

PNG **Kundu**

SEPTEMBER 2024



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

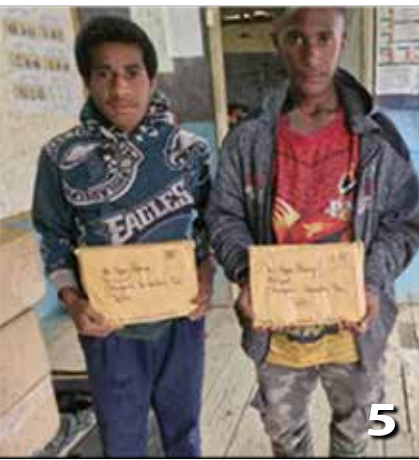
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PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

(Formally constituted in 1951—incorporated in 1996)

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

2024–2025 PNGAA Office Bearers

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EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR: Position vacant (please see page 4)

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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.

◀ **Deadline for the December 2024 issue: 4 OCTOBER 2024** ▶

JOURNAL EDITOR: Christine Leonard—(Mob) 0422 002 667

Please send all contributions to: editor@pngaa.net

Reviewed by Murrrough Benson & Andrea Williams

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Contributions may be edited for length and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or the PNGAA, and if not received by the copy deadline may not be guaranteed inclusion in the coming issue.

• Contributors' Guidelines are available on page 42 of this issue or 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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PNG Kundu

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Front Cover Feature:
Celebrating at Alotau Cultural Festival,
Milne Bay Province, 2018
(© Peter Worsley OAM)



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.

Management Committee Update

With the 50th anniversary of independence fast approaching, a letter has been sent from PNGAA to the Australian Prime Minister with a request that Australia celebrate this occasion.

It requests consideration for an Australian Cultural and Community Centre for Pacific Nations and a space where the PNGAA Collection can reside and be displayed. A centre where the Pacific can come together and share ideas with Australians is much needed and, without wider Australian acknowledgement, Australians will have no knowledge of the joint history leading to PNG independence that many of our families were part of.

We encourage all PNGAA members to write to their Federal Member in support. If you need suggestions on wording, please email admin@pngaa.net.

ACNC Application

On behalf of the PNGAA, I would like to acknowledge and thank Kylee Anderson who submitted the application to the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) in early June. This was a hugely, lengthy journey of research, phone calls, and filling in innumerable questions requiring thoughtful and skilled answers, and it took several months to finalise.

Kylee was supported by Jane Rybarz and Murrough Benson who have generously given their time too. It was wonderful to see the team working like this. It's



Kylee Andersen

something we've wanted done for many years, but haven't had the volunteers to do it.

It's a huge achievement and we send an enormous thank you to them, especially to Kylee for persevering. Whilst we hope it will be successful, whatever the outcome, this is a great help to PNGAA.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

There is always ongoing work with *PNG Kundu*, with the PNGAA website as well as with the treasurer's role. Much checking and re-jigging behind the scenes has also been going on to update the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru website, too. The education program has been revamped to bring it up to date. External links have been tidied and new photographs added. We are also grateful to those who have contributed items to the PNGAA Collection and donated to the PNGAA Scholarship Fund.

Successful Events

Recently, very successful lunches were held in Cairns, Brisbane and Perth. It was tremendous to see

the attendance at all the events, reflecting the camaraderie and fellowship we all enjoy. We thank those who have organised these special occasions for our enjoyment.

New Committee Members Needed Soon

Some of our wonderful volunteers have been in their roles for years. We cannot expect this to continue, and some need a break! At the 2025 AGM we will have the opportunity to vote for new members to the committee and we will be calling for nominations in the next journal. Please, please think about the roles and how you can help in 2025 and 2026. It is always good to have fresh ideas too!

50th Anniversary of Independence

2025 is the 50th anniversary of independence and volunteers are needed to help celebrate this in various states. The current committee all have continuing working roles so this cannot be left to a few people.

Chances are it may not happen unless PNGAA has some special volunteers, and it is an important celebration to share with others. If you feel you can organise an event, please email admin@pngaa.net as soon as possible.

Kiap Memorial

This will be built and dedicated in Canberra in 2025, with thanks to the efforts of Bill Sanders, Graham Watts and John Hocknull OAM, ML. More on that as we are updated.

PNG Kundu

Our journal, *PNG Kundu*, loves to hear all your stories. Please contribute so that there is a good balance—it's only through you that the journal can have this balance.

Being practical, if more people have lived in one area over another, or certain towns have more historical emphasis, then it's likely there might be more information available on it.

Having said that, if you've read *PNG Kundu* properly, the breadth of stories is actually breathtaking! Don't forget to comment too! *PNG Kundu* has a great spot with the 'Letters & Reviews' section.

Exercise Pitch Black

It is always good to hear of the activities of members. Recently we heard that Graham Watts was catching up with his nephew, Lt Colonel Doug Vavar, in Darwin. Lt Col Vavar is the Commander of the PNG Air Transport Wing (ATW).

For the first time, the PNGDF



Graham Watts with his nephew, Lt Colonel Doug Vavar CO of PNGDF Air Transport Wing, enjoying a Darwin sunset at the end of Exercise Pitch Black 24

ATW, has actively participated in Exercise Pitch Black in the Northern Territory, and the PNG PAC-750XL aircraft were being well utilised during the exercise in Australia's Top End.

Website Photograph Albums

Photos of Port Moresby, taken in April this year, have recently been added to a new photo album on the PNGAA website.

The albums on the PNGAA website are well worth a browse. Again, an example of the 'behind



View from Touaguba Hill, Port Moresby

(Courtesy Andrea Williams)

the scenes' work our volunteers on the committee do.

Special thanks to Roy Ranney and Claire van Bakel, and previously Ross Johnson, who set up many of the original albums with Nick Booth.

September Milestones

September 2024 holds two significant milestones:

• 110th Anniversary of the Battle of Bitapaka, 11 September 1914

This was significant for many reasons:

- The Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) was the first combined operation comprising a seaborne invasion of army and navy, raised in Australia. Units of the Royal Australian Navy escorted the force.
- It was the first Australian



The AN&MEF raising the flag at Rabaul, 1914

action of WWI and the first action under the full command of Australia.

- It was the first time any Australian or British force fought the Germans on their own Territory.
- It was sent to seize German New Guinea and capture the German wireless station at

Bitapaka. It was also tasked with dismantling the vital communication systems that supported German naval assets based in the Pacific.

- The AN&MEF secured the first surrender of WWI. it was Australia's first decisive battle and victory as a nation.

• The first decorations of WWI were awarded for action at Rabaul.

• The first Australian casualties, including six killed in action, occurred in New Guinea on 11 September 1914.

• Australia's first submarine, *AE1*, disappeared off the coast of Rabaul on 14 September 1914.

• Strategically it was important because there was a presence of a German fleet in the Pacific that threatened the sea lanes.

• 30th Anniversary of the Twin Volcanic Eruptions of Tavurvur and Vulcan 19 September 1994

This covered Rabaul with volcanic debris and ash and destroyed the homes and livelihoods of all who

lived there (see the feature on the back cover of this issue).

Recovery has been slow and challenging, but recovering it is. Queen Elizabeth Park in Rabaul, the home of rugby league, was reopened in July this year after being closed for 30 years since the 1994 volcanic eruptions. The Frangipani Festival is being held, as usual, in September.

Malum Nalu recently wrote:

In 1993, as a young reporter for the Post-Courier in Lae, I travelled with the Lae Bombers for their game against the Rabaul Gurias. Although we lost in front of a passionate home crowd, we got to enjoy the vibrant nightlife of Rabaul post-match. The Bombers partied all night in the volcano town, soaking in the atmosphere of those glory days. Rabaul was the place to be, with nightclubs, live music, great bands like Barike, and beautiful people.

Australians have lived all over Papua New Guinea and we regularly hear how beautiful Rabaul, and Madang, in particular, once were. Rabaul's history, within PNG, is unique, having been the scene of the first battles for Australians and Papua New Guineans in both WWI and WWII, and the scene of several volcanic eruptions.

During WWII, there was horrific fighting and bases throughout PNG—in Milne Bay, Kokoda, Buna/Gona, the Markham, Bougainville, the Sepik, Emirau—but Rabaul, a former administrative capital for Australia, and the Pacific

base for the Japanese in WWII, will always claim extraordinary history.

We cannot ignore that major political and geological events have repeatedly destroyed what is a town with majestic volcanoes and a deep-water harbour.

A tremendous number of people have rebuilt it, and have enjoyed living there! These two milestones have centred on Rabaul. Please send in milestones you would like acknowledged.

Scholarship Update

Glenda Giles, our contact in Wewak, emailed PNGAA Secretary, Kylee Andersen, with a message of thanks from Joyce Manjina, the principal of Anguganak High in the West Sepik Province for the school book packs donated by the PNGAA.



Rabaul, after the eruption

A further update is that in late May 2024, a small Mission Aviation Fellowship Cessna single-engine plane flew the books donated by PNGAA to Tekin airstrip, where Oksapmin Secondary School is located. There is no access to this remote school other than by air.

2024 Olympic Games

In August, many were glued to the TV watching the 2024 Olympic Games held in Paris. Papua New Guinea had six athletes

POSITIONS VACANT

The PNGAA Management Committee has two vacancies which need urgent attention

PNGAA PRESIDENT

This important role includes chairing Association and Management Committee meetings, and engaging with both members and external parties whilst showing leadership and belief in the Association.

EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR

This person will enjoy getting together with others and initiating and managing social events for the PNGAA, including the AGM and Sydney Christmas Luncheon. Computer, organisational and networking skills will, of course, be helpful!

For further information, please contact:
Andrea (coordinator@pngaa.net / Mobile: 0409 031 889) or
Kylee (admin@pngaa.net / Mobile: 0405 334 501)
as soon as possible.



Students at the Anguganak High School in West Sepik Province with their book packs (top), and Oksapmin Secondary School students with their packs (left)

Forty-nine years ago, on 16 September 1975, the nation of Papua New Guinea achieved its independence from Australia and we, the members of the PNGAA, are proud of our past and continuing contributions to the Independent Nation of Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea Independence Day Celebrations for 2024 will begin with the Flag Raising Ceremony on Independence Hill in the grounds of the National Parliament House. Many other events will be held throughout the country and in Australia—they will include cultural festivals, official speeches, craft fairs and music, with many participants wearing the national colours of black, red and gold—ending with fireworks in Port Moresby.



representing their country, held from 26 July–11 August 2024. The athletes included Josh Tarere, and Georgia-Leigh Vele from swimming, Gibson Mara and Kevin Kassman from Taekwondo, Sprinter Leoni Beu, and veteran weightlifter Borea Baru. The team was led by former Olympian Ryan Pini MBE.

Australia had 460 athletes competing in 33 sports.

Whilst all compete for sporting glory, success is celebrated by only a few. Acceptance at the Olympics comes after endless hours of dedication and commitment and that, in itself, is a huge achievement which everyone is proud of. All athletes are at the top of their game, and the journey and experience mean we congratulate all those who take part.

PNGAA New Members

The committee welcomes the following new members: Peter

Briggs, Alison Copley, George Curry, Tim Griffiths, Bill Hawley, Ian Honey, Janice Iredale, Brian Jackson, Philip Jamieson, Luke Johnson, Anne Musgrove, John Nelson, Inge Reibe, Tracey Tatnell, Gunter Thyzel, Rory Webb, Naomi White, Renyl Willard, John Wold

2025—A Special Year!

Do give some thought, and email admin@pngaa.net, on how you can help make 2025, the 50th anniversary of PNG Independence, a special year for PNGAA!

ANDREA WILLIAMS



Editorial
Christine Leonard
editor@pngaa.net

Take a Turn

Next year, 2025, is important for a few reasons; the first that comes to mind is it will be the 50th anniversary of PNG

Independence. It is also the year that PNGAA committee members and office bearers step down at the AGM for a fresh lot to be voted in.

We love being part of the Association—receiving the journals and catching up with *wantoks* at social gatherings. These benefits continue because Association office bearers have been tireless stalwarts who step up year in and year out.

Two vacancies remain—President and Events Co-ordinator. The absence of a president will eventually affect the PNGAA’s governance requirements to continue in the longer term.

Full details of both roles were outlined in the June issue, are also featured on page 4 of this issue, and are regularly flagged on Facebook and the Association’s website.

If you believe you have the background and capacity to

fulfil either of these roles please consider taking a turn.

Apart from these roles, all positions will be declared vacant in the lead-up to next year’s AGM so that new office bearers can be voted in. This is a non-negotiable process for incorporated associations irrespective of whether incumbent officer bearers are happy to continue.

Some roles carry a heavier responsibility than others, there’s no point in pretending otherwise. The secretary, treasurer and membership/website positions are crucial to the PNGAA’s operations. Without a secretary, no incorporated association will receive approval to operate from the Office of Fair Trading. So the voting in of office bearers is very important. Please actively nominate yourself, or chat with and nominate another, to ensure all positions are filled and the Association benefits from more helpers.

To inquire further, please email Kylee Andersen, Secretary of the PNGAA at admin@pngaa.net or phone Kylee on her mobile at 0405 334 501. The other person to approach is Andrea Williams at coordinator@pngaa.net or her mobile 0409 031 889.

Having recently joined the committee I can say, ‘hand on heart’, there’s a very supportive crew behind me. A culture of support and encouragement is evident at all levels. So give it some thought, please.



Helene L Cronin OAM presenting a copy of her book to the PNG Consul-General for Queensland, Mr Reatau Rau, and his wife, Susan, at the Brisbane luncheon

Thank You Helene

Helene L Cronin (née Foley) OAM has generously donated two large boxes of books to the PNGAA. The boxes contain an extensive list of titles related to Papua New Guinea’s colonial history, including WWII.

Helene recently published a book titled *The Papua Bugle Call 1939–1945: The War and its Ultimate Effects*, about the Foley’s family connection to Port Moresby and the experience they endured during WWII. Helene was thrilled to present a copy of her book to the PNG Consul-General for Queensland, Mr Reatau Rau, and his wife, Susan, (*above*) during the PNGAA social gathering in Brisbane on 28 July.

PNG Kundu Front Covers

The photo on the cover of this issue was sent to us by member, Peter Worsley OAM, and we are

always interested in receiving appropriate images that suit the format from our members.

Specifications required are JPG / 300 dpi / 220 x 310 mm (min.) portrait size. Caption and photographer information must also be included.

If you have something applicable, please send it to me, at editor@pngaa.net, along with your details. The specifications are also available in the Guidelines on page 42, or on our website, www.pngga.org.





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 4 October 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, on 3 May (photos below) and their winter luncheon was held on Friday, 16 August, at the same venue, with Peter Worsley OAM as guest speaker. Photos will be included in the next issue.

BRISBANE Operation Rimau & Commando Day Sunday, 7 July 2024

Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles Ex-Members Association President, Phil Ainsworth, Vice President Bob Collins and Andrea Williams, PNGAA and Montevideo Maru Society, attended the above day for the Australian Commando Association, on board HMAS *Diamantina* at the Qld Maritime



Bill Collins, Andrea Williams and Phil Ainsworth at the Qld Maritime Museum (left); Perth raffle winner, Ray Morris (right); Doug Stewart with Margaret & Pat Dwyer (below) at the Perth WA Catch Up

Museum. This service is held each year to remember both Operation Rimau, the second commando raid on Singapore Harbour, in the latter months of 1944, resulting in all the attacking party being killed in action, by drowning, dying of wounds or being executed, mostly just prior to WWII, and the Commandos who have died in service since WWII.

It was a moving ceremony and Phil Ainsworth laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.

BRISBANE PNGAA Members & Friends Annual Lunch Sunday, 28 July 2024

Almost 50 guests gathered in the relaxed garden setting of The Ship Inn for the annual Brisbane lunch. From a modest list of RSVPs, the numbers swelled to include guests from North and South Coasts, the hinterlands, Moreton Bay Islands and Brisbane.



We were pleased to welcome the PNG Consul-General, Mr Reatau Rau and his wife, Mrs Susan Rau. Mr Rau extended an invitation for everyone to visit the consulate offices and the sincerity of this invitation was welcomed with loud applause from the group:

PNG Consulate-General,
Level 1, 316 Adelaide St, Brisbane.
Hours of Business Monday–Friday:
General Enquiries: 8.30 am–4.30 pm.
PH +61 07 3221 7915.

Two books were donated to the consulate by the authors: *When the Garamuts Beat: A memoir of 50 years in Bougainville*, by Franz Miltrup SM, edited by Christine Leonard, and *The Papua Bugle Call 1939–1945: The War and its Ultimate Effects*, by Helene L Cronin (née Foley) OAM (see Christine's Editorial on page 7).

A special welcome was made to Guest Speaker, Christine Leonard, who talked about her stewardship as editor of the *PNG Kundu* journal, and Rosalie Everest, who recently returned from laying her mother's ashes in Papua New Guinea (*PNG Kundu*, June 2024, p 26).

Thoughts were also offered to the past lunch event organiser, Kieran Nelson. Kieran's widow, Frances, sent apologies and warm wishes to all.

This lunch is held every year on the last Sunday in July. So put it in your 2025 diary now. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of PNG Independence and it's sure to be a celebration not to be missed!

BELINDA MACARTNEY



EVENTS DIARY



SYDNEY
Chatswood
Networking
18 November 2024

Think about joining one of the Sydney networking sessions co-ordinated by Roy Ranney at the Chatswood Bowling Club.

Anywhere up to ten members generally turn up on the third Monday of the month each quarter. It's an informal get-together.

The last social gathering was on Monday, 19 August, and the next will be on Monday, 18 November. If Chatswood isn't too far out of your way, try to make it sometime. You will be made most welcome.

PNGAA Annual
Christmas Lunch
1 December 2024

Further details will be available soon on the PNGAA website and in the next journal.

PERTH
PNGAA Christmas Lunch
29 November 2024

Venue: RAAFA Club, Bull Creek, 11.30 am to 3.30 pm.

MELBOURNE
Paradise Palette—
Contemporary Art from
Papua New Guinea
27 Nov–10 Dec 2024

Venue: SOL Gallery, Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne
 Curated by Don Wotton on behalf of the PNG street artists.

CAIRNS
Ex-Kiaps Meeting
Saturday, 27 July 2024

Former *kiaps*, friends and family gathered recently at Yorkeys Knob Boating Club in Cairns. About 45 people attended with many coming from far away places—Steven (1980) and Delilah Peters from Lae, Frank Leibfried (1960) and Shushila Desai from Tasmania, Mike Press (1966) from Darwin and Rick Rogerson and Kay Mori from Perth.

We welcomed wives of departed *kiaps*—Genevieve Cavanagh, Lois Logan, Maxine Wright and Patti Hiatt. We also

had an anthropological cohort—Prof. Rosita Henry, Dr Michael Wood from JCU Cairns and A/Prof. Monica Minnegal from Melbourne.

An enjoyable time was had by all re-telling, and embellishing, stories from a life far away and long ago.

DERYCK THOMPSON



Mai & Laurie Bragg, Chris Makin (top); Chris Warrillow, Rick Rogerson, Delores & Roger Dargie, Judy Avoa Warrillow & Kay Mori (middle); Monica Minnegal, Rosita Henry, Dymrna Leonard, Deryck Thompson (below)



Featuring letters to the editor along with opinions of interest, 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 4 October 2024, the Copy Deadline for the next issue:
editor@pngaa.net

South Pacific Aero Club Memorabilia

Having been the foundation secretary and Strip Report editor of the *South Pacific Aero Clubs* (SPAC) in the mid-1960s, I am in the process of writing a family history and my involvement in PNG aviation between 1963 and 1967.

For nostalgic reasons, when my wife and I had *gon pinis*, I took my copies of all the club's minutes, newsletters, and other historically significant documents. About 30 years ago I decided to offer the PNG government all the copies of the cinema newsreel and TV news stories I shot in PNG during that period, including coverage of the UN Teams doing their inspections leading up to independence.

Fellow aero club member, Ray Thurecht, had arranged to meet Wilma and me in 'Moresby to assist in finding, without success, a government organisation that might have been interested. I also handed over to Ray all my SPAC archive material for donation and safekeeping, and if not already preserved, hopefully at the club or other local archives, although at the time, the club had appeared to have almost collapsed.

I hope some PNGAA members may be able to provide me with contact details of the club if it still exists, or where those early records may still be found. Some of the information therein would assist in verifying my declining memory.

My phone number in Perth

is 08 6277 3751, and my email address is darylbinning@outlook.com

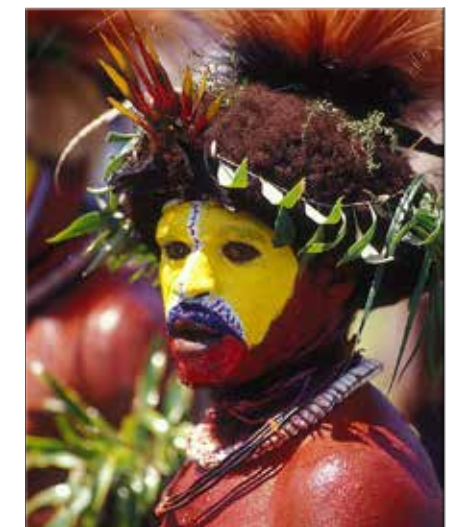
DARYL BINNING OAM, ACS

Our Strong Bond

I found the address by Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, James Marape, to the Australian Parliament last February, both inspiring and moving. It will re-assure many Australians and indeed other members of the 'Pacific Family' of the strong historic, social and strategic bond between our two countries; a bond that will not be breached by the cheque book tactics of other countries.

Having served as a *kiap* in the Huli region of the then Southern Highlands District in the early 1950s, it was with some nostalgia that I noted Mr Marape's place of origin is the Huli region.

It was at Rumurumu, now known as Tari, with two other *kiaps* that we built the airstrip and station in 1952. The story of the landing of the first aircraft on 18 August of that year is



A Huli tribesman in festival costume

told on the internet titled, 'First Plane at Tari'. This story was first published in *Una Voce* (PNG *Kundu's* forerunner) in 2015. It is very likely that James Marape's grandfather or even his father, was present on that historic occasion, amongst the thousands of Huli people who flooded the uncompleted airstrip.

On 24 February, I asked the Papua New Guinea High Commissioner, Mr John Kali, to pass the appreciation and gratitude of myself and my wife to Mr Marape. Just a small piece of Papua New Guinea's extraordinary history.

QUENTIN ANTHONY

John Groenewald's Diary Now Available on PNGAA Website

Ross Johnson recently completed a mammoth and important job digitising and compiling six parts of *John Groenewald's Diary—1963 Star Mountains Patrol*, including the prologue and slides—into a series of PDF files that are now available on the PNGAA website.

John, a patrol surveyor, was



John Groenewald



part of a five-month patrol that entailed trekking 500 miles through mountainous terrain, fast-flowing rivers and swampy plains. Led by District Officer (DO) Des Fitzer, with ADO Ross Henderson, John Groenewald, a small group of police and approximately 60 carriers (*above*), the patrol left Kiunga on 17 January 1963. You can read some of the background to this patrol in Judith Blogg's article in *Una Voce*, December 2016.

Roy Ranney has uploaded the complete diary on the PNGAA website. Members can read them via the members-only link <https://pngaa.org/john-groenewalds-diary-1963-star-mountain-patrol/>

John Groenewald passed away in Western Australia on 12 February 2016. Des Fitzer passed away on 27 June 2006 in South Australia.

PNGAA extends its gratitude to Ross and Roy for making this fascinating chapter of PNG history accessible.

Track vs Trail

I noticed the debate re 'Track vs Trail' was raised again in the last issue. I have published the

following two articles on the issue: 'The Kokoda Trail: 10 Essential Facts' and 'Official Name of the Kokoda Trail'.

I have the highest regard for Dr Karl James' historical research regarding the Kokoda Campaign, however, he is trying to have a 'bob' each way on the name and has drawn a long bow in describing 'track' as being '*strongly associated with the language of the Australian bush*'. If this is the case how come our vast continent is criss-crossed with 'fire trails'? He would also be aware that Australia developed a 'Remembrance Trail' between France and Belgium for the Centenary of Anzac

I have been trekking across the Trail for 32 years and every sign (apart from the Isurava Memorial) has referred to 'Kokoda Trail' since I first trekked it in 1991.

It is also the official name gazetted by the traditional owners of the land, i.e. Papua New Guinea—and the name of the Battle Honour awarded to their Papua Infantry Battalion and the 10 Australian battalions who fought in the campaign.

I'm not sure what part of these facts the proponents of 'Kokoda Track' don't get!

I have recently posted the following two blogs for your info:

- *Papua New Guinea—A Place of Pilgrimage*
- *PNG Angels demonstrate the philanthropic potential of Kokoda Tourism*

Best regards, Charlie

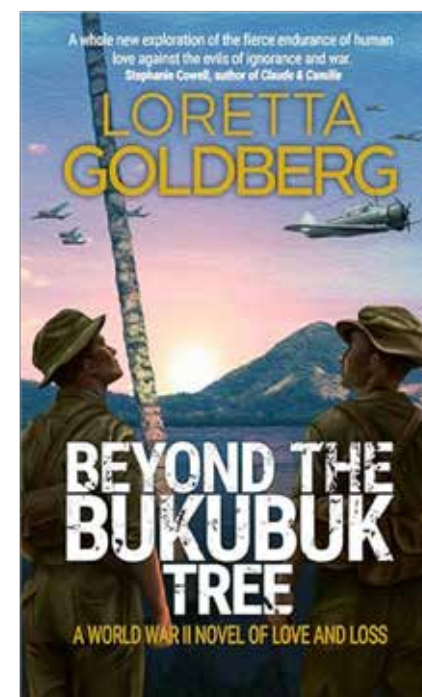
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www.networkkokoda.org

LORETTA GOLDBERG *Beyond the Bukubuk Tree*

This historical novel by an award-winning author was published in late June. The 378-page paperback and e-book is set against the backdrop of WWII in East New Britain. The story is promoted as a World War II novel of love and loss.

Published by MadeGlobal Publishing (2024)
ISBN 978-84-122325-8-5
ASIN: B0D4MH8D63



www.pngaa.org



A group of cadet patrol officers (*kiaps*) are shown the Royal Papuan Constabulary police barracks at Sogeri, 1950

The paperback version is available through any good bookstore and Amazon, as is the e-book. You can read more about the book at <https://mybook.to/bukubuk>

What is a Kiap?

Bill Sanders' article in the last *PNG Kundu* issue about the proposed Kiap Memorial in Canberra got my aged brain thinking that many, especially some of the younger readers, may be wondering who or what a *KIAP* was.

The word *kiap*, so I am informed, comes from the Tolai people of Rabaul and their interpretation of the German word for 'captain'—which quickly became the nickname in all of Papua New Guinea for a patrol officer.

A Cadet Patrol Officer (CPO) was naturally of the lowest *kiap* rank and hopefully, if one passed muster, one advanced up a couple of grades of Patrol Officer then Assistant District Officer, then District Officer with Patrol Officers under him being responsible for a vaguely defined patrol

post area and the ADO and the DO assuming the running of larger settlements, including small towns.

At the very top was the District Commissioner, generally known as God's Right-Hand man, who was the co-ordinator of all government departments in a particular district.

And yes, compared to today, the then Department of Native Affairs to which all *kiaps* belonged, included sexist and racist individuals, and that's how it was then. No such person as a female *kiap* was recruited, and PNG males were not recruited on a mass scale until the 1970s.

Kiaps had a sort of basic law to administer 'Native Administration Regulations', which only affected indigenous people and had rules on what local people could wear and the times they were allowed in towns and other settlements!

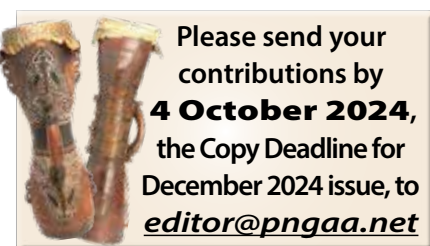
A *kiap* could be gazetted as a commissioned officer of the

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Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary plus also as a reserve magistrate of a district court. All races were subject to the jurisdiction of both courts (hearing statutory places cases where district cases could be heard involving all people), but his main job was patrolling—sometimes into what was called ‘uncontrolled’ areas; and yes, until the mid-1960s there were still parts of the Highlands and the Sepik where a European had not visited!

Patrolling involved trudging up and down jungle slopes to visit various villages, taking perhaps a couple of weeks to visit everyone. The *kiap* was welcomed by a *luluai* (village headman) or a *tul-tul* (2IC) and all the assembled villagers because the *kiap*'s visit was something of an event and out of the ordinary. In island or river areas, your feet could take it easy as patrolling was undertaken by a workboat or motor canoe.

At the conclusion of a patrol, a patrol report was sent up the chain of command with notes on how the patrolled area was going, recommendations for economic development and anything else that might be of interest. A link for where old patrol reports can be accessed is *Papua New Guinea Patrol Reports | Collection | Library Digital Collections | UC San Diego Library (ucsd)*.



edu)—The digital library collection of Melanesian Anthropology at the San Diego Library in the USA.

Patrolling was arduous sometimes but usually never dangerous, at least in my case, except for tripping over a log, standing on a snake or keeping a wary lookout for crocodiles when wading through rivers.

A notable exception was the murder of PO Gerald Szarka, CPO Geoffrey Harris, Constables Purari and Buritori at Telefomin in the mountains of the Sepik District in November 1953.

The *kiap*'s role abruptly changed in the mid to late '60s when the Australian Government suddenly woke up to the fact that Independence might be the way of the future in the Territories. *Kiaps* then had the job of informing people about House of Assembly elections and forming Local Government Councils.

A *kiap* was a bit of a 'Jack-of-all-trades' and, in my time in PNG, I had a chat with a cannibal, disinterred a Swiss citizen, witnessed in the trial of a murdered witch, defended arrested Taiwanese fishermen, supervised the construction of an airstrip, investigated a cargo cult and helped host a cocktail party two to three metres underwater, to name just a few out of the ordinary jobs. Other *kiaps* should be able to list some of the odd jobs that came their way.

Kiaps started winding down from the early 1970s when we were virtually kicked out of our job by the then Australian Government,

though still warmly remembered by the ordinary people of PNG, as exemplified by the time my wife and I went on a cruise. I was subjected to handshakes and pats on the back as a *lapun kiap* (ancient Patrol Officer). It seems that we have gone into folklore and tradition.

JOHN B QUINN

Editor's Postscript: More can be read about the 1953 Telefomin murders in an article penned by Bill Brown MBE at <https://www.pngattitude.com/2013/04/the-telefomin-murders-revisited-the-gritty-detail.html>

PNG Portraits

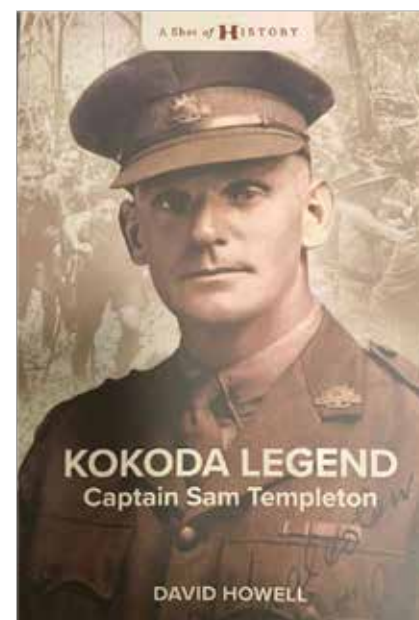
I am the retired Chairman of USA Rugby League, living in Newcastle, NSW. I wish to contact someone from the PNG community in Newcastle or Sydney and hand these portraits to them. The PNG Prime Minister gave me these two portraits (*below*) in Port Moresby during the Rugby League World Cup in 2017. I would like to hand them to a Papua New Guinean.

Can you help me contact the appropriate PNG community in Newcastle or Sydney, please?

PETER J ILLFIELD
(E) pillfield@icloud.com



Papua New Guinea Portraits



DAVID HOWELL *Kokoda Legend:* *Captain Sam Templeton*

Templeton's Crossing was named by Bert Kienzle in honour of a brave soldier, Captain Samuel Victor (Sam) Templeton.

Templeton's name and actions are synonymous with Kokoda. Sam was the Officer Commanding (OC), B Company, 39 Battalion (Bn) which spearheaded the battalion in its march to Kokoda to stop the Japanese advance over the Kokoda Trail. He disappeared and was assumed killed near the village of Oivi fighting the Japanese. His body was never found.

The book describes how Sam was captured by the Japanese, interrogated, tortured and executed on 26 July 1942. He was the first officer to be captured in the Kokoda Campaign. Sam gave misleading information about allied military strengths at Kokoda, on the Trail and in Port Moresby, which significantly assisted the Allied campaign.

Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to Protestant parents on 28 January 1901, Sam migrated to Australia in June 1921, settling in Victoria, and marrying in 1928. After enlisting in the Militia in September 1930, he received regular promotions, and was called up on 5 October 1939.

On 7 October 1941, aged 40, he was posted to 39 Infantry Battalion as OC B Company as a lieutenant. The 39 Bn departed Sydney on 28 December 1941, arriving at Port Moresby on 3 January 1942. On 15 April Sam was promoted to Captain.

B Company 39 Bn—comprising Sam, four other officers and 125 men—began their trek to Kokoda on 7 July, arriving there on 15 July.

The Japanese invaded Buna on 21 July and B Company was ordered to make a stand near Gorari Village, but moved back to just west of Oivi Village, about 16 km east of Kokoda in the Kumusi and Mambare Rivers' watershed. It was here where Sam disappeared.



The 39th Battalion's Captain Sam Templeton (*left*)

Sam's story is told in detail in David Howell's book, and this well-researched, referenced, 268-page book is soft-back and printed in clear, large print. It is chronologically written and easy to read. There are appropriate photographs and maps as well as abbreviations, bibliography and endnotes.

I enjoyed reading the story. The book removes the myths and discusses the real contribution made by Captain Sam Templeton in the Kokoda Campaign.

Published by Big Sky Publishing Pty Ltd, 2024
ISBN: 978-1-923004-980-6
RRP \$30.00

PHIL AINSWORTH
President of the NGVR & PNGVR Ex-Members Association

Phil was a company commander in PNGVR in the 1960s. In 1963, he walked the southern route through Deniki to Kokoda during 'Exercise Long Hop', a replay of 1942 being a combined exercise involving PIR and SAS.

See David Howell's report on page 22 of this issue about leading the Australian and PNG prime ministers along the Kokoda Trail for the Anzac Day 2024 Dawn Service.



At one-minute past midnight, 16 September 1975, Sir John Guise issued the Proclamation of Independence:

Papua New Guinea is now independent. The Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, under which all power rests with the people, is now in effect.

We have at this point in time broken with our colonial past and we now stand as an independent nation in our own right.

Let us unite, with the Almighty God's guidance and help, in working together for a future as a strong and free country.



49 YEARS

30th Australia-PNG Ministerial Forum

The largest delegation of Australian ministers attended the 30th Australia-PNG Ministerial Forum on 19 June, which saw Australia commit to a suite of new initiatives aimed at strengthening PNG's national security and law and justice priorities.

These initiatives will be funded out of the A\$200 million budget from the Bilateral Security Agreement announced by Australia and PNG in December 2023.

The announcement was made a little more than a month after reports that PNG was considering signing a policing deal with Beijing. Australia has also donated a vessel from Tasmania Police as a maritime gift to PNG.

It was also announced that Australia would deliver 12 new armoured vehicles to the PNG Defence Force in October 2024 for internal security operations



Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong

as well as fund the refurbishment of the Air Transport Wing. <https://www.thenational.com.pg/aust-to-help-improve-pngdf/>

You can read more at <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/delivering-under-australia-papua-new-guinea-bilateral-security-agreement-and-https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/21-june-2024-the-week-in-australian-foreign-affairs/>

Private Sector Cheques Stopped

As of 28 June 2024, the Bank of South Pacific (BSP) stopped accepting private sector cheques as a means of payment. Only Public Sector cheques, including BPNG, all levels of Government, and State-Owned Enterprise cheques will be exempt.

Mt Hagen Checkpoint

The Western Highlands Provincial Police Commander was planning to establish a checkpoint outside of Mt Hagen city in late June to clamp down on the movement of illegal firearms and ammunition to the Upper Highlands provinces, as well as monitor vehicles and commuters for illegal weapons moving into Enga, Southern Highlands and Hela provinces. <https://www.postcourier.com.pg/checkpoints-to-monitor-movement-of-firearms-into-upper-highlands/>

68th Goroka Show

Goroka will host the 68th Goroka Show between 13–15 September



Dancers at a previous Goroka Show

2024. The first day of the festival, Friday 13th, will see the Pikinini Festival take place to educate the younger generation about the values of their cultural identity and heritage. The main event, on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th, will see 150 traditional groups from all over PNG showcase their unique performances. <https://www.postcourier.com.pg/498921-2/>

PNG Minister Charged

In early July, the Hon. Jimmy Maladina, PNG Minister for Petroleum, stepped aside following alleged domestic assault charges during a visit to Sydney. He remains on bail under set conditions.

Read further at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-07-07/png-minister-charged-with-domestic-assault-in-sydney/104068390>

New Indo-Pacific Broadcasting Strategy

In December 2016, the ABC announced it was shutting down its long-running short-wave radio service across northern Australia and the South Pacific. On 13 July 2024, the Commonwealth committed A\$40.5 million in

the ABC over five years to the new Indo-Pacific Broadcasting Strategy to create new content, grow digital engagement and ongoing support for media partners in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and South Asia, and expand Radio Australia's FM footprint across the Pacific.

Read more at <https://www.abc.net.au/pacific/indo-pacific-strategy-aims-to-boost-media-development-in-region/104091708>

Ongoing Ethnic Clashes

In late June, four primary schools in Tewae-Siassi's Sialum in Morobe had to close down for the academic year due to ongoing ethnic clashes. Provincial Education Officer, Keith Tangui said that the



Keith Tangui

Nunzen and Gerup primary, along with two other schools, were closed for the remainder of 2024 due to continuous fighting in Sialum. Read more at <https://www.thenational.com.pg/four-schools-shut-due-to-fighting/>

PNG Resources Week

This commenced with the PNG Industrial and Mining Resources Exhibition and Conference on 3–4 July in Port Moresby, bringing together all sectors of the industrial, mining and resources industries, and featuring over 100 displays of equipment and stands.



PAC P-750XL from the PNG Defence Force taxis out for a sortie during Exercise Pitch Black 24 (Courtesy Sgt David Gibbs)

Exercise Pitch Black

PNG has one of the world's youngest air forces, but that didn't stop it from taking to the skies in war games alongside stealth cutting-edge fighter jets in Exercise Pitch Black from 12 July to 2 August 2024. Held every two years, sorties operated from the RAAF bases in Darwin and Tindal in the Northern Territory and Amberley, Queensland.

Exercise Pitch Black is the RAAF's most significant flying activity. It focuses on large-force employment and aims to strengthen international engagement and enhance Australia's ability to work with overseas

partners. PNG's first-time participation boosts its defence ties with Australia and the United States. https://images.defence.gov.au/assets/Home/Search?Query=20240716raaf8165233_0054.jpg&Type=Filename

PNG National Rugby League (NRL) Bid

PNG Prime Minister James Marape is pushing hard to have a PNG team included in the 2028 Australian NRL competition. He was quoted as saying:

Rugby league is part of our contribution to ceasing lawlessness, ceasing unemployment, ceasing unengagement by the youths. We still have politics that divide, we still have tribes that we are affiliated to, but

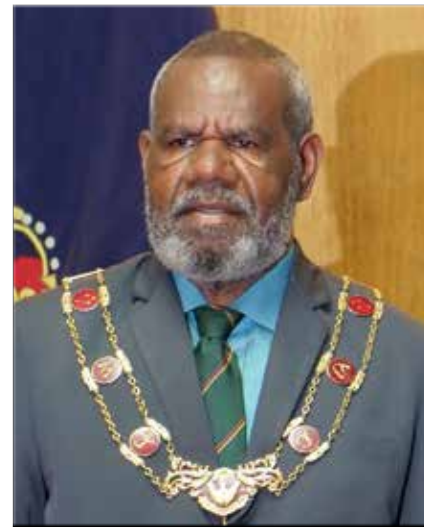
our common denominator right across the land of 1000 tribes is rugby league and the passion for rugby league. Sports unites.

Extract from the *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) newspaper, 23 July 2024

Another PNG politician who strongly advocates for the inclusion of PNG in the NRL is Michael Marum, the Governor of East New Britain and former coach of the Kumuls and Hunters RL teams.

Three New Judges

In late June, the Governor-General of PNG, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae, officiated the swearing-in of three judges to the National and Supreme Court of Justice, each to serve ten-year terms.

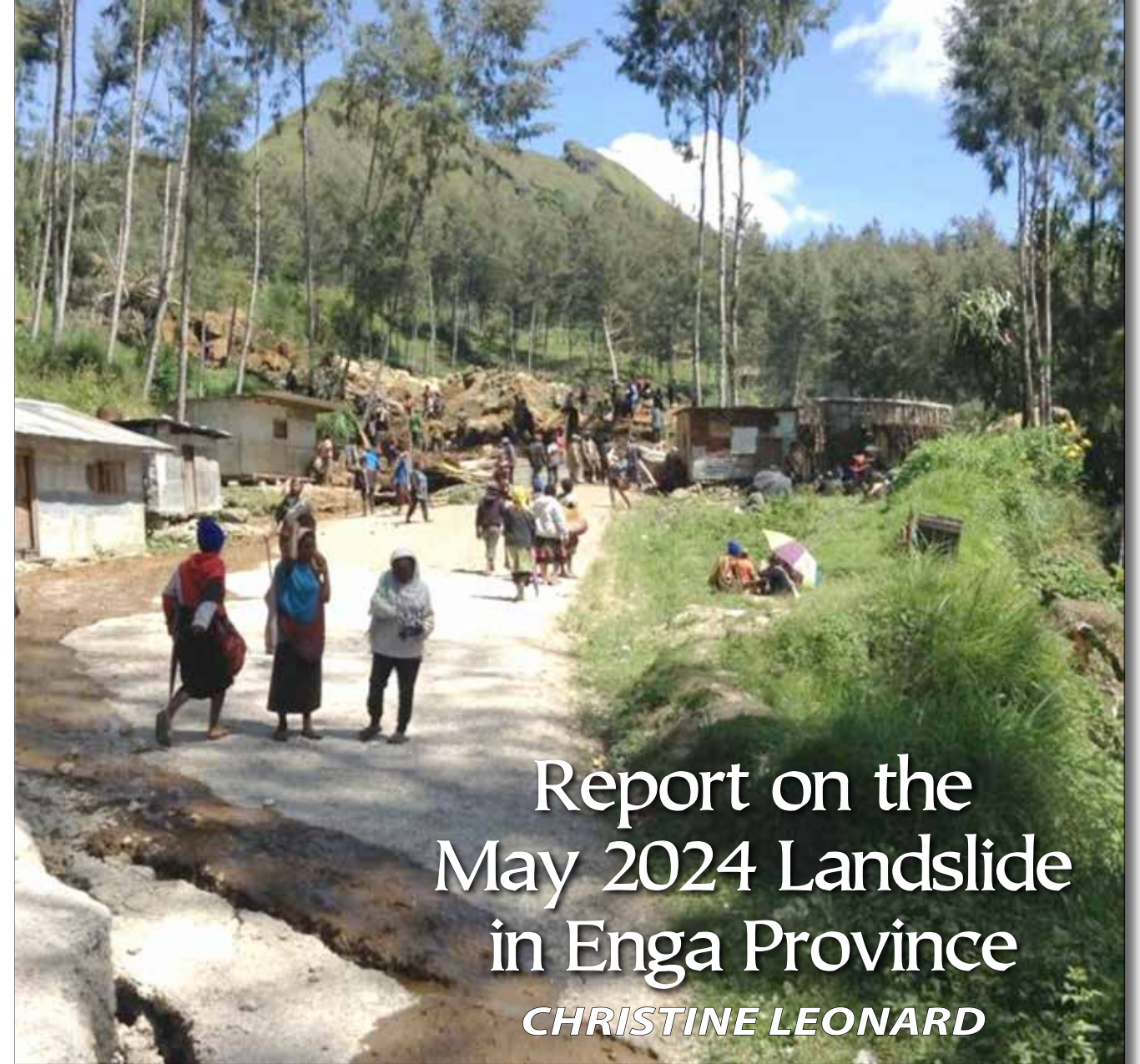


PNG Governor-General, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae

They were Justices Lawrence Kangwia, Justice Peter Toliken and Justice Iova Sebea Geita. Refer to <https://www.looppng.com/png-news/three-judges-reappointed-126474>

Team PNG

The line-up for PNG's Olympic team, which got underway in late July, represented various disciplines. They included two from swimming (Josh Tarere and Georgia-Leigh Vele), taekwondo (Gibson Mara and Kevin Kassman), weightlifting (Morea Bau) and Leoni Beu (sprinter) from athletics. Georgia-Leigh was the team's flag bearer. Chef de Mission was four-time Olympic swimmer, Ryan Pini MBE.



This article is based on compiled reports prepared by Sr John Mary, secretary to Bishop Arnold Orowae, and Project Manageress of the Catholic Diocese Wabag, Enga Province.

The situation is chaotic and, understandably, some are thought to be touting numbers to ensure the aid they need reaches them.

Landslides and other natural disasters, such as frost, long dry seasons, heavy rains and earthquakes, are familiar to Engans, but the catastrophe that occurred on Friday, 24 May at 3 am local time was like nothing anyone had ever experienced before. Approximately 3,950 people resided in or near the mountain-based village of Kaokalam, in the ward of Yambali—Mulitaka, Porgera District, Enga Province. It is thought that not only did a massive landslide occur, but the accompanying earthquake caused big cracks throughout the rocky mountain from which fault lines run down to the nearby river.

Kaokalam was completely flattened, with everyone from one whole clan, Panges, of the Kipul tribe, directly affected. It was estimated that 1,500 people were impacted. According to survivors and community members at the time, 178 people were buried and more than 255 houses were sunk; five families were totally buried and, out of 250 families directly affected, some escaped and some died. The number of fatalities will increase as more bodies are exhumed or found.

Through the Catholic Diocese of Wabag, a team comprising diocese administration staff, nurses, health workers, volunteers and survivors



was formed to address the basic needs of those most affected, especially survivors of Kaokalam village at Mulitaka. Immediately following the massive landslide, the team was dispatched to assess who was seriously injured, the number of deaths, other health issues and damage.

There was total confusion on the ground, partially due to the community having already formed a disaster committee that stated very high numbers of deaths and survivors. The numbers quoted were thought to be unrealistic but aimed at gaining as much support as possible from the various politicians, NGOs, government organisations and overseas funding agencies.

Landslides have left in their wake debris up to eight metres deep across 200 square km, cutting off road access, thereby making relief efforts difficult. People of goodwill, however, have helped the team reach the area with food and medicines.

Immediately after the disaster, medical assistance was provided to 132 people with minor injuries. Those with major injuries were brought to Wabag Hospital and the Catholic health centres for further treatment, including trauma counselling. After medical attention was given, those who were able were returned to their community.

The diocese team found that 1,322 survivors from 250 affected households needed immediate basic needs and medical assistance. Provisions included food, clothing, medical assistance, temporary shelters, water, blankets, mats, dignity kits (sanitary items), other household items and cooking utensils. On 27 May, 10-kg bags of rice, tinned fish and noodles were distributed to 625 survivors across 125 directly affected households, along with medical assistance.

The diocese committee negotiated with wholesalers in Wabag and Mt Hagen to purchase what

was needed. Fortunately, these suppliers are passing on good discounts, knowing it is for the relief effort. Generous donations are coming in from Catholic agencies in Germany, MSC Mission Australia, Caritas PNG and the Catholic Diocese of PNG Kerema and Mendi. Items purchased included blankets, pillows, mats and plates, which were then transported to Wabag. Once goods arrive in Wabag, they are repacked for family units based on the number of households and moved to the Kasap Parish campus for distribution due to the huge number of people waiting in the disaster-affected area. A second distribution of relief materials took place on 20 June to 231 households and 1,107 survivors (283 males, 290 females, 280 male children and 254 female children). Medical assistance and trauma counselling are ongoing. Distribution of relief goods occurs amidst the backdrop of tribal fighting that is still occurring in some areas.

Accurate data collection requires ongoing attention under very difficult circumstances. No one knows the exact figures for sure. After several attempts to verify data, the team believes that 55 people, including children and pregnant mothers, have died in the landslide disaster. In one family of nine, nobody survived. In other families, some died and some survived. Out of 55 deaths, 26 are refugees from surrounding districts, four from Daru-Kiunga. The term 'refugees' relates to people from nearby areas who have travelled to the area to escape tribal fights or visit from another province for various family reasons, as with the Daru-Kiunga people.

The term 'household' refers to immediate and extended family members sleeping in the same house. The number of households buried is estimated at 67, comprising 366 individuals, including refugees. One elementary school, three churches and a few stores were also buried. Twelve schoolchildren from elementary and primary schools have lost all their learning materials.

The next distribution phase the diocese team will focus on includes household items, clothes

and water cans for 366 individuals, plus school materials for the children. The Government is developing a relocation program that will likely require building materials for the construction of houses and water tanks. For survivors to sustain themselves in the longer term, garden tools, seeds, seedlings, permanent and bush materials for houses, classrooms, health centres, water facilities and sanitation will be required.

All the agencies involved in relief work rely on community support and international donors. Whilst not officially endorsed by PNGAA, if members want to contribute individually, they may do so through the MSC Mission Office donation system (click donate) on their website, as they are in direct contact with the Catholic Diocese of Wabag: <https://www.msccmission.org.au/>

One hundred per cent of donations are sent to the project in Wabag.

Other funding agencies are also working in Enga. In direct response to the Government of Papua New Guinea's request, Australia is providing technical experts in incident management assistance, geohazard assessments, as well as emergency relief. •

This article was prepared with the co-operation of Fr Roger Purcell MSC, who has spent most of his life in PNG, and the images featured are from the MSC Mission Office website.



Prime Ministers on the Kokoda Track

DAVID HOWELL



As a life member of the 39th Battalion Association, I was proud to have been selected to lead both Prime Ministers of Papua New Guinea and Australia from Kokoda up to Isurava, along the Kokoda Track for the 2024 Anzac Day Dawn Service. The planning involved bringing not one, but two, Prime Ministers and the Governor of Oro Province on a two-day trek was a difficult task. In addition, there were many other people involved from the Office of Australian War Graves, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Australian Defence Force, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, Australian Federal Police, the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, the Australian High Commission, the office of both the Prime Ministers Anthony Albanese and James Marape, not to mention all the media teams that were in the party.

In all, there were over 70 people plus the guides and porters' team to feed and house. No mean feat when it comes to logistics. I was lucky to have a great support crew around me, being the *Green Masin* (the Kokoda Historical guides & carriers). In the week leading up to the trek, I positioned myself in Port Moresby where I started the process of gathering and packing all the stores including loan packs, sleeping bags, mats, tents etc. I had already pre-booked the Australian High Commission Hut at Isurava and managed to get a helicopter lift in with stores including extra rations if, on Anzac Day, the weather closed in and we had to stay an extra night.

Three days before the Prime Minister arrived at Kokoda, I assembled my team. The next day I was joined by members of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF). They were the advance party who would march a day ahead of the official party. Their duty was to provide security and to coordinate the logistics in preparation for the main party to arrive.

Meanwhile, Kokoda was coming alive with people from all over the districts. Bunting was being placed on specially made archways leading from the airstrip up to the Kokoda Plateau, school children were practising their singing and local dancing groups were rehearsing.

When the day arrived, both Prime Ministers landed at the Kokoda airstrip and made their way to the Bert Kienzle Museum at the Kokoda Plateau. Here I was able to tell the Australian PM about the service and sacrifice of both the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) and 39th Battalion at the first and second battles of Kokoda. The PM had recently helped Jodie Belyea with her successful campaign in the Dunkley by-election in Melbourne. Jodie's grandfather was Arthur 'Judy' Garland, who was one of Sam Templeton's B Company platoon commanders, and who was among the first of the 39th men to face the Japanese at Kokoda.

After speeches, and hundreds of school

children singing songs, including both the PNG and Australian National Anthems, the official party met their porters. One of my senior guides, Bella Donna, was introduced to our Australian Prime Minister. We weighed packs and had our permit checked by the rangers of the Kokoda Track Authority. Then we set off from the archway and headed off into the jungle.

Our first stop was the village of Kovello. On arrival, we were met by the first of many local villagers and children in their scouts' uniforms with the sounds of 'Oro Oro, Oro Kaiva', their traditional welcome.

We then continued to the little hamlet of Hoi, where we were greeted by more singing. Pulling up a pew alongside the beautiful stream, we were served fresh fruit. For those who are not familiar with this part of the Kokoda Track, it is relatively flat, but the canopy is open. Having started at midday, the hot sun beating down, was the hardest part of the journey. However, this was all about to change. The climb up to Deniki challenges the fittest of trekkers. On the trek with us was the Australia High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, Mr John Feakes, who had recently struggled with an ankle injury. However, John took off and set the pace, shortly followed by the two Prime Ministers who walked hand in



David Howell with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and PNG Prime Minister James Marape (above); Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese coming into Isurava Village (opposite)



The two PMs in high spirits as they make their way up the Kokoda Track

hand. Both spoke of the great bonds between our two nations as they huffed and puffed their way up to Deniki.

With the first day of the trek complete, everyone settled in for their night's rest. Coconut ginger chicken and rice was on the menu for the evening meal. As the main party broke bread, the media teams had their laptops and satellite phones set up and desperately writing and sending their content out. I was pleased that everyone had made it and most importantly were in high spirits.

The next morning as we looked down through the valley to Kokoda and the airfield below, I detailed the desperate struggle made by the withdrawing 39th Battalion after the second battle of Kokoda. Although I had told the story a hundred times before, I was proud to mention great heroes like Lance Corporal Sanopa leading Doug McClean out after the battle of Oivi, First World War veteran Jim Cowey with JD McKay and men of A Company trying to make their way back to Deniki and, of course, the heroic efforts of Don Simonson and his action for the Military Cross.

While the initial climb up to Deniki was tough, the climb ahead was bigger. At one point our PM tripped, but Bella was there to catch him. The realisation that if something happened to either of the PMs on my watch set in. But after seven hours we made it to Isurava in preparation for Anzac Day. The camp had already been set up and we were glad to link up with the advance party. There were approximately 240 Australian trekkers, not to mention the hundreds of porters and guides also in residence. At one point the water pressure dropped. Our PM had not had a shower, so I looked around to see where I could find water. In the smaller lower campsite was 39th Battalion Association member and a great mate of the late George Cops, Mick O'Malley.

After a quick discussion with the PM's security detail, I led him down to Mick's campsite, where Mick and I and the PM sat together on a rough bush bench seat, reminiscing about the importance of Kokoda and what the future holds. It was a great moment for me and great to spend some time with our PM away from the media and entourage that had followed. In the morning at the Dawn Service, both Prime Ministers delivered a speech and Mick and I laid a wreath on behalf of the 39th.

As I sat in the helicopter flying back to Port Moresby, I realised how important the PM's visit was and what it meant to both Australians and Papua New Guineans alike. When I returned to Australia, I read the Prime Minister's words:

As an Australian, there are few experiences more humbling than to walk the Kokoda Track. To be in the place where Australians and Papua New Guineans faced a merciless invader and fought for the same thing: home.

This week I had the privilege of walking in the footsteps of those giants, and to do it in the spirit of friendship that was forged between our two peoples in those darkest of days. Joined by Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape, it was a trek like no other.

Starting at Kokoda itself, the welcome our party received at each village was so warm and uplifting. During our relatively short journey it was a pleasure to meet many Australians walking the entire Track in what has become an Aussie pilgrimage in memory and respect. It is a beautiful but challenging country, yet every step along the way I reflected on how easy our group had it.

Like so many Australians who have trod that sacred ground, I tried to imagine what it might have been like knowing there was a chance that any of those majestic trees might be hiding a sniper, or that every bed of long grass might reveal a terrible, sudden flash of bayonet. In 1942, in a place that now feels like paradise, 625 Australians were killed.

That is the great weight of history you feel on the Kokoda Track, that great artery of mud and suffering and perseverance that holds a place of such power in Australia's shared memory—and PNG's.

So many Papua New Guineans helped Australians—troops, coast watchers, shipping pilots, nurses and carers. Villagers who risked their lives. Stretcher bearers whose courage was matched only by their kindness. They were angels walking tall through the hell of war. Together with our extraordinary soldiers, they cemented the powerful bond and friendship between Australia and Papua New Guinea that lasts to this day. All this was on my mind when we reached Isurava, the scene of the

battle that claimed the lives of 99 Australians and wounded another 111.

What a solemn privilege it was to join all the Australians and Papua New Guineans on that hallowed ground for the Anzac Day Dawn Service and utter the words: 'Lest we forget'.

I will always treasure my time in PNG, from the friendship of Prime Minister Marape, who kept his promise to walk with me every step of the way, to the kind attention of every one of the porters who made it all possible. Not least Bella, who looked after me; I could not have done it without him.

PNG is our nearest of neighbours and our closest of friends. After this week, I am more confident than ever, we will keep walking together side by side towards a better future. ●

Editor's Note:

David Howell is a Melbourne-based author and Kokoda tour guide and historian specialising in the history of wartime New Guinea. David recently released a book, *Kokoda Legend: Captain Sam Templeton*, published by Big Sky Publishing.

Captain Sam Templeton was the first Australian officer to be captured by the Japanese in the Kokoda Campaign. After being interrogated by his captors he was executed on the battlefield. See Phil Ainsworth's review of the book on page 15 of this issue.

Please note that due to usage of both 'Kokoda Trail' and 'Kokoda Track', where people have used one or the other, the journal will follow suit.



The two Prime Ministers laying a wreath at the 2024 Isurava Dawn Service

Coffee & Women in PNG

MATILDA RONDY HAMAGO: SENIOR SOCIO-ECONOMIST MAKING INROADS WITH COFFEE FARMERS

Coffee is an important cash crop in Papua New Guinea (PNG), but the industry is male-dominated, and women working in the sector face many challenges.

This article is based on *SA Country Woman's* interview with Matilda Rondy Hamago, who has worked in PNG's Coffee Industry for over 24 years. Matilda spoke about the challenges and issues facing women in PNG today.

Matilda Rondy Hamago is 51 years old and comes from Wewak Town in the East Sepik Province of PNG. She studied at Curtin University of Technology and graduated with an Honours Degree in Agribusiness (Horticulture Management) in 2010, followed by a Master of Philosophy in 2019. Matilda has been employed with the PNG Coffee Industry Corporation Limited (CIC) for over 24 years and is now a Senior Socio-Economist.

When I first started my career with the coffee industry in September of 1998, I was employed as the first female extension officer (FEO) working amongst all male officers. I worked as the Women's Liaison Officer promoting women's interest in growing coffee as a business, which was very challenging, especially having to deal with the very strong cultural barriers among the male smallholder coffee farmers, and especially in the Highlands of PNG.



Matilda Rondy Hamago

In late 2022, Matilda was appointed Acting Manager for the Research and Innovation Program, a position held by men for 30 years. As the first female to be appointed in this role, she has broken through one of the many glass ceilings in this industry; however, she still faces many challenges.

Matilda described the constraints and challenges faced by female agricultural extension officers in PNG. They include the lack of funding and management support to carry out their work, difficulties working with males, cultural barriers and access to promotions. Matilda explained that the male agricultural extension officers usually receive priority funding and resource allocation for their extension activities. Even though their numbers have increased as extension officers, women have less financial capacity to undertake extension work on behalf of female farmers. This makes it extremely difficult to perform their duties. Matilda stated:

The additional recruitment of FEOs will be unlikely to fully achieve institutional goals to raise the productivity and status of female farmers.

Another difficulty is culture-based and occurs because men prefer women to be in supportive roles rather than in leadership. This is a cause of frustration for women, as Matilda said:

Men display insubordination in the workplace as they are reluctant to follow directives from females in senior positions.

According to Matilda, patriarchal attitudes are widespread and entrenched in PNG.

Culturally, men are perceived to be superior to, and more knowledgeable, than women and therefore are reluctant to listen to FEOs. They dismiss or discount the value of information given to them by women. This makes the task of communicating extension information to farmers very difficult for women, especially in the coffee industry. There is still a long way to go before FEOs are accepted as equals by their male colleagues and male smallholder farmers.

For women in the coffee industry, it can take 10–15 years to gain any kind of promotion. Despite having the same qualifications, job responsibilities and experiences as men, they were less likely to be promoted or were not encouraged to apply for promotion.

Matilda stated that one of the main problems facing women is that they don't own land, therefore they have no power over the usage of land. Traditionally and culturally, men are considered the head of their household and take the lead in decision-making. Matilda noted that:

For women farmers, their role is always backstage when it comes to attending or receiving extension training.

Matilda explained that coffee farmers are encouraged to practise integrated farming systems, which means being bee farmers, fishers and rearing livestock and poultry. Matilda would like to see women farmers receiving basic life skills training, and cottage industry training, such as roasting and grinding coffee, as well as sewing and cooking. More directly, Matilda stated that for her women coffee farmers she needs assistance in securing some small hand coffee grinders and a few sewing machines. The resources would be kept for communal use in the women's community resource centre.

Economic empowerment activities aim to empower and provide alternative income opportunities for women farmers. Access to resources and equipment is essential to complement any training of women farmers. There appear to be some PNG government initiatives to support the agricultural sector, such as access to loans and some funding allocated to women's activities



Conducting a physical assessment of a coffee garden in Marawaka, Eastern Highlands Province (top); Field visit to women coffee farmers in Wasu, Morobe Province (bottom) (Photos supplied by Matilda)

through the Women's Micro-Bank in PNG.

Not disheartened by the challenges, Matilda developed a socio-economic livelihood research pilot project using solar energy with smallholder coffee farmers:

I want to conduct this research and introduce solar panels and see whether the solar energy will have any impact on the women farmers' livelihoods or not.

Next time you brew a coffee, consider supporting PNG Women coffee farmers. •

Editor's Note: The PNG Highlands is a patrilineal society.

Written by Tanya Lyons.
First Published in *South Australia (SA) Country Woman Magazine*, Spring 2023
—reproduced in the *PNG KUNDU* with permission from *SA Country Woman*.



Save the Kula Babies —Spacim Pikinini-PNG Inc.

WENDY STEIN OAM, PP, PHF—PROJECT MANAGER

Wendy Stein OAM became a Rotarian in 2005 and has for more than 20 years dedicated her life to mothers and children in need of medical assistance in Papua New Guinea. Her interest in PNG started during a visit to Mando village near Goroka in the Eastern Highlands in 2005. Seeing the need for clean running water was a catalyst for the work she continued with, managing four Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) projects.

The longest running of these, and still running, is the volunteer-run charity organisation called Save the Kula Babies—Spacim Pikinini-PNG Inc., of which Wendy is CEO.

Spacim pikinini in Tok Pisin refers to family planning—literally ‘spread out children’. The ‘Save the Kula Babies—Spacim Pikinini’ program provides safe, reliable, and reversible, family planning by way of subdermal contraceptive implants to women and young girls in remote areas. The work takes place on a floating medical clinic, called *Kula Spirit*, based in Alotau, Milne Bay Province. Some of the areas visited include; Normanby, Esa’ala and Ferguson, with a focus on Bomada Aid Post, Esa’ala Health

Centre, Dobu Aid Post, Boduya Health Centre, Ulisalolo Sub-health Centre, Mapamoiwa Health Centre and Igwageda Aid Post. Plans are underway for an outreach to Louisiade Archipelago in August 2024, after the cyclone season, which will involve the project’s medical team spending several weeks in remote islands once again.

The *Kula Spirit*, a 44-foot fishing trawler owned by Wendy, was set up as a floating outreach clinic visiting remote villages on islands in Milne Bay, beyond the reach of adequate, if any, medical services. The vessel was purchased when health workers taking family planning implants to remote communities in

Sumkar District, north of Madang, had mishaps in small banana boats.

‘Taking family planning to the people and addressing their needs is our priority,’ Stein said. ‘Many islanders faced food security issues, chronic diseases, conflicts, and other social problems. Forty percent of pregnancies in developing countries were unintended. So to reduce the unintended, we are providing family planning at one’s doorstep to save maternal and child deaths. It also empowers women and girls so they can contribute to national development,’ Stein said.

(The National, 2016)

The boat was sold in December 2023 and the project intends using donated vessels in 2024. Wendy has been teaching nurses, medical students and young doctors how to insert the implants. Under her supervision, some 60,000 of these devices which ensure contraception for almost five years, have been used in PNG. These Jadelle double implants allow for fertility to return as soon as the implants are removed.

‘Save the Kula Babies’ program provides free disability support services, new medical equipment to clinics and hospitals, hearing aids, and spectacles, as well as solar suitcases, thanks to international donors, mostly from Australia. Solar cases are a compact high-powered battery bank designed in conjunction with Durst Industries (Aust.) Pty Ltd and Rotary for use in remote regions. They provide light in remote health centres to assist health workers when access to electricity is limited, and are also vital in times of natural disaster. As the light in most bush material facilities is dark, when performing procedures such as implants even during the day, the team needs to wear head torches.

The CWA NSW has also supported the program by providing Mother and Baby Packs that encourage pregnant women to attend health facilities to ensure safer delivery of babies and to receive information on family planning; the mantra being ‘less children, more love and resources per child, including health and education’.



‘Save the Kula Babies’ project is supported by, or partners with the PNG national government, the Obstetrics and Gynaecology division at UPNG, Rotary International, DFAT through Australian Volunteer Doctors, the Australian-based DAK Foundation, the Dick and Pip Smith Foundation, and Fastair Services for freight.

Wendy advised that their latest outreach, which was in Nov/Dec 2023, involved:

Working with DFAT’s Australian Volunteer Doctors program, which resulted in supplying from their clinic, medications, consumables, gloves and equipment, that were desperately needed for health facilities for their work. Due to continual shortages in the country, life-saving medicines are always scarce and our help is much appreciated. Doctors cannot save lives without continual supplies. •

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YouTube: wendystein1

Editor’s Note: The information in this article was provided by Wendy Stein OAM, PP, PHF, Kula Spirit Floating Clinic (Rotary), Spacim Pikinini-PNG Inc., Rotary Australia (RAWCS). The photos are from Wendy’s FaceBook page, with her approval.

If members wish to support or know more about the project, they can look for the website: RAWCS *Save the Kula Babies Spacim Pikinini No. 18/2009/10*

Honouring Max

Part Two

MAX MACGOWAN

& JOHN MAY, RABAUL, 1941

TEMPE MACGOWAN (TM)

& MARIAN MAY (MM)

This article continues from Part One of the PNG KUNDU June 2024 issue.

It 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 Montevideo Maru in 1942.

It also celebrates the wartime friendship between Marian's father, Padre John Lovett May, and Tempe's uncle, Max Macgowan who perished at age 26.



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

The last news of Max and John for a very long time was letters written on 24 March 1942. In an unusual gesture, the Japanese commandant allowed the POWs to write a letter; four bags were dropped during a raid on Port Moresby 'instead of a bomb'. Many could not be retrieved, but Max's and John's letters were eventually delivered. John's letter reads in part:

Best of all, Max & Lance [Howlett, John's batman] are with me. We are all well, though Max's tinea is not the best. Will you get in touch with Mrs. Macgowan, 6 Montague St., East St. Kilda? Max is telling her to write to you. ... Max and I are going to join a wealthy club after the war and make cigarettes out of the cigar butts.

Max adds a postscript:

Hallo [sic], we are doing fine & our chins are up. God bless you. Love Max.

In 2022, searching for some information about my grandmother, I came across a small package containing letters between Mollie Macgowan and John's mother, May Louise May, written during the months when the two men were missing in Rabaul.

TM: The five letters from Mollie to May Louise May (née Lovett) trace such a heartfelt relationship. They swing between hope and despair, depending on whether they have heard anything about their sons. On 18 April 1942, Mollie writes:

... It has occurred to me that you may not have heard—have had an opportunity in Tasmania, of ... with news of the boys who escaped from Rabaul ... If I hear any further news ... I'll write you further ... We have been very happy about Max's friendship with John.

Mollie writes:

I suppose you have also received a letter from Rabaul. I really am on top of the world, although I know the fact remains that they are still prisoners of war ... to know that they are safe.

John remembered:

It was the first word that they had of us. For some, it was the only word.

On 28 April John followed Max back to Malaguna Camp for POWs and internees in

Rabaul. Then on 22 June, Max left to board *Montevideo Maru*.

In his few letters home from Zentsuji POW Camp in Japan, John mentions Max in August 1942:

Tell Mrs Macgowan, 6 Montague St., East St Kilda, that Max was well and in good spirits. He left before I did.

And almost two years in captivity and no mail, in December 1943:

If you do not know, I was captured, unharmed, Kokopo Hospital, 23 January ... All except officers had left [censored] 22 June. Max and most O.K.

By April 1944 there was still no word of those who had left on *Montevideo Maru*:

We hope you have heard of Max and the rest. Love and prayers, Johnny.

After the War

MM: It was in Manila after liberation in September 1945, that John sent news of Max to his parents:

For your own information—I think the official report will soon come out—we can find no trace of all the civilians & troops who left us in Rabaul on 22 June 1942. The ship they were in was probably lost—Max & all the others with it. I had asked the Japs to let me go as chaplain with that party!

TM: Whilst in 1945 the war authorities had a list of names compiled by Major Harold S Williams of the No. 1 Australian Prisoners of War Contact and Enquiry Unit, it is unclear whether Max's parents knew of the exact circumstances of his death before they died in 1950 and 1951.

MM: I'm fairly sure that on his return, Dad visited Max's family. He spent several weeks in Melbourne in November–December 1945 visiting families of those last seen in Rabaul. He told Lot:

... It has been a pretty sad time ... with people for whom the light has suddenly gone out of life.

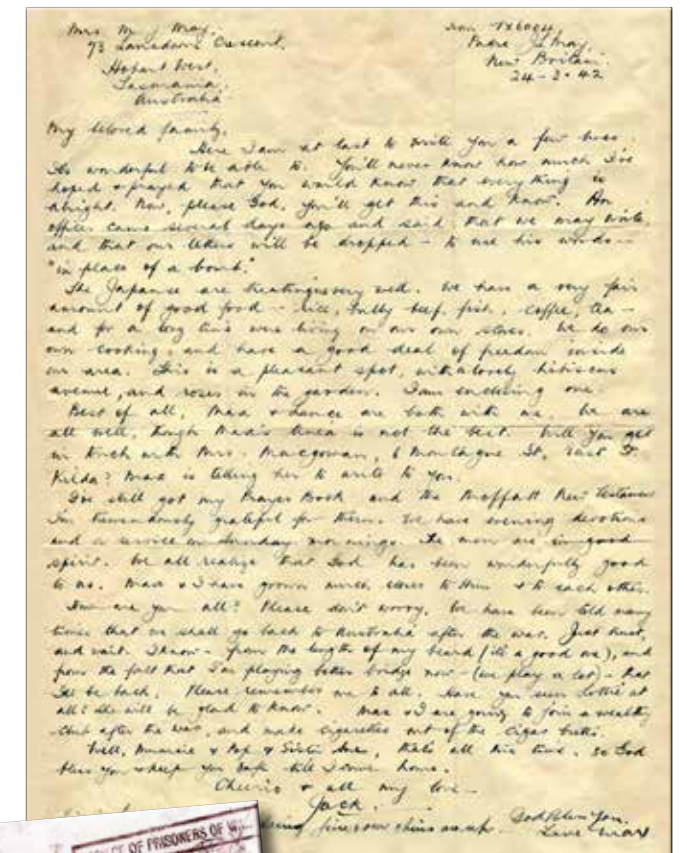
It is ironic that war brought Max and John together, and war that destroyed their friendship.

TM: Marian and I met in late 2022, with my daughter, to go through the correspondence and other effects. It

was a truly moving experience to handle the pages written by our grandmother, Mollie, who died several years before any of my sisters and I were born. Shiela's children, however, do remember her, as they were that bit older. They would spend time with them at Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula. Both Dinah and Hope Dodds remember Cliff, my grandfather, being a stamp collector.

Dinah has passed on photos of Mollie and Cliff. The ones of Cliff are the first photos that I and my sisters have ever seen of them, other than a studio photo of Mollie. The family resemblance is striking between our father Murray, Max's youngest brother, and their father Cliff. Another striking likeness was that between Max and his great-nephew, Kip, Dinah's son, who also died tragically at 26. Identifying the similarities has brought some solace to Kip's parents.

We were also quite unfamiliar with the circumstances in which the family lived. John's letter from



John May's letter to family a couple of months before his transportation to Japan, and the envelope from a letter sent to his mother after his capture

16 November 1941 pretty much sums up what the situation was like for our father, Murray, and the family:

Maxwell Harcourt Glover Macgowan, living at 6 Montague St., East St. Kilda, with a father and mother, a sister (younger) and a younger brother, still (as was Max) at Caulfield Grammar. Before the war, he used to be in Paterson, Laing, and Bruce, the cloth merchants in the city, as a salesman. I'm just not quite sure how old he is, but he's a little younger than I am. Shiela his sister, has just passed her training at the Alfred Hospital and has begun a job at Gundagai.

Mr. Macgowan has had several jobs under way, lately, including newspaper reporting, a business of sand-refining, and retailing, and a motor garage. I think they are not particularly well off, and have a bit of a struggle at times. They speak to Max of moving up to Upwey, in semi-retirement, and neither Mr. nor Mrs. is very well. There they will be quieter and Mr. M. can do sufficient newspaper work to keep things going. They seem to be a very pleasant home-loving family.

Max is engaged to a girl named Joyce Williams, who is a typist, stenographer, clerk, or what-have-you, in a fairly big building firm. She looks nice in

the photos, of which Max has dozens. (Max was born 10-3-16.)

Sharing the correspondence with my sisters and cousins has been a gratifying outcome of what was such a tragic incident. It has brought us together and allowed us to overcome some differences that existed between us. It has meant reconnecting with Laura's mother, Sacha, who lives in the same house that we visited as children when her parents, Margaret and Peter, were alive. Now I at least have some sort of family to refer to on our dad's side, that came from that one auspicious text sent in July 2022.

Postscript

MM: Some of Dad's photos (previously published in PNGAA's *When the War Came*) were on the walls in the operations room for the search for *Montevideo Maru*, including one of Dad and Max, and one of the group of officers in the POW camp in Japan. By chance, Tempe and I were speaking on the phone when the photos were visible for a short time on SBS footage. I know the officers would have wanted to be there, searching for their men—so in a way they were. •



Cathay Community Association of Brisbane

KEN CHEUNG OAM

In the early 1980s, many former residents of Papua New Guinea living in Brisbane would often meet at Kingston Sports Centre for an informal get-together. The young people would play squash or tennis while the oldies inquired about where each other was living and how they were finding their new country. One day, someone suggested that we should try and assist the many Vietnamese who were arriving in Brisbane. From the very beginning, the aim of doing something for the community was very much supported.

We incorporated the Cathay Club in 1981 by drawing up a constitution, electing office bearers, and having members who were willing to pay an annual fee. Surprisingly, most were happy to join an association that they understood was formed in the spirit of not-for-profit.

We had a committee of over 20 members. However, as time went on this began to shrink as people dropped out.

Beginning in 1984, we commenced the Grant in Aid from the Department of Immigration, to assist new migrants to understand Australia's

welfare system and how they could apply for and receive Government assistance. We were able to do this successfully through the generous terms of David Seeto and Eric Chin in renting to the association a small office in Cameron House, which was a stone's throw from Duncan Street, which would be the future heart of Chinatown. Brisbane City Council had already drawn up plans to beautify and make this into a mall that would attract locals as well as tourists. There would be stone lions and a huge gateway at both ends.

We stayed in the Valley Precinct for nearly 30 years; moving office three times. The second time was above the car park next to the mall. Initially, we had a whole floor to run our activities. This was the time when we were able to expand our weekend Chinese School for children as well as classes for seniors. As the Valley prospered, our landlord started to take back our rooms as we were only paying a nominal rent with no outgoings. Eventually, we got squeezed

out. We then moved to Wickham Street, which is a very busy one-way thoroughfare that people used when they were rushing to Brisbane Airport.

With the dawn of the new millennium, Chinatown had become very busy. In the beginning, we could park out front all day. However, the Council started putting up 'No Parking' signs or restricting parking to certain hours. Eventually, you could stop for 15 minutes only; our parking bill was starting to match our rental. Members did not visit as it was easier to buy everything on the south side. The new suburbs of Sunnybank and Macgregor were flourishing, and both people and businesses were moving there. We could see the writing on the wall. Our next move would be to the south side, as close to Sunnybank as possible, and it would need to have plenty of parking.

Finally, we found a warehouse that suited our purpose. After purchasing a property at Annie Street in Coopers Plains, we made extensive



Front L-R: Cathy Lui, Ken Cheung OAM, Dr Mervyn Cheong, Isobel Seeto;
Back L-R: Ang Li, Eddie Yun, Louis Chan, Peter Cheg



Volunteers in the Cathay kitchen

renovations to include a medium-sized hall seating up to 150 diners with allowable overflow onto a patio. The new premises included staff offices, ample storage, and most importantly, plenty of parking. We made the move over Christmas at the end of 2013 and opened for business in early 2014. Since then, we have not looked back.

Our centre has a full-size commercial kitchen that equips us to serve lunches on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, to our seniors. The Centre is equipped with toilets and shower rooms, and plenty of storage. Plans have been drawn up to add a mezzanine floor above the downstairs toilets and storeroom that will give

us room to fit some 10 workstations for the potential growth in staff numbers.

In 2022, we celebrated our 40th Anniversary on the 9th of October—a little bit late! Luckily there was a lull in the number of Covid-19 cases so we rushed it through. It was an important milestone. I am very glad that we were able to celebrate it.

Today, the Commonwealth Home Support Program is our only program. We have eight Taragos that are being replaced with the Kia Capital Special Vehicles (CSV) to accommodate wheelchairs. This means we can pick up clients and bring them four days a week to Annie Street where we provide a cooked meal, activities, and free time before returning them home.

We offer a similar service for clients who live on the north side. We hire the Bowls Club at Aspley to run the Social Support Group. Our cooks do the cooking so clients are very happy. Now and again, we bring them to the centre at Coopers Plains, but it is a 45-minute drive so by the time you pick a few people up, time-wise it takes at least an hour, which as you know, most seniors find difficult. On special occasions like the Moon Festival or Christmas, we take clients to a restaurant, and we regularly organise one-day bus trips to the Sunshine Coast or the Gold Coast. We have not organised an overnight trip away for some time. So we have a varied program, particularly for those who are more active.

I was awarded The Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2015 for some 34 years of continuous volunteer work, and whilst I stepped down as President of the Cathay Community Association of Brisbane at the end of June 2022, I still volunteer today—I am still on the committee, but as an adviser. •

Editor's Note: This article is an update of an earlier story published in the Autumn 2022 issue 82 of *Kundu News*, per the kind approval of Patricia Chow, *Kundu News* Editor, for the Papua New Guinea Chinese Catholic Association of Australia. Ken Cheung OAM, of the Cathay Community Association, Brisbane.

Crossing the Saruwageds, Easter 1976

Part Three

IAN

HOWIE-WILLIS

Part Two of this three-part series described how the author and his three Papua New Guinea University of Technology (Unitech) companions tried to find their way down the northern side of the Saruwaged Range north of Lae.

This final instalment describes how they reached safety in a hospitable village on the northern side of the range. It concludes by pointing out that the tough and demanding routes across the range still claim the lives of unwary travellers.

After Robin King, Matt Linton, Hector Clark and I reached the first of the villages on the northern side of the range after more than 11 hours on the track, the villagers showed us to the *Haus Kiap*, where we would spend the night. They lit a fire for us and brought us a kettle of boiling water for cups of tea. They also brought us a generous meal of *kaukau* (sweet potato).

When the *kaukau* arrived, steaming in its pot, I thought it was the most satisfying meal I had ever eaten. With the *kaukau* came dozens of villagers. Somehow, they all managed to squeeze into the *Haus Kiap*, sitting around the fire with us for an evening of *planti toktok* (much conversation).

Their first question was who on earth we were. We said we were teachers from Unitech in Lae. They nodded wisely because they knew what that was.

Next question: why had we come to their village? *'Mipela laik wokabout tasol, long ol naispela maunden bilong yupela'* (We just like hiking around your beautiful mountains). We explained further that we had flown into Bainduong two days earlier and had started walking there.

They then told us that we were only the third party of Europeans who had ever come into their village that way. The first had been Mary Clemens (née Strong, 1873–1968), an American botanical collector, who had been there in 1937. The second had been a pair of Australian *kiaps* escaping from the Japanese during the war. This had possibly been Les Howlett and Peter Ryan in June 1943. (Peter later wrote about their adventures in his classic 1959 memoir of his wartime experience as a Morobe *kiap*, titled *Fear Drive My Feet*, which we had all read.) The conversation continued over many cups of sweet black tea late into the night.

I cannot for the life of me remember the name of this very welcoming village. Hector, who kept a diary of the trip, does not seem to have written the name down. The village might have been Gomandat, Hemelingen, Komutu, Honziuknan, Dawot or Sambangan, if we had come down the Yalumet-Timbe River headwaters to the north of Mount Saruwaged. Alternatively, if we had descended into the Kwama River headwaters further east, the village could have been Degondo, Kiroro, or Hatnon. Whatever its name and location, I remain grateful to its warm, generous, hospitable people.

We left the village at about 8 am the next morning. We had rested well overnight and were feeling fresh, but we faced an eight-hour walk to Kabwum. Farewelling us, the villagers pointed us in the right direction.

The tracks leading us from village to village were well-maintained and easy to follow. Along the way, we were greeted warmly by the villagers. In several places, they brought us each a *kulau* (green coconut) to drink from. (The spritzig coconut milk from a *kulau* is always refreshing.)

We eventually reached the Kabwum airstrip at about 5 pm that afternoon. We set up camp in the open-ended aeroplane hanger, where we spent a comfortable night. Our charter flight back to Lae arrived on time the next morning at about 10 am.

The flight back to Lae took us over the route we had walked two days earlier as we descended the northern side of the range. We couldn't believe how tall and steep it was. It seemed to be cliffs and crags all the way for many hundreds of metres of almost vertical descent. 'Did we really walk down that?' we gasped in amazement.

A couple of hours later we were back on the Unitech campus, showered, shaved and ready for that afternoon's work. For my three companions that meant their teaching duties; for me, it was time among the university archives.

And so our great Easter 1976 adventure crossing the Saruwageds was bookended by mundane normality. Resuming routine activities was an anti-climax, but what a relief to know our bones would not be bleaching *antap tru* in the Saruwageds!

A few days later I wrote to Peter Ryan to tell him what we had accomplished. By this stage, Peter was the director of Melbourne University Press. He had published my first book two years earlier. I sent him a photo of us *antap tru* as



Ples nogut—the tangled spurs and ridges of the alpine grassland high in the Saruwaged Range, 1974 (Photograph by Hector Clark)

proof. 'Very good, Willis,' he wrote back, 'but you weren't being chased by Japanese shooting at you like I was when I made my crossing 33 years ago!'

Sadly, neither Matt nor Robin have lived long enough to read this article. Matt was killed in a plane crash in Thailand in 1991. Robin drowned in July 2022 after he and his wife Penny were swept off rocks near Moonee Beach on the NSW central coast. After Unitech, Robin had a stellar career in Australian universities. He became a senior lecturer at the University of NSW and an associate professor at the University of Sydney. Before his retirement in 2007, he had spent ten years as the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Division of Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment at the University of South Australia.

Robin and I had been exchanging emails in the years before his death because he had been advising me about the routes across the Saruwageds. As a leading member of the Unitech Explorers' Club, he had mapped the tracks. I wanted to know more about them for one of the chapters in my book, *Operation Postern: The battle for Lae against the Japanese, 1943*, in which I charted the withdrawal of the Japanese Army from Lae in September–October 1943. (The Japanese had escaped the Allies in Lae by trekking over the Saruwageds to the Huon Peninsula's north coast.) Robin had read and commented on that chapter in-draft. I am sorry he will not now be receiving his complimentary copy of my book; but if he is looking over my shoulder as I write this, he might be pleased to know that his name appears in my acknowledgements.

As for Hector, who now lives in retirement in Budapest, he undertook more Saruwageds trekking than I did. He tells me that sometimes his guides were reluctant to lead him where he wished to go. '*Ples nogut, masta!*' (It is a bad place!) they would caution him. Wisely, he could accept that their intimate knowledge of their own territory was better than the best of maps and all the modern gee-whizzery of satellite-based navigational aids.



This photograph from an article by Bradley Mariori on the surveying of the Kabwum-Lae Road, published 2023 on the website of EMTV, <https://emtv.com.pg/social-mapping-and-survey-effort-for-lae-kabwum-road-project/>, accessed 24 October 2023.)

The hazards of the Saruwageds attracted worldwide media attention in August 2019 when 16 people from Lae died while attempting to cross the range. Their destination was Indagen, a village 60 kilometres north-east of Lae, 20 kilometres north-east of Mount Saruwaged and 11 kilometres south-east of Kabwum.

Those who died were members of several large parties on a pilgrimage from Lae for the centenary celebrations of the Lutheran church at Indagen, which has an airstrip, but the pilgrims had decided to walk rather than fly because they could not afford the fare. Becoming lost on the way, they variously died of cold, exposure, hunger and injuries they had suffered. With great difficulty, helicopter crews later retrieved their bodies.

These events led to demands for the construction of an Indagen-Lae road. The Morobe Provincial Government eventually committed itself to this project. The Morobe Governor, Luther Wenge, performed a sod-turning ceremony at Indagen on 1 September 2023. He allocated two million *Kina* for plotting the route. A team of 32 surveyors, including volunteers from nearby villages, were at work on the ground by the end of the month. The National Government had

pledged 100 million *Kina* for the project over ten years.

The survey team beginning work on plotting the route of what will hopefully one day be a road between Lae and Kabwum.

Whatever route is followed, constructing and maintaining a road across the Saruwageds will be a formidable engineering challenge.

Readers familiar with the history of road building in Papua New Guinea will be reminded of the famous Wau–Bulldog road of 1943. This was the army route from Wau south across the Central Ranges to Bulldog on the upper Lakekamu River. The Royal Australian Engineers constructed this 114-kilometre road, which included 17 bridges, in only four months. It was a stupendous engineering achievement but a white elephant.

Once completed, the Wau–Bulldog road was little used because the construction of the Nadzab aerodrome near Lae in September of that year rendered it redundant. Flying troops and cargo from Port Moresby to Nadzab was much easier, quicker and cheaper than sending them by road. The jungle soon reclaimed the abandoned road. •

Parts One and Two of this article were published in previous editions of PNG KUNDU.

They were taken from an account written by Ekke Beinssen of a 1929 exploratory expedition to find the source of the gold being sluiced out of the Bulolo and Edie Creek goldfields. This third part describes the frantic attempt to carry the sick and dying geologist Zakharov to a rendezvous to fly him from Garaina to hospital in Salamaua.

Matapui

EKKE BEINSSSEN
Part Three

Garaino, the first village between Piaru and Garaina, which the locals had told us we would reach in a day, can't be far away now. Naie thinks he can smell smoke, so I send him on ahead to locate the village. After an hour he comes back, holding the huge hand of a native man. I have never seen such an enormous human being. He looks like one of those fairytale giants who eats a naughty child for breakfast. His dress shows me that he is from the Waria Valley. With a grin a metre wide and a terrible 'Uuaah', he greets me, and in the manner of mission natives, gives me a firm hearty handshake which almost splinters my bones. I just manage to prevent him from greeting Zakharov in a similar manner.

He guides us now, and an hour or so later we arrive at a clearing where 20 Gerepo villagers are warming themselves by a fire. Heaven only knows how the news could have preceded us, but the entire Waria Valley seems to know that a sick white man is being carried to Garaina. The native missionaries have sent these men to widen the path for the stretcher. They have done it well, and our progress is now quicker and easier, but our carriers are exhausted. On top of that, we are now ambushed by a heavy shower of rain, so we stop early and set up camp for the night under the dense protective shelter of the dripping rainforest.

Finally on the afternoon of the following day, four days after leaving Piaru, we reach Garepo. We bed Zakharov down in a hut. He has been in an exhausted sleep for the past hours. I enquire about the state of the track ahead and how far it is to Garaina. Again, I am told: 'If you walk quickly—two days.' At our pace it will take us at least three or four days and this means we will arrive in Garaina two whole days, too late to meet the arranged flight. I decide to send a runner ahead to tell the pilot that we will be late. If he cannot wait for us, he is to return in another three days, that is on the 12th of February.

At first the track follows grassy slopes and is quite wide and easy, but soon it turns into a narrow forest trail again. It is the same fairytale forest of the dividing range, just a small portion

of the vast jungles of New Guinea; so dark, so hushed, hiding so many undiscovered secrets. I am awed by its eeriness and vastness, and its impenetrability.

There is now a need for three men with machetes and axes to go ahead and widen the track for the stretcher. We walk through a round green vault and the denseness of the bush lessens only when we come to a stream, allowing us to glimpse the blue sky above. I am aware of my own illness, and I have a terrible feeling of light-headedness. On one occasion I go ahead and lie down on the moist moss beside a creek for a brief rest. The voices of the porters rouse me and reawaken the realisation of our dreadful reality. Although we continue until dusk, I estimate that we have not even completed half a day's march.

That night Zakharov is very feverish and hallucinates in Russian. I can only understand an occasional word and it is often hard to make out whether he is dreaming, or awake and uttering a request. I hardly sleep so that I can be easily roused. I spend the night in a dozy state between tiredness and worry, very aware that my friend's condition is deteriorating.

Next morning I tell the porters to slow down a bit to make it more comfortable for the sick man. Zakharov says, as I bend over him: 'It is a race; but there is another racing us, and he will win'. I try to reassure him, but I know only too well that death is competing with us.

Finally they arrive at the airstrip at Garaina to hear that a plane had made several unsuccessful attempts to land due to bad weather.

Beinssen writes:

I have lost hope that the plane will come. I have also given up hope for Zakharov. Even though he is now sleeping peacefully, his breathing comes in short gasps. He did not regain consciousness during the night. Naie now calls to tell me that Zakharov has woken but he is not fully conscious. He asks: 'Has my wife arrived?' 'No,' I reply, but quickly collect myself and tell him: '... but she is waiting for you in Rabaul.' 'If that is the case, all will be well,' he says, and then falls asleep again. I

realise he is no longer in pain. I stay beside him. Perhaps he will come to and want to say more. Two hours pass and then he sits up with the last of his strength and gazes at me with a long, silent look as if he wants to say something more, and then falls across the bed. My friend has passed away. It is the morning of February the 13th.

I bury him that evening. In this hot and humid climate that task always has to be done quickly. We can't make him a coffin, so we wrap him in his coat and sew him into a tarpaulin like a soldier.

Our twelve porters and the entire male population of Garaina accompany him on his last journey. The procession winds through the high grass to the spot at the edge of the jungle that I have chosen as his last resting place. By the time the sun sets, a cross has been erected on the new grave mound. •

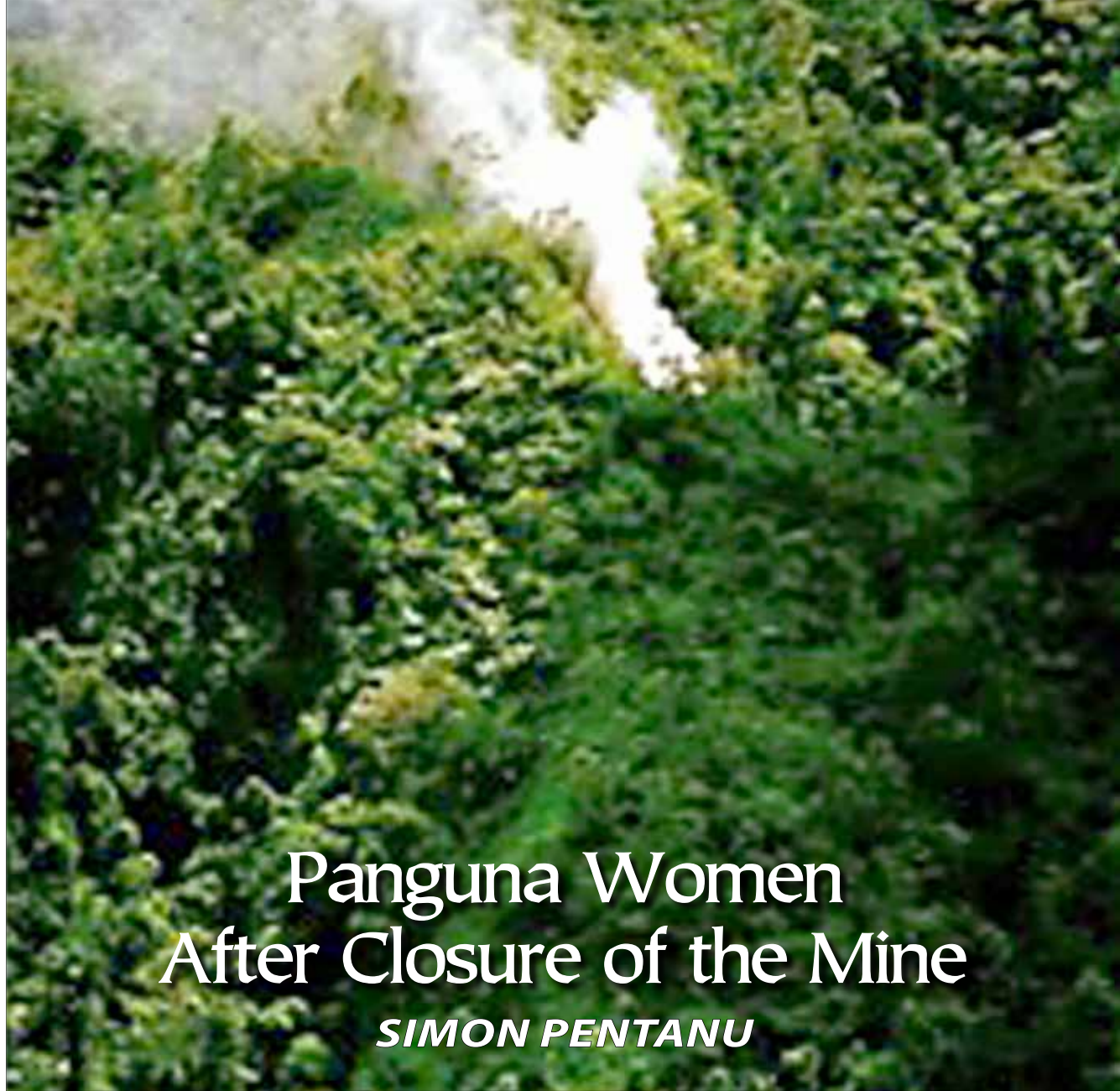
Soon after Zakharov was buried beside the airstrip at Garaina, the plane finally arrived and was able to land. Beinssen was seriously ill with dysentery and had urgent surgery in Sydney to remove a cyst on his liver.

He never returned to New Guinea, but he later wrote that his memories were the gold he brought back with him to Australia.

The full story, about 100 pages with photos, can be accessed via the PNGAA website.



Zakharov's funeral procession at Garaina (above); and his grave beside the airstrip (left)



Panguna Women After Closure of the Mine

SIMON PENTANU

I took this shot from a moving vehicle on a visit to Panguna on 15 January 2016. The photo isn't great resolution-wise, but please read on.

As our vehicle descended toward the old pump station, my long vision was staring in the direction of the Jaba River imagining its estuarine destination and formation near the delta before it flowed into the sea on the west coast. The milo-coloured flow into the sea was once quite noticeable from the air flying direct from Port Moresby into Kieta (Aropa) airport. But on this day as I also looked up to the hills, something else, much closer than the meandering Jaba flowing down to the west coast, drew my eyes. There was smoke rising above a village, at this altitude it looked starkly white against the green alpine forest. I say at this altitude, as Panguna is smack in the centre of the island, high up in the Crown Prince Range.

Smoke from forest garden plots under slash and burn is a familiar sight growing up in a village anywhere in Bougainville. The smoke from the forest that I was watching had become more and more noticeable as the breeze carried it farther up and away. Where there's smoke there's fire, and in this part of the world's habitat, where there's fire, there are women toiling and cleaning plots, and making new gardens. After the land is cleared women make gardens pretty much as they have been for yonks, to produce garden food as a staple for family meals.

After the Panguna mine was abruptly closed in late 1989, women could first slowly, but over time, surely go back to work some of their gardens on the land. In Panguna, the women still have arable land on distant peripheries to the open-cut mine as well as further up the slopes.

As I kept watching, I also noticed two other areas in the distance where white smoke rose out of the bush, from the forest floor on the hilly peripheries of one of the largest closed open-cut mines in the world, Panguna, in Bougainville's Crown Prince Range. Where there is white smoke rising, there is a mother weeding, toiling, and gardening, on the forest floor. Up here it was in the hills that remained unscathed physically from mining but in many ways, not spared from its effects on the human population in the villages and hamlets around here.

Women in Panguna represent what I call a relentless and admirable effort in the face of and against, two devastating experiences. They've had to put up with mining and its ruinous effects all around their valley. And if that wasn't enough, they also bore the brunt of the human suffering dealt to them and their children from causes triggered by the mining on their land. Despite all of this, more women have kept working the land, ploughing, planting and harvesting the fruits of their labour to maintain the family unit in the face of challenges of development.

A mother in the village is at one with Mother Earth, she never ever doubts the motherland will provide all the bare and sumptuous necessities of life. It is her maternal duty, a labour of love, to feed her children. Her spouse also brings game from the forest, and fish and prawns from nearby rivers and creeks.

Development, progress, growth and impact projects have continued to be misnomers for the rural majority that are subsistent, self-sufficient, interdependent and content. Food security also means you cannot eat money, but you should still grow, gather, hunt or catch, for sustenance. This is what the world is coming to, not what Referendum and Independence promise, which is trying to catch up with the rest of the world and be like the Joneses or join the rat race with the Toms, Dicks, Harrys and Muhammads.

On these hills and mountains, in the rift valleys and ravines, along the river banks and meandering creeks, the possibility of a contented

self-sustaining existence is no more or no less than living and surviving in the modern, civilised world, with its unique and limitless possibilities to do well.

Mothers though will say this to you: theirs is a symbiotic and mutually belonging relationship together with Mother Earth where they live for each other every day. It is not an existential crisis or struggle for survival. They belong to the land; they aren't separate from it. They sow and reap with care and respect without ripping into the guts and disembowelling their land.

For the mothers up here in Panguna, peace has come in many respects and means many things, more than merely an end to mining and the end of a brutal and devastating conflict. The most telling thing they are seeing after the mine was forcibly closed is that the land is replenishing and renewing itself albeit it will never ever be the same again.

Their consolation is that without mining, machinery and the constant noise, they get better root crop harvests, many more fingers on banana bunches, healthy sweet potato from the soil mounds, firm and oilier ground nuts, and plentiful fruits and vegetables. There are also more grasshoppers that have come back, often to their annoyance.

Maybe even the copper, gold and silver that attracted a monstrous mine up here are replenishing and growing to replace what was mined and taken out and away.

The other thing that is quite telling and that makes life worth living as they knew it, is this: since mining stopped, women in Panguna have experienced and benefited from the power of quiet in their own environment which was always disturbed by an unrelenting world of the noise of men, and machines digging and ripping out the heart of their land.

Life in the village usually starts earlier for women than men. When he may be still taking time to get up and wipe his eyes awake, she has left for the garden with her metal and wooden implements to continue from where she left her

Contributors' Guidelines

We welcome factual and anecdotal stories of various lengths pertaining to Papua New Guinea, information about members, events, letters and enquiries, PNG book reviews, vales and reunions—a diverse range of material is accepted from members, non-members and PNG citizens.

• **Contributions to be submitted via email as MS Word documents:** They must be checked, and typed in a plain typeface, with the author's name included. Appropriate references are required if the article has been taken from a website or another primary source. PDF text files and handwritten or printed submissions cannot be accepted.

• **Length of contributions:** Articles should be between 500 and 1,500 words—longer submissions are welcome but may be split over two or more sequential issues due to space restraints. Vales are normally about 300–500 words, and longer ones may be reduced and the full version added to the website. Usually, news items, letters and book reviews should not exceed 500 words.

• **Photographs & Images:** Scans should be emailed as JPGs (approx. 300 dpi / 12 cm wide), with appropriate acknowledgement and captions. They should be provided as separate files and not embedded in the document. Unfortunately, slides or original photos cannot be accepted.

• **Front Covers:** We are always interested in receiving appropriate, copyright-free images that suit the format for this position. Specifications required are JPG / 300 dpi / 220 x 310 mm (min.) portrait size. Caption and photographer information must also be included.

• **Events Roundup & Diary:** If you have an activity to advertise, promote or report, please send the information as soon as possible for inclusion. Events are also listed on our website at *Resources>Events*.

• **All submissions are subject to editorial consideration:** However, we reserve the right to reject, reduce and/or postpone contributions to following issues subject to time and space, and there may be times when your patience is appreciated—however, members may add their stories and photos directly to our website. We try to represent all submissions respectfully, and the journal supports the use of both *Pidgin* and *Tok Pisin*.



Please send your contributions to editor@pngaa.net by the Copy Deadline on the masthead page of each issue

gardening yesterday or the other day. Seeing rising thick and thin white smoke here and there from the gardens on hilly and forested peripheries of the mine means life is slowly returning to normal. But has it really?

With alluvial mining all around Panguna, around the river banks and creek estuaries, even on the hillsides the earth is being dug by hand to the extent of dangerously caving in and collapsing. Mining still goes on by hand, often proving a scavenger's nightmare that, for all the labour, the returns for today might be next to nil. But over time and with a combination of determination, perseverance and luck there are dividends despite the multitude of risks, including health risks. Reliable estimates from some research put earnings from all alluvial mining around Bougainville, but mostly Panguna, in the vicinity of just over K100m.

Down in the old Karoona market though where some of the old market building still stands, the women are back selling their fruits, vegetables and nuts, as they were during the mining days. I have even bought green coconuts in areas where I have not noticed many coconut trees growing before.

The women, I believe, will always have a lot to say about what happens to the land, including any decision on the future of Panguna. They are more connected to the land physically as they toil and harvest it daily. They are also much more connected spiritually as maternal guardians, as they care for the land, using its resources more responsibly to sustain families in this matrilineal society.

For most villages and the population around here, it is debatable whether the huge mining venture really has made a difference to the quality of their lives, whether they are any happier, better off or worse off since the closure of the mine.

Today, women have gone back to gardening the land in a sustainable way to support families long after the mine closed in late 1989. •

Editor's Note: Simon Pentanu is a Bougainvillean author who regularly writes about his homeland.

My PNG Journey

**LIZ MACKINLAY,
CEO of Australian
Business Volunteers**

My journey with Papua New Guinea is deeply intertwined with my family's history and my own love for the country. My family has a long connection to Papua New Guinea—my father and his brother worked there as part of the building boom in 1966, one as a carpenter and the other as a painter. My mother was the secretary to the head of the Department of Public Works and, in 1967, my parents married in Port Moresby (POM) at Saint Mary's Cathedral.

They captured many cherished memories in Port Moresby and Mt Hagen, which I now look back on in our albums. A very important part of my history started in Papua New Guinea, and even though my family moved back to Australia in 1970, my connection to the country remains strong.

Over the past 15 years, I've been travelling back to Papua New Guinea regularly, reconnecting with old friends and family members like my cousin Bruce, who was the principal of the International School at Ela Beach. These visits have only deepened my love for PNG and fuelled my desire to support its people and culture.

This passion eventually led me to my role as CEO of Australian Business Volunteers (ABV), an organisation dedicated to supporting Papua New Guinea's small and medium-sized businesses. Under my leadership, ABV has built strong corporate partnerships with BSP Financial Group and Newmont, which fund initiatives like our Your Enterprise Scheme (YES) program. YES aims to nurture local businesses and entrepreneurs through the support of our local staff and database of skilled volunteers.

One of the things that brings me great joy is the opportunity to continue my family's connection to Papua New Guinea through ABV's work. We send volunteers like Zarah de la Cruz to deliver the YES program, and I find her a kindred spirit as she shares a similar passion for supporting small businesses that are the heart of PNG's



Zarah de la Cruz and participants of the YES program



Liz with Sister Anna, who ran the Catholic Health Service in Western Province (top); Liz with cousin, Bruce Mackinlay (right)



economy. With her mother from Port Moresby and her father from Lae, Zarah has a strong personal connection to the country herself.

Zarah is a highly experienced business consultant who joined ABV while looking for a way to give back her expertise. She specialises in business model development, cost management and risk assessment. In late 2023, Zarah went on assignment in Lae, teaching the YES program alongside her volunteer partner Phil, whose background in finance complemented her own business experience.

As many YES Grow participants are in the agricultural industry, Zarah dedicated time to understanding the seasonal cycles of different crops, including the ideal timing for planting and harvesting. This knowledge is essential to help the businesses she worked with adapt their strategies to account for periods of low yield, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable agricultural business model.

Reuben Yapi, the Chairman of Morobe Primary Provincial Cooperative Association (MPPCA), was one of the participants in the YES Program in Lae. The MPPCA is an association that brings together clusters of villages with smallholder farmers. Each farmer produces until they have a collective amount of around 50 bags of cocoa or coffee, which the association then sells at the markets.

The profits from the sales are evenly distributed among all members to ensure fairness and equity.

Reuben participated in the program to gain skills to train smallholder farmers to enhance their business practices and achieve higher crop yields.

Reuben shared his thoughts:

The overall training was very good, and the presenters have done a tremendous job. Although English is my second language, Zarah and Phil have done an excellent job. The Business Model Canvas really suits SMEs and retail businesses. We can use this for cooperatives and smallholder farmers' groups.

Zarah's dedication to her work is evident in her commitment to staying connected with the businesses after the training. She shares a weekly 'Monday motivation' message via WhatsApp to the participants every week.

Her favourite quote she's shared has been, 'small steps in the right direction are better than big steps in the wrong direction,' which guides her approach and inspires the entrepreneurs she mentors. Our work honours the relationship between PNG and AUS with the support of skilled volunteers like Zarah. •



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 your obituaries and tributes for the next issue to the editor by 4 October 2024, the Copy Deadline for the next issue: editor@pngaa.net

CLIFFORD, Leon d. Saturday, 18 May 2024

The PNG Forestry mob has lost another Forest icon with the passing of Leon Clifford. Many knew Leon and his work in PNG between 1958 and 1975, especially in forest research and when Leon was Principal of the Bulolo Forestry College and then Regional Manager Lae.

In 1963 Leon Clifford was transferred from Kerevat to Bulolo where he worked on tree improvement in *Araucaria* spp. During that time, Leon surveyed termite damage in the hoop pine plantations. In 1965 Leon was appointed Acting Principal of the Bulolo Forestry College following the departure of Joe Havel.

The yield plots, which Leon established during his days of Forest Research, were used by the students at the forestry college for training in mensuration and growth studies.

Leon left Bulolo in 1969 to accept a position as Regional Forestry Officer in Lae. Leon's area covered the coastal regions including Lae, Vanimo, Wewak, Madang and the Sepik River.

In 1976 Leon departed PNG and moved back to Newcastle NSW, living near family. He went into business and began voluntary work for the Saints Church. In 1980 Leon was approached to work full time for the church with his first appointment being District President for the Newcastle area. In 1986 he was appointed to Brisbane and the South Pacific area and then in



The Clifford family

1990 Melbourne, where he settled.

Highlights of Leon's 20 years working for the church include his ministry in the South Pacific area, returning on two occasions to Lae and Buso, encouraging children, youth and family ministries. Leon also assisted in the establishment of church campgrounds at Kallara in Victoria, growing, planting and nurturing many hundreds of trees.

Upon his retirement in 2001, Leon spent time with his family and travelling in Australia and overseas. Leon is survived by his wife Janelle, son Noel and daughter Kerin.

Dick McCarthy

DAVIES, Professor Hugh Lucius AO, OL

d. Friday, 26 April 2024

Hugh Davies passed away after a short illness in Canberra at the age of 89. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Connie Lou, and an extended family. Hugh met Connie Lou while studying for a PhD at Stanford University in California in 1964. He remarked that the \$10 cost of the marriage

licence was the best money he ever spent.

Following a private family committal and a chance for the family to grieve a much-loved man, a public celebration and thanksgiving for Hugh will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation in his name be made to Guide Dogs Australia: <https://nsw.guidedogs.com.au>.

Several tributes can be found on the Internet, nearly all attributing Professor Hugh Davies AO, OL as the ‘father of PNG geology’. This was a worthy title given that he first arrived in PNG in 1956 as a 23-year-old geologist with the Bureau of Mineral Resources, working on geological mapping and studying plate tectonics and volcanology. Hugh often mentioned one of the highlights of his first trip to PNG was meeting a young Michael Somare, with whom he remained friends until Sir Michael’s death in 2021.

Hugh held many leadership roles in government, industry and the community, including Chief Government Geologist of the newly formed PNG Geological Survey from 1973 to 1981. Following the 1998 Aitape tsunami, Hugh Davies turned his attention to addressing the disaster arising from plate tectonic movements. It was a natural progression that led him to develop the National Disaster Awareness and Preparedness Committee from 1999 to 2007, of which he was Chairman.

In 2001, Hugh founded and

became the inaugural director of the Centre for Disaster Reduction at the University of PNG (UPNG), having taught and mentored more than 500 geology graduates. He created and led the UPNG’s Earth Science Department, making it competitive in the world and earning him the title of Father of Geology in PNG. On 30 April, the *Post Courier* wrote:

Many of his former students have gone on to greater things in life, tinkering with rocks, studying volcanoes, diving into fault lines, and being ‘shaken’ by tremors, earthquakes and powerful ‘gurias’.

In 2005, Hugh received the Order of the Logohu (OL) from the PNG Government for services to geological education and disaster relief.

In 2006, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists awarded him the Michael T. Halbouty Human Needs Award for the same purpose. From 2007 to 2009, Hugh was Executive Manager of the newly formed Geological Survey Division at the Mineral



Professor Hugh Davies AO, OL

Resources Authority. He was the first Managing Director of Ok Tedi Development Company and the first Executive Manager of the Geological Survey Division of Mineral Resources Authority. Hugh authored several books, including *Earth Tok* (2014). His research output was prolific, with over 100 academic papers on PNG’s geology.

Retiring from UPNG in 2018, Hugh and his family left PNG but continued maintaining close contact with the staff and students of Earth Science until his passing. He continued working on his latest research on PNG geology, helping former students with research and study opportunities and connecting with colleagues from PNG and other countries. This continued up until two days before his death.

In 2018, Hugh was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished services to Australia-Papua New Guinea relations in the area of geological sciences and to education as an academic, author and researcher.

This tribute was compiled from information gleaned from the following sites:

<https://tributes.canberratimes.com.au/obituaries/508639/hugh-davies/?r=https://tributes.queanbeyanagechronicle.com.au/obituaries/queanbeyan-au/>
<https://www.ausimm.com/news-and-media/community-news/geoscience-society-hugh-davis-obituary-the-father-of-png-geology/>
<https://devpolicy.org/father-of-geology-in-png-dies-at-89-20240502/>

MAYNARD, Peter d. Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Peter Maynard passed away at Regis Aged Care in Birkdale in the arms of his daughter, Simone Maynard.

Peter, the son of Stanley Charles Hilton Maynard (Mick) and Bertha May Maynard (Bid), was born in Western Australia on 25 December 1943. He was the brother of John Maynard, and was previously married to Andrea and later to Rose. Peter leaves behind three daughters—Margaret, Narelle and Simone, and three sons—Michael, Warren and Price, as well as ten grandchildren and his beloved dog, Bear.

Peter travelled to Papua New Guinea where he performed his role as *kia*p during the 1960s and ’70s. Peter was Assistant District Commissioner in Bereina and Kikori, before ending up in Port Moresby at the District Office Post-PNG Independence.

Peter returned to Australia to serve in the RAAF’s 77 Squadron. After leaving the RAAF, Peter worked in real estate and opened Lemon Tree Passage Real Estate in NSW. Later he returned to PNG in community liaison roles for mining and forestry companies and he also worked in local governments in northern Queensland.

Peter was an avid sailor and a celebrated member of various yacht clubs and, in his spare time, he built ketches. There was nothing Peter liked more than a yarn with mates and Peter’s



Peter Maynard

friendships were many and strong. He was known for his loyalty, his witty sense of humour and great smile. A man who would take the shirt off his own back to give to others, he will be greatly missed by family, friends and communities from the west to east coast of Australia and in PNG.

We organised a charter yacht to farewell Peter with a three-hour sunset cruise on 19 May 2024 so that his ashes could be scattered at sea off the Brisbane coast. Attendees drank Spumante, the name of the first yacht that Peter built.

Simone Maynard

McCARTHY (née Missen), Margaret Rose d. Wednesday, 5 June 2024

Our best friend, wife, mother, grandmother and companion of 52 years, my wife—Margaret Rose McCarthy née Missen, passed away surrounded by her family at the Blue Cross Aged Care Facility Westgarth, in

Victoria, after a lengthy battle with dementia.

Margaret was the eldest daughter of Mary and Alan Missen, formerly of Queens Street, Dookie in northern Victoria. Her siblings are Maureen (Tod) Seedsman, Faye Boland (deceased) and Ronald Missen.

Throughout her life Margaret continually displayed her love of art, fashion, animals, travel, her Catholic faith, music and culture. She loved her home place of Dookie, where she attended Dookie Primary School and then Sacred Heart College in Shepparton. After completing her schooling, Margaret travelled to Melbourne to take up work with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the Reserve Bank of Australia, during which time she resided at St Ann’s Hostel in Central Melbourne.

A major highlight of Margaret’s life in 1965 was when she left Australia on the *Northern Star* for a two-year stint to live and work (Australia House, London), including travelling throughout Europe. Returning from Europe, Margaret moved to Port Moresby in 1969 to work for the PNG Crown Law Department.

Margaret met Richard McCarthy in 1971 at a Red Cross function that was held at the Papuan Hotel (otherwise known as Top Pub). They were engaged in May 1972 and married at St Joseph’s



Richard & Margaret McCarthy with their family

Catholic Church in Boroko, Port Moresby, on 7 October the same year. Margaret's mother Mary, her sister Tod and Uncle Paddy Quinane travelled to Port Moresby for the wedding.

In 1973, Margaret and Richard moved to Bulolo in Morobe Province where Richard was a senior lecturer at the Bulolo Forestry College before being appointed District Forester for the Bulolo Wau Forestry District. Margaret returned to Australia for the birth of daughter Llewellyn Maree, born in Shepparton Victoria, after which mother and daughter returned to Bulolo.

It was the year of PNG's Independence, in 1975, when Margaret and Richard returned to Australia so that Richard could undertake studies for his Masters in Forest Management at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. While the family lived in Canberra, Margaret and

Richard's son, Roderick Patrick, was born.

The family moved to Traralgon in Gippsland, Victoria, in 1977, where Richard was the Operations Manager for APM Forests (part of AMCOR). Llewellyn and Rod received their primary and secondary school education at the Traralgon Catholic Education schools. Margaret's work as a Gippsland artist grew during this period. One of her achievements included a large mural on the approaches to Traralgon adjacent to the local golf club.

During this time, many overseas trips were undertaken, one of which included all the family in 1982 to the USA (including Disneyland), whilst Richard was undertaking a study program for AMCOR. Global travel again beckoned in 1995 when the McCarthys moved to Sumatra in Indonesia, where Richard was the regional manager for a large pulp and paper company.

That same company supplies paper products to Coles and Officeworks today.

In 1996, AusAID came knocking, resulting in the family moving again to PNG, this time to Lae, where Richard was a forestry adviser to AusAID, a role he held until 2000. During this period, Margaret and Richard purchased their home in Jessie Street, Westgarth (Northcote). Margaret took up residence at Jessie Street whilst Richard commuted between Westgarth and PNG.

Margaret continued her painting with the East Melbourne Artists Co-operative. That lifestyle continued until 2015 when Richard partially retired from overseas management consulting to look after Margaret in Westgarth.

Margaret is survived by her husband Richard, a daughter Llewellyn Maree, granddaughter Saskia and her partner Rodger, a son Roderick Patrick, his wife Tori and grandchildren Thomas and Hannah.

Richard (Dick) McCarthy

MOORE, Capt. William
d. Tuesday, 18 June 2024

It is with extreme sadness to report that Capt. William (Bill) Moore, a long-time distinguished aviator of the Territory of Papua & New Guinea (TPNG) and later PNG, made his final landing at home in Brisbane. His long-time wife, Serena, was with Bill until he was 'on chocks'.

Having amassed some 20,000 plus flying hours in an

unblemished career, Bill's aviation career in PNG began in the early 1970s when he flew for Aerial Tours out of Port Moresby. He went on to become a formation pilot with MacAir, which was formed by Bryan McCook and Dave MacLure, before launching with Graham Syphers, a competitor to Territory Airlines.

In 1973, Bill was recruited by TAA for its TPNG division as DC-3 captain. Around that time, Bill was a flight instructor at the South Pacific Aero Club at Port Moresby's Jackson's Airport.

As a DC-3 captain, Bill moved to Air Niugini when it was launched in late 1973. One of Bill's most memorable DC-3 flights was when he was assigned to ferry one of these iconic aircraft from Lae to Tullamarine Airport, Melbourne. That particular aircraft was historically significant in that it was the first TAA DC-3 to go online, so it was planned to be a company flag waver for promotional events.

Bill was paired with a senior TAA management captain. All went well until the landing at Melbourne. The TAA 'heavy' decided that tradition dictated he should carry out the landing. He announced that he would be carrying out a tail-down 'wheeler' only he hadn't taken into account that it was nighttime and there was a gusty south-westerly wind accompanied by rain showers.

The landing looked to

becoming totally out of control as the aircraft started into a well-defined ground loop! Quickly taking over, Bill managed to bring the aircraft under control from the right seat, avoiding major embarrassment to TAA, and not least to TAA's designated senior 'heavy.'

Not long after, Bill was promoted to Air Niugini's B707-320, and I crewed with him on many occasions. One trip that came to mind was the Air Niugini—United Nations contract transporting a Fiji battalion from Nadi to Beirut, Lebanon, and later to Tel Aviv, Israel. This type of operation required crews to think outside the box. Bill ran a master class when it came to such operations.

Eventually, our B707 fleet was replaced by an ex-TAA A300-B4 and, once again, Bill displayed his experience to the full as he continued with the airline's Asian and Australian operations.

Bill moved to Singapore Airlines, flying the 'plastique fantastique' A340-200 on the European routes before retiring



Capt. Bill Moore—
Legendary aviator of PNG

to Brisbane, initially at Newport Waters and later at Mango Hill.

I have attended several Air Niugini crew reunions in South East Queensland organised by Bill—they were always a merry affair with lots of stories, not all entirely truthful I might add.

A PNG Legend has left us, and we are the poorer for it. Rest in Peace, Bill. We will miss you.

Capt. Garry Honour Rtd.

NEEDHAM, Terence
d. Thursday, 2 May 2024

Terence (Terry) was born in Bowral, NSW on 27 April 1939 and his parents lived at Hilltop. In 1943, he and his mother moved to Westmead, Parramatta to live with his grandmother, while his father was enlisted during World War II. His father was demobilised in 1946 and they travelled to Papua New Guinea where he was employed as a plantation assistant at Mai Mai Plantation near Samarai.

At the age of seven, Terry joined his parents in Mai Mai via steamship in July 1946 and commenced correspondence schooling. They then moved to Raua Estate in Bougainville in 1949. Terry travelled from PNG to All Souls St Gabriel's Boarding School in Charters Towers, Queensland in 1950.

In 1953, the family moved to Belik Plantation on New Ireland when Terry was boarding at The King's School, Sydney. He returned home once a year while at school due to the remote location and travel difficulties. While

at King's, Terry went to junior Macquarie House in 1951 as a day student, then boarded from 1952 until 1956 at senior Macquarie House. Terry loved his time at The King's School and remained in contact with many friends throughout his life.

In 1956, Terry left school and planted three coconut and cocoa properties, Kenapit, Tersue, named after him and his sister Susan, and Rubio. He worked on Belik and married Liane Neilsen in 1964. Their wedding was held at The King's School Chapel.

Having been a Master Mason in Kavieng Lodge No. 487, Terry was Master twice for the Lodge, as well as secretary for the New Ireland Planters' Association, which sent a delegation to Malaysia to exchange ideas on cocoa, copra and rubber.

Two of Terry and Liane's children were born in Rabaul at Nonga Base Hospital and two in Brisbane. Whilst living in New Ireland, Terry managed and leased four properties and Bululogan Plantation until 1985 when the family relocated to Brisbane.

Whilst living in Brisbane, Terry owned several businesses including a kindergarten/child-care centre, lettuce, avocado and custard apple farms, and three food outlets.

Terry had eight grandchildren and was involved in numerous sports including tennis and golf. During his retirement, he enjoyed spending time with family, travelling and caravanning around

Australia. Following a brave 14-month battle with pancreatic cancer, Terry passed away on Thursday, 2 May 2024, five days after celebrating his 85th birthday, with family at his bedside.

Jodi Ord

PELIKAN, Milos Jan

d. Saturday, 15 June 2024

Milos was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia on 27 June 1926, to parents General Dr Rudolf Pelikan and Jana Pelikanova. His father was one of 16 Generals who were hand-picked by TG Masaryk (the first President) to establish the independent nation of Czechoslovakia, following the renowned Czech Legion campaign of WWI. His mother was a successful businesswoman in the Vilemov region.

Milos studied at an agricultural college in Czechoslovakia in the late 1940s but did not complete the degree due to the political upheaval after WWII, which saw the Communist Party seize power after a coup in 1948.

Thousands of students fled the country ending up as refugees. Milos was one of these students, together with friends, who ended up as a United Nations Displaced Person/Refugee, arriving in Melbourne, Australia in 1950 aboard the *Fairsea*.

This cohort of European refugees after World War II were nation builders: refugees in Australia at that time were



Milos Jan Pelikan
(Photo courtesy of Yana Di Pietro)

required to work as manual labourers regardless of their education or skill level.

Milos worked on the wharves in Port Melbourne for a number of years and then, in 1962, applied for a position as Assistant Inspector (Lands) in Papua New Guinea (PNG) for the Department of Territories, Canberra.

He wrote in his application that he had worked in Melbourne as a labourer for State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, Johns & Waygood Ltd and Australian Stevedoring Authority.

He was awarded the role and moved his young family to the mandated Territory of Papua and New Guinea under the Australian administration.

Milos was stationed at the Australian Administrative Headquarters in Port Moresby, working for the Lands, Surveys and Mines Department. He was successful in his work there and continued his service until PNG gained self-government status and entered the transition to

Independence, which it gained on 16 September 1975.

On 3 August 1973, Milos received a personal request from Michael Somare (the Founding Father of PNG) to continue his work in PNG until after Independence. In the letter he acknowledged Milos' contribution to PNG and its people and wished that he stay on. Michael Somare stated:

... (I wish) that you should continue your service in Papua New Guinea

This decision to invite you to continue your service to this country at a time when localisation is so important to us has not been taken lightly. It results from careful inquiry by your department head in consultation with Ministers and the Public Service Board. Your personal past contribution to the development of this country has been particularly taken into account.

I appreciate that there are a number of considerations important to you personally that must influence your decision whether or not to accept my Government's invitation for you to continue the services that we so highly value.

I look forward to your continued association with, and contribution to, the development of this nation.

The letter is signed by Michael Somare, Chief Minister.

Milos agreed to continue working in PNG. His position at the date of termination of employment in PNG (1976) was Head of Land Settlement Division, Lands, Surveys

and Mines Department.

Milos is acknowledged in the first government performance review, 'Programmes and Performance 1975-76', prepared by the National Planning Committee (continued work of the 1974-75 document, 'Strategies for Nationhood: Programmes and Performance').

He made a significant contribution not only to the Australian Government administration prior to Independence but to the fledgling PNG Government as it established nationhood.

Milos retired to Melbourne, Australia, with his wife Mary Pelikan. After the opening of travel to Czechoslovakia in 1989, Milos returned to his beloved homeland, reuniting with his sisters and family spending considerable time there over many years.

In 1991, 41 years later, he was awarded his Agriculture Degree in Prague along with other students.

Before he passed away, Milos met with a Czech historian who had been compiling the stories of Czechs in Australia over the decades. Milos' life and achievements will be featured in the upcoming book.

In Loving Memory Always.
Yana and Family

TAYLOR, Rev. Harold W d. Monday, 22 April 2024

Harold William Taylor was born on 6 November 1932 at

Pascoe Vale South, Victoria. His family was very involved in the Methodist Church and Harold soon began his own journey of faith.

He attended Coburg High School, left at the end of Year 10 but continued his studies at night school, gaining matriculation and then his BA and BD.

Harold's favourite recreation was Aussie Rules, through which he met his future wife, Barbara Johnson, whom he married in 1958. By this time, he was training as a minister of the Methodist Church and was ordained in 1960.

Their daughter Jenny was born in 1959 and their son Andrew in 1961.

In 1961 the Taylors went to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea as missionaries and were first stationed at East Cape, the easternmost tip of the main island of New Guinea. Two more children, Cathy and Paul, were born in the family's early years in the Territory.

In 1965, Harold became a lecturer at Rarongo Theological College, near Rabaul. He was a senior member of the college staff and was highly esteemed for his knowledge and understanding of PNG culture. He wrote several books, including *Tend My Sheep* on pastoral care. Barbara's nursing skills were appreciated by staff and students, and both were caring mentors for the students. In 1976 the Taylors returned to Australia. Harold joined the staff of the

Bible College of Victoria (BCV), where he remained for 20 years, becoming Vice-Principal.

In addition to his work in the BCV, Harold had a leading role in the Community of Hope, and also joined the Order of Saint Luke, an international healing ministry, and was Warden of the Order in Australia. As part of this ministry, he wrote the large book, *Sent to Heal: A Handbook on Christian Healing*.

The Australian College of Theology awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Theology for his exceptional work in all these fields.

Even when 'retired' Harold kept up pastoral work in many ways, ministering to people in whatever group he was with.

The last few months of his life were spent in Walmsley Retirement Community in Kilsyth, Victoria, where he passed

away on 22 April 2024, aged 91. Harold is sadly missed by Barbara; his children Jenny, Andrew, Cathy and Paul; their partners Sally, Lynn and Sharon; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and his many friends.

Neville Threlfall CSM

WILLIAMS, Cynthia Schmidt d. Sunday, 28 July 2024

More information in the next issue.

Farewell to the Last Coastwatchers

I attended the funeral services on 14 and 15 July 2024 for the last two Coastwatchers of World War II—Ron 'Dixie' Lee at Werribee and Jim Burrowes at Box Hill. I regret never meeting 'Dixie'; they died within 12 hours of each other, aged 100 and 101 years respectively.

I first met Jim in Rabaul in 2014 for the centenary of the capture of the German wireless station at Bitapaka, East New Britain, by the Australian Naval & Military Expeditionary Force. Jim was generous with his time, later accompanying me to the Signals Museum at Watsonia Barracks. On display was an ATR4 dry-cell radio transmitter (about the size of a letterbox) of the type Jim used behind the lines in the Baining Mountains in 1944–45, observing Japanese positions around Rabaul.

Incidentally, also on display were replicas of the radio set 'Winnie the War Winner', as cobbled together by 2/2nd Independent Company signallers

in East Timor in 1942, and an AWA radio transmitter (three components each the size of an overnight bag, plus the essential generator set with fuel and oil), as distributed to Coastwatchers before Pearl Harbor. Each AWA set required a team of 16 carriers on standby, night and day, ready to escape with the set if attacked. Coastwatchers were resupplied with cash to feed and shelter their carriers by RAAF Catalinas; occasionally, evacuees or rescued airmen were taken off by USN submarines.

I've included the link to an obituary written by Vice Admiral Peter Jones AO, DSC (Retd), for both Coastwatchers, that appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* on 10 July. I believe he will be delighted if their obituary can be accessed through the PNG Kundu: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/australia-s-last-two-ww2-coast-watchers-die-aged-100-and-101-20240710-p5jsdw.html>

On behalf of the RAN, Vice Admiral Jones honoured both men by presenting a folded, encased White Ensign to Mem and Beryl and their families. A uniformed RAN bugler sounded the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille' for Dixie, and a RAN honour guard presented arms when Jim's casket was carried to the hearse.

Additionally, Colonel Doug Knight, President of the Australian Commando and NGVR Associations, together with RSL representatives, paid tribute to each Coastwatcher and their families.

REG YATES



Ron 'Dixie' Lee (left) and Jim Burrowes



2024 NSW Premier's Reading Challenge

This aims to encourage a love of reading for leisure and pleasure in students, and to enable them to experience quality literature. It is not a competition but a challenge to each student to read, to read more and to read more widely. The Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC) is open to all NSW students in Kindergarten to Year 10. It was open from February to late August 2024.

Recently we discovered that Sue Lawson's book, *Finding Darcy*, had been included in the list of books to read for the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge 2024. The book is based on her grandfather, William Avenel McLennan, VX23813, 2/22 Battalion, who is listed as dying on the *Montevideo Maru*. The main character is a young girl who undertakes a history project at her school and discovers that her great grandfather died on the *Montevideo Maru*. *Finding Darcy* has student worksheets available for use in schools. These are also available on the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru website.

School History Cruise Program for Sydney Harbour

In conjunction with the Chief of Navy and the Commander of the Fleet, the Naval Historical Association of Australia has organised a 2-hour School History Cruise Program for Sydney Harbour. The *Montevideo Maru* will be included in the history of the Navy to highlight the need to find ships and bring some closure.

2024 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship (PAMS)

This runs from 30 September until 10 October and will travel to Japan. Twenty scholars and three teachers with a shared passion for history will participate in an intensive study tour to develop their knowledge and understanding of the history of Australians at war by visiting significant military and cultural sites in Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nara and Osaka. Dr Keiko Tamura, Tour Historian, Australian National University, will accompany the students.

In encouraging schools to use the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Education Program and website, our Education Coordinator, Patrick Bourke, often looks for connecting links, and this is something all members can do. We then write to the school to alert them, and provide some further information and links so that the history is interconnected. We hope they will use it as a learning tool with the students. Any of our members can do this. We would love to hear if you do!

In reading support documentation for the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship this year we found that one of the Rabaul Australian Army Nurses, Mavis Cullen, who was imprisoned in Japan during WWII, was an ex-student of Pymble Ladies College in Sydney. Mavis Cullen had also been a nurse at the Yass Hospital prior to joining the Australian Army Nursing Service. She received a Mentioned in Despatches, a military award, for her war.

One of the Pymble girls, Lauren Korenblyum, has been selected to go on the trip—see the public announcement of successful students in this competition at <https://www.veterans.nsw.gov.au/education/premiers-anzac-memorial-scholarship/pams-2024/>

This is a wonderful connection for this student to have in her study of this history.



Traawool 2/22nd Battalion Gathering, 28 July 2024

Over 50 people attended a 2/22nd gathering at the Tallarook pub for lunch and then headed out to the Trawool Memorial rock, the site where the 2/22nd was formed. Everyone enjoyed the sunshine, seeing the 2/22nd rock formation on the hillside and the nearby plaque (below left) and flagpole. With thanks to our photographer, Dave Evans.

WL 'Birdie' Heron MID and the New Britain Open Golf Championship

Considering the Rabaul Golf Course had suffered two major disasters since 1937—both completely destroying the course—the idea of a Territory Open Golf Tournament in 1952, sounded extremely ambitious. It was not until 1951 that the course was actually playable.

Yet in 1952 the more determined members decided to hold the Open. In that year the New Britain Open was born. It remains an open tournament and all amateur, professional and associate golfers from Papua New Guinea, Australia and anywhere else are welcome to participate.

The trophy that is played for and proudly cherished by the club is the WL 'Birdie' Heron Memorial Cup. Birdie was a World War I veteran who lost one eye during the fighting and took up Tovakundum Plantation when the Australian Government expropriated land from the Germans. He played golf regularly but was never renowned for doing anything spectacular. The name 'Birdie' was a nickname affectionately given by friends, not because of his prowess at golf, but for the way he looked at you with his one good eye.

Tragedy struck with the start of World War II and the invasion of Rabaul by the Japanese. Birdie was last seen being led away as a prisoner. His daughter, later to become Mrs Pethebridge, inherited the property, and in 1952, donated the cup in memory of her father.



The Australian Golf Heritage Association Museum is lucky enough to have three trophies in its collection, all courtesy of ex-professional, and good friend of the Society, Edgar Oakman. Edgar won the event in four consecutive years, and it is the 1960 version that is featured here.

It is described as 'a small, silver-plated cup type trophy. On a Bakelite plinth, it has a handle on both sides, and a separate, snug-fitting lid.

The front of the trophy is engraved with information regarding the event, and its winner (Edgar W Oakman).'

Who was WL 'Birdie' Heron?

Wilfrid Ledlie Heron was born in Melbourne on 20 July 1894. He attended Melbourne Grammar School playing cricket and Australian Football, and serving in the cadets, before commencing employment with the pastoral company Dalgety & Co. in 1913. While working for Dalgety's he played Australian Rules Football for Melbourne University and, after a goalless first season in 1913, scored five goals during the 1914 VFL season.

'Birdie' Heron enlisted in the AIF in August 1914, having already spent several years serving in the Army Reserve. At 20 years of age, six foot four inches (193 cm) tall and tipping the scales at 200 lbs (91 kgs), he certainly would have stood out in a crowd. Serving in the 7th Battalion, he was part of the landing at Anzac Cove at Gallipoli on the morning of 25 April 1915, coming ashore as part of the second wave.

'Birdie' Heron was Mentioned in Despatches for 'various acts of conspicuous gallantry during May and June 1915 at Gallipoli' before he fell victim at the Battle of Krithia to a gunshot wound to the head and lost his right eye. He was invalided home as a lieutenant and, after serving time as an administrative officer at Puckapunyal, returned to serve in France where he was again injured. He was repatriated to England where he served as the Adjutant at a Training Unit for the rest of the war. He returned to Australia in 1919 as a captain.

After the war he became a coconut plantation

owner in Papua New Guinea on an estate expropriated from the previous German owner.

He married Madge Laurence Clapin in June 1929 but she died in January 1933, shortly after giving birth to their only child, a daughter. In November the following year, he married Audrey May Clapperton.

'Birdie' Heron continued to manage the Tovakundum Estate Plantation, 15 miles from Rabaul, making frequent trips back to Melbourne.

Following the outbreak of war in the Pacific, most civilian men were forced to stay in Rabaul. On 23 January 1942, a Japanese force of around 5,000 troops landed on New Britain. Outnumbered and outclassed, Australian resistance was limited, and over 1,000 military personnel and civilians were taken prisoner.

Of the prisoners, at least 800 soldiers and 200 civilians—'Birdie' Heron amongst them—were loaded onto the ship, *Montevideo Maru*, for transport to Hainan. The *Montevideo Maru*, which wasn't marked as a prisoner-of-war ship, was sunk off the north coast of Luzon by the US submarine USS *Sturgeon* on 1 July 1942. There were no survivors from the contingent of prisoners, and the sinking is considered the worst maritime disaster in Australia's history.

What remains a mystery is why, 10 years after the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*, when the Rabaul Golf Course had been rebuilt (requiring the removal of many unexploded bombs), WL 'Birdie' Heron's name is associated with the golf trophy, never mind a trophy for an event that has been running for nearly 70 years.



WL 'Birdie' Heron

Information from the 30th Anniversary (1982) and 71st Anniversary (2023) New Britain Open, Rabaul Golf Club Program, with thanks to Mavis Host and Darrie Nightingale, and the Australian Golf Heritage Association and Australian War Service Records research with thanks to Patrick Bourke.

Jet Flights Return to Rabaul

For those who travelled to Rabaul in April 2024 from Australia, you will be happy to know that Air Niugini has resumed Fokker jet operations into Tokua Airport!

It has been over 12 months since Air Niugini was able to operate jet services to Rabaul. This has had a major impact on tourism and trade into and out of East New Britain. It is also not the first time the runway was repaired. In 2021, Tokua reopened after runway repairs were undertaken. Unfortunately, due to the poor quality of repair work, and potentially jeopardising safety of jet operations, Air Niugini chose to downgrade to a smaller Dash 8 service with only 5 – 15 passengers per flight depending on weight. Air Niugini CEO, Gary Seddon, said, 'We need good airport infrastructure that can meet the increasing demand for air travel.'

The National Airports Corporation (NAC) managed the repair work and Air Niugini had to regularly reschedule around the work.

Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Website www.montevideo-maru.org

The website has had many additions made to it recently, so have a browse!

Our thanks to Patrick Bourke for his assistance in re-doing the education program to ensure it is up to date, and easy to use. Also, for the many pieces of information he sends in.

A few more tributes have been added to the electronic tributes section, new memorials have been added, news items have been updated and external links that have changed to 'error' have been removed. Where possible, we will try to keep information on the website and use hyperlinks so that the errors don't persist.

It would be great to hear of members recommending the education program for use in the history departments of secondary schools. It is one way to ensure the story of what happened to the civilians in the New Guinea Islands, and the men of Lark Force and 1 Independent Company, endures.



(L-R) Judith Palfryman, Jill Hutson, Stephen Hull, Olive Hull, Sarah Hull, David Hull, Anne Murray

95th Birthday Celebrated in Rabaul

The Hull family returned to Rabaul to celebrate Olive's 95th birthday, and to attend the Anzac Day services in Rabaul and at Bitapaka, along with visiting places with special memories.

Rabaul Memorial Tour, April 2024

Among the members on the tour, featured in the last issue, were Rod and Sandy Miller, and Lauren and Doug Wood, and in this specially enlarged issue, we asked if they would share their memories.

Of particular interest during the tour was Sandy's visit to the Mary Immaculate Primary School in Vunapope, where the headmistress discussed with the group if a teacher from the school could be supported to visit an Australian school to experience how students learn in Australia. If you have a contact at a school who could help make this happen, and you're able to billet the teacher, please email Andrea at coordinator@pngaa.net. Once we have the trip planned, we could then fundraise to make the flights happen.

ANDREA WILLIAMS

Rabaul Twenty Years On

Prior to ANZAC day this year, I was last in Rabaul in 2002. Back then, I was travelling with Bert Speer, who was a part of the medical administration in Rabaul in the 1960s. In 2002, there were still a small number of locals who had stuck with Rabaul through thick and thin. Matt Foley, who had been a coastwatcher in the area during the war, and a plantation owner postwar, had confidence that Rabaul would rise again from the ashes after the 1994 eruption. With its deep-water harbour, it managed to survive the 1937 eruption, the 1941 eruption, and the devastating bombing of WWII and was restored to the bustling centre of commerce it once was.

However, today's reality is a little different. Twenty-one years on, most traces of 'old' Rabaul have disappeared, with the Cenotaph, Montevideo Maru Memorial, Queen Elizabeth Park, Yamamoto's Bunker, the New Guinea Club and the ever-resilient Rabaul Hotel surviving.

Concrete steps leading to non-existent buildings and parking bay lines on Mango Avenue hint at a once vibrant township that no longer exists. With the volcano having been dormant for a number of years, the vegetation has slowly returned to the once barren landscape of volcanic scoria, transforming it from its moon-scape appearance in 2002 to a lush tropical jungle today.

Although the natural beauty of the volcanic springs at the base of the volcano remains a major attraction, the once proud broken-in-half Japanese Betty Bomber, which sat in a crater on the edge of the old Rabaul airstrip, has all but disappeared with only parts of its heavy engines remaining.

The Coastwatcher Memorial Lookout has also changed substantially from a well-kept terraced park to a local school with a number of village houses surrounding it; however, its magnificent view of Rabaul remains.

Those who made the journey to attend the services at the Montevideo Maru Memorial, the

ANZAC Day Dawn Service and Bitapaka greatly appreciated them. Thanks go to the locals, including Suzie McGrade OAM of the Rabaul Hotel, who made it all happen.

With the history of Rabaul linked to Australia by two world wars, the loss of Australia's first submarine, AE1, and the greatest single loss of Australian lives in WWII with the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*, its importance to the defence of Australia is somewhat forgotten. However, Rabaul these days still sometimes caters to cruise ships that are able to dock due to its deep-water harbour. Their visitors are well catered for by local guides who take them on tours around the aptly described 'Pompei of the Pacific'.

Unfortunately, during our visit there was a



Rod Miller at Malmaluan



Rod Miller in front of an inscription copied from what Edward Llewellyn Gordon (known as Gordon Thomas) wrote inside a POW Camp at Rabaul on 7 June 1945. Gordon was one of the few expatriates who survived the Japanese.

local disturbance that closed the main area of Rabaul to traffic, which hindered our sightseeing for a day and closed all the businesses. However, this is nothing compared to the uncertainty of how Air Niugini performs.

When travelling in PNG, one must allow these problems to arise and accept them as part of the adventure of travel as they occur. The airline problem is a major one. Although we weren't informed when booking our flight, the PNG National Airports Corporation had been digging up half of Tokua Airstrip for needed maintenance for several months prior to our visit. This impacted Air Niugini's regular service with many unscheduled changes, weight and passenger restrictions.

Whilst necessary, constant rescheduling was challenging and costly when connecting flights had to be rescheduled. This makes it very difficult not only for travellers, but also for those trying to run tourist-based industries such as hotels and resorts in New Britain.

With the development of the main area of New Britain, now sensibly centred on Kokopo, what Rabaul offers today is certainly a different experience to most other adventures in PNG.

ROD MILLER

A School Visit to Vunapope

It was an unexpected privilege to make a school visit during our trip to PNG in April 2024. Andrea Williams, assisted by Dame Sandra Lau, co-ordinated a visit for a few of us to the Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School in Vunapope.

We arrived on a day when most of the students, except Year 8, were unable to attend because of a toilet block problem. But as someone who works in a school, and this was my second visit to PNG, it was still a fascinating glimpse into the PNG education system.

Our first stop was, in fact, a staff room, where the staff were using the mainly pupil-free day to handmade class resources. I recognised very familiar phonics-type posters, which we

purchase or print off and laminate in Australia without a thought. The staff, however, were painstakingly hand-printing and drawing beautiful illustrations. For instance: 'C...c...c... C is for coconut. A coconut tree is tall.' There were syllabus textbooks, but clearly a lack of the necessary quantity, and again staff were making posters with reading information on science, history, etc.

We visited a classroom with the Year 8 students, and they seemed happy to share what they were working on; it was so interesting to have a look through their workbooks. There is obviously a range of ages in the year group, and I didn't really ascertain why. The school starting age is gazetted at six or seven years, but there

seemed to be an age range of 14–17 in Year 8. Nonetheless, what immediately struck me was how good the standard seemed. Neat writing, good spelling and very recognisable topics. Looking at teacher charts on the walls, there were classroom expectations and behaviour charts. Students received a cross for being late, out of uniform, swearing, etc. ... a couple of kids had crosses against their names for 'escaping from the classroom'; not how we manage poor behaviour choices in NSW schools, but teachers obviously face similar challenging issues in schools wherever children are.

The PNG Syllabus mandates that children are taught English for at least an hour a day from Prep School, and this increases from there. The Year 8 students all speak at least three languages: their local language (given there are 832 living languages in PNG), *Tok Pisin* (their lingua franca form of Melanesian Pidgin English) and English. It seemed remarkable to me, however, that they were working on topics such as the water cycle or the American Revolution with such competent written English skills.

The senior classrooms were in a fairly modern building, but the Elementary (K-2) classrooms were very simple, with earth floors, wooden seating and blackboards. It seems an absolute credit to the teaching staff that the children still seem to learn regardless of a very basic environment.

After our tour, the students gave us a



Sandy Miller with Year 8 students
(Photo courtesy of Sandy Miller)

wonderful concert, singing and playing guitars. We donated money and some resources we had brought from Australia as a thank-you for the opportunity to visit their school.

Nelson Mandela said, 'Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world,' and although I think Mary Immaculate is probably a more well-resourced school than many, it really felt like a positive experience knowing that there are increasing educational opportunities in PNG.

SANDY MILLER

Editor's Note: Sandy and Andrea kindly provided some great photos of this visit which have been uploaded on the PNGAA website.



Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School in Vunapope (Photo courtesy of Andrea Williams)



L-R: Commander Jonathan Corker, RAN; Commander Graham Lebitina, PNGDF; George Cheng, PNGDF; Lt. Col. Anthony Evans

Anzac Day 2024 in Rabaul

At the invitation of Andrea Williams, PNGAA's Past President and a member of the Silentworld Foundation team that discovered the wreck of the *Montevideo Maru* a year ago, my wife Laurel and I joined 30 members of the 2/22nd Battalion Lark Force Association to attend the three memorial ceremonies on the afternoon of 24 April 2024 and the morning of 25 April. We were joined by Sandra and Rod Miller, Rod being the author of the book, *Lost Women of Rabaul*.

Monday, 22 April, saw us depart Brisbane mid-morning with Air Niugini to Port Moresby, then transfer to the Dash-8 mid-afternoon flight to Rabaul. A short half-hour trip over the lush Owen Stanley Range with the Buna and Gona coastline in the east; all quiet and serene now but the keeper of brutal secrets of bravery, death and hardship. A further hour over the beautiful blue Solomon Sea and half an hour over the lush green interior of Northern East New Britain, the island so named by William Dampier on his visit in 1700.

Rabaul was once a picturesque small town that served as the capital of German New Guinea from the mid-1800s until 1914, when World War I came to Bitapaka wireless station (more of this

later) located on beautiful Simpson Harbour, the north-western extension of Blanche Bay. This Bay runs east to the seven islands that form the Duke of York Islands and is protected to the north and east by New Ireland. As the eruption occurred 30 years ago, vegetation has returned the post-eruption moonscape to a lush tropical jungle.

Rabaul sits on the junction of three massive tectonic plates (the Pacific Rim of Fire) making it one of the most volcanically active areas in the world. Major eruptions have occurred three times in the past century—1937, 1941 and 1994.

Only days after the Japanese landing on 23 January 1942, of approximately 5000 troops with the reported loss of only 16 men (unsubstantiated), they captured Rabaul from Lark Force and quickly established their Pacific operational headquarters under the command of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. Yamamoto was shot down near Buin in the south of Bougainville in 1942, thanks to information supplied by coastwatchers during Operation Ferdinand. By May 1942, the Japanese deemed themselves invincible, having established control of the corridor on the north and east coasts of New Guinea, covering Madang,

Lae, Salamaua, Buna and Gona. Their land defeat at Milne Bay in June 1942, proved to be the high watermark of the Japanese advance south.

Fortunately for visitors, the Rabaul Hotel stands alone on the devastated Mango Avenue, providing a welcome venue for lunch and accommodation for the Lark Force Association visitors. The nearby Cenotaph, the Montevideo Maru Memorial, New Guinea Club and Rabaul Yacht Club have all been reclaimed from the ash and are functioning.

On Tuesday, 23 April, we departed our beautiful accommodation on the shores of Blanche Bay at Kokopo Beach Bungalows for a full-day tour along the deteriorating coast road past two Japanese tunnels, the Blue Lagoon, a destroyed Japanese crane and Mount Vulcan. We drove into the once thriving CBD of Rabaul, the overgrown and ash-covered Rabaul airport to the Matupit hot sulphur springs, where steam rises from the harbour in the prevailing winds. After a nice lunch in the well-appointed Rabaul Hotel dining room that included two beers of SP, we continued on to the picturesque old governor's residence facing north over New Ireland and then to the Volcano Observatory overlooking Simpson Harbour wharf area and the three volcanos that surround the town. In the thousand-kilometre Bismarck volcanic arc between Manam, near Wewak, to Rabaul—11 volcanos have remained active since records began in 1850.

Feeling safe with the Observatory monitoring seismic activity we returned to Kokopo via the sealed inland road and 'Four Ways'. After a sunset boat ride and a swim at the Duke of York Islands, we returned to a lovely fresh lobster dinner. Doing it tough in the Tropics!

On Wednesday, 24 April, at 11 am, we ventured via the inland road and Lark Force's meeting place, 'Four Ways', just south of Malaguna in the mountains behind Rabaul. Just before Rabaul CBD, we turned left up the hill and, for 30 minutes, drove along the North Coast Road to the beautiful resort of Kulau Lodge for lunch and a swim off the white sandy beach. Their welcome sign read, *'Leave only your footprints*

and take with you wonderful memories.' Here, our group of five connected with the Lark Force Association's group, where we heard about their emotional journey to Tol Plantation and the memorial cairn erected in 1987 on-site by the Australian Army during a training exercise called 'Rabaul Walkabout'.

At 5 pm, we assembled in a large grassed area on the foreshore facing west near two large basalt rocks that serve as the Montevideo Maru Memorial. A service was held at dusk and all present were invited to lay wreaths. I laid a wreath on behalf of the Battle For Australia Association (BFA) while Andrea Williams laid one for the PNGAA and Montevideo Maru Associations. Other attendees included Rabaul's mayor, Mr Changol Manuai, and three members of the Australian and PNG defence forces, namely: Lieutenant Colonel Anthony (Tony) Evans, based at Murray Barracks, Port Moresby; Commander Graham Libetina, PNG Navy; and Commander Jonathan Corker, Royal Australian Navy (RAN).

A very nice meal and informal get-together at the nearby New Guinea Club was organised by Rabaul Hotel's Susan McGrade OBE following the ceremony.

At 3 am on Wednesday, 25 April, the phone alarm awoke us, and by 3.45, we were in a three-SUV convoy in the pouring rain. Via a dark, quiet inland road, we arrived at the fire-lit Rabaul Cenotaph, arriving at 4.30 am. Fortunately, the rain ceased and about 100 people, including the four dignitaries from the previous evening,



Kokopo Beach Bungalows, Kokopo



Doug Wood laying a wreath at the memorial
(All photos by Doug Wood & Sandy Miller)

assembled in a semi-circle around the Cenotaph and lectern, while Winston Churchill's 1939 'We Are at War' address was broadcast repeatedly. With candles lit, at 5.30 am the ceremony began, and addresses were given by Lt Col Evans and the Co-ordinator of the 2/22nd Battalion Association, Fraser Harry, son of the 1942 escapee Bill Harry. It was a very moving scene.

All present were invited to lay flowers and Laurel and I took the opportunity to do so on behalf of the Battle For Australia Association (BFA). The ceremony closed with the Last Post playing followed by a minute's silence, the Reveille, and singing of the National Anthems of PNG, Australia and New Zealand. The Cenotaph glowed in the morning sunshine. After an enjoyable 'gunfire' breakfast of Bundy rum and tea at the Rabaul Yacht Club from 7 am, we returned to Kokopo Beach Bungalows for a brief rest.

At 10.30 am, we were back on the road travelling along Blanche Bay's coast road, passing the beautiful Rapopo Beach Resort to Bitapaka Memorial Cemetery. Established in 1945, this is the final resting place for WWI and WWII

soldiers. Six WWI soldiers, killed during the taking of the German wireless station that was situated across the road from the cemetery six months before the Gallipoli landing, are buried here. The Cemetery is a beautiful grassland garden donated by PNG to Australia in perpetuity. It is dominated by numerous towering shade trees. The WWI Memorial was rebuilt after being destroyed by the Japanese during WWII.

Commander Jonathan Corker, RAN, was the master of ceremonies for an 11 am service. The Governor of East New Britain Province, Governor Hon. Michael Marum, and the Mayor of Rabaul, Mr Changol Manuai, gave addresses before Lt Col Evans delivered the Commemorative Address. Wreaths and flowers were laid, followed by the Ode to the Fallen delivered by Commander Graham Libetina, PNGDF. I learnt that Commander Libetina was from Milne Bay and raised in Alotau. At the gunfire breakfast, he told me that his father helped the Allies in June 1942, in the Milne Bay area and that his father's actions led him to pursue a naval career.

After the Bitapaka Primary School choir sang, there were the three National anthems and the ceremony concluded, after which the much-appreciated free cold water and soft drinks were handed out. Lt Col Evans addressed the 50-strong school choir, presenting the School Captain with a red and white rugby league football. The gesture was greeted with huge smiles, giggles and much laughter from the children.

This was a fitting end to our ANZAC tour—three memorable services in 19 hours. All three were well-run and attended by approximately 100 people. The singing by the respective choirs was enjoyable and all the students seemed to be very aware of the importance of the occasion.

LAUREL AND DOUG WOOD

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Remembering Glenys 'Gleny' Köhnke

Well-known artist, sculptor and author, Gleny was born in Brisbane, Qld on 23 October 1948, and was drawing and painting for as long as she could remember, deciding at a young age that she would be an artist—and went on to study art with art educator and future director of the National Gallery of Australia, Betty Churcher, in Brisbane.

Gleny's father, Roy Köhnke, and her grandfather, Hartwig Gustaf Johannes Köhnke, had a long association with PNG, and when her parents moved to Madang in 1960, they enrolled their daughter at Brisbane's Sommerville House for five years. It was while she was there that Gleny met Judith Wright, the Australian poet, and some years later Gleny painted her portrait for the Archibald Prize.

In 1965, when Gleny's parents separated, Gleny lived with her father, and met Rudi Caesar, who took Gleny on as an apprentice to help her gain experience in commercial art, oil painting, sculptures, drawing and even art forgery techniques.

Travelling to Germany in 1969, Gleny was admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart, and a year later Gleny returned to PNG to live in Port Moresby.

Gleny found many Papua New Guineans were keen to embrace Western culture and urban life, just as she was taking notice of PNG mythology, and decided to incorporate PNG mythology and spirituality into her painting and sculpture.

From 1970 to 1980, Gleny travelled extensively throughout PNG and Irian Jaya, living in villages, recording and painting oral traditions. These paintings appeared in numerous exhibitions in PNG, Australia and Germany.

Her journey in 1970 included travelling by boat—to Samarai, Lae, Madang, and Wewak. She then travelled to Mt Hagen and Minj in the Highlands when a big pig-killing feast was involved. The feast involved 200 pigs and 18 cows being killed. Gleny filmed the event with a Super-8 camera and painted the scene on a mural which went into a solo exhibition in 1971 along with other paintings and sculptures at the Davara Motel in Port Moresby.

In the years 1972–73, Gleny acted as a guide and interpreter for expeditions to the Western Highlands, the Great Papuan Plateau and the Purari River. She visited New Ireland, Bougainville and New Britain the following year.

These travels provided an opportunity to record oral legends and traditions for future books, leaving an indelible mark on her style and subject matter for more than 40 years.

Time Belong Tumbuna: Legends and Traditions of Papua New Guinea was published in 1973 and *The Shark Callers: An Ancient Fishing Tradition of New Ireland Papua New Guinea* in 1974. Gleny's third book, *The Green Parrot*, a fable of how the birds of PNG got their interesting characteristics, was published in 1976 in PNG.

In 1973, at an exhibition in Port Moresby, then Chief Minister of PNG, Mr Michael Somare, said: 'Art knows no political or geographical boundaries, but is the true expression of the artist's relationship with her environment.'

Gleny was approached in 1976 to paint the portrait of PNG's first Governor-General, Sir John Guise. The late 1970s saw Gleny travel through Europe before returning to Australia in 1980 when her first son was born. Art remained a central focus of her livelihood in Australia, Spain, Germany and PNG.

In 2011, Glenys returned to settle back in Queensland, and passed away on 8 May 2024, after suffering a stroke at the Brisbane nursing home where she lived.

Editor's Note: Information compiled in this tribute is taken from Glenys' website and interviews, with the collaboration and approval of her family.





30th Anniversary of the Volcanic Destruction of Rabaul

ON 19 SEPTEMBER 1994, with little warning, two volcanos—Vulcan and Tavurvur—erupted and buried East New Britain’s capital, Rabaul, known as the ‘pearl of the Pacific’ and ‘Frangipani Town’. Almost two decades after PNG achieved its independence, Rabaul—home to more than 17,000 people and 50,000 in the surrounding area—still resembled a tropical Australian country town, but it was the second time in 57 years that eruptions had destroyed it.

Much was devastated, with ash sent thousands of metres into the air, and the subsequent rain of ash caused most of the buildings to collapse. Whilst the power supply was shut down at the start of the eruption, large sections of the electrical distribution system were damaged by falling trees and buildings. However, due to planning by the Rabaul Volcanological Observatory (RVO) for such a catastrophe, especially since the 1983 alert, the townsfolk were prepared and the entire population was evacuated, five people killed.

As Rabaul is continually threatened by volcanic activity because it is on the edge of the Rabaul caldera, after the eruption the capital was moved to Kokopo, about 20 kilometres away.

Now, though, 30 years after the disaster, the people of Rabaul have shown remarkable flexibility with their rebuilding and ingenious tourism plans, which offer natural and cultural experiences, World War II memories and the traditions of local communities.

FEATURED: Eruption of Tavurvur in 1994 (*Chris Read*) and present day (*Andrea Williams*)

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