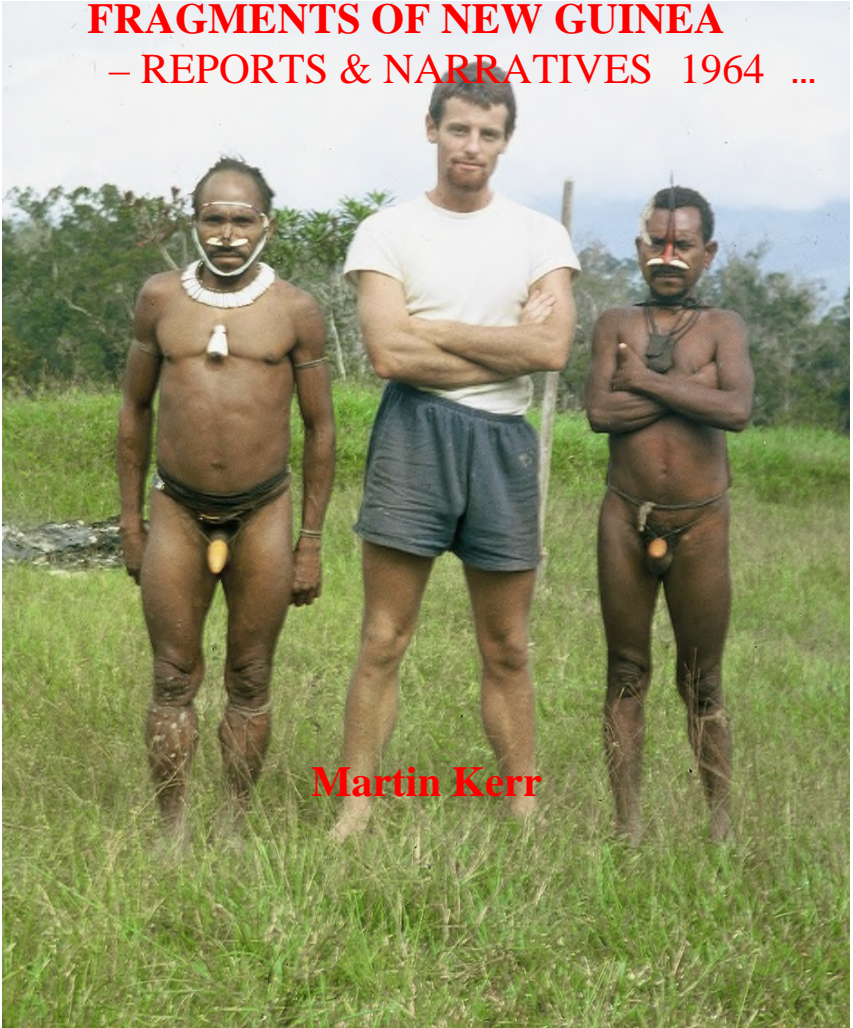


**FRAGMENTS OF NEW GUINEA**  
**– REPORTS & NARRATIVES 1964 ...**



**Martin Kerr**



# FRAGMENTS OF NEW GUINEA

– REPORTS & NARRATIVES 1964 ...

Born and raised in New Zealand, Martin Kerr travelled to New Guinea, joined the Australian Trusteeship Administration as a cadet patrol officer and later operated as a crocodile shooter along the West Papua border. Teaching at Sydney High School for three years he settled in Victoria and moved to North Queensland in 2002.

## **Published previously:**

*New Guinea Patrol*

*Brutnall's Follies* (co-authored with Harry Brutnall)

*Tamariki and the Whales*

Nine books authored by Martin Kerr are available on Kindle.



# FRAGMENTS OF NEW GUINEA

– REPORTS & NARRATIVES 1964 ...

*Martin Kerr*

CD-ROM



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# FRAGMENTS OF NEW GUINEA

– REPORTS & NARRATIVES 1964 ...

May be used in conjunction with relevant images under the title *Fragments of New Guinea – Catalogue of Images 1964 ...* (CD-ROM).

## Methodology

Events, correspondence, opinions and attitudes are recorded in general chronological order. *Fragments of New Guinea Reports & Narratives 1964 ...* also contain patrol reports, stories from Papua New Guinea nationals and an outline of correspondence leading to the publication of Martin Kerr's first book, *New Guinea Patrol*, Robert Hale, London, 1973.

Original documents (most of which have been fair copied below) plus maps and slides, various field notes, an exercise book of drawings in felt pen by Waskuk artists gathered by Graham Gilmore MHA at Ambunti in late 1967, and a copy of *New Guinea Patrol* 1973 were donated to the Michael Somare Library, The University of Papua New Guinea, (contact Mrs Josepha J Kapa) in February, 2007. Included on a CD in Microsoft Word were a draft version of *Fragments of New Guinea*, a draft revised copy of *New Guinea Patrol*, a Catalogue of Images (22 pages) and 326 digitally-copied images.

A draft version of *New Guinea Patrol* was donated to UPNG in 1968, catalogued as **AL Paradise my goal (manuscript) 1968**.

Martin Kerr

1 February 2009

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# 1. Martin Kerr's Background

Martin Duncan Kerr was born in Wellington, New Zealand, June 14, 1941 and was educated at Wellington College (Firth House) and Victoria University of Wellington completing BA, 1963, BA(Hons) (political science), 1966 and Grad. Dip. Ed. at Bendigo, Victoria, 1987. He arrived in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in July, 1964 and joined the then Department of Native Affairs (soon to be Department of District Administration) as a cadet patrol officer. After brief training he was assigned to Telefomin sub-district of the (West) Sepik District (now Sandaun Province) in January, 1965. Martin was assigned to accompany district officer John Wearne to the then 'Uncontrolled' and Restricted Mianmin area north of Telefomin. Telefomin is at the headwaters of the Sepik River. Its people are light skinned, small in stature and speak a tonic language broadly classified as Ok. At this time, Ruth Craig an anthropologist was working out of the Baptist Mission assisted by her husband, Barry. (Dr) Barry Craig\* some years later was appointed curator of Aboriginal Art at the Museum of South Australia. It was Ruth and Barry who stimulated Martin into making observations recorded in his first patrol report.

After five months in Telefomin, Martin was transferred to Angoram on the lower Sepik River. He patrolled regularly with other officers and on his own. On one patrol he met Douglas Newton, Curator of the Museum of Primitive Art, New York. Two years later Martin had the privilege to accompany Douglas and his wife to Pagwi on the Sepik River and nearby Maprik. He returned to New Zealand in February, 1966 to take an honours degree and at the end of that year joined John Pasquarelli who was then the parliamentary member for Angoram Open in the

PNG House of Assembly. John operated a trading business, Las Kompani Pty Ltd and collected artefacts for The Museum of Primitive Art and other major museums. Martin was employed to set up a base on May River and trade as far as the West Irian Border.

Martin left PNG at the end of 1967 but returned briefly in December, 1968 and again on an aid mission to the highlands (Mount Hagen) for two months December/January, 1998. In February, 2006 he visited the East Sepik Province for one month accompanying Anna McGibbon (a daughter of Chu Leong – former Sepik trader) and spent time in Angoram, Maprik, Wewak and Vanimo.

A book on his earlier experiences (*New Guinea Patrol*) was completed while teaching at Sydney High School (1968-70) but was not published until 1973. By that time he was living with his family in Melbourne.

Divorced in 2000, Martin moved to the Cairns Highlands of Queensland where he occasionally assisted individuals to write their own histories. He set up a publishing venture, Maskimedia in 2008.

\*See CORRIGENDA 1 & AFTERWORD 384

## 2. Brief Historical Summary

When Martin Kerr arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1964, Port Moresby had become a bustling capital with new buildings and air conditioning. The fully democratic House of Assembly met for the first time. Experts, many under UN auspices, were flocking to the country while patrol officers were bringing the last 'Restricted' areas under control. Much of the highlands were not explored until the 1930s. As a newly-recruited cadet patrol officer, Martin was fortunate to be on one of the last patrols (led by assistant district commissioner John Wearne) which touched on unexplored areas and discovered a number of tribespeople.

By the end of the 1960s the country had been fully brought under control and independence was, in eyes of many, about twenty years away. With a change to a Labor government in Australia in the late 1972, prime minister Gough Whitlam announced that PNG would become independent and did so on 16 September, 1975 under an elected chief minister, Michael Somare.

Since that time the population had doubled to over five million; a major rebellion caused up to 10,000 lives to be lost on Bougainville; and much of the country had become virtually lawless, while AIDS was ripping through populations in the major centres and along the highlands highway. Foreign aid in billions has been provided to PNG and more recently there was a serious effort to strengthen institutions and promote economic growth. Australia was still at the forefront of foreign assistance to prevent the state failing and to maintain security of Australia's northern maritime border.

'Through all this 'development' the people of PNG are resourceful, thoughtful and caring,' Martin Kerr said. 'This is a

marvellous country with energetic populations and a very bright future if the politicians, bureaucrats and legal system work within their means and at a level which is close to the vast majority of village people. I feel privileged to have given a brief part of my life to this country and shared in its art and culture.'

### 3. Letters from Papua New Guinea

<to Tim Kerr, Martin's brother, Firth House, Wellington College, Wellington, New Zealand>

On train between Rockhampton & Townsville  
Tuesday 29 July 1964

Dear Tim,

Happy Birthday. You will get this news late, but I suppose it is better late than never.

On Friday I left Wellington for Sydney and since then I have been having a ball. At the moment I am in a second class sleeper (very modern) on my way to Cairns where I hope to get a job of some sorts either cutting cane or school teaching.

On Friday night me and another NZer looked around Kings Cross and ended up at a rather high class strip joint (£1) where we watched for 40 minutes an almost endless parade of girls come in, undress, do an act and walk off.

The next morning I took a train out to Hornsby where I succeeded in hitching a ride 200 miles up the road. After a couple more shorter lifts I ended up at a place called Quirindi, west of the coast road. I shacked up in a pub – I was the only guest and soon made acquaintance of a 21 year-old school teacher called Brian. He was drinking in the bar on Saturday night and soon he invited me to a party put on by some girls working in this small town of 3000. It was a damn good show though some silly Aussie thought Brian and I were trying to move into his woman and ended up stomping off in a tremendous rage. Quirindi is a sheep and wheat raising area of holdings of 3000

acres.

On Sunday I got a lift into Tamworth by the treasurer of the Newcastle Rugby League Club who was up there 'buying' a couple of players. From there I got a lift with an Insurance salesman, dying of cancer through to Lismore where I stayed the night, 80 miles from the Queensland border. Lismore was off the Pacific Highway – and as I had already meandered across the GREAT Dividing Range twice already, I thought I would not have much trouble getting onto the highway.

After a couple of short lifts I ended up with a prawn fisherman who drove me to a place just north of Surfers Paradise.

Surfers looks pretty colourful – but I would say pretty hectic for those without a healthy bank balance. From there I decided to take a bus for the 50 odd miles into Brisbane.

Brisbane was pretty big, and after making a few enquiries at the Commonwealth employment office, I decided to head north as soon as possible to Cairns.

This was done almost immediately as a train was departing that night at 9.30. Saying goodnight to Brisbane, I prepared myself to settle down in a 3 passenger sleeper compartment for a journey destined to take almost two full days. With me is a 50 year-old Hungarian who is going to see his son at Cairns and perhaps cut cane. Behind in the next compartment is a Rarotongan who was at Wanganui Collegiate with some of my last year's flatmates. He is going to study tobacco.

At the last stop it was decidedly warmer. People were just lying around on the station and there was a very tropical feeling in the air. One up here can buy pineapples - 3 for 2/6d or less!

Always between towns, which seem to be not few and far between, is the brown blue gum dotted landscape, with the odd wide tropical river splitting it up into crazy patterns. The scene

here looks just like the scene 200 miles back. Really Aussi landscape is not very alluring. Here, even one gets sick of the wide-open spaces.

Queensland is really a go-ahead State. In NSW where I was staying at Quirindi there is an active movement to secede on economic grounds to form The New England State. But in Queensland everything seems to be growing, with recent discoveries of gold and other precious metal mining, not to mention bumper prices for the sugar crop. Not many jobs seem to be advertised in the Brisbane papers – and nothing for Mount Isa Mines Ltd. That is why I did not muck around in Brisbane.

At Cairns some work is available, and from there it is easy to join a ship to New Guinea, Singapore or wherever you like.

Money is no problem yet and I do have £60 in the BNZ. So far then, Tim I say if you have enough to get you some of the way then go. From there you can adapt yourself to the conditions and move off where you can. This way one learns a lot about other countries.

Here anyone can buy a car and some cars can be bought on as little as 10% deposit – pay off in 3 years. One thing that is expensive and that is beer, but one does not need as much as the N.Z. rubbish, as the Aussie beer is richer and stronger.

My love to you and all the family,

Martin

P.S. please excuse the writing - this ain't a Pullman car I'm riding on.

<to Martin's parents addressed to Dillon Street, Lowry Bay,  
Wellington, New Zealand>

20 Queen Street  
Cairns  
North Queensland  
31 July 1964

Dear Mum & Dad,

Well I am pretty well settled down here now. It is not too hot, and I have a rigger's job paying £27A/week at an immense bulk sugar terminal at Cairns.

The town is streaming with men after work. The cane cutting is not going too well as it has been hampered by wind and rain.

Queensland is really go ahead, though we are here 1200 miles from Brisbane. This area is very rich and I have just applied for a Secretary's job for a cane growers executive 40 miles north of Cairns.

This is my permanent address at the moment - flatting with 3 Wellingtonians two of whom I was at school with. As things are at the moment I would like to settle here. The weather they say is like this all year round, cars are cheap, the pubs stay open and the people are kind. You could therefore forward any mail here.

My hopes at getting into New Guinea may be dashed as I need Territory Department permission. I also need a teacher's certificate to teach. However, there is much in the offing and I would have no hesitation settling down here, if I got into the right job - cane, mining.

I would appreciate it Dad if you could let me know of any NZSCo ship due to this port. I can see most of the movements



in the paper, but a little behind-the-scenes advice would not do much harm.

Even thousands of miles away I feel so close to home, as the people here are little different, except that the old cattle drovers stories in the pubs are more exciting than any pub stories I heard in N.Z..

I have written to Tim and other persons in NZ already. Give my regards to Hilary and the rest of the family.

I will write in length soon,

Lots of love,

Martin

<to Martin's parents>

20 Queen Street

Cairns

Sunday.

<c. 7 August 1964>

Dear family,

Received your letter and letters Dad. Pleased to hear that you, Mum have settled down again. By the way how did the anniversary go? And also happy birthday Dad.

I am having a swell time here, playing regular squash, swimming and drinking. Work is pretty hot though, as I am trapped inside up in the eaves of this roof 100 feet up, in

temperatures of 110F. It is pretty hot believe me. However I run to work in the morning (about three miles) and 'crawl' back to the flat at night, and it is just surprising to realise how unfit I was before leaving NZ.

Last night we put on a party at which most of the young local talent turned up. I got to bed about 4 am and was in the baths with about five other chaps at 9.30 this morning. We then cleaned up the flat and went divided ways in the afternoon. Some of us went to the beach and the others went to Lake Barrine to water ski.

Tonite Bob Cousins (of Wellington) and I had a terrific game of squash. Bob is a good tennis player and still succeeds in beating me. However, I am learning fast.

I have been watching shipping news Dad and note the *Papanui's* arrival. I will wait till it arrives before approaching authorities about getting a berth. In the meantime I am learning a lot about New Guinea, so may fly over there, provided I can earn enough to get me towards the northern hemisphere.

But if you can offer me anything definite Dad, then I would probably grab it. In the meantime, myself along with a couple of thousand other drifters are sailing pretty well with wind & tide.

Good to hear that you are playing in the backs Tim and that you are well Hilary.

How are things back in Wellington? Any interesting scandals, and when is Kirsty due to shoot through?

Hope to hear from you soon,

Lots of Love,

Martin

PS Nicole says her sister Françoise may be passing through

Wellington, so you could have another doll on your hands Mum.  
This one speaks good English.

<to Martin's parents - sea mail>

14.8.64

Dear Folks,

Here are just a few pamphlets on Cairns. As you will see, Cairns has a 'booming' tourist industry – though one must not lose sight of the fact that this literature was brought home by one of my flat-mates who is a printer.

Regards and love,

Martin

PS Tim. See Green Island - a bonza for underwater fishing!

20 Queen Street  
Cairns  
16 August 1964

Dear Mum & Dad,

Thanks very much for your letters, and for the news. I am

glad that the 25th anniversary went so well. It was a pity I was not there – but these things can't be helped.

Up to now I have been leading a pretty gay life here at Cairns and we had another party at our place on Friday – though this time I struck a bit of trouble when some drunken guy wanted to take the keg home to make up for his 10/- worth of drink which he reckoned he never had.

We went to another party last nite, but it was pretty quiet when I left to rest my weary bones. Work is pretty long and boring – though yesterday on two hours sleep dangling 100 ft up on the weigh tower at the sugar terminal was quite stimulating. Small ships were plying the placid waters of the mangrove swamp and the town looked so gay in its splendour of roofs glittering in the sun and the odd lazy wisp of smoke from the fertiliser works.

At the moment the waterfront is flat out loading in fertiliser for cane farms and on Thursday nite Bob & I went down to Sincats Ltd to load in fertiliser. It was all 1 cwt bags and we worked like mad for 1 hour after waiting half-an-hour among the scores of work-seekers. After this hour of loading cwt bags on sweating labourers backs (our job was the easiest) who in turn climbed heaped bags 20 ft high, we retired to the darkness of one of the sheds until another truck arrived. With us was an agricultural graduate and a couple of Abbos. We soon began loading again, but this cut out at 9.45 when we were signed off. So down to the pub – and the next day I collected £3 for my little effort.

Fertiliser is being loaded in again this week but I think I will give it away. One tends to lose a bit of condition rather than gain with long hours in warm weather.

All the boys have gone water skiing at Lake Barrine but I have elected to stay at home to prepare a few studies and think

about the forth-coming squash game tonite.

I got paid by Ford, but I will have to return the check to NZ for banking, though I am awaiting transfer of £55 to the Commonwealth Bank here in Cairns. In the meantime I am saving £15 a week – better than NZ but the work is going to finish soon.

In the meantime I have made application to enter New Guinea and should with luck be out of Cairns within the month. Our house has been sold and so we have to get out in a fortnight. Anyway Peter & Bob are going south to Brisbane, and David Gapes is getting married and returns to Cairns to continue working for the *Cairns Post*.

It is just tremendous to see a country with so much potential – here in Australia. Eventually I think I may make Sydney my home, but that will not be after I have attempted an M.A. thesis in New Guinea which will probably mean that I will have to return to N.Z. next February to sit papers at Varsity.

It is wonderful to have my freedom – helping myself for a change and not little boys and men in rowing clubs and such like. Tell Tony <Antonievich> I will write soon – but not until I am in New Guinea – or failing that on the *Papanui*. I have seen the Secretary of the Cairns Rowing Club and we may be having a row some time, though squash is keeping me pretty fit.

I have written a story for *Salient* and will write a few more once I get out of Cairns. This should enhance my name at home as well as my experience abroad.

I got a letter from Shona Glasgow who is going home on 22nd of August with her sister – I think on the *Remuera*. She wonders whether it will be possible to get into the second sitting Dad – even though she has the cheaper births.

I hope Tim got his camera back safely, and it is a pity about the electric razor. Though I never use one now. My Remington

never gave me a good shave, though about £4-10-0 spent on new cutting blades would make a difference.

I do not need any clothes yet, though I do miss my underwater gear and will ask you to forward it when I get to New Guinea.

How is the weather treating you? I have posted (Sea Mail) a lot of literature on Cairns which has bubbled the place up a bit. But it will give you an idea how civilised this place is.

I must finish now. I have not heard from Tim, though I have written to him. I must write to Hilary & Tony.

Love,

Martin

P.S. about the capping photos, I would not mind a few prints Dad. Hélène would like a couple.

<to Martin's parents written on 'Moresby Hotels BAR CHIT'>

Port Moresby Post Office  
PAPUA  
5 Sept. 1964

Dear folks,

Thanks for the letter Mum, it was delayed some time before I received <it>, but I got the news anyway. I hope Wellington Col. won the tournament.

And how did Tim get down South? Did he come back with a hangover?

This past week at Cairns was one big ball and I only worked 2½ days, the rest of the time being spent at the beach with various girls.

Last night we really lived it up, especially after I had met four NZers. It was really great to have some gorgeous blond out at the airport waving goodbye as I departed for Moresby.

After a 2½ hr flight I duly landed and am now installed at the Moresby Hotel. £4-7-6 a night! So I will have to get a job pretty soon!

The town seems pretty well spread out. It is warm but comfortable. Screaming natives were passed on the way into town, but otherwise things look peaceful & happy. Everyone can drink and so far it does not seem as bad as at the waterfront of Cairns, as truck loads of native police with baseball bats roam around.

I must away now as I am going to have few drinks with some people.

See you later,

Martin

P.O. Port Moresby  
8 Sept. 1964.

Dear Mum & Dad,

A lot has happened this past day – from strolling through native quarters to drinking and speaking pidgin English with Papuan and New Guinean Parliamentarians from the House of Assembly which is discussing a quite inadequate budget at the moment.

One of the elected members on the open roll – a European called Bill Bloomfield is half shares in a Gold Mine with a West Coaster (Greymouth) called George Buchanan. They are stationed in the Southern highlands not far from Tom Shanahan's coffee plantation which has been taken over by its creditors, Burns and Philp. Tom's wife is filing for divorce and Tom is getting treatment in a hospital in Queensland.

At the hotel Dad, a party of pretty school girls from a private school in Melbourne are touring round and one of the girls called Pithie has a father who attended Otago Boys High about your time. So the world is pretty small you see.

Yesterday I went for an interview for a cadet patrol officer, before they send me off as a temporary clerk, I think to Bougainville. The interview was pretty hectic, and because of the uncertainty of the administration's position here, this appointment comes under certain exempt regulations which necessarily makes promotion difficult. Thus, in turn I let them know my doubts about the job, telling them I would like to pursue my studies and get MA either through Victoria or Queensland University.

At the moment I don't really care whether I get the job. As a graduate clerk I get £1,600 a year, as a CPO drop to £1,400. This territory wants new ideas and a fresh outlook from kiaps (district officers) & PO's especially now that there are such things as Parliamentary representatives.

I had a great talk with Bill Bloomfield last night and also with a young diplomatic 1st Secretary who had been to Moscow.



His name is Bob Lawrie who had been over here travelling with two UN Officials from the Committee on Colonialism. As a matter of fact the House of Assembly condemned the interference & actions of the UN Officials – and this was a purely native move!

So you can see that this place is not going to be another Kenya. The natives, it seems do not want independence yet, but would like to become Australia's Seventh State. Commercial interests would like this also – but Government can see that it would have to lift its white Australia policies which it is unlikely to do.

The House of Assembly is perhaps the most remarkable institution I have seen. Old codgers of official members in £12,000 houses doing very little and native members speaking no English, some of whom have been vicious cannibals.

In fact one man was reported to have said, 'In my electorate we have the highest human protein content.' Bill Bloomfield, patrolling his electorate before the last elections saw some natives with a body strapped to a pole. 'This is one vote you won't get, Master Bill.' So the place is full of stories – some of them blood thirsty – some of them funny.

There are no parties in the house though legislation is introduced by official members at the moment. Bills were passed rapidly – including doing away with trial by Jury which only applies to Europeans. Bill Bloomfield called a halt with an almost unnecessary bill on fluoridation introduced by an official. The Natives wanted time to discuss this one as 'Fluoridation maybe good for teeth but not for cock.' So people do not like being pressed into things here unless immediate advantages can be seen.

Listening in at the Assembly yesterday, I got an idea just how undeveloped New Guinea is in certain areas. One chap's

electorate of 130,000 natives had two private businesses, one airstrip where a bag of cement cost £5 after it has been flown in, and a road going nowhere. This is in the Eastern Highlands.

The weather is very hot, but I can sleep alright and there is no malaria here in Moresby. The hotel costs me over £4 a day so this evening I hope to be in Govt quarters.

There are women here, and quite a few N.Zers I believe, though drinking seems to be the main occupation among the men.

I hope you find the weather agreeable in Wellington, and would you tell Cyril Dentice that he may be asked for a reference on me by Territory Service. I will endeavour to write to Cyril.

Lots of love,

Martin

<to Martin's parents>

Department of Native Affairs  
Konedobu  
Port Moresby  
PAPUA  
12 September 1964

Dear folks,

I have just completed one week in Papua, and am likely to be here for a couple of months before either being flown down to Sydney or put out on a station as clerk. So far then I have done very little except listen & observe.

Last night I was again drinking with Bill Bloomfield together with my donga mate – an Irishman who has been here a number of years.

It is really terrific to observe the changes here in Moresby. The newly-elected House of Assembly, in the short time it has been operating has the seeds of party formation. Speeches in general have been of a high standard and relevant.

Perhaps the most interesting was an ex-PO's speech <John Pasquarelli> condemning the fact that the Catholic Church did not pay taxes or any other mission for that matter in private enterprise. The Catholic Church has even gone into the artefact trade with primitive natives in the Sepik – whereas once before they burnt their idols.

Last night I took a girl <Liz Abel> out from the office who was born here in Milne Bay district, and whose parents were or are break-away C of E missionaries. She has been to varsity and so my introduction to Papua is being very enlightening.

The future for unqualified public servants is in doubt as more & more natives take European jobs. However at the higher level Paps New Guineans & Europeans will have to work very closely together. My degree here is a God-send and I have been approached to do some lecturing to Matric level older students. I would love to lecture here.

Last night, pretty drunk, I put on a bit of a scene with our house boy. He has no idea of time since the meal was an hour late. He, me and my donga mates had a great laugh. One realises just how important education & so good English is important for the indigenes here.

Tomorrow, and Monday (Papua National Day) I hope to be going underwater fishing in a large double canoe.

By the way, I have bought a good, easily operated camera for £25 an Agfa Optima II which normally costs £41. I am now making enquiries after a movie camera – probably a 16 mm.

Love to all,

Martin

DNA  
KONEDOBU  
PAPUA  
Sept. 1964.

Dear Mum, Dad & Tim,

Thanks for the photos. Really bring back memories. It all seems to have happened a long time ago. Thanks also for the news Tim. Good old Wellington College.

I am still in headquarters here, and probably will not be sent down to Sydney for an induction course at ASOPA (Australian School of Pacific Administration). Thus I will be here in Moresby until December and then put out into the sticks.

In the meantime I have been free to delve generally and in

detail through the Departmental files, which together with discussion with senior and junior administrators have, and are continuing to give me insights into administration procedure and policy.

I might say at this time policy is in a state of change due to the vacillations at Canberra. It seems that Australia is ready to walk out on Papua & New Guinea if it was not for its obligation to world opinion, UN and to a lesser extent settled Europeans here.

No one could anticipate another Congo here, as there is no political grouping. However, take away an effective but pretty small-minded colonial-type administration and then there would be a fall back to 'nature'. All this makes interesting thought and it brings people here like Richard Pape author of *Boldness Be My Friend*, and Martin Kerr!

I've got a new donga mate now. A Hungarian chap who was working a mine up in the highlands in '56. He is working for the Lands Department. The person who has vacated the donga has gone up to the Indonesian border where he is to carry out drilling operations for pure water supplies to prevent possible outbreak of cholera which has been introduced into West Irian by the Indonesians. I've just started a course of inoculations and the first Typhoid has left me pretty sore.

Tonite is the final night of a play I am in called *Murder in the Red Barn*, an old time melodrama. I've been auditioned for a musical and what with my history of winning the talent quest in Cairns I stand to get a reasonable part!

As I write this now I am awaiting a few photos to send to you. These were taken out at Rigo and give some indication of bushy vs more civilised native.

Except for drama and the inevitable parties that go with it life is pretty quiet. However, I am reading a lot and making

tentative preparation for an Llb with Queensland University. With credits from BA, part-time I could be qualified by 5 years. It is said out in the bush one does get time to study, even when on long patrols, so I could end up better qualified than I would if I stayed in NZ.

I will require a few things from home – and later perhaps a few books. In the meantime I will enclose a cheque which will cover air-freight the following articles via TEAL & ANSETT-ANA. If this is not convenient via ANSETT-ANA C.O.D. can be arranged.

What I require is -

- pack
- camping equipment
- boots (in wash house)
- slide rule (somewhere in my room)
- small Oxford Dictionary " "
- song book <Maori> with actions to purchase from Whitcombes. I may need to keep some of the natives happy with a song as I intend to buy a guitar.
- Red reading lamp
- Steam Iron.

Sunday 28/9/64

Have had a good weekend which has included a hike (by car) a little way up the Kokoda Trail. Boy! There was a bit of jungle there.

Enclosing a check and photos. Hear from you soon. My regards to Cyril & Yvonne Dentice, Mr & Mrs Jeffrey & of course Hilary & Tony.

P.S. Sorry to hear about Foss <Shanahan - Tom & Dan Shanahan's brother>. I must get a letter away but I just can't

spell Derowgny (?) Foss's daughter. Could you please advise.

In the meantime the sun still shines and there is much to see and do.

Hear from you all soon,

Love,

Martin

<from Brian Kerr, Dillon Street, Lowry Bay, Wellington>

30/9/64

Dear Martin,

Pat has just phoned to advise receipt of mail from you and a cheque to cover Air Freight on some of your effects. Could I suggest we send it all by the ship:-

*Crusader* leaving Wellington 14 October due Port Moresby direct 4 November BP agents.

– it will save you a considerable amount and these little ships run a train like timetable – a change for shipping perhaps.

Anyway drop us a note if you still really want air. Meantime we shall get on with the packing.

Here's a cutting from the Evening Post of 14th covering Foss Shanahan's death.

In haste as just time to catch the Aussi mail.

Love

<Receipt>

**KONEDOBU CLUB**

No 1344

Date 21/10/64

Received from Mr M. Kerr

Nomination £2-2-

D.N.A.

KONEDOBU

PORT MORESBY

26 Oct. 1964

Dear Tim,

I received a short note from Dad today just before they left for their holiday. Gosh it is hard to think that summer is coming on there since I always tend to think of NZ as Wellington Airport – bitter and cold as was the day I left.

I have been leading a pretty quiet life here these past few weeks but have made up with a bit of reading – e.g. Dr Shivago by Pasternak. On Sunday the first NE monsoon arrived – it really teemed and the temperature dropped to the late 80's – humidity in the 80's as well. We were up at the office laying down a special floor surface – it is air-conditioned the office –



but outside the native kids laughed and played in the streaming mud coming freely off the parched hillsides. On Sunday it was fine and I spent most of the day on the beach finishing up at the town's only coffee bar with a girl from work who has been to NZ.

At work I have nothing to do and so am seriously considering asking the editor of the SP Post for a job. I don't think I will now be becoming a CPO (cadet patrol officer). I would say my qualifications are too high for a job that may only last a couple of years. With the withdrawal of Europeans from the service here – resignations are preceding actual retrenchment and the vacant positions at lower levels will no doubt be filled by Papuans and New Guineans. Which of course is the right idea in principle.

If you get S.C. <school certificate> go on for UE and have a crack at Bachelor of Agricultural Science – 4 years work! But by God it would be worth it – you could get a job anywhere!

Today, anyway – with nothing to do I decided to go up to the hospital to get a small-pox vaccination. On the way back into town I met a Soloman Islander who is a sergeant in the PIR (Pacific Islands Regiment). He and 130 others have just returned from 3 weeks exercises in the Western District – chasing "Indonesian" guerrillas. He was able to tell me quite a bit about conditions up there and how they eventually tracked these men down. All the time now, patrols are up near the border – though no Indonesians have been seen for a few months.

Last week when I received from home news about Pape's adventures on the Sepik. I gave the cutting to him down at the Club. He was very pleased to receive it as he actually swapped identity with a NZ POW in his book *Boldness be my Friend*. He was really quite amusing about his experiences and his next book he reckoned would be called the *Rape of Pape*. Richard

Pape is now in his 50's and sending him up the Sepik was a little too much – especially after the canoe overturned and he had to walk a whole 5 hours! in the bush with a PO. I have enclosed the SP cutting about the nun who looked after him – save it for Mum and Dad.

How is the rowing club going? NZ got thrashed in the rowing which backs up my theory which says one can't live a life of full celibacy for one's sport. One missed out socially, and so intellectually and physically when it comes to the final test – the race! And you can tell that to the rowers! Though Tony sort of has this idea, if he is included in the gang shags and booze parties with women!

I have a four-track small portable tape recorder now and so I have spent a few hours talking to myself. It is a help with this play coming up as I do have the lead part as a corrupt Justice – Mr Squeezem.

By the way, talking about justice; I stopped at the Courts of Petty Sessions today and so was able to see how the supreme court and magistrate's court worked. Working through interpreters is very slow and involved – and in the supreme court, all day had been spent on a native woman who was said to have received stolen money, while the actual culprits were outside wasting the whole day away.

In the magistrate's court the interpreter "got" a man off a charge of drunkenness and was he pleased when I spoke to him afterwards. The judge was bored stiff and the witness in the prosecution, though emphatic had no witness to back him up.

When you write again, Tim could you put in and on it, all the Xmas stamps you have – the office was in quite a stir today when they saw these new NZ stamps!

I hope you had a busy "Labour" week-end and have success with your exams.

See you soon,

Martin

2 November 1964  
Dept. District Admin. DDA  
Konedobu  
Port Moresby.

Dear Mum, Dad and Tim,

Some more photos of Moresby – I rather like the sunset – my shots of people (close up) did not come out.

By the way I acknowledge papers re personal gear. It arrives 17th November.

Hope your holiday is going well.

And same for your exams Tim.

You could pass these photos on to Hilary and Tony, and others if you like.

Love,

Martin

<This is a proforma letter to a referee. The 'career in Papua and New Guinea' is in fact a six-year 'contract' and offered no superannuation and definitely no severance pay at the end of the 'contract'. The intake of cadets in November 1964 was the second cohort on six year contracts.>

Commonwealth of Australia  
Telegrams: 'TERRITORIES'  
Telephone: CANB. 4 0477

**DEPARTMENT OF TERRITORIES**

DERWENT HOUSE  
HOBART PLACE  
CANBERRA CITY

*YOUR REFERENCE*  
*IN REPLY QUOTE* REC/136

Mr. C. Dentice,  
Dillon Street,  
Lowry Bay,  
WELLINGTON. N.Z.

Dear Sir,

Your name has been given as a reference by Mr. Martin Duncan Kerr C/- Post Office, PORT MORESBY. T.P.N.G.who is an applicant for appointment to the Public Service of Papua and New Guinea as Cadet Patrol Officer.

You will appreciate that a frank assessment of an applicant's qualities by someone personally acquainted is most helpful in assessing suitability for appointment. Would you please let me have a report, which will be regarded as strictly confidential, based on your personal knowledge of the applicant.

With the idea only of helping to make your report, the following criteria are followed in assessing suitability for a career in Papua and New Guinea. You will understand that, if selected, the applicant will have to live in the Territory which has a hot tropical climate, is sparsely populated, is relatively isolated and generally lack the amenities and facilities of life in Australia. The applicant will be directly concerned with a large native population whose standards of life and development are quite different from those in Australia. Against this background consideration must be given to the following qualities:

- (a) Intelligence and ability to deal with practical problems; commonsense and sense of humour; sense of proportion.
- (b) Character, resolution and other moral qualities.
- (b) Poise, address and general demeanour; adaptability and tact, background.
- (d) Capacity for working and getting on with others.

- (e) Participation during school, university or working career in activities evidencing aptitude for administration; leadership qualities or talent for organisation.

It is appreciated that you may be able to give a full account of the applicant's qualities under all of the above headings but your comments on any points of which you have personal knowledge, including any not mentioned above, will be most helpful. You might draw attention to any shortcomings that the applicant may have as well as the good qualities. It is important for both the applicant and the Administration that selection be based upon the applicant's ability to fit successfully and happily into the new environment.

As a decision on this application has to be made very soon an early reply would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

(C.C.J. McRae)  
for Secretary

18 November '64  
Department of District Administration  
Konedobu  
Port Moresby.

Dear Mum, Dad & Tim,

I took this afternoon off work and finally got hold of my trunk while trade store owners pushed each other around the green customs shed on the wharf getting their NZ frozen meat off the *Crusader*, which rapidly deteriorates under these temperatures.

It is really great to get those Maori books - if I'm here long enough I'll learn a couple of languages and so 'sell' a new dance craze here, using local dialects.

My guitar playing has not improved much, though a fortnight ago at a place called Wanigela on the other side of the island 100 miles away, three of the us N.Zers had quite a sing sing at this newly opened guest house.

Wanigela was a paradise compared with Moresby. Food was plentiful and the native girls, by the size of their breasts, were in far better physical condition. It is remarkable to note that a patrol had not been there for over a year and yet the natives speak reasonable English – due to a very active Anglican Mission there.

Originally Wanigela – besides the Mission – was a place for cutting timber commercially. The Natives now are keen Fishermen as well as growing cash crops – (cocoa) – in a small way. They also have a few copra stands – but generally in this paradise one can live off the land very comfortably.

Crocodiles are very plentiful though I never saw any – but at night they come out often and take pigs sleeping beneath the

houses.

Roger Smith who was with me – who is also a reporter on the thrice weekly rag – plays a guitar well and also knew Bob Maiden since he went to the same school. A girl whom we met was also from NZ and is a dental nurse over here – so we all had quite a ball. The most uncomfortable part of it was waiting in the DC3 – temperatures soared to perhaps 120. Coming into land at Wanigela we were met by two native groups in a sing sing. One group (Orokaiva) from Tufi – and formerly very war-like were decked out with tremendous head gear of birds of paradise plumes. My camera went mad, but alas – what film that did come out was in poor condition due to the type of film used which obviously deteriorates quickly in this climate.

Wanigela was just a weekend trip, but it was certainly a change from Moresby.

Life otherwise has been extremely leisurely, though now I am playing squash once a week and a little basketball. On Monday night I got very drunk with Roger and we almost took on a bar full of European Police sub-inspectors. We went from 3.30 to 10.30 pm without a break – and did we talk. One person of the many we met that evening was an Australian naval rating just back from the naval 'survey' just east of the West Irian Border. If he had any secrets he would have given them away – because of his state of drunkenness. But realistically we are virtually at war with Indonesia – even in a limited way.

No guns are firing here in Papua New Guinea. But we have just done three weeks manoeuvres in the Western (Border) District. And it looks as if Indonesia is about to enter in large scale manoeuvres too. About 8 million has been allotted in defence spending (mainly) strategic airstrips.

I do not think people up here expect large scale war but the threat is always there for limited fighting – and of course



Australia is at last doing something about her defences.

Tonight I helped a chap take his 'lakatoi' (outrigger canoe) round to Ela Beach where we are going to paint it.

It cost him £90 in all including motor and in a fortnight we should be ready for moonlight cruises and underwater fishing. I can see if I have to stick around Moresby that I will not be getting much swat done next year, or money saved. If I go bush instead, I'm now considering taking Anthropology I from Auckland Uni. which I believe can be done externally. So I could be a busy boy next year whatever happens.

I hope you had a good holiday Mum & Dad – and thanks for the news Tim. Hope your exams have gone well.

I'm afraid I missed the last surface mail for Christmas to NZ – but you will all get something – even if it is only an Xmas card – I have not had much of a chance to buy good artefacts, though I could get another trip down to Rigo to purchase some.

Give my regards to Hilary and Tony,

Lots of Love,

Martin

Ref: Rec/136 19th November, 1964  
<date appears confusing – December?>

The Secretary  
Department of Territories,  
Dewent House,  
Hobart Place,  
Canberra City  
AUSTRALIA.

Dear Sir,

In reference to your letter of 18 November concerning Martin Duncan Kerr.

Martin is the son of very highly respected parents who have been neighbours of mine for almost twenty years and during that time I have seen Martin grow from a young boy, into manhood.

He has always been of a quiet disposition: a very keen athlete: and led a very good and energetic life.

He has intelligence and plenty of common sense, with a generous sense of humour.

As far as his general character and morals are concerned, they could not be faulted.

He has an excellent background and he has always been very respectful to my family and has been looked upon in the neighbourhood as a very fine young man.

He has, as far as I know, been a good worker. This has been proved by the fact that he worked very hard manually in his spare time during his education at Varsity.

I cannot speak too highly of Martin, for he has confided in me on many occasions regarding his future; he is eager; and I wish him every success.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

C.L. Dentice.

<From notes made in a notebook, end of 1964. Obviously a rugby team. These are recognised as cadet patrol officers among the cohort at the end of 1964>

Mike Douglas	F/R
<Martin> Kerr	S/R
<Gerald> Howard	Centre
Norm Richards	F/R
Mike Cunningham	5/8
Bill Tucker	S/R
Alan <crossed out>	Jim? Hughes Lock
Alan McLeay	centre
<Roger> Dargie	centre
<nephew[son] of painter Sir William Dargie>	
Tony Beard	lock
Mal Brereton	half
Peter Luscombe	front row

<Activities with the above cohort are mentioned in *New Guinea Patrol*, London, 1973>

DDA Konedobu  
15 December 1964

Dear Mother,

See enclosed Jean Patou – I can send eau de cologne if you like – but you know the costs at moment with me having to prepare an expedition into Sepik. I wrote to Tim today so he can let you know other information.

In the meantime have a Merry Xmas all of you. Did you get the *South Pacific Post*?

Would appreciate very much any written material from N.Z – especially NZ *Listeners*, *Law Journal*, and information on NZ attitudes to New Guinea development – Indonesia troubles etc. Please pass this onto Dad and let's have action.

I do not know my exact station in the Sepik but my address after the 1st January will be

CPO M.D. Kerr  
DDA.  
Sepik District.  
WEWAK  
New Guinea.

Only two of us are going to the Sepik but more due to luck than qualifications. This crowd of CPOs are a great bunch and already I have put on two parties in my donga.

My apologies about Dad's & Hilary's Xmas presents – but please let me know what Dad and Hilary want which cannot be obtained in NZ. I may be able to get it here.

Hear from you all soon,

Love

Martin

<refer also to response in letter of 16 June 1965>

School of Political Science and Public Administration,  
Victoria University of Wellington,  
PO Box 196,  
Wellington,  
New Zealand.

23 December 1964

Mr. Martin Kerr  
Department of Native Affairs,  
Konedobu,  
Port Moresby,  
Papua.

Dear Mr Kerr,

Thank you for the very interesting letter to myself and Mr Murphy. Your new job looks like being very exciting and satisfying. The newspapers you sent were read around here with great interest.

Regarding your ideas of doing BA(Hons) in 1965 I'm afraid that can't be done extramurally. Presumably you might try the Queensland University degree if that can be done extramurally, or you could wait till you get back here. Another course would be to do some work on your MA thesis which you could do for this university. However, you couldn't obtain the MA qualification officially until you had either the Victoria BA(Hons) or its equivalent elsewhere. I would think New Guinea would be a fascinating area for research for an MA thesis.

Could you let us know what you would like to do and then we could perhaps make a few suggestions to help.

Your sincerely,

Dr AD Robinson

<Letter (not posted) to Jock McIntyre, patrol officer from Wewak who was transferred to Western District (Ningeram Patrol Post?). Mick stayed with Martin until he left for NZ in February 1966.>

DDA  
TELEFOMIN  
2 January 1965

Dear Jock,

You do not know me, but I know your dog *Micky* who

arrived one day at my Donga in Newtown P/M <Port Moresby>. Since then he has not left me, even though he has been free to run around Konedobu and Newtown.

I decided to bring the dog up here and it was then I discovered through David Orr who Micky was. Now I understand that you value this dog and were awaiting delivery of it via Moresby.

As the situation now stands, I leave for Telefomin on Wednesday, but intend to take Micky with me. From there a plane could fly through to Daru, etc. Anyway, I await your reply on this one.

The dog is not in good condition, and terribly meek. He is thin, but his coat is in good order. His foot has healed. Nevertheless I expect almost full recovery once he finds a settled home. From what I can see this dog at one time had a good master.

Yours faithfully,

Martin Kerr  
CPO

DDA  
TELEFOMIN  
SEPIK  
8 January 1965.

Dear Mum and Dad,

We I have last been posted to a place which you might call the end of the earth. One can only get in here by aeroplane, and patrolling here is probably the most difficult in the territory.

Telefomin is about 50 miles from the Indonesian border, and on the border between Papua and New Guinea. It is a sub-district office and its only patrol post is Oksapmin which is a week's walk away. We also have a one man police post on the border.

At the moment there are three CPO's here, but one of them is to go down to Australia for a year's course. These boys are from previous intakes.

It took an hour and a half to fly in, and we descended in the Cessna down into a large valley which is the headwaters of the mighty Sepik, at over 5000 feet. Thus the weather is cool – in the early 70s and the nights cold. It is just like home, except that playing tennis was very exhausting in this air.

There is a strong Baptist mission here on the station, which looks after 2000 scruffy natives. Their language is hard to learn – no one can speak it – and they could not care less about Administration. In 1953 two patrol officers and some police were killed by natives just a few hours away.

At the moment we are very busy around the strip, as National Mapping are operating a helicopter for its men who are making observations around on the peaks (up to 10,000 ft) around here. As well as that we had a Bristol freighter in yesterday which flew in a small bulldozer and parts. This is to make the strip suitable for regular DC3 runs. As it stands only light aircraft can officially use the strip. Thus there are more planes being used. At 1/6 a pound for freight it will cost me 40 quid to land 44 gallons of kero. We do get a freight allowance of £230 a year however.

Accommodation is not the best, and of course we have to



feed any government person who comes in. This inconvenience is alleviated however by the fact that our house has three servants. I picked my monkey master up in Wewak on recommendation by the District Commissioner and I think I have a good buy.

Most of my gear is still in Wewak, and all my food, which I had to offload in order to get the dog into the Cessna. Mick who originally came from the Sepik is a first class dog, though not very aggressive as yet, and is having a bit of trouble with the ADC's dog. Nevertheless with a little bit of encouragement we should have a little bit of fun.

This week-end the army is coming in for a fortnight's exercises, so again we will be busy and entertaining.

There is a tennis court here, so I should have enough sport. The other CPO's have quite a selection of firearms, and so we may go pig shooting in the near future. Out on patrol it is quite normal to wear side arms.

Next week I will be accompanying the Patrol Officer on short one day census patrols, so then I will be able to have a bit of a look around the place.

How are things back home? And the weather? Tim should be getting his SC results any day. By the way I got a letter from Hilary. Thank her very much. I'll send her some perfume when I get on the right side of the bank account, which will not be for a while with heavy uni. fees coming up.

Now that I am in a temperate climate, a few extra clothes would not do any harm. What I require are about four pairs of heavy socks, a couple of heavy, large cotton shirts, and a work jersey. I received word from Dr Robinson, one of my Pol Sc lecturers so am considering a long term thesis. For that I will require all my books on Political Sociology, elections, etc which a chap Mike Harris has borrowed. I am writing to him to return

them immediately. He will drop them at home, so you could include them in the parcel of clothes.

I have one heavy cotton shirt at home. The grey one. Could you get another like that one. Could you also get a pair of whipcord trousers, or something like it.

Naturally I will pay for everything.

About reading matter. It was great to get those *Weekly News* and the *News Annual*. I'd love more of it. It can be sent surface via Wewak.

Clothes and books could also be posted and it would save delay in customs.

One more thing. Could you get some tax rebate forms (normal tax returns) as the government owes me £50.

That is about all for now. As I type this full of mistakes letter I find myself filling the position of Telefomin typist. All I need is practice.

Good-bye for now. You will receive some colour slides soon.

Love,

Martin

P.S. On my way up to Wewak, I enquired after Tom Shanahan. Everyone knew him, and I was told by an airline official that Gail is in Sydney and the son <Peter> is in Bougainville working for some museum. Mrs Shanahan is still in Wau.

<from Tom Shanahan, elderly father of Tom Shanahan, planter, New Guinea. Dan Shanahan was married to Martin's mother's sister and is Tom's brother. In 2009 I caught up with Peter Shanahan who lives in Kuranda near Cairns. His sister Gail also lives in Kuranda. Peter is nearing retirement (Jan. 2010) from deputy curatorship of the Cairns Botanical Gardens.>

Gisborne <NZ>

15/1/65

Dear Martin,

I feel I must drop you a line, to thank you very sincerely, for supplying me with a typed copy of Tom's obituary, per medium of Dan & Nancy. It is quite good and accurate (except that they never said he was badly wounded [shrapnel] just prior to cessation of Jap hostilities), but I was damned pleased to get it to finish scrap book. He was on a life pension from the War (5 years). It was only when he had the big operation in Brisbane 3 years ago, that they found shrapnel was the cause of his troubles. They had him 6 months in military ... <page missing>

We have had a very hot, dry drought, temp to 80, 85 & 92. No good.

I have no news from Auckland, but, I believe they all had seaside baches.

Signing off au revoir. Wishing you prosperity for 1965 and good health.

Sincerely yours,

Tom Shanahan

DDA  
Telefomin  
Sepik District  
New Guinea  
3 Feb 1965.

Dear Mum, Dad & Tim,

I have not heard from you for a while – what's happened? Has Tim passed SC or what?

Got a letter from Jeune King and by the sounds of it you have given up on me in NG. Well never fear I'm going into unexplored territory soon so have plenty to do.

The main thing is at the moment which worries me is lack of outside news. Mail comes about once a week and newspapers are unheard of. So how about it? – you know – Saturday's *Evening Post* sent airmail – (money enclosed) and other news appreciated too.

At the moment there is little to do until Uni. starts. The army have left us and we are back to usual routine – weather, treasury, general station duties.

I have done 10 days of patrolling locally. It was very interesting and now I'm quite fit. Last Sunday with my monkey master, another native and a local Telefomin, we climbed up the 3000 ft mountains at the side of the river looking for wild pigs. At that height, 7000 feet everything's light green moss – quite cool and short of breath. The locals are terrific walkers and bush trackers and my two 'bois' (from the coast) were left far behind going up. We got onto this pig – but were 6 hours late. Descending down into the valley again we sheltered in a bush

hut from the rain while some 'meri' came and fed their domesticated pigs. All in a good day. My rifle is a perfect bush weapon on account of its size.

This weekend I hope to shoot balus (bush pigeons) with the DDA shotgun.

We have a continuous stream of visitors here in Tel – ranging from Aussie defence experts to the electrician. So there is always someone new to talk to.

Would you let me know if 'Jake' Harris has returned those books and I will arrange with you to ship them by sea to me in Sepik.

Pleased to hear Hilary has another daughter. I dropped her a line the other day.

The photos are not a good selection but I have more coming. If you could possibly manage it I would like a couple of colour prints off the one taken of me in front of the *Haus Tambaran* at the small village of *Korborenmin*.

In the meantime cheers, and a pleasant remainder to the summer.

Love,

Martin

<letter from CPO Gerald Howard>

Pagi  
Vanimo Sub District  
14 February 65

Dear Martin

Thank you so much for your long letter. Please excuse the delay in answering but I have just returned from 4 weeks walkabout.

I rather fear Telefomin must be as boring as Vanimo and places to be avoided. You start very early six o'clock I agree – maintaining the strip and all connected with it is so dull but it sends some people into ecstasy.

How typical to arrive without your kit. Does the admin think you are a native? I trust by now you have got it as it sounds a little cold in the hills.

I didn't see any advertisement for a croc shooter – interesting though I presume they can't have been very successful or your friend wouldn't be a PO.

I think your idea of the radio is good. I have discussed it and think that 1 o'clock on a Sunday morning on our frequency 5050 would be the best.

If you would like to confirm this I will call you up with Mike. Kits as a call sign.

My boat the *Thetis* has an action very similar to a corkscrew and by Wednesday when I arrived at Vanimo I felt rather seedy.

The fine people in Vanimo are all charming but again I did no work. JK Mc <Keith McCarthy, director DDA> and Wakey <Jim Wakefield, district commissioner, Sepik District> passed through with a grunt!

I had a few days at Pagei before leaving with Peter Tatterson the PO on Patrol. At first we took life easily and it was a pleasant existence except as you say this bastard Pidgin! One feels so impatient. Fortunately the trip was not complicated by Malay.

We ran out of cash and Peter left the school keys locked in the safe so I did a lightening trip to Pagei. Six hours going and swam coming back due to rain. The road was appalling through stinking Sac Sac swamp. For an old man like me those two days were hard.

However the last two weeks we got up speed and arrived back last Thursday after two days hard going. Peter goes off like a startled hare. Personally I prefer to keep going at a steady pace without stopping. I think I would have expired if coconuts were not produced by the villagers. They are the real pleasures of life. Especially as the water is filthy.

I am now living in a native Materials House. There is a yellow lamp fridge. It seems most ineffective and I shall most probably die of food poisoning due to unfrozen meat!

There are plenty of pigeons and if cooked with care are a pleasant fresh meat. There are also a few crocs but I have to have a go at them.

There is talk I may be going out again on Monday week. However let's see if we can get a crack at the Radio – damn thing might be some <indecipherable>. As luck would have the battery charger has given out!

Very Best wishes

Yours Ever

Gerald

DDA  
Telefomin  
11 Feb. 1965

Dear Mum, Dad & Tim,

Gee its warm in this green jersey even though we are closed in by fog which keeps the cold. Thanks Mum and especially for the <woollen> socks which seem impossible to buy here.

I don't know quite when I'm going on this MIANMIN patrol as we are having a 'Flu epidemic over the hill at our patrol post, Oksapmin.

By the way, did I mention I had a letter from Jeune King?

The slides are not so hot, but I have some good ones coming up after my trip last week-end.

Cheers for now,

Martin



DDA  
Telefomin  
Sepik District  
2.4.65

Dear Mum & Dad,

Thanks for the papers and letter. Sorry to hear that Lady Bowerbank has died. Really people must be aging quick in Lowry Bay. Sounds as if the golf is going OK as well as your tomatoes, Dad.

At the moment I've just come back from a pretty arduous 36 day patrol in where we made a few temporary arrests, discovered new people and explored new territory. We would walk for as much as 3 days in leech infested jungle without seeing a soul. Many natives ran away, and more than once we were under threat of attack. Altogether, a pretty good time. I've grown a small beard, and am feeling pretty fit.

This is good, as we have one very experienced mountaineer (the new medical assistant who is French) as well as a new CPO who climbs, so we will be walking round a bit.

The *Eastbourne Sun* seems to have picked up – what with Sepik news in it. You can write and tell them that in the Telefomin sub-district of the Sepik District, my recent patrol with the assistant district commissioner was punctuated by heavy jungle, at times frightened and uncontacted natives. This is the last remaining area that receives little European influence, except for Telefomin itself.

Tim seems to be settling down at school again, though I think his ambition to win should go further than the F<irth>H<ouse> sports.

In the future (or did I mention it!) you could send papers

surface mail. The odd NZ *Listener & Weekly News* could not go amiss.

I'll be sending some more slides soon, though they may go through other peoples hands first in NZ.

In the meantime all the best and once again thanks for the news which was very welcome, 3 weeks out on patrol, from an air-drop.

Love,

Martin

DDA  
Telefomin  
Sepik District  
22 April 1965

Dear Mum & Dad,

Thanks for the news Dad. Sounds as if everyone's either leaving or dying – or getting hurt. I suppose it makes life interesting though.

I'll be looking forward to that surface mail too. Thanks also for seeing Jake Harris. I wrote to him about three weeks ago setting out a list of books he has borrowed. I enclose this list for your follow-up action if possible. Actually I'm rather concerned about them, as I may require them soon, if I get the teaching job I applied for in Moresby – you know – Tutor of Government about £2300 per annum.

In the meantime life here in Tel. has become decidedly

boring now that there are four DDA (kiap) on the station. A short patrol is supposed to be going out next week so things should brighten up.

Easter passed very quietly. We had ideas of going into the Star Mountains, but then gave up. Ian Smalley was not fit and I've only just come off patrol.

We went round to Ruth Craig's place one night for tea, and so we are going to start a play reading group. Ruth Craig is completing MA and her husband is in the Star Mountains.

The only thing of interest to date then is the women situation which is hitting the cops almost as much as us. Some native missionary zealot has let it be known that missionary girls are playing about with the police. The only hitch is that there is no law about it now. So everybody is getting up against the mission.

I have the slides from the MIANMIN patrol with me now, and I will send them out later. Some slides should also be due from Auckland as I loaned a girl some.

Law studies, after completing 3 exercises, have fallen by the wayside – too expensive, too boring – and not enough incentive. Actually I can get hold of quite a selection of heavy reading so I think I will please myself.

How did you get on in the Golf Mum? A boozy time had by all I bet! And what about Tim? I received a short letter from him telling me of his academic situation as regards teachers. But what I hear from you Dad, Tim is going to be a real waster!

Hey! this Gwen Innes – she's nice <second cousin>. Tell me more about her and I will write. I have Eileen Innes's address as c/- 168 South Head Rd Vaucluse, NSW. Is that Mackay? Or is Mackay in Q'land? Could you clarify the matter please – and also what relationship is the Innes family to ours? I'm interested.

Thanks also the capping photo. Slides (I have a slide

projector here) and photos of home will be much appreciated. Naturally I will return them.

Yes, I got a long letter from Tony Anton<ievich> on patrol. I wrote to him expressing my congratulations. He will no doubt pass it on. The club is quite a going concern, but as I realise now, just a bit restricted for my interests. But it is good to see you doing a bit of work down the shed dad. Tony needs a few senior citizens around to keep him in line. The Crofts and Eggers were a bit hopeless alas.

Well that is about all for now. Give my regards to Tim & Hilary and to the Jeffries, especially to Lena, who seems to have had a hard time of it. You did not bring me up to date with the Macallans. What *is* happening on that side of the Bay?

My best wishes also to Cyril and to Ben Marsden. I suppose Dave will be home soon.

Cheers for now,

Martin

P.S. Get on to this Gwen Innes girl for me soon.

<attachment>

#### Books to get from Jake Harris

Society and Power – Schermethorn  
Bureaucracy in Modern Society – Blau  
Class and Society – Meyer  
Politics – Lasswell  
States and Morals – Weldon  
N.Z. Politics in Action

Ends and Means in NZ Politics  
Public Opinion and American Democracy – VO Key  
Political Life – Lasswell

DDA  
Telefomin  
Sepik District  
4 May 1965

Dear Mum & Dad,

How's things? Got all those magazines the other day. They were really appreciated and of course would love any more sent surface mail.

At the moment I am in Wewak getting my teeth looked at, as I had a bad tooth-ache last week. Nothing serious, but a well looked for field break away from the mist and clouds of Telefomin.

Actually I flew in yesterday by Cessna, stopping at Ambunti – a green mosquito ridden paradise on the Sepik river, to let off Barry Ryan the ADC there who had been stuck in Telefomin for the week-end due to the fact that a mission Cessna went down in the bush, fortunately on a dry river bed, taking all our fresh bread with it.

Before I flew out I took a helicopter survey with John Wearne looking for MIANMIM groups we did not see on our last patrol. It was just surprising how much unexplored territory there is in our sub-district. And what is more the roughest country you could possibly get.

The helicopter also flew in one of the Star Mountains

Expedition boys and no doubt you will be reading about it in the papers. Seems to be quite a successful expedition considering the difficulties they started under.

I hope by this Friday I get back into Tel, though I like the climate here in Wewak. But with nothing to do except drink & spend money one may as well be back on the station.

When I get back I'll send some more slides home. In return, do you think you could send me some of your slides airmail. We're all pretty interested in NZ here and a NZ film evening would not go without plenty of interest.

Well I hope you are settling down to winter OK and that Tim is working hard. Any more local gossip is appreciated. And of the Macallans I have not heard much.

Cheers for now,

Love,

Martin

DDA  
ANGORAM  
SEPIK DISTRICT  
27 May 1965

Dear Mother,

Well did you have a happy birthday? I don't know what came over me. I thought I was two months ahead of myself one

morning when I was doing the radio schedule with Wewak. Someone sent a telegram to his mother and all of a sudden I sent one too. Maybe you had better regard it as a Mother's day present.

Well I'm now on the lazy Sepik. My brief 10 day spell in Wewak to get my teeth out gave me time to speak to the DC about our chronic overstaffing in Telefomin. And so I'm now at Angoram a few miles from the vast river's outlet to the sea.

Shipping is regular. There is a hotel here and beer is back to 2/6 a bottle. I flew in yesterday in plane to myself, dog, gear and house-boi, and now I'm having difficulty getting used to the heat which has just about laid me out.

It is hotter than Wewak and almost as humid as Moresby. The atmosphere is very lazy but friendliness from both natives and Europeans makes this place civilised after Telefomin which has a Baptist Mission and backward natives.

My house-boi Bekinok who is about 13 is really revelling in the heat, cheap rice and meat. Already he has befriended a house-boi's son and I suppose can relax more than in Telefomin where family life is cut down during the night, when men retire to the men's houses, boi to theirs and pigs and women to their house.

Yes, even though we discovered about 1000 natives in the helicopter, my not going on this forthcoming patrol would have meant me doing nothing at Oxsapmin the isolated Patrol Post in Telefomin Sub-District. So really prospects were not too bright as the very few patrols have to be spread evenly between five or six men.

Before I left, Ian Smalley and I put on a party for the station and Star Mountains Expedition which had just returned after 3 months in the mountains. It was really quite a show and we were able to see movie films of the expedition. We drank vodka

all night and the next day I flew down to Angoram.

The Acting ADC is called Dave Bretherton, from Dunedin. His Aunt and Uncle still live there I believe though he is an Englishman born in Hong Kong. His wife is also very nice and altogether a more relaxed and social couple than nervous John Wearne & wife at Tele.

I've got to meet John Pasquarelli the present 'Character' of the Sepik who lives here. A former CPO fired because of his morals – he is a Member of the House of Assembly and artefact trader. Also a staunch enemy of the Catholics.

Artefacts here are good and I'm sorting a few out to send home.

Thanks very much for the slides a few more of course will be appreciated. And thanks also for the magazines – bundles of which arrived – Keep it up.

Good to see Kirsty with her BA etc. I see Hugo Manson only got IInd class honours. Still it's better than I ever did!

How are things at home anyway? I received a letter from Tim who seems to be going through the homosexual baiting stage. When, I wonder, is he going to get on with his work?

And Dad? How is he? I have not heard much news for a while.

Well I've been here in the Territory 9 months now. I'm not rich, but maybe richer in experience and decent living. I believe the Territory is becoming my home now – its slow life – but nevertheless colourful, warm and satisfying. The river here offers canoeing, duck shooting, swimming and water skiing. There is even a golf links here of sorts, though there are only about 15 adult Europeans.

Now that I'm here in Angoram sending Tim up here for a holiday would not prove too expensive. He would enjoy it – even if he found little to do in Angoram. I should be able to offer



at least £50 towards fares etc. So you can think about it. Though one hitch is that I'm due to go to Moresby some time around Christmas.

So long for now,

Regards & love to all,

Martin

DDA  
Angoram  
Sepik District  
15/6/65

Dear Mum & Dad,

Thanks very much for your recent letter, and for the news. As you will note again, that I'm now in Angoram so I should receive surface mail faster since Angoram is a shipping town with a direct link with MADANG.

I enclose that map you're after. It is one of the best – so look after it. And also some films. Already the Telefomin ones have some value so do look after them. They would not last six months in Angoram, what with heat and humidity.

Life is a bit more hectic here. Certainly the drinking is a lot more rougher with traders & other admin people (single) always on the soak.

I had a Swedish doctor in for tea the other night along with Dave Cook from the Star Mountains Expedition. Succeeded in

selling about \$100 of Telefomin artefacts – though I have not got the money yet. Artefacts are a big business and collectors from all over the world often pay fantastic prices to suit their needs. Dave Cook & the Swede have this morning departed for the Ramu River. Dave is going to buy some croc. skins (he is also a geologist) before going to the highlands and on to Moresby.

Sport is pretty active here. Have been playing basketball, swimming, Australian Rules and cricket, even though for the past week was really crook with a swollen elbow and a similar sickness I had when I got to Telefomin. A change in the climate really knocks me around. Though I am over it now.

I've just applied for another job as an Information Officer £2,300 per year, though it looks like a jack-up since I had less than a week to apply. Getting a bit sick of being a PO. Money not enough and patrolling is just about a thing of the past. Nevertheless I'm holding on to my leave – a world trip – then perhaps settle down somewhere.

So long for now, and do send some more surface mail.  
Cheers,

Martin

<for the lengthy report attached to this letter see **16. Academic Studies**>

16 June 1965

Dr A.D. Robinson.

Department of Political Science  
and Public Administration  
Victoria University of Wellington.

Dear Dr Robinson,

Thankyou for your letter of 23 December 1964.

I have not progressed in preparing for a thesis beyond general observations and the collection of a little data from the Telefomin area of the Sepik District. However, all is not lost, and I may get off my backside and do something about it once I get back to Moresby some time this year.

My travel in the Territory has been quite considerable, including a five week heavily armed patrol into uncontrolled and uncontacted areas of Telefomin, about thirty miles from the West Irian border. I was stationed at Telefomin for five months before coming to Angoram, a more civilised 'town' on the Sepik River seventy miles from its mouth.

I enclose some of my views for consideration. Personally I think they are pretty vague. But then again so is the future of the country. Whether this Australian form of government is going to be a success, or is the right thing I cannot really say except that the country is being conditioned for it from Local Government Councils to the House of Assembly. This sounds imposing – but as you will be aware – when one looks at the Public Service the facts look one straight in the eye. There are about 2,300 Natives *in* the Public Service compared with about 5,400 Europeans. A

proportion of roughly one Native to four Europeans, though there are 7,900 Administration Servants who hold such positions as drivers and messengers.

This is where the criticism from the UN and other quarters is justified. For instance I spend about one quarter of my working day selling stamps (typical DDA Agency function), and I'm not allowed a Native educated to standard six level whom I can train to do it. The role of senior staff being teachers <mentors> to Natives is not popular, as working oneself out of a job in many cases means possible loss of career. These are the psychological problems which one must be faced. No one likes giving way to obviously less educated and in most cases less efficient personnel. Yet for all this the Administration cannot get educated Papuans and New Guineans fast enough, most of whom will fill less responsible professional positions as teachers, welfare workers, medical assistants and nurses, and agricultural field workers.

I do not know whether you were at the recent Seminar of TPNG held at Sydney. I would strongly recommend that more New Zealanders take more interest in the Territory. Living here is expensive, but life is colourful once one gets beneath the strict veneer of 'the long-white-shirt-and-trousers' variety of Australian colonialism. As a Patrol Officer, getting to know the primitive has meant sleeping in their houses and eating native foods. It is from this base that I will eventually start working out my own ideas on the Territory's future and how they can be solved.

A challenge yes, and any help, advice or otherwise would be appreciated. What I have in mind is looking at possible party structures – whether they are based on racial, regional, social and economic factors – and their effect – the future of Europeans, Public Servants, planters and traders. Much of the

material will come from discussion with MHA's and senior Public Servants.

What I envisage in the way of help from the Department would be useful theoretical books. Teleologically my preferences and hypotheses will be based on the idea of an all-Native society, its 'pulse' or 'heart' based in the bush which, (to speak crudely) is the union of three basic elements – land, pigs and women. This Society has no superficial superstructure, but is a vessel entirely controlled and made up of native elements, from the engine to the officers and crew. Hypothetical, but certainly with a large proportion of truth. The European can enter into the 'bush society' but he will never be part of it. Australian policy has been from the beginning of the Century 'the enlightenment of primitives but separation of races' and it is too late to start 'bastard' races now. A Tahitian mixed society, or in my mind the New Caledonian variety of South Pacific life – Indonesian, Vietnamese, French and Native would solve more problems than create them. The system in New Guinea is authority eventually to almost 100% black educated mass, and it is *how* we handle the 2,000,000 persons which will mean much to the future of Australia and New Zealand.

So long for now,

Yours faithfully,

Martin Kerr

B. Kerr, Dillon Street, LOWRY BAY, WELLINGTON, N.Z.  
21 st June, 1965

Dear Martin,

I shall start off with a sad note and, I hope, find something bright with which to finish.

Doolan <Brian Kerr's brother> was walking across the road from the Maternity Annexe of the Tauranga Hospital where his wife Pia had her eleventh – a boy – when he was collected by a car and died in hospital in the early hours of Sunday (13th) morning. I left Wellington by car and arrived Tauranga on Monday morning. His body had in the meantime been taken to the Maungatapu Pa Meeting House and to cut a long story short the usual rites and tangi took place.

The whole thing was most unfortunate and brought to an end a most colourful life – he was in his 56th year. I stayed there until Wednesday midday and fixed up her Widows Pension etc. Fortunately he left a will and a couple of thousand quid but the house has £1,500 owing on it although the six acres is now in the middle of a posh housing scheme called Marina Estate. Rangihau will be down here for a Sea Cadets camp in the August School Holidays. If you wish to write to Pia her address is – Mrs Pia Kerr, Maungatapu Road, R.D.5, Tauranga.

As perhaps Pat has mentioned, I have been 'doing the Branches' and the week before last was in Christchurch where I saw the rest of the family i.e. Matey, Nora, Kathleen, Pat and all the grandchildren. All appear well. Pat <Brian's eldest brother> and Irene as you know have recently returned from a visit to the UK and the USA where they called on Roy <Pat's son, Prof. Roy Kerr & solver of Einstein's general relativity equations> at Austin, Tex. and our uncle in San Jose, Calif.

I posted off a dollop of newsprint for you his morning and tonight will start packing your books. I have not found any by Popper but shall have another look. They are all in your room.

Now a quick run through the family. Hilary is well, having survived her birthday and she told Tim when he called on her yesterday morning that she was pleased to have received a letter from you. Tim himself is well, playing rugby when he can – drew with Tech. on Saturday – but the way things are he does not get a game every week. The College agrees to the boys playing for outside clubs now and Robt. Tompkies of all people plays for Eastbourne. Tim attended the Chiltern St. James dance and danced with the Headmistress at the Marsden do on Saturday night which he said was 'rottin'. He told Pat it is better to get sex over with before you go to Varsity – whatever that means.

Pati is also very well – but during my absence took herself a job, with English Electric Co. (NZ) Ltd, as a filing clerk for five Engineers – will have to harness the old girl up to the national grid she's sparking so much. She felt that nearly 10 years of golf was enough and is speaking of going to Surfers Paradise next year.

Narney <maternal grandmother> and Nancy <aunt> are off on an Islands Cruise, Fiji etc., next month and I have persuaded Narney to bring back a television set (16") for the sun room. Bert is back from Australia but we have not seen him yet although we understand he looks like a pared matchstick.

Ben Marsden appears to be holding his own, he was down yesterday morning to borrow a bottle of scotch in a hurry. He has been elected a Life Member of the Acclimatisation Society so, as he says, now gets his hunting and fishing free – too late alas.

Kath Wilson has gone into hospital for a leg operation –

don't worry, it wont shew. Debbie has grown into some doll – Tim did not recognise her at a dance with the result that Robt. Josephson danced with her all night.

The McKenzies are well and old Jeff is still up and about altho they both hit the bottle now and then and become a bit weepy.

The eldest Higgs, is it Murray <Dennis>, is working on construction jobs in Cairns.

The HV Rowing Club has a new site about 400 yards south of the old one and they tendered for a Power Board building which they got for £150, chopped it in half, and re-erected it on the new site much to the chagrin of the Petone rowers who have been trying to block them.

On Saturday evening we are having a dinner at home for some of the locals and we have had to get a new clutch or something in the car, 27 quids worth.

I think that's about all Martin. Oh! I'm well, managing to keep my weight down to 12 stone which is better than the 13 stone I was this time last year. The boss is off to USA and UK.

Love from us all,

Dad



B. Kerr, Dillon St. Lowry Bay, WELLINGTON NZ  
23.6.65

Dear Martin,

I posted off two parcels of books yesterday:-

No. 1

Selected Works - Marx, Engels - Vol II  
Systems & Processes in Politics - Kaplan  
Politics - Lasswell  
Public Opinion & American Democracy - VO Key  
Les Fleurs du Mal - Chas. Baudelaire  
Antigone - Jean Anouilh  
La Symphonie Pastorale - Andre Gide  
L'Imoraliste - " "

No. 2

States & Morals - Weldon  
Society & Power - Rich. A. Schermerhorn  
Political Life - Robt. E. Lane  
La Peste - Alb. Camus  
Bureaucracy in Mod. Society - Ptr M. Blau  
Class & Society - Kurt Meyer  
NZ Politics in Action - Chapman, Jackson, Mitchell  
Political Parties - Michels

Which we trust will arrive with reasonable despatch.

We also got your last letter with two boxes of slides. Don't worry about them. All your slides have been kept. We do realise

the value of them and they will be well looked after.

Pat wants a show on Sat. evening of some of the more 'interesting' ones, so tonight I shall go thru them and endeavour translate your writing upon them.

You mentioned dental treatment and Pat imagined you had all your 'beautiful teeth removed'

Love from all

Dad

DDA  
Angoram  
Sepik District  
30 June 1965

Dear Family,

Thanks for the letter Dad Re Doolan Etc. I've written to Pia and Matey <paternal grandmother>.

Sounds as if things are really moving for winter. Dad tripping around the branches and Mum taking a job. I don't know about Tim & *his* sex. Let's see him get to Varsity first then he can worry about it? How's his work going anyway? School Cert about four months or less away you know.

Life is pretty quiet here in Angoram. Have barely left the office in more than a month. I'll probably be like this for another couple of months.

I've got a young NZer from Auckland staying with me at the moment, who will going to Maprik soon. Dave Cook who is also staying with me has just returned from the Ramu River, and made £20 on Croc. skins, as well as getting a few reasonable

artefacts.

Yesterday there was a bit of a panic on when a native walked in with a beautifully carved crocodile table out of *kwikila* hardwood and a five-foot carved crocodile – also well done. The panic was on – there is Swedish artefact collector here with tons of cash – and seeing him approaching I rushed my native seller off and payed him £25 for the lot. Something which would be worth about £100 down south. So I now have the house looking quite good.

The mosquitoes are not so much a worry, now that the dry season is on us and also because I'm getting used of them after Telefomin. I'm keeping pretty fit too with quite long swims in the Sepik River most days.

Thanks for getting onto those books Dad – Popper, I'm sure is around somewhere.

Cheers for now,

Love

Martin

PS did you get those two boxes of slides of NG sent 2 weeks ago?

DDA  
Anoram  
Sepik District.  
7 July 1965

Dear Mother,

Happy Birthday.

I think I have the date right this time – but it is not reinforced by any real material gift. Instead I enclose a couple of stories which I have picked up in my travels. Actually I'm in the middle of compiling a few more but as I must catch the mail tomorrow – you can only have two. I'll send the others later.

From these stories you will see what a primitive country basically New Guinea is – yet I find it fascinating and with honest people – above all honest with things dear to the heart. You should enjoy them.

Life at Anoram has been especially quiet – though I had a great last weekend water skiing in which I finally mastered one ski.

Dad says that you are working – well it will certainly be a change from golf.

Thank dad for sending those books to me – I'll be looking forward to them avidly.

At the moment I have a young Aucklander, Rob. Sintes staying with me – he has been buying a few artefacts. You never know he may drop in and let your know how I'm getting along.

Oh well that seems to be all for now,

Love,

Martin

<Note: see **17. Stories Gathered by Martin Kerr during 1964-65** >

Department of District Administration,  
Angoram,  
Sepik District, TPNG  
18 August 1965

Dear Dad and Mum,

Sorry of the tardiness in birthday greetings Dad, but anyway  
Happy Birthday.

For the past month I have been on patrol mainly along the River from Angoram to the Mouth. Most of it was by canoe, though with the dry season on us we had to get out and push a few times. The coast along the Murik Lakes was very pleasant – not only did we have crabs, crayfish and fresh fish, but large oysters as well. There was also a slight surf running and so Dave Bretherton – Ex St Clair – and self had a bit of splashing around. From the Muriks we moved along the East Coast and into the Porapora. There the people are pretty primitive as far as a cash income is concerned and telling them that they are going to get a Local Government Council was often like talking to the brick wall. The battle of the Missions - AOG vs RC was going on in one place and consequently two airstrips – one already completed – have gone up two hours walk apart! Gee its good to be a heathen – except they heathens have to do all the work.

I have been on the Station for a week now – catching up on correspondence and writing a Patrol Report. Next week I'm off

up to the Middle Sepik on a small patrol of my own. At least this way one can save a bit of money – and I'm really beginning to think about my leave.

Thanks for the advice on the books Dad – so far I have received no. 2 parcel. And thanks for the two bundles of Mags – Keep it up. I've sent another box of slides to Auckland – you will no doubt receive them in due course.

Thanks for your letter Mum – the touch typing does not look very professional yet – with that V8 of yours I reckon you would make a pretty good 'rocker'. Just wait to Tim gets hold of it. When I come on leave I will be buying a car – so if you want something smaller we could come to some arrangement so I can go honeymooning around in grand style. What happened to the Jefferies anyway – who runs them round? I'm sure they would not be too much of a tie if you were.

Got a letter from Tim, too. What exactly is he doing? It doesn't sound like much school work! What with pimple trouble, someone is looking after him too well.

I got a short note off to Pia – tells me that Rangihō has a ruptured spleen but should pull through. Some people have all the luck don't they?

And... got a note from Hilary, too along with photos of her bonny family. Also mentions Kirsty and Mrs Mac. What is Kirsty doing? Hilary seems to think that Kirsty is really introvert – whatever that is.

Gee... I reckon I'm about due for a write up in the *Eastbourne Sun* – you know the sort of thing – Lowry Bay man makes initial contact with cannibals near the West Irian Border... Bull... etc. Well it's true anyway.

Angoram is still pretty quiet, though I have really got my house looking nice with some very good artefacts as furniture. During the afternoons, if I'm not swimming I take out a native

canoe – and standing up in one of those things has taken me over a month to master – let alone propel myself.

Sorry to hear that you could not get to the HVRC prize giving. I believe I donated a cup?

Old Hilary really has concern about my future – when you see her tell her that Tony her beloved husband only began to settle down a few years ago when he was over thirty.

Well that is just about all the news for now,

Love,

Martin

<undated - probably 28 September 1965 or thereabouts>

DDA  
Angoram  
Sepik District,  
T.N.G.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Well it has been some time since I have written. The point is that I have been out on patrol for nearly two months broken into two halves with a week on the Station in between. The second patrol was my first 'solo' patrol which was spent in the Middle Sepik Census Division on about 100 miles of the Sepik River in a double canoe. This is the most sophisticated area of the Sepik and they're creating the most problems as the population is considered big-headed, emotional as well as lazy as far as

earning money is concerned. No serious trouble was encountered though I almost had a riot on my hands at a place called Mindibit. Since then a man from that place has been calaboosed for attempting to murder another man. He bashed him over the head a few times with a piece of wood and then dropped him into the muddy Sepik and sat on him. In fact things have been pretty hectic this week. The jail is full – the Colonial Dogs are really pushing it hard! Anyway, catching two dozen men around a four gallon drum of meths is going beyond a joke since there is a law against drinking this stuff. Really 'spirits' is such a popular drink – with no visible bad results – it's a wonder they don't throw the law out and legalise drinking meths.

Not surprised you are not sweltering in the heat of the dry season and are in the process of a cool spring. Not much else is happening of note, except that I've purchased a ZENITH radio second hand and heard from NZ the other morning that Hancox had failed on his second attempt across the Channel. How is Hilary and Tony <Hancox's coach> anyway? I got a nice note and photos of their family – or have I already mentioned it? Seems as if Wellington really is changing. Will I recognise it when I return with all this town planning going on? Or are they just talking about it. What! Lowry Bay to get a shop, etc, well I couldn't think of a better thing... it's better than trudging up the road to Pt Howard to see the store closed. So Joe Pitt has left – younger blood replacing him too. I still have not got the full story about the Macallans. Is Kirsty still an eligible spinster or another Charlotte Bronte? And thank you for the continued magazine service. Ag. journals too. While on patrol I had a look over a Native cattle project at Timbunke – I was quite impressed and I gave the Mission a couple of copies. I have now received all those text books. Though I don't look at them often, it is really good to get the odd book out and glance through it and



think how hard it was to pass those cursed exams when at a glance now I know what I should have read between the lines. Learning becomes so much easier when one does not have to swat. Which brings me to Tim. How is he going to go this year? That's the question and a burning one too. I sincerely hope he does well for his own sake.

I've sent a couple of boxes of slides to Auckland you should get them in due course.

By the way could I mention a few financial and business points now? About that Insurance Dad which you have out for us. Are you still paying? Or what? I have taken out £5000 with T&G Australia and a few more quid to pay out should not bother me. If there is anything you want Dad just let me know. If I come home next year I'll have over £600 Australian. If you want me to invest it in something and make a swap let me know. I have already mortgaged a section (£500) in Brisbane in the event of ever having to get a car in NZ. At the moment I really do not know what to do about my leave, with your help Dad a cheap berth to the UK and back would not go amiss though I may need more than three months to do that. Besides I do have a girl friend back home who may be coming up here next year. In the meantime I'm looking around for more lucrative jobs (I've dropped £500 on my degree qualification in not becoming a clerk instead of a CPO) though I'm pretty satisfied with what I've got till I go on leave. Getting to know this brand of native is not easy for my temperament and learning to be firm, fair and politik is very much part of my everyday training. The one thing I can't get used to is domestic servants – the spiviest mob under the sun. My efforts to get honesty have been pretty good comparing with other people, but I still go to put some sugar in my tea and find the bowl empty. You can't win!

Well my regards to all,

Love,

Martin

DDA  
Angoram  
Sepik District,  
NEW GUINEA  
28 September 1965

Dear Tim,

Well how are you getting on? I have not written for a while, but I do not suppose you noticed since you will have been no doubt working so hard for those exams, which you are going to get, aren't you?

Since I last wrote I have been out on two long patrols – one down to the Mouth of the Sepik River with Dave Bretherton and the other on my own up the River 100 miles from Angoram. Had a bloody good time, and not too much trouble with the big-headed Sepiks. Most of the work was doing census, though I divorced a few people (following Native custom) and sent a few into the Station for Calaboose.

This week the Director of our Department and the District Commissioner called in. We had a bit of a cocktail party at the ADC's place and I fronted up and asked the Director down to the CPOs' barracks for a whisky. What's more, they came and we had a bloody good evening grogging on. I'm not sure whether

the ADC (my boss) liked it, but I'm getting a bit sick of being a shit-arsed cadet, when I can get £500 more as a clerk. Nevertheless I'm sticking to it and applying for every job that's going, now being able to put forward my knowledge of Native custom and Pidgin as a qualification besides BA, which means F-all as far as my Department is concerned.

Tonite is my first night off the beer for a while. First it was the Army Landing Craft, where, with the skipper and engineer, as well as a kanaka-hating PIR (Pacific Islands Regiment) instructor – all of whom have been banished to the Territory from Australia, and therefore are a funny mob – really hit the slops. Then came the director, and last night we had a go at the diddyman's (agric. officer) beer.

What has been going on in Firth House? And are you driving the coupé about yet – you know DEMO fashion. Well let us know the news before I get out on patrol again.

Oh, see enclosed a couple of stories – they may be of interest.

Cheers for now,

Martin

<Note: **17. Stories Gathered by Martin Kerr during 1964-65**>

Sub District Office  
Angoram  
SEPIK DISTRICT

TNG

27 October 1965

Dear Mum and Dad,

Well I've just received a very nice lot of magazines which means a 100% increase of morale for me. Nothing but Springboks! Sounds as if people have been either flat out supporting them or criticising them or playing them. And the Listeners and Sunday Papers – The *Listener* is really a high class magazine.

I've taken this opportunity to write now as I may be going out on patrol for a few weeks soon and I would like to mention the fact that I have come up for a twelve-month security check and there may be a few letters coming by way of Canberra to the following – Cyril Dentice, Bob Dalgliesh and Tony Antonievich. This is just a routine thing which I think has just been restricted to Border Districts in the past and maybe still is.

I received a short note from Tim. I reckon he is a bit hopeless. Who can be proud of sending one of his educators away with a nervous breakdown? We will see who breaks down when Tim does not get his SC though he sounds intelligent enough – just that I don't think he is directly interested with school work at hand. And what about the coupé? A real DEMO kid I would say. Perhaps a bit of Mummy's boy too? He was telling me he was all set to come to NG. Well if you think it will do him good send him though I don't think he will be the innocent little boy he is now when he returns. As far as I can make out I will be on or around the station over Christmas, though the return fare from Australia would be in the vicinity of £120 from nearest departure points.

Angoram has not been too quiet these past two weeks. Old 'easy easy' Bob the labour recruiter has been perpetually drunk

on his double canoe on the water front all week and last week a trader went and sacrificed his dog on our boss's furniture. People do queer things in this heat ...

Well that seems to be about all. Summer is by now well on the way and I suppose you will be thinking of setting off for some sort of holiday.

Cheers for now,

Love,

Martin

Dept District Administration  
Angoram  
4 Jan. 1966

Dear Mother & Father,

Thanks for the letter Mother – glad you like the face. I should have a few more in a box coming by sea when I come home.

Xmas went very well having been to No.2 Kiap's place for Xmas dinner with drinks at the ADC's place beforehand. We had a few hectic parties at the club and on the day after boxing day three of us went down to MURIK Lakes in the Govt speed boat, which are situated at the mouth of the Sepik River. Back for a couple of days at the office and then onto New Year festivities – a great party on New Year's Eve with people off an ocean going (on-its first-trip-around-the-world) yacht – but alas no single women, except one fifteen year old and very young.

Well I hope you had a very happy Xmas & New Year and that Tim will soon receive successful SC results.

I'm set to fly to Sydney on 5 February. I've been accepted into 1966 Hons course and I'm really looking forward to getting on with very solid nine months university studies. Just think the old boy is coming home – changed very much I suppose – and probably for the better! I have a lot to do so I will not be interrupting your going-into-old-age-routine too much.

Sorry to hear Dianne has been sort of jilted – sent her a card to cheer her up – anyway it should not be long before she is "available" again.

Well it won't be long now. Good old NZ here I come!

Love,

Martin

Jan 6 <1966>

108 Lucinda Av.  
Wahroonga <New South Wales>

Dear Martin,

Many thanks for the loan of your 3 slides of Kamangowi potters – enclosed herewith – have had duplicates made from them & they'll certainly be most valuable to include in my lecture to potters here, as I have nothing else on that area.

I wonder if you could give me any more information on

Kamangowi potting (or any other) or suggest anyone who might be able to.

For instance one of the potters here points out to me that the carving in one of the ones I collected has been done after firing, & I see now that it certainly looks like it – you can see where they have carved through the blackened fired surface. Do you know if this is always so or are they sometimes carved in the hardened clay (leather hard is our term for it) before firing? Do you know or could you find out how & for how long the firing is done? Is the carved decoration always done by men only at Kamangowi as someone tells me?

Stan Moriarty, a collecting friend of ours, has shown me conical shaped bowls, used blackened ones, which he collected at KARAM where he thought they had been made. They look identical to the Kamangowi pots to me so I feel its more likely they'd been traded to Karam (which incidentally I can't find on our map – only the Keram River). So – question – Do you know if small pots are made anywhere else but Kamangowi area? i.e. Koiwat & Charapa too according to our boy on the boat, Cletus Smank <? second name>.

As for the making of the bowl – is this right? The woman potter collects the clay in a bilum bag, beats it with a long handled stick, then rolls thick pieces between her hands in the air until she has a pile of these, then takes the thick pieces & rolls them thinner (to pencil thickness) with her hands on a flat board. Should be more detail of course for the preparation. From here I don't know what happens – maybe you told me & I forgot to write it down! Does she start coiling the pointed bottom of the pot & then rests it in a grass ring or depression in the ground as they do elsewhere in N.G., or does she coil the wide mouth first and build up to a point? Does she use a *scraper to join the coils* & smooth & shape it or just her fingers? Is it dried in the sun or

in the *shade*? *How many pots do they fire at a time?*

Can you stand any more?!

Do you know anything of pot making at Biwat or Poro Poro areas? And can you suggest anyone to tell me a bit more of Aibom pot making? Here I saw quite a lot myself but didn't have time to ask all the necessary questions.

Apart from giving a lecture I am meant to be writing an article for our Potters Society mag, & am getting so interested in the whole subject I would love to spend more time in TPNG one day & learn enough to do a fairly thorough survey of all the potting villages. It's a thing that's hardly been touched on as far as I can discover & should be done before it's too late. We managed to get back 22 pots on all our changes of planes to Sydney, all whole except one small break. Some were carried in baskets, etc as personal luggage – a few were excess luggage. These are mostly for our Gallery, Museum & Tech. Ceramic Dept collections so I'm very pleased to have got so many back whole. Peter Johnson is sending all the bigger Aibom ones, still keeping my fingers crossed on those.

Am sending this letter C/- Mr McCabe <ADC> in case you are not in Angoram so he can forward it or send me your address. I remember that you were possibly coming down for more study. This mass of questions is a very tall order I realise but I would be most grateful for any answers at all even only one!

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Tuckson



Department of District Administration,  
ANGORAM.  
27 January 1966.

Dear Mrs Tuckson,

Thankyou for your letter. I am glad that you got most of your pottery back safely. It's marvellous how absorbed one can get in this fascinating subject – so fascinating in fact that there is a German or German-Swiss couple, Mr & Mrs Schuster at Aibom doing a special pottery study. The Schusters may be contacted at the RC Mission, Chambri Lakes. I'm sure they can help you. Also there is a film out, or about to be released called *Women of Aibom* by Boris Cook. Boris Cook (deceased) places a special emphasis of pottery making in this film I believe.

Well how can I help you now? Since you left I went up the Yuat River and into the Grass Country from Biwat to a place called Yaul, Dimiri and Maruwat, which is a pottery making centre of the area. There I watched women making large cooking and storage pots. This is done in the same manner as at Kamangau with clay kneaded and later turned in the woman's lap (see Koiwat slides which you may keep) – except with the larger pots the rolls of clay are thicker and up to about an inch across. About a quarter of the pot is built in the woman's lap, then it is placed in a grass ring and the work continued. From start to finish I saw a pot built up in about five minutes – truly remarkable – then the woman scrapes the inside of the pot with a coconut shell and water. I did not see how the outside is finished, but I dare say a period of time is allowed for the clay to become more firm to manipulate the pot.

The pot when finished, may or may not be designed by the

woman – anyway the significance of it does not appear to be great. In Kamangau and Koiwat the job of designing is definitely a man's job for the small food dishes. The pot is then left in the shade, but I do not know for how long, then it is fired in an open fire.

Firing is done by placing the pot, or pots (two or three) on some large broken pots. Large stones would probably be used if available. This is done I suppose in order to let the fire circulate. When this is done old roofing palms (moreta - <sago leaves>) are placed over the pots and a fire set up. You may be able to work out how long this process goes for. The fireplace looks like this:

<hand drawn diagram> Moreta  
(sago leaves) > < pot to be fired <top up>  
<picture of a storage pot with  
small neck opening>  
< old pots

I daresay the pot is turned during the process so that it is fully fired, but I cannot confirm this. So much for the pot making process in the Grass Country. Though it would probably be the same in Aibom for large pots. As for carving of pots after firing I find it hard to believe – but if evidence points to this then it must be true.

To sum up:

1. Pots are made by the circular building up of clay 'ropes' varying in thickness according to the size of the product required, from the bottom to the top.

2. A pot is made in the lap of a woman until it has reached about ten inches across, then it is put in a grass ring for the completion of the 'building-up' process.
3. Pots (cooking and storage) are usually designed by the women. This is so for the Grass Country but it is not so for Koiwat and Kamangai. Men in the Grass Country pottery making villages do however fashion crude statues and pot boiling stands.
4. Pots are left in the shade before firing.
5. Pots are fired in an open well ventilated fire of *dry* sago leaves.
6. Pottery manufacture is carried out in the following villages:

Yaul, Dimiri and Maruwat of Grass  
Country  
Kamangai and Koiwat of Kwongai  
Aibom at Chambri Lakes  
Manmong of Porapora  
Terebu near Wewak for coastal villages  
including Murik Lakes  
'Bosman' ? near Bogia.

Well that is about all. If I can be of further assistance I may be contacted at Dillon St, Lowry Bay, Wellington. Cletus says he has written to you so you may get more information from him

I am off to NZ in a week's time and I'm really looking forward to it. May I conclude in wishing you and your husband the best of fortune in your most interesting vocations.

Yours faithfully,

Martin Kerr

<After spending nearly ten months in New Zealand, Martin is back on the Sepik River, after accepting a job from John Pasquarelli.>

Las Kompani Pty Ltd  
Ambunti,  
Sepik River  
New Guinea  
Wed. 30/11/66

Dear Mum & Dad,

Well I'm here after two hectic days. I was met by Pasquarelli at Lae and went to Wewak on Tuesday morning. Today we flew out to Ambunti – and since then I've been helping Warren

Hanson unload trade goods and fuel for the store. It's a good set up here. I'm glad I'm out of the govt. Two years up here should be quite profitable, Dad if I take your advice.

Well I did not get married <to Maree Papesch doing MA in German at the University of Auckland> and I don't know about my exam results – but Tim Johnston should let you know.

Thanks so much for the year's free bludge – I hope in the near future to repay you to the full. Anyway I think we may have all learned something this year.

My love to Tim and Hilary etc.

Cheers,

Martin

Las Kompani  
Ambunti  
8 Jan. 1967

Dear Mum, Dad Tim and Hilary,

Thanks for the letter, Mum. It looks as if there is any writing to do you are always there with the typewriter. What's Tim doing? Or is he too tired from rowing? It's good to see him at it anyway and I hope he makes a bird of it to include the NZ Varsities 8 next Easter.

Xmas went very well at Angoram, and you will get some idea what I was up to from the tape I sent you. I just spent three days on the trip up to Ambunti and am spending the Sunday

getting stuff together for the big crocodile shoot when the 'dry water' comes. It really is a great life. The natives get one down a bit and the mosquitoes are exceptionally vicious but all in all I'm my own boss and can build and do what I like if it means a greater bonus for me and a profit for the company.

Thanks for the newspaper results. Tim Johnston thought I knew that a 62 pass was a second class. Tim says that Dr Robinson my assessor thought I worked very well – and I suppose now that I did even though I had two years off. There were no real exceptions in the class except that Wayne Robinson expected a second first and Tim Johnston who came third in the class was very surprised. The year *has* been a successful one thanks to you all and it will stand me in very good stead for any job with the government. A second class honours is nothing to be sneezed at. Maree got a second-second, too.

I'm off up to May River tomorrow. Have you got that map out? It will be quite lonely but I have all the comforts and soon I will send usual slides. A couple of years up here will do no harm and I may turn out that book after all. What is more I will have a chance to save some money. Everybody here seems to be just back or going to Japan. I may eventually head that way.

Enclosed is \$2 and a list of addresses I would like Dad to obtain. If you could send the papers of the Conference Lines with appropriate manila envelopes it would be most appreciated. I think if I sent a personal copy to all involved would be the right thing to do.

My love to you all,

Martin

May River,  
Sepik District,  
New Guinea

22 February 1967

Dear Mum and Dad,

Thanks very much for the dissertations and envelopes. And also for the newspaper cuttings. It looks as if Hutt is going to have a go, though on their results so far they have not been doing that well. But by the time you get this letter you should know if Hutt gets a Red Coat. <NZ Champion 8 1967>

I am now at Ambunti and move back to May River tomorrow on one of my canoes. Jack, Warren and I have had a good chance to discuss the future plans and it seems that I will be flat out supplying my shooters and doing a bit myself. This coming 'dry water' is going to tell whether we make any money.

I am glad you enjoyed my tape recording. If I get a chance I'll send another.

As for Tim. At this stage not knowing what to do is a bit of a blow. I don't think he likes the idea of having to work. Well, we all must some day if we are going to stay out of the streams of mediocrity. I'm going flat out to save some cash so I can invest when I return to Australia.

How's Hilary? And are you fit and well after that virus Dad. I'm in the middle of my first cold ever in NG and am I miserable, but still I should be rid of it in a few days.

Well that seems to be all for now. Those slides should give you some idea what things are like. We are ready for the long knives as well as for a bit of trading.

Cheers for now,

Martin

<Letter to Tim Kerr, in Wellington. With reference to rowing, Martin attended a rowing reunion of the former Hutt Valley Rowing Club with his twin sister, Hilary and Jeune Savage/King (née Morgan) in Petone, NZ, 11 August, 2007: Tim was not able to make it up from Christchurch owing to a vehicle breakdown. Martin met with coach Tony Antonievich and all the members of his four and eight (except Brian Giles) who won the maiden fours (Peter Wear, Mark Irwin, Martin Kerr, Ross Collinge, Bruce Jones, cox) and maiden eights (Wear, Kerr, Irwin, Rob. Bucket, Collinge, Andrews, Gibbons, Giles, Bruce Jones, cox) at the NZ Championships, Lake Waihola, 1964. Collinge got an Olympic gold medal in the coxed fours in Mexico, 1968 and a silver in the coxless fours, 1972.>

May River  
1 June 1967

Dear Tim,

Thanks for your letter. I got a lot from it, and thanks for the newspapers. Dad tells me you have not been going so well, and of course it is this term which counts, so I hope your head is



down and arse is up ready for action.

I wrote to Dad from Green River and it had to be brief because of the arrival of an aircraft. But here back at May River there is the same old monotony, nothing happens, the last cannibal feast was in 1958 and ten years later nothing but quiet and rain, punctuated by the odd trouble with my mistress and with my boys.

I've just got back from Green River and now am awaiting a few supplies on the Govt work boat which leaves Ambunti and arrives on Sunday. Then I will be able to finish work on a new modern double canoe and then head for Ambunti to collect our new jet boat – if it is in working order. Early last month I went up to the lower MIANMIN in search of gold and copal gum – very poor results – but it does bear further investigation with the jet boat.

Pasquarelli is heading to Brisbane for few days and then comes back to the House of Assembly armed with a fiery political speech and a few ideas from your truly. The future is pretty poor for the Sepik and what with the over-fierce competition in our trade I find we're virtually working for nothing. The only compensation is our independence and nowhere could there be a more independent operator than me. I am completely on my own and now have five canoes operating the upper Sepik as far as West Irian. My opposition had three or four canoes but is in financial difficulties at the moment, but before long it will be really fierce trying to get skins out of the kanakas. In the meantime I'm negotiating to buy some cattle so I can get fresh milk at May River, and am also waiting for a possible interview for a public relations job with the Bougainville Copper Project for Conzinc Rio Tinto.

With monotonous regularity I churn out chapters of my book, 'Paradise my Goal' and have finished chapter 13. I have a

publisher already lined up and by the end of the year I should have a draft ready to go into print. I'm really feeling pretty confident about it all. From the struggles getting the first five chapters down I find writing comes easily as long as I remain simple and have something to say. This varsity life puts too much emphasis on bullshit in words – really if you have something to say – say it and nine times out of ten people will listen. This should be a hint to you, Tim. Just do the bare minimum of work and spend the rest of the time contemplating and summarising your position into a relevant related whole in society and you can't go wrong writing essays. Live a full life, play about with other girls and really you can't go wrong – as long as you don't take yourself too seriously. Varsity is just a phase – difficult nevertheless – but just a phase. I spent too long there and was reluctant to leave, but now once out for good I find life really quite rich and rewarding, even if I have no European company within 200 miles or have TV and other amenities. Really, people are the same everywhere whether they have PhD after their name or a bone through their nose. It's all a matter of relativity. The only difference up here is that I spend most of my time surviving while you spend yours keeping up with the Jones. My life therefore lends more interest.

Please give, Mum, Dad and Hilary my love.

What's happened about the NZ rowing crew? Did, or have Collinge and the other bloke stayed with the squad? Obviously they were picked out of that 'four' not for their rowing, but for their ability to bend with the wind. Though Collinge is a devoted rower he is not a devoted Tony man, whereas Wear and Irwin were. Tony has not been picked as the <Olympic> coach and probably he never will be.

I was surprised to hear you sort of never make the varsity 8. Actually I don't think the standard has changed much from our

day. I could still row for that eight if I had bothered to stick it out – but why stick it out when one can live it out and enjoy it stuck in a lonely river miles from it all. I reckon I should last here to Xmas if I don't get the Conzinc Rio Tinto job – perhaps longer depending on the company finances and progress of my book.

Cheers for now,

Martin

PS Write more often it may do you good.

May River  
East Sepik  
New Guinea  
3 August 1967

Dear Mum, Dad & Tim,

Thanks for the letter and cuttings, Mum. All very interesting. I suppose you did finally see my name appear in the Graduates list in those cuttings. Martin Kerr BA(Hons) II Class (Second Division).

At the moment I am on the river somewhere between Ambunti and May River. The mosquitoes are really bad here and even during the day they make dive bombing attacks at you.

Sorry to hear the Josephsons are shifting. Please give them my best wishes and if I had £25,000 I would love to buy their

house! Diane on a trip overseas and everyone else either married or getting married. It looks as if Martin will be single for a few years yet – in fact, many years. There is such an independence for me up here that I would find it hard to conform again. My beard is thriving and my hair is long and not going too grey. To keep fit I run six times round the station at May River and swim across the river.

For intellectual stimulation I am writing my book and am now redrafting nineteen chapters of it. So far I have kept to the autobiographical with me in the background and if on the little work I have done, I can get it published, then I will probably attempt a novel involving New Guinea. The patrol officer at May River, who is trying to do a degree and has given up thinks I've got a cheek to write a book – but still not all of us have literary ambition let alone talent!

Thus my stay here will probably not be for much longer. If we can get going with the tourist industry then I will stick around, but as far as crocodile skins are going Pasquarelli is so off side with the lazy Administration that we can't expect too much co-operation, and so not much by the way of profits. Tentatively I set a date to leave here 30th November, but anything may happen in the meantime. My idea is to go to Sydney to see my publisher and then look around for a job. Then I may pop over for Xmas. Certainly I think there is little point of working in New Zealand with its present difficulties. Tim had better start working and then start to specialise. For God's sake don't let him go like me. Afterall what can I do? Except the unusual, as I'm not qualified for anything else. Law is a long course but once the first couple of years are passed then one gets into the swing of things.

Alistair McPhail is probably coming over here sometime next month. He is now shareholder-director of an export

company which seeks markets overseas for NZ goods.

I'm pleased to hear Dad got his *Playboy*. I read the stories avidly and up here Pasqu's *Gourmet* are just the thing when I sit down and eat a meal of sago and fish.

I'm glad to hear Hilary is taking Tony's absence quite well. It's a pity she's pregnant as otherwise she could start playing single again. I have not written to her yet but give her my fondest regards.

Well it's birthday time. I missed yours Mum, Hilary and Tim's, but I was thinking about you on these occasions. How old will Dad be this month? I'm glad to hear my suit is all safe and sound. Could you shake the moths out of this and the DAKS one – I may be requiring them in a few months.

Cheers for now,

Martin

May River  
East Sepik,  
New Guinea.  
7 August

Dear Dad,

I have worked out that am worth a fair bit now and have made out a will leaving everything to my next-of-kin (you) who may appoint an executor and have the estate divided as he wishes among parents, brother and sister and any of my

descendants (if I've got any) or among their wards. Fairly simple but should get out of tax difficulties etc.

Could you shove all this in your safe deposit box, etc.

Cheers for now,

Martin

<note in pencil by Brian Kerr>:

Free Life Nat Mutual Life

\$10,000 Pol 5901337 dated 10/7/67

\$162.50 P.W. New Guinea Region

### W I L L

I, MARTIN DUNCAN KERR, born in Wellington, New Zealand on 14 June 1941 do bequeath in the event of my death all my personal possessions, insurance policies and property to my next-of-kin who will after appropriate legal advice or the appointment of an executor divide my estate in such proportions as he thinks fit among my parents, brother and sister and any of my dependents or their wards thereof.

If my death occurs in New Guinea a single stone cairn will mark where I have fallen and a bronze or brass plaque may be inserted with particulars of name, age, cause of death etc and these words

HE LIVED TO DIE FREE.

Signed MARTIN KERR on this seventh day of August 1967 before Mr B. Maume, Assistant District Officer, at May River Patrol Post, East Sepik, New Guinea.

Signed B. MAUME, witness

and before Constable Heny

Signed CONSTABLE HENY

May River  
28 August 1967

Dear Mum, Dad, Tim, Hilary, etc,

How's things? Have not heard from you for a while. Did you get those documents Dad? And how did you manage for the floods, etc.

For the past week I have been away from May River. There have been a few tribal murders up there and the kiaps are getting on fine without me. That chap <Douglas Newton> who sent me that photo which sits in Hélène's < Hélène Felix, French Ambassador's daughter in NZ 1962> picture is up here doing further research and with his wife we went into Maprik for a few days. It really was a good break and I have returned to find Pasq. and Gilmore off to the House of Assembly and Warren off to Amboin, Angoram and Madang. There are about four Kiwis up

here at the moment. So far, I have missed them and they are doing a geological survey of the April River. In a few weeks I will be up at May. In a fortnight I will be in Wewak for the Liquor Licensing Commission – having a bit of trouble to sell grog at the May store – unlike NZ one can get beer, etc at the local grocers once he gets a licence.

Have struck difficulties with my book. I like to think I have completed it but Doug Newton, the curator and writer is crying out for more sex, so I will have to give what the sick American readers want, but with my time cut out for the next month there will not be much time to write.

We had an Argentinian millionaire with us for a few days – armed with a Hasselblad camera. Paying \$100 a day we showed him the sights in the jet boat, which at last seems to be functioning properly.

At the moment there is a fitness campaign going on at Ambunti – that is for all except some kiaps who are rotting in alcohol. In Maprik I met up with my girlfriend (Lisa Laps), but alas a missionary she does not drink or smoke – so it looks as if I have drawn a blank. Also in Maprik I got talking to an old gold miner – there is a hell of a lot of gold about it seems – it is all a matter of striking it rich, so some of us may be heading for the hills in a few weeks. Thus Dad could you air-freight my pack over to me at AMBUNTI. Enclosed is a cheque for \$12 – anything left over – then I would appreciate some of those good old woollen work socks of fawn colour, size 11½.

I hope Tim is going well, though I begin to wonder what's the rush? The yanks are a pretty sick lot at the moment. This could be indicative of greater education and faster decay. In fact I reckon I might stay bush for a while yet, which means my planned trip to Aussie is delayed for a while. If I can't go down with a book to publish, then I would have to start all over again.



Get that frame pack out as soon as you can, Dad – any extra cost, just sing out.

Cheers for now,

Martin

Ambunti

21 November 1967

Dear Dad,

Just a short note to let you know my plans.

Have just finished my book. M/s enclosed which you may enjoy reading. Since the company has undergone a change of management I have found it most convenient at this stage to call it a day and follow the M/S down to Sydney where I can hoik it around a few publishers. From there I do not know where I will go, but I just received a cheque through the mail for some writing I did, so things are looking up and I may enter the journalists profession.

In the meantime rest assured that I am fit and well and that you, too, are much refreshed after Tokyo.

But for the first fortnight in Sydney I will be getting the feel of things again before deciding whether I can afford to fly home for Christmas. My address in Sydney will be

C/- Jeune King, 4/21 Trewlawney St, Woollahra, 2025  
until I advise otherwise.

At the moment I feel as if I have completed a full, exciting as well as profitable year.

Love,

Martin

PS. And of course to the whole family.

Ambunti

27 Nov 1967

Dear Mum and Dad,

Just got your letter today Mum. Good news and the photo looks good. Dad looks as if he had put on a few years. Don't see Tim appear or is he out picking flowers? What's the world coming to?

I am quite pleased about retuning home – i.e. Sydney where I will be seeing a publisher about this book. Have a few articles to do for the Pacific Islands Monthly – one was published last month under 'Port Moresby Correspondent'. But I have a long way to go and it should be a lot easier when I know what's going on. While on the river I never knew what day it was.

Have just returned from the border with Richard Leahy, the NG explorer's son – opened up the highlands in 1933 – and shot a few crocs. Richard is here stuffing a few small crocodiles and I'll see if I can't get one down for Xmas. Also I'll be selling a few of them around Sydney to see if I can make a business of it, and if it is successful, then I'll have some time to sit around and write a bit more or something. There are some plans to start a business in the Trobriand Islands, also I am trying to find someone to finance me while I do the first trip solo across New Guinea – Vanimo to Kikori. A publisher may bite on this one.

Also got a letter from Jeune today. She seems to be having

husband trouble. Geoff who is now about 37 would just about have lost his marbles and so Jeune is looking round for a bit. Hope to be staying there for a couple of days till I know what I'm doing. The aim is to be home for Xmas, but I want to leave some cash in the bank – so just wait and see.

Have posted surface mail two bundles of newspaper Dad. It's holding hot cargo, but nothing illegal in NZ. Just one bundle is hot. The other is a blind. It's addressed to you at N.Z. Shipping Co.

That seems to be all just now. I have not packed yet and I am going into Wewak tomorrow. Jack has sold out to Warren and should be back in Brisbane around Xmas. I've been flat out all day fixing outboard motors.

I'll let you know my address when I get to Sydney. In the meantime I've asked that all my mail be forwarded to you.

Hope Tim has done well and that you find my MS interesting.

Martin

<Here ends fair copies of all preserved correspondence to and from Martin Kerr while in Papua New Guinea in the period July 1964 to January 1966 and November 1966 to November 1967. Subsequently, copies of old correspondence 1968-70 were received from Martin Kerr's brother, Timothy in October, 2007. These are included below. Stories, poems, patrol reports, research, articles and correspondence with publisher appear elsewhere on this CD.>

20/530New South head road  
Double Bay, 2028  
Sydney.

20 February 1968

Dear Tim,

How's things?

Beginning to settle down a bit now after five weeks hectic running around. Now it looks as if I will be teaching at Sydney Boys High for the rest of the year, all going well.

There are some interesting chaps on the staff, and the crowd in the languages staff room are extra good.

Thanks for the art examples, Tim. I am still sitting on them as Collins are not interested and have suggested I take the book to Landsdown Press which specialises in this sort of thing. The fact that they made this suggestion after reading it fairly thoroughly is all in my favour. Now I must wait for a few more weeks.

Did you, Tim pass that other article on the *Sunday Times*,

and are the photos and MS I gave you safe? I especially do not want to lose those photos of yours truly in a kumbung.

To keep me fit I have taken up rowing again at the Sydney Rowing Club. I am the only teacher who has rowed at Sydney Boys, and of course my services are much required, though things in boys rowing seem to be going fairly well at the moment.

Give my love to Mum and Dad and friends,

Cheers for now,

Martin

P.S. What the hell are you doing now. What about uni?

20/530 New South Head Road  
Double Bay, 2028,  
Sydney, N.S.W.  
<undated>

Dear Tim,

Well as you know by now Lisa and I are engaged and the wedding is for Friday, 23 August. As I do not know whether Mum and Dad will be able to come over, and because we are going to NZ for the honeymoon, could you represent the family as my Best Man?

Anyway I will leave you to discuss this with the oldies.

I think I owe you some money? But if you are thinking of an engagement present. How about obtaining a Wellington College

Old Boys tie and a Vic. tie. Everybody is very old boy conscious here and the ties would be appreciated.

Re. the *Wahine* disaster. There has been pretty good coverage over here. But the impression the papers give is that it is a shambles which could have been avoided.

Let Mum, Dad and Hilary know about my plans. And also ask if Hilary or Tony will be in Australia about that time.

Cheers for now,

Martin

P.S. \$2 enclosed for ties and also for engagement notice *Ev. Post* first Saturday.

The Engagement is announced between Lisa Marie Laps, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs E. Laps, Punchbowl, Sydney and Martin Duncan Kerr, elder son of Mr and Mrs B. Kerr of Lowry Bay.

11 Cooper Street,  
Double Bay,  
N.S.W. 2028

29 July 1968.

Dear Tim,

Just received your note and the tie. Thanks very much. I really appreciate this.

I have just written to Mum and Dad before your letter arrived and I enclosed a cheque for \$14 to cover the expenses of those drawings and ties as well as leaving a few bob for your self.

All I am waiting for now is a Wellington Old Boys Tie and perhaps a Vic. T-shirt which I can use for training – i.e. a T-shirt with the monogram splashed all over the front.

If you could get off your jaxy and do it straight away, this will do me fine.

Yes... I suppose you are right. Everyone wants to get married, but the older one gets the wiser one gets and the desire to tie oneself down to an old bat in dressing gown and slippers is not a pleasant thing to face. However, I am still waiting for the right girl to come along and that may take ten years or so.

Glad to hear you are making a go of Uni. Politics. And the camera club too. You should be able to run some great rackets there eg. a photographers' picnic where all the young birds jump around in the nude and the blokes literally and figuratively take photos madly. Etc, etc.... You've got to get these women organised. With the French Club I had a super efficient women's committee and I did the lot of them over, then skipped to New Guinea.

Ah well such is life. I've just shifted out of Church Point after a month's hard grind writing TV scripts. It could be a swinger, but the bloke I was writing with and I had a row and I got out. Writers are such temperamental creatures. But I'm off to a party next Saturday night. One of the mothers of my pupil's asked me, as she is a bit of a writer herself so I'm going to swing along with a bird or two to see what's going.

By the way that MS 'Sex and Sac Sac'. Could you send it over right away to the above address. I need it as I only have one worn out copy left. The NG University have the original and are really pleased with it. I hope to God that I get this Churchill

Fellowship so I can get up there and finish the thing off. Honestly, one is here in Sydney so busy trying to make money, that there is little time to sit down and write seriously.

Our rowing four could be a State champion. We are flat out three nights a week on weight training. Honestly, Tim, you don't know what you missed when you gave up rowing though I must admit rowing with Tony was a little too hectic.

Well old boy. Now you've got some money – i.e. if the cheque does not bounce get on with those little chores. You needn't send the MS registered mail. Just air mail.

Well, cheers for now,

Martin

22 Cooper St,  
Double Bay, 2028.  
NSW.

13 August 1968

Dear Tim,

I have just been looking through some old copies of correspondence and I find that when I last wrote to you regarding that MS and cheque, etc that I gave the address as 11 Cooper Street. Well I made a mistake. I am in no. 22 Cooper St., so I would appreciate it if you could inform me right away if in fact you did send something to that mistaken address.

Things seem to be swinging along OK. It is a pretty hectic



time of the year at the moment with trial school certificate exams on and me making a balls up of the reports, etc and having to straighten everything out again.

However, I got a finished script away to Ralph Smart Ex *Dangerman* and now *Riptide* and I hope for a cheque for a couple of hundred bucks any day!! But I never spend my time just wishing and am pretty flat out with a four which may turn into a pretty good senior four by the end of the season. But it is bloody hard work. Weights and running three nights a week for the last month, not to mention rowing during the week ends. However it keeps me occupied since there would be little else to do.

Well I hope that photo. club keeps you going. Really, I'm just dropping you a line this time to confirm that the MS and ties have not gone astray.

Cheers for now,

Martin

10 Trelawney Street  
Woollahra, 2025

6 December <1968>

Dear Tim,

Just a short note to let you know I'm getting married on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1968, Registrar General's Office, Sydney. To Marie Rugg. Have told Mum & Dad, but seemingly they have not got

my letter yet.

Marie is coming to NZ over New Year and will be looking you up so give her a ball, if Mum & Dad are away or something?

Now my book has been refused by Reed's (letter enclosed) so could you get hold of Lin Mayhew – she works as a receptionist, ground floor *Evening Post* to ascertain that she has sent the MS plus drawings off to Hodder & Stoughton.

I'm off to New Guinea on 18<sup>th</sup> and will be back late January.

Cheers,

Martin

32 Evans Street  
Balmain, NSW 2041

23 August 1970

Dear Tim,

Thanks for your long awaited letter. You know I don't think I ever had your address and Mum never gave it to me when I asked her about you.

Well it certainly seems that you are enjoying life with the job, photography, and girls for the boys. It seems hard to believe that Robert and Deedle are married and getting unmarried all at the same time. Believe me there is never any hurry to get married until one starts approaching thirty.

Well, at last it looks as if I've made it. 'The Dawn of

Darkness' or whatever they want to call it is coming into print. I do not know as yet whether your drawings are included but I would expect that you should expect 10% of what I clear after tax if they are included. That means you could make about \$100 on the first edition. Perhaps you would like me to start a savings account or investment of some kind here for you.

Thanks for the cuff-links they're really nice. With some of my leisure time I have been doing wood carving and also made myself an adze to do the hack work. However, I'm still pretty tender about the liver owing to this cursed hepatitis which nearly killed me. For a while I would have given a million dollars to have my health back again. Nevertheless Marie pulled me through.

I'm still teaching and it looks as if I may be one for a while yet. As the years slip away I take on more and more the image of my surroundings and even decided to purchase some land here which cost \$9,100 and is going to be the burden round our necks for the rest of our lives. However, even as I write this values are increasing by over 16% per annum and I cannot save this fast to keep up. So we should come out on top if we decide to sell.

Young David Duncan really is quite a chap. He now goes out to the girls place across the road since I've put Marie back to work to help pay for the land. He really loves it, and he gets a chance to meet other babies and kids.

At the moment we have some people over from NZ staying with the boys upstairs. Everyone comes here with the idea of making the big time. They may as well forget it! I've tried everything and with a bit of luck I'll have a couple of modest books to my name when I'm through. At least in NZ one can drink a lot of booze and not worry about where the next \$50 <is> coming from to pay for dentist, doctor etc, etc.

Enclosed is a badly printed shot from my Pentax. I bought

this last in New Guinea. But it is not a Spotmatic and that day the light metre ran out of battery. I find that I must take photos continually to get good shots.

Is Wilson building a block of flats next to our place? If Dad had a chance to buy and the money, he should have lapped it up. We could do with a good-sized family estate which we could all run as a company or something.

Anyway, Dad and Mum must be getting on in years and I suppose can't be bothered about increasing their debts.

Your work in the union field seems quite exciting. But a word of advice. I either keep out or lead unions – I was very influential in our own teacher strike. Since then I've had many other things to do. But to go against the good-old worker may get you into trouble. From my experience management couldn't care a damn if one of their underlings does the dirty work for them. Unless you get onto the executive staff you're fighting a lost cause. Besides you could get hurt ...

Unless I win a lot of money before Xmas it looks as if we may have to postpone our visit to NZ, again. We're hoping that some of you will come and visit us here.

Marie of course is very interested in meeting the mystery brother. That's one thing I find hard to understand. She goes over to meet the family and misses you and Hilary. Well ... you missed something believe me.

Cheers,

Martin

32 Evans Street,  
Balmain, NSW 2041.

<undated 1970>

Dear Tim,

How's things? We got a call from Mum and Dad the other night and it appears that they are both well after a holiday up north. Dad had bought the Jefferies' section and I'm glad he did. This will give him the opportunity to put a retirement cottage up on it or something and live off the rents of the house – or at least pay the cottage off.

I hear that you are working for Todds. Now I have an offer which you may like to consider.

John Pasquarelli is looking for a jet boat driver – single – for his new tourist venture on the Sepik River. He is offering \$100 per week all found plus bonus. But he is looking for more than just a driver – the man must be reliable and knows about Holden motors. His boats use V8 Holden 308s and are made in NZ. From what I can gather is that the boats take twelve people and the driver would take them about 180 miles down the Sepik and up the Karawari River to Amboin where he has a posh guest house. Over this distance with tourists paying \$80 a day nothing can go wrong – hence the need for mechanical know-how.

Since you have been in the trucking business and have worked over a few cars this may suit you. Also there is plenty of work for the reliable European in New Guinea – they are worth their weight in gold and if things did go wrong you could get a job anywhere else.

Now John Pasquarelli is saying that the applicant must get himself to New Guinea – which would cost you a bit – but this

case he may subsidise you. Leave is granted after 21 months, fares paid.

If you are interested, write John Pasquarelli, Box 300 Wewak, New Guinea, giving all details as to skills. Let me know if you do write and give me a copy of the letter you send to Pasq, so I can find out what to enlarge on.

If john gets this show <Karawari Lodge> off the ground it will be a terrific experience – and you will have the opportunity to meet many overseas visitors and knock off a few millionaires.

Hear from you soon,

Martin

## 4. Diary Note (February, 1965) of weekend hike from Telefomin to Bogelmin

<Copy of diary note made in February 1965 by cadet patrol officer Martin Kerr while on a weekend hike out of Telefomin.>

*Diary*

Saturday February

11.30 finished office early to prepare for unofficial bush walk to URAPMIN.

12.30 departed station with Cess (interpreter) <Sun?> and Anton (house boy) to URAPMIN.

12.40 Were joined by KIALIKMIN boy (Beck) <Beckinok> who was with us the whole trip. Walked to URAPMIN via Telefolip and BOGARIPMIN lands and duly arrived at House police URAPMIN five hours later after stopping a number of times for a rest. All of us carried small packs and myself a rifle. It was my purpose also to search and shoot wild pig.

Half way about some Drolingan (1 man, 2 meris, 2 pickininis) who offered us some of their sugar cane, then continued journey to URAPMIN.

At URAPMIN were met by villagers and after obtaining firewood and food settled down in house police to be joined by a TIFALMIN boy about 12 years (who had been before, I later heard, John Cochoran ADO for fornication or something - i.e. being seduced by a Chimbu policeman's daughter of which the

case was dismissed.) Also joined by two mission teachers (brothers) also brought radio & guitar. Listened to radio and slept while Cess returned to teachers houses for some time.

The TIFALMIN boy tended fire throughout the night as only had a blanket each.

Next day, by previous arrangement a Luluai went looking for wild pig 'Leg' and in the meantime a considerable line-up of villagers was seen in front of house police (40). The Luluai soon returned having seen no leg – and received a tin of meat from myself. A reminder by Cess told me to talk to villagers about work at airstrip and plantations.

The general impression was that they were satisfied with new pay rates and looked forward to future outside work. I departed telling them that if they had troubles to talk to No. 1 kiap as I was only No. 3. I also added that I would return some time to look for wild pig.

10.30 Departed down Urapmin Tifalmin valley towards Sepik. Crossed Sepik at narrow point and rested. Then walked on up to Misinmin where we rested & spoke with available villagers. A small house (by previous census patrol) was in the process of construction. From talk gained the impression that they were keen on airstrip work and that even after a fortnight's pay they were avid to come up for work again on Monday. Four of their number were going to NUMANUMA <Bougainville>.

4.00 Arrived at station after passing no. of single police at small stream 1 mile from station. Local meris were working in garden nearby.

On arriving home my boi purchased a bottle of rum off me and I took a few glasses of my own likewise. From the talk between preparation of meal & afterwards - it seems that my boi who was talking in house cook with 'Sepik' married boy belonging to No. 2 <kiap - patrol officer> that he had been



offered a woman. This woman was from KORORENMIN who sold us (my boi, John's <John Wearne, Assistant District Officer> plant operator & self) some taro the previous weekend on our way & returning from the mountains over the southern bank of the Sepik. From the talk I gathered that Anton would, though reluctantly, marry this girl on Sepik's advice and mine as she was now single though formerly betrothed. She seemed a reasonable type, so I asked Anton to bring her to me for my approval.

Also in this talk I heard that Anton had moved his quarters behind my place, because he was being kept awake by Meris (from Eliptamin) coming up to the police quarters for men.

How involved police are in this sort of situation? I do not know but in view of past troubles (1953) I think it would be wise that this

1. sort of thing was stopped.
2. Organised prostitution arranged by paying off Eliptamin men for all their women.

Though this is not a good thing as the situation now is, these women are after something besides sex, and the police have it by way of income.

I hope to bring this matter up with P.O.<patrol officer> Gill when the time is right.

## **5. Patrol Report – South Sepik Report No. 7 – 1964/65**

<Copy of carbon copy of report written by cadet patrol officer  
Martin Kerr, April 1965, approx. 6800 words>

Territory of Papua and New Guinea

### **PATROL REPORT**

District of South Sepik Report No. 7 – 1964/65

Patrol Conducted by Mr J.M. Wearne A.D.C.

Area Patrolled MIANMIN Census Division (Fak, Fiak, San  
and Wamu Valleys and Eastern bank of Sepik River)

Patrol Accompanied by Europeans Mr M.D. Kerr C.P.O.  
Natives 12 Police

Duration – From 25/2/1965 to 1/4/1965  
Number of days 36

Did Medical Assistant Accompany? Mr M. Aruki

Last Patrol Area <left blank>

Map Reference Sub-District Map, Telefomin

Objects of Patrol Follow up on previous patrol, consolidation of censused areas. Initial census of contacted groups. Contact with previously uncontacted groups. Establishment of suitable air drop site. General dissemination of Admin influence. Law and order.

<remainder of pro-forma report page not completed or seen as irrelevant>

<letter (copy) to the assistant district commissioner, Telefomin  
re M.D. Kerr>

Territory of Papua and New Guinea  
Department of District Administration,  
Sepik District,  
WEWAK.

COPY.

The Assistant District Commissioner  
Subdistrict Office  
TELEFOMIN.

TELEFOMIN PATROL NO 7 of 64/65.

The report of this patrol by Mr M.D. Kerr, into the Mianmin area, is acknowledged with thanks.

Mr. Kerr will have benefited greatly by being on this patrol and the experience gained will be of considerable value for his future work.

Your covering comments are noted and I concur with them. A check should be made on the next patrol into the area regarding the statement on child birth.

Mr. Kerr had written a very interesting report and has made some very good observations.

(Signed) J.E. WAKEFORD  
a/DISTRICT COMMISSIONER.

<blokey hand written note by Tim Gill, then patrol officer at Telefomin. Not shown here>

<copy of covering memo of patrol forwarded to 'Mr Kerr, Angoram'>

TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

File No. 67-1-2  
Subdistrict Office,  
TELEFOMIN.  
26th May, 1965.

District Commissioner  
Sepik District  
WEWAK.

TELEFOMIN PATROL NO.7 – 1964/65

Please find attached the report by Mr M.D.Kerr, Cadet Patrol Officer, of the above patrol together with Claim for Camping Allowance. Mr. Kerr accompanied me on my recent patrol to the Mianmin. This is Mr Kerr's first patrol and first report.

Diary  
6th March

The "Gold" was Iron Pyrites. There is pyrites throughout the area sometimes in sedimentary and sometimes in igneous rock.

Village Officials

I hope to use Fuerap as a guide, interpreter (Telefomin –

Mianmin languages) and convincer of our goodwill on a patrol in the near future to the Western Mianmin.

A Village Officials course for officials from all Telefomin areas will be held on 8th, 9th and 10th June.

Maseie of Tempsapmin arrived at Telefomin this day with Fireneip, the headman of the San River Kusarenmin who had run away from the patrol. I expect both these men was well as others from the southern part of the Mianmin area to attend the Village Officials Course.

Fireneip came in to apologise for previously running away and stated that Mawaimin people has asked Kusarenmins to kill two Fiyarimin youths. The necessary investigation will be undertaken on a future patrol following establishment of contact with the people of West Mianmin.

The two headmen were accompanied on their trip to Telefomin by fourteen Mianmin lads, most of whom attend school at Timelmin which is conducted by the Baptist Mission.

### Anthropological

I would like to confirm Mr Kerr's statement referring to Mianmin men assisting their wives in childbirth. In my experience this is most unusual in this Territory.

In addition to his being an asset to the actual patrol, Mr Kerr has presented an interesting first report.

(J.M. Wearne) Assistant District Commissioner. Attach.

1.

TELEFOMIN      SOUTH SEPIK DISTRICT

Patrol Report No 7 – 1964/65

Patrol Conducted by

J.M. Wearne A.D.C.

Area Patrolled

MIANMIN Census Division (Fak, Fiak, San and Wamu valleys between May River and Mt Stolle as far north as Ietema River; eastern bank of Sepik River from the Nam-Sepik junction)

Personnel Accompanying Patrol

M.D. Kerr C.P.O.

M. Aruki, Medical Assistant 12 Police Interpreters Sune and Tindinam (D.D.A.) 83 to 102 carriers.

Duration of Patrol

25 February 1965 to 1 April 1965.

36 days.

Objects of the Patrol

Follow up on previous patrols, consolidation of censused areas. Initial census of contacted groups. Contact with previously uncontacted groups. Establishment of suitable air-drop site for future patrols. General dissemination of Administration influence. Law and order.

Compiled by

M.D. Kerr C.P.O.

## INTRODUCTION

It has been two and a half years since a patrol last visited this area, except for a patrol from May River which crossed the sub-district boundary and censused the AMAROMIN group in the IETEMA-MAY River junction at the close of 1964.

Not much is known of the MIANMIN Census Division and during the past two years little has come to the Administration's attention in Telefomin. Isolation and rugged country together with the relative scattered nature of native settlement, has necessarily meant that government influence directly or indirectly has been slow and will continue to be slow in the future.

The MIANMIN group have been known for their murders both in the 1956 and 1959 and several punitive patrols have entered the area. As a consequence this area has had its share of ex-detainees who speak a smattering of pidgin and in two cases have become village officials.

With this history of murder, ignorance of the area, together with rumours received at Telefomin about further murders, the patrol departed from Telefomin with quite a lot of work to do. Census, initial census, establishment of an air-drop site, promoting friendly relations with the indigenous population, as well as attempting to discover the situation of law and order for the past two years.

This did not mean that the patrol would strike unco-



operation. In fact from all groups contacted the patrol was received in a friendly manner, except for groups in the FIAK Valley.

Employing MIANMIN as well as Telefomin carriers cemented friendly and co-operative relations between former enemies. Some MIANMINS were used as guides and interpreters

At the same time perpetual mountain topography ranging from 7000 feet to 850 feet above sea level, covered by thick rain forest with poor or no tracks, broken by flooding rivers, meant that the patrol moved slowly and could not guarantee a regular food supply from a small scattered, and at times, frightened population numbering less than 800.

The previous two patrols from Telefomin, it appears, had little difficulty over supplies, but no arrests were attempted then, and the ground covered was not as great. This patrol therefore in the final resort had to depend on an air drop to a site that had not been established. This was established at the IETMA and May River junction and will, though not ideally situated, guarantee constant supplies for future more mobile patrols into the restless FIAK valley.

.....

DIARY25.2.65 To CAMP 1

1100 Departed Telefomin for OFEKAMIN with about 100 carriers and 12 police. Mr J.M. Wearne to follow later.

1330 Arrived at OFEKAMIN rest house. Set up camp and radio.

Radio contact with Telefomin.

1800 Mr Wearne arrived. Self listened in to discussion with police by Mr Wearne about patrolling in a restricted area. Party, escorted by some police sent back to Telefomin to bring up more rice.

26.2.65 To CAMP 2 at approx. 3000 ft

0715 Broke camp.

1230 Arrived at MISINMIN after a steep ascent over the MITANG Range. Then passed down a stream strewn with land slides to ELIP River where it was discovered the usual bridge was down.

1500 Finally arrived at ELIP River where a log bridge had been constructed. River crossed and a steep ascent, aided by a rope, made to a cleared area on the northern bank.

More ELIPTAMIN carriers were recruited.

Extra rice arrived.

Radio contact, food purchased, guard posted.

27.2.65 To CAMP 3 6650 ft

0715 Broke camp and headed up DONNER Range. Light rain falling and falls heavier during day.

1215 Stopped for a rest just below summit of DONNER Range. Weather wet and very cold.

1600 arrived at CAMP 3.

No radio contact. Heavy rain falling.

Police issued with ammunition and further instructions by Mr Wearne.

Rice issued. Guard posted.

### 28.2.65 Sunday To CAMP 4 at 5,440 ft

A wet and cold night.

Temporary carriers sent back to Telefomin.

1000 Began shuttling cargo down to CAMP 4 two hours walk away.

1330 After arrival of 20 carriers from CAMP 4 self and three police and one interpreter departed for CAMP 4 with remainder of cargo.

1550 Arrived at CAMP 4 which had been firmly established.

Noted arrival of some 12 MIANMIN natives with BELIAP the Luluai from TIMELMIN.

Paw paw and taro purchased and some rice issued.

Radio contact. Guard posted.

### 1.3.65 To CAMP 5 at 2450 ft

0930 Broke camp and with MIANMINS recruited as extra carriers, moved down to FAK River to find a welcoming party of MIANMINS on airstrip site.

1145 Arrived at airstrip site. Mr Wearne surveyed existing work on strip, then the patrol moved across, via a swing

4.

bridge, the FAK River to a prepared camp site of CAMP 5.  
While waiting to cross the FAK self heard of Mr Neville's patrols from a TIMELMIN warrior.  
Mr Wearne held discussions with MIANMIN headmen.  
Food purchased. Radio contact. Guard posted.

2.3.65 To CAMP 7 at approx. 2500 ft

0740 Broke camp and after some difficulties recruiting carriers departed for SOGAMIN.  
1100 Reached top of first mountain range between FAK and May Rivers, then descended to MELILI River and ascended another range of mountains.  
1330 Arrived at a SOGAMIN hamlet above May River. Generous welcome for patrol, and a prepared camp site.  
Radio contact.  
Large quantities of food purchased. Pig bought for some lap lap, beads, tomahawk and knife.  
Guard posted.

4.3.65 At CAMP 7 2500 ft

Census taken by Mr Wearne during morning in conjunction with medical survey.  
Radio contact. Tentative arrangements made about air drop.  
Guard posted.

5.3.65 To CAMP 8 1700 ft

0815 Broke camp and descended to MAY River. River crossed

by a ford, then ascended to another SOGAMIN hamlet.

1230 Arrived at yet another hamlet where Mr Aruki inspected a sick aged man. Then passed down a prepared track to WAMEIMIN on the WANAGU River. Met some WAMEIMINS on the way who volunteered to bring down 4 bags of rice left at SOGAMIN owing to a shortage of carriers.

1400 Arrived at WAMEIMIN on WANAGU River. Camp 8 established. Radio contact. Ample food purchased along with two small pigs. Guard Posted.

#### 6.3.65 At CAMP 8 1700 ft

Rain throughout night.

Census held in large sing-sing house about 30 x 40 ft.

People very co-operative. Village officials nominated.

During the afternoon PANIC! 'gold' was discovered in WANAGU River in quite considerable quantities. The rush lasted two hours. Samples taken.

Further discussions with headmen by Mr Wearne.

Radio contact. More food purchased. Guard posted.

7.3.65 To CAMP 9 1650 ft

0800 Broke camp and after a little trouble finding a number of carriers departed for URAMÉ River.

1315 Arrived at CAMP 9 on URAMÉ River.

Radio contact. Rice issued. Guard posted.

Heavy torrential rain during night. River rose some feet to threaten camp.

8.3.65 To CAMP 10 850 ft

0830 broke camp.

0930 Reached DAISA River then moved onto a prepared track.

1200 Arrived at AMAROMIN on IETMA-MAY junction.

CAMP 10 established. AMAROMINS particularly friendly.

Headman of KUSARENMIN group from FIAK River arrived at the camp, but approached very cautiously after having the way cleared by a TEMPSAPMIN native who had worked at MAY River Patrol Post, and who was living with the KUSARENMINS.

Discussion by Mr Wearne on suspected FIAK River troubles.

Proved very fruitful

Ample food purchased. Radio contact. Guard posted.

9.3.65 At CAMP 10 850 ft

Heavy rain previous night. Census taken by self during morning in conjunction with health survey. Gave a short talk on government aims. During afternoon more natives from FIAK River arrived.

Food purchased. Radio contact. Guard posted.

10.3.65 To CAMP 11 about 1200 ft

0800 broke camp and passed south up eastern bank of MAY River.

1130 Arrived at FIAK River. Attempted cross by ford to western bank of MAY River.

1600 Crossing finally made over sunken log.

CAMP 11 set up at junction of MAY and FIAK Rivers.

Some MAWAIMINS (a group living further up the FIAK valley than the KUSARENMINS) cautiously approached the camp.

Discussions held by Mr Wearne as to the possibility of establishing a drop site. Country not too promising for a drop site.

Radio contact. Rice issued. Guard posted.

11.3.65 At CAMP 11 1200 ft

Restless night for patrol. MAWAIMINS were thought to be snooping around camp.

0515 Dawn stand-to.

1000 Mr Wearne and party of police with MIANMIN guides went in search of a drop site. Self ordered a cleaning up of camp site and the construction of a border path encircling the camp.

1300 Mr Wearne and party returned. Efforts at finding a drop site in this steeply timbered country so far unsuccessful.

Radio contact explaining above situation.

MAWAIMINS still snooping about and consequent to their arguing about food purchases were given a strong talking to by Mr Wearne. It had by this time been established that members of this group had been connected with the murder of two

FIYARENMINS an uncontacted group of natives three days walk to the west from MAWAIMIN.  
Rice and native foods issued. Strong guard posted.



12.3.65 At CAMP 11 1200 ft

0515 Dawn stand-to.

Mr Wearne and police party went in search again for a drop site. Self organised repair of sunken bridge across May River. Also told carriers to stop giving their rations to the MAWAIMINS in an attempt to embarrass them socially, in the hope that this group would become less belligerent.

1300 Mr Wearne returned to the camp.

1320 Radio contact with Telefomin telling them that we would return to IETMA-MAY junction and await air drop there.

MAWAIMINS became more co-operative during the afternoon and Mr Wearne was able to have quite fruitful discussions with them. Plans were made to visit them after the air drop and they were asked if they could bring in the uncontacted FIYARAMEN <FIYARENMIN> group.

Stores checked. Small quantities of food purchased. Rice issued. Guard posted.

13.3.65 To CAMP 10 850 ft

0800 broke camp.

1130 Arrived AMAROMIN. During afternoon existing large garden site cleared along IETEMA River. Remaining trees felled to make site about 200 yards long and with a minimum width of 70 yards.

Arrangements made to pay compensation for damage to taro and banana trees.

Food purchased. Radio contact unsuccessful owing to fault with radio. Guard posted.

14.3.65 Sunday at CAMP 10 850 ft

Air drop cancelled owing to weather.

Food purchased. Radio contact. Light guard posted.

16.3.65 To CAMP 11 1200 ft

1030 Air drop 100% recovery. Prepared to move up to FIAK River. Unnecessary cargo left in men's house at AMAROMIN to increase mobility and to allay the recruitment of further carriers. It is planned to pick up this remaining cargo when the FIAK valley has been patrolled.

1450 Self departed with patrol to FIAK River. Mr Wearne to follow as soon as possible when he had had further talks with FRETANAP, the AMAROMIN headman.

1700 Arrived at FIAK River. The MAY River had to be rebridged and carriers were finally across with Mr Wearne by 1830. No Radio contact. Rice issued. Guard posted.

17.3.65 To CAMP 12 3100 ft

0850 Broke camp and with MIGLIN the KUSARENMIN headman as guide moved up FIAK River to MAWAIMIN. It is planned to census KUSARENMIN on returning to MAY River. Met further KUSARENINS en route who accompanied patrol

7.

to MAWAIMIN.

1400 Arrived at MAWAIMIN half-way up southern slopes of FIAK Valley. Patrol received in a friendly manner.

CAMP 12 set up 50 yards from MAWAIMIN hamlet of 4 houses.

Two uncontacted FIYARENMINS were found with MAWAIMINS. These two men were later interviewed by Mr Wearne about the alleged murders to their group.

Food purchased. Radio contact. Guard posted.

#### 18.3.65 At CAMP 12 3100 ft

Discussions with MAWAIMINS. Suspects identified.

Food purchased. Radio contact. Guard posted.

#### 19.3.65

Census held in hamlet and suspects for murders noted.

Moment not yet opportune to detain suspects.

During afternoon two of three suspected murderers visited camp with SURUDUP, supposedly to arrange a marriage of MAWAIMIN girl with SURUDUP, with regard to SURUDUP's job as Tutul of TIMELMIN.

Suspects (2) forcefully detained along with one FIYARENMIN. Police and carriers alerted. Most of remaining MAWAIMINS fled to the bush.

Detainees questioned and alleged witnesses called in.

Information laid against KUSARENMINS re murders. KUSARENMINS had disappeared by this time.

Radio contact. Strong guard posted.

#### 20.3.65 At CAMP 12 3100 ft

0515 Dawn stand-to.

Witness and a FIYARENMIN woman came into camp. Interrogations continued throughout day. Established that FIYARENMINS were possibly the murderers, though not perhaps without MAWAIMIN help.

Radio contact. Rice issued. Guard posted.

### 21.3.65 Sunday at CAMP 12 3100 ft

0515 Dawn stand-to.

Further interrogations, though this time detainees free to go as they pleased. Hoped that further MAWAIMINS would come into the camp.

Radio contact. Rice issued. Heavy guard posted.

### 22.3.65 To CAMP 13 2800 ft

0715 Broke camp and moved east down FIAK valley.

1130 Passed through deserted KUSARENMIN hamlet of KOROFIMIMIBIP.

1200 passed through another deserted KUSARENMIN hamlet of MONENGKIVIPBIP.

1300 Arrived at KUSARENMIN house sing-sing. House surrounded and five occupants detained for questioning. Could not establish exact whereabouts of KUSAREMINS who had just been holding a large sing-sing here.

Some food purchased. Rice also issued. Radio contact. Guard posted.

8.

23.3.65 At CAMP 13 2800 ft

Rained heavily during night. Cargo from IETMA River brought up. Radio contact. Food purchased. Guard posted.

24.3.65 To CAMP 14 1600 ft

0720 Broke camp.

1130 Arrived at ABIABIP, a KUSARENMIN hamlet above WAMU River.

1230 Departed ABIABIP, which was deserted, for WAMU River. Crossed River and passed up mountainside to descend into the IEGAL River, a tributary of the WAMU.

1600 Made CAMP 14. A hard day's walk. No radio contact. Rice issued. Guard posted.

25.3.65 To CAMP 15 2800 ft

0730 Broke camp in light rain and climbed for three hours to summit of 5,200 ft and then dropped down to IAK River (a tributary of the SAN River). Continued with more uphill climbs.

1630 Arrived at TEMPSAPMIN aid post. MASEYE (TEMPSAPMIN headman accompanying patrol) had been sent ahead of patrol and so had a small welcome party for us. Aid post some distance from TEMPSAPMIN.

No radio contact. Food purchased. Guard posted.

26.3.65 At CAMP 15 2800 ft

Census taken at aid-post. Day noted by arrival of some

TIMELMINS, including BELIAP their Luluai. A KUSARENMIN group living at the head of the SAN valley did not appear, though previously censused by Mr F.V. Esdale. KUSARENMIN hamlet was deserted.

Radio contact. Food purchased. Guard posted.

27.3.65 To CAMP 16 2600 ft

0730 broke camp and ascended mountain side to west. Then descended 3000 ft passing two deserted BOVARIPMIN hamlets to SEPIK River, close to NAM River.

CAMP 17 made at 1400 close to populated BOVARIPMIN hamlet near SEPIK River.

Some KARENMINs approached camp cautiously, with FUERAP an ex-detainee.

Food purchased. Radio contact. Guard posted.

29.3.65 At CAMP 17 1800 ft

More KARENMINs arrived from Nam River area.

Census made of BOVARIPMINs present, and a provisional census made of KARENMINs. 31 BOVARIPMINs counted and 21 KARENMINs, with additional 48 names taken.

Policemen and interpreter TINDINAM with some carriers had gone early this morning to inspect bridge across FAK River. This party returned 1630.

Food purchased. Radio contact. Guard posted.

30.3.65 To CAMP 18 2100 ft

0730 Patrol broke camp and headed towards FAK River accompanied by 7 KARENMINs.

0930 Reached FAK River.

1430 Forded ELIP River and made camp on southern bank.

No Radio contact. Rice issued.

31.3.65 To CAMP 19 3500 ft

0700 Broke camp and ascended ridge along SEPIK River for two hours. Then descended to SEPIK River.

1400 Arrived at SEPIKIALIKMIN to find Corporal NEN with extra supplies.

No Radio contact. Rice issued.

1.4.65 To Telefomin 4700 ft

0700 Broke camp.

1230 Arrived at Telefomin.

1530 Carriers paid. Patrol stood down.

END OF DIARY



It is difficult to split the area up into geographical proportions and compare the political situation in each, because of the scattered and migratory pattern of the MIANMIN population.

Generally however it could be said the SAN and FAK valleys containing TIMELMIN and TEMPSAPMIN groups are amenable to government patrols and seek development in a small way. Within the SAN valley however the KUSARENMIN and BOVARIPMIN groups living there were not seen, though they have been censused previously. Also the KUSARENMIN of the WAMU and FIAK valleys failed to appear in numbers. This was mainly due to a knowledge that arrests would possibly be made. The MAWAIMIN group in the FIAK valley, though contacted and censused went bush when some of their number were detained for questioning. The URAMÉ and eastern May River areas from SOGAMIN in the south to AMAROMIN in the north were glad to see the patrol and the same for the BOVARIPMINS and KARENMINs on the SEPIK River.

However indications from the MIANMIN carrier line showed that they would be prepared to help their fellow MIANMINS of the FIAK and WAMU valleys when the patrol approached, by giving warning shouts. Consequently a not readily discernible split of opinion was seen among the carriers in the patrol. If arrests were not going to be made then things went smoothly. If there was a possibility of taking people in for questioning, then naturally the accompanying MIANMINS did not look too favourably on it.

There appears to be little animosity, either now or in the past between the MIANMIN groups. The matter of the alleged murder of two FIYARENMINs by KUSARENMINs in the

FIAK valley, to me is suspected of being caused more by domestic reasons than by reasons of traditional animosity.

TIMELMIN, with the services of a native mission teacher, is the most 'Civilised' village, along with AMAROMIN in the north, because of their relative ease of contact from outside, is not homogeneous in its opinion. As this group is reaching a dynamic stage of social development, not everyone is going to like the change. Traditional means of warfare have ceased and perhaps some resent it. In its place the youth of this village learn little of the traditional arts of hunting and killing and are going to a low standard mission school. The teaching is of a poor standard and the pidgin spoken by the pupils is barely understandable. In fact the village is left with an idle generation of youth with little prospects and little education.

This is seen in Telefomin, but in TIMELMIN there is no emigration outlet for this idle group of teenagers who seem to be splitting the group in two. The traditional leaders can do little with them and BELIAP, the Luluai could get almost no co-operation from them when asked to be carriers.

Former Enemies From informants it was learned that the MIANMIN group was started by an ancestress from TELEFOLIP in Telefomin, who took the arrow pit pit to MIANMIN. At the FIAK River a traditional site was pointed out to me as former bastion against Telefomin raids well into the MIANMIN territory from the south. Telefomins were also known to have ambushed some MIANMINS on the WANAGU River.

It appears that the Telefomins were a real threat up to the last War, and since then it has been the elusive MIANMIN who have been battling the Telefomins and ATBALMINS in small retaliatory raids.

Marriage Marriage between members of different MIANMIN groups is not common, but does occur, as in the case of SURUDUP, the TIMELMIN Tultul who married a MAWAIMIN during the patrol. Marriage gifts seem to consist of some lap lap, beads, one to two axes, bilum and other minor items. Previously marriage gifts consisted of bilums, bananas and other small items.

### CENSUS AND RECEPTION OF PATROL

Table 1

GROUP	LOCATION	CENSUSED	EST. RECEPTION
(in order of appearance)	POP.	POP.	SUPPLIED
TIMELMIN yes Rivers	Fak and Uk	149	149 friendly
SOGAMIN	May River	140	friendly yes
WAMEIMIN yes	Wanagu River	95	friendly
AMAROMIN yes	Ietema River	43	friendly

MAWAIMIN	Fiak valley	55	55	cautious	little
FIYARENMIN	N.W. Mt KASA		35	two	contacted
-					
KUSARENMIN	Fiak valley		50	fled from patrol	
	little				
	San valley	40	not seen	-	
TEMPSAPMIN	San valley	55	55	friendly	yes
BOVARIPMIN	San & Sepik	94	100	those seen	
	yes				
	Rivers			friendly	
KARENMIN	Nam River		21	those seen	yes
				friendly	

EST. POPULATION OF AREA PATROLLED 852

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Walking times

Wameimin in Amaromin two days

Fiak valley to San valley two days

San Valley to Sepik River two days

Telefomin in Timelmin two or

Bovaripmin (Sepik River) to  
Telefomin three days

Other walks to population less  
than one day.

12.

VILLAGE OFFICIALS

Table 2 (not exhaustive)

GROUP IMPRESSIONS	NAME	RANK	OFFICER'S
Timelmin	Beliap	Luluai	Has been on previous Admin. patrols. At times co-operative and definitely pro-administration.
	Surudup	Tultul	Ex-corrective detainee who accompanied patrol. An unknown quantity, who while

aiding  
patrol at all  
times,  
tends to  
vacillate in  
tricky  
situations  
in order to  
keep the  
wavering  
respect of  
his fellow  
Mianmins.

Amaromin

Fretenap

appointed  
Luluai

A quiet  
man and  
pro-admin.  
His village  
is within  
easy  
distance of  
May River  
Patrol Post  
and  
members  
of his  
group visit  
and work  
there from  
time to  
time.

However this group seems to have little influence on other Mianmin groups to the south which are less river orientated.

Tempsapmin

Maseie

Luluai

Accompanied patrol from Timelmin. A keen observer of administrative methods. Remains a steady and respected man within his group and of Mianmin.

Karenmin

Fuerap

Luluai

Ex-



corrective  
detainee of  
buoyant  
manner.

Would like  
to see  
more of  
this man in  
administration work,  
but present  
isolation of  
his group  
inhibits  
this.

In these and other groups the headmen of the villages were generally pro-administration, but being 'pro' does not mean that they understand what is required of them. They tend to look on our organisation of the patrol with awe and gathered their people for census in a quiet and co-operative manner. They also, except for the KUSARENMINS, see the advantages of trade. I would like to see the men mentioned above brought in for work and instruction on the station.

## LAW AND ORDER

No complaints were brought to the patrol's attention. As regards the alleged murders of two FIYARENMINS this will be

the subject of a special memorandum by Mr J.M. Wearne.

Briefly the situation of law and order has been unstable in the FIAK valley, mainly due, I feel, to a decided lack of regular patrolling. The people in this area know about our law on killing, yet a failure to police this law is a weakness of the Administration which they may well recognise and so take advantage of it.

INTERPRETERS

The MIANMIN dialect is not readily understandable by Telefomin speaking interpreters. Some MIANMINS however can converse in Telefomin. Much of the time double interpretation was used which was fraught with many complications. For questioning of suspects an impartial MIANMIN-pidgin interpreter was not to be found.

CARRIERS

The patrol in its final stages had 83 carriers, about 20 of whom were MIANMINS. The Telefomin carriers, as usual, worked hard and happily and there were no serious cases of sickness. The MIANMINS, though not used to carrying, are generally stronger and worked well towards the end. They are also good bridge builders and can swim – a must for this area.

20 MIANMIN carriers from the area patrolled seemed to be about the limit we could obtain, and I do not think the number will increase much in the future.

HEALTH

The patrol was accompanied by Mr M. Aruki, Med. Ass., who will no doubt furnish a report. My impressions were that the native of MIANMIN enjoys better health, due to better diet, than his Telefomin counterpart. No serious diseases were found, though a number of deformities were noted, especially in SOGAMIN where all the woman of one hamlet had goitres. TIMELMIN was suffering from many eye complaints.

There is a large incidence of tinea in all hamlets visited. Malaria does occur infrequently and was encountered during the patrol.

There is an aid post, established in 1964, which is situated in the SAN valley on TEMPSAPMIN land.

## AGRICULTURE

There seems to be little or no possibility of cash cropping in this mountainous and heavily forested area. The only flat land is at AMAROMIN, which is forested, in a fertile river basin.

### Foods

Taro is the traditional crop of this area which survives the onslaught of wild pigs and other calamities. The taro here is generally considered of a superior variety by Telefomins and samples were brought back to the station.

As with Telefomin taro is cropped on a three field system. Land clearing for a new crop, awaiting maturity of present crop, and harvesting old plot.

Unlike Telefomin, the land it seems in 90% of cases is cleared by the village as a whole and then sub-divided into individual plots for men, women and children, who are old enough to cultivate for themselves. Sometimes minor co-operative alliances will be made; say between brothers, who then will share the work on one plot. But generally cultivation is an individual matter on clearly defined plots of common land.

Taro in the IETEMA-MAY junction area matures about six months. Taro matures in Telefomin after nine months.

Taro gardens, once planted, in most cases receive little maintenance by way of weeding. Weeding is common practice

in Telefomin.

No food shortages in MIANMIN were found, though there is a food shortage experienced at this time of the year in Telefomin. But small groups of 50 or 60 persons cannot be expected to supply a patrol for more than a couple of days.

### Other Crops

Pumpkins, bananas, cucumbers, pawpaw and breadnut (KAPIAK). Sago is processed by some MIANMIN groups for two months of each year on the lower reaches of the MAY River. It is generally cooked on hot stones in banana leaves – something in the manner of taro bread.

### Other Foods

Fish, opossum, pig, snakes, lizards and birds (wild duck, pigeons, hornbills and parrots).

Meat takes a greater percentage of diet than perhaps any other Sepik group.

Little kaukau was seen. Kaukau gardens require enclosing to stop pigs. The migratory habits of the MIANMINS no doubt hinder the cultivating of kaukau.

### LAND TENURE

All land is owned by the group. Clearing of land is done communally with crops cultivated individually. A native retains sole use of the land only when he or she is cultivating his or her share of cleared land. Otherwise it remains the property of the community. There seems to be no shortage of land.

Hunting lands appear not to be the property of the

MIANMINS as a whole. Relative insularity of some groups seem to indicate this, though it appears that any MIANMIN may take game on or close to any recognised road within MIANMIN.

### FORESTS

Particularly good stands of timber were seen in all areas patrolled. Floating logs down the MAY River would not be an impossibility.

## MISSIONS

As stated elsewhere, there is a mission school situated at TIMELMIN, administered by a local pastor who comes into Telefomin to receive instruction from the Baptist Mission. I understand the Baptist Mission is eager to make further inroads into this area, but they cannot place a European there or make an inspection of the pastor's progress because this area is Restricted.

As it is at the moment the mission seems to have a disruptive effect on the social life and structure of TIMELMIN, though if given adequate supervision, will in the long run bring greater benefits to a population who, as yet, are reluctant to visit Telefomin on their own accord.

## AIRFIELDS

Two suitable airstrip sites were encountered by the patrol. One is situated near TIMELMIN on the FAK River. Construction, encouraged by the Baptist Mission in Telefomin, has been going on there for some time. So far the strip is over 500 ft long and is of excellent surface material. Progress is slow and requires constant supervision. A strip at this place saves a two day walk over the DONNER Range from the nearest strip at ELIPTAMIN.

The other site is at the IETEMA-MAY River junction. If the flat ground were to be cleared at this site, a strip of the correct dimensions would be suitable for DC3s, as the aerial approaches are broad.

## VILLAGES

The typical MIANMIN village or hamlet never exceeded six houses, though in some cases there were three or more settled hamlets to a group. The villages were not neat as regards layout or drainage. In this area there is a general respect of water sources for cooking and drinking, and filth seems to be deposited in the surrounding bush away from drinking water.

The houses differ from the Telefomin style house in a number of ways. The main characteristic is that they take a decidedly more 'river type' design, set up on piles like Telefomin, but with a definite verandah which is not seen in Telefomin.

The MIANMIN houses are generally smaller, except in some cases, where unlike Telefomin, a house has two rooms and two doors for brothers living together with their families. The construction is less rugged, and in many cases more durable split timber was omitted and small saplings used instead. In other cases, a fine lattice type of construction is used, with small slit timber assembled in a criss-cross pattern across much of the walls. As with Telefomin the walls are lined with bark.

### House Sing Sing

All groups have a house sing sing, but only two were seen. The house sing sing is not a feature of Telefomin, which forbids women to participate in many ceremonies. The MIANMIN house



sing sing for use by the entire community, is about 40 x 30 ft with a roof which is about 17 ft from the floor suspended on piles. The materials used in its construction are similar to those used in family and men's houses. Around the walls is a continuous platform about six feet wide on which are set at intervals fire-places, presumably set aside for each family group. The house sing sing becomes the community centre of the communal-minded MIANMIN.

Table 3

A comparison of houses in Telefomin and Mianmin

TELEFOMIN	MIANMIN
Larger construction;	smaller construction;
more permanent materials;	less permanent materials;
no verandahs;	verandahs extend along front of all houses, though sometimes enclosed for reasons of defence;
only one room;	often more than one room with separate entrances;
distinct separation of sex into -	no distinct separation of sex except with house Tambaran; do have -
house boi	house boi
house man (Tambaran)	house man (distinct)

from Tambaran), but once  
a man is married  
he may sleep in  
the same house as  
his wife and  
children;

house 'mun' for use by women      No house 'mun' seen;  
when menstruating  
No house sing sing;      House sing sing a feature;

Some villages have large      No carved doorways.  
carved doorways (ATKOM).

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Introduction

Though MIANMIN natives originated from Telefomin, they differ from the Telefomins in many remarkable ways. The essential feature of the MIANMIN is that he is migratory in his habits, and relies to a greater extent on game foods, which are more abundant than in Telefomin. In turn because a larger proportion of meat is eaten by both men and women, MIANMIN cultural life is adapted accordingly. Thus there is more participation taken by the whole family in ceremonies to do with food. In Telefomin because women are forbidden meat, there are few ceremonies which they can directly participate in. The cultural life of Telefomin centres around the men in their house tambaran. In MIANMIN each group has a large house sing sing which is for everyone's benefit, and seems to be a place of ceremony every 3 or 4 months.

### Influence of food on MIANMIN culture

Every MIANMIN hamlet has separate family groups responsible collectively for the ceremonial aspects of one or more types of food.

In one village of five houses one house was adorned solely by pig skulls, another house had pieces of taro bread on a primitive altar inside the house. A third house had beaks of hornbills, and a fourth opossum skins and snake skeletons. The fifth house was the house tambaran adorned with many ancestral skulls and some pig jaws. Though there are separate groups of foods involving different ceremonies, there appears to be no division of labour in food gathering, except between male and female, young and old, firm and infirm. It could be however that one particular family is known in the past for its successful pig hunters, but in general every man and woman is conversant with every food gathering skill allotted to their sex.

Thus there are five basic food groups which are open to separate 'myth' interpretation. They are:

Taro and other vegetables  
pigs  
bird life  
snakes, opossums and fish  
human flesh.

Before each hunt, either for pigs, birds or opossums, or in former times before a fight, informants told me that some form of ceremony was performed and held in the appropriate house. At certain times, the whole group would gather and enact some or all these ceremonies at the house sing sing.

As one family is responsible for the maintenance of one; or if the numbers are small, more than one food myth, specimens of hunting are worn by the appropriate members of the group. For the pig myth, the power of hunting this animal is reincarnated in the wearing of wild boar penis armlets, usually by the elder son of the household. Again other men wear opossum skin hats 14 in

long.

I must stress that I was not able to obtain a clear picture of this cultural pattern based on separate food myths, as I like to call them, but the sharing of products of the bush encourages more equitable cultural participation for all. In Telefomin, the general shortage of game was well as the taboo on meat eating for females, makes direct cultural participation essentially a man's business.

The wider cultural pattern of MIANMIN is also demonstrated by a sharing of domestic duties. In TIMELMIN especially, warriors were most of the time with their children and were seen bathing and feeding them. According to the Medical Assistant's informants, men also assisted their wives in child birth.

### Other Ceremonies

Initiation – There are as far as I am aware no real initiation ceremonies for puberty. When hair is seen on the boy he is given a penis gourd (KAMEN) to wear, and the girl is given a skirt (UNAN), though at a much earlier age. Both articles being the same as in Telefomin.

Marriage – is cemented by the giving of gifts, but as far as I am aware no proper ceremony is performed.

### Burial

There are two methods of burial. One is for grown men who have died of natural causes. In this case the corpse is placed in a tree or on a cliff face at the boundary of the groups traditional lands. When the flesh is sufficiently decomposed the skull is taken and placed in the house tambaran.

Men killed in battle, (if not enemies and eaten) and women and children, are buried at the borders of their lands.

Once buried these bodies are not disturbed, and often a fence is put around a grave to prevent disturbance by wild pigs. In both forms of burial, worldly possessions accompany the deceased in the grave. This seems to account for a lack of artefacts such as stone axes and shields. Only one stone axe was seen.

A child whose mother had died in child-birth is killed and buried with the mother.

### Conclusion

The communal clearing of land and the sharing of food myths makes for closely knit communities in MIANMIN. Unlike Telefomin, families in general do not scatter and cultivate areas great distances away from the village. Instead the whole village moves to new land. This migratory habit of MIANMINS would also be a factor that maintains taro as the staple vegetable diet. Taro does not have to be fenced from pigs, whereas sweet potatoes do. Also with their former fear of the Telefomins and minority of numbers permanent settlement may have been out of the question. The need to hunt came in new areas may also be a factor contributing to, and making the MIANMIN way of life that which it is.

### ARTEFACTS

Few artefacts were seen other than well-made bows and arrows of similar design as those used by Telefomins. Generally the Telefomin carriers admitted they were of a higher standard. One stone axe was seen. In former times stone for axes was obtained from the NIAR River east of Mount STOLLE. Telefomins, I

understand, obtained their stone from ATBALMIN. Fighting shields were a feature of battle but none were seen. I take it that they are all buried with their owners. There were no carved doorways (ATKOM) as seen in Telefomin.

## DRESS

Dress is virtually the same as seen in Telefomin. For men it is a penis gourd the size of a small cucumber, with bamboo rings around the waist. Dress is the same for women in both regions: i.e. a small grass skirt.

The men of MIANMIN also wear some type of head dress of bilum material, often on a topnotch of hair woven into it. Some according to custom wear opossum skins covering the bilum cone of about 14 in. on the back of the head.

## CONCLUSION

Law and order in some of the area patrolled is not as good as it could be, though on the other hand I feel some areas could be derestricted. Some groups are anxious to have a mission with accompanying benefits.

The MIANMIN though a small and scattered group lead full lives enriched by an essentially integrated cultural heritage, based on a very diversified pattern of food gathering. A proper anthropological study of this area, would I believe, prove interesting and fruitful.

19.

In all a successful patrol, but will need to be followed up soon by another in order to show the KUSARENMIN and MAWAIMIN groups that the Administration takes a serious view of killing. Besides there are still uncontacted groups to the west of Mount Kasa and to the East of Mount Stolle.

Cadet Patrol Officer



## *Maps*

May River (SB 54.3) 1966, Blucher Range (SB 54.7) 1966. From maps similar to these held at the sub-district office in Telefomin, Kerr roughed out a map (Patrol No. 7 64/65) of the Mianmin Patrol with camp sites marked and route shown in (faded) blue. This is probably a trial copy of the map Kerr would have sent in with his patrol report. Kerr also visited Urapmin and Feramin from Telefomin shown on the Blucher Range map.

***Other Information*** (Held at Michael Somare Library, University of Papua New Guinea)

With the carbon copy of the Mianmin patrol report (transposed above):

1. A note by Kerr in red ink regarding a trip he took to Urapmin one weekend in early February 1965 to the south western end of the Telefomin valley.
2. Kerr's hand written copies of earlier patrol reports and memoranda (no photocopier available):
  1. No. 4 May River 1964/65 by Assistant District Officer A.D. Pitt.
  2. Extract of a Memo (28/12/1964) to the District Commissioner in Wewak from J.M. Wearne about the proposed patrol program to Mianmin.

3. Extract of a Memo to the District Commissioner in Wewak (12/1/65) about departure of patrol to Mianmin.

4. Notes (one page) Kerr took from Telefomin Sub-District Office re. earlier patrols. Note: one patrol in 1957 (EMA refers to European Medical Assistant) was attacked and several Mianmin were killed.

5. Extracts from a patrol report (starts at a page 2). Kerr believes this patrol was led by Assistant District Officer Fraser Esdale.

6. Comments on Eliptamin census divisions by Patrol Officer J.P. Kelly, July 1962.

7. Comments on Eliptamin from a patrol report 2 - 63/64 by Patrol Officer (?) J.R. McArthur.

8. Village Population Register of MIANMIN CENSUS DIVISION.

## **6. Patrols From Angoram May, 1965 - December, 1965**

Martin Kerr was transferred to Angoram Sub District Office soon after the Mianmin Patrol. He was on patrol a lot of the time before departing for New Zealand on study leave in February 1966.

Documents and associated memoranda (including covering letters and financial claims) are as follows:

1. Angoram Patrol Report No. 1 – 1965/66 to the Lower Sepik (with ADO David Bretherton).
2. Angoram Patrol Report No. 3 – 1965/66.
3. Patrol Report No. 6 – 1965/66 to Kwongai-Chimbian census division 13/11/65 to 27/11/65.
4. Memorandum of Patrol – Patrol No.7 – 1965/66 to part of Kwongai-Chimbian 2/12/65 to 6/12/65.
5. Patrol Report No. 9 – 1965/66 to part of YUAT and KARAWARI Census Divisions <police investigation> 10/12/65 to 14/12/65 17/12/65 to 22/12/65.

## **7. Patrol Report – Angoram Patrol No. 1 – 1965/66**

<Fair copy of carbon copy. There is no blue cover. Martin Kerr accompanied Assistant District Officer David Bretherton on much of this patrol.>

67-3-5/816

Department of District  
Administration  
Sepik District  
Wewak  
12th October, 1965

The Assistant District Commissioner  
Sub-district Officer,  
ANGORAM.

### ANGORAM PATROL NO. 1 OF 65/66

The receipt of the report of the above numbered Patrol conducted by Mr M.D. Kerr, Cadet Patrol Officer, in the lower Sepik Area, and your covering remarks are acknowledged with thanks.

Your comments have adequately covered the report and I agree with them.

Mr. Kerr has written a good report of an evidently well conducted patrol, and the report indicates that he has keen

powers of observation and a good appreciation of the native situation in the area patrolled.

E.G. Hicks,  
a/DISTRICT COMMISSIONER.

c.c. Director  
Department of District Administration  
KONEDOBU.

<hand written> Mr Kerr  
Copy for information

B. McCabe <initials>

## Angoram Patrol No 1 - 1965/66

### Introduction

The purpose of this patrol was to review the Area Study of the proposed Lower Sepik Council made in 1963. For this purpose village by village visits were necessary and a total of fifty-three villages were censused, council talks and business advice given to all adult persons.

In general the Patrol found similar information contained in the 1963 Area Study. Certain aspects have changed and these will no doubt be enlarged upon in Mr D.C. Bretherton's (A.D.O.) Report.

The area covered by the patrol was considerable covering five Census Divisions which are - Lower Sepik, East Coast, Murik Lakes, Porapora and the Marienberg Hills. Nearly one sixth of the Sub District's total population live in this area. Most of the Patrol was by canoe, through immense mangrove swamps of the Murik Lakes and parts of the East Coast and the extensive 'sak sak' and 'pit pit' swamps of the Porapora. At this time of the year difficulties are usually encountered in the Porapora as it is the dry season.

Generally it was felt that the people of all five Census Divisions want a Local Government Council, and were advised that the Council would be proclaimed in about six months. Emphasis was therefore given to business advice as the proposed Council will have to aim for a viable tax-income structure in order to form its functions effectively. The villages were also advised to think about choosing suitable men and women for nomination in the Council Elections.

Though this reception of the Council was good, only the people of the Marienberg Hills, the Murik Lakes and the Lower Sepik census divisions seem politically aware of the most of the facts involving the establishment and running of a Council. These areas would have the highest per capita income, whereas most of the East Coast and the Porapora is considerably depressed economically and socially.

Overall the need for a Council was felt and I look forward to the early establishment of the Lower Sepik Local Government Council with sustained interest.

Diary14 July 1965

0830 Departed ANGORAM for DARAPAP on work boat 'Onyx'.

1600 Arrived DARAPAP (MURIK LAKES). Settled into rest house.

15 July 1965

0900 Departed for KAUP by motor canoe.

0930 Arrived estuary near MURIK - crossed bar and headed along east coast for KAUP.

1200 Arrived Kaup.

16 July 1965

0900 departed KAUP for KIS by pull canoe.

1100 Arrived KIS.

17 July 1965

0630 Departed KIS for KAUP.

0830 Arrived at KAUP.

0845 Departed KAUP by sea in motor canoes (two) for MURIK.

1100 Arrived MURIK.

18 July 1965

0900 Departed MURIK for DARAPAP.

1100 Arrived DARAPAP.

19 July 1965

1000 Departed by motor canoes for MENDAM.

1200 Arrived MENDAM after inspecting KAUP.



20 July 1965

0730 Departed MENDAM by motor canoes for KOPAR on open sea.

1100 Arrived KOPAR.

21 July 1965

0800 Departed KOPAR for WATAM via 'barat' at fairly low water.

Heavy KOPAR canoe pushed most of the way.

0945 Arrived WATAM.

22 July 1965

0900 Departed for WONGUN by pull canoe.

0945 Arrived WONGUN.

23 July 1965

0800 Departed for GAPUN by pull canoe plus walk of one hour.

1000 Arrived GAPUN.

24 July 1965

0800 Departed for SENA. Walking.

0930 Arrived SENA.

25 July 1965

0815 Departed for TARINGAI. Walking.

1130 Arrived TARINGAI.

26 July 1965

0815 Departed for UNKENANG by canoe.

1130 Arrived UNKENANG.

27 July 1965

0700 Departed for GWAIR by pull canoe.

1500 Arrived GWAIR.

3.

28 July 1965

0745 Self departed with one constable plus Tultul for BWAIR. Mr Bretherton remained at GWAIR for census etc.

0900 Arrived BWAIR.

1000 Departed for GWAIR.

1115 Arrived GWAIR.

1130 Departed GWAIR for MANMONG.

1130 Arrived MANMONG. Mr Bretherton and cargo there.

1400 Self departed with constable and Tultul to inspect RENONG and MANMONG hamlet OKAIN.

1800 Arrived back and MANMONG.

29 July 1965

0800 Departed by pull canoe for JANGIT.

1030 Arrived JANGIT. Census etc of KIROP, DUWAR, JANGIT, ADJORA, PINAM. During afternoon while Mr Bretherton gave Council talks etc self inspected ADJORA and KIROP.

30 July 1965

0845 Departed Jangit by pull canoe (with motor).

0900 Arrived PINAM.

0930 Departed (motor canoe) for ARAMUNDA.

1130 Arrived ARAMUNDA.

1230 Departed for POKORAN.

1500 Arrived POKORAN.

31 July 1965

0815 Self and constable departed to inspect JETA and PALIPAN. JETA, PALIPAN, KITCHIKAN, POLARAN censused etc at POKORAN.

0930 Departed JETA.  
1200 Arrived PALIPAN.  
1700 Arrived back at POKORAN.

#### 1 August 1965

0745 Self departed for KITCHIKAN walking and by canoe.  
1000 Arrived KITCHIKAN. Mr Bretherton moved down to OGOMANIA.  
1515 Self arrived OGOMANIA.

#### 2 August 1965

0745 Departed for AGRANT. By canoe.  
1430 Arrived AGRANT.  
1500 Departed for OREMAI by track.  
1600 arrived OREMAI.

#### 3 August 1965

0800 Departed by motor canoe.  
1130 Arrived OMBOS.

#### 4 August 1965

0815 Departed OMBOS. By motor canoe.  
1130 Arrived PANKIN.

#### 5 August 1965

0800 Departed. By motor canoe.  
0930 Arrived BIEN.

#### 6 August 1965

0730 Departed.  
0845 Arrived MARIENBERG. Mr Bretherton departed for TAWAY. Self to Mission to gather information re numbers and

names expatriate residents for Council Common Roll.

1100 Departed.

1200 Arrived BONAM. Took census etc of BONAM,  
MANGAN, SUK.

1400 Arrived MASAN.

4.

7 August 1965

0800 Departed MASAN.

0930 Arrived MANSEP. Took census GAVIEN, MANSEP.

1200 Mr Bretherton arrived ex TAWAY, IMBANDO, MAMBEL.

8 August 1965

0800 Departed for ARIAPAN.

1100 Arrived ARIAPAN.

9 August 1965

Census etc ARIAPAN, WASKURIN.

10 August 1965

0830 Departed.

1030 Arrived KASIMAN. Mr Bretherton by slightly longer route to inspect BOIG, WASKURIN.

11 August 1965

Self with constable walked to KIS and KAUP to investigate recent Mission activities.

12 August 1965

0600 Departed for Angoram.

0930 Met Landrover for station.

1000 Arrived Angoram. Patrol stood down.

End of Diary

## OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

### Reception of Patrol

At all times friendly and co-operative.

### Villages

1. A standard river-type of housing was generally typical, though degenerating into just platforms with a roof in some parts of the PORAPORA. In other places sometimes a typical 'mission' style house was seen with fenced verandahs, rooms and spaces for windows. This was especially prevalent at OREMAI.
2. In most cases the sites of the villages were suitable, situated on the higher ground as well as being nearby to water supplies - but as regards economic development PALIPAN and JETA in the South PORAPORA are virtually isolated during the dry season from the Sepik River, even though allied villages such as BINGO and KOMTING have moved to the Ramu River nearby. Growing commercial activity on the Ramu River is becoming of economic importance to these villages.

5.

3. Water supplies in the PORAPORA are not good - an open 'barat' seems to be sufficient and at JANGI a woman died of dysentery. Wells do exist in places, but I regard them as just about as sanitary as the 'open barats'. If a well is to be built a suitable concrete affair or otherwise a deep penetrating well with a hand pump should be constructed.

### Village Officials

Generally the village officials were in my opinion good to average. Only the Luluai of DARAPAP possessed the quality of leadership in economic development as most of the others are aging and seem quite prepared to let younger men show the way for cash cropping. Some concern was expressed by the MARIENBERG HILLS officials about the changeover to the Council and consequence of their authority as headmen. Some even suggested a token reward by the Administration for their services rendered.

Table 1.

#### Influential Men

Name	Place	Comments
Tamau/Game	Darapap	Luluai - behind



Assua	Mendam	fish business A.P.O. <assistant aid post orderly> - influential in fishing enterprise.
Dana	Mendam	Skipper of pinnace <u>Xavier</u> now in Marienberg for overhaul.
Harry	Watam	Runs trade store and small copra business at Watam.

-----

### Political Situation

The political situation will not have changed much as regards relations with outside groups - traders etc. Where there appears to be a change in the political situation is the general awareness of the need and desire for a Local Government Council.

This was indicated by the talk of many village men at the Council 'teach-ins', who are in some cases campaigning for themselves. However, though this is a healthy situation greater political awareness will not improve their way of life unless they improve their cash incomes. Generally as regards the proposed Council the people will be quite prepared to deliberate for themselves. They have a definite awareness of extending charismatic values beyond the village group, but have yet to show firm executive action and responsibility to see the future decisions are carried out.

Europeans have been told that the proposed Council will include them if they are residing in the Council Area. From discussions I had with two missionaries - one R.C. and one A.O.G. - they appeared to welcome it, though it is hoped they will take an active if not participating interest in the Council. If the Council Chambers is constructed on Government land at MARIENBERG interest by the Mission should follow.

### Absenteeism and Census

For the full census figures see Mr D.C. Bretherton's Report.

A total of 182 men and 29 women were absent at work inside the District, though the actual absentee rate was higher. 156 men and one woman were working outside the District. Approximately one half of these 156 men are contract workers on plantations, and most of them come from the more backward PORAPORA Census Division. There appear to be no definite trends here, though about ten men from the MURIK LAKES

were engaged in commercial and Government fishing activities inside and outside the district. About twenty-five men from the areas patrolled are school teachers or training to be school teachers, either for the Administration or the missions. Of the total number of absentee men approximately eighteen are engaged in carpentry, eight as domestic servants and eight as house painters. About forty are working as saw millers.

Only one village on the PORAPORA did there appear to be over recruiting, though this is not to say that absenteeism does not have its effects. In about five villages situated near MARIENBERG there is hardly an able bodied man to be seen, as most men are working in WEWAK or elsewhere. A fair percentage of these will be more or less permanently away from their villages as they are Administration or Public Servants.

Table 2.Population Increases

Census Division	1963	Average		Increase%
		1964	1965	
East Coast	330	331	348	2.6
Lower Sepik	732	750	814	5.7
Porapora	2466	2482	2536	1.4
Marienberg Hills	1558	1558	1615	1.9
Murik Lakes	1030	1064	1089	3.7
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>6116</b>	<b>6185</b>	<b>6402</b>	

Average population increase 3.1 per cent

<figures here are apparently inconsistent - Kerr obviously did not have a calculator!>

Agriculture (Cash income from local produce)

1. Sago. Sago is produced in the following areas: Kis, Kaup, Mendam, Kopar, most of the East Coast, all of the Porapora and Lower Sepik. The Marienberg Hills Census Division is not a great producer of sago.

There are three villages on the Murik

### Lakes –

Murik, Darapap and Karau (total pop. 814) with virtually no land on which to grow a starch food. What land there is consists of a sandy beach front backing onto extensive mangrove swamps. Therefore these villages are virtually dependant on land holding villages for food. Kis (and Kaup sometimes) is the largest supplier of sago to these villages on the Murik Lakes, and canoes are continually going to Kis to obtain sago, sweet potatoes, tobacco and other foods with cash or by trading with fresh and smoked fish. This in turn provides Kis with an income, which is useful and there is every possibility of a store being set up at Kis. It must also be noted that there is a Cessna strip owned and constructed by Kis villages under the guidance of an A.O.G. missionary resident there.

The Porapora villages produce considerable quantities of sago which they sell to the Marienberg Mission which has to provide food for about 180 people every day, and consequently considerable quantities of food are required at regular intervals.

Some villages from Pinam north supply Marienberg regularly, but villages further south such as Poloran, Jeta and Palipan have only visited Marienberg once or twice in a year to sell sago, which shows that in this isolated area their income is very little from this field of activity. Porapora villages also take sago to Angoram.

2. Fish and Shellfish. Murik lakes villages catch fish with nets, spears and hand-lines for the local market – Kis and Marienberg. Murik, Darapap, Karau and sometimes Mendam supply Wewak regularly with smoked and fresh fish. The price for a fish about ten inches long sold at the market is about four shillings. The price offered for fish by Government Departments is I believe ninepence or tenpence per pound. The Murik Lakes villages have considerable potential with fish processing and plans are being laid in conjunction with the Fisheries authorities of setting up a cool store at Darapap or thereabouts. The Darapap people are eager to get started on a venture of this nature, but with fish prices other than those paid at the Wewak market as they are, a real fifty-hour-a-week or more enterprise would have to be got under way in order to make such a venture an economic success. As things are at the moment, supplying Wewak with fresh and smoked fish through the local market makes the Murik Lakes people the best dressed of the whole

five Census Divisions. Another factor involved in a cool store business is suitable water transport. Some village men would like a boat which could supply Wewak all year round. The seas are only calm enough for canoes six months of the year (April to September inclusive). The Murik Lakes are about six hours by motor canoe from Wewak.

Mendam village has had profitable ventures with a boat called the Xavier which is at present undergoing a complete but painfully slow overhaul at Marienberg Mission and is to be outfitted with a Yanmar diesel engine. The small boat (about 20 ft) was purchased I was told for £1575 by Mendam. It ran

for six years and during this time the calm season Wewak was being constantly supplied with fish and shellfish. Shellfish seems to be their main line as they have extensive beds of it (Kina). With the Xavier out of action Wewak has only been supplied irregularly by canoe. Marienberg is supplied fortnightly with Kina by separate syndicates of ten women and two men who work on a roster basis. Smoked Kina threaded onto sticks (two doz. per stick) sells at eight sticks a shilling and income is about £12 a fortnight.

The A.O.G. missionary at Kis says that the demand for fish in Wewak is so great, that if suitable arrangements could be made he would purchase fresh fish straight from the Murik people - i.e. once a net has been pulled and the fish taken direct to Kis, and sent on an A.M.A.F. Cessna. There is an ice box in the A.M.A.F. hangar at Wewak. If the timing is right fresh fish could be frozen within four hours of being netted. This sounds a good scheme which requires little or no outlay, but 'native time' somewhat fluctuates and aircraft do not make money sitting on a strip. Yet it is hoped that something could come of this idea if the Murik Lakes people want to sell fresh fish at about one shilling a pound. It may be stated here that 500 lbs pulled once a week could supply a village such as Darapap with about £15 extra income if it wanted it.



However, in the meantime further discussions with Fisheries personnel will help to clarify the social and economic problems involved.

3. Basketware. Darapap and other Murik Lakes women are traditional makers of basketware, and a considerable income is derived from this source with large baskets selling at Wewak, Marienberg and Angoram for £1 or more. This form of basketware is sturdy and durable and is seen even in the South Porapora.

Agriculture (Cash Crops)

1. Rice. No rice was being cultivated in any of the suitable rice growing areas. In fact most Porapora village have grown rice but have not continued with it. The reasons seem to be – not enough money and/or probably laziness.

2. Copra.

Table 3

Approximate Coconut Plantings

Census Division	1963/64	1964/65	Total including previous years
East Coast			
Lower Sepik	-	5685	26,949
Murik Lakes	-	2705	28,190
Porapora	1504	1543	22,018
Marienberg Hills	not available		20,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1504</b>	<b>9933</b>	<b>97,157</b>

Kopar and Watam were the only villages in the process of producing copra and then production was very low. Kopar does not appear to have much copra anyway, but is a natural berthage for

passing ships and ten bags of copra were awaiting shipment when the patrol passed through. Watam has been a supplier of seed coconuts for the past eighty or so years. The Germans originally obtained their seed nuts for plantations in the Madang District. Watam also supplied Angoram with nuts but the supply for some reason has been erratic. It would seem that the only way to get seed nuts would be to send a work boat into the area and have it wait around for a week or so to wait for villages to collect the nuts. At the moment transportation, together with a lack of initiative, have retarding effects on copra production. Prices for copra seem to be recognised as good and both Watam and Kopar were

## 11.

urged to get back into production. From my calculations the able-bodied men of Watam could work two or three days a week and still produce over ten bags – enough to fill up Kopar's large canoe and send it to Angoram – the net income would be around £25.

In every other village of the Porapora coconut gardens have been planted, mainly under Agricultural Department guidance – and I must say a credit to this Department - but at this rate coconuts will not mature for another four to seven years and in the meantime interest tends to wane and gardens are in many cases choked with weeds. Even though there has been and emphasis on copra production in the Porapora and elsewhere a truly viable industry does not appear to be apparent once transportation is taken into account. In the Porapora many villages do not have waterways large enough to handle canoes suitable for carrying considerable amounts of copra and so much effort will be wasted in getting produce to markets.

Coconut gardens in the Marienberg Hills have a similar transportation problem though the road system would alleviate this problem.

### 3. Coffee

Table 4

1964/65 Coffee Production in the Marienberg Hills

Village	No of coffee	Stage	of	Production
Sales	Trees			
Mansep	899	producing		£12
Gavien	521	producing		none
Waskurin/		trees mature		
Ariapan	115	but not producing		none
Boig	41	" "		none
Kis	231	producing		none
TOTALS	1,807			£12

From the Table there are five separate coffee enterprises – and about enough coffee trees to support two or three families on an independent cash income. Mansep is the only village that has

sold coffee and whether the other four villages sell any remains to be seen even though coffee was being produced into parchment form in three of these villages. In fact coffee production appears to be pretty much in the doldrums despite Agricultural Department advice on working coffee on a family basis instead of as a village effort.

In the Porapora shade trees have been planted at Gwair and Kitchikan. These gardens were a disgrace and Gwair had twenty-three coffee seedlings. Shade trees were also inspected and Manmong and Unkenang. A very poor effort all round by the villagers concerned.

4. Cacao. Persistent enquiries were made about cacao at Gwair (Porapora) and at Masan (Marienberg Hills). It appears that no sooner has one crop been 'tried' – (e.g. Gwair's twenty-nine coffee trees, Masan had tried peanuts) – that they want to try another. The people are unprepared to specialise yet expect cash for little effort, and according to my informants 'cacao looks good since it grows a large pod'. My efforts to tell them about prices on the open market were not appreciated even though in Gwair's case they had heard that cacao had been destroyed in the Bogia Sub-District.

## Livestock

There are no cattle owned by village groups in the area patrolled, even though there are cattle at Marienberg Mission. The main meat supplier to local markets are the people of the Marienberg Hills who sell pigs in Angoram and elsewhere at often prohibitive costs – up to £15 a pig. Cassowary meat from this area is also in popular demand. Because of the prices that can be demanded for pigs these people do not seem prepared to use more scientific methods in the raising of pigs. As it is at the moment Kis village has the only permanent enclosure for pigs which they feed two or three times a day. Elsewhere pigs roam about the village eating almost randomly from gardens and the bush.

### Forests

There are extensive forest areas in the lower Porapora and Marienberg hills. There is also a strong demand for hardwoods – Garamut and Kwila – which the Porapora people can supply. This market has been recently tapped by the Marienberg Mission, but it appears that once timber has been cut and rafted to the Porapora-Sepik River junction a mission vessel has to pick it up and take it to Marienberg. This can cause undue delay. Present staff availability at the Catholic Mission, Marienberg, does not allow full utilisation of these hardwoods in the Porapora, nor in the Marienberg Hills, where with a trained bulldozer driver, bulldozer and logging staff and saw-mill staff the Marienberg Mission would be able to get almost all its timber requirements virtually on Mission property.

It can be noted that the Administration has timber rights over at least 62,500 acres of forest land in the Marienberg Hills of which Briggs and McLean Ltd have worked commercial quantities.

### Crocodile Skin Industry

As this was the dry season not much activity was seen in this sphere though incomes in the Porapora are considerably enlarged by this source of income. One village, Tarangai (pop 182) had ten men absent from Census because they were away crocodile hunting. It does appear though that large crocodiles are hard to come by as they seem to be becoming wary of spotlights. This does not mean that crocodiles are scarce, it requires harder



work to catch them. I would say that if most Porapora people really wanted to expand their meagre incomes then crocodile hunting is the means to do it.

### Industries and Commerce

The Angoram Native Society operates within the area patrolled, but it would appear only spasmodically. To the all-to-rare copra producers the price paid for copra by the Society is too low, and of course irregular supply by copra producers means irregular collection by the Native Society. All in all the Society could be said to be in the doldrums in this area, though I have no statistics available to back this observation.

There is the Mission store at Marienberg and Ajora. A new Society store is virtually completed at Darapap. There are private enterprise stores and Kopar and Watam. With mission activities at Kis at the moment, the villagers with Mission help will no doubt start a store in the future. Essentially for the more sophisticated groups with motors, easy water transport puts Angoram, Marienberg or Wewak within easy reach. As mentioned elsewhere basketware is an important business to the Murik Lakes women.

### Artefacts

Throughout the Porapora there is a trend forward in the production of artefacts for sale. The quality in general was very good and many persons were asked to bring artefacts to the Council Shop at Angoram. The artefacts industry has been encouraged by the Catholic Mission, whereas in S.D.A. influenced areas there is little or no artefact production for sale.

### Land

Land for resettlement appears to be readily available – and also for livestock in the Marienberg Hills. Recently 1796 acres were purchased by the Administration and sub-division by the Department of Lands for Native resettlement is in progress.

As mentioned previously there are 62,500 acres of timber rights purchased by the Administration in the Marienberg Hills.

One area of land yet to be investigated – and then perhaps by

helicopter – is land between Kitchikan and the Keram River. The Japanese used this area extensively during the war for market gardens, and from Kitchikan there is ready water transport to the Keram River less than a day away, and so reasonably accessible to the land hungry Grass Country. Coconuts however do not, as far as Natives claim, grow well there though other crops do.

### Complaints and Courts

A number of minor complaints were heard by Mr Bretherton and three C.N.A. courts were held. So significant trends can be seen – generally it would appear that the people censused are law abiding, and unless encouraged, are usually

ready to settle minor troubles among themselves.

### Rest Houses

Generally good.

### Health

One woman died of dysentery and a child brought too late to Angoram Hospital. Another woman also died from after-birth complications. In all cases these lives could have been saved if they were health educated. One village – admittedly the most isolated – Palipan had three persons with serious cuts and sores. These were sent to an Aid Post on the Ramu River. One case of mild filaria was brought to Angoram. Dysentery, though not chronic is a sickness that could be alleviated with appropriate education, wells or water tanks.

### Education

Table 5

<u>Census Division</u> <u>Other</u>	<u>Persons at Study</u>				
	<u>Govt Schools</u>		<u>Miss. Schools</u>		
	M	F	M	F	M
East Coast (348)*	12	5	6	7	-
Porapora (2536)	9	3	53	5	1
Lower Sepik (814)	25	14	63	33	3

Murik Lakes (1089)	85	36	6	9	3
Marienberg Hills (1615)	54	19	59	41	4
TOTALS	185	77	187	95	11

\* Population

From the above table of the eleven students under other one, Tom Sumare <Michael Somare> of Karau is <was> attending the University of Queensland. The remaining ten students are attending Mission and Administration Training Colleges or Medical School. In all there are approximately thirty-five students attending Mission and Administration secondary schools.

There has been a considerable increase in children attending schools the past few years. A new Administration Primary T school was opened this year at Singarin and now

caters for 101 students up to Standard Two. The Administration Primary T School at Kaup has extended its facilities to cater for over 120 students up to Standard Four. With the opening of the Singarin School one village – Mendam – has all but a very few children of school age at this school. Some villages in the Marienberg Hills had a majority of children attending primary or secondary schools. The Porapora seems to be the most unaffected by formal education, though there are Mission Catechists in most villages giving some sort of educational instruction – usually in Pidgin.

### Roads and Bridges

There would be no more than ten miles of Landrover roads in the Marienberg Hills, though there are quite possible routes to Wewak. At Marienberg roads have been half completed to Masan and Mansep. Provided the proposed Council or Mission could supply staff and equipment, these roads will serve useful purposes (coffee, livestock, timber etc) when completed, otherwise energies of the natives have so far been wasted.

### Waterways

The following nineteen villages own or share outboard motors: Murik (3), Kaup (1), Darapap (4), Mendam (1), Kopar (2), Watam (1 U/S), Wongan (1 U/S), Taringai (1), Unkenang (1), Jangit, Kirop, Adjura (share 1), Duwar (1), Pinam (1), Kitchikan (1), Nauruk (1), Ombos (1), Pankin, Arango (share 1).

Except for the South Porapora and Kis, waterways are

generally navigable by motor can throughout the wet season. Kitchikan, Pokoran, Jeta and Palipan are closer to Angoram via the Keram River than by the Porapora waterways. Palipan, Manmong, Gwair, Bwair, Unkenang and Taringai have direct water links to the Ramu River, but not always to the Sepik River. In no place within the proposed Council area does it take more than three days to reach Marienberg – the proposed site for the Council Chambers.

## Missions

There are three Missions operating in the area patrolled – Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, and Assemblies of God. Except for Darapap and about four villages in the Porapora, Roman Catholic influence is felt in the remaining forty-nine villages. Mission influence from the Ramu River is mildly felt by some villages in the Porapora and East Coast. The A.O.G. Mission has been largely responsible for the Kis people's recent motivation and efforts to complete a Cessna strip at Kis. This has not been a popular move as far as the Catholic Authorities are concerned as Kis up to now has been traditionally influenced from Marienberg. However it would seem that as a result of the Kis people's new airstrip the people of Kaup have been asked to build a strip not four hours canoe from Wewak and two hours from Kis. Work has already started on the 'Bruta's plais balus'. Thus there appears to be a little too rigorous competition by two Missions in this one area and the situation is enlarged on in a memorandum by Mr D.C. Bretherton.

## Conclusion

As seen from this Report there is little definite commercial activity. Yet there are means of improving cash incomes, not to mention the already existing cash resources from the sale of local produce. This situation however pathetic may be improving, especially if fishing industry plans come to fruition. For the landed areas, land as a heritage is nowhere utilised, though there are enormous problems to be surmounted before



any significant change could come about. Politically the people are reasonably well advanced and they want a Council – all that is required from them is responsibility. The area patrolled for the Lower Sepik Local Government Council is not hopeless and more regular patrolling will no doubt improve the present situation.

End

Cadet Patrol Officer  
17th August 1965

## **8. Patrol Report - Angoram Patrol Report No. 3 - 1965/66**

<Typed copy of carbon copy of Patrol Report Angoram No. 3  
-1965/1966>

Territory of Papua New Guinea  
Patrol Report

District of Sepik                      Report No. Angoram No. 3 65/66

Patrol Conducted by M.D. Kerr, Cadet Patrol Officer

Area Patrolled Middle Sepik Census Division

Patrol Accompanied by Europeans Nil

                    Natives Two Members of R.P. & N.G. Constabulary  
Did Medical Assistant Accompany? No, but Hospital Orderly  
gave small pox injections

Last Patrol to Area by District Services 18/9/1964

                    Medical August 1965

Map Reference Angoram Sub District Map

Objects of Patrol Census and general administration

<Letter referring to patrol, from H.Q. Port Moresby>

<handwritten> Copy Mr. Kerr  
9th November, 1965.

District Commissioner  
Sepik District,  
WEWAK.

Angoram Patrol Report No 3/1965-66

1. Receipt is acknowledged with thanks of a patrol report by Mr. Kerr, covered by your memorandum 67-3-5/926 of 26th October, 1965.
2. Mr. McCabe's comments and yours have been noted.
3. Mr. Kerr has concluded a worth while patrol and has submitted a detailed report, which is very commendable. He has presented a very interesting report which shows that he has used his powers of observation and has carried out all the objects of the patrol.
4. These people appear a bit resentful that there are not enough schools for their children in the area. Are the people only interested in Administration Primary "T" Schools? I am sure that the 2 Mission bodies working in this district have schools in nearly every village.
5. Mr. Kerr appears to have put a lot of thought into the Decimal Currency lectures. It must be extremely difficult for these simple people to understand the conversion

over to dollars and cents.

File: 67-3-5  
District Office,  
WEWAK. 22/11/65.

MINUTE/  
Assistant District Commissioner,  
ANGORAM.

For your information please.

a/DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

<Letter referring to patrol, from District Commissioner>

67-3-5/926  
Department of District Administration  
Sepik District  
WEWAK  
26th October, 1965

The Assistant District Commissioner  
Sub-district Office  
ANGORAM

ANGORAM PATROL NO. 3/65-66 - MIDDLE SEPIK

The receipt of the report of the above numbered patrol conducted by Mr M.D. Kerr, Cadet Patrol Officer, in the Middle Sepik Census Division is acknowledged with thanks.

Mr Kerr has presented an interesting report which shows he has used his powers of observation and has carried out the object of the patrol.

Your comments are noted and adequately cover the report.

Would you please ensure that Mr. Kerr signs his future reports and marks his patrol route on his patrol map.

E.G. HICKS  
a/DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

c.c. Director  
Department of District Administration

KONEDOBU.

<hand written note> Mr. Kerr

For information, and compliance  
with final para please.

B. McCabe ADC

<letter to M.D. Kerr – orders given for patrol>

Department of Distr  
S

67-1-1/282

Mr M.D. Kerr  
Cadet Patrol Officer  
ANGORAM

Patrol Instructions - Middle Sepik Patrol

You are requested to take a Patrol out this coming week to the Middle Sepik Census Division. Confirming my oral instructions would you attend to the following matters?

1. Carry out and complete census revision.
2. Give notice of posting of Final Orders, and advise those concerned. Report any late claims.
3. Give explanatory talks on decimal currency using the literature and charts available.
4. Carry out general patrol duties, including a close check on economic and social progress. Endeavour to obtain as much factual data as possible to illustrate same.

Any complaints which can be settled locally by arbitration, do so. If not, and for serious matters, send advice to this office

and a magistrate will arrange a visit probably during the Patrol.

B.A. McCabe  
Assistant District Commissioner



ANGORAM PATROL NO. 3 - 65/66

Diary

At all the villages visited the following was done:

1. small pox injections given.
2. talks and instruction on Decimal Currency
3. general economic discussions.
4. census taken.

27 August 1965

0900 Departed from Angoram in double outfit using Scott-ox 14 H.P. outboard motor, carrying fifty-two gallons benzine.

1230 Stopped at MOIM for lunch.

1630 Arrived at KANDUANUM No. 1 – spent night after inspecting crocodile lagoon.

28 August 1965

0800 Departed for KARARAU.

1200 Arrived TAMBUNAM. Met the curator of the New York Museum of Primitive Art, Mr Douglas Newton. Mr Newton was starting out for the Kwongai-Chimbian C/D <census division> to look at some cave paintings. Self and Mr Newton depart for KAMANGAUI, rested and then departed over hot kunai plains for SERABA. Spent night at SERABA.

29 August 1965

Departed for KWOWIA, the name given by the people of SERABA of the archeological site mentioned in Mr Claasen's Patrol Report no. 13 - 1964/65. Inspected site

and noted defaced paintings by the more 'literate' people of SERABA who seemingly like to put their initials on their most ancient monument.

Asked villagers to cease this practice.

1000 Departed back for TAMBUNAM stopping to inspect pottery and pottery making at KAMANGAUI. Spent night at TAMBUNAM. Mr Newton departed for Angoram.

### 30 August 1965

0730 Departed for KARARAU accompanied by some SERABA men, including SUINDU the headman.

1400 Arrived KARARAU. Night at KARARAU.

### 31 August 1965

Spend morning inspecting village and coconut gardens. Arbitrated a land dispute concerning the burning of some sago. Only a few in the village own the suitable agricultural land and these people seem very ready to capitalise charging high prices for land or crops for those people who want to commence a cash crop business. During afternoon departed

for KAMINDIBIT. Spent night.

1 September 1965

Departed KAMINDIBIT for Chambri Lakes with Mr Phil Watson of AVATIP in his speed boat. Stopped at AIBOM to inspect pottery. Went on to CHAMBRI and then returned to KAMINDIBIT early afternoon. General discussions with the villagers that night – they claim that they have lost a lot of money through flooding of coconut gardens. Out of seven gardens claim that 112 palms remain.

2 September 1965

Further discussions re. Yanmeri School which became very heated. Appears to be two groups within the ANGRIMAN and MINDEBIT villages – those for the school and those impartial to it. Attempted to set discussions on a higher plane and let them go. Dispute mainly over Tultul's ground which he refuses to give to the school (he has already offered some land). Some compromise reached when an ANGRIMAN villager offered some of his land. Later on in afternoon moved to ANGRIMAN and spent night.

4 September 1965

Sabbath at ANGRIMAN observed. Returned to MINDIBIT by pull canoe to test opinion and feeling to the determinations made the previous day by the villagers. Entertained a Medical Assistant and Dental Technician on leave to their villages along with Yanmeri

school teachers for tea. Further discussion re. land fruitful.

5 September 1965

Tax and census of ANGRIMAN. General discussion re. land shortages. SUINDO of SERABA made general offer of his land. (See comments elsewhere in Report). Night spent at ANGRIMAN.

6 September 1965

Departed for TIMBUNKE. Inspected cattle, heard dispute over Hospital land and the taking of crops from it. Generally TIMBUNKE people appear to be very impartial to R.C. Mission. Complaint re. adultery sent to Angoram.

7 September 1965

Inspected all Native cattle in corral half an hours walk from TIMBUNKE. Twenty-five animals, including three calves and one Government bull appear to be thriving well. BEBE, a former policeman and company of four men are running this business, though most young men in the village take turns at looking after the beasts. These people have about £350 ready to invest in further cattle – money which was obtained from the sale of about 1500 acres for a Mission agricultural lease. The mission with about 350 head have been killing about one animal a week for Mission consumption within the District. There is an airstrip at TIMBUNKE. Departed for TAMBUNAM and WOMBUN.

8 September 1965

Heard many general complaints re. absenteeism in WOMBUN and TAMBUNAM. SUINDO of SERABA again discussed his land. Noted that there is a real premium on land in this area, especially near the villages which are crowded onto a small strip of land along the River. Departed for KANDUANUM No. 1 where a complaint of adultery was referred to Angoram.

9 September 1965

Censused KANDUANUM No. 1 and No. 2. Departed for KANDUANUM No. 2. Inspected village and Mission grounds which includes an airstrip. Departed for KRINJAMBE and spent night there.

10 September 1965

Departed for KAMBRINDO.

11 September 1965

Departed for MUNDOMUNDO in a single canoe. Inspected coffee gardens and timber cutting efforts by Mr Jeff Liversidge who is using a semi-portable chain saw-cum-saw bench for cutting anything from large logs to planks. Kwila and Garamut (hardwood) only being cut.

12 September 1965

Inspected remaining coffee gardens and noted poor efforts. This village noted for its low absenteeism, high birth rate, almost total illiteracy and poor quality of leadership, though have the natural resources of good soil.

4.

13 September 1965

Departed for KAMBRINDO and got back into double outfit then departed for YUERIMA.

14 September 1965

Departed for MOIM, then to PINANG for census. Spent night at MOIM. Considerable interest taken in discussion with MOIM and PINANG Councillors.

15 September 1965

Departed for TAMBALI. Inspected copra producing efforts. Agricultural land dispute with AGRIMARA referred to Council in meantime.

16 September 1965

Departed for MAGENDO. Spent night in double outfit at MAGENDO.

17 September 1965

Departed for ANGORAM Village. Lined also KAMBEROK, then departed for Station where patrol was stood down.

End of Diary

Introduction

This patrol of the Middle Sepik Census Division took twenty-one days and eighteen villages were visited and census

taken of 6,381 persons. Travel was by motor double canoe which carried the patrol over a hundred miles up the Sepik River as far as the Ambunti Sub District Boundary, through flat 'pitpit' country, where about ninety per cent of the ground seen is flooded in the wet season. The muddy Sepik River flows through this country changing its course almost at random, sweeping away suitable agricultural land in places, while elsewhere whirling silt-laden waters build up considerable banks of mud and sand which eventually may become suitable for crops. Land, not washed away in the yearly floods, when flooded is rejuvenated with new layers of mud and native crops can be grown on it year after year.



5.

At this dry part of the year numerous fires can be seen, lit by Natives who hunt the elusive crocodile in the grass. On the edge of the River gardens are seen growing near villages, producing anything from water melons to taro. The occasional clump of sago palms is seen, but this is a rare sight owing to the changing of the River's course, and enhanced by the fact that most Natives buy this food from areas more amenable to sago cultivation in the BIWAT and KARAWARI.

Over 4,000 of the people in the Middle Sepik Census Division are in the BIWAT Council Area, while five remaining villages furthest away from Angoram are directly administered from Angoram Sub District Headquarters.

This whole area, which has been under European influence for over half a century, and now regularly patrolled, is also the mainstream of commercial ventures which centre around the crocodile skin industry. The present relatively high 'standard of living', or should I say cash income for these Native people is both directly and indirectly due to this industry, and so the economic stability of these people is liable to serious fluctuation if the skin boom ceases (prices for some crocodile skins have dropped about thirty per cent this past month), or the crocodiles are killed off. If in the event of a serious depression in this industry the people of this area face serious social and economic depression.

In this patrol, as well as doing the necessary and essential administrative duties, I emphasised the need for greater diversification of income through cash cropping. For those

enjoying a high income now I encouraged saving and investment, and for those with little or no suitable land I encouraged discussion on the merits of resettlement elsewhere in the Sub District. Only one area within the Census Division had a bright future in my opinion – TIMBUNKE – where a hot-blooded, (or in the opinion of some – 'big headed') people have purchased cattle, and with Mission and Government help are investing in a future cattle industry. Elsewhere approximately one half of one bag of coffee was sold this year in Angoram, along with about twenty bags of copra. Thus, besides crocodile skins, this leaves artefacts, some timber

and the sale of native foods and tobacco to form the remaining means to a cash income.

In most cases discussions with headmen were fruitful and many doubts and problems were at least recognised in a new light through discussion. With only 500 children in the area attending schools – less than thirty per cent of school-age children, and then remaining at school for an average of about four years – headmen and councillors with little or no education, and with few educated people to help them, face considerable problems with entering or guiding business ventures. Thus a decided lack of action is apparent in these people towards bettering themselves. Whether they can be classed as being lazy with due respect to these problems I hesitate, but one thing is noticeable and that is the general feeling of inferiority when faced with problems that the business adapted entrepreneur from Australia faces. In the meantime the Natives tend to look on the Australian Government as the means to bring about all change, mainly through education, and so are liable to treat this as 'cargo', while in the meantime they are building little or no business heritage for their children attending school at present.

Thus with brief description as I see it in the Middle Sepik Census Division, one would say that the area, if not advancing slowly is stagnating and is wholly reliant on the crocodile skins for cash income. Socially there are many problems, especially regards the present high rate of absenteeism, while educationally much is left to be desired. I attempted to come to grips with these problems, though by no means will I have dealt with them all, let alone help solve any.

## Reception of Patrol

Village reception of the patrol was at all times friendly and formally co-operative.

### Village Officials

Village officials tend to fall into either of two classes – government appointed and elected. Of the five villages outside the Council area with Luluais only one appears to be unsuitable – the Luluai of TIMBUNKE who is too old. Otherwise the Officials appear to be doing their job as effectively as possible considering the great distance from Angoram. Largely because of this isolation from the mainstream of Sepik River politics and social development – the Biwat Council Area – these five villages tend to be groups in a 'prima donna' class of their own and there is a tendency to settle inter and intra-village disputes by violence instead of by discussion with perhaps Council guidance. This I believe is having retarding effect on social development, as this area of the Sub District is perhaps the richest due to crocodile skins and little is being done to apply cash resources in schemes beneficial to all the inhabitants.

The Councillors I spoke with varied in quality. One councillor appeared to be of very low intelligence. In several cases the Councillors appear to be 'front men' to more powerful interests (usually traditional), though this will probably train them to become better politicians. In most cases the Councillors saw it was their responsibility to look to their electors' interests, and though not possessing the mandatory and often traditional powers of a Government appointed official, can when required exercise considerable prestige and authority. The Councillors, except for the one of apparently low intelligence, joined eagerly in political and economic discussions and at times displayed a remarkable knowledge of their present social and economic

level in comparison with more prosperous parts of the territory, which can be a cause of their feeling of inferiority as suggested in the Introduction. The Councillors also recognised the use of the Council to air their grievances and settle some forms of disputes instead of rushing into Angoram. The Councillors, though not having direct traditional control over their electors, do have residual powers of traditional control, which is helpful considering the still 'primitive' stage of political development by Western standards.

Attitude Towards Government and Europeans

As with the discussion on village officials, a discussion of attitudes may be broken into two parts. The five villages – KARARAU, KAMINDIBIT, MINDIBIT, ANGRIMAN and TIMBUNKE are outside the Council area and the remaining thirteen inside. For the five villages political and economic development in general has not progressed as fast as cash incomes. As mentioned previously, there is much money in these five villages not being used effectively. Though I counted ten trade stores – most of whom are Native owned and operated – these ten stores serve a population of 2,125 persons! Obviously business profits are not flourishing, and in KAMINDIBIT (two stores) I was told that Natives attempting business enterprises with their money need guidance, and certain European traders were mentioned whom the Natives had 'helped' set up in business, and now because some Natives were entering business little help from the European traders was being returned. Whatever the traders are doing about it I was not exactly able to determine, though I pointed out that a population of 532 for KAMINDIBIT did not warrant two trade stores, and that one would suffice if it was stocked with enough goods all the time. These people also had the idea that the European Traders possessed 'shares' in Australia, which in this context is something more than it usually means. 'Shares' to the KAMINDIBIT people seems to embody a concept of Knowledge, business sense, Australian money (I was careful to point out that Decimal Currency was Australian money), and general know-how on how to make money and get 'cargo' – something which they believed only Europeans had. It was

pointed out that trial-and-error, hard work and education, along with a bit of luck, made a successful businessman, and that if a Native wanted to start a trade store it would be best to look more closely at how a European runs one. Though no bitterness was apparent in these discussions, these Natives were in fact critical of the way of life that some Europeans were leading, which they believe has been at the expense of some of their people who used to work for them. In attempting to deal further with this problem I pointed out that a trader's life in Angoram was not an easy one and that he had stiff competition from other traders, and that a European trader would not necessarily help a Native to make competition harder still.



In the Council Area this notion of 'shares' became an idea of Knowledge or 'education' as the MOIM and PINANG councillors called it. In this area thoughts were not impartial or slightly anti-trader and definitely pro-government. The feeling was that Natives were not gaining knowledge fast enough. Criticism was levelled at the authorities for not supplying enough schools. There is one Primary T school at MOIM (195) and a Catholic School at TAMBUNAM (151) – less than 350 places for 2,500 children, though a few of these attend Angoram Primary T School. Every village in this area, except ANGORAM, KAMBEROK, MAGENDO and MOIM, spoke with concern over the general lack of schooling. Much of this criticism is tied up with the fact that there is an awareness of the lack of economic development and that Knowledge instead of hard work will rectify the position. Along with this feeling of the lack of economic progress, some of the Councillors felt that they were not always clear as to their duties, and that the Biwat Council has shown very little concrete advancement. My emphasis was therefore on demonstrating to the Councillors that their role first and foremost was political and educative and that discussion and more discussion would bring a certain amount of Knowledge to the uneducated and eventually help motivate them towards economic development. I also stated that unless Councillors grasped the wisdom of discussions and democratic deliberations and gained new ideas through District Conferences, Radio Wewak etc, education would be of little use to their children if they could not use it, and could in fact promote discontent.

## Absenteeism and Labour

438 men were working away from their villages, or nearly seven per cent of the total censused population of 6,381, and nearly a third of the male work force. In many cases a labour shortage had an effect on economic production – that is in many of the cases any economic projects were at a virtual standstill – though this is not entirely due to the absence of a considerable part of the labour force. Where the absence of men is felt is in the family, where in villages such as WOMBUN and TAMBUNAM, men have in some cases left two or even three wives along with their children to more or less fend for themselves, straining the resources of the men left at home, who have to maintain houses etc, bringing

materials some considerable distances. The ensuing social problems, such as broken homes, juvenile delinquency and adultery, though not serious yet, do exist and I received a total of eighteen specific complaints to have relatives return and look after their families. In one case because a semi-crippled youth did not have his relatives, he was left I was told, to go hungry much of the time. This should be an indication that this primitive society's 'built-in' social security system is not infallible to change.

Of the labour force away only about ten per cent are contract workers on plantations, approximately another ten per cent are living away on plantations with or without their families semi-permanently. About another twenty per cent work for B.G.D. Bulolo on a semi-permanent basis. Of the remaining sixty percent, twenty-five per cent are casual workers in Rabaul, Lae, Madang and Wewak and the remainder are semi-professional and skilled workers in more lucrative occupations. Because of the high percentage of skilled workers, teachers, etc from this area, it would be difficult to bring about any change in the absentee rate. However, it must be noted that it is mainly the semi-jobless worker who has left a family behind, and not the single and usually younger worker doing a skilled job, who is causing the problem.

### Marriage

Marriage patterns may be broadly classified into two groups. In most of the Biwat Council Area 'sister exchange' is the predominant form of marriage, though if parents agree marriage can be obtained without exchange of a sister for a relatively

nominal outlay in cash.

Outside the Council Area sister exchange is not so common and I was told that up to £400 had passed hands in a marriage arrangement. In the two areas courtship is usually begun on the initiative of the woman by the supplying of small gifts such as tobacco and betel nut to the man through a relative. The man on accepting such gifts usually feels obliged to take this woman as his wife. Previously in this area there was a shortage of men due to almost constant tribal fighting and the Japanese occupation

if a woman liked a man strong enough, marriage even if it made for a second or third wife, was more or less obligatory. At KAMINDIBIT I was told that when the day of the wedding feast was arranged, the bride-to-be is decked out in her best clothes and her relatives come forward with pots, pans and bolts of cloth etc. The husband would receive them. Concealed in one of the presents would be a written note asking for money – the exchange. This is not always a predetermined amount as far as the husband is concerned – though if the bride is young and virginal, and her relations have supplied a lot of goods – he can naturally expect to pay more. On seeing the note the husband nods and may have to pay £50 to £100 or more, of which there is usually a stipulated sum which the bride's parents must pay back to the man, in fact about one quarter of the original amount.

While in KAMINDIBIT a complaint was laid that a husband had not paid the full £65 of his marriage gift, and that of £35 he had handed over, £15 had been returned, and that he had yet to pay £20. This form of arrangement does show respect for the principles involved and the cementing of family friendship through a fairly equitable exchange of gifts. In the Council Area such outlays are controlled by a more rigorous keeping to the idea of sister exchange.

#### Dissemination of Information, Mass Media and Communication

The main form of dissemination of information is by word of mouth, through opinion leaders – traders, missionaries, patrol officers, councillors and returned workers. Teachers and pupils, educated semi-professionals on leave also have an opinion forming role, though traditional village authority is not always geared to accept this source of information. Letter writing would

be the next most important method of information dissemination, though the quality of it may not be great. The use of radios for a sophisticated area such as this comes a very poor third, though perhaps has the most educative form of information available virtually all the time. There are just not enough radios available – one for every 170 persons compared with about one to every four persons in Western countries. Communication with Angoram is also a factor which determines the amount of information by any one village.

12.

Table

Availability of Motors <outboard motors> and Radios -  
Education rate

village motors	pop.	mission	%pop at school	radios	
Kararau	227	SDA/RC	12.7	4	4
Kamindibit	532	RC	7.7	2	2
Mindibit	332	SDA	13.6	4	2
Angriman	371	SDA	17.6	6	7
Timbunke	613	RC	12.8	7	9
Wombun	421	RC	20.0	-	1
Tambunam	943	RC	8.3	5	5
Kanduanum	347	RC	2.9	1	3
Krinjambe	213	RC	5.2	-	2
Kambrindo	421	RC	5.2	-	1
Mundomundo	401	RC	0.5	-	2
Yeurima	236	RC	5.1	2	2
Moim 3	280	RC	21.2		1
Pinang 3	239	RC	12.4		2
Tambali -	141	RC	11.2		-
Magendo	411	RC	6.8		1 6
Angoram	146	RC	6.8	1	2
Kamberok	57	RC	3.6	-	-

TOTALS            6,381

36 54

From the above Table generally the greatest number of radios is found in villages furtherest away from Angoram and in villages possibly in a position more able to afford them. Three villages off the Sepik River have no radios, MUNDOMUNDO, TAMBALI and KAMBEROK. MUNDOMUNDO has the lowest literacy rate if the percentage of population attending school gives any indication. It seems to be that education, commercial activity and education rate plays a leading role in promoting the acceptance of information by various forms. As yet newspapers such as New Guinea Tok Tok and Nuis Bilong Yumi, which are delivered to the Council Chambers at Moim, have in my opinion only a marginal affect.

### Decimal Currency

(See Appendix)

<See Kerr's papers with University of PNG - electronically **not** transcribed>



## AGRICULTURE

### Food Situation

In all the villages except KARARAU and KAMINDIBIT, the people purchase most of their sago – basic diet. In the upper part of the Census Division sago is obtained from up the Karawari River, and in the lower part from the Biwat Area. The main reason for this appears to be that the Sepik River changes its course and planting sago near the river is a risk, though most river villages have sago inland. The fact is that these villages are getting cash income and can afford to buy sago. Whether this is having a detrimental effect on Biwat sago supplies is difficult to tell. However, wherever possible I encouraged further planting of sago to offset the increase in population.

Sweet potatoes and other foods are grown in considerable quantities and most villages supply Angoram regularly with local produce.

### Cash Cropping

Cash cropping is virtually non-existent. Coffee is grown in MUNDOMUNDO and about three pounds worth have been sold over two years. In every other village coconuts have been planted in plantation form, but there are only three villages producing copra. They are TAMBALI, MAGENDO and ANGORAM. There were also a number of complaints brought up about land for coconuts – both inter and intra-village disputes – mainly accentuated by the land shortage. With existing forms of land tenure and the general nature of the Native social system,

cultivation of coconuts makes this business a necessary co-operative venture, and in some places because of internal dissension progress is barely seen. In places where the land shortage was noticeable landowners at times proceed to be an all too effective block to those villagers who want to improve their financial position. Generally the shortage of suitable land, and high present incomes from crocodile skins dissipates any effort towards working cash crops.

### Livestock

The only livestock seen in the area was cattle at TIMBUNKE, where the Roman Catholic Mission have about 350 head and the TIMBUNKE villages twenty-five. I spent some time with the villagers inspecting their cattle which included three calves and a Government bull. These people, though working slowly towards building up their herd, have a great interest in their cows, and have a good idea of the temperament of each beast. Four men under BEBE run a company with others helping, including a trainee who has completed a four months course in the Morobe District. Though these people are getting considerable help from the Mission, with advice on the borrowing of salt licks etc, they tend to consider the Government as the 'papa bilong ol', and that the prices they paid for the Mission cows (£35 each) were too much.

Along with this land, and that extending out from KAMANGAUI to SERABA in the Kwongai-Chimbian Census Division, opposite TAMBUNAM, a cattle industry will have excellent chances of establishing itself with proper guidance.

### Forests

There is no timber cut on the Sepik River, though at MUNDOMUNDO small stands of hardwood are being cut by Mr Jeff Liversidge with a portable saw bench.

### Commerce and Industry

The only substantial industry on this part of the River is the

crocodile industry, which virtually supports a total of seventeen village and mission trade stores and fifty-four outboard motors which are serviceable. There are six European traders and their Native employees working in the area buying skins, and selling them through three major wholesale organisations. One, Gaulstaun Pty Ltd has recently dropped its skin prices owing to the amount of small skins being sold. Though the management of Gaulstaun Pty Ltd is pressing for appropriate legislation to place restrictions on the size of crocodile skins being sold, other companies do not appear to be taking steps in this direction. Some

individual traders see the wisdom of refusing small skins with the idea that conservation will mean larger skins on future occasions.

There does not appear to be any indication that the crocodile skin industry is going to die out, though crocodiles are becoming more difficult to catch – caught at present mainly by burning off dry swamps in the dry season, and by hook and line.

### Land

The richest agricultural soil near the River appears to be at MUNDOMUNDO which is running an abortive coffee project. TIMBUNKE land and the land opposite TAMBUNAM appears to be the only land that the Government could consider buying for resettlement.

SUINDO of SERABA (from a village which has ten bearing individual coffee gardens) travelled with the Patrol and discussed the sharing of his land with the ANGRIMAN and MINDIBIT people. Though it is difficult to see the reasons for this offer, it can be stated that SERABA – as with most of the villages of the Kwongai-Chimbian Census division – was a traditional enemy of the River people, and that SUINDO could be making a bid to get recognition from his former enemies, by trying to get into the hum of commercial activity on the Sepik River. I encouraged SUINDO to discuss this matter further and it is hoped that firm deliberations may eventuate.

I have mentioned at land short villages the idea of resettlement and gave the Gavien resettlement scheme as an example. The following is a summary of the discussion with KAMINDIMBIT people:

1. For some to settle at Gavien would

impose high costs for transport going to and from the village.

2. Resettlement causes disruption of families.
3. The old people are afraid of being left alone.
4. Enough income is coming from crocodile skins at present.

A total of four land disputes were brought to my notice, which have been referred to the Assistant District Commissioner.

## Missions

There are two Missions operating in the area - the Seven Day Adventists at KARARAU and ANGRIMAN, with the guidance of Native teachers and catechist, and the Roman Catholics with Europeans stationed at TIMBUNKE and KANDUANAM. With the gradual growth of Government activity, activity in the Missions have not increased at such a fast rate, as it appears to me that many Natives, especially at TIMBUNKE and TAMBUNAM expect benefits without obligation from the Government. Though this may be regarded as an unfounded allegation, in my opinion the Catholics are losing ground and not gaining it, as far as Native attitude is concerned, though about four Native sisters and one Native Brother have come from this area.

## Conclusion

Though much of my time was spent doing purely administrative tasks, I did have many opportunities to see these people informally in their gardens and elsewhere. The general impression, as indicated in this Report, is that little commercial activity is seen, except that centred around crocodile skins. At the same time dissatisfaction has been expressed as regards education and absenteeism. As well as that, land disputes are causing undue delays in any form of effort to cash crop.

Though this area is not a hive of activity, existing Government, Mission and commercial enterprises are bringing these people more and more to a westernised style of life, with many of its accompanying problems. These problems must be

looked at openly and with the feeling that something must and should be done about it to make the necessary transformations of this society easier for the sake of political and economic development.



# 9. Patrol Report - Angoram Patrol Report No. 6 - 1965/66

## ANGORAM SUB DISTRICT

Patrol No. 6 - 65/66

Patrol Conducted by M.D. Kerr, Cadet Patrol Officer

Area Patrolled            Kwongai-Chimbian Census Division

Personnel Accompanying    Medical Orderly  
   Agricultural Assistant Repo Tambari

Duration of Patrol            from 13.11.65 to 27.11.65  
   fifteen days

Last Patrols to Area    D.D.A. May 1965

D.S.A.F.                    Area  
continually patrolled from  
Agricultural            Extension  
Centre at NAMUK

Objects of Patrol            Routine Administration,  
   Decimal Currency instruction,  
agricultural fact finding,  
agricultural extension work.

Map Reference                    Lands            Fourmil            of  
   Ambunti                            with

amendments,  
attached.

copy

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## INTRODUCTION

The Kwongai-Chimbian Census Division comprises an area of approximately 504 square miles containing a population of 1221 persons living in sixteen villages spaced at intervals of one to six miles. Covering low hill country, kunai grass plains prevail stretching across Yangoru and Wewak Sub Districts south to the swampy marshes of the Sepik River, dotted by sago swamps and stands of bush. In most bush areas where villages are situated coffee is in some stage of production, while well-drained grass plains exist devoid of stock, being burnt off from time to time by Natives for the catching of game.

With an airstrip at TINBOLI the New Guinea Gospel Mission has a school and a well-stocked trade store with prices below prices paid for similar goods in Angoram, and actively engaged in buying coffee, copra and rice, as well as crocodile skins from Native producers who otherwise would have little outlet for their crops. To the east at CHIMBIAN the Roman Catholic Mission has also purchased crops, though on a small scale.

Though the population is small and the villages likewise, ample land in general, suitable village leaders, and the seemingly natural ability to work consistently at cash cropping, is slowly but surely bringing economic improvements to the whole area. The recent setting up of an Agricultural Extension Centre by the Agricultural Officer at Angoram and staffed by an Agricultural Assistant gives some indication of the favourable attitude the D.A.S.F. has for this area, and the local people seem to be responding though as yet it is too early to assess the full influence of the Centre.

In comparison with other areas I have patrolled of the Angoram Sub-District, the people of the Kwongai-Chimbian are by all appearances generally eager to improve their economic and social standing are actively – with Mission and D.A.S.F. guidance – improving their standard of living through their own efforts. Thus I was not plagued so much by talk and usual dilly-dallying about Local Government Councils and the House of Assembly, but by such cold hard statements as "we would like to buy a coffee huller", and "we are a peaceful people and any interference in our lands

by outside Natives is going to upset our business, and so we look to the Administration to supply adequate safeguards for our own traditional and legal rights."

This I feel it is the Administration's business to continue to watch closely any developments which could otherwise take these active people away from the job in hand, and for this reason a patrol coming five months after the previous one had not come too early, and that continued such regular patrolling would assist the present encouraging situation.

## DIARY

Note - at all villages visited general agricultural extension work was carried out and statistics gained. Talks were also given on Decimal Currency.

- 13.11.65 At 1000 patrol departed for TIMBUNKE in Government Canoe, stopping at KANDUANUM and TAMBUNAM. Arrived at 1530. Slept night.
- 14.11.65 Sunday observed. Government Canoe sent back to Angoram. Discussion with TIMBUNKE Natives re Hospital land which they felt was not purchased completely. Tea at Mission.
- 15.11.65 More discussions over Hospital land, and not very fruitful. BEBE and others dispatched with note to A.D.C. Angoram. Put permanent

boundary pegs on land and walked boundaries with Natives. Later inspected Native cattle.

16.11.65 At 0800 departed TIMBUNKE for TINBUN in hired canoe. At 1000 arrived at TINBUN and then walked to MALIMBO half and hour away.

17.11.65 At 0800 departed for TINBOLI inspecting some coffee gardens en route. Met Mr Davidson, Superintendent of N.G.G.M. and discussed economic progress in area. Continued to TINBOLI and then to YINDIGIN.

4.

- 18.11.65 Walked to MANGANJANGUT and then to TINBOLI then on to Mission for tea. Spent night at YINDIGIN.
- 19.11.65 Walked to SAMANGAI and KINGAUI then back to YINDIGIN for night.
- 20.11.65 Departed for TINBOLI and heard complaints from Luluai and Tultul of KARARAU over rights to a piece of land recognised to be part of the KWONGAI area. Discussions not fruitful so advised mediation and compromise by all parties concerned until a decision could be made by a higher authority. Moved to JIGINUMBUT then on to NAMUK where met REPO TAMBARI, Agricultural Assistant at new Extension Centre.
- 21.11.65 Sunday observed at NAMUK. Watched burning off of large tract of grassland.
- 22.11.65 Moved to SAUI, then set out to visit CHIMBIAN and WARIGAM, then back to SAUI.
- 23.11.65 Walked to SUIMBO.
- 24.11.65 To KOIWAT.
- 25.11.65 Walked to KAMANGAUI then to SERABA.
- 26.11.65 Walked to PIAMBIT, then by canoe down

Nagum River to MUNDOMUNDO.

27.11.65      Departed by hired canoe for Angoram. Arrived  
1130. Reported to A.D.C. Patrol stood down

End of Patrol



OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

## RECEPTION OF PATROL.

At all times friendly and co-operative.

## VILLAGES

The type of housing varies, it appears, to the amount of Mission and economic activity influencing any one group.

In the west and north of the Census Division – especially the villages of YINDIGIN and CHIMBIAN – housing is beginning to follow a European pattern in layout, and sago blind is being extensively used. By contrast, in the communities of KOIWAT and KAMANGAUI the people are isolated and badly led, living a more traditional way of life in houses that barely have walls.

In one case the people of SAUI have set up a hamlet where the Extension Centre is situated. The reason for this is that the people wish to be nearer their coffee gardens. A new hamlet has been started by some KOIWAT at a site near a stream where TIMBUNKE villagers buy their sago.

## VILLAGE HEADMEN (not exhaustive)

table 1

Village	name	Age	Status	Comments
Yindigin	Kanjendimi/ Ombun	42	coffee grower	largely responsible for purchase of

coffee huller.  
Active in village  
affairs.

Yindigin Lami/ 40 Tultul, A responsible man  
Tipmanmeri coffee has respect of  
grower villagers.

Seraba Suindo/ 45 village Formerly of Granjango  
leader CHIMBIAN  
coffee Set up village

grower  
for  
express  
purpose of  
cash  
cropping.  
Has over  
1000  
coffee  
trees.

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## POLITICAL SITUATION (see also Introduction)

The people of this area continue to respect both Mission and Government agencies and realise that future activity in the area by both Government, Mission, and it is hoped eventually by private enterprise, largely depends on their ability to produce a steady cash income. At the moment it appears to be the feeling that it will be a few years before the Kwongai-Chimbian Census Division has any sort of prosperity based on cash cropping, and until then it is the feeling that a Local Government Council would serve little purpose. More than once it was commented that the Biwat Council is a Council made up of talkers who have little land and little prospect of any real business. At the present time the relative isolation of the Census Division centred around a very active Mission, and a new extension centre, together with no real detrimental social and political animosity between groups, creates a conducive atmosphere where the people can concentrate on their own economic development.

## AGRICULTURE

Native Produce. The basic staple of the area is sago and this is produced in such quantities that it is sold regularly to the hospital at TIMBUNKE, and TAMBUNAM, WOMBUN, and MUNDOMUNDO villages all within the Middle Sepik Census Division. For KAMANGAUI and KOIWAT people who sell sago in the dry season as well as a few clay pots, this is at present their only means of income. Discussions were held with me as to the raising of sago prices.

Pigmeat and other game is also sold, and as most villages of

the area are relatively far enough inland from the Sepik River, and yet can still catch fish in their streams, trade routes link some villages of Yangoru and Wewak Sub Districts for the purpose of selling fish.

Betel nut is also a popular item of trade. Where payment for goods is not expected from Middle Sepik villages, basketware and mosquito baskets are a suitable means of exchange.

Cash Crops. The main cash crop of the area is coffee, followed by copra and rice in that order. All villages have coffee gardens.

Table 2

Coffee Production

Village Sold	Population		1965 Value		No. Trees Coffee	
	No.	No.	Gardens			
Malimbo	68	5	1569			
Yindigin	123		14	3167	£52 to N.G.G.M.	
Simangai	36	6	1231			
Kingau	49	3	464			
Tinboli	81		11	2000		
Manganjangut			82	11	922	
Jiginumbut	51	1	165			
Namuk	53	2	241			
Warigam	55	10	1667			
Sau	74	8	900			
Chimbian	99	10	1613		£25 to R.C. Miss.	
Suimbo	69	2	944			
Koiwat			183	2	439	£12 to D.A.S.F.
Seraba	69	10	4141		£20 to D.A.S.F.	
Kamangau	76	3	532		£2 to D.A.S.F.	
Piambit	53	2	595		£10 to D.A.S.F.	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1221</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>21,590</b>	<b>£121</b>	

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From the above table it can be seen that income this year is something like £120 from coffee. This compares very unfavourable with £1,500 worth of crocodile skins which passes through the N.G.G.M. Even the local food market supplies income will in excess of incomes gained from coffee. However there are gardens now prepared for a further 25,000 coffee trees and as present gardens reach maturity (only about a third of the 21,590 coffee trees will mature or are mature this year) incomes from coffee can expect to treble during the next two years. Production, though at its early stages, is encouraging and already a coffee huller has been purchased by men at YINDIGIN village and was working when the patrol called. In all cases I can ascertain, planting was on an individual or family basis. No problems were encountered regarding rights to land, though Yindigin people are concerned about trespassers from Yangoru Sub District using their bush land which they have reserved for food production owing to the amount of land taken up near the village for coffee. As the N.G.G.M. has regular chartered M.A.F. Cessna flights to Tinboli airstrip, air freighting £52 worth of coffee was no problem. The price paid for the coffee

was 1/4d per pound and resold to D.A.S.F. in Wewak for 1/6d per pound. This does not mean that filling chartered aircraft with coffee is a paying proposition, but the Mission eventually gets most of its money paid out back through its well equipped trade store. The Catholic Mission has purchased £25 worth of coffee from CHIMBIAN which also has an airstrip, but flights to CHIMBIAN have ceased in the meantime.

With these outlets for the sale of coffee in the western and northern parts of the Census Division immediate access to Angoram is not vital as yet, though SERABA, being a considerable distance from TINBOLI, has delivered coffee to Angoram via PIAMBIT, MUNDOMUNDO and down the Sepik River. If SERABA continues to develop coffee production (4141 trees) transport such as pack mules or such other beasts of burden will eventually have to be considered, as the walking distance to MUNDOMUNDO and TAMBUNAM is about four hours - most of it across stifling hot kunai plains.

Copra. Copra is being produced by YINDIGIN, TINBOLI, JIGINUMBUT and other villages near the Tinboli Mission. Up to now the Superintendent of the Mission is experimenting with the selling of copra and has purchased some at 4d per pound. A total of about 1,500lb of copra has been purchased or weighed for purchase this last month. The total number of bearing coconut trees in this area would not exceed 2,000.

Rice. One bag of paddy rice has been purchased by the N.G.G.M. at Tinboli, but there is no evidence of any rice growing on any considerable scale.

## LIVESTOCK

There are no cattle within the Census Division, though preparations are underway to prepare a fenced compound for four cows which D.A.S.F. Angoram will sell to the JIGINUMBUT people. A fence for pigs has been half completed at MALIMBO and awaits more wire to complete the job.

The feeling of the people is that coffee will be a good intermediate crop in the event of a cattle industry being established.



## COMMERCE

With N.G.G.M. help there are three Native-owned trade stores in the area, though providing a very small range of goods. The people have no illusions about making big money in trade stores while there is still a relatively low per capita income in the area, and in the meantime having a trade store is giving some business training as well as being a status symbol. The trade store at the N.G.G.M. has an approximate annual turnover of £5,000 and some of this has been through the supply of wholesale goods to Native traders as far away as the Chambri Lakes. Though the N.G.G.M. is a small independent Mission reliant to a large extent on trade, its store prices are very reasonable to say the least, when comparing them with the higher costs of similar items in Angoram. It is claimed by the Superintendent of the Mission that he can sell all-wave transistor radios for £18 and Winchester 'Cooee' shotguns also for this price. To pay for the same articles in Angoram would cost about £25.

The value of crocodile skins can be expected to be lower this year - about £1,500 instead of about £2,000 paid to Natives last year.

The N.G.G.M. runs a Commonwealth Banking Agency and there are approximately 14 passbooks in the area with accounts totalling £50.

## COMPLAINTS

Two complaints regarding land matters were brought to my

attention during the patrol and are dealt with in separate correspondence.

## HEALTH

A medical Orderly from Timbunke Hospital accompanied the patrol as far as SUINDO. A number of urgent cases were sent to Timbunke Hospital which could have been treated at TINBOLI had the Mission Aid-Post, formerly staffed by an ex Medical Assistant, been operating. At present the staff situation at Tinboli Mission has led to the temporary closing of the Aid-Post for more serious cases. One man died of dysentery it is believed, and instructions were given to headmen at KOIWAT and KAMANGAUI to try and stop initiation practices which periodically come about, causing in some cases serious infections.

## EDUCATION

There is a registered school at standard three level at Tinboli Mission run by one European with two Native assistants. Eighty pupils attend this school. There is also a small prep. school at CHIMBIAN run by a catechist who claims he has a teaching certificate. The school was not operating when I passed through, though from indications I got teaching done in English some of the time.

## ROADS

Two roads have been part completed from WARIGAM and KINGAUI. From discussion it was found that the Natives wanted to build these roads with the idea that a Native trade route could set up with markets at SIMANGAI and CHIMBIAN. Here inland people from Yangoru and Wewak Sub Districts could trade for fish etc. Their efforts are to be commended as a road is quite feasible right up to the main Maprik-Wewak road and could be fashioned on the predominantly rolling kunai plains relatively cheaply, though not necessarily to all-weather specifications. In the event of a cattle industry being established north of the Kwongai-Chimbian Census Division a road system will be a priority and extra link-ups with the Kwongai-Chimbian would involve little extra cost, even as far as TIMBUNKE.

## CONCLUSION

Though this report is brief - many facts omitted here are found in Mr D. Claasen's Report Angoram No. 13 64/65 - considerable development is coming regarding agriculture. The setting up of an Agricultural Extension Centre will no doubt mean closer contact between D.S.A.F. and the producers in the area. I feel it is up to D.D.A. to see that present friendly relations among all groups are maintained, and that a short, sharp patrol every six months (it can be done in eight days) will give the people an outlet for any possible grievances especially regarding land which if not attended to promptly could hinder present economic progress.

# 10. Patrol Report - Angoram Patrol Report No. 7 - 1965/66

TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

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DEPARTMENT OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

## MEMORANDUM OF PATROL

Patrol 7 - 65/66 Subdistrict ANGORAM District SEPIK

Officer conducting Patrol M.D. Kerr, Cadet Patrol Officer

Census Division Patrolled Part of KWONGAI-CHIMBIAN

Objects of Patrol To accompany Agricultural Officer D.C. Willis for opening of Agricultural Extension Centre at NAMUK.

To settle two land matters arising out of MD Kerr's Patrol No. 6 -65/66.

Date Patrol Commenced 2 December 1965 Date completed 6 December 1965.

Duration - days five.

NOTE For full account of area patrolled please refer to

Angoram Patrol No.6 - 65/66 completed in November 1965.

SUMMARY OF CORRESPONDENCE ARISING FROM PATROL

File 35-6-2 of 29 November 1965 to A.D.C. Angoram

Patrolling Officer's Signature

I certify that all necessary local administrative action has been or is being taken on matters arising out of this patrol and that the correspondence above indicated by a tick has been forwarded to the Headquarters, Department of District Administration, Port Moresby.

.....  
District Commissioner

## DIARY

2.12.65.

Departed in heavy rain in Agricultural Canoe with Mr D.C. Willis, Agricultural Officer for TIMBUNKE. Slept night at TIMBUNKE. Arranged to assemble TIMBUNKE villagers on 6/12/65 to settle payment for HOSPITAL LAND.

3.12.65.

0800 Departed for NAMUK, leaving canoe at TINBUN.

1300 Arrived NAMUK. Preparations for Singing underway. Arranged that KARARAU village leaders have informal discussion regarding use of land known as LIMBAMBU with KWONGAI leaders.

4.12.65

Agricultural Centre at NAMUK formally opened. Speeches all round, etc. Singing and interviews recorded for Radio Wewak. Night at NAMUK.

5.12.65.

Meeting with KARARAU and KWONGAI leaders over land disputes. Agreed that use of LIMBAMBU land be shared by both peoples subject to permission and discussion with headmen of KARARAU and KWONGAI. People told of Adjudication Committee being set up and that if the dispute does not stay resolved that this machinery will soon be available.

6.12.65

Departed for TIMBUNKE where assembled men of village were told of legal implications of Hospital Land purchase. Monies that had not been paid out to individual owners was arranged and a formal witnessed payment was made. The people appear now to regard the Hospital Land and its economic trees as belonging to the Administration. The responsible men of the village say that any action to the contrary will be dealt with sternly by themselves. People informed of benefits that Hospital brings to them. Departed for Angoram.





Summary of Correspondence Arising from Patrol

File 37-2-5 of 6.12.65 Angoram  
37-2-5 of 15.12.65 Angoram

Coroner's Court 30 December 1965

Martin Kerr <signature>

Patrolling Officer's Signature

I certify that all necessary local administrative action has been or is being taken on matters arising out of this patrol and that the correspondence above indicated by a "tick" had been forwarded to the Headquarters, Department of District Administration, Port Moresby.

District Commissioner



## DIARY

Note Unless otherwise mentioned, transport is by Motor Canoe

- 10.12.65                    1030 Departed on patrol, Mr A. Sutherland, Med Ass. accompanying. 1600 arrived BIWAT. Spent night.
- 11.12.65                    Departed for ASANGAMUT. Spent night.
- 12.12.65                    Departed for MUNDAMBA and interviewed witnesses re. alleged fight.
- 13.12.65                    Returned to Angoram.
- 14.12.65  
to                              Recovering from slight fever. Light office duties.
- 16.12.65
- 17.12.65                    As per instructions by A.D.C. proceeded again to ASANGAMUT.
- 18.12.65                    Walked for eight hours to KANSIMEI (Maranyam Village) on KONMEI River in Karawari I Census Division.
- 19.12.65                    Interviewed complainants of alleged assault and exhumed body of a man. Body to Amboin with Const Angoi.

- 20.12.65 Walked back to ASANGAMUT.
- 21.12.65 To MUNDAMBA where interviewed witness to alleged assault. Departed for SIPISIPI where a baby was picked up for delivery to Angoram Hospital with suspected pneumonia. Stopped at SAPARU, ANDUAR, ARANGUNAM and KUNDIMBA to present Provisional Orders re. Mission land and assess claims. No Claims. Night spent at MOIM as Mercury 20 hp had a blocked water pump.
- 22.12.65 To Angoram towed by Native canoe. Interviewed one last witness that afternoon.
- 27.12.65 Constable Angoi arrived ex Amboin with body.
- 29.12.65 Post-mortem examination of body by Dr Gerrits at Angoram Hospital.
- 30.12.65 Coroner's Court held at Angoram.

## INTRODUCTION

This patrol, primarily a Police investigation travelled up the Yuat River as far as ASANGAMUT on two occasions. The first time up the Yuat River proved to be abortive as I contracted a fever, lost interest in the investigation and returned to Angoram to recover. On the second ascent I stopped at ASANGAMUT and crossed over to MARINYAM (KANSIMEI). At MARINYAM I interviewed witnesses and as a result exhumed a body before returning to interview witnesses at MUNDAMBA and ASANGAMUT.

Descending the Yuat River for the last time certain land matters were attended to at SAPARU, ARANGUNAM, and KUNDIMBA where Provisional Orders under the N.G.L.T.R.O. were presented. No claims were made.

## POLITICAL SITUATION

As an extended patrol has just been in the YUAT Census Division (No. 4 - 65/66) my comments are brief.

At the upper villages of SIPISIPI, GIRING, MUNDAMBA and ASANGAMUT the patrol was received in a cordial but lethargic manner. Distance for the other villages on the Yuat River, a swift river to navigate and the lack of educational facilities necessarily keep these people so. Some efforts are being made to grow coffee, but as crocodile skins are still available little real effort appears to have been made in cash cropping.

At BIWAT, ARANGUNAM and KUNDIMBA efforts at native agriculture - preparation of sago for sale and native

gardening - appeared to be active. Enquiries were made by KUNDIMBA villagers about the alienation and eventual sale of a portion of their land to the R.C. Mission nearby. Land has been marked out for an airstrip but has not been surveyed or purchased. I asked the Missionary there to contact this office about making application to lease this land.

Generally the whole area impressed as progressing slowly but surely in the economic sense, but I am unable to comment on political progress as I had little chance to discuss Councils and Government with villagers.

### ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE

Because of the briefness of the patrol I saw little of economic enterprise. However I saw timber made up into about ten rafts on the Konmei Creek near MARINYAM and spoke with the Agricultural Field Assistant at BIWAT who was busily assisting villagers to construct the Sub-District's third Agricultural Extension Centre. At BIWAT there is also a copra drier, and three cows. Apart from this and crocodile skins the main enterprise on the Yuat River is the sale of native food and tobacco.

## COMMENT ON POLICE INVESTIGATION

At MARINYAM I heard complaints from two persons about the death of a man called ANDUK of MUNDAMBA who was buried at MARINYAM. I removed the remains of ANDUK and sent them with Constable Angoi to Amboin Patrol Post by canoe as this avoided an eight-hour trek across sago swamps back to ASANGAMUT.

While at MARINYAM I got the impression that the Natives there were at least satisfied that Justice in some form was being done, though I took care to explain that the remains of ANDUK were being taken to Angoram for a post-mortem on which would largely stand the necessity or not for a full-scale inquest and the possibility of eventual charges being laid. Villagers present at the exhumation claimed they saw some broken 'rib' bones, but eventual examination proved that these bones were collar bones.

The delay in reporting the death of ANDUK – he had been buried almost a year – necessarily meant that a post-mortem would give little concrete evidence as to the cause of ANDUK's death, and, coupled with the fact that ANDUK took about three months to die after an alleged assault, not to mention the unreliability of witnesses who had a year to fabricate or forget what they heard or saw, meant that I had little real evidence to go on.

Because the villages of ASANGAMUT and MARINYAM are closely related, there appeared to be a little trouble over child swapping as the Asangamuts claimed back a little girl of a Madang woman who had died but who had been married to an Assangamut man. This was finally agreed to but I could not help feeling that because the Marinyams knew they had to give



back the girl (in fact a beautiful child by anyone's standards), this may have caused the complaint (whether fictitious or not) to be laid in the first place. But for this incident the Marinyams and Asangamuts appeared to be friendly towards each other and food was readily brought to the visitors who were in fact my carrier line.

The investigation did not bring about an inquest, but from my observations it appears that though Native movement between the upper YUAT River and the Karawari River occurs frequently, the distance in this case between ASANGAMUT and MARINYAM (formerly three hours apart, but now eight hours apart, separated by almost trackless bush and sago swamps) lead to the generating of suspicion between groups when some person or persons have been wronged in some way by members of another group.

In this case ANDUK (deceased), it appeared had been ill-treating his wife and on one occasion even burnt his house at MUNDAMBA down in a temper. On the occasion of the alleged assault he broke an earthenware pot which was a family heirloom on his wife's side. Soon after this incident ANDUK left for ASANGAMUT, then he went into the bush for a while before appearing at MARINYAM, later to die of what appears to have been t.b. and/or dysentery. This, as well as other evidence, appears to sum up to the idea that Anduk was not liked at MUNDAMBA and ASANGAMUT because of his actions, and possibly out of spite he may have alleged that an assault on him took place, when in fact evidence points to the contrary. Eventually MARINYAM villagers acted on this and a complaint was made to the Patrol Officer at Amboin last November.

## CONCLUSION

The prime purpose of the patrol was to carry out a Police Investigation, and though time was spent with MARINYAM and ASANGAMUT villagers no effort was made to bring Natives to discuss political and economic problems because of my position as a Police Officer investigating serious allegations.

As a result of the investigation and consequent post-mortem examination it was deemed that it was unnecessary to hold and inquest into the death of ANDUK of MUNDAMBA.

## 12. Creative Activity While in PNG

When Martin Kerr arrived in Port Moresby he joined the local Arts Council and acted in a couple of rehearsed play readings.

While in Telefomin – Jan 1965 to May 1965 he played around with a bit of poetry – not very good, going by the notes he left.

One amusing item was sent off to DDA Headquarters in Port Moresby accompanying a small carton of penis gourds from Telefomin:

### TELEFOMIN CONTRACEPTIVE COMMUNE

(Manufacturers of a guaranteed product since 4000 BC)  
(Guaranteed to outsell neo-colonialist West Irian)

Dear Comrades,

Please find enclosed samples of contraceptives of rigid construction. If you have trouble fitting them you may return them for another size.

A village commune industry for this typical Telefomin product is being organised, on strictly Mao-Marxist lines, and we hope to crash into the well established Japanese (capitalist dogs!) novelty market with the help of S.S. (Sexy Sexy) sales promotion.

In the meantime tell your friends, as there are only a few left in this batch.

The market price will be -  
small size 2/-  
large size 3/-

large and curly 3/6d

Instructions

When using this unique Telefomin Rigid Contraceptive, check to see that there are no holes in the end.

This product is guaranteed hermetically sealed and Test Run before leaving the commune. We cannot guarantee full safety and satisfaction once this product has left the factory.

The tunnel life of this product is 10 miles.

Hoping you get 100% satisfaction.

Yours faithfully,

Comrade Jack Slack

Sales Promotion Officer,

Telefomin Contraceptive Commune

HA! HA!

Telefomin

P.S. If you do find a hole in the end, sell it to the local natives as a lime gourd. But don't tell anyone as my black comrades will no doubt banish me to that power station in Moresby, for encouraging capitalism!

Poem addressed to the Poetry Editor, The Bulletin, Box 4088  
GPO, Sydney from Telefomin New Guinea dated 17 May 1965:

*Paradesia*

Far away from my cold base  
High in the mountains –  
Where men in gourds  
Point ... strut ... parade ...  
Behind their Meris  
Bow and arrow, or axe in hand –

I reach a green shore  
Where women with babies to their sides,  
Breasts slapping at a lazy surf,  
Swing palm-frond rods in easy motion  
And catch small fish  
For the evening meal.

Back in the mountains  
My men will retire to their haus tambaran.  
And my women and children  
Will sleep apart with their pigs,  
Fist-full of taro  
Around glowing embers.

And I ask myself,  
"Is the shore in fact  
The never-ending life  
Following the rise and fall of tidal waters?  
Or are my mountain men,

Masters in their contemplation and sufferance,  
Condemned always to work and die  
In mud and sweat?"

- Martin Kerr

Martin wrote this in July 1965 while in Angoram:

*The Breeze*

A light breeze blows through the fly-wire,  
A rare animal striking through  
My government room, leaving gnats,  
Mosquitoes, enmeshed and draught-dried.

It's stronger now, calling me home,  
Where I bent my back in unison  
With seven other companions  
Not afraid of work, stiffening  
Our shell before Wellington's winds  
Along Korokoro's rocky shore.  
My house-boi then calls me – whisky –  
'Wind he kamap Masta', he cries,  
And I lie stretched out on my bed –  
Colonial fashion – while the wind  
whips crocodiles and native canoes.

Another poem written 21 September 1965 while in Angoram:

*The world goes by*

It was another day  
while on the River,  
in the crocodile bed  
and sago cleaner – mudden water,  
that I saw how life goes by.

I watched long breasted women  
heave their canoes or nets.  
It was their continuance and their strength.

A length of sugar floated by.  
I gathered and sucked it.  
What nourishing juice of life, I thought ...

And spat out shreds sucked dry.  
Enough! the sweetness of this World was tasted.  
I shall go back to my house  
and watch the world go by.

This allusion to water, to canoes, to rowing is carried forward in 2004 when a two-page poem 'Somare's Paddle' was published in *Quadrant*, October 2004:

... I raced four, five or six man crews in dugouts.  
Warriors we were  
slumped but laughing at the finish

malarial guts distended and strained ...

Soon after his return from his third trip to PNG Martin wrote to Peter Hastings, Editor, *New Guinea*, Council of New Guinea Affairs, Sydney 5 February 1968: 'Please accept as a second article entitled New Guinea's New Society as well as a poem which may fill up some spare space.' Neither was accepted for publication. The poem:

*Kiap Jones and the Tambuna's curse*

When Kiap Jones  
camped for the night in a native bush house  
reserved for government men who prey  
on the customs  
and imprison those who step out of line  
the atmosphere was hostile –  
Jones could tell at a glance  
when he screamed at the meris  
to bring him firewood.

He had heard that a man  
had died that day  
and he was blamed.

Jones slipped quietly beneath his net  
lonely and afraid  
while in the haus-boi Sepik men played  
kundu and flutes dreaming up a chance  
to work a curse.



Jones tossed and turned  
and the mosquitoes got worse  
diving and buzzing his head.  
He tried to pray  
but all he got was the clack of crocodile's teeth.

Beneath the limbun  
pigs snorted and dogs whined  
and a rat scurried across the floor –  
O to die in fear and pain  
is bad  
but to die for nothing but a curse  
simply makes no sense at all.

The carved posts enbloodied before  
the whiteman came  
stirred in a macabre dance –  
the Sepik men played their flutes  
and laughed between gob-fulls  
of blood-red spittle  
pouring across the sand.

Soon they knew it would happen  
and it did –  
poor Jones fell to the floor.

Ol masta i bagarap they say  
killed by Tambuna's lore.

- Martin D. Kerr

## 13. Journalistic Activities While in PNG

Martin was also a stringer for the *Pacific Islands Monthly*, (editor Stuart Inder) Sydney. He had articles about the Sepik region published in the latter part of 1967 and a long article in June 1968. Stuart Inder's staff writer and publisher Judy Tudor played a crucial role in Martin's 'writing' future.

One article that wasn't published was offered to Stuart Inder 19 September 1967. It was entitled 'D.D.A.s New Chief a Welcome Change?' It was about the appointment of Tom Ellis as the new Director of the Department of District Administration. Ellis was originally a medical assistant who worked with the Coastwatchers during the War and later became District Commissioner of the Western Highlands. Martin first saw Ellis in Telefomin prospecting for minerals. Ellis was a 'can do' administrator who had the support of a many indigenous leaders.

There were possibly some doubts about Ellis's real abilities in the move to independence. Hence Martin's tortured article:

Mr Tom Ellis's appointment, along awaited has come as no surprise to many Territory people. A determined and tough individual who has for the past few years become known as *king* of the Western Highlands, the change in the New Guinea bush administration hierarchy may yet cause a few heads to roll. In his own district, officers were known to shudder as this criticism, yet were given broad powers and were allowed on most occasions to exercise their own peculiar judgements in the field. As a man of strength, drive, capacity and rugged

individualism, Mr Ellis's posting to Moresby may cause friction among the entrenched bureaucracy – both within his Department and in other Administration departments.

Now no longer *king*, but co-ordinator and policy maker receiving suggestions and recommendations with a mind to the progression from the colonial system to pre-independence and eventually independence systems, it is likely that a conflict of ideals or goals may be encountered.

On one hand Mr Ellis would seek economic development in all quarters and drive his *kiaps* to work towards this, but at the same time he would realise that his own Department in the pre-independence system will out of necessity have to re-define its role.

Certainly not every district is developing in the same progression. Large areas of the Sepik District are only now being explored by geologists of the Australian Government and private enterprise. But some of Mr Ellis's *kiaps*, who are supposed to be bush whackers and keepers of law and order have never entered these areas, even if Administration funds did allow it. The far-flung and over-stretched Department of District Administration empire does not necessarily see the progression from the colonialist to pre-independence stage in the same light.

Lack of promotion prospects for senior D.D.A. officers has tended to create a sub-system of intrigue, hate and jealousy throughout the districts. And this is where Mr Ellis's appointment may not be too popular.

Now as co-ordinator will it be likely that Mr Ellis will back up *kiaps* as he did in the Western Highlands? where he maintained a close eye on everyone. The writer thinks not. Mr Ellis is a shrewd and politic man with a mind for

business. He would want progress at any cost since he must realise that it is a lost cause to continue with the McCarthyite concept of the *bush kiap*.

Perhaps within the near future the slow moving District Commissioners and A.D.C.'s will be expected to draw up and co-ordinate development plans for their respective districts and if results are not forthcoming they may be in for the chop. There will be no support for inefficiency and that is what many districts are suffering from at the moment.

Mr Hay's obvious support for Mr Ellis's appointment may also mean that a new hard look is being taken of D.D.A..

But Mr Ellis should also have other ambitions – future Governor General of New Guinea, a knighthood? – and his own deteriorating Department will not hold him in his way. The progression speaks of much soul searching. Mr Cole's appointment as Police Commissioner, ex D.D.A. may be regarded as purely a stop-gap measure before the Police split three ways into Cole, European Officers and Native Police. Mr Cole seen in this light stands to gain little but his pension.

Mr Ellis on the other hand has even a more flightier Department to control and should see that the retreat is sounded from the most favourable position. What will be his battle plans?

Pre-independence has brought many new changes, local government being perhaps the most far reaching, where kiaps invested with police and court powers are supposed to establish and advise local government councils. Mr Ellis, looking for the kudos, could create a Department of Local Government into which his

enemies, drones and sycophants as well as some men with an efficient knowledge of the local government set-up could be placed. This would leave the head of D.D.A. with few troops to control.

Divested of court powers local government advisers would become highly paid clerks to whom a shire-clerkship in Australia may eventually be quite inviting as the senior local government officers course in Sydney seems to be tuned for.

What then for the remainder of the Department? Could District Commissioners themselves be abolished? Not for a while anyway. U.N. officials and Australian Parliamentarians, but few of lesser rank, move from District residency to residency on whistle stop tours of the Territory. Red tape and flag bedecked Holdens intrigue them as they move from empire to empire, from one round of cock-tail parties to another. The D.C. in fact is generally a good host and guide to the important overseas visitor who finds it increasingly difficult to see through the palm fronds the real heart of New Guinea.

In transition Mr Ellis would have to maintain diplomatic advantage and keep a wasteful hold on his troops at the expense of precious economic advancement. Yet if he, as he must, creates a Department of Local Government, he must find some way to bridge the gap between often ill-advised local government councils and elected Native politicians, and the officialdom of the Canberra based Territory Administration, heavily dominated by conservative kiaps and ex-kiaps.

Mr Ellis's co-ordinating role must also take heed of other departments as well such as the Departments of Health, Education and Information, which are rapidly

becoming indigenised. Mr Gunther, the Vice-Chancellor of the Territory University may add fuel to the fire and with his old-time attitude towards kiaps, demand through the power of the press, sympathetic students, D.D.A.'s withdrawal altogether.

Mr Ellis, unlike Mr McCarthy will have little cause to claim that his boys are doing a 'great job', as private companies, missions and bearded anthropologists move into areas where the lame duck fears to tread.

What will Mr Ellis do? To maintain his Department on the present lumbering lines will, whichever way he moves, create a large amount of criticism. To cull the Department may reduce his own influence unless he finds a company directorship with any of the large investing enterprises in the Territory. That way Mr Ellis may yet find his path to fame and glory.

Mr Ellis's present appointment is latent and loaded with innuendo, yet this it seems must be a necessary and testing role to play, provided he works with the Administrator, Mr Hay. Independence will not mean goodbye to Mr Ellis and it is how he grooms himself for it that will determine whether he in fact will become the Territory's truly great man.

Martin got a full page article; 'New Guinea - One of the Few Adventures Left' in the N.Z. *Dominion Sunday Times* 7 January 1968.

One unpublished article (for *Pacific Islands Monthly*) was written after Martin's return from PNG in January 1969. He had taken his Christmas holidays to do a trip from Vanimo to Kikori (as stated in his plans in correspondence to Professor Inglis dated

18 May 1968 and first envisaged in a letter to his parents dated 27 November 1967), but when he arrived in Wewak and later in Vanimo he realised the magnitude of the task was beyond his financial means. He stayed with Adrian Visser who was setting up a trading enterprise at Vanimo and penned this story:

### *Dutchman With a Problem*

The recent 'forcible' removal of over forty West Irian refugees to Manus Island has caused many headaches and much heart-rending to Dutch refugee and Sepik businessman Mr Adrian Visser.

As a result of recent publicity about the Papuan Freedom Movement, and refugee camps along the New Guinea-West Irian Border, which have allegedly served as escape routes and underground courier services, Mr Visser's manager and a youth whom he looked after for many years in Dutch New Guinea are among the group sent to Manus.

Born in 1933 in Holland Mr Visser went to Indonesia with his parents in 1949, where he trained in the Netherlands Navy and later moved to Dutch New Guinea to set up a sawmill and trade store.

Mr Visser in these years became well-known personally to the Papuans of Sentani and Hollandia areas. He speaks fluent Malay, the *linga franca*, which Mr Visser considers far more advanced than New Guinea's Pidgin.

Mr Visser finally settled in Wewak in 1964, after two harrowing years under the Indonesian Administration, during which time he was imprisoned. Unable to speak English Mr Visser learned Pidgin first and gradually set

up a business eventuating in the establishment of one of New Guinea's largest picture theatres.

During this period Mr Visser was approached by authorities to actively assist in the resettling of refugees, and was eventually able to employ Malay speaking West Irian refugees in his trading business. He did this out of what Mr Visser calls 'Humanity and Christianity', often because he knew the Papuans personally.

Mr Visser, who regards himself as an All-New Guinea 'citizen' with a Netherlands passport, has invested heavily in both Dutch and Australian New Guinea, and in Vanimo he has purchased two trucks for West Irian refugees.

But, a Melbourne Correspondent's all-too-true claim of 'Border Intrigue' has caught up with Mr Visser. Mr Visser, who up to recently actively assisted the Administration with matters concerning Papuan refugees, has now become a potential embarrassment to certain high placed individuals in the Administration, because of his links with refugees who belong to the Freedom Movement.

Australia's all-too-short standing and barely demarcated land border is causing problems of unforeseen magnitude with Army, Administration and Canberra authorities. And, solutions tried seem to smack of diplomatic immaturity and disregard for basic human rights.

Now Australia's ready to please but shaky diplomatic relations with Djakarta have the added factor of a well-organised and financed political and guerrilla front organisation working in Australian New Guinea, and devoted to the regaining of West Irian for the Papuans, if



the West Irian Plebiscite in 1969 is unsuccessful or is not held at all.

Mr Visser's independent stand for humanity, up to recently supported by Administration officials for their own devious reasons, has now received a stab in the back. His two employees – a well-qualified manager and a youth who is up for his driver's licence – have been spirited away from him. Could it be that Mr Visser's position as a 'resident alien' in Australian New Guinea is also threatened by Administration authorities?

<Note: A photo of Adrian Visser accompanied this article>

Another angle on Martin's trip to New Guinea at the end of 1968 is shown in correspondence with 'Kerry' (Kerry Leen, ADC; Ted Hicks was DC) at Wewak:

10 Trelawney Street  
<Woollahra, Sydney>

Dear Kerry,

Since I am about to make another trip to New Guinea, and will be heading up your way, I think it would be appropriate to let know what I'm doing back around Wewak, in case some people are asking too many questions.

When I last met you I was heading down to Sydney to try to get a rough M.S. published. This has since been turned into a full-scale book and there is every hope that I'll get it on sale sometime next year. In the meantime I have been writing t.v. scripts and this should eventually prove to be a financial boon to me.

Now that school holidays are coming up – I teach at Sydney High School – I've decided to come up and gather material for another book. The book will be based on experience of an attempted crossing of New Guinea, from Vanimo to Kikori. I have been planning this over a year now and though I'm financing this trip on my own – again there is the possibility of a financial return.

I intend heading back down the back way from Vanimo to Green River, down the Sepik to May River, and then up to Telefomin. From there all will be subject to making a crossing of the Strickland River – if not then I'll have to go to Olsobip and eventually down the Fly River.

You may wonder about all this, but I assure you if there is one thing that needs to be done is a trip like this. The resulting publicity for tourism and airlines will be tremendous, and I'm quietly lining these interests up. However, at the moment I'm keeping everything hush-hush until I get well underway out of Vanimo. I've been keeping hundred per cent fit all year and should win the N.S.W. Junior Rowing Champs this Saturday, stroking a four.

Now I am not asking any favours of you or your department, except to be left alone to go about my business. I'm sure you realise that I appreciate this. However if you should like to see me then I'm arriving in

Wewak Ansett-ANA 18 December. In the meantime I would appreciate it if you could keep the contents of this letter confidential.

May I wish you and your family the compliments of the Season.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Kerr

Martin got to Wewak and on advice from Ted Hicks was talked out of going overland to Green River and suggested he stay with Adrian Visser. Visser was not happy to receive Martin, but they struck up a prickly friendship while Visser completed extensions to his trade store. It was there he told him his story and Martin also spoke with some of his staff. It was from this moment Martin knew he had not only a story, but also the basis of a novel. Martin flew on to Pagei, Amanab, Imonda and landed at Green River before Christmas. He met with the kiap (name forgotten) there (Tony Plummer was kiap in 1967) and walked the overgrown and flooded track to the Sepik River where he obtained a canoe with a guide, and, despite a warning by the local people about the '*batsis*' (whirlpools) in a certain section of the river, headed off down the Sepik for May River. As Martin and his guide were going into the whirlpool area a huge crocodile appeared alongside the canoe and then disappeared. The guide panicked and headed the canoe towards the nearest village on the right bank. There Martin picked up a larger canoe with three paddlers. The next day he met up with a Las Kompani trading canoe which took him to May River. Stopping the night there he

took a single motor canoe and got to Ambunti on the same day. Spending perhaps only one night in Ambunti Martin took a plane to Mt Hagen (stayed night) and flew to Moresby and then onto Sydney. His expedition (from Vanimo to Kikori?!!) was well and truly over. Having married at the Sydney Registry Office on 13 December with John Pasquarelli as best man, this may also have been a factor in Martin's abortive trip.

# EMERGENCY—ONE OF THE FEW

## ADVENTURES LEFT

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES

BY MARTIN KERR

A professor of the History Department of Victoria University said, my hearing: "We are here to learn a part of cogsmanship.

"Whether you like or not you will, successful graduates, play your part in the State not stop a well-aided machine."

...and a cog. How could I explain how easy it is to change jobs in the savage of New Guinea? I all started in October, 1962, when I received a telegram from Robinson New Guinea solely and politician, the Government "Don't and help us out with a crew. We'll pay your own."

I went, armed with a motor degree in political science and a 2000 rifle cartridge. Three days later, after a run from Auckland through Brisbane, Port Moresby, and then on to each of the New Guinea with coast, I found myself a place called Anahini, 16 miles up the Sepik river.

Esposito said: "You're a May River and we'll see you again in a couple of months." The May River was four days' drive, in a canoe, from a 1000 ft. waterfall. I was not completely to leave of New Guinea. I had been a patrol officer on a boat previously. But when I saw these natives on the river banks, I had to fight the mosquitoes every night. I thought the country could go its crocodile and its independence. At May River I set about finding my equipment, and six weeks later I headed for the West Irian border.

### Little food

I had little supplies of an and batteries for my rifle-crocodile shooter, and of food I had little. I had to eat the mounds of rot which the natives all over me which I washed from the camp patio, and was good to eat. One day I had to go to the river to get some food. I had to go to the river to get some food. I had to go to the river to get some food.

### frightened

The natives were from the highlands and could swim. They were also very frightened at the idea of having to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat.

Fortunately we had enough mosquito nets and had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat.

It is hardly a sporting state, such as other found in New Zealand.

But then I had to make a living. A 10 ft. freshwater crocodile was worth over \$40 to me. It had been a salt water crocodile, and the last one had been worth \$70. Not had pay if I shot one every week.

We didn't get one every night. Crocodiles had been hunted on the Sepik River for years by the local natives, and their methods were more thorough than ours. Now the crocodile industry is rapidly dying out.

Six months later I returned to Anahini. Then I can show of Auckland, working for the Australian Bureau of Mineral Resources, was leading a team of geologists to map and explore the headwaters of the April River.

With him was Stan Fisher, of Christchurch, who was looking after three Hamilton jet boats. The jet boats and a helicopter always called on us, and as soon as we had four, they left for the Anahini we held a party.

To this day the local natives still speak of the time when Kamate, Kivale, called across the atlatip.

On one occasion I hitched a rifle and a canoe to one of the jet boats. Also eight miles from my camp we looked down.

Stan Fisher was driving a large boat powered with a V8 motor, and we had seven native porters for the assault on the upper May headwaters.

And so we had to drift back down river until we found a deserted hole to sleep in.

On another occasion I had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat. I had to sleep in a boat.

A fortnight later the dream of a jet boat disappeared. The natives, who had never seen a white man before, had thrown it into the water leaving the white man's "biggest

MARTIN KERR was educated at Wellington College and Victoria University. His home is at Lorry Bay, Wellington. He went to New Guinea in 1958 as a Patrol Officer, and returned to New Zealand to complete university studies.



Without wings" would return. On the Sepik River cannibalism and head-hunting is now a thing of the past—but not a distant past.

As a patrol officer I had to search for some cannibals at the top of the May River. We failed to find them.

Two years previously a patrol in the same area had the body of one of its porters, who was killed by a falling tree, exhausted and eaten by hostile natives in defiance of the Administration.

In 1952 natives had their last feast of "long pig" withal wings" would return.

As a statistician were working out regional predictions for the New Year, the others a year later.

The first group includes:

1. Call — to take care of the children if my wife is killed, too.

2. Notify the following people —

3. Reserve a parking space for —

4. Reserve a parking space for —

5. Bank books are to —

6. Return to safety deposit box and —

7. Return to safety deposit box and —

8. Other keys are —

9. My lawyer is —

10. My auto money is —

11. My money is —

12. Call — to take care of (name of pet).

13. Call — to take care of (name of pet).

14. In addition —

local people. But for the area I worked in, if the crocodile is not out there, a little hope for 40,000 or so natives whose land it for six months of the year under water.

Experts are preparing appropriate legislation to protect the remaining King eel; if successfully controlled, crocodile shooting may yet remain the livelihood for thousands of natives, and an exciting sport for non-natives and non-crocodile eaters.

Cattle is another industry fast becoming a major source of income to the

local people. But for the area I worked in, if the crocodile is not out there, a little hope for 40,000 or so natives whose land it for six months of the year under water.

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# Bizarre quiz for drivers

Are you prepared to die behind the wheel?

That was the chilling question in a full-page advertisement in the New York Times on the eve of New Year.

The message sponsored by an insurance company was accompanied by a "last list of instructions" for motorists drivers to put out and get in a safe place.

The list had these spaces for answers:

1. Call — to take care of the children if my wife is killed, too.

2. Notify the following people —

3. Reserve a parking space for —

4. Reserve a parking space for —



to work take

THE READ lamp manufacturers have taken my challenge and produce a standard lamp you really read by.

No choice to interfere to read thing.

Two manufacturer presentation wrote me, both from Chicago.

A designer says company is about produce a simple lamp, avoiding electrical and gift certificates.

Would have preferred lamp. The direction of electrical and gift certificates puts me in an odd will tell you more. If there's really a need to try to read by.

FOR THE SAME appearance of my town I hope there's other commodities on the way.

"DELLA" technician commented that the car has before this year's Grand Prix anniversary.

EVER HEARD surf boat on a lake? The car has before this year's Grand Prix anniversary.

When they read the newspaper, they read the newspaper, they read the newspaper.

They were a bit to get the best of the \$1000-dollar answer.

DEPUTY ATTACK the Andromeda Brothers.

TONY BLACK, THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

THE NEW ZEALANDER, is back in Sydney.

The Dominion Sunday Times, January 7, 1968. p11

## 14. *New Guinea Patrol*

In the correspondence with his parents Martin refers to writing a book: In fact in one of his last letter's from May River (28 August 1967) to his family prior to going to Sydney: 'If a can't go down with a book to publish, then I would have to start all over again.' Earlier, in the same letter he referred to comments made on the MS by Douglas Newton of the Museum of Primitive Art, New York: 'Have struck difficulties with my book. I like to think I have completed it but Doug Newton, the curator and writer is crying out for more sex, so I will have to give what the sick American readers want, but with my time cut out for the next month there will not be much time to write.'

The book was finally published in a heavily edited form in 1973 and few American readers would have seen it, since it was published only for the British market, viz: Martin D. Kerr, *New Guinea Patrol* (Robert Hale, London, 1973, 189 pages plus glossary of terms).

The original MS was called *Sex and Sac Sac* or *Paradise My Goal*. Writing from Sydney in February 1968 Martin presented the MS to Ken Wilder agent for Collins & Sons (Overseas) Ltd, Sydney; Lansdowne Press, Melbourne; Rigby, Adelaide, 21 March 1968. Later the same year the MS was renamed *Paradise my Goal* and offered to Professor Ken Inglis, University of PNG in a letter dated 18 May 1968 written in Punchbowl, Sydney:

Dear Professor Inglis.

I have been reading your 'Island without History', which I find most enlightening – if only because it points out the frustration of trying to implement appropriate courses of study at the new University, and the attendant physical, cultural and financial problems.

For some years I have been an 'amateur' of New Guinea History – and I have been fortunate in having contributed to it – as a Cadet Patrol Officer, 1964-65, and a crocodile shooter, 1967. Last year I completed *Paradise My Goal*, the original MS which I enclose for U.P.N.G.'s collection of 'historical' documents. Though completed in a hot, smokey double canoe, with a typewriter on a couple of bags of salt and myself sitting on a pile of crocodile skins, moving up and down the Sepik River, I have added brief notes and a couple of photographs for those students who seek some chronological order. Though nothing in the MS is really historical, I would say some of it would suit more specialist students, who perhaps would like to study border relations. For the more general researcher it may provide a 'kick' in later years when one learns of the squabbling of Administration officials with private enterprise and European members of the House of Assembly, not to mention the crude yet genuine respect Europeans have for New Guineans in the isolated parts of the Sepik.

The paper 'Containment and the West Irian Boundary' (1964) <honours paper 1966> *is* history – but it does help summarise the border problem up to that date. There is a chapter in the MS <Paradise My Goal> devoted to my crossing of the West Irian border and I request that this be kept only for academics in an academic context as

Securities Heavy Feet may stand on someone.

I am looking forward to returning to the Territory in the near future for a planned solo journey North to South, Vanimo to Kikori. However I would only have six weeks (I'm teaching French at Sydney Boys High School), and anything of an historical nature would require significant documentary preparation, time and finance.

If these papers are not acceptable for the U.P.N.G. library, please return them to the above address.

In conclusion may I wish you and your staff, as well as the students, my best wishes for successful and meaningful contributions towards New Guinea's Statehood.

Yours faithfully,

Martin D. Kerr

In a hand written note dated 19 June 1968 on The University of Papua and New Guinea letterhead Professor Inglis writes:

Dear Mr Kerr,

I'm sorry to be so long acknowledging your letter and the seminar paper and the manuscript of *Paradise My Goal*, but I've been on the move & I wanted to read it before writing.

Thankyou very much indeed for letting us have your writings for the library. As you say, your MS will have



things to say to people in later years; but it has plenty to say to people right now, too, about important matters which are ignored or only touched on very lightly in published accounts of life here - esp. about the complexities of life within the expatriate community.

I'll be away for the next 6 months or so, but if you have time to look in at Waigani either on your way to Vanimo or from Kikori, ring the university at 5-3900 & ask for Hank Nelson, a historian who would like to meet you & also have you meet some students.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Ken Inglis.

Official letters came from the Librarian W.G. Buick dated 21 June and 31 July 1968, thanking Martin for the MSS and asking for more photographs, other than two he provided (one being of him naked in a penis gourd standing beside a PNG/Indonesian border marker).

When the revised MS *Paradise my Goal* was finally published as *New Guinea Patrol* in March 1973, Professor Inglis wrote to Martin in a hand-written note on The University of Papua and New Guinea letterhead dated 17 November of that year.

Dear Mr Kerr,

Many thanks indeed for *NG Patrol*, which I found waiting for me when I returned this week after three months away. I look forward to reading the published version, & you're welcome to put my name on those comments used on the dust jacket,

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Ken Inglis

'Paradise my Goal' was a badly prepared manuscript. This note appears in Martin's papers (undated) and with an initial which can't be deciphered (If not Judy Tudor, possibly Stuart Inder MBE):

He has a zipping kind of style that kept me reading the manuscript – in spite of the fact that I was determined that I wouldn't.

However, the almost total lack of punctuation, the sometimes very involved English and lousy typing are only minor reasons why I'm sure no publisher would look at it in its present form.

I haven't time to analyse what is wrong with it. The best thing about it is its youthful outlook and the worst that he appears to make some pretty immature judgements. He could get over the latter and make a better story if he'd just written about things as they happened, with as much zest as he liked and left the

broad generalisations to take care of themselves. If he really believed that all Port Moresby natives resent or hate Europeans there's more ways of showing it than saying that they do.

I think he's got something – but my advice to him is to put it away and let it simmer for a while, then have a fresh look at it.

One should remember this was a period when publishers did write honest letters about some authors work without fear of legal action.

This letter is reproduced in full from A.H. & A.W. Reed Publishers, Wellington:

A.H. Reed Limited  
GCAW/sjw

26 November 1968

Mr Martin Kerr  
C/- Miss Lyn Mayhew  
3 Findlay St.  
Linden,  
Via WELLINGTON

Dear Martin,

We've put all pressure on reading this manuscript, and I'd dearly like to publish a book with your suggested jacket design,

but I regret to report disappointing news.

I don't know whether I mentioned the regrettably old fashioned nonconformist attitude of the firm's founder, old A.H. Reed, to matters of sex, grog, and language?

We hold him in the very highest affection and regard, but there are times – and this is one – when his prejudices hamstring us from publishing books which we ourselves find utterly harmless in these respects compared with what other firms get away with.

Niugini, rightly, doesn't wallow in sex and grog, but neither does it paste figleaves over these subjects; but old A.H. would blow his top loud, clear and vehement if he saw our name on it.

I don't expect you to sympathise with or even to understand this, and I don't attempt to defend it – it's just a fact that we have to live with.

Anyway, I read and re-read the manuscript wondering whether by censorship (with your agreement of course) we could get round this obstacle. But it wouldn't work. To bowderise it as it would need to be done would take all the character out of it, and a second opinion had confirmed this.

So I'm very reluctantly returning to you, under separate cover, the manuscript of a most enjoyable and eminently publishable book. I'd suggest you immediately try it on a less conservative house, and the people who I believe, would be keen to see it would be Hodder & Stoughton (41 Shortland St, Auckland C.1.), Collins (Box 1, Auckland) or Minerva (C.P.O. box 2597, Auckland).

With real regret, and sincerely wishes for better luck, and for a not too adventurous transit of NG,

Yours sincerely,

G.C.A. Wall  
Editor

When Graham C. Greene, a director of Jonathan Cape Limited received the MS, retyped and called Niugini, while in Australia in October 1969, Martin had been advised to approach Robert Hale, London. Judy Tudor, publisher of Pacific Publications (Australia) Pty Ltd (*Pacific Islands Monthly*) wrote on 22 July, 1969 complaining of the typing: 'the spelling makes me suspect that the New Zealand education system has fallen on evil times since I had anything to do with it; the whole thing badly needs editing.' She suggested as a 'long-shot' Robert Hale Ltd, 63 Old Brompton Road, London SW7. 'Some of the adventure stories that I've seen under this label makes me think that they might be sufficiently unconventional to take a look at this.'

As a result of this encouragement, Martin wrote to the Editor, Robert Hale on 29 July 1969 from Balmain, Sydney: 'I have had some very good reports on the MS and enclose a suggested introduction, chapter headings, plus a little about myself.'

John Hale wrote back on 5 August saying 'We should be very pleased to give this careful consideration and look forward to receiving the manuscript.'

On 12 December 1969 Jonathan Cape Limited advised Martin that following a request from him dated 8 December, 'We are today forwarding the manuscript of NUGINI to Mr John Hale.'

On 26 February 1970 John Hale wrote saying 'the signs are quite propitious in the sense that we think publication of your book feasible', and he spoke of arrangements with an Australian publisher. He asked for photographs and transparencies. On 20

May John Hale wrote offering to retype the MS for £50 and set out terms for publication.

It seems that Martin always had trouble with his spelling – even with the spelling of the title 'Nuigini'. In the contract signed and returned on 10 June it became 'NIUGINI (tentative)' and in the covering letter Martin suggested a number of titles, none of which suited Hale who came up with 'New Guinea Patrol' finally in 1972.

On 21 August 1970, Martin offered John Hale *Diansinkan – The Exiled* a 'full novel, though some of the characters are based on real life'.

Under a letter dated 18 September 1970 Hale enclosed a cheque of £135 (net, after paying 10 per cent tax) for the advance on *Niugini*. On 24 November John Hale advised that Rigby (Australian publisher previously offered the MS by Martin) did not want to publish the book and that Hale was going ahead with publication and 'will distribute the book through our Australian representatives.'

Time was proceeding and Martin wrote to Hale on 18 January 1971 concerning progress of *Niugini* and lack of a publication date. G. Chesterfield of Robert Hale wrote back on 9 March raising queries re disclaimers and defamation. Martin wrote back 16 March offering solutions to make the book non-fiction and included a list of real names for the characters.

On 25 May 1970 John Hale wrote to Martin declining to publish *Diansinkan - the Exiled*, saying 'the story seems very remote to us and we do not feel it would be sufficiently exciting and well written story to prove a successful publishing proposition at this difficult time for fiction.' Martin offered it to Jonathan Cape as the MS was still in the UK which was also rejected.

So Martin is confirmed as not much of a writer. But he

persisted and went on to write *Tamariki and the Whales*, completing the first draft in July 1971 (finally published under his own imprint in [MaskiMedia] October 2008), plus a couple of plays which he had completed in the same year (plays unpublished). Martin was busy but not successfully busy!

Finally, a letter dated 20 September 1971, a copy of which was sent under cover of a letter from John Hale dated 14 October 1971 addressed to Martin at Punt Road, Richmond, Victoria. The letter concerned libel and 'should you feel after all this time that it would be better to drop the whole project I shall quite understand.'

Martin was devastated. He would have to start all over again, though he was now married, in a career job and with one child and a second on the way.

Martin wrote back on 20 October offering to retype the MS. On 27 October John Hale offered to return the typescript and did so on 9 November. On 30 November Martin wrote to John Hale, having gone through the MS and making appropriate changes 'that would in no way affect the readability of the book.' He said he 'had sound legal advice' and left John Hale with the 'typescript to complete in terms of the contract signed many months before.'

On 11 January 1972 John Hale wrote including a lawyer's report.

On 17 January Martin answered points made by the lawyers and made suggestions.

On 10 March John Hale wrote to Martin at 54 Baker Street, Richmond, Victoria:

We have not quite resolved all the points but hope to very shortly. This means we can actually start producing the book with I hope the aim of publishing it at the end of

this year.

On the 3 May 1972 Martin wrote to John Hale enclosing a recent map of New Guinea and commenting:

As you are no doubt aware New Guinea is really getting off the ground at the moment, getting thrashed to hell by the press, while budding New Guinean writers are thrust into a rather shaky limelight. Nevertheless, 'I've been there and seen it for myself' book, when available seems to get quite a bit of publicity. Nothing, yet as earthy as the MS as you are holding is available, and in my opinion is very much needed. Still, I suppose you see things in a different light.

On 10 August John Hale wrote:

We would like to adopt the title NEW GUINEA PATROL instead of NIUGINI. I hope this will meet with your approval.

I am enclosing herewith a map which I should be glad if you would return together with a sketch based on this enclosure showing everything relevant to your book. We would of course have the sketch redrawn if you are not an experienced cartographer.

On 27 September 1972, G. Chesterfield of Robert Hale informed Martin that 'Publication date will be in the period April to June next year.'



The book was on its way, finally – Martin D. Kerr, *New Guinea Patrol*, Robert Hale, London, 1973! Perhaps 1700 copies were sold. A further 1500 were produced by Foyles Travel Book Club for a royalty of two pence a copy. Copies of *New Guinea Patrol* turned up in a library in Brunei in the late 1990s and in a St Vincents de Paul secondhand store in Ravenshoe in far north Queensland in 2005. Martin was offered 204 remaindered copies in early January 1976, but at that time could not afford to purchase them.

### **(CD-ROM) *New Guinea Patrol* 2009**

The decision to publish a CD-ROM revision of *New Guinea Patrol* was made in 2008 while Martin was preparing three books for publication by MaskiMedia. In 2007 he distributed a CD in Microsoft Word of a draft version of *Fragments of New Guinea*, images and a draft revised copy of *New Guinea Patrol* to the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, NZ; Michael Somare Library, UPNG and to schools in Telefomin and Wewak. Martin subsequently realised the convenience, quality and accuracy of the CD contents were not professional enough, hence the (CD-ROM) *New Guinea Patrol* of 2009.

## ***15. Diansinkan – The Exiled***

Adrian Visser, who was running a trading business out of Wewak and Vanimo in December 1968, was the basis of the character Rudi van der Sloot in the unpublished novel *Diansinkan – the Exiled*. Written as a futuristic 'airport' novel on events predicted to occur in 1974, the book was completely recast, put on computer and in 1995 it was entered into the Australian Book Council-HarperCollins fiction award. Martin was subsequently informed in writing (19 May 1995) that the MS got onto the 'long short-list' of over 200 entries. This was apparently the last year of the competition and when the winner was finally published ... Yes you've guessed it, it was a novel about PNG!

Martin wrote a number of (unpublished) novels (including New Guinea themes) and other works.

## **16. Academic Papers**

Martin's academic studies at Victoria University of Wellington in 1966 went towards BA(Hons) in political science. A seminar paper 'Containment and the West Irian Boundary' is transcribed here. His research paper (6000 words) was entitled 'The Conference Lines and the Bargaining Process.' Correspondence with his academic supervisor Dr A.D. Robinson (16 June 1965) envisaged research on PNG towards an MA but this was not progressed. Martin enclosed with this letter a paper 'An Officer's

Impression of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea,' which is also transcribed. Martin returned to PNG at the end of November 1966.

## CENTRE FOR ASIAN STUDIES

June 1966

### V.U.W. STUDENTS ONLY

Seminar paper (Honours) – Containment and the West Irian Boundary

Presented by: Martin Kerr

#### Introduction

This paper falls short of many of the desirable elements which go to make up a study of border relations, in that there is perhaps a noticeable lack of information on the Indonesian viewpoint, and on Indonesia's progress in West Irian. However, there is an attempt to glean what there can from the history and foreign policies of Australia and Indonesia, and bring them to a meeting point across the un-demarcated West Irian border.

New Guinea has been subjected to some form of imperialism by Dutch, German, British, Australian and even Japanese powers at various times. As a result of foreign intrusions onto New Guinea soil, a boundary was delimited between Great Britain and the Netherlands, and between these two countries and Germany at the close of the last century. British New Guinea was eventually placed under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1906, and after the First World War Australia took

over German New Guinea as a Mandate in 1921.

While the major powers consolidated their gains in the area, this was to come to an abrupt and bloody conclusion during and after World War II. The exception was Australia, who with overwhelming United States military assistance, threw out the Japanese, and New Guinea was nearly to revert to pre-war conditions, but for the pressure of the United Nations and growth of Afro-Asian criticism of the remaining imperialist powers.

As a result of the decline of imperialism in South-East Asia, is there every likelihood of border incidents and perhaps aggression, as seen in the Sino-Indian border conflict, and the present uneasy border situations between Cambodia and Thailand, Cambodia and South Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, and Indonesia and North Borneo? The loss of Dutch authority over the western portion of New Guinea has brought Australia directly vis-a-vis an Asian neighbour across a land frontier for the first time; and with all the memories of the Japanese threat, relations with Indonesia, though cordial, have been treated suspiciously by the public at large in Australia. Present border relations seem to reflect the attitude of an apparent need to accept mutual isolation, along with separate developments, for the respective territories of New Guinea.

### The Boundary Problem

As early as the eighth century Papuan slaves seem to have been present in the great South-Sumatran based Empire of Srivajaya, and indeed, until late in the nineteenth century New Guinea's chief items of export were slaves and bird of paradise feathers. Very shortly after its first established contact, the Netherlands East India Company reached the realistic conclusion that New Guinea's chief value was as a barrier to intrusions by

other European powers into the jealously-guarded monopoly of the spice islands in the Moluccas.

In 1660 the Netherlands East India Company undertook to regulate the territorial claims of the Moluccan vassal states, including the conflicting and vague sovereignty claims to islands and areas of New Guinea. The result was the Company-dictated treaty which sought to define the domains of the Sultans of Tidore, Ternate and Batjan. By this contract the Papuan islands in general were placed under the King of Tidore without being specifically enumerated. But the Papuan islands were used as bases for pirates, and for nearly two centuries the East India Company and the Netherlands Indies Government tried to incorporate guarantees in treaties with Tidore to stop Papuan pirates.

It was British activity along the northern shores of Australia which finally spurred the Dutch into an expedition to New Guinea in 1823, which resulted in the formal act of annexation which claimed for the Dutch Crown the territory from the 141st meridian of east longitude. This official act was followed in 1848 by a secret decree which extended Tidore's rule to embrace the territory between the 141st meridian in the south to Cape Bouland in the north.

According to Indonesian history, of which evidence remains scanty, references in the poet Prapantja's Negarakertagama, recorded about 1365 during the zenith of Java's Modjopahit's empire, refer to 'Wnanin' and 'Seran'<sup>1</sup>. These names, which have

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<sup>1</sup> "New Guinea Annexations and the Origins of the Irian Boundary," Paul W. Van der Veur, Australian Outlook, No. 3, 1964, Vol. 18, p. 315. The author refers to Rapport Van de Commissie Nieuw-Guinea 1950. See also The Question of West Irian, Sept. 1955, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia.

been identified with the Onin and Kowiai regions of the south-east portion of West Irian, point to some familiarity of the Javanese with that part of the island. More significant and more lasting were the contacts between the inhabitants of Ceram and some of the other islands of eastern Indonesia with parts of the western portion of New Guinea and its off-shore islands. Limited expansion also took place from the New Guinea side. The Biak hero Geora-besi, for example, is supposed to have married the daughter of the sultan of Tidore, and to be the legendary progenitor of the four rulers of the islands off the western tip of New Guinea, known as Radja Ampat.

Under the Dutch, the status of New Guinea was ignominious to say the least, which included a treaty with Tidore in 1872, "the unquestioned right of the Netherlands-Indies Government, should it find a measure desirable, to take into its own hands the administration of the whole state, or any section thereof"<sup>2</sup>, and in July 1949 the Hague Government officially took over the administration of Netherlands New Guinea when negotiations were still in progress for the handover of Dutch authority in Indonesia to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia.

The development of the Netherlands West Indies therefore, served only to place West New Guinea as a barrier against foreign intrusion, as a place for a tour of punishment duty by delinquent civil servants, and finally a place of exile for Indonesian Nationalist leaders. Indeed, there was to be little change until the outlines of a new Indonesia and a new Asia began to emerge from the turbulent and bloody independence struggles of the postwar period.

The territory of the future Indonesian state was one of major

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<sup>2</sup> The Dynamics of the Western New Guinea (Irian Barat) Problem, (1955), Robert C. Bone, p19

consideration of the two bodies established under the Japanese occupation; the B.P.K.I. (Body for the investigation of Indonesian Independence).<sup>3</sup> On July 11, 1945 the B.P.K.I. voted by secret ballot, after much discussion, on three proposals concerning the territory of Indonesia. The simple majority of voters voted for the former territory of the Netherlands East Indies, as well as the territories of North Borneo, Malaya, (West) New Guinea, and surrounding islands. The official proceedings reveal that sentiment of the B.P.K.I. was overwhelmingly in favour of some form of "Indonesia Raya" (Greater Indonesia). The fact that Indonesian political leaders adopted the narrower concept of the future Indonesian state consisting only of the territory of pre-war Netherlands East Indies appears initially to be Japanese dictated. According to Jones<sup>4</sup>, Soekarno and Hatta represented two different factions, Soekarno leading the faction for Greater Indonesia, and Hatta the faction for only the territory of the former Netherlands East Indies, excluding West Irian if necessary. History has since proved that Indonesia now includes all of that area formerly under Dutch control, but the issues are very much alive today regarding claims for Greater Indonesia. In December 1964, the Australian press announced Indonesia's name for Australia and East New Guinea as South Irian and East Irian respectively, while Indonesia was actively pursuing her confrontation of Malaya. Thus there is a very possible threat of Indonesian expansion into those areas mentioned in Indonesian history. The long struggle since 1949 with the

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<sup>3</sup> "Soekarno's Early Views upon the Territory Boundaries of Indonesia", Garth N. Jones, Australian Outlook, No.1, 1964, Vol.18. pp30-39

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* pp31-32.

Netherlands over West Irian gives some indication of Indonesia's tenacity and fortitude, as well as diplomatic skill, in claiming her empire, which leads western powers to wonder when the "expansionism" will cease. Australia throughout this period has been brought more and more into Asian politics, and though it attempted to appease Indonesian nationalism and expansionism where possible, maintenance and improvement of relations with Indonesia across the common land border in New Guinea have not been good.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For an account of Australian-Indonesian relations see Australia in World Affairs 1956-1966 (1963), Eds. Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harper. pp272-319



## The West Irian Crisis and Australia's Attitude

That Australia served as a spokesman for the Indonesian Republic in 1949 at the Round Table Conference at The Hague, at which the Netherlands conceded her authority to Indonesia, is an indication of the apparent compromising attitude Australia has for her near neighbour. However, it was over the deadlock of the West Irian issue that Australia, in attempting to find some solutions at the Conference, suggested that the question of West Irian be settled at a later date. It was the feeling of the western powers at the Conference that some sort of settlement should have been reached in order to stave off communist influence in Indonesia, and Australia's plan became incorporated into the agreement for the handover of Indonesia. That West Irian was not included in the original agreement was largely due to the fact that the Netherlands authorities were attempting to appease interests in Holland who believed West Irian should remain under Dutch control as a bastion of Dutch power in the East Indies, and also to harbour European and Eurasian refugees who were leaving Indonesia in large numbers to avoid discriminatory practices brought down by the new regime<sup>6</sup>. At this time Australia had a Labor Government, but in December 1949 it lost the elections, and with growing tension of the Cold War, Australia entered into a form of isolationism as regards her relations with Indonesia. While Australia remained on diplomatic terms

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<sup>6</sup> Bone, op.cot. p69

with Indonesia she supported the Netherlands in her claims for retention of Netherlands New Guinea. In a lengthy statement dealing with the West Irian dispute the Minister of External Affairs, Sir Percy Spender told the press:

The Australian Government does not consider that Indonesia has any valid claims to Dutch New Guinea, the future of which is of vital importance to Australian people.

Australia has a deep attachment to the people of Australian New Guinea... If the claims to Dutch New Guinea were conceded to any degree at all, it would be a matter of time, no matter how genuine may be the assurances to the contrary, when the claim will be pushed further so to include the trust territory of Australian New Guinea and its people.<sup>7</sup>

That Australia supported the Netherlands in order to preserve her strategic position in the area was indicated again four years later when the same person told the Political Committee of the Ninth Assembly of the U.N.:

Events in any part of the world are viewed with interest in Australia. But when the stand of New Guinea is mentioned in an international context, then that interest becomes of an intense nature...

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<sup>7</sup> "The Western New Guinea Problem", L. Metzemaekers, Pacific Affairs, June 1951, Vol.24. pp 139-140

New Guinea has been shown to represent the very key to Australia's defence. We feel that the destiny of Australia is closely bound up with this island which stands so close to us.<sup>8</sup>

However, with the growth of Afro-Asian solidarity as shown at the Bandung Conference in 1955, as well as the emerging countries increasing numerical strength in the U.N., Australia's official attitude began to change from one of preserving Dutch interests in West Irian for defence reasons, to an emphasis on the mission of the Netherlands to remain for the purpose of carrying out her preparation of Papuan peoples for eventual self-determination. This is shown by the Joint Policy Statement of New Guinea of November 6, 1957:

The Territory of Netherlands New Guinea, the Australian trust territory of New Guinea and Papua are geographically and ethnologically related and the future development of their respective populations must benefit from co-operation in policy and administration.

The Australian and Netherlands Governments are therefore pursuing and will continue to pursue policies directed towards political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples in their territories in a manner which recognizes

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<sup>8</sup> U.N. General Assembly, Ninth Session, First Committee, A/C1/SR 727, (26 Nov, 1954)

this ethnological and geographical affinity.

At the same time, the two governments will continue and strengthen, co-operation at present existing between their respective administrations in the territories.<sup>9</sup>

The growing Indonesian military threat to Netherlands New Guinea resulted in a statement on March 15, 1962, in the House of Representatives by the Minister of External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick:

Whatever the outcome as to the immediate administration of the territory, the course has already been commenced towards self-government, and free choice of their future for the Papuan population of West New Guinea should be maintained.<sup>10</sup>

While Australia renounced the use of force by Indonesia in the West Irian dispute, Australia did support and assist and promote any move whereby the Netherlands and Indonesia could come to the conference table, provided Netherlands New Guinea remained directly out of Indonesia's hands. The takeover of West Irian from UNTEA in May 1963 and the consequent claims that West

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<sup>9</sup> Current Quotes on International Affairs, March 1962, p.32

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p.33

Irian would remain within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Indonesia, while at the same time Indonesia began her confrontation of Malaysia, placed Australia in a difficult position as regards its already tarnished relations with her neighbour. To Australia the very principles behind the confrontation of Malaysia could be the eventual cause for confrontation of Australian New Guinea, if and when she became independent. Consequently Australia is continuing her rapid development of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, and special emphasis is being placed on areas bordering West Irian. The Territory's army, the Pacific Islands Regiment, is at present being increased from two to three battalion strength and airforce and communications bases are being planned at Wewak. In recent months there has been continued reconnaissance, both by aircraft and by troops, of the border areas, and many airstrips have been lengthened or improved to take RAAF Caribou troop transports.<sup>11</sup>

Even though Australia is committed by the Trusteeship Agreement<sup>12</sup> to the defence of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, one must ask if and when Indonesia will make claims to Australian New Guinea, or in the event of independence, confront her. Present long and delayed co-operation to survey the West Irian Boundary seems to indicate that events in the near future will be quiet, though both countries are building up border areas in an effort to

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<sup>11</sup> See map Appendix II

<sup>12</sup> Article 7 of Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of New Guinea 1946

delimit their respective interests over difficult terrain and primitive, wandering tribesmen. It therefore appears that, while Indonesia's diplomacy does not recognise any clash of ideologies with Australia, boiled down to military and economic terms, Indonesia just does not have the resources to carry out active confrontation of or infiltration into Australian New Guinea if she wanted to.

### Boundary Demarcation and Complications

The tri-partition of New Guinea by the imperial powers of the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain was achieved in 1884-85, and the 141st meridian became the geometrical line dividing the Dutch possession in the west from the German and British possessions in the east. Pinched by shortages of men and money neither the Dutch Colonial Ministry at the Hague nor the Indies Government at Batavia were eager to assume the financial and administrative burden represented by West New Guinea. But the need to control the Tugeri headhunters<sup>13</sup> of the south coast in the boundary area near British Papua forced the Government to put in a Dutch border post at Sileweka in 1893. That same year a joint expedition was made to define the border on the south coast. This commission concluded that the newly discovered Bensbach River clearly formed the most natural boundary in the area, and that the mouth of the river would be more easily

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<sup>13</sup> "New Guinea Annexations and the Origins of the Irian Boundary". *op.cit.* p.328

understood as a border to the local inhabitants, than a marked mangrove stump. The Administrator of British New Guinea, William McGregor, then decided that another minor correction could advantageously be made at the upper course of the Fly River, which would lead to the exchange of about the same amount of territory. Finally, after quite an exchange of notes between the British Ambassador in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Government, articles of ratification on boundaries were exchanged on 20 July 1895. Article V states:

Navigation of the Fly River is free for the subjects of both contracting powers, excepting as regards the carriage of warlike stores, and no duty shall be imposed on other goods conveyed by that river.

This article has been passed over lightly, and it is only recently that Australian officials became aware of the "free navigation" clause, as this has been generally omitted<sup>14</sup>.

As a result of further raids by the Tugeri tribesmen a permanent Dutch post was set up at Merauke in 1902 and the Tugeri were gradually forced into submission. No major "invasion" across the border occurred until 1963, when several hundred inhabitants from Netherlands New Guinea entered the Territory of Papua to evade Indonesian rule, and a number of them settled in the still depopulated area near the mouth of the Morehead River.

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<sup>14</sup> In 1896 a British Order-in-Council only introduces the first four articles. The London Gazette No. 26708 Feb.11, 1896

On this occasion it was reported in the Pacific Islands Monthly:

Western District Officer Ian Holmes was sent to try to persuade the people to return to their home villages. He failed. The westerners expressed plainly their dissatisfaction with the Indonesian rule, although it is not clear whether anybody actually claimed he feared for his safety.

As Holmes was talking to one group, a jeep load of Indonesian troops, on border patrol duties, arrived to try to persuade the Papuans to return. They drove right up to his camp. The Indonesians asked if they could speak to the Papuans, and Holmes invited them to carry on where he left off. But several hours later they gave up.

The Indonesians spent that night under Australian tents, sharing Australian food, and next day set off along the rough track back to Merauke. Reluctantly, Australia decided that the unwanted migrants would have to be allowed to stay. There were ties of kinship between them and the Bensbach people and they did in fact own some land in Australian Papua<sup>15</sup>.

This same article also claims that a "closed border" policy was adopted at the end of 1962 as a "protection against disease and subversion from an Indonesian Western half of the Island." But, along other parts of the

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<sup>15</sup> August 1963, Vol.34. p.5



border there were problems as to what country looked after what territory during the time of the Netherlands controlled West New Guinea. In 1954 the "treaty of Ingebit" signed by Kiunga Patrol Officer, J.C. Baker, and head of Boven-Digul sub-district, C.H. Stefels<sup>16</sup>; stipulated that some twelve villages near Ningerum were to be controlled by Australian authorities. Another seven villages, mostly straddling the centre border area, were to remain under Dutch authority. It was recognised that people on both sides of the border were closely related and that "short visits" were permissible: longer ones, however, were to be discouraged.

Further to the north there was the problem of the Waris and Jaffi enclaves where Dutch patrol posts administered some twenty-three villages in the Waris enclave and seventeen in the Jaffi enclave, Malay had become the lingua franca and six subsidised and seven unsubsidised schools were maintained by the Catholic Mission. Eventual discussions were held over the Waris and Jaffi enclaves between the District Commissioner of Hollandia and District Commissioner of the Sepik District in mid 1956, and a "gentleman's agreement" maintained the status quo.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, in June, 1962, an Australian patrol went into these areas and the Dutch and West Papuan flags were

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<sup>16</sup> "The Irian Boundary Slumber, 1904-1962", Paul W. Van der Veur, Australian Outlook, No. 1, 1965, Vol.18, p.88

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, pp.89-92

lowered and replaced by Australian flags. This caused complaints to be laid by some members of the New Guinea Council of Hollandia and the Netherlands Parliament. Australia claimed that this action had been carried out as a matter of "regularisation" based on the principle of "one's own administration within one's own territory." The Djakarta Indonesian Herald attacked the handover of the "two villages of Waris and Jaffi, in West Iran to the Australian Government" as "arbitrary" and intolerable<sup>18</sup>, the Pacific Islands Monthly reported in September 1962 that "Australia will accept Indonesian assurances that she has no ambitions in East New Guinea - despite Indonesia's broken promises that she would use no force or threats of force to gain her objectives in West New Guinea."<sup>19</sup>

With the growing refugee problem during and after the takeover by Indonesia of West Irian from the U.N. in December 1963, an announcement was made to survey the border after consultation between the Australian Ambassador Mr. Keith Shann and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio<sup>20</sup>.

Though detailed plans for a joint survey have been much delayed since then, the Australian Government continued to carry out aerial reconnaissance of the border

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<sup>18</sup> "Self-Determination A La Hollandais", The Indonesian Herald (Editorial), 14 June, '62

<sup>19</sup> Vol. 33, p.15

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, Jan. 1964, Vol.35, p.8

areas. In the meantime Willey reported that:

An Australian survey attempt in south-west Papua ended abruptly at the beginning of 1964 after an Indonesian patrol had forced the removal of a border marker which they claimed was inside West Irian. In a second incident troops menaced an Australian officer with automatic weapons and threatened to remove him to Merauke goal.<sup>21</sup>

Finally a technical border conference was convened in the Djakarta from 31 July to 4 August 1964<sup>22</sup>. Consequent surveys by the Americans and the Department of National Mapping have set up astro-fixes to assist in the accurate mapping of the border. By the end of 1965 it was announced in the press that a joint survey party had been set up and would look into the business of actually carrying out a border demarcation, assisted by Indonesian aircraft and Australian helicopters.

Over this period the frontier area on the Australian side had changed considerably, with the following patrol posts and base camps (see map, Appendix II) having been set up since the time just prior to the Indonesian take-over of West Irian. They are Ningerum (May, 1964) and Weam (June, 1963) in the Western District; Atbalmin (August,

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<sup>21</sup> Assignment New Guinea, (1965) Keith Willey, pp 192-93

<sup>22</sup> Current Notes on International Affairs, Aug. 1964, p.28

1964), Imonda (Sept., 1962), Pagei (May, 1963) and Wutung (May, 1963) in the Sepik District. Over this period airstrips at Ningerum, Kiunga, Telefomin, Pagei, Imonda and Amanab have been improved to take RAAF Caribou aircraft. From the map it is seen that five local Government Councils have been recently established in Vanimo, Pagie, Imonda, Green River and Kiunga, in order to increase indigenous participation in local affairs. In the Pagei council area a small portion along the border is not included in the Council. Villages in this area belonged formerly to the Waris enclave and for various reasons are not considered eligible to be included in the Council, one reason being that they are Malay speaking and do not wish to join any council. Late in 1965 a village headman (Luluai) appointed by the Australians was taken to Sukarnopura for talks and later returned to his village. Regular Army and Administrative patrols continue to watch over the more accessible and inhabited areas and likewise similar duties are being carried out by Indonesian authorities on the more populated West Irian side of the border.

What in fact had begun with boundary demarcation plans discussed with the Netherlands Administration in 1960 ended ignominiously with the swift takeover by Indonesia of West Irian. This change of partners has meant undue delays and expense, especially as Indonesia has refuted some claims made by Australia. Up to now no combined efforts have produced material results in the actual demarcation of the border, and while there is still no marked boundary, except for a few pegs in the Western District and a monument at Wutung in the Sepik District,

the complication caused by wandering tribesmen and refugees could, but for the present existing environmental and physical conditions, have been unforeseen and regrettable affects on existing Australian-Indonesian relations.

### Conclusions

From this brief study, is it likely that a border conflict can be forecast? Though this paper does not concentrate on the international scene, the possibility of such a conflict can only be gauged with an appropriate shift of international alignments, such as a change in the ANZUS pact, given that the present strengths and weaknesses of the domestic situation within Indonesia and West Irian do not alter to a great extent. This paper has implied that the difficulties of administering New Guinea, due to the nature of the terrain and the indigenous peoples residing there, creates problems which makes "controlled" border conflicts on the Asian pattern difficult to emulate. The relative unsophistication and containment of the divided border groups would necessitate far more Australian and Indonesian consolidation of the area, before prospective dissident tribesmen suitably armed with slogans, rifles and ammunition, could create a nuisance value to warrant intervention by either Australia or Indonesia. Present negotiations and plans to demarcate the border on a joint basis, seem to presuppose that in the near future it is the wish of both nations to create conditions of stability. Thus common policies will have to be formulated in the dealing with Native peoples who are continually crossing the

border to visit kinsfolk, hunt, or cultivate their land. So far there have been few incidents of a serious nature, but there were twenty-seven refugees (other than Natives who crossed over the border to cultivate their tribal land, etc) reported to have crossed into Australian territory in 1964, of which all but one returned when the international border situation was explained<sup>23</sup>. While Australian authorities do not wish to arouse Indonesian anger, a continuing refugee problem is also treated as a threat to Australian agriculture, now that there is suspected cattle disease present in West Irian.

Thus present conditions suggest a policy of administration of respective areas by respective countries with as little contact between West Irian and New Guinea as possible. The reluctance to set up liaison offices in Port Moresby and Sukarnopura<sup>24</sup>, and the stringent entry regulations into both territories, bears this policy of 'containment' out.

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<sup>23</sup> House of Representative Debates, 1965, p. 1002

<sup>24</sup> Netherlands and Australian liaison offices existed up to the time of the Indonesian takeover. It was also common practice in the Sepik District for Australian Administration officials to visit Hollandia during weekends and holidays.

APPENDIX I

Table

Population of Sepik and Western Districts, 30 June, 1965

(approx)                      Non-Indig.                      Inig.                      Sq.                      Miles

Sepik District

Amanab Sub-Dist.	42	16,497	3,528
Telefomin "	33	13,639	3,168
Vanimo "	96	5,339	2,636

Western District

Kiunga Sub-Dist.	51	19,574	13,311
Morehead "	20	3,983	8,176

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242                      59,032                      30,819

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APPENDIX II  
 WEST IRIAN BOUNDARY AREA  
 Showing  
 Sepik and  
 Western  
 Districts  
 (special emphasis  
 on border  
 sub-  
 districts)

141

Sukarnopura      +Wutung +Vanimo

WEST IRIAN                      Sissano

Jamas            +Pagei                      +Aitape

Jaffi  
                     +Imonda                      +Wewak

Waris            **SEPIK DISTRICT**

+Amanab

+Green River  
                     *Sepik River*  
     +Angoram  
     +Ambunti

May River



Atbalmin

+Telefomin +Oksapmin *TERRITORY*  
*OF NEW GUINEA*

+Olsobip

+Ningerum  
*PAPUA*

+Kiunga  
Mindiptana  
**WESTERN DISTRICT**

Lake Murray

*Fly River*

<to Merauke +Weam  
+Morehead

+Daru  
=====

141 47'9"  
141

<location map hatched here>

LEGEND

- Territorial Boundary
- Sub-District Boundary.....
- Sub-District Headquarters..... —

District Headquarters..... ==  
Airstrips <Eastern side>..... +  
Council Areas                      Scale: 60 miles to 1 inch  
(approx)

Dr

### ***Postscript to paper 'Containment and the West Irian Boundary'***

In a letter to Professor Ken Inglis at The University of Papua and New Guinea 18 May 1968, in an attachment, Martin Kerr reported: 'Border Marker at Hupi reads "Australian Team Survey, Team Survey Indon - 141 00E 4 8 41S 12 9 66" To preserve diplomacy and territorial integrity the Indo. Survey team slept in a camp constructed by Australian Protected New Guineans from Hupi, a mile up river inside West Irian, after being flown into Hupi with the Australian Survey Team by an Australian Helicopter from Green River. One Hupi Native's comments of the Indonesians. "Me tink dispela man long Indonesia em i manki tasol!" As far as writer is aware no further Indo. patrols have been in the area west of Hupi, though Hupi Natives refer to many high flying aircraft (Australian) which have flown over while they themselves were in West Irian.' Martin Kerr visited Hupi on two occasions in 1967 and travelled by canoe to a long house in West Papua belonging to villagers at Hupi.

## *An Officer's Impressions of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea*

<See **3. Letters from Papua New Guinea**, 23 December 1964 and 16 June 1965>

### Introduction

My job in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea is that of the Cadet Patrol Officer attached to the Department of District Administration.

My first posting, after a brief course in Port Moresby, was to Telefomin Sub-District in the Sepik District of New Guinea. Telefomin is situated on the Papua and New Guinea border approximately thirty miles and at least ten days walk from West Irian. At 5000 feet above sea level Telefomin has a temperate climate. To the southwest lie the recently explored Star Mountains rising to 13,000 feet, and to the north the virtually unexplored Mianmin Census Division where up to recently cannibalism was common practice. The country ranges from grass (kunai) plains and mountainsides with huge limestone outcrops to moss forests and dense jungle.

The area is perhaps the most backward and underpopulated of the whole Territory, where men wear as basic dress 'Telefomin Trousers' or *kamen* - a gourd which covers the penis.

Racially the people show strong negroid characteristics, but with copper skins and of small almost pygmoid stature. Their life centres mainly around the cultivation of taro, though hunting the rare game

(opossums, snakes, wild pigs, cassowaries and other birds) at this altitude is common practice with bow and arrow.

In 1953 two patrol officers were murdered in a planned but abortive rebellion and since that time the Administration has paid closer attention to this area which achieved sub-district status soon after.

However, as elsewhere in the Territory, where land is poor and communication virtually impossible, there is little or no cash income for natives, except from working on the station as labourers or by selling their meagre crops of sweet potatoes and taro. One outlet is a two-year contract on a coastal copra or cacao plantation. The Sepik District, now and in the past, has supplied much of the essential labour to the plantations on Bougainville, New Ireland, New Britain, and Madang and Morobe Districts.

With this situation, little by way of agricultural extension services can be expected for Telefomin, though coffee does grow there. Administration therefore tends to be essentially that of maintaining law and order by continuing patrolling, and exploring and breaking in uncontrolled (Restricted) areas. One reason at least why the Administration must keep up these services, is the proximity of the West Irian Border.

### Development of Other Areas of the Territory

At the same time other areas are developing very quickly. The Central Highlands, opened up during the 1950s, are potentially prosperous, with a large and healthy native population, many of whom are not afraid of

entering into commercial life by growing coffee<sup>1</sup> and European vegetables. Elsewhere, on the coast copra and cocoa production is expanding even though there has been a fall in world prices. Besides large European plantations, native co-operatives and individuals are producing a large percentage of copra.

In some areas resettlement schemes are in progress to rehouse landless natives in New Britain and the Sepik District. By efforts so far, this has not been very successful as natives are not keen on leaving their traditional homes.

For all this development only about six per cent of adult males are permanent or semi-permanent wage earners, and even a larger percentage earn less from their lands. This latter group are subsistence farmers or worse, 'bush kanakas'<sup>2</sup> with little future, and in some places perhaps some dissatisfaction with the Administration.

### Development Towards Self Government

I am, as my position puts me, not conversant with all the political developments in Port Moresby, but it is enough to say that now there is an elected majority in the House of Assembly - most of them uneducated, many of whom cannot understand English let alone the procedures of democratic decision making - divided by ethnic and regional affiliations. The leader of the elected members, Mr. John Guise, has not stepped out to lead this heterogeneous group, though he has made able contributions in debate. Instead it is the European elected

members, both in the Open and Special Electorates who dominate proceedings, criticising (often on behalf of their darker less educated fellow parliamentarians) the ten Official Members who are heads of departments of the Administration - non-elected and forming a 'cabinet' lacking any real leadership. But then again these men are public servants and under the English system should not be on the floor of the House. Where they stand now Official Members can be criticised but they cannot lose office.

At the same time some elected members (indigenous) are under-secretaries or rather should I say office boy-understudies to the far more sophisticated, socially integrated and well paid heads of the Departments. There is no under-secretary for the Department of District Administration.

Mr Simogen Pita has this to say -

I have spoken to policemen and other government officers during my visits to many districts recently. Someone told me that I cannot speak to people in the Public Service because I am a politician, but this is not true. Now I have been elected to this House and I have been made an Under-Secretary, but I would like to know what kind of work an Under-Secretary is supposed to do. The Government has made me an Under-Secretary, but I do not know what I am supposed to do and my Department has not shown me.<sup>3</sup>

I quote this as this should give some idea of the

difficulties facing native politicians and the Administration. Lack of education and experience, and a conflict of duty between the Administration and often an insular and ignorant electorate necessarily makes organised opposition difficult - not to mention the barriers of traditional animosity which have to be broken. There is also a pessimistic realisation by natives that the country cannot run without the non-elected Administration. Organised opposition (there is always general opposition) could mean outvoting money bills or the Budget, but failure to pass such a bill would be suicide in that such a move would more or less stop Australian funds from being used by the Administration. At the moment the 'opposition' criticises and helps formulate policy. Any elected member can introduce a Private Members Bill if it does not involve finance. This has been a popular means of getting things done, though little had been done in this direction yet. In fact it is the nominated public servants who still have the power and this could cause difficulties in the changeover to responsible government, by the very fact that these senior men have become politicians.

At times the House becomes a stamping ground for inebriated traders, conservative and well-landed planters, tribal murderers possessing retinues of wives, and a not very expert band of public servants trying to play politicians (often making a better job of it than the elected members) while becoming daily more and more responsible for an Administration that is becoming unwieldy and inefficient.

## The House of Assembly Elections 1964 - as seen in one Electorate

I can only speak of the Electorate in which I was living up to the present time - that of the Upper Sepik which runs down the West Irian border from Papua to Vanimo on the north coast.

I am unable to quote here statements made in Patrol Reports, but it goes without saying that unlike a normal western type election, these electors were not conditioned by centuries of democratic development or by sociological circumstances to do with the maintenance of modern democratic society. In fact income, occupation, parents views, party affiliations and modern charismatic values were all missing. Basically it was Administration patrols who *told* the people about elections and taught them the actual mechanics of voting. The natives voted according to discussion amongst themselves, based on the idea that there was a 'nambawan man bilong' the House of Assembly to vote for, even though voting was preferential. Ease of decision-making was generally common in the Telefomin Sub-District as a local candidate was available known personally in many cases to them. Yet there was only one group of persons who could influence them - administration employees, though in other areas there was a decided mission influence. It was rumoured that the police on election patrols influenced in some cases the vote for more primitive electors. The local candidate was not elected.

Attendance on the appropriate election days was in nearly all cases a hundred per cent in the regularly



patrolled areas close to Telefomin, though this is not surprising since it is compulsory to be present for census patrols - even though instructions were that it was not compulsory to be present when the election patrol came.

No pictures of candidates were available, and most of the electors in the Telefomin area (at least ninety per cent) could not speak Pidgin, let alone write it. Yet most knew the names of most of the candidates, which seems to indicate that they discussed the matter among themselves. Considering the time available for political education, the natives were not confused by the mechanics of voting (to vote preferentially was not compulsory), though they have seen nothing for their vote. It is ironic but true that these people learned to vote, and so are one more step on the road to democracy.

### The Development of Democracy in T.P.N.G. - Local Government Councils

The desired aim of responsible people is to bring about a workable and stable democracy to Australia and New Zealand's north west islands, and that such a democratic underdeveloped country will necessarily maintain close ties with Australia as regards economic and technical assistance, as well as defence. The largely unsophisticated population, in groups often isolated, superstitious and insular, and above all conservative in their attitudes towards social and political development - has created problems. These problems are becoming overcome with increased education and democratic participation from

village level. Local government councils, the first of which was started in 1950, with the program being stepped up rapidly the past three years, till there are ninety-eight such local government councils today, is perhaps the largest single factor in the growth of democracy.

The development of local government councils will eventually lead to a decentralisation of many Administration functions and services. In some areas local government councils are building schools and aid posts, as well as performing a host of other functions. The councils are based on tribal or language groups, and by the Local Government Ordinance (1964) can determine or regulate many native customs, such as bride price.

Local government councils, which now are encouraged to include European residents, provide a means of practical democratic participation, and in the long run minimise the possibility of large scale graft and corruption associated with many Asian and African countries with large central governments.

Local government councils are established with the help of the Department of District Administration staff (patrol officers, etc) and there is a training school for native council clerks. Councils determine the tax and natives within a council tax area are exempted from paying tax to the Administration. Council tax ranges from about ten shillings to two pounds for men and something less for women - levied according to the economic position of the area. Loans and grants may be made to councils if warranted, when funds are available. This has largely been the case in the Vanimo Sub-District along the West Irian border.

There is some conflict however in that the Department of District Administration officers in their advisory capacity bestowed on the under the Ordinance, has meant in fact that this is not always so, and in some cases lazy councillors (or councillors in most cases who just do not know) resent being told what to do. Another point is that departmental officials visiting local government areas are inclined, or are too busy, to pay much attention to the views of councillors, who are by now directly participating in many works programs. Usually officials confine discussion to their European colleagues.

Sociologically a local government council has less direct power than that of a 'Luluai' or 'Tultul' (village constables) appointed by the Administration. In local government areas the Administration is not always able to support councillors and the respect for these elected men or women is often very low. In areas that do not have local governments, the Administration has direct access to the people and expect to have instructions such as killing diseased dogs, clearing tracks, building toilets, etc, obeyed. In council areas the Administration still has power to do all these things but there is often a strain on human relations. A clear division of authority is sacrificed necessarily to getting the job done, which does not always endear the people to the Administration or local government council in question.

### The Need for a Separate Judiciary

In the transitional or 'take-of' period towards

democratic self-government the need for an independent judiciary has to be faced. At the present time the Department of District Administration patrol officers are both magistrates and policemen. Suggestions have been made to let local government areas have their own independent judiciary with the services of honorary resident magistrates. This appears to be a good suggestion, especially as Europeans are being included in local government areas. On the other hand some magisterial powers are going to be taken away from the Administration's largest department - the Department of District Administration<sup>4</sup>. Yet at the same time senior D.D.A. staff are being elevated to magistrates of District Courts. A not unwise decision since such staff are often in a better position to understand native custom than qualified legal men from south.

At this time a code of law for natives is set down in the Native Administration Ordinance and Regulations<sup>5</sup> (soon to be repealed) based on the Queensland Criminal Code, but qualified by circumstances found in the Territory. It is proposed that there should be a common law for all races. But under the Native Regulations adultery is an offence (fine three pounds or six months imprisonment), and native opinion seems to be that they wish to keep it that way. Law based on native custom is not a temporary measure now that local government councils can deliberate and make laws on many customs.

### Other Means of Promoting Democratic Action

A co-operative movement is established in the Territory under the under-staffed Department of Trade and Industry, which endeavours to get native owned businesses functioning. Overall however it is education which is sadly lacking. The Territory's first graduate was produced this year and last year only eight persons were attending Australian Universities. Development of secondary schooling is being hampered by a serious shortage of qualified staff.

### The Future of T.P.N.G.

The future of this emerging nation is not at all clear though Mr John Guise has this to say -

... a properly organised and workable Constitution is essential as a guide for Papua and New Guinea, but the meeting of elected members emphasised - and I wish to emphasise again for the benefit of the all the peoples of this council and of Australia - that the last thing we want at this time is for people to think that Papua and New Guinea wants them to go, or that we want independence now.<sup>6</sup>

Mr Zure Makili also had this to say -

We must begin to decide where we are going. We can begin to chart our course and the people will know where they are heading. How many people are afraid that their brothers from Australia will

leave, but when the Constitution is written it will reassure our Australian brothers because it will guarantee their rights and security. Members here who know the old ways must make their words heeded. Who has been saying that the people of Papua and New Guinea are ready for self-government? Is it the people as a whole or the sophisticated individuals? Let us prepare and get ready, for it is no good to keep repeating that we are not ready. We must go as fast as we are able. It is wrong to keep postponing all discussions on where we are going until we have developed more. We should start now, for we will not know whether we are ready until we have tried to move.<sup>7</sup>

There is an awareness by European Public Servants of their uncertain future, and on this account resignations by senior staff have been considerable. Steps are being taken to introduce a compensation scheme, and there has been much discussion on who should control the Public Service - the Department of Territories in Canberra or the Administration in Port Moresby. At this time opinion appears to be that internal control of the Public Service would mean setting up of such a service which would be dependent on changes of government. Therefore it is argued that control should be retained in Canberra. Another reason is also that Canberra would look after the interest of overseas officers. All this discussion has largely been amplified by the general dissatisfaction of the Public Service Ordinance 1964 which sets separate European and native wage scales. At this time an overseas

officer can expect to receive three times to four times the salary (including allowances) than his native counterpart.

For all this, the Territory is going forward. Educational facilities are improving, and agricultural production is increasing. There is a growing conflict between a strong central administration and the less sophisticated local government councils, along with a divided, apathetic, uneducated and unled group of men who call themselves professional politicians, elected to the House of Assembly. But these conflicts are not unhealthy at the moment. Organisation of political groups is coming<sup>8</sup>, though perhaps too much emphasis is being based on colour, business interests and regional affiliations, instead of healthy nationalistic ideals. As a result there is a need for a draft constitution, as politicians, public servants and the like continue to struggle up the same hill fret with the same obstacles, but lacking signposts to true progress which could be placed there by the combined efforts of all with the help of the country pouring £28 million this year into Papua and New Guinea.

A genuine active interest by Australians and New Zealanders in the problems of the Territory and a step-up of exchange programs, together with more educational and economic assistance, would help the emerging nation's burden of responsibility. A lifting of the 'white-brown' immigration screen would let the people of the Territory know that they are wanted.

People of Papua and New Guinea are not embarrassed by accepting southern hospitality. In fact they will take all they can get and then come back for more, in the hope that they will become more truly South Pacific even though a

northwest orientation could in the future be easier since Indonesia is closer geographically and ethnically.

This latter action is not impossible and both the Australian and New Zealand Governments are aware of this. But Australia needs to do more than send money and a few 'advisers'. The United States are doing this in South Vietnam and having little success. What Papua and New Guinea requires is the true neighbourly hand of friendship by all Australasia's people.

Martin Kerr  
Angoram,  
New Guinea.

5 June 1965

End Notes:

1. Fifty-one per cent of the value of coffee produced in the Highlands is by Native growers.
2. 'Kanakanaka' is an accepted Pidgin term, though not necessarily accepted when used in this context.
3. P 488 House of Assembly Debates - Fourth Meeting of the First Session - Volume I. No. 4. Mr Pita (member for Wewak-Aitape) speaks Pidgin in the House and his speech is translated.



4. Formerly known as the Department of Native Affairs until reorganisation in 1964 which now gives D.D.A. under the Ordinance a more active role in community development and local government.

5. The Native Regulations only apply to the Court of Native Matters in Papua and the Court of Native Affairs in New Guinea. Supreme Court cases are tried under Queensland Law.

6. P 453 House of Assembly Debates - Vol 1, No.3.

7. P 455 House of Assembly Debates - Vol. 1. No. 3.

8. There is little Communist influence in the Territory. Strict immigration laws controls this. It is compulsory for all political parties, trade unions, etc, to register.

### USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

1. House of Assembly Debates - The first Session  
Published by Authority  
four volumes as at June 1965  
obtainable from V.P. Blook Government Printer  
Port Moresby.
2. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the House  
of Assembly Elections 1964
3. Local Government Ordinance 1964

4. Public Service Ordinance 1963
5. Native Administration Ordinance (1921-1951) and Regulations.

## 17. Stories Gathered by Martin Kerr during 1964-65

### *Miamia*

Story as told to Martin Kerr by **Emily Jim** on 27 December 1964, Port Moresby. Refer to Martin D Kerr, *New Guinea Patrol*, (Chapter 5).

Story, translated from Pidgin, as told to Martin Kerr by **Bekinok** (Peter) of Kialikmin village, Telefomin. See *New Guinea Patrol*, (Chapter 5).

### *Do Not Eat Human Flesh at Night*

In the time before the whiteman (tabrasep) came, there used to be much fighting, especially between the Natives of Telefomin and those of Feramin. Eating one's victims used to be common practice, until one day the headman of Kialikmin in Telefomin had an unfortunate accident. His skull rests to this day in the Haus Tambaran as a reminder.

After a big fight with the Feramin lasting a whole day, the Feramin were forced to withdraw, leaving their dead on the kunai plateau of Telefomin. The Kialikmin collected their share of the kill and returned home with it for usual feasting.

That night the victims were decapitated and their limbs torn off with bamboo knives and placed in banana and taro leaves to cook over a fire. When this was completed, the Kialikmin went into their usual ritual and the food was handed out by the headman. The headman retained what was considered the choicest human morsel - a human forearm - and began eating it. Unfortunately, in the darkness he did not see where the hand was, and when he cut through the forearm's tendons at the wrist, the hand snapped shut over his eyes. The man screamed and was blinded.

From that time it became a rule in Kialikmin that one does not eat human flesh at night, but must wait until dawn.

## *The Pardon*

Story translated and adapted from Pidgin (tok pisin) as told to Martin Kerr by **Aba** of Wombun, 29 August 1965. Refer to *New Guinea Patrol*, (Chapter 9) and **8. Patrol Report - Angoram Patrol Report No. 3 - 1965/66**.

## *Breaking-In*

Narrative by Martin Kerr written 20 September 1965 and later adapted to be included in *New Guinea Patrol*, Chapter 6, 'Mianmin Patrol'. This narrative relates closely to observations made in **5. Patrol Report – South Sepik Report No. 7 – 1964/65**, and includes tribal groups

involved:

## *Breaking-In*

We had been marching for two weeks in the almost impenetrable mountain country through which runs the Sepik River, fifty miles from its source. At a tributary of the May River we at last came up with the Mawaimins – a semi-nomadic group of tribesmen who move from place to place cutting their bush huts and planting taro in communal gardens nearby.

The plan was to approach cautiously up the tributary using another group of tribesmen called Kusarenmins as guides. Previously we had been camped beside the May River which could not be crossed by conventional means such as fording or rafting, but by a cane suspension bridge which could be cut quite easily, so saving up our only means of retreat if we struck a heavy ambush and were forced to withdraw. But we could only press onward and remain alert. Two nights in this river encampment gave John, the Assistant District Commissioner time enough to get an idea who the murder suspects were from our guides the Kusarenmins. The Kusarenmins were also going to hold a singsing at a large ceremonial house overlooking the upper reaches of the May River some days later, and in the meantime would oblige us by taking us to the Mawaimins' camp.

The patrol broke camp early on the third morning and headed up the tributary, crossing it a number of times and escarping the cliffs at its side. Soon one came to the mark

(a tree of some species) which indicated the boundary of the Mawaimins' land. John, at the head of the patrol with his temporary guides and two police, stopped the patrol, and I soon came up holding the rear of the hundred man column with the remainder of the twelve escorting police. John issued instructions to close up and to keep a special watch on suspicious happenings.

There was no real expectation of a frontal attack as the Mawaimins of about sixty persons had prepared a track into their hamlet 2000 feet up the mountainside and were obviously showing us we could stay.

Two hours later from the head of the column I heard shouts then some natives I had not seen before appeared, their long bows unstrung – a friendly approach at least.

Soon we were in their hamlet of six houses with intricate verandas and two doors, constructed obviously for defence purposes. Women and children were there so obviously this was a genuine form of welcome. A round of hand-shaking followed with the typical flicking of the fingers found in this area. Our interpreter spoke the usual form of greeting and we were led to a camp site just below the village from where our potential killers had the tactical advantage of height and cover. John decided we would call their bluff and we duly pitched camp. I hung out the aerial of the '510' portable transceiver and a weak signal was acknowledged by Tim at sub-district headquarters of our whereabouts.

The usual preparations followed. The completion of tent erecting and the setting up of bush shelters for the carriers which were set up inside the marked perimeter of the camp. The two police tents were situated on each side

of our tent, an obvious target in the event of any attack. The trade box was then opened and the meris with a few men and children came into the camp to trade for salt and beads their meagre supplies of taro. In the hamlet men who remained walked around with their axes and bows and arrows. Tea for all followed and a police guard was posted. Then John and I settled down with an interpreter to interrogate two Mawaimins in order to elucidate the facts on the murder reported previously.

From this night's work some suspects were noted, but the facts of the case were against us. The killing happened months before and members of the clan of the murdered man – Fiyarenmins – were residing in the village behind the camp. Inconceivable as it might be, some form of help was given either by the Fiyarenmins themselves – a light-skinned Fiyarenmin woman was living with the Mawaimins – although she may have been abducted – or, the Kusarenmins, who were said also to be involved in the murder. Of the body – we would never find it - it was thrown into the river or eaten – probably the latter.

The next day, after a pre-dawn stand-to with fixed bayonets, questioning continued and suspects identified. But just when it would be possible to make arrests we did not know. Two things were involved – the necessity to uphold the due process of law, and the responsibility for the safety of the patrol personnel. And our aims were to bring law and order to a people contacted only once before for a murder of a tribesman from a group that had never seen a whiteman. John and I discussed this matter at length over cups of tea. John had become a regular chain smoker, though possibly further supplies would be

airdropped later. His tall lanky frame had become decidedly gaunter. He was responsible to see that no blood was let. Yet it seemed impossible to avoid it. To our advantage was the strength and fire power of our party – more than a third of a platoon of police, plus our own firearms. Of mobility and surprise we had none. And we were without a regular food supply for our hundred or so carriers. Evidence was so strong that we were bound to take in suspects for questioning, as this was one way these natives learned not to commit murder. When and where we could act on this information would be decided only when the chance afforded itself.

The following day John took a census of the people while eight police surrounded the small group, except for one exit which could not be covered, and led from one of the doors of a house, covered by a latticed verandah, onto a fallen log which led up onto a spur from where natives could disappear behind it into the bush. This is what made us hesitant to step in and take the suspect men, who carried tomahawks anyway. I carried a long staff, obviously not meant to assist my walking, with a Smith and Wesson thirty-eight revolver at my side. The police had cartridges in the breeches of their rifles, and John had his cookboi with a jungle carbine nearby. The moment however was not ours - and never would be while the suspects carried axes and had a path of retreat. The only way to get any suspects would be to entice them into the camp. Just how this could be done I did not know, except that a man called Surudup from Timelmin – now pro-Government – had been doing some hard talking to these people as it was known that he wanted take one of these Mawaimin women



as his wife, and that with our help he could take her back to his village four days walk away.

Anyway we retired from the potential massacre or battle field. Back in our tent we discussed our failure over a cup of tea. Soon Surudup appeared with two suspects, his wife-to-be, and her mother and father, along with a Fiyarenmin man who had had a member of his own clan killed by the Mawaimins. Surudup, who had already spent seven years in prison for pay-back murders, spoke pidgin and launched into a story about his marriage to the girl who stood firm breasted, her head shaved completely except for a top-notch. John saw his chance, but I did not until he blasted me quietly in English. "Get outside and watch the village. I'm going to try and get handcuffs on these men." Two policemen came into the tent with handcuffs and I moved out to watch the village. The two murder suspects turned and fled leaving the Fiyarenmin who had never seen a white man before in an advanced state of panic. The suspects disappeared before the police could bring a cordon around them, and with some Telefomin carriers turned on the four remaining persons. Twenty seconds had lapsed and John was still poking round for his revolver, while I stood out in full view of the village screaming at the natives hidden behind their houses above waving a revolver. Some women appeared for a moment then disappeared leaving the village deserted except for their dogs. The carriers from Telefomin, former conquerors of these people had not been altogether inactive, and pranced around with machetes and axes hoping for a bit of blood. None had been let and we returned to our captives – two women and two men. The

Fiyarenmin tribesman at that moment screamed and breaking way from the hold of a policeman began to rush off down the hillside. But he had to pass me who was standing in his path. With a shout I leapt for his legs and came down with ten Telefomins screaming and flinging fists at his face. Our captive was again secure and a policeman put some handcuffs on him.

That afternoon our guard was doubled and the carriers forbidden to leave the camp for water unless escorted by an armed policeman. During this time we were able to sort out Surudup's part in this incident, and John questioned the captives. This continued throughout the night till stand-to at dawn. No attack came and by this time we really did not expect any.

From the information this gained we learned that our former guides, who had now left us – the Kusarenmins – were said to be involved in this murder, so we tried to entice the Mawaimins back to the camp. Our Fiyarenmin began yodelling across the valley and shouts were returned. Eventually by midday two men and a woman returned to the camp – but not our original suspects. Our show of strength had failed with the lack of decisive evidence and quick action on our part. However we had avoided bloodshed and had not made enemies of the Mawaimins.

The next day we broke camp giving small gifts of tobacco to the Mawaimins who had appeared, with a stern warning not to attempt further killings. Our destination had to be for the Kusarenmin ceremonial house where a large singsing was being held. The approach was by way of a rough track along the side of the mountain range along

with Surudup and his blushing bride.

Eventually we came to the large singing house of the Kusarenmin tribesmen, surrounded it quietly and captured a crippled man and two old women. Our suspects had already gone – dispersed to their hamlets in an area of about a twenty-mile radius in almost impenetrable country. With supplies almost exhausted, ourselves tired out, we cancelled our next air drop and decided to give the game away and head back to the Sepik River across unexplored country towards home.

Since that time a helicopter buzzed this unsettled area and our 'suspects' or their friends arrived on the station at Telefomin – being most apologetic about everything. Who knows, we may have succeeded in civilising these people a little after all? If so, in this respect our patrol was not a failure – the objective of introducing law and order without bloodshed had been achieved. What remained to do was more regular patrolling followed by the possible setting up of a patrol post near or at the only air-strip side on the upper May River. Then missions would follow, aid posts and possibly a school of some sort. Eventually these people would play an active role with a now enlarged concept of their country beyond the mountains.

## *Porapora Legend*

Adapted and edited by Martin Kerr from a story found in the Haus Tambaran, Angoram, written in broken English by **Sebastian Okim** of Ajora. Probably completed in late September 1965:

## *Porapora Legend*

This is a story about three people from a place called Aparm near Bankin (Pankin). There are two brothers named Eprim and Bunara and a sister whose name was Kungara.

One day when the three of them were making sago a young girl suddenly appeared out of the sago. Bunara the youngest said he wanted to marry her, but Eprim said he would, and did. His wife's name was Osawa.

When they were all making sago one day, Eprim did not join them but took his dogs and went into the bush in search of game to eat with the sago. At the same time Bunara went paddling upstream to make a banis<sup>1</sup> to catch birds in. While he was making this he fashioned a piece of sago thorn and sent it drifting downstream to Osawa. Osawa saw this beautifully carved thorn and when Bunara returned home soon afterwards, she asked him to carve a thorn <presumably the thick spine of a large palm leaf> just like the one she had found. Bunara willingly did what was asked of him, then he went on to dye her grass skirt with some special dyes he had and later carved a beautiful figurine to go underneath it.

When Osawa's husband came home that night she told him that she was sick. Eprim did not believe her, but could prove anything, even though she was bleeding from cuts to her skin made by Bunara's application of the carved

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1. fence

sago thorn when she made love.

One day Eprim decided to trick her. He went into the bush with his dogs, but quickly returned without them. He fashioned a hook out of bush materials and went under his house and started to pull away some of his wife's meat hanging there to smoke. Osawa heard the noise and went to look, but as soon as he came out of her mosquito basket Eprim saw the marks freshly cut by his young brother. Eprim appeared and said angrily, "Now I know what you and Bunara have been doing and I will kill him for it."

It took quite some time for Eprim to find a way of killing his brother, but at last he decided he would do it when building a new haus tambaran. Eprim told Bunara that they should both cut posts and holes for this new house. Bunara agreed, and when they had done this Eprim marked a special hole to kill his brother in. But Bunara knew about his brother's secret, and before he went into the hole he made a magic potion and swallowed it. Into the hole Bunara went and began digging. When he saw Eprim go for the post he began to dig fiercely a niche into the side of the hole he was in. By the time his elder brother returned with the post and heaved it into the hole Bunara was safely hiding in his niche, from whence he dug a tunnel under the ground until he arrived at a baret<sup>2</sup> called Anumora. He made a house and lived for some months and then shifted to a village called Wombos (Ombos).

At Wombos (Ombos) he started to build a very large boi-house. He did this alone without the help from other

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2 cana1

villages and always thought of his sister Kungara. But Kungara believed him to be dead - buried in the post hole - and so she set about to gather food for his sing-sing<sup>3</sup>. One day she came to the village of Wombos (Ombos) and discovered Bunara at work on his house. Bunara, out of joy, grabbed her and told that he was not dead. But Kungara refused to believe it. After further futile persuasion Bunara showed her into the boi house. Then he gave her plenty of food and other things for his sing-sing then sent her home to live with Eprim.

But Kungara continued to see her brother and one day Eprim's wife, Osawa, smuggled herself under some food in Kungara's canoe and so went on to Wombos (Ombos). Near the village Osawa revealed herself and Kungara became frightened. Bunara saw this and said, "Bring Osawa here." And Kungara did as she was told.

Bunara was so cross to see the woman that has caused so much trouble that he went into his house to get his white sea-shell and a piece of clay pot which he attached to Osawa - the shell on her breast and the broken pot on her back. Then Bunara threw Osawa bodily into the river. Osawa drowned and now they call her Tortoise whom you have all seen in the Sepik River.

After Bunara had done this he sent Kungara back to fetch Eprim who was at Aparm. He told her to bring Eprim to their new home at Wombos (Ombos) on the Porapora River. It was at Wombos (Ombos) that the brothers met each other and they were happy again. Or at least for a while.

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3 dance

One day Bunara told Eprim to get up a big sing-sing for the opening of the boi-house. the first thing that Bunara did was to turn all the wooden carvings into people so giving life to the sing-sing. He told lies to these people and said. "I am tired now and am going to my house." But he went under the boi-house and removed the posts. When he had removed the last post the house collapsed and hundreds of people were killed. Then the house floated down the Porapora River into the Sepik and then out to sea where it drifted until it reached Madang. Today, as you all know, this house has become an island near the Madang Bridge.

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It seems that Bunara had not got his revenge, as according to some stories he had not killed Eprim or Kungara in the collapse of the boi-house, and a sequel to this story is that Bunara made six crocodiles, their names being Aujani, Gaiam, Wubanon, Kasraum, Agame and Ejambu. Then from these crocodiles he was able to manifest himself in either one of them which he did and so killed and eat many people.

At last he killed his nephew, a second son to Kungara, and killed many others as crocodiles do. When he killed his nephew, the boy's father shot Bunara with a heavy spear in the back. Bunara swam back to his house and changed back into a man. When next morning his sister came to borrow some embers to get up a fire, she saw the wound in her brother's back, so she went back to Eprim and told him what she had seen. The father of the dead

boy also discovering this wanted to kill Bunara, but the other son of Kungara warned Bunara and he escaped.

The revenge did not stop till many hundreds of people were killed. Then tiring of fighting Bunara packed up all his goods, swallowed them, and then turned into a magic bamboo to float down the river.

While he was still a magic bamboo he came across two young girls - sisters. They picked the magic bamboo up and carried it home where it turned into a man with all sorts of bilas<sup>4</sup>. Both sisters were most surprised, and it was at this place called Bin (Bien) that Bunara married these two girls.

Funnily enough these people always ate dirt which they thought was sago. When Bunara saw this he was very angry with the Bin (Bien) people, and for this reason he showed them how to make sago and all sorts of food.

For some time he stayed at Bin (Bien) and then left for Madang to follow the big boi-house. It was there he met his elder brother, who had followed the house some time before with his sister and two wives. Bunara stayed for a short while giving them all his possessions before producing a heavy gale into which he disappeared. From there he ended up on a mountain called Sini where he set about constructing a large canoe. When it was completed he asked the local people on Sini to help him launch it. But these people refused. So thereupon Bunara brought rain and high tides. he put all the available animals into his canoe and sailed out to sea. From that time Bunara seems to have been lost.

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4 articles



But as for the eldest brother, Eprim, he returned from Madang and arrived at a place called Manam. It was there that a big fire started, but Eprim planted a piece of sugar cane and it stopped. He then left Manam and came to Kopar and then on up the Sepik River to arrive at Marienberg. There he made a large boi-house and then he left and went onto Angoram. In Angoram he made another boi-house and stayed on for quite a while and then left for Kambaramba where he fought these people and departed. He then went on to Bopaten (Bobten) where he killed his cousin Ekuran and took his head. But it was in Bopaten Bunara also died with a nail wound to his head, and his head was in turn taken away by the Bopaten people and carried back to Porapora. It was on the way there that Kungara, his sister died.

Now the tambuna<sup>5</sup> of Porapora's head is at a place called Duor on the Porapora River near Angoram.

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<sup>5</sup> spirit

## *A Dog's Life*

Story written in Angoram 4 October 1965 immediately after the alleged event (pseudonyms used; refer letter to parents 27 October 1965):

### *A Dog's Life*

Martin Kerr

It has the makings of a good Saturday afternoon. You know the sort of thing for this town. The *Kathy* had arrived with the beer, three days out from Madang. And the beer was already cold by midday, sitting in the hotel's bokis ais, where we could go down and have a counter lunch with our dogs.

About six of us sat at the bar – two school teachers, the clerk, one trader, the hotel keeper and myself number five kiap – not to mention the eight of so Natives also in for a quiet beer on money gained from the sale of crocodile skins that morning.

Conversation went O.K. for a while – the usual things – Native women. Then the teachers started off on pay and conditions. Too many resignations as a result they said. What was the Area Education Officer doing about their conditions of work and pay? Teaching two classes and four Native teachers to supervise. We discussed this for a while, then Jim the trader began to spark about the proposed crocodile skin ordinance, which virtually meant a tambu on buying skins in unlimited quantities. As Jim put it – 'Only skins over four feet six inches long can be

purchased. Well naturally who is going to buy them? Us traders. And if we are going to be limited to 500 each, we'll take saltwater skins, that's all! The Natives are going to get low prices so we can up our profit on each skin.' – and so on. A majority of highlands Natives would pass the bill, not knowing the full implications, for the sake of the Western District – now almost devoid of crocodiles. And what of this Sub District?

By that time the Natives were joining in the discussion and Pidgin was mainly conversed in. Jim started to lead the 'rebellion' over skin prices for Natives. The Natives would lose and so would he. 'Right! Where do we meet?'

It was just like that, and not at the Ex-servicemen's place, but at the Haus Tambaran. What's the use of keeping the haus open for two shillings a time when only the all-too-rare tourist could afford it. Yes, we would start the Town Workers Association – the first in the Sepik – basic urban rates for all – £3 a week. Who would be president? Would we affiliate with the United Party?

It was finally arranged to meet and Jim went out to get into the only motor car in town. He took his dog with him, but the stupid bitch took to a local government councillor's meri, mauling her very lightly. I missed this but when I rejoined Jim, a violent discussion was going on over compensation. Previously Jim had a court conviction – the number one kiap sitting on the District Court – and Jim was very upset about it. He refused to pay compensation saying the Native could court him again. The councillor stood his ground and then came and saw me. I said go and see the number one kiap, but not then as he was playing golf with his wife.

We returned to the hotel. Jim saw the Native go and talk with number one. Jim swore he would go and beat the

kiap up – a little man with the manner of a preoccupied school teacher. Jim needed restraining, Natives coming to my help, and, when he had rid himself of his anger, we let him go. 'Alright! I'll kill my dog and I'll smash it over the bastard kiap's house!'

Number three kiap, John, arrived by then and Jim was still cursing the kiaps, courts and kanakas, so we left him.

That night, my boi, who had already departed for the night, came back. 'Masta you come! Masta Jim em he killim dog belong em na putim inside long house belong nambawan kiap!'

I put my shoes on and took my five cell torch and went to the kiap's house. The damage was done – blood everywhere, louvres broken – a bitch disembowelled over the kiap's furniture and carpets, the remains of the sacrificial offering left on a beautifully carved crocodile table.

I hear later that night the kiap had called out for the police watch to help him but no immediate help came – the watch stayed where he was.

Oh well, why look for trouble? – the damage was done – temporary insanity – quite common in this area – and a high proportion of European suicides – you know ... Trouble with Native women. Native husbands wanting compensation, the heat, beer, mosquitoes, the stinking muddy Sepik River running perpetually through us all. This is a dog's life, that's all...

# *Touchdown*

Written by Martin Kerr October 1965:

## *Touchdown*

Martin Kerr

Saturday burst fine and clear once the ground mist had cleared south across the airstrip towards the mountains. It was not a morning for real work as that has been done during the week and therefore time could be spent talking to Natives who had come down the River for the weekly market day.

No aircraft were expected and the sound of an aeroplane was received with some surprise. Soon it came in sight and its four engines and bulky fuselage stood out dark brown against a bright blue sky. The machine a RAAF Caribou Transport circled slowly like a large hawk and then came in over the end of the airstrip its flaps down, and settled on the grass sward at a speed not exceeding forty miles per hour. Its propeller went into reverse and the blast of the engines brought the aircraft to a stop within 200 feet, then, picking up again the giant bird on its small nesting strip lumbered to the end of the grass, turned and came to a stop.

Six men in green overalls were disgorged from the bird, four of them from a lowered platform which came from the rear of the craft's cargo deck. The green men walked over to the office and about 200 Natives, men women and children appeared as it seemed from nowhere

and quietly encircled the strange bird not knowing from whence it came, why it came, or where it was going. On the edge of the strip nearer the office the Assistant District Commissioner met the six men, two of whom were wearing air-force peaked caps and seemed to be of considerable rank.

'Hello,' said the ADC. 'Calling in again to have a look?'

'My name is Reynolds and these are my associates. We've just come from base today and this will give two members of the flight crew some orientation to New Guinea conditions compared to South Vietnam where they have been flying.'

'I don't know what similarities you will find here, though I would say the people are more friendly.'

By that time about 100 Natives had surrounded the group and were eyeing the strange uniforms.

'This is just an informal call,' said Wing Commander Reynolds. 'We don't want to put you to any trouble though I believe one can buy artefacts here.'

'We should be able to arrange that,' said the ADC, and in Pidgin he asked the nearest Natives to bring what artefacts they had before the six men in green.

'Come over to my office,' said the ADC. 'We can see what artefacts there are for sale in the Council Shop.'

The six strange men walked to the Council Shop, situated in a rickety building with a bush materials roof, next to the almost as rickety Sub-District Office. Inside they began inspecting the artefacts which included face masks of all descriptions, carved crocodiles, walking sticks and small figurines.

'This seems to be an interesting one,' said a young flight lieutenant. 'What exactly is it?'

The ADC looked at a long carved mask with small giri

shells plastered neatly on clay to its forehead. From a long nose two large pig tusks protruded out around a grimacing mouth. Bordering the face protruded cassowary feathers from opossum fur.

'That is a devil mask used in funeral ceremonies. Quite menacing really and it still will frighten women and children, though not on its own as it usually worn by men in their dances.'

Wing Commander Reynolds became engrossed and the airmen went into a discussion about it. The young lieutenant said, 'It would go alright in the mess but it will be a devil of a job to get those pig tusks out of the country.'

'That's true,' said his superior. 'But I see a lot of natives bringing more artefacts. Perhaps we could look at these.'

The six green men and the ADC stepped out of the shop to be immediately surrounded by ever-watchful Natives carrying their wares of Native art.

Wing Commander Reynolds looked around at the faces and so did his colleagues. Would one of those people throw a bomb? Would a knife be inserted in their ribs one night? The men in green didn't know – they were men of the air, born out of science and technology to land on a grass airstrip miles from anywhere to face a Native people which they did not understand. A tension came over them – it was as if they were in camp in South Vietnam, and were making their first cautious approach to the people outside the camp, not knowing whether to trust the people, many of whom they were no doubt fighting.

Freedom for the green men was the relative freedom of flying, and yet the crying need for human warmth and understanding remained. Flying was an enforced escape from the mortal problems found on earth, where famine, disease and death – love, affection and birth followed each

other in almost monotonous waves, each wave bearing its own human tragedy or its own joy and happiness.

The senior officer spoke uneasily, 'How much will you sell this mask for?' The Native stared blankly back, for he could not understand English. The ADC spoke in Pidgin and soon was able to inform the wing commander that he could purchase it for two pounds. From one of the many-zippered recesses of his flying suit the wing commander produced two pound notes, as if by magic.

The Natives stared wonderingly at it all. 'Thankyou very much,' the wing commander said and handed the money to the Native with more uneasy words in a language that could not be understood, praising the Native for his diligence and skill in producing such a fine mask.

The airman would have had more success if he had been talking to his own three-year-old son back in Australia. Then the Natives stood aside and watched the six green men, with an extra face staring grotesquely back at them, head towards the aircraft and disappear inside. The engines started and with final roar the mighty bird took to the air and isolation. Later it would land at another green field where the crew would look again at potential battle fodder and think about the wasteful sorties they flew over Vietnam.

The Natives dispersed without a word and the ADC walked back to his office to hear the first complaint for the day – someone's pig had been raiding a villager's garden.



# APPENDIX 1 – *Fragments of New Guinea – Reports & Narratives 1964 ...*

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In his book *The Sky Travellers* (above) Bill Gammage says John Black, patrol officer, arrived at Telefomin from Mount Hagen in 1938 as part of the 18 month Taylor-Black expedition. He had an affair a Feramin girl.

Some notes on the Sepik area taken from Bill Gammage's book:

P16 "Others were interested in what might lie west of Hagen. In 1935 two companies, Oroville Dredging and Oil Search, asked to prospect there. That October the Administrator, W.R. McNicoll, steamed up the Sepik to the Dutch border. Might it be possible, he wondered, to reach the Highlands by river? That would be cheaper, faster if something of value was found, and less dangerous. Or apparently less dangerous. After his voyage McNicoll disembarked at Madang. His ketch, *Hermes*, with twenty-four men, sailed into the Bismark Sea and was never seen again.

By 1936 both Oxford University and the Royal Geographic Society were proposing expeditions west from Hagen, and on 14 July 1936 the Australian company Enterprise of New Guinea applied to prospect the ranges south of the Sepik. Chinnery opposed the application because the area was not under control, and McNicoll refused it. Enterprise applied again in December 1936 and April 1937. Each time McNicoll refused. Enterprise lobbied the Australian government. On 27 August 1937 the Minister of Territories, Sir George Pearce, asked McNicoll to consider (p17)

bringing under control the uncontrolled portion of the Sepik District, having regard specially to ... oil prospecting ... I do not wish any are to be thrown open until... it is considered safe ... but I should like you to formulate some proposal whereby special attention might be given to concentrating upon the penetration of areas in which oil prospecting companied are likely to be interested

...

This was essential 'from the Imperial point of view', Pearce explained.

It was also becoming unavoidable from the Administration point of view. From north, south and east prospectors were probing. Without Administration knowledge, in March-May 1930 the Amana expedition went south almost to Kampian in Enga, and in February-March 1934 Ludwig Schmidt let a party northwest from Hagen through the same area. Schmidt shot people and abandoned carriers. In chasing him ADOs Gerry Keogh in August-October 1934 and Bill Kyle in may 1935 passed from Lai north of Kompian to the Maramuni. In June 1934 Mick and Dan Leahy prospected west to the Ambum

valley, and in August Tom and Jack Fox followed them, returning to claim having reached the Dutch border. From Papua, between December 1926 and January 1928, Charles Karius and Ivan Champion crossed New Guinea, on the way locating Telefomin, which Richard Thurnwald had reached from the Sepik in 1914. In 1936-37 J. Ward Williams' Oroville expedition set up a base and airstrip at Telefomin and prospected north to the May. In February-September 1937 Jack Hides and Dave Lyall prospected the upper Strickland, retreating when Lyall took ill. On 29 November 1937 Investors Ltd applied to let Hides return to the Strickland via Hagen. McNicoll refused: he had decided to mount his own patrol. Its purpose was clear in a letter to Chinnery wrote on 2 October. It would explore the country between Hagen and the Dutch border, make friends with the people, and locate sites for government posts preferably with water access to the Sepik, from which prospectors entering the new country might be supervised. The last task was deleted from the patrol's official instructions issued on 31 December, but the patrol searched for sites as though it remained."

P151 "On 17 January [1939] they reached Yessan (camp 233), the first village with government-appointed officials, and the next day met M.V. *Sirius* seeking them." P 152 "For Jim and the carriers, though not for the police manfully steering the barges against a strong bow wave, the trip meant watching banks slide by, calling on Merui and Marienberg missions and Angoram station, and on 22 January berthing comfortably at Korpar near the river mouth (camp 238), to refit ... On 25 January Jim's birthday passed without comment, and on the 27th the line boarded *Sirius* and headed upriver. On 1 February they turned into

the Karawari. The master kept to midstream but at Ambrumei (camp 244) could go no further. The line disembarked, *Sirius* made thankfully for the sea, and Jim went to bed for three days, with a cold."

Martin Kerr quotes this latter particular item (above), speculating that Anna Chu's father assisted in supplying Jim Taylor's patrol when the *Sirius* called in at Marienberg. Jim Taylor was wounded by the ADO at Angoram when he was sent to take over the patrol post in face of the Japanese advance. Chu Leong possibly provided his vessel to help Jim move along the Sepik. Chu Leong took his wife, Anna and his other children up to her village on the Keram River to hide from the Japanese, before disabling his vessel and fleeing to the highlands with Jim Taylor in mid 1943. (See Anna Chu, *Kapiak Tree*, MaskiMedia, Ravenshoe, Qld, 2008)

**APPENDIX 2 - *Fragments of  
New Guinea – Reports &  
Narratives 1964 ...***

**Inventory of Martin Kerr's Writings**

**Martin Kerr**

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## **Published**

*New Guinea Patrol*, Robert Hale, London, 1973. Revised and republished in CD-ROM Maskimedia, 2009

'Somare's Paddle', *Quadrant*, Sydney, October 2004 (long poem)

*Brutnall's Follies* (co-authored with Harry Brutnall), MaskiMedia, 2008

*Tamariki and the Whales*, MaskiMedia, 2008 (fiction)

*Fragments of New Guinea – Reports & Narratives 1964 ...*, (*New Guinea Patrol* CD-ROM), MaskiMedia, 2009

*Fragments of New Guinea – Catalogue of Images 1964 ...*, (*New Guinea Patrol* CD-ROM), MaskiMedia, 2009

## **Novels**

*Diansinkan - The Exiled* spy fiction 1969 and revised 1995 (long short-listed [25] for judging in the 1995 Angus & Robertson Fiction Prize, letter from Tom Shapcott, Executive Director, National Book Council and Judging Co-Ordinator 19 May, 1995).

*Challenger* comedy, film treatment 1973

*Far is Time* (Trilogy 1) 1986-1995 (Entered, July 2007 for ABC Fiction Award 2008)

*Time for All That* (Trilogy 2) 1996 (Entered, June 2008)

for ABC Fiction Award 2009)  
*The Last Straw* novella 1996  
*The Toll of Time* (Trilogy 3) 1997-2007  
*The Cicatrice* (Entered, July 2007 for ABC Fiction Award  
2008)

### **Short Stories**

Over 60 short stories (1961-2008), many of which are adapted in *The Cicatrice* (above)

### **Plays**

*L’Affaire d’Ivanac, Soirée with Mother*

See [www.maskimedia.com.au](http://www.maskimedia.com.au) for updated list of 9 ebooks on Kindle.



## **CORRIGENDA 1 & AFTERWORD**

***New Guinea Patrol*** CD-ROM – from  
Barry Craig PhD to Martin Kerr 9.09.09

Martin,

Thank you for the CD – I have a Travel Book Club edition of your book, *New Guinea Patrol* but the other material (photos and patrol reports etc) is a most interesting addition to my PNG resources. What you have done in organising your material is most important for providing the basic materials for a history of Australia-PNG relations (as Ken Inglis is saying) and others should do the same.

I do feel a need to make some corrections to the caption to the photo of the Star Mtns expedition members. First I can add that the chap on the right is not Dave but Mike Shepherd who, at the time of the expedition in 1965, was a geology student at Uni of Sydney studying glacial geomorphology – hence his interest in the Star Mtns where there was considerable evidence of glaciation in the past. He subsequently got a teaching job at Massey University, Palmerston North in NZ. He visited Adelaide with his daughter a few years ago. I've lost track of Tom Hayllar and David Cook. I remained in contact with Paul

The main corrections are that there was no falling out over shortage of supplies and carriers – in fact everything went pretty smoothly and in three months away we had no serious injuries at all, everyone was decently-fed (under the

circumstances), and we made decisions by consensus. We had seventeen full-time carriers, supplemented them with short-term locals as needed, and staged all our advances to use our carriers to the full. The only problem we had was with Jean Huon who was rather bullying in his association with us and may have been the source of the rumour that we had leadership problems – he wanted the dominant role. But he left us after three or four weeks while we were still encamped on the south side of the Stars and the rest of the trip went quite well. There was a bit of hoo-hah about airdrops but it was bloody Huon who stuffed that up. On the first run by Piaggio, quite low over the Plateau on the Stars, he was in the plane to push out the goodies and was waving his arms around when shouting at the pilot (as the French tend to do) and knocked one of the two engine switches into OFF position and the plane faltered as the pilot was trying to clear a rise in front of him. That scared the hell out of the pilot and he abandoned the rest of the drop and returned to Telefomin. Subsequent airdrops took place like bombing raids over Dresden from high up and we had a devil of a time locating the bags.

The expedition took place 18 February to 20 May so the piccies you have (40, 41) must have been taken when Mike Shepherd and Tom Hayllar arrived at Telefomin on 22 February just before we left (not after we came back) – that should be apparent from their clean clothing and fresh countenance!

Since 1995 I have been Curator of Foreign Ethnology at the South Australian Museum (not Aboriginal ethnology); Foreign Ethnology includes ethnographic collections from the Pacific, SE Asia, Asia, Africa, ancient Egypt and the Americas . Of course I'm not an expert in all these areas but I have networks I activate when needed. Previously I was a Curator of Anthropology at the PNG National Museum 1980-83 during which time I did three long trips along the middle and lower Sepik and tributaries. Douglas Newton was a mentor when I

was in New York 1969-71, and again 1973-4, while I was studying at the Institute of Fine Arts , NYU. During 1972-3, I was a year in the Idam valley, just south of Green River . That's when I met Kevin Rigg (PO Green River), and we became friends, consolidated when I was living in Moresby 1980-83.

Pasquarelli rang me the other day to comment on something I'd published in the Oceanic Art Society Newsletter recently. He's as bombastic as always. Become a painter (art-type, not house), he says...

I have a couple of hundred images from the central NG and upper Sepik regions on the website of the 'Upper Sepik-Central New Guinea Project' – [www.uscngp.com](http://www.uscngp.com) Go to 'Gallery' from the horizontal menu line, select 'Photosets', then select an ethno-linguistic or other category listed eg. 'Star Mountains' has three shots from that 1965 expedition; 'Wopkeimin' and 'Atbalmin' also include 1965 expedition photos. The photos in 'Telefolmin' also will be of interest to you. You click on individual thumbnails in the set and then click on the Flickr link at bottom left to get a larger image with caption. You can choose the largest image from the size options along the top of the image-with-caption.

Keep in touch...

Barry

PS

I got interrupted when I was typing up the email I sent a couple of hours ago and just realised I hadn't finished a sentence. After details of Mike Shepherd, I meant to add:

I remained in contact with Paul Symons who later became Regional Psychologist based in Lae and later Chief Psychologist based in Moresby. He was there in the early 80s when I was at the National Museum . He retired from PNG c. 1983, before I left, and went to Sydney but then I lost track of him. He was prematurely aged (a heavy drinker) and probably did not survive the nineties.

Cheers

Barry

**Martin Kerr**

**Walls of Wonder**

10 September 2021

The Star Mountains

By Tom Hayllar

Balboa Press, Bloomington, Illinois. ebook 2016 ISBN:

9781504303309 (e) 9781504303293 (sc)

The reviewer has an association with the Star Mountains Expedition even though the book was not published until 2016. There may be various reasons for this. Tom Hayllar writes sympathetically and knowingly about an expedition to New Guinea's Star Mountains, first explored in outline in 1963 by a government patrol out of Telefomin near the border with West Papua. The mountains, some over 12000 feet, were

viewed but never topped by explorers going back to the late nineteenth century.

Hayllar's expedition of six Europeans and a number of local carriers began in February 1965. Members stayed at my patrol officers' cottage in Telefomin. I helped entertain them and feed them. One of them visited me when I was posted to Angoram later that year. The expedition inspired me to write novels associated with a similar but fictional expedition to the Star Mountains.

I was intrigued with the expeditioners' enthusiasm, some of it quite amateurish, but also their dedication. This was a mixed group with their own agendas and experience. Tom Hayllar, a school teacher and experienced bush walker, put the show on the road. How he did it he describes with great modesty in his thought provoking, entertaining and revealing book.

The book is packed full of the trials and tribulations of an expedition which could have ended in disaster. Was it not for the support of local villagers, headmen and interpreters with the encouragement by experienced government medical assistant (on leave), John Huon and school teacher and anthropologist Barry Craig, who with his anthropologist wife Ruth spent some years in Telefomin.

Problems were endless: the weather, the bush, the rivers, waterfalls, sink holes, limestone slivers, rocky barriers, moss, bugs, fleas, dangerous river crossings, sometimes arguments with their porters, care for injuries, confusion with airdrops, wild dogs, constant wet conditions, problematic sleeping and cooking arrangements, excess baggage and overloaded portages.

Tom Hayllar, Paul Symonds, John Huon (Jean Huon Navarancourt), Barry Craig, David Cook and Mike Shepherd had their own skills and interests, as did their carriers. The individuals could break off to pursue their own investigations at times, allowing time out for others. The whole mission was a cultural and human business where men and sometimes local girls took up new challenges, including the capture of a murder suspect. Two Star Mountains, Cappella and Scorpio

(Scorpion in the ebook) were summited for the first time in 1965. Returning to Telefomin (and maybe life in general) was never going to be a walk in the park.

Barry Craig made his research offerings available over time, others may have done similar things, but it Hayllar's writing, his skill describing landscapes and the slush and slosh of moving forward and sometimes backwards on an expedition with varying aims, some achieved and some not, makes this book a wonderful example of humans working under constant mental and physical stress.

Hayllar's *The Star Mountains* should be on everyone's reading list.

Martin Kerr's *New Guinea Patrol* was first published in 1973. His cult memoir, short stories and seven novels including, *Amon On*, *Amon Two* and *Amon Three*, are available on Kindle or through [maskimedia.com.au](http://maskimedia.com.au)



Barry Craig, Dave Cook (geologist), Tom Hayllar and Mike

Shepherd (geology student); four expeditioners of the Star Mountains outside single kiap quarters in Telefomin, February 1965. Local shields hung by Martin Kerr. Photo: Martin Kerr