, *PNG KUNDU*, per year, full access to all content on the website, including our eBooks, receive email updates via Tok Save, network through events and social media and are encouraged to explore and become actively involved with all aspects of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Inc. New members are always welcome. For more details, please turn to the previous page or follow the link: <https://pngaa.org/membership/become-a-member/>



PNGAA Store

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

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Congratulations go to PNGAA Member, Professor Robert (Robin) Cooke AM, OAM, OBE, who was recognised in the Australia Day 2024 Honours List, by being made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

Robin was awarded the AM for significant service to pathology, teaching medical students in both Australia and Papua New Guinea, and for publishing scientific articles in the *Bulletin of the International Academy of Pathology* (IAP), the largest organisation of pathologists in the world. He has been editor of newsletters for the Australasian Division of the IAP, and its international body for a record 23 years. The gold medals and certificates of appreciation Robin has received from several countries include the USA, Japan, France, and the Arab Division. He was the first and likely the last Australian to receive many of these awards.

Robin remains a current Adjunct Professor with the University of PNG, James Cook University, and the University of Queensland. He was an Anatomical Pathologist with Pathology Queensland (PQ) from 1968 after working in PNG and London. During his time in PQ, Robin received the title of Emeritus Director and life membership to several professional associations. Having retired from clinical duties in 2009, Robin continues to teach, research, and publish educational material and electronic media, and running conferences both National and International (Australian College of Tropical Medicine: 2018).



Professor Robin Cooke Awarded Member of the Order of Australia 2024



Group photo taken at Government House in Port Moresby when Robin was presented with the OBE in May 2003 (L-R) Joe Igo, Marshall Cooke (Robin's brother), Kris Ninkama, who proposed Robin for the OBE, Robin, and Jacob Moreweya (above); Robin wearing two medals (right)—the OAM from Australia (awarded in 2001) is on the left, and the OBE from Papua New Guinea is on the right



Oro Province Governor, Gary Juffa, Anthony Albanese and James Marape at the start of their historic walk along the Kokoda Trail (top); The walkers are set to arrive at the Isurava Memorial (centre); The two prime ministers lay wreaths at the Isurava Memorial Dawn Service (bottom)

Information & photos courtesy various news sources including ABC News, Daily Telegraph & Australian Financial Review

Australia Will Never Forget!

After spending two days walking the Kokoda Trail in often arduous terrain, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Hon. James Marape, and the Australian Prime Minister, the Hon. Anthony Albanese, laid wreaths together during the Dawn Service at the war memorial at Isurava to symbolise the close bond between Australia and Papua New Guinea—and as the sun began to rise over the mountains, an Australian Army soldier played the ‘Last Post’ before the attendees observed a minute’s silence.

Mr Albanese addressed about 400 people at the memorial—the site of an intense six-day period of fighting by Australian and Papuan infantry against Japanese soldiers. Ninety-nine Australians died in the Battle of Isurava in 1942, and more than 1,600 were wounded—a pivotal moment in the successful effort to repel Japanese troops who invaded what was then Australian territory.

Mr Albanese used the speech to highlight how the events of the war forged a powerful bond between Australians and the people of PNG. He told the crowd that they were standing on ‘ground made hallow by Australian sacrifice’, and we are gathered in a place that has known the most pitiless ferocity of battle, fought with bullet, bayonet, mortar and the desperation of bare hands. It is also a place that has seen the unadorned strength of the Australian spirit.

‘We feel the weight of history as we gather here along the Kokoda Trail, this great artery of mud and suffering and perseverance that has come to occupy a place of singular power in Australia’s shared memory.’

The Australian Prime Minister also paid tribute to the local villagers who risked their lives to feed, guide and shelter Australians in desperate need along the Kokoda Trail. ‘They were angels walking tall through the hell of war,’ he said. ‘For the Papua New Guineans, this was not a theatre, a backdrop or a battlefield. It was home.

‘We thank every one of them who helped Australians in the face of retribution and sometimes unfathomable cruelty,’ he said. ‘The troops, the coastwatchers, the shipping pilots, the villagers and the stretcher bearers whose courage was matched only by their kindness.’

‘To the people of PNG, I offer Australia’s promise: We will never forget.’

The prime minister also honoured those who fought in other parts of the world, as well as serving members of the Australian Defence Force.

www.pngaa.org