

KPNG Kundu

MARCH 2025



**Papua New Guinea Association of Australia
Celebrating Papua New Guinea's 50 Years
of Independence 1975-2025**



PNG Kundu

MARCH 2025

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Front Cover Feature:

Wonderful head adornments, with feathers of the Bird of Paradise and other birds, at the celebration of independence at the 2009 Goroka Show © Rita Willaert/CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



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

Vision for an Australian-Pacific Cultural and Community Centre

It is crucial for Australians to learn about Pacific people and cultures. Acknowledging Australia's taking PNG to a peaceful independence is very much a significant part of such a centre.

Having a centre where Australians and the Pacific Islands are acknowledged together, recognises all those Australians who worked to develop PNG pre- and post-independence, who fought for Australia on its soil and will build understanding and knowledge for a better-shared future together.

The PNGAA Collection would also make a good starting point for an educational and resource centre. At this stage it appears that Australia is focused on acknowledging independence in PNG. The Australian High Commission there is doing a great job. But what about the generations of Australians who helped to make independence happen? Most live in Australia now. Most people have no idea of the Australian history in PNG.

The Australian government needs to be proud of what it achieved then and in the time frame it did it. Sharing/celebrating this history within Australia would widen the audience to understand it better.

PNG Scholarship Recipients Update

The PNGAA congratulates all

six students from Anguganak High School who have worked diligently and been accepted into Year 11, with three from Oksapmin High who are moving on to Year 10 at Oksapmin. They are Metel Maiah, Timberiang Mopsan and Ekron Lawie.

We especially congratulate Sheppelle Hapika who has had a fantastic result and was accepted into Year 11 at Passam National School of Excellence (NSoE), which is one of the top Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) schools in Papua New Guinea. It is one of six government-run national high schools in PNG and is a coeducational school for Years 11 and 12, taking boarders and day students. The school is located about 20km south of Wewak and a 10-hour drive from Anguganak. Travel is challenging with the roads and cost of diesel about PGK30/AUD12 per litre.

Euthanneshia Meibo will be attending Vanimo Secondary School. Three students—Augustine Wulai, Nemantu Haimowi, Raily Aliawani are going to Green River Secondary, near Vanimo.

Macquardah Anpan will attend Mercy Secondary school near Wewak. The Mercy Education Program provides disadvantaged young women with literacy, cooking and sewing skills and opportunities to complete their secondary education.

The students have all been studying English, Maths,

Science, Social Science, Personal Development, Business Studies and Agriculture. PNGAA is pleased to support these students and hear about their continuing progress.

Support from PNGAA members and friends is also welcome to assist this special PNGAA Scholarship program. If you would like to help, please use the red 'donations' button on the website home page, or contact the treasurer (treasurer@pngaa.net).

The fees for the Year 11 students have more than trebled from PGK 500 in Year 10 to PGK 1,600 in Year 11. The fees of the students moving into Year 10 at Oksapmin High School have doubled from PGK 1,000 to PGK 2,000 each.

The National Education Board sets school fees at the opening of the academic year. Once these are known, the PNGAA pays the parental contributions together with the cost of books. This varies from school to school. One hundred per cent of donations to PNGAA for school fees goes to pay these school fees.

Best wishes to all the students for 2025!

Australia Day Awards

Congratulations to these Australia Day recipients, with special mention to PNGAA

member Ian Macintosh AM, for significant service to the media and broadcast industry. Ian and his wife Denise first travelled to PNG in 1969.

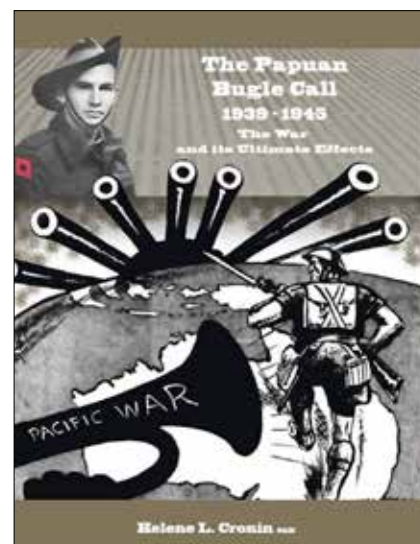
Also Dr David Geoffrey Mills AM for significant service to medicine through international development and rural and remote health education, especially through the University of Papua New Guinea and at Kompiam District Hospital.

Member's Donation

PNGAA member, Helene Cronin OAM, has generously donated several boxes of valuable books to the PNGAA Collection. She is also donating a lot of her data to the PNGVR/NGVR Museum in Brisbane.

Helene recently published a book titled *The Papuan Bugle Call 1939-1945: The War and its Ultimate Effects*. The book is fully indexed and lists the 441 men who enlisted in Papua with the service number P (Militia) or PX (AIF). Most of these men, aged from 17 to 65, who signed up for war in Papua and fought in Papua New Guinea and other theatres of war were either born or had spent many years in the Territory pre-war.

Their lives changed forever on Christmas Eve of 1941 when their families were evacuated and



again on 27 January 1942, when all able-bodied men were called up. As Jack Mann P172 said, the army gave them very little; they survived by taking what they needed. For any enquiries, please email the author at hcronin@bigpond.com

This book was reviewed by Greg Ivey in the December 2024 issue of *PNG Kundu*.

PNGAA New Members

The committee welcomes the following new members:

Graham Bartley-Smith, Ken Broomhead, Penny Brown-Ingram, Sylvia Dawson, Pat Dreyer, Gretchen Druliner, Jacqueline Habu, Jan Hasselberg, Roy Hay, Jade Lake, Jun Mclatchie, Kathy McLeish, Isobelle Morgan, Margaret Mumme, Scott Perry, John Peters, Trenton Schmidt, Christopher Smith & Catherine Taylor.



PNGAA 50th Anniversary Celebrations

If your group is organising a special event to celebrate the anniversary, please make sure you send the details to the editor in time for promotion in the June issue, by the Copy Deadline of **25 April 2025** (if not before), to make sure they are included.



Editorial

Christine Leonard
editor@pngaa.net

This year promises to be one to keep an eye on with events happening around Australia and Papua New Guinea, given the golden jubilee of PNG's Independence Anniversary. At the launch of PNG's 50th Independence Anniversary logo on 30 January 2025, the PNG Prime Minister, James Marape, said:

Fifty years is a milestone. Who would have thought 50 years ago that the fathers and mothers of our country dared to dream big? They dreamt of a united country in all its diversity, charting its own destiny.

He went on to announce that national events focused on historical reflection, national unity and future aspirations will take place throughout the year across PNG. The following day in PNG's Parliament House, when the PM addressed the nation, part of his speech included:

Let us celebrate our rich cultural heritage—not as separate tribes, but as a united nation proud of its traditions, its democracy, and its vision for the future ... And let us be inspired—not just for today, but for the next 50 years—to build a nation of peace, prosperity and unity.

The PNGAA journal is celebrating the significance of 2025

by running a theme through the March, June, September and December issues of *PNG KUNDU* in a section titled 'Unity in Diversity'. I am interested in the topic of independence, be that of a specific year or a broader reflection of your own lived experience, but as you will see in this issue, all stories are welcomed. I'm also reaching out to Papua New Guineans keen on writing about their country, to give the membership an opportunity to hear their voice. Writing for a publication with a broad readership such as PNGAA's can be daunting but if you know a Papua New Guinean whose voice should be heard or who enjoys writing, please contact me by email at editor@pngaa.net.

A special tab was recently added to the PNGAA website where items relating to the 2025 50th Anniversary events and stories can be highlighted, to make it easier for members to follow what is happening. Through this tab, you, the members, can add news, photos, funny stories and memories relevant to pre- and post-independence. If you wish to contribute to the website directly, please contact Roy Ranney, PNGAA's Membership Officer.

The AGM in April 2025 is also significant as it falls in a year when office bearers are nominated and elected. The Association relies on voluntary support. This helps keep the costs down and reflects the spirit of what the PNGAA is all about. So please, if you can, book your



Raising the new PNG Flag, 1975

place to attend. Your presence is what makes these occasions worthwhile.

Around this time of year the Membership Officer is busy processing subscription renewals. If you haven't received a reminder of a soon-to-expire membership by email or receive notices by post and haven't heard anything, contact Roy directly. His contacts are easy to find in the journal and on the website.

Lastly, thank you to those who have sent affirming messages of support for the journal. Feedback is always appreciated and helps keep us on track and motivated.

It takes a team effort and the layout and production of the *PNG KUNDU* which I think looks fabulous is down to Jeannette Gilligan. We have a great team helping behind the scenes and that includes new volunteer proofreaders, David Campbell-Williams, Wendy Glassby and Pamela Cowley Virtue, plus our stalwart experts Murrough Benson and Andrea Williams who always make themselves available when asked.

Tenk yu tru olgeta



Notice of Annual General Meeting—27 April 2025

The 74th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Incorporated will be held in Sydney on Sunday, 27 April 2025
Rydges Hotel, Gibbes Room, 54 McLaren St, North Sydney, commencing at 11.30 am

If you are mailing your proxy, please ensure that it is received by the Returning Officer, PNGAA, PO Box 250, Kilcoy QLD 4515 by 5:00 pm on Friday, 21 April 2025. Proxies may also be emailed to the Returning Officer at admin@pngaa.net or may be handed to the Returning Officer prior to the start of the Annual General Meeting.

A luncheon has been arranged starting at approximately 1:00 pm.

All PNGAA events this year will celebrate the 50th anniversary of PNG's Independence in 1975. The PNGAA Management Committee would like to see a high attendance at this year's AGM.

AGENDA

1. Members present and apologies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of the 73rd AGM—available on the PNGAA website at https://pngaa.org/official_business
3. Business arising from the Minutes
4. Committee Report
5. Treasurer's Report and receipt and adoption of the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024
6. Election of the Management Committee of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia for 2025–26 (refer Rules 16 and 25(2))
7. General discussion

AGM LUNCHEON

This year, the location is in North Sydney, easily accessible by public transport from all parts of Sydney, and a great spot from which to venture if you choose to travel to Sydney to attend, which we hope some of you will do. Keep in mind it is the week following Easter and just after Anzac Day. The venue is central with Metro station nearby.

If you've been to one previously you will know that the AGM does not take long and it is a very pleasant social occasion with easy, friendly mingling before and after. It's always enjoyable! We would like everyone attending to bring a special photo or artefact to share the story of it with others.

Cost is \$80 per person. Book now via the link on the PNGAA website <https://pngaa.org/notice-of-annual-general-meeting-sunday-27-april-2025-rydges-hotel-north-sydney/>

Guest Speaker to be advised. **RSVP** by 7 April 2025.

Members, their families and friends are all welcome—but please let us know if you wish to come to the luncheon by either:

- booking via the online link at the PNGAA website <https://pngaa.org/notice-of-annual-general-meeting-sunday-27-april-2025-rydges-hotel-north-sydney/>

OR

- by direct credit to the PNGAA bank account, including your surname, member number (if known) and the code 'AGM' in the transaction description—and followed up with a confirming email to treasurer@pngaa.net as the full transaction details do not always show up on our bank statement;

OR

- completing the booking form and payment details on the 'Treasurer's Corner' form included at the end of the March

2025 PNG KUNDU and returning it by Monday, 7 April 2025.

The cost of \$80 per person includes morning tea on arrival, and a grazing lunch in the Wattle Room with juice provided. The bar will be open if you wish to purchase alcoholic drinks on the day.

Payment needs to be made by 7 April, please. Cancellations advised by 10 April 2025 will secure a full refund; after this date the Association must pay for those unable to attend.

Travel by Metro to Victoria Cross Station: Victoria Cross Metro (Vic X) is about 200m from Rydges Hotel drive-in on McLaren Street, North Sydney (and another 150m to the entry). It is located 5 minutes to Martin Place, Sydney, 3 minutes to Barangaroo, 15 minutes to Macquarie Park and 5 minutes to Chatswood. Vic X is 5 minutes walk from North Sydney Station. If you research Transport NSW you will be able to download maps.

Driving to Rydges Hotel: Rydges Hotel is on a battleaxe road behind McLaren Street, its official address.

To drive in and drop someone off at the lobby, enter at the Rydges sign at 54 McLaren Street, North Sydney. It is a long battleaxe curved driveway. Continue until you reach the covered portico of Rydges' lobby. From there you can continue driving through to Elliott Street.

If you are not dropping someone off, please drive to and park in Elliott Street, North Sydney. It is a short street. There is plenty of free parking in Elliott Street which is a very short walk, about two minutes, to the Rydges Hotel drive-in. Elliott Street parking will likely have adequate carparks for the AGM, but if not, there is more parking on Ridge Street (off Miller St).



Reports of functions, reunions and ceremonies held throughout Australia and Papua New Guinea, and listings of upcoming meetings and events of interest for PNGAA members. If you and your friends have an activity to advertise or promote, or have been 'out & about' recently, please send your details and reviews to the editor by 25 April 2025, the Copy Deadline for the next issue: editor@pngaa.net

Chatswood Catch-Up 18 November 2024

Attending the latest PNGAA Catch-Up were Warren Martin, Wendy Smith, Greg Corner, Ros & John Godlee, Steven Gagau, Peter & Lucille Stace and Roy Ranney.

It's an informal social gathering at the Chatswood Bowling Club in Sydney which kindly offers the venue at no cost to the group.

This gathering is held once a quarter on the third Monday of the month. It is a small gathering with attendees bringing their own coffee/nibbles, so there is no cost involved nor is there an agenda.

Usually between four and ten people turn up. It is very low-key, but everyone is made welcome. If getting to the venue isn't too onerous a drive, please consider it for 2025. Roy Ranney usually promotes the date on the PNGAA Facebook site and in newsletters.

PNGAA Sydney Christmas Gathering 8 December 2024

Thirteen PNGAA members gathered on Sunday, 8 December, at

the Norths Collective (previously known as North Sydney Leagues Club). We all ordered our own meals and beverages, and I believe everyone found the venue acceptable. It offers outside parking and a multi-level under-cover parking so it's a useful venue for future occasions.

Those attending include Greg Corner, Lisa Bleijee x3, Wendy Smith, Janice Iredale, Peter and Jeanne Barr, Rod Miller, John Notley, Jane Rybarz and Roy Ranney. Thanks everyone for turning up!

ANDREW CADDEN



Celebrating Christmas at the PNGAA Sydney Luncheon



Members attending the November Catch-Up at Chatswood, Sydney



(L-R) Deryck Thompson, Guy Jeffries and Phil Browne

Victoria Ex-Kiap Gathering

9 November 2024

Thirty-five former *kiaps* with their families and friends gathered at the Victoria Hotel in Woodend to share memories of a past life in Papua New Guinea. Attendees came from all of the eastern states including Tasmania and South Australia. Several of those attending met colleagues they had not seen for decades.

The most senior *kiap* present was Chris Warrillow of 1959 vintage, who caught up with Max Heggen whom he had last seen on Bougainville in 1969. Deryck Thompson, Guy Jeffries and Phil Browne were on the last intake of Australian patrol officers in February 1972, and this was the first time they had met together since then. Yes, one should ask—where did those decades go!!!

Also attending was Rick Nehmy who was back in Port Moresby from December 2004 to September 2006 and sent regular articles to the journal then known as *Una Voce*.

Many thanks to Phil and Elza for organising another very enjoyable gathering at Woodend.

**CHRIS WARRILLOW
& DERYCK THOMPSON**

PNGAA WA Lunch

Upcoming lunch planned for 23 May 2025 at the RAAFA Club, Bull Creek, from 11.30 am.

Canberra Christmas Luncheon

14 December 2024

This was yet again another success. This event provided a platform for informative discussions and drew attention to the need to preserve and recognise Papua New Guinea's cultural heritage. A big thanks to Courabyra Wines for supplying two bottles of their award-winning wines and to all of you for your active participation and support.

With two speakers, the gathering was very informative. Deveni Temu spoke about his work in restoring the Hugh Stevenson Collection of over 200 contemporary paintings, 60-plus sculptures and several artefacts held at the Michael Somare Library of the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby which are in desperate need of proper curatorial care and space for display.

Our other speaker was called to Melbourne at the last minute but, with the wonders of modern technology, we connected by

Zoom with Dr Theresa Meki from ANU, who enlightened us on the work being carried out in getting women from PNG recognised in the *PNG Dictionary of Biography*. An initiative aimed at celebrating and documenting the less popular nation-builders of Papua New Guinea.

Another guest was Keimelo Gima from the University of PNG, who was interested in the rich oral histories he heard during the afternoon.

JOHN REEVES



TOP: Dr Theresa Meki from ANU (photo courtesy ANU)

CENTRE: Deveni Temu and Keimelo Gima

BOTTOM: Some of the group at the Canberra luncheon (Photos courtesy of John Reeves)





Featuring letters to the editor along with opinions of interest, memories and enquiries from those who require assistance with their research or finding someone from the past. Also included are book and exhibition reviews about Papua New Guinea, and items of interest to members. Please send your contributions to the editor by 25 April 2025, the Copy Deadline for the next issue: editor@pngaa.net

BOOK REVIEW

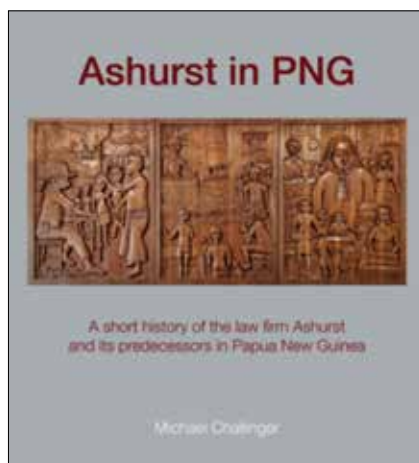
Ashurst in PNG: A short history of the law firm Ashurst and its predecessors in Papua New Guinea

MICHAEL CHALLINGER

This excellent new book, *Ashurst in PNG*, traces the history of a law firm in Papua New Guinea (PNG), from humble origins that started when as a sole practitioner, Allan McLennan, arrived in Rabaul in 1924 or 1925. The firm grew to becoming a branch of Ashurst, a global, prestigious partnership.

In doing so, Challinger tells several big stories: the roles of lawyers and judges in a complex, diverse society and how they maintained respect and authority amid poverty and conflict; how PNG law has drawn upon disparate English, Australian, German and local traditions; and the relationship between Australians and Papua New Guineans.

While describing the evolution of this law firm, the author also illustrates the dramatic political, commercial and social changes which have occurred in PNG in the last 100 years.



McLennan arrived in Rabaul at a time when complex issues surrounding the appropriation and dispersal of German plantations needed to be resolved. With the discovery and exploitation of the goldfields at Wau and Bulolo, representing mining companies became an important part of the firm's business. This experience prepared the firm for the expansion of mining in PNG which began with Bougainville Copper Limited's mine at Panguna in Bougainville in 1969 and accelerated after independence in 1975.

The expansion of mining and other parts of the economy led to the establishment of other businesses—all requiring legal representation. Thus, Ashurst's predecessors advised Patair, Ansett, World Wide Air Services and Air Niugini in their registration as companies and in their subsequent operations.

The Ok Tedi mine and resulting litigation led to the expansion of the firm, then operating as Beresford Love Francis and Company. They entered a joint venture with BHP's Sydney lawyers, Blake Dawson Waldron, to represent BHP in PNG. The opening and operation of the mine and the court cases which followed dominated the firm's work.

The major case brought by Ok Tedi Mining Ltd (OTML) concerned its insurance claims for damage caused by a major land slip of structures built to develop a tailings dam for the mine's waste. The case was heard in the High Court at Waigani,

a place unknown to the many international witnesses. OTML won their case but decided not to proceed with the dam.

Instead, following a decision of the government, they proceeded to dump the tailings into the Ok Tedi. The result, as Challinger writes, was ‘catastrophic and generated more litigation’.

Challinger devotes a chapter to the important contributions that Ashurst and its predecessors have made to the development of the legal profession in PNG. After 1965 they employed lawyers graduating from the University of Papua New Guinea, giving graduates the practical experience which allowed them to move to other firms or into government service.

Further, the firm promoted and contributed to the establishment in 1972 of the Legal Training Institute, which provided professional training to prepare new graduates for private practice and government positions. The firm was also an incubator for appointments of talented local people to the judiciary of PNG.

Overall, the book tells the recent history of PNG through a legal lens. It is written in clear, accessible and direct prose and lavishly illustrated. It does not shy away from the racism and injustices of some aspects of Australia’s presence in colonial PNG and the legal defence of white defendants accused of crimes against locals. The early founders of the firm were of their



Michael Challinger

time and reflected the influence of the White Australia policy of that era.

The book places these key figures within their cultural and historical context, but it does not seek to excuse or justify beliefs or practices that would now be regarded as racist, oppressive or ignorant. Instead, the book maintains clarity and perspective on how Ashurst’s predecessors were sometimes involved in maintaining or defending systems of oppression during the period, particularly when defending Australians or their companies against claims by local people or against criminal charges for abuses of Papua New Guineans.

A particular strength of the book is how it charts points of continuity and change before and after 1975. It emphasises the continued role of Australian lawyers and judges in PNG after independence up to the present day, even amid the growth of the local legal profession and local legal traditions. The study of Australian law rightly

emphasises the influence of the United Kingdom and the United States upon our constitutional and legal history—that is, how Australian law has drawn from other sources.

But this book is an important contribution to the study of how other nations have drawn from and been shaped by Australian law, particularly in the Pacific, both through the direct colonial inheritance and through the work of Australian lawyers and judges in other legal systems. At the same time, however, the story of PNG law has not simply been about adapting or choosing from Australian traditions; instead, PNG law has drawn from Australian law in some respects but upon local or other international sources in others, creating an idiosyncratic melange.

This book is an outstanding example of Australian and PNG legal history, for both a general and an academic audience. It is highly recommended, even for readers unfamiliar with Ashurst or its unique role in PNG. It tells a complex story with remarkable clarity and directness. It skilfully weaves together the history of the firm with its broader social context—how the evolution of Ashurst in PNG reflects broader shifts within PNG law, politics and society.

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**John Egerton AM
& Douglas McDonald-Norman**

Help Wanted

Help wanted for the compilation of book material. I'd be most grateful for copies of photographs and words on personal recollections of working in one of the government agencies that have over the past few decades 'morphed' into one of today's PNG State Owned Enterprises. This would include PTC (now Telikom, Post PNG & Data Co.), Elcom (now PNG Power), Water PNG, Ag Bank, PX, Harbours Board (now PNG Ports). Please send material to, or contact, me.

John Brooksbank

E: jwbrooksbank@gmail.com

Warren Carey AO and the Papuan Delta

I read with interest the article supplied by Harley Carey on his father, Warren Carey AO, on page 50 in *PNG Kundu*, December 2024 edition.

I was a patrol officer at Kikori in the Gulf District from 1963 to 1967 and it was there that I met Bruce and Dulcie Hides of Ogamobu Plantation, just up the Kikori River from the Sub-District Office.

Bruce was the brother of the late and famous Patrol Officer Jack Hides. Bruce and Dulcie were a wonderful couple—great entertainers and the providers of a terrific Sunday roast. Until I read the article, I had no inkling that Bruce Hides was one of the team members at the Era Base Camp. What is mentioned in the article is a 'bar of brown coal' across the Era River.



On Saturday, 4 April 1964 this brown coal was discovered by Patrol Officer John Irwin of Baimuru and myself, then a cadet patrol officer at Kikori. We took some coal back with us and, after letting it dry out (because it was well and truly waterlogged), we used it with success in our stoves. The seam of coal was about 1.5 to 2.0 metres in thickness.

My photograph (*above*) shows a man standing at the water's edge, with the seam extending quite a way in. We did mention the coal in the subsequent patrol report; probably hoping that the 'dark satanic mills' of an industrial revolution never came about owing to the coal's 'discovery'. At the time the two of us were ascertaining the Era River boundary of the Pie-Era Timber Rights Purchase and we went rather a long way up the Era River looking for its North-Eastern boundary marker (there wasn't one!).

Bill Hawley

Can You Help?

Do you know how get in touch with Mrs Pat Shea, who supplied the letters and photographs from Samarai for the *Una Voce* article about her grandfather, Captain Soren Nelson? Since I am from Norway, like

Captain Nelson, and am a frequent visitor to Milne Bay, I would like to hear more about Nelson's background and what brought him to New Guinea and Samarai.

Jan Hasselberg

E: janhass@online.no

U206C CBI PNG Junk

I have a tale featured on your website from 2015 when I did a scary go-around from the ground at Aseki, Morobe District, in early 1970 in a Cessna U206D VH-MKG when she was brand new. This aircraft was later lost in a prang as P2-MKG with Territory Airlines in 1974 whilst transversing the Tari Gap in bad weather. The pilot was still alive when found a day or two later, but the wreck was left there.

Would anyone have more details and photos, etc. of this incident or the plane? As the first pilot of this plane in PNG when it was originally accepted by Macair Charters, I'd be most interested.

Ben Dannecker

PO Box 1478 Nowra NSW 2541

E: jetdrone@virtualcity.com.au



Cessna U206D MKG Lae PNG, 1970 & Cessna U206C CBI PNG junk



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

American Historical Expert Promotes Historical Literacy for PNG Tourism

Dr Brent Glass, former Director of the National Museum of American History and senior advisor to the Smithsonian Institute, made a special visit to the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA) in September 2024 and discussed the importance of promoting historical literacy and public memory in Papua New Guinea.

Dr Glass is a prominent figure in the global museum and history community and was accompanied by the American Embassy’s Acting Public Affairs Officer, Claudia Borevina, and Public Engagement Assistant, Mathias Post.

During his visit, Dr Glass highlighted the significance of PNG’s war history as a powerful attraction for international tourists. He believes PNG has the potential to become a key destination for historical tourism.

Papua New Guinea’s war history is compelling and holds global interest, particularly in the context of World War II. Developing historical sites that are accessible to tourists will not only preserve this history but also create opportunities for international travellers to engage deeply with it.

Dr Glass emphasised the need for the PNG government and TPA to consider their historical aspect as a major attraction for international tourists. ‘PNG is a destination with opportunities to promote history

education, historical literacy, and public memory on a global scale’, said Dr Glass.

TPA’S CEO, Eric Mossman Uvovo welcomed Dr Glass and the team from the American Embassy and expressed his gratitude for their valuable insights and support in promoting historical awareness in PNG.

This article draws from:

<https://www.postcourier.com.pg/american-historical-expert-promotes-historical-literacy-for-png-tourism/>

The PNG National Library and Archives

This has been closed for more than 12 months due to unpaid creditors exceeding K11 million. Much of the collection in the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery is under threat due to basic recurring maintenance such as the air conditioning system in the building not working. This was aired on Australia’s *ABC News*, Monday, 6 January 2025.

Pacific Museums and Art Galleries in a Battle for Survival

Wild weather, funding shortfalls resulting in a lack of air conditioning, and staffing limitations are putting thousands of valuable artefacts in Pacific museums at risk.

Rare artefacts, artworks, stuffed animals and archeological objects, some dating back hundreds and thousands of years, are a concern.

As to the question of repatriation, Kim McKay, Director of the Australian Museum, also explains that whilst repatriation is

important it is a difficult, lengthy and costly process. With repatriation of ancestral remains it is important to know that the identity and provenance are correct. Museums need to ensure that the wrong set of remains are not repatriated to a community.

See an interview featuring the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery, and PNGAA and Sydney Wantoks Steven Gagau, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sj-hN_o6ivQ

(ABC News, 6 January 2025)

Kutubu Oil & LNG Projects

In February 2025 landowners from 139 Incorporated Land Groups of the Kutubu oil and LNG projects submitted a petition to the PNG government threatening to shut down the mine if existing benefit-sharing arrangements established in the 1990s are changed as per plans announced by the PNG government.

Gasmata Monument

John Reeves posted on the PNGAA FB, page 11, February 2025, news of PNG's PM in West New Britain officiating at the launching of a World War II monument in the Gasmata Local Level Government area.

The monument is one of four erected in the Gasmata area to remember Royal Australian Air Force personnel from three plane wrecks who lost their lives in this area during the war. The monuments were funded with the support of Dr Andrew Forrest, nephew of one of the RAAF airmen

who went missing in action in the Gasmata area.

The Forrest family's Minderoo Foundation has been funding the search for Andrew Forrest's uncle's plane for several years with the support of the National Museum and Arts Gallery, but sadly it has not yet been located. The story aired on *NBCTV National News* on 08 February 2025.

Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty

The *PNG Weekend National Newspaper* of 27–29 September, page 4, had an article about the PNG Foreign Minister Justin Tkatchenko reaffirming at the 11th Ministerial Meeting of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty highlighting PNG's commitment to build a resilient and nuclear-free Pacific community. The Treaty was ratified on 13 March 2024 in Rarotonga.

Land Access & Compensation Agreement

On 26 November 2024 over 300 traditional landowners from Panguna in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville signed a Land Access and Compensation Agreement (LACA) with Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), marking a significant milestone in the project's exploration phase.

<https://bougainvillemews.com/>

Bank Governor Appointed

According to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), Elizabeth Genia who

was appointed governor of the Bank of Papua New Guinea in January 2023, despite fighting in court to block a police investigation into suspected money laundering. She has not been charged.

Paul Barker, who heads the Institute of National Affairs, a think tank in PNG, said the revelations about police investigations into Genia come amid a 'slippage in standards' at the bank, which could complicate efforts at fixing the credibility of the country's financial sector. Refer to OCCRP's website: <https://www.occrp.org/en>

More on the NRL

In December 2024 the Australian Prime Minister announced an agreement with PNG that would see the PNG Rugby League team join the Australian National Rugby League (NRL) competition in 2028.

Reflecting these times of geopolitics there is a clause that the Australian Government will cease support for the PNG team, including redrawing the A\$600 million funding, if PNG signs a security treaty with China ([NRL.com/news](https://nrl.com/news)).

PATRICK BOURKE

Australia's Loan

Australia grants PNG A\$570 million loan and as part of the deal PNG has agreed to tighten foreign investment screening to reduce unviable and high risk projects.

This is Australia's fifth loan to PNG since 2020 taking Australia's budget support to more than A\$3.1 billion since the COVID pandemic (*ABC News*, 5 February 2025 Stephen Dziedzic and Marian Faa).



Papua New Guinea will commemorate its 50th anniversary of independence from Australia on 16 September 2025, but there will be a year-long celebration that includes festivals, shows, fireworks and exhibitions—highlighting the country’s post-independence history.

Australia will also celebrate the anniversary, reflecting on the shared history between the two countries and looking ahead to the next 50 years.

Papua New Guinea's Road to Independence

1883: HM Chester, Queensland Government Agent on Thursday Island, raised the Union Jack near present-day Port Moresby and annexed, on behalf of Queen Victoria, that part of New Guinea and adjacent islands lying between meridians 141E and 155E longitude.

1884: Britain proclaimed a protectorate over south-east New Guinea. Germany claimed Kaiser Wilhelmsland, the north-east part of the country and allowed its administration by the Neu Guinea Kompagnie.

1888: The British assumed sovereignty over the protectorate of British New Guinea.

1899: The German Government resumed responsibility for the administration of German New Guinea from the Neu Guinea Kompagnie.

1902: British New Guinea was transferred to the newly federated Commonwealth of Australia on 18 March 1902.

1906: The Papua Act of the Commonwealth Parliament transferred control of BNG to Australia and renamed it the Territory of Papua.

1907: Australian Sir Hubert Murray appointed Acting Administrator of Papua, and then served as Lieutenant-Governor until his death in 1940.

1914: Australian Forces invaded, occupied and administered German New Guinea at the commencement of World War I. The first Australian ‘killed-in-action’ in WWI resulted.

1920: The League of Nations conferred a mandate on Australia for the former German New Guinea. The two territories, the Mandate and Papua, were administered separately, both being responsible to the Australian Government, until 1942.

1942: The Japanese invaded New Guinea, landing at Rabaul. Administration of Australian-held territory was transferred to the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU).

1945: The Japanese surrendered off the coast of Rabaul on 6 September 1945 on board HMS *Glory*. The final surrenders in New Guinea were on 13 September 1945 at Cape Wom and Wewak airstrips.

1945–46: The Papua-New Guinea Provisional Administration Act was passed by the Australian Parliament in July 1945. The Act established a single administration for the former territories, to be known as the Territory of Papua-New Guinea.

1946: Civil administration restored to Papua-New Guinea. The General Assembly of the United Nations approved a trusteeship agreement for New Guinea and its administration by Australia.

1949: The Papua and New Guinea Act formalised the provisional administration for the two territories and provided for a Legislative Council.

1961: A twenty-eight-member Legislative Council, set up in 1951 by the Australian government was reconstituted to allow for the inclusion of six elected indigenous members and six nominated indigenous members.

1964: Legislative Council was replaced by an elected House of Assembly.

1972: Michael Somare elected as Chief Minister. The territory's name was changed to Papua New Guinea.

1973: As Chief Minister, Somare led the country to self-government. Papua New Guinea became self-governing on 1 December 1973.

1975: Papua New Guinea became independent on 16 September, at a ceremony in Port Moresby at which Australia's flag was lowered and PNG's flag raised. The proud new nation became a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and was admitted as a Member of the United Nations Organisation.

Officiating at the main ceremony were His Royal Highness Prince Charles, Prince of Wales (representing Queen Elizabeth II, the British monarch); Sir John Kerr, Governor-General of Australia; Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam; Sir John Guise, Governor-General Designate of Papua New Guinea and Michael Somare, who became the country's first Prime Minister.

At one minute past midnight on 16 September 1975, the Proclamation of Independence was issued



TOP: The Australian Naval & Military Expedition Force (AN&MEF) raising the Australian flag at Rabaul, 1914

CENTRE: Japanese officers handing their swords to an Australian officer at the surrender in Wewak in 1945

BOTTOM: Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam at the Independence Day celebrations, 1975

Prime Minister Marape's New Year & Australia Day Messages



As Papua New Guinea approaches 2025, the year marking 50 years of independence, Prime Minister Hon. James Marape issued a heartfelt message to the nation, urging every citizen to unite and work together for the betterment of the country.

'2025 is a monumental year for our country, not just because we are celebrating our Golden Jubilee, but because it offers us an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come and to chart a clear path forward,' Prime Minister Marape said.

'While the government has the biggest role to play, I want to remind every citizen, from the youngest child to the oldest elder, that we all have a part to contribute to our nation's progress.'

Acknowledging the challenges Papua New Guinea faces, the Prime Minister expressed confidence in the country's resilience and unity. *'Our country's challenges remain significant, but we can overcome them if we work together. Let us set aside our differences, respect each other, and coexist peacefully. By God's grace, we have maintained our unity so far, and I believe we can continue to rise above any challenge if we remain united.'*

Prime Minister Marape highlighted the importance of 2025 not just as a year of celebration but as a time for national renewal and forward planning. *'We will engage our entire nation—government agencies, schools, institutions, and communities—to participate in this significant moment. Together, we will revisit the last 50 years, evaluate the first 15 years of Vision 2050, and set concrete milestones for the next 20 years as we strive for industrialisation and sustainable growth.'*

The Prime Minister emphasised the need for action and cooperation, calling on citizens to work alongside leaders at all levels. *'I appeal to every*

Papua New Guinean: cooperate with your members, your governors, and your leaders. Criticise constructively, but always with solutions. Let's leave politics aside and focus on taking our country forward. The future of our nation depends on our collective effort.'

As part of the Jubilee celebrations, Prime Minister Marape shared plans to host significant events that will attract leaders from across the Pacific and beyond. *'We will welcome leaders from Pacific Island nations, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, China, Rwanda, and other parts of the world to join us in celebrating this historic milestone. It will be a moment of pride for Papua New Guinea as we showcase our strength, unity, and determination to progress.'*

The Prime Minister concluded with a powerful appeal to citizens to seize this historic moment. *'This is our generation's time to live through the 50th anniversary of our nation's independence. Let's not waste this moment or take it for granted. Let's contribute where we can so that every child in Papua New Guinea can find prosperity in this country. Let's ensure that no place is left behind and that we all grow together into a brighter future beyond our 50th anniversary.'*

Editor's Note: This speech and photograph are taken from the website of the PNG Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council, published on 31 December 2024. Available online at <https://pmnec.gov.pg/prime-minister-marapes-new-year-message-a-call-for-unity-and-action-in-our-jubilee-year/>

Prime Minister James Marape extended his message to the government and people of Australia on Australia Day, 26 January 2025, reflecting on the enduring relationship between Papua New Guinea and its longstanding partner in the region.

‘As Papua New Guinea celebrates 50 years of independence this year, we pause to acknowledge Australia’s historic role in our nation’s journey,’ said Prime Minister Marape.

‘From the early days of nation-building to the establishment of critical institutions, Australia has stood with us—not only as a neighbour but as a steadfast friend and partner.’

The Prime Minister highlighted Australia’s significant contributions during the pre-independence period, including investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and governance, which laid the foundation for PNG’s emergence as a sovereign nation.

He also paid tribute to the collaboration between leaders such as Gough Whitlam and Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, whose shared vision ensured a peaceful transition to independence in 1975.

Prime Minister Marape also honoured the contributions of *kiaps*—Australian patrol officers who served in some of PNG’s most remote and challenging regions.

‘These men were more than administrators; they were builders, educators, and peacemakers. Their efforts remain a lasting legacy of the partnership between our two nations,’ he said.

He emphasised that the PNG-Australia partnership has continued to grow stronger over the past five decades, evolving to address the challenges and opportunities of the modern era.

One recent milestone is the Bilateral Security Agreement, signed in December 2023, which formalises co-operation between the two countries in areas such as defence, policing, cybersecurity, and maritime security.

‘This agreement demonstrates our shared commitment to safeguarding regional stability while respecting PNG’s sovereignty,’ noted Prime Minister Marape.

The Prime Minister also described PNG’s upcoming inclusion in the National Rugby League (NRL), supported by the Australian government, as

‘a historic moment for PNG that not only celebrates our sporting talent but also strengthens cultural and personal connections between our peoples.’

He reiterated Australia’s role as PNG’s largest trading partner and its ongoing support in key areas such as infrastructure, climate resilience, and education.

He highlighted Australia’s contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic, including vaccine distribution and medical support, as a testament to the enduring partnership between the two nations.

‘Australia has helped us build capacity through long-term initiatives such as scholarships and technical training, empowering Papua New Guineans to contribute meaningfully to our national development,’ Prime Minister Marape said.

As PNG celebrates its golden jubilee of independence, the Prime Minister reaffirmed the nation’s commitment to strengthening its relationship with Australia.

‘Our relationship is built on shared values of democracy, freedom, and equality. Together, we can continue to build a safer, more prosperous, and inclusive Pacific for future generations,’ he added.

On this Australia Day, Prime Minister Marape expressed his gratitude to Australia for its unwavering friendship and support.

‘Happy Australia Day. May the next 50 years bring even greater achievements for our peoples and our region,’ he concluded.

Source: The National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), Papua New Guinea’s national public broadcaster.



PM Marape meeting Australian Parliamentarians

Lawyers, Milestones or Millstones for the Rule of Law in the Independent State of Papua New Guinea: a memoir

PART ONE

PAUL MUNRO AM



The Hon. Justice Paul Munro AM

In July 1961 I became one of the last ‘permanent’ officers appointed to the PNG Administration—as Legal Officer. At 85, I am among the last survivors of the lawyers practising within Crown Law at Konedobu in 1960–61.

A decade or so ago, I set myself to write a piece about those lawyers. Rod Madgwick SC¹ had asked me if John Greville-Smith, our erstwhile boss, was still alive—The Hon. John Greville-Smith CBE: Crown Law’s Chief Crown Prosecutor, sometime Public Solicitor, President of the (PSA) Public Service Administration of PNG, and Judge of the National Court. A Vale notice in *Una Voce* showed that John died in 2004, his career telescoped in five sentences. We wondered whether one’s spouse will always pick out the best points of a chap’s career. We lawyers are almost universally afflicted by social underappreciation of our merits. I promised I would get something together to make amends.

I set out. I never got around to throwing more light on Greville-Smith’s contributions. I couldn’t find a copy of the ‘*Stud Book*’. In the 1960s the administration published a detailed list/directory of relative seniority and positions of all permanent officers. Without it, I couldn’t decipher the musical chairs of promotions within Crown Law around 1960–62.

Some high-achieving lawyers worked there, as many more were soon to join them. Their names and contributions are too easily forgotten, by me *na olgeta*. As Papua New Guinea (PNG) enters its 50th anniversary of independence, I hope in this memoir to snapshot a few ways in which those senior to me at that time, by their collective activities and stances, laid the foundations for features of PNG’s legal system.

I remember most vividly (aided by hindsight and history): Parliamentary Draftsman Joe Lynch², Peter Clay, Lou Cervetto, Crown Solicitor Sid Johnson, Assistant Sec-Law Paul Quinlivan³, Public Solicitor WA (Peter) Lalor⁴, John Greville-Smith, Rob O’Regan KC⁵, Tos Barnett, Con McLoughlin, and Dr J J Janousek⁶. Beyond Crown Law, among the non-judicial legal giants was Jack Mattes⁷, ASOPA’s outstanding Principal (1964-71) and lawyer, also his early mentor Hal Wooten QC⁸, and in Canberra’s Department of External Territories (DOET), the

prolific legal millstone John Ballard⁹, and later his more constructive successor, John Greenwell¹⁰.

Notably, in 1961, there were no women lawyers in PNG. No Papua New Guinean lawyers either. Not until 1968 did Joseph Aoa graduate from the University of Queensland (UQ) and be admitted to practice. Buri Kidu (UQ, 1972) and Bernard Narokobi (University of Sydney, 1972) followed. Only in 1972 did Ilinome Frank and Kubulan Los become the first graduates from the University of PNG (UPNG) admitted to practice, although both had experience as magistrates.

Mal Maritimos CBE QC recently observed:

At the end of 2023, there were about 1,400 lawyers holding practising certificates in PNG. Well over 200 of these lawyers worked for government departments or statutory bodies. A very large proportion of lawyers in PNG are sole practitioners.¹¹ ... PNG is a litigious country.

In my view, that should be a matter for celebration for a 50-year-new emerging nation. The lawyers listed, and many others not listed, deserve recognition for their parts in bringing that about.

In 1960–61 all legal officers engaged by the administration, resident magistrates, commissioners and public solicitors included, held positions within the Crown Law Department establishment. Crown Law Department’s head office at Konedobu was known widely as ‘The Vatican’, for a mix of reasons, not all misleading. Church and Lodge had places in that naming, but it also served to fix a key spot in the hierarchy of bureaucratic power. Infallibility, though, was disputed. Other hierarchies were not timid: the Administrator, the Supreme Court, the Commonwealth’s DOET, attorneys general and their respective ministers; locally, by no means least, sometimes gifted bush-lawyering, even cowboyish determinations by layers of regional Native Affairs/ District Administration.

Those most familiar with Crown Law roles saw it as a happy mix of capability with occasional roguery. The roguery was glimpsed in the aftermath of separate fires on the same 1958 night in the Crown Law office and the Supreme Court. For

Celebrating On Board the *Torrens*

What a great day for Papua New Guinea, and for Australia in helping PNG reach this day, and for all the *kiaps* and others who had been trying to prepare Papuans and New Guineans for this momentous day.

From 1970 to 1975, firstly, self-government and then independence had been a major part of our political education when on patrol.

Where I was in the Highlands, it was a difficult and frustrating topic. Invariably, *kiaps* returning from patrol would say: ‘Bring it on, let the people experience it and discover for themselves that it won’t adversely affect their lives.’

The great sigh of relief was probably heard in Australia!

By Independence Day I was stationed in Rabaul. On 14 September 1975 I was privileged to spend several hours on board HMAS *Torrens*, being given a guided tour and being allowed to be up on the flying bridge while the ship was manoeuvred to its anchorage in Rabaul Harbour for Independence Day.

On the 15th I attended the ceremony for the lowering of the Australian flag, in Sir Hubert Murray Stadium.

On the 16th I watched the colourful street parade, followed by the impressive ceremony for the raising of the new PNG flag, including a gun salute by HMAS *Torrens*.

In the afternoon I refereed two soccer matches as part of the celebrations—a truly memorable day in many ways.

Brian Hartley

(*Una Voce*, September 2005)



years after, a well worn excuse for concerns about delay in hard cases was that ‘the file must have been lost in the fire.’ Allegedly, the morning after, some files were thrown on the embers.

Always colourful, Denny Kelliher wrote a single sentence response to a long-winded question from an assistant district officer. He wanted expert legal advice about which offences were best to charge villagers for helping themselves to water from his sub-district office tank. ‘Crown Law advises that the ADO should secure his rainwater supply by fitting a tamper-proof tap’. Conversely, with equal wisdom and insight, Kelliher, as Land Titles Commissioner, once rebuked an importunate Crown Law cross-examiner of a Duke of York Island elder:

Mr (John Doe), I should not have to remind you that you should know and respect that this witness is a much more important person in his community than you are in yours.

Perhaps another was at the inaugural meeting

of the PNG Law Society in Port Moresby. The Chief Justice, Sir Alan Mann, gave a welcoming address to the Commonwealth Attorney General, Bill Snedden, who responded. Sir Alan explored in depth the design of a coat of arms and architecture for the Supreme Court. Snedden developed at length his insights about the Rule of Law. By this time, the assembled legal fraternity was well-primed. Sweepstakes over who had been more rivetingly dull, paid out for Snedden as narrow winner over Mann. Crown Law favourite, ‘Mr Junior’, Geoff Dabb, thanked the distinguished guests. To gales of laughter he explained in detail how the CJ and AG had each stolen his thunder, adding what he might or might not have said about both topics.

In all seriousness, putting aside its lengthy delivery, the Commonwealth Attorney General’s subject of Rule of Law was an important one as it related to the establishment of the Constitution of the new nation. I return to this in the second part half of this expose. ●

FOOTNOTES

1. Rodney Neville Madgwick KC served as a judge of the Federal Court of Australia from 1995–2008.
2. Cyril Joseph Lynch OBE: *Papers of C.J. Lynch, 1901-1985*; Catalogue. National Library of Australia.
3. Paul Joseph Quinlivan CBE: PNGAA *Paul Quinlivan’s Snapshot Archives pdf* [www.pngaa.org]; *Tribute for Paul Quinlivan CBE: Vales and Tributes* March 2023 Kundu.pngaa.org; Sir John Rumet Kaputin, KBE, CMG, PhD. (2017) *The late Paul Joseph Quinlivan CBE-Tribute to the Lawyer and Senior Stipendiary Magistrate in Rabaul, whose decision in the Mataungan Case in 1969 recognised and reinforced the dignity and respect due to the Tolai people in our quest for political freedom* [published by John and Leila Kaputin to select media and Quinlivan Family; authorised copy available from author]
4. William Andrew (Peter) Lalor (28 March 1992, aged 71) *Vale Notices* June 1992, Una Voce.pngaa.org; K Dillon *The Chronicle of a Young Lawyer. A legal journey in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea* hybrid Publishers 2020 @ 19-24; DFAT Documents on Australian Foreign Policy *Australia and Papua New Guinea 1966-1969* [2006] @ 594,738,893; especially 994-997: *Bougainville: Legal Challenge by Indigenes*.
5. Robin Stanley O’Regan KC, (1935): M Maritimos: *Hearsay*: Issue 95 March 2024 Feature Article: *Queenslanders at the PNG Bar: Wear a Coloured Shirt at Your Peril; Dillon Op.cit @ 350*
6. Dr. Jan Janousek (6 January 1995 aged 95): PNGAA *Vale Notices* : Una Voce, March 1995, www.pngaa.org.net
7. Jack Royston Mattes (1920-1988) PNGAA *Vale Notices* June 1988
8. John Halden Wooten AC, QC (1922-2021): Summary Notes for: *Hal Wooten interviewed by Jon Ritchie in the Australians in Papua New Guinea (PNG) 1942-1975 oral history project [Sound recording] Bib ID 4390292 catalogue.nla.gov.au*
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10. Greenwell, John H, First Assistant Sec. Govt and Legal affairs DOET; *DFAT Docs 1970-1972 Index entries Documents to and from:* at 846
11. *Maritimos*, Op. Cit

Thoughts on Papua New Guinea's 50 Years as an Independent Country

GARRETT ROCHE

Independence Day in Mt Hagen, 1975

I remember Independence Day 1975 in Mt Hagen. I had been in the country since 1970, based in the Western Highlands and I had some grasp of the significance of independence. I remember the parade through Hagen town, the various floats and pupils from various schools in uniforms and traditional dress. I remember the float from Holy Trinity Teachers College on which was one of the expatriate lecturers, Mr Allan Yarnold, who if I remember correctly, later became a pilot working with Civil Aviation in Port Moresby.

The transition from the Territory of Papua & New Guinea (TPNG) to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in September 1975 was generally peaceful and without any major incidents in the Western Highlands, despite some prophets of doom. I remember one Moresby-based church figure forecasting a 'night of the long knives' for Port Moresby when he expected disgruntled people to take vengeance on their former colonial bosses. Some cynics were debating whether the newly independent country could survive until Christmas 1975.

I believe that many Western Highlands people took a pragmatic viewpoint regarding independence. The influential leaders of the large tribal groups, Jika, Mokei, Yamka, etc., had worked well with Australian patrol officers. With the establishment of the coffee industry and the building of roads, in general the 1960s and 1970s had been



Mt Hagen 1975—PNG Independence celebrations:
Holy Trinity Teachers College float
(the expatriate on the left is Allan Yarnold)

a time of peace and progress in the Western Highlands. In the years up to independence, local government councils in the Highlands had been working very well. Councillors were respected and influential. There was a sense of pride in the progress being made.

In the Jimi area where I was based for a year, some people said that Thomas Kavali, the Member of Parliament for Jimi, had persuaded Kaibelt Diria, the Member from Minj, to support the move for independence and thus helped to give Michael Somare the numbers he needed in parliament to vote for independence. Thomas Kavali was later made Minister for Lands.

Becoming One Nation

What must not be overlooked is that, especially in the Highland provinces, previously there had been little or no sense of national identity. People identified with their tribal groups and the specific geographical areas they came from. In the Hagen area people would traditionally identify themselves as being the 'root people' (in *Melpa* language—*mbo wamp*). Outsiders were strangers—*kewa wamp*. Many of the local people did not know much about the rest of the country. In the Highlands, while there had been some trading contact with the outside world followed by increasing human contact since 1933, it was not until after the Second World War that real progress was made in the fields of education and business etc.

There had been efforts at explaining the meaning

and consequences of independence to the people. But even so, there were some Highlanders who were not that keen on independence, primarily because they believed that the Highlanders needed another few years to catch up on the coastal people. They did not want to be dominated by coastal people.

The historical distinction between ‘Papua’ and ‘New Guinea’ must also be kept in mind. Before the First World War, the ‘New Guinea’ section had been a German colony and *Tok Pisin* was spreading. The ‘Papua’ section had been an English/Australian colony where *Hiri Motu* was the more common language.

However, I do think that over the years since independence, a sense of national identity has developed. I believe that sports, cultural shows, and education were among the factors that helped to develop that sense of identity. Students who had to travel to other provinces for education became more aware of the many different cultures. The presence of teachers, nurses, medical orderlies, etc., from other provinces also helped to promote a sense of national identity.



Graduation day at Divine Word University, Madang—during Sir Michael Somare’s last term as PNG Prime Minister, c.2011 (L-R) Ross Garnaut, the Hon. Sir Michael Somare, Garrett Roche—then Chair of the Divine Word University Council, Sam Abal and Judge Arnold Amet
(Photos courtesy of Fr Garrett Roche, Society of the Divine Word (SVD))

Diversity in Leadership

Since independence in 1975, there have been nine Prime Ministers and one Acting Prime Minister, Sam Abal. It is worth noting they were elected from several provinces as can be seen from the following:

Michael Somare, East Sepik Province
(born in New Britain but family was from the Sepik)

Julius Chan, New Ireland Province

Paias Wingti, Western Highlands Province

Rabbie Namaliu, East New Britain Province

John Giheno, Eastern Highlands Province.

Bill Skate, Port Moresby,
National Capital District

Mekere Morauta, Gulf Province

Sam Abal, Enga Province,

was briefly acting Prime Minister

Peter O’Neill, Southern Highlands Province

James Marape, Hela Province.

This diversity in leadership is, in my opinion, a positive consequence of democracy in action and an achievement to be acknowledged.

What Has Been Achieved Since 1975?

I left PNG in 2017 and am not qualified to comment in depth on the current situation in PNG, but I am aware that some commentators believe there is a real need for a more honest administration. At the same time, I do believe that there is now in PNG a real sense of nationhood. Even if the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, once known as North Solomons Province, succeeds in seceding, the fact is that since 1975 many peoples and tribes who had once not considered themselves as one, do see themselves as being part of the Independent Nation of Papua New Guinea.

It is acknowledged that Papua New Guinea has more than 800 languages—more than any other country. That a strong sense of nationhood has developed in the past 50 years is quite an achievement.

One ongoing challenge may be to see that together with other nations in the Pacific region, there is a real need to work together for the benefit of all. ●



Independence Day, Goroka 1975

TREVOR FREESTONE

I was an education officer in Papua New Guinea from 1964 to 1975. My postings included Ambunti in the East Sepik District, Pagei in the Sandaun (West Sepik) Province and Bena Bena in the Eastern Highlands.

In 1968 I was transferred to Watabung school, also in the Eastern Highlands. I was there for six years and with the help of the teachers, students and parents built a great school.

It was about 1973 when the PNG Government Minister for Education, together with the NSW Minister for Education, visited our school and told our superintendent in Goroka that Watabung was by far the best primary school he had ever visited.

The school was dedicated to the education of its students, encouraging children who weren't going on to high school by offering programs suitable for them. The school had its own piggery for instance. We also had a special cultural program teaching students about their culture; this included cultural days when students dressed up in their cultural costumes. We had several buildings representing traditional buildings including a museum. I also staged the firework show for Goroka's celebration for Independence.

FEATURED: The Independence Day Parade at Goroka and some of the fireworks on the day
(Photos courtesy Trevor Freestone)





Sel Kambang and Andapen

PART ONE BAKA BINA

This story is my take on listening to my father talk about self-government with other men in the village and his play on the words *sel gavaman/sel kambang* and village ribald jokes about getting Telefomin gourds.

I remember throwing my book *bilum* onto the *pitpit* bed that was the men's part of the house and sitting down feeling hungry. I had eaten my *kaukau* lunch at the morning recess rather than at lunchtime and was low on energy. Beaming with a smile I noticed the pot on an elevated shelf behind the centre posts in the middle of the house. Bless Mum, she was always thinking of us.

I was in Grade 4 and my sister Theresa was in Grade 1. Ma knew that small sis would need her *kaukau*. However, small sis played a lot and never ate much, but Mum always had more than enough for her, albeit for both of us. She kept a

separate place for Tes to keep her share of afternoon *kaukau*. If it were left to me, I'd take these afternoon titbits and share them amongst the boys we hung around with.

I opened the pot lid and looked inside. There was more than enough boiled *kaukau* for us. I scooped some out onto a flat tin plate, three pieces for myself, and poured a cupful of the water from the pot into a cup.

I moved to the bed and was eating when Tes breached the door with her small red, black and gold flag. She hung it up onto the wall on the women's side of the house. The light from the open door did not reach her side of the bed, but she beamed a smile at me for her handiwork at hanging up our new flag.

I smiled back.

I had four copies of these flags tucked into my reading book that I was going to give to Dad later that night. I had done my share of learning the flag song and could master it, although not remembering all the words. Outside I could hear the village was abuzz with children singing the new flag song that we had learned.

'This is our flag, Flag of our nation ...'

Already at Paketo Creek the flag song was being sung over and over in loud voices as children waited their turn to fill their water containers. Tes and I looked at each other. It was my turn to fetch water and hers to collect firewood for Mum to cook the afternoon meal. I hoisted our 20-litre blue plastic container and joined the children at the creek, singing our lungs out with the new song.

I returned huffing and lugging the full container of water in between trying to sing this new song. I had achieved quite a mastery over it even though the notes did not sound exactly as they should.

Mother started a fire outside of the house, and a few adults came by to sit and chat away the evening. They were talking about the new song that the children were singing and wondering what it was all about.

Sel Kambang—it came out as though the song for the flag would bring in our *Sel Kambang*.

Father was considered a travelled man, and he

was trying to explain what he understood about the 'sel kambang' that the *Somare gavman* said we were getting.

'*Em nau, Somare rausim ol waitman, meri blo Astralia na laikim mipla yet stap long hauslain bilong mipla wantaim nupela trausis—em ya sel kambang.*'

Na mipela ol mama bai mekim wanem? Wanem kain sel kambang bai mipla ol meri kisim?

'*Ol Telapaumin na ol Sipik save putim ol 'sel kambang' olsem ol trausis—paisim bol blong ol. Somare em laikim mipela olgeta mas raun wantaim displa sel kambang pastaim, orait bihain bai em kam na givim mipla ol andapens olsem ol wait-mahn/meri save putim ananit long trausis na dress bilong ol.*'

I looked up into Dad's face, wanting to correct him. It was self government not *sel kambang*. He was serious and meant well. I did not want to feel his wrath so I kept quiet.

'Self Government or *Sel Kambang*, they were the same thing, weren't they?' I studied my parents' friends' faces around the fireplace. Our friends looked up to Dad as being knowledgeable, and his version of *sel kambang* and *andapens* had to be correct.

To be continued in the next issue.

Author's Profile:

Baka Barakove Bina is a senior official of the PNG National Court and a prolific author. Baka is the first Papua New Guinean writer/author to be shortlisted for the literary Commonwealth Short Story competition in 2022. This story is included in his recent anthology and tenth book, a collection of stories that he submitted to the Commonwealth Short Story Prize competition under the title *Resis Long KSSP*. He had this self-published in late 2024. You can read about this and other books Baka has written and co-authored by searching the Amazon Australia website.

Many of Baka's books are drawn from age-old stories and customs of the people of Kotiyufa village, located 12 kilometres west of Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, where Baka originates. Baka wrote, 'I want to capture a time when I was a child in the village growing up.'

There is an emphasis on using *Tok Pisin*. Some of the puns used in *Tok Pisin* lose their meaning when translated into English and are best left in *Tok Pisin*.

Celebrations at Ela Beach

On Independence Eve, Ela Beach was alive with celebrating *lakatois* and sluggish expatriate boats like mine were fair game. So, as I photographed this *lakatoi* and its exuberant crew sheering past my trailer sailer, I took their hail to be a good-natured gesture of derision. Clearly our *Coral Queen* was a lame duck and a very appropriate target (as my watercolour faithfully records, our self-furling jib was badly twisted around the forestay!).

But as I look back now, there was something of a symbolic gesture here for all outgoing expatriate administrators—these very capable young Papua New Guineans were the new leadership 'sending us off' before they took over the wheel!

I retired from the statutory appointment of PNG National Statistician in 1976, but was back to Port Moresby in later years on some of my short-term consultancy and training assignments.

In 1996 I discovered a latent painting talent and now in my 80s enjoy reliving exciting times by way of my colour slide photos and byproduct artwork!

Ron Fergie

(*Una Voce*, September 2005)



Ron Fergie's painting from a photo taken off Ela Beach in September 1975

Reforms in PNG Politics: Political Stability vs Independent Legislature

MICHAEL KABUNI

PhD Candidate at the Australian National University (ANU)

At the 2024 PNG Update, the PNG Prime Minister James Marape went to great lengths to argue that political stability is a prerequisite for economic development. He referenced the high economic growth that started in the 2000s under the late Prime Minister Michael Somare as the basis of political stability. While the growth did coincide with political stability, especially with the passage of the Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC) that prevented, among other things, Members of Parliament (MPs) switching sides and parties, it was largely driven by high commodity prices and subsequently the construction phase of the ExxonMobil-led LNG project. The recent no-confidence vote against Marape in September, which he survived, has sparked debates about the suitability of Papua New Guinea's parliamentary system.

This blog looks at two proposed reforms currently before the parliament—namely, alternative forms and systems of government, and a revised OLIPPAC — and their limitations.

In 2022, the PNG government tasked the Constitutional Law Reform Commission (CLRC) to investigate alternative forms and systems of government to the current unicameral parliamentary system. This review sought to identify models that would bring stability to the executive arm of the government. The report, with various proposed models, was delivered to the government in May 2024 for tabling in parliament. Four models stood



Papua New Guinea Parliament House in Port Moresby

out during the consultations and here I will briefly discuss each.

The first is an upgrade of the current system of forming government. Currently, the political party with the highest number of MPs elected in a general election is invited to form the government. However, because no political party has ever had more than 50 per cent of MPs, all governments have been coalitions. This model would mandate the largest party to form the government without the need to meet the 50 per cent-plus-one minimum threshold. However, PNG politics is very fluid and the largest party usually loses MPs after the end of the 18-month grace period. What happens when MPs leave the largest political party that formed the government, and the party is no longer the largest party? This question has not been answered.

Under the second model, the people would elect the prime minister directly in a nationwide election. This would mean the prime minister's tenure is not subject to the parliament and votes of no-confidence. But who holds the prime minister accountable if the parliament does not? This model proposes that impeachment provisions would be embedded in the Constitution to hold the prime minister accountable. However, if MPs' service delivery roles are not abolished, they might have an incentive not to impeach the prime minister because, in PNG, the prime minister controls Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) — known as District and Provincial Services

Infrastructure Program (DSIP/PSIP) funds. The control of CDFs by the executive has been observed in many countries, where CDFs are used to ‘buy compliance from the legislature.’

In a variant of this second model, accountability might be achieved by drawing on the Bougainville model where the prime minister can be recalled through a referendum and a new one elected (section 58 of Bougainville’s Constitution). However, this would be logistically and financially impractical given PNG’s difficult topography and related expenses. Also, violence, malpractice, and corruption during elections in PNG, which are to some extent contained within the provincial and district boundaries, could spill nationwide if this direct election model was adopted.

The third model is a bi-cameral parliamentary system, with a lower house and an upper house. However, this model will still require an executive and a legislature, and if the service delivery role of parliamentarians is not abolished, the house that ultimately controls the funding will ‘buy the other into compliance’.

The fourth model, and the one arguably best suited for PNG, is to maintain the current unicameral parliamentary system but either abolish the CDFs and the service delivery functions of the MPs and restrict them to lawmaking functions or else legislate the CDF funds so that MPs are legally entitled to them and are not beholden to the executive or the prime minister to access these funds. Either way, the legislative arm of the government becomes independent. It is unclear if this model would stop MPs switching sides, but it does strengthen the legislative arm of the government.

Now let’s look at the amendments to the OLIPPAC proposed by the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission. The OLIPPAC came into effect in 2001 (amended in 2003) with the goal of ensuring political stability through restrictions placed on MPs aimed at making it more difficult for them to switch sides, among other things. The Supreme Court ruled those restrictions unconstitutional in 2010.

The revised OLIPPAC aims to strengthen political parties without infringing on MPs’ rights to switch

parties. Currently, political parties with parliamentary representation receive K10,000 per MP annually from the Central Fund administered by the Registry, with funding ‘following’ the MP to their new party if they switch (Part 6 of OLIPPAC). The proposed reform proposes an increase to K20,000, but this money remains with the original party after an MP departs. Additionally, political parties would be encouraged to include provisions in their party constitutions for MPs to refund campaign contributions if they leave the party.

However, two proposed provisions in the proposed amendments have faced significant opposition: requiring parties to endorse female candidates in at least 10% of seats and mandating the merger of parties with fewer than five MPs.

Political parties oppose the female candidate requirement because they prefer candidates perceived to have high winning chances, who are most often not female candidates. On the merger requirement, prominent one-man parties, such as Brian Kramer’s and Gary Juffa’s parties, would resist forced mergers.

Reform efforts should focus on making the parliament more independent and better able to hold the executive accountable, rather than solely seeking political stability. Political stability in a highly corrupt environment might lead to an irresponsible and unbridled executive. Removal of the service delivery role of the MPs would potentially remove the motivation for MPs to align with the government to access funding for service delivery. While there are no certainties, having a stronger parliament should strengthen PNG’s democracy in the long run, as compared with a situation where the executive is stable and the parliament weak.●

Editor’s Note: Michael Kabuni’s article was first published by the Australian National University’s Development Policy Centre on its Blog site on

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<https://devpolicy.org/reforms-in-png-politics-political-stability-vs-independent-legislature-20241203/>

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PNG INDEPENDENCE

This special section will be featured in the following issues of *PNG KUNDU* throughout the anniversary year, and all your stories are welcome on the topic of independence—be that of a specific year or a broader reflection of your own lived experience.

Volcanoes in the PNG Highlands

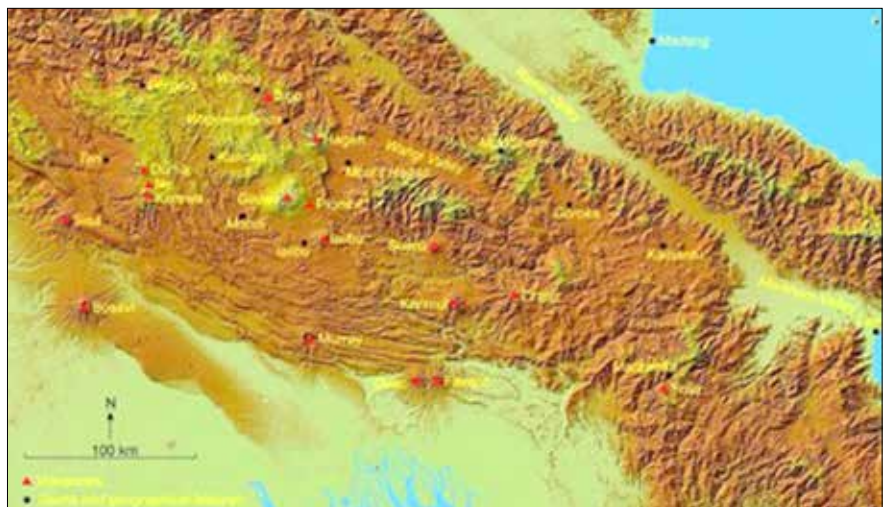
COLIN PAIN

It is well known that some mountains in the Papua New Guinea Highlands are extinct volcanoes, most having retained their original shape to some extent. These volcanoes have an important impact on the Highlands. First there are obvious features in the landscape—Hagen, Giluwe, and Doma Peaks come to mind. Second, their influence extends for considerable distances away from their obvious landforms. I will talk about this extensive influence rather than the volcanoes themselves.

How many readers have travelled the roads in the PNG Highlands and wondered what the layers in the road cuttings are? I know I did. I spent a great deal of time spread over 25 years looking at road cuttings between Tari and the Kassam Pass, studying the materials they expose. The layers are volcanic ash, also called Tephra, an important product of volcanic eruptions. The area I studied, some 24,000 km², has been covered by at least two metres of volcanic ash derived from the Highlands volcanoes. Over half that area has been covered by at least five metres, and in some places volcanic ash is more than 20 metres thick.

Volcanic ash beds are laid down very quickly in a geological instant. As they are deposited they mantle the landscape, distinguishing them from other deposits, such as river and lake beds, which are confined to lower parts. Why are they layered? Each layer represents an individual eruption or a series of eruptions, depending on how far away is the source volcano. Close to the volcano, each explosion may be represented by an individual shower bed. Further away the shower beds disappear and the layers are more uniform.

Individual volcanic ash beds can look very different from place to place. These differences are partly a consequence of the characteristics of the eruption. An important variation is the decreased bed thickness away from the source volcano. Ideally a volcanic ash bed would get thinner in all directions from its source. However, wind direction during an eruption controls changes in thickness away from the crater. Volcanic ash beds are usually present as elliptical deposits around a volcano, the axis orientation of each deposit dependent on the wind direction at the time of the eruption. In the Highlands, wind blows mainly from the east, so most of the volcanic ash goes to the west of the volcanoes.



There are 15 large volcanoes and at least 30 small cones and craters in the PNG highlands. This map shows only the large volcanoes plus two cones that produced volcanic ash (Birip and Piombil)

[Map compiled by Colin Pain with background image from the Advanced Land Observing Satellite (ALOS), downloaded from OpenTopography]

When a volcano erupts, the cloud of volcanic ash is made up of large, medium and fine particles. Larger and heavier grains fall faster than light ones, so individual volcanic ash beds close to a volcano may grade upward from coarse to fine. The same happens with distance from a volcano. As an ash cloud spreads, coarser particles fall out close to the volcano, while further away only fine particles are deposited. Associated with a decrease in grain size is a decrease in the number of beds derived from an eruptive source that can be recognised with distance from that source. Two volcanic ash beds identified near the source may be recognisable as only one further away.

The same applies to the thickness of ash beds with distance from the volcano—deposits become thinner with distance. It is also common for shower beds from individual explosions to be present near a volcano and absent further away. With distance from a volcano, ash beds become more uniform. This means that an ash bed close to a volcano may represent one explosive event, whereas a bed further from a volcano may represent many explosive events.

Relatively short eruptive periods are usually followed by long periods of quiet, during which vegetation is established and soil formed on the deposited volcanic ash. In major eruptions where the resulting deposits are thick, new soil is formed on a sterile surface well separated from the old soil, which is now buried and sealed off. At greater distances from the source, where volcanic ash beds are thinner, they cause little disturbance to vegetation and become incorporated into existing soil. Where this occurs, it may be difficult or impossible to identify individual beds.

Buried soils, present over wide areas, are good for the identification and correlation of volcanic ash beds. Where deeply buried they lack organic staining but may be a different colour from the main part of the ash bed. Buried soils show that there was a quiet period between the eruptions long enough for soil to develop. This period is likely to be hundreds if not thousands of years.

Assisted by my colleague Russell Blong, I was able to identify 18 different volcanic ash layers



Hagen volcano from the Highlands Highway near Tomba—this was an important source of volcanic ash in the PNG Highlands (Photo: Colin Pain)

spread across various parts of the Highlands. How do we know which layer is which? Stratigraphic position, the order in which the layers are found on the surface, provides relative age. Properties such as colour and particle size are the main criteria for recognising the different layers. Volcanic ash units were identified and described by ‘hand-over-hand’ mapping. This meant going from road cutting to road cutting (separated by hundreds to thousands of metres), following the layers using their stratigraphic position and other properties to recognise them. Characteristics such as colour, particle size, and the presence of buried soils, coarse basal layers, and shower bedding change across the distribution of a volcanic ash layer, whilst hand-over-hand mapping allows individual units to be followed for considerable distances, even if they change their character. The work thus relied almost entirely on the presence of road cuttings, and for this reason I give heartfelt thanks to anyone who has made, or caused to be made, roads in the PNG Highlands (despite the nerve-shattering experiences I had while negotiating some of them).

How far are the volcanic ashes spread? I mapped from Tari in the west to the Kassam Pass in the east. I estimate that at least 75,000 square kilometres of Highland PNG received more than 50 centimetres of Tephra from various Highland sources. The total volume would have been well over 300 cubic kilometres. A lot of this has now been eroded and removed from the Highlands.

Where did the volcanic ashes come from? They came mainly from Giluwe and Hagen in the west and Yelia in the east. Birip cone also produced ash that reached as far as Kandep. The youngest major



TOP: Layers of volcanic ash in a road cutting on the Highlands Highway near Togaba during construction in 1972—this road cutting exposes at least 20 metres of volcanic ash

CENTRE: Layers of volcanic ash in a road cutting on the Highlands Highway near Paigona in 1975—the thin dark grey layers are the sandy basal parts of shower beds—further away from the volcano the sandy layers disappear and the beds become finer and more uniform

BOTTOM: Layers of volcanic ash mantling old landscapes in a road cutting near Tambul on the road to Mendi in 1970—there are two buried soils, the upper one expressed as a groove in the road cutting and the lower one as light-coloured blocky material—they demonstrate that there were hundreds to thousands of years between the eruptions that produced the volcanic ashes (Photos: Colin Pain)

volcanic ash layer in the Highlands is Tomba Tephra which erupted from Hagen volcano at least 200,000, and possibly as much as 400,000, years ago. It would have been about the same size as the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, the second-largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century.

Apart from their scientific interest, volcanic ash layers are important for the PNG Highlands for two main reasons:

First, land use in the Highlands is important for planning purposes. Highland soils are dominated by humic, yellow-brown clay soils formed on volcanic ash that support large agricultural populations. Volcanic deposits have covered thousands of square kilometres, and thus soil parent materials are uniform over large areas.

Second, slope stability is an important consideration for earthworks, including roads, dams and mining activities. The presence of volcanic ash on steep hillslopes allows the stability of individual sites to be assessed in a long-term sense despite the range of geomorphic environments and the natural variability of the lithology. A hillslope covered with volcanic ash that has been stable for more than 200,000 years at a slope of 20 degrees can be expected to remain stable at that angle. On the other hand, hillslopes that have lost volcanic ash cover are likely to be less stable.

So, there is a widespread cover of volcanic ash in the PNG Highlands. We estimate that at least 120,000 square kilometres received more than 50 centimetres of volcanic ash from various Highland sources, meaning that all the Highland provinces, as well as the Highland areas of Western (Fly), Sandaun (West Sepik) and East Sepik Provinces, received large thicknesses of volcanic ash. Thin deposits less than 50 centimetres thick likely extend into the Indonesian side of the island. Moreover, many Highland volcanoes (e.g. Bosavi) have not been studied as sources of volcanic ash. There is also a much wider road network now than there was when I carried out my work; there is plenty left for the next generation of volcanic ash followers. •

Detailed results can be downloaded from:

<https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/ck9gd5vbkr/1>

Snapshot of Tufi, Oro Province

SANDY MILLER

Rod and I were going to be visiting PNG in April 2024, attending the ANZAC Day Dawn Service and Montevideo Maru Memorial Service in Rabaul. After a lot of thinking and internet searching, we worked out that we could also explore a different area of PNG and fit in a little side holiday first. We chose Tufi, near Milne Bay in Oro Province (formerly known as Northern Province), with links to WWII history, a strong village culture, an area renowned for its diving and snorkelling and with its beautiful volcanic *rias*, known locally as fjords.

To get to Tufi requires planning. There are only two flights in and out from Port Moresby per week, on a Monday or a Friday, via Tropicair. It is only 250 km east of the capital, so it's only an hour's flight, give or take. Tufi has a grass runway, but we felt perfectly safe flying and landing in the small aircraft.





We stayed at the Tufi Resort, a small boutique resort that sits on the hill with 180-degree views of fjords and mountains. There is absolutely a feeling of remoteness. This was probably compounded as, by chance, we were the only guests there for five days. It felt very special, almost as though we were experiencing one of the last frontiers on earth. The harbour below was a PT boat base during WWII, and there is even one sunk there in the waters; the wreck is still accessible to divers.

Food is included in the package. The manager is a former chef with high expectations and we couldn't fault any of the meals. Rooms are a fairly simple cabin style but with verandas, working air-con and fans. They were perfectly comfortable. One definitely needs to take antimalarials as a precaution with all the vegetation around. Within the resort, the staff kept ceiling fans going and there were abundant mosquito coils.

Rod and I did every activity on offer. We aren't scuba divers, but we had a great day snorkelling off a boat and saw lots of beautiful fish. We visited a butterfly farm and saw the fabulous Queen Alexandra butterfly that has a wingspan of up to 30 cm. We did a village cultural tour and were treated to a fabulous welcome by traditional dancers with their amazing, feathered headwear. We viewed demonstrations of female tattooing, the making and painting of tapa cloth from bark, fire making and string bag (*bilum*) making. We had a beach BBQ at a local village and went on a visit to local waterfalls.

One of my favourite activities, however, was not an organised one. We borrowed one of the resort's double kayaks and just paddled around the fjords ourselves and found new waterfalls and inlets. No one else was around, and it was so quiet and beautiful. We paddled to the fjord where PT boats sheltered during WWII.

Rod walked to the local village just up the road from the resort on a couple of occasions and felt safe and comfortable wandering around and chatting with locals.

Someone told me that 'oro' means welcome in the local language and we certainly felt welcome in the Oro Province. It's a very special part of PNG! •

Editor's Note: More photos have been uploaded on the PNGAA website

A Historic School Photograph of Legendary Characters

PETER SKINNER

The chance discovery by Derek Baldwin of a small black and white school photograph in an old suitcase makes one wonder what other historic Papua New Guinea images are buried in family collections.

Derek, whose connections with PNG go back several generations on both sides of his family, came across the photograph in a suitcase left by his late mother, Mary Baldwin (née Grahamslaw).

Now retired at Pelican Waters, Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Derek was born in Port Moresby in 1933 and lived and worked in PNG for many years, leaving shortly after independence.

At first glance, it was a typical school group photograph—children and their teacher—but in the annals of PNG history, this school photograph is far from ordinary. Fortunately, Mary, one of the children in the photograph, had typed a caption so all the subjects are named. And even a cursory glance at those names reveals what a collection of legendary characters attended that small primary school in Port Moresby. The image is not dated

but given the years, 1911–14, that one of the children, Ivan Champion, attended the Port Moresby European School, Derek thinks the photograph was probably taken in 1914.

Browse the children's names in the photograph and legendary family names leap out: Hides, Cowley, Champion and Grahamslaw, for example. It is likely others in the image also went on to contribute to Australia's involvement in Papua New Guinea's path to independence. Hopefully among the readers of *PNG KUNDU* there will be some who knew them and that the photograph triggers wonderful memories.

Whilst he's not in this school photograph, Archibald 'Archie' Herbert Baldwin, Derek's father, was an important personality during the early to mid-1900s in PNG. Archie Baldwin's father, a master mariner, had arrived in Port Moresby in



(Standing L-R) Bill Bruce, Bob Bruce, Vivian Hides, Cecil Cowley, Evan Herbert, Claude Champion, Ivan Champion; (Sitting Middle Row L-R) Mary Grahamslaw, Marjorie Cowley, Miss Winifred Penny (teacher), Jessie Hart, Ada Budd; (Front Row L-R) Billy Perkins, Noel Hides, Vera Perkins, Maisie Budd, Elaine Hart, Alan Champion, Alma Perkins, Freddie Smith, Jack Hides (and Jack's dog). (Photo courtesy Derek Baldwin)

about 1893, establishing a successful trading store. Archie was born in Randwick Hospital, Sydney, in August 1903, his mother having travelled from Port Moresby for the birth.

As a young man in Papua, Archie established a wonderful rapport with the indigenous population and became completely fluent in *Motu*—skills which were to play an important role during World War II. For a short time, around 1914–15, he attended boarding school at Trinity College in Sydney before returning to Port Moresby.

When Archie Baldwin married Mary Grahamslaw in October 1927, his best man was Ivan Champion, one of Archie's oldest and best friends.

When Japan entered World War II, all the European women, children and elderly, were evacuated from Port Moresby and Derek's mother, Mary (née Grahamslaw) and her four children travelled to Australia aboard the SS *Katoomba*. By coincidence, Derek's future bride, Patricia, and her parents from Edie Creek, were also on SS *Katoomba*, although Derek and Patricia didn't meet until 1959.

Archie remained in Port Moresby and in February 1942 was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) and promoted to Acting Lieutenant Colonel in August 1944. As a senior officer with ANGAU Archie oversaw all native labour and associated army personnel. Among other responsibilities Archie played a key role in organising labour support and equipment for the Kokoda Campaign for which he was twice mentioned in despatches.


When he died in Port Moresby, September 1956 at age 53, Archie's funeral was attended by 800 Papuans, indicative of the esteem in which he was held by the local people.

There's not the space here to recount all the exploits of men such as the Champions, the Hides, Cecil Cowley or Tom Grahamslaw (Mary's older brother), but in times of peace and war their contribution and feats are truly the stuff of legend.

Cecil Cowley and his sister, Marjorie, were among the first of 12 children to enrol at the European School on Hunter Street, Port Moresby in 1911. Described in some accounts as a 'true Empire

builder', Cowley had an outstanding career with the administration and was District Commissioner, Northern District, when Mount Lamington erupted on 21 January 1951. Cecil Cowley was among the 13,000 or more who died in that disaster. He was 47.

Ivan Champion was born in Port Moresby in 1904, where he attended school until 1914 before travelling to Australia, enrolling in Manly Public School, Sydney, until 1915. He completed his education at The Southport School (TSS), Queensland from 1916 to 1922.

 **Cecil Cowley was among the 13,000 or more who died in the Mt Lamington disaster—he was only 47!**

Ivan began his career in the Papuan civil service as a cadet clerk following a 1923 meeting with Papua's Lieutenant-Governor Sir Hubert Murray.

Reputed to be one of New Guinea's greatest explorers, Ivan was on the historic patrols with Charles Karius to cross New Guinea in 1926–28, discovering the sources of the Fly and Sepik Rivers. Later, wartime service with the Royal Australian Navy included the command of HMAS *Laurabada* and, postwar, Claude was officer-in-charge of relief operations following the eruption of Mount Lamington—ironically the same natural disaster that claimed the life of his former school mate, Cecil Cowley. Awarded the OBE in 1953, Ivan and his brother, Claude, both served on the Legislative Council at various times.

Claude Champion, who became a patrol officer in 1928, was with ANGAU from 1942–46, rising to the rank of major, and in the postwar period served twice on the Legislative Council, 1951–52 and 1959–61.

On the bottom right of the photo is a young Jack Hides (holding his pet dog) who went on to serve as a patrol officer from 1931–36. Jack was chosen by Hubert Murray to lead what Murray later described as 'the most difficult and dangerous patrol ever carried out in Papua' in the then unexplored Great Papuan Plateau between the Strickland and Purari Rivers. Following this, Jack left the Papuan public

service to prospect for gold in the Strickland River area, but the venture did not fare well and he returned to Sydney where he died from pneumonia in 1938.

Jack Hides wrote of his Papuan adventures in his book, *Papuan Wonderland*. It was a very successful publication, as were several other of his books and public presentations.⁽¹⁾

The Grahamslaw name is also well etched in New Guinea history. Tom Grahamslaw, who, in all likelihood, attended the same primary school as those in the photograph, was born in Townsville in 1901 and went to Port Moresby with his parents, James and Annie Grahamslaw, in 1911.

Tom left school at 14 to work for the British New Guinea Development Company as a grocer's boy. In 1916 he joined the territory's civil service as a cadet clerk, a move that started a career in a variety of government roles. During World War II, as a district officer with ANGAU, Tom helped prepare Australian soldiers for the Kokoda Campaign. His knowledge of the area and the terrain reached back to when, following the Japanese invasion, he had walked alone from the north to the south coast of New Guinea. Tom was temporarily promoted to major and awarded the OBE in 1943 for his efforts during the Battle of Buna-Gona.

After WWII, Tom Grahamslaw rejoined the civil service working in several senior positions in Customs and serving in the Legislative Council. He retired from PNG in 1961.

This is just a sampling of the extraordinary amount of PNG history associated with the group of children in this old photograph. And it's hoped that their teacher, Winifred Penny, was able to take some of the credit for helping launch their careers.

Author's Note (1): Jack Hides and *Papuan Wonderland* were catalysts in my father, Major Ian Skinner, MC, going to PNG. Interested in applying to be a cadet patrol officer, after reading his book, my father contacted Hides, who encouraged him to pursue his aspirations, which he did. My father joined the Territory of Papua and New Guinea public service in September 1937, and was appointed as a district commissioner in 1954, retiring as Director of Civil Defence in 1971, after 35 years' service.



'He was my mate'

Recognising sacrifices made during
the WWII Bougainville Conflict,
Papua New Guinea

Dr DAVID TIERNEY

The above image, from page 15 in the *Sydney Sun*, 19 August 1945, with the caption 'He was my mate', shows an Australian digger carrying a cross to mark the grave of a fellow soldier killed during the WWII Bougainville Campaign. Sadly, the implied sentiment has been lost over time, with the sacrifices made and the extent of the conflict largely unrecognised.

This is despite a quarter of the local population of 50,000 perishing and at least 239,000 combatants comprising 65,000 Japanese troops (18,500–21,500 casualties), 144,000 US troops (727 casualties), 30,000 Australians (516 casualties), and New Zealand and Fijian troops.

In the late 1950s the Sohano Return Services League (RSL) organised the construction of a memorial to Australian and Allied Forces service personnel who died during the war, along with the Coastwatchers and locals who supported them. In 1955 an area of about an acre where the memorial is located was proclaimed as Sohano Memorial Park and reserved for future sale or lease.



TOP: The original dedication ceremony at Sohano, 1955 Kathleen Vellacott-Jones Collection (Unveiling of WWII memorial, Sohano, [Papua New Guinea], c.1960 to 1969–UQ eSpace)

CENTRE: Sohano Island Memorial, Bougainville, Department of Veterans' Affairs.

BOTTOM: Team leaders Tony Tsora and Lawrence Belleh (Photos D Tierney, November 2024)

In 2009 I stumbled across the memorial, causing me to reflect on the Anzac Day celebrations of my childhood. Later, photos of the memorial and the plaques were forwarded to the Australian War Memorial and Department of Veterans' Affairs site for overseas memorials which, remarkably until then, had no record of its existence. Recent meetings with representatives of various RSLs and Bougainvilleans also suggest that the extent of this campaign is largely unknown.

Sadly, last year, the memorial plaques were stolen, and Bougainvilleans requested assistance to have them replaced. This work was completed in November 2024, under the auspice of the Bougainville Arts, Culture and Tourism Authority, with prominent Bougainvilleans, Tony Tsora and Lawrence Belleh taking the lead. The project was made possible with a grant from the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs, along with the generosity of Springvale and Clayton RSLs and Cameo Memorials. The last photo is of the completed work which, in addition to replacing the plaques, included repainting the monument and four bollards, reinstalling the perimeter chain fence, and repairing and re-erecting the original flagpole.

The memorial sits on a beautiful natural parkland on Sohano Island, situated at the western entrance of Buka Passage, a body of water separating Buka Island from the much larger island of Bougainville.

In addition to memorialising the sacrifices made during the Bougainville WWII campaign, the memorial stands as a symbol of the sustained peace that exists between former belligerents and the long-lasting relationship between the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and the countries of former combatants.

In recognition of its importance, the stakeholders would like the memorial formally recognised with a re-dedication ceremony.●

Concerns of a Council Adviser

**CHIPS
MACKELLAR**

Tom Leahy was a scion of that famous pioneering dynasty of PNG. Like his equally famous family contemporaries, Mick and Danny Leahy, Tom was widely respected and much loved by expats and locals alike. He was so popular that he was elected to the pre-independence Parliament of PNG from 1968 to 1972.

Editor's Note: The following YouTube shows footage of the rugged terrain between Leron and Wantoat, thanks to the YouTube channel 'PNG in a Nutshell'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfgsIFihWJ8&t=84s>

As the member for Markham, Tom's constituency consisted not only of the people of the Markham Valley but also of people from the Wantoat Local Government Council area. Wantoat was then a landlocked part of Morobe District, isolated from the rest of PNG by its mountainous terrain and generally accessible only by air. There was a walking track of sorts from Wantoat to the Markham Valley, and Tom had promised the Wantoat people that he would develop this track into a motor road for them linking Wantoat to Lae via the Highlands Highway at Leron Plains.

The problem was that the proposed route of the Wantoat-Leron road passed partly through the Wantoat Council area and then partly through the Markham Council area. The *kiap* at Wantoat, Paul Simpson, had done good work with the Wantoat Council building the road on their side, but the Markham Council was not interested.

As a sign of goodwill though, the Markham Council agreed for the road to pass through its council area provided it did not have to pay for it. They did not want to pay because their own network of feeder roads already consumed available road-building funds. Also, the Markham Council reasoned, as Tom Leahy was a Minister in the Somare government he had reasonable access to national government funding and should use that access to pay for the road.

To solve this impasse, a conference was called in Lae, chaired by the then District Commissioner, Ron Galloway. In attendance was Deputy District Commissioner Graham Hardy, the Public Works Department (PWD) engineer, Julian Lee, the Wantoat *kiap*, Paul Simpson and a local planter, Bruce Spreag, who had had some connection with the proposed road. Spreag hailed from Liverpool in the UK and still possessed a Lilipudlian accent. John Biltris, the senior local government officer, also attended. John was quite a character, having spent most of his off-duty hours in the lounge of the Lae hotel, where he regaled visiting tourists with tales of derring-do and funny stories.

As adviser to the Markham Council, I was summoned to appear before the committee to give the Markham Council view, but no Markham councillors were invited. The tone of the conference turned nasty when Spreag accused us of being hopeless and lazy and proposed a construction method for the road which I considered would be totally beyond the resources of both councils. Nevertheless, regardless of my opposing view, the general feeling of the meeting was that the Markham Council should go ahead anyway with whatever resources it could muster and complete the road.

When viewed logically and objectively, this decision was, of course, in communion with the Morobe District road development program, but I knew the Markham Council would not like it. They had conformed with this program as far as they felt they could by

Ballad of the Wantoat-Leron Road

*There was Galloway and Hardy,
and Tom Leahy from the House,
And Simpson down from Wantoat,
and Spreag the former Scouse.*

*Came Julian Lee from PWD,
and Biltris from the pub,
All politicians, technocrats
and kiaps from the scrub.*

*Our task was pure and simple,
to decide what sort of load,
Should eventually traverse
the Wantoat-Leron Road.*

*But Spreag confused the issue
by declaring kiaps lazy,
With insults, threats and loud abuse
and arguments plain crazy.*

*The issue then became confused,
all logic soon was lost,
And a decision made to build the road
at enormous senseless cost.*

*It will collapse within a year to a
narrow forlorn track,
And no amount of shovel work will
bring the road then back.*

*This decision does not bind you,
and I suggest you do not heed it,
But build instead a walking track,
and expand this when you need it.*

*Pay no attention to demands as to
what should be the mode,
But do whatever you think best,
on the Wantoat-Leron Road.*

There was no reply.

But the outcome was predictable.

I was transferred to Menyamy.

consenting to the road being built through their area, but had not agreed to fund it.

So, taking all this into consideration, I was told to report back to the Markham Council, specifically to provide written advice to the Council and to supply the District Commissioner with a copy of that advice.

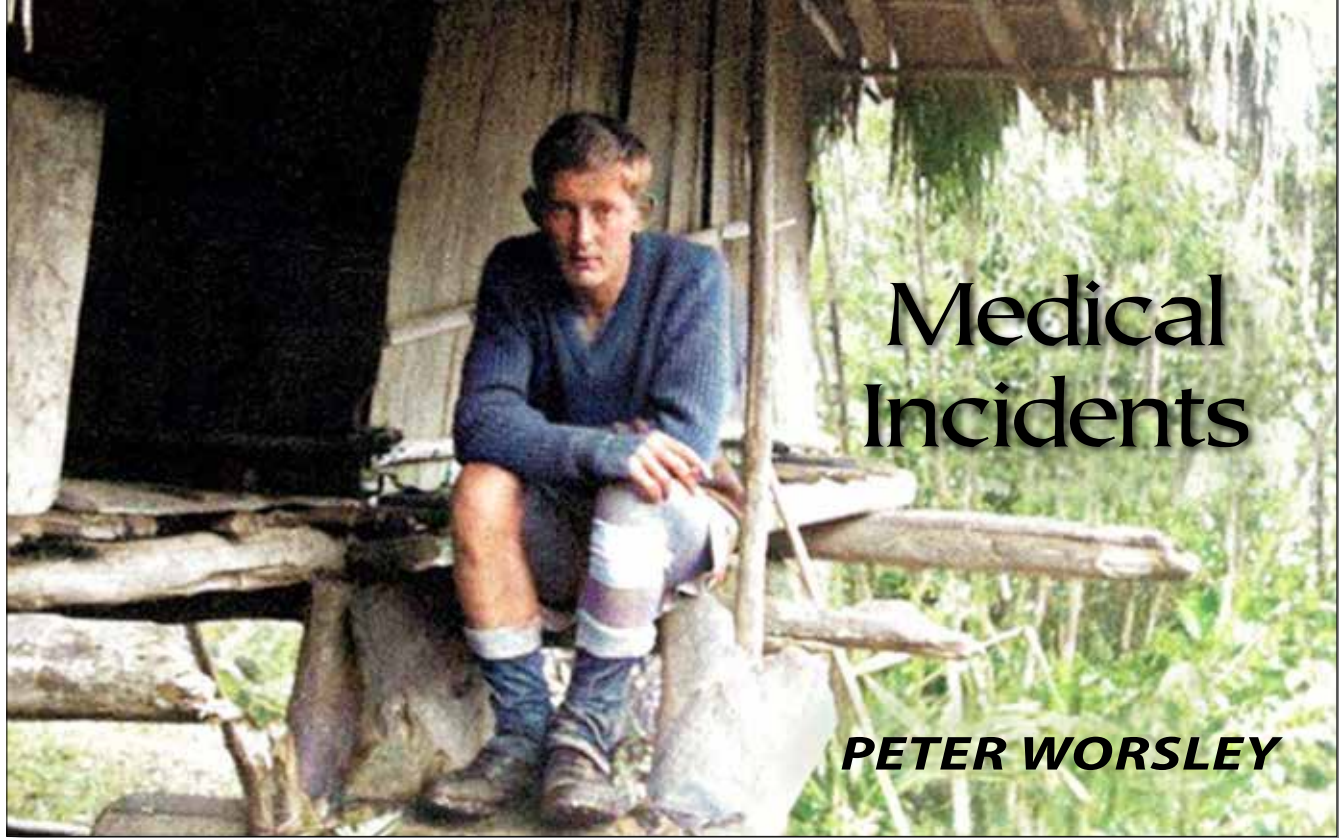
Then the penny dropped. It was indeed a tense moment. Why had no Markham Councillor been invited to the conference? Had I been instructed to tell the Council to abandon its current works program and concentrate its efforts on building a road in which it had expressed no interest? Oh no!!! Perish the thought. It was much more subtle than that.

All I was really instructed to do was tell the District Commissioner what advice I would give the Council. But the subliminal meaning was clear.

In my 30 years of service in Papua New Guinea, this was the only moment I had ever felt the tension of power politics—local government style, and I fumed about it as I drove back to Kaiapit.

On the way, I decided that this tense moment in my career required an equally tense response. How much more tense could my advice to the Council be than if it were delivered in rhyming verse?

My written report of the conference and my advice to the Council, copied to the District Commissioner, is featured at left. ●



Medical Incidents

PETER WORSLEY

I spent about 18 months as Officer In Charge at Kalalo Patrol Post on the north coast of the Morobe District, 2,500 feet above sea level. My nearest airstrip was at Wasu on the coast, and getting there involved driving four and a half miles down a very steep, rough track in a Land Rover with chains on the wheels, as the track was very slippery. The only other Europeans at the post were a teacher, Bob Blanche, and his wife, Gloria, a trained nurse.

During my period there, I had a few medical experiences which are worth mentioning. One occurred in 1964 while I was on patrol in the Urawa and Yupna census divisions west of my post. At one village, I was shown a man who had been in a fight and had an arrow in his right thigh. The shaft of the arrow had broken off but the barbed point was very deep inside, in fact lying alongside his thigh bone. It had occurred a couple of days before and was obviously turning septic. None of their bush medicines were doing any good and the arrowhead needed to come out or the wound would rapidly kill him. I always took a first aid kit with me on patrol but it was very limited. I certainly had no anaesthetics.

The wounded man wanted something done and I knew that it would be too late for him if he had to go to Kalalo and get a plane from there to the hospital in Lae. It would have taken at least five

days to walk to Kalalo, certainly much longer if he had to be carried on a stretcher. This was highly probable as he was already having great difficulty walking. As usual, I was completely out of touch with anyone while on patrol as we did not carry radios, so getting advice from a doctor was out of the question. I decided to have a go at getting the arrowhead out. This required an operation.

I had a sharp scalpel, a pair of tweezers, a needle and cotton (for sewing on buttons and repairing tears in clothing), some sulpha powder (my only antibiotic), some methylated spirits (used for lighting my lamp) to wash and disinfect the wound and some rum as a sort of anaesthetic! I first poured a large mug of rum and gave it to the patient, telling him to drink it as quickly as possible. I had already explained to him that this was the only 'anaesthetic' I could give him. I then washed the wound with the methylated

FEATURED PHOTO: I had just walked up and down a few mountains to a village up high in the mountain range (hence the jumper I put on because of the cold) and was having a breather before commencing work. This was taken only a week or two after my 21st birthday by my *mankimasta* (cook) Alugi, using my camera.

spirits and commenced cutting down through the muscle of his thigh towards the thigh bone and the arrowhead. I was scared that I might cut an artery and that he would bleed to death, so every cut was only a millimetre deep. Eventually, after literally cutting down to his thigh bone, I managed to get hold of the piece of arrow and pull it out. Numerous splinters of wood and bone (the arrowhead was partly bone) also had to be cleaned out. I washed the wound in methylated spirits, packed it with sulpha powder, sewed a couple of stitches to keep it more or less closed and put a bandage on it.

I then detailed some men to take him to Kalalo as quickly as possible so that Gloria Blanche could check him and get a plane to get him to hospital. Throughout the operation, the patient just sat there watching what was going on, never once complaining or giving any indication that it hurt. I am proud to say he made a complete recovery. It was sometime later that I started to wonder what would have happened to me if the patient had died during the operation.

I might have been in considerable trouble then! The incident of my operation on the man's leg brought out the fact that the people generally showed little reaction to pain. Naturally, they felt the pain but because most other people in the village offered little sympathy they did not show much reaction. This was combined with the men's idea of toughness and the 'macho' image of strength and fortitude.

A typical example is of the man who came to my house at Kalalo one Sunday full of apologies for disturbing me on my day off. He was cutting firewood down at Wasu and had cut right through his ankle and his foot was only held on by a bit of skin and flesh on the outside. He had strapped the foot up to the bottom of his leg with some vines and walked up to an altitude of 2,500 feet along four and a half miles of very rough road to me for help. I hastily radioed for a plane and he was taken to Lae. He survived but I think he lost his foot. Sewing severed limbs back on wasn't as common or as possible in those days, particularly in little remote towns like Lae in New Guinea. •



Pathways for Papua New Guinea's Future Military Leaders 1951–75

GREGORY JIVEY & RUSSELL WADE

This article outlines the pre-independence evolution of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF), although readers may be aware that the first indigenous battalion was formed by the Australian army in June 1940. During WWII the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) and the later New Guinea Infantry battalions served honourably and continuously across the New Guinea mainland and islands. These battalions were amalgamated with the title of (HQ) Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) in 1944 until the work of the battalions ceased in 1947.

The Australian army was given approval to re-form the PIR in 1951 and develop an efficient and

effective military force. By 1975 the PNGDF was arguably the best-prepared (large) institution for independence.

How was such readiness actually achieved?

From 1951, especially from 1966, Papua New Guinean servicemen of the PIR were being trained for future leadership roles by Australian servicemen. During the 1950s their focus was training future PIR leaders but during the 1960s and 1970s the mission broadened to educating future leaders for the PNG community. Quietly and proactively, commanders of the PIR implemented

a mission to prepare some future leaders in a self-governing country. Unlike the cautious views of some managers and expatriates, the strategy of senior Defence Force leaders was to anticipate and enable self-government.

Since WWI the Australian army has had its own Education Officers and NCOs who led courses in literacy, numeracy, current affairs and vocational skills. From the 1950s, young PIR recruits received educational instruction, always in English, during their initial training in Port Moresby. Later, as soldiers, they undertook additional education courses in order to qualify for army promotions. As well as these courses in PNG, groups of soldiers with technical aptitude were often selected for courses in Australia to gain higher level experience and/or qualifications.

By the early 1960s, a few promising Papua New Guinean soldiers were being coached for officer training at the Officer Cadet School at Portsea, Victoria, in an intensive one-year military leadership course, graduating alongside Australian, New Zealand and Malaysian classmates. Some Australian and Territory of Papua & New Guinea (TP&NG) graduates later served alongside each other as platoon commanders in the PIR. After the establishment of Igam Barracks in 1968, some potential officers undertook education courses at the Military Cadet School in Lae before their training at Portsea.

The mid-1960s saw an escalation in the education of Papua New Guinean soldiers. A farsighted program saw the diversion of some National Servicemen teachers from Vietnam or Australian postings to postings across PNG in order to expand the Army Education mission rapidly. There the army wisely took advantage of those Nashos' civilian professional qualifications. Between 1966 and 1973 about 300 additional Education Instructors (Nasho chalkies) were deployed to PNG army bases to accelerate the education and potential promotion of PNG soldiers. These Education Instructors led not only the traditional English literacy and numeracy courses but also developed lessons focused, for example, on Democracy and both Military and

PNG History, as well as courses in science or agriculture (under the supervision of a *Nasho didiman*—a *Tok Pisin* term for an agricultural officer). As a result of these increased opportunities, more PIR soldiers qualified for positions of responsibility and leadership within the army. At the same time, many other Australian officers and NCOs were training PIR soldiers daily, both in the Territory and in Australia, for future command roles. In addition to such structured courses, PIR companies engaged their soldiers in lessons discussing military culture and the supremacy of the civilian government.

By the late 1960s, the resources of the Australian Army were fully committed to the Vietnam War deployments, which meant that the army in TP&NG had lower priority. Furthermore, TP&NG personnel were under the control of Northern Command in Brisbane until 1965. Nevertheless, for their first posting to the PIR, the Australian Army often required its junior commissioned officers to undergo a psychological examination and a language aptitude test. Additionally, if posted to the PIR, to facilitate communication, Papua New Guinean soldiers would speak to their newly arrived platoon commander only in *Tok Pisin* until that officer was fluent. In the Army Education precincts, however, speaking in English was the priority. Non-commissioned regular



Qld Members with PNGDF Major-General J Singirok on Anzac Day 2023 (courtesy of Lindy Horton)

servicemen, often at the rank of lance corporal or higher, were also posted to TP&NG to apply and demonstrate their skills.

The PIR had a particular reputation for being the first organisation to integrate soldiers from all the then 18 districts in an even distribution across its infantry platoons. Such a strategy was not easy to achieve but it was seen as a model for future governance. The benefits of this strategy were seen in the operational deployments such as civic action projects and border patrols, where at least one soldier in a platoon could speak *tok ples* or the local dialect. (These patrols often had an attached education serviceman for gathering field experience.) PIR soldiers signed on for a far shorter period of service than did Australian soldiers. After several years of military training and education courses, PIR soldiers could re-enlist or return to their village better qualified for positions of responsibility.

In early 1965, PNG Command was established, which facilitated local decision-making and local initiatives such as the Nasho chalkies' scheme referred to above. The PNGDF was formed in January 1973 with a focus on forthcoming independence. Papua New Guinean officers were being promoted proportionately through the ranks to positions of higher responsibility, mentored by their Australian colleagues. When independence came, the PNGDF was in capable hands with



NSW members with (PIB & NGIB) WO 'Jock' Wilkinson, aged 102, Anzac Day 2023 (courtesy of Peter Porteous)

sound assets, and respected by government and citizens alike.

Those Australian officers who had served in the PIR and other PNGDF units and who were fluent in *Tok Pisin* were said to have had their personal file 'marked with the black hand' and were affectionately called '*Blackhanders*'. After 1975 this became a badge of honour and a precursor for selection for service in the newly Independent Papua New Guinea.

Post 1975, those with previous experience in PNG were highly sought after to serve in critical positions under the command of former PNG classmates and other Portsea graduates. This was a unique leadership situation and required the utmost mutual loyalty, trust and respect. Other Australians who had PNG service in the army, navy, RAAF or 183 Recce Flight before independence, also returned to serve in the PNGDF Land units, including the Royal PIR, the Maritime Element, the Air Transport Squadron and even the Royal PNG Constabulary.

About the PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Association

Many of those who served in TP&NG, or later in PNG, continued, through their membership of the PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Association, to support the objectives of the Association in commemorating those who served in Papua New Guinea both in war and in peace. With members across Australia and in PNG, this Association aims to promote the constructive role played by its members in the years before PNG independence. We hold commemoration services and publish stories and photos of the pre-Independent PNG Army on our website: www.soldierspng.com. As our name suggests, we also honour the Australian and PNG servicemen who fought in the PIB and the New Guinea Infantry Battalions during the WWII campaigns in PNG. Membership of our Association is open to all those interested, for the low cost of \$5 a year, at our website. •

Editor's Note: The author, Gregory J Ivey, is formerly 2 PIR 1969–70, and Russell Wade is formerly 1 PIR 1971–73 & Facilities Engineer, PNGDF, 1983–84.

Department of Agriculture, Stock & Fisheries, Taliligap, Rabaul

Part Three

THE GATEWAY FOR NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS (*didiman*) TO THE PNG ISLANDS:

Personal Experiences
in 1967

**PETER STACE &
JW (Bill) GORNALL**

Parts One and Two of this article focused on the history of DASF Taliligap and how Bill and I were introduced to the realities of agriculture and culture, important elements in our work. Part Three is the final instalment of this series.

Coconut Production

Coconuts and copra production was the first cash crop in most coastal areas of Papua New Guinea. Copra, being the dried coconut flesh, was sought after by early European traders for the production of coconut oil, a product that was, and is still, used for soap, margarine, ice cream and cooking. In the 1800s the world demand for vegetable oils and coconut oil was high. As early as the mid-1870s, traders were buying coconuts from the Tolai for the production of copra.

Emma Forsayth of Samoa, née Coe, widely known as Queen Emma of New Guinea after about 1890 (Robson: 1979, p 7), took her first long look at eastern New Britain about 1878. The Godeffroy men, German traders with a schooner in the area, showed the natives how to dry coconut kernels and make copra (Robson: 1979, pp 96–7). In New Guinea in 1882, Emma's brother-in-law, RHR Parkinson (who married her sister Phoebe Coe), joined her. Together they planned Ralum (near Kokopo on the Gazelle Peninsula) as the centre of a wide area of inter-related plantations. By 1885 their coconut plantations extended for miles around Ralum (Robson: 1979, pp 164-5).

The German administration of New Guinea was established in 1885, and one of its objectives was the production of copra sourced from indigenous farmer-grown coconuts, and later from commercial plantations that were established on the Gazelle Peninsula and other areas of coastal New Guinea. Copra plantations have been cultivated since the late 19th century, originally by German colonialists. Following World War I, these plantations continued under Australian interests, managed by companies such as Burns Philp, WR Carpenter & Co. and Steamships Trading Co., to name a few, as well as individuals.

When we RDOs were learning on the job, marketing of copra was well established through the Copra Marketing Board (CMB) and privately owned trade stores. The CMB



Sun-dried village copra production

bought copra by the bag, whilst trade stores were set up to purchase small quantities from growers. Traders would re-pack these small quantities of copra into bigger lots and onsell to the CMB at a profit. We were introduced to CMB staff and shown the big copra shed piled high with bagged copra waiting to be shipped overseas. The process of marketing large or small volumes of copra was well established by the mid-1960s (Jackman: 1988).

Domestic Use of Coconuts

Domestic consumption of coconuts is a major use of coconuts in PNG, and coconut milk is a principal ingredient in many Melanesian culinary recipes. Coconut milk is made from coconut flesh when it is grated and squeezed to extract the juice. This coconut juice or milk is used to boil vegetables, taro, sweet potatoes, fish and pork. It is also used in the famous *mumu*, where meat, taro and other vegetables, and coconut milk, are wrapped and tied in banana leaves and cooked in a hot pit. The *mumu* bundles are put into a pit and covered with hot stones, soil and wet bags, and left for hours. When the bundles are removed from the pit, the resultant meal is a gourmet dish, PNG-style. A *mumu* meal offers a lifetime of powerful memories, thanks to the flavours of coconut.

One of the first aspects of coconut production

we learnt was that coconut palms should be planted 27 feet apart. This method was the basis for coconut plantations and new village plantings. And yet, as we travelled around the Gazelle Peninsula, the first village we came to showed coconut palms growing like a planted forest. Individual palms of all ages were planted really close together.

An explanation was provided by agricultural assistant, Kepas, Taliligap's residential Tolai cultural staff member, who said:

With the matrilineal inheritance of the Tolai, there may be two or more people with legitimate rights to grow a garden on a piece of land. In a short-term food garden, each person may plant their garden at different times with no problems. However, coconuts are a long-term crop, and each legitimate person plants their own coconuts, resulting in lots of palms on a piece of land.

Then the next generation may come along, and the younger person who also has some traditional rights, plants their own palms. The result is a forest of palms with limited production, but everyone is happy (maybe).

Kepas showed us how cultural values were more important than the best economic model for agriculture.

Livestock Production

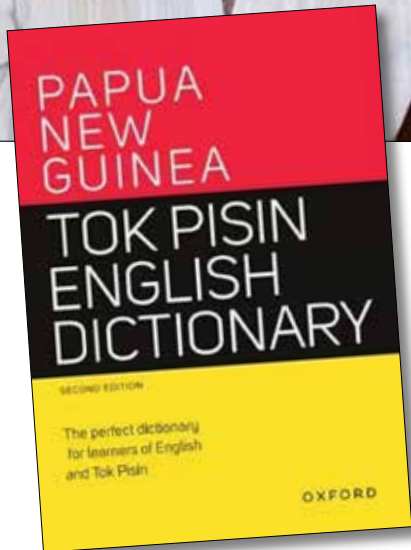
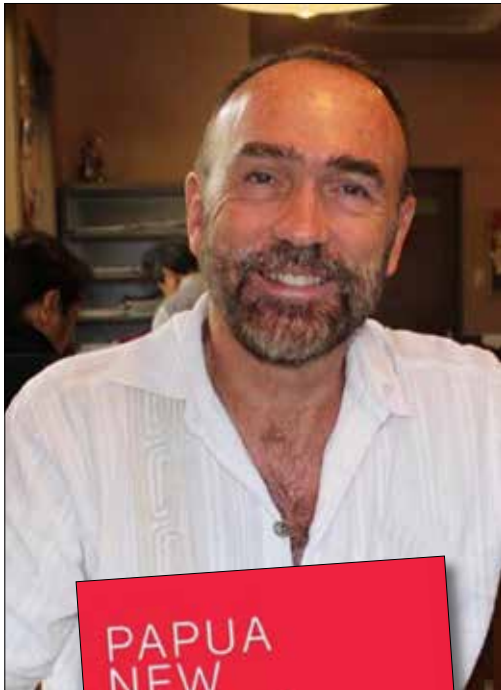
Livestock production on the Gazelle Peninsula was mainly free-range pigs and poultry, where animals were allowed to scavenge around the villages. They were fed food scraps and used coconut scrapings to keep the animals close to their owners. When found, chook eggs were collected, and fowls and pigs were slaughtered as required.

Sometimes, day-old chickens were ordered from hatcheries in Australia or Port Moresby and paid for through the DASf office. These chicks were fed scraps and commercial feed and raised to a slaughter weight. When the birds were ready, they were sold through the market or prepared for a special cultural event or *singsing*. Animal protein (except fish) was essentially kept for special occasions and represented a small but very important element of agricultural activities.

(continued on page 44)

Who Started Tok Pisin?

PROFESSOR CRAIG
ALAN VOLKER



In this monthly discussion we will answer one question about language in PNG and beyond. This month we are looking at how *Tok Pisin* started, just who started it, and why.

Of all the 830-plus languages in PNG, *Tok Pisin* is by far the most widely spoken. Most of us use it daily in the market, with our friends, and sometimes even in our family. But few people know exactly what its origins are. Often I hear people say that ‘the Germans brought it here’ or ‘Europeans didn’t want us to learn English’ or ‘it’s how the Australians used to speak to us in colonial days’.

Just where does the truth lie and who started the language? The actual origins of *Tok Pisin* lie in the central Pacific in the middle of the 1800s. About 30 years ago the late Professor Roger Keesing of the University of California traced its origins to the Western Pacific when sailing ships had begun hunting whales and trading on the islands.

The ships were headed by American and European officers with crews from many countries, including an increasing number of Pacific Islanders, who usually did not speak either each others’ languages or much English, but who needed to speak to each other and to their officers. They used the English words they heard as best they could. Some learned English well, but others ended up using English words in phrases and sentences like their own Pacific languages. Some also used words from Chinese Pidgin English that they heard on trading trips to Chinese ports, such as the Portuguese words *saber* (to know) and *pequeno* (small, which ended up as *pikinini*). When there was a word that was common to many Pacific languages such as *susu* (breast or milk), they used that word instead of an English word. As new sailors came on board, they learned this pidgin from older hands.

The *pidgin* came on land when sailors returned home. When ships moved into Melanesia in search for sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer* (sea cucumbers) for trade with China and later for blackbirding, the language followed them. Pidgin English became so identified with the *bêche-de-mer* trade that in Vanuatu it is still called *Bislama*, a local way of saying ‘*bêche-de-mer*’.

On plantations in Queensland and Sāmoa, blackbirded Melanesians from many different languages had to live and work together. Those who knew Pidgin English from contact with sailors taught it to others. It was easier than learning English because the grammar was based on Pacific ways of speaking. In any case, few of the blackbirded plantation

workers had many opportunities to mix with Europeans often enough to learn English.

When blackbirded workers returned home to Melanesia, they brought the language with them and taught it to any of their *wantoks* or relatives who might be going to work on plantations in the new German colony in the Bismarck Archipelago. Here they sometimes heard German words such as *raus* (get out) or *gumi* (rubber), that do not appear in the Solomons or Vanuatu.

Many of the first plantations were in the Tolai areas of New Britain where workers started to use Kuanua words such as *kakaruk* (chicken) and *lapun* (old person). The way they put words together also became more like Kuanua. As Rabaul was the capital of the German colony, this was the type of *Tok Pisin* that workers and policemen took to other areas.

This process continued under the Australian administration. As people from more and more language groups mixed together, the language spread to new areas. Even if Australian school teachers punished students who spoke *Tok Pisin* in school, this was the language that Melanesians preferred to use with each other because it was based on Melanesian ways of putting words into sentences. After independence ever-increasing mobility helped it to spread throughout the southern part of the country and into interior areas like Enga where it had not been spoken before.

The important thing to notice in all this is that *Tok Pisin* was not invented by Westerners or forced upon them by colonial masters. It was a Pacific solution to deal with the dilemma of Pacific Islanders who were suddenly thrown together because of colonialism. Papua New Guineans have a strong desire to make human connections.

Tok Pisin is the result of this strong desire. What began as a very Melanesian reaction to the new colonial order has become the linguistic symbol of a new Melanesian nation.●

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(continued from page 42)

Pidgin English (Neo-Melanesian—*Tok Pisin*) was a widely used language amongst many of PNG's people, especially in New Guinea but also in some parts of Papua. It followed then that for field officers in particular, to converse with people in a country where its inhabitants spoke some 800 different languages, the widely used Pidgin English should be learned. So our introduction to *Tok Pisin* was at a course in Taliligap run by Geoff Gaskill. Our future field postings provided the majority of our education in this endeavour.

All too soon, following our short orientation at Taliligap, we were posted to various locations in the New Guinea Islands to learn our profession 'on the job'. Bill was posted to Talasea, West New Britain in July 1967 and in November to Kandrian, WNB. Peter was posted to Kavieng in New Ireland in July the same year and in January 1968 to Hoskins, WNB, the start of the Oil Palm scheme.

The first address that parents and friends of many new *didiman* would address their letters to was: DASF, Taliligap, Rabaul, East New Britain, Territory of Papua New Guinea. Taliligap remains a powerful recollection of Papua New Guinea for expatriate men and women who went to PNG as agriculturists.

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Road-scape of rural Gazelle Peninsula showing coconuts of various ages and planting densities (Photo by Bill Gornall 1967)

'Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines'

CAPT. GARRY HONOUR, Retd



Capt. Garry Honour in an Air Niugini Boeing 707
(Photo taken by a fellow crew member)

A Tribute to Aviators in PNG

Here are a few tales put together remembering some legendary Papua New Guinea aviators whom we all respect.

Captain GA (Dick) Glassey

The following biography is based on an obituary written by Peter Sharpe and published in the Port Moresby Post-Courier on 1 September 1995.

Although Dick Glassey was with Adastral for only a short time in the mid-1950s, it is significant that he served his time with the company in Papua New Guinea, for he went on to become a central figure in the development of postwar civil aviation in PNG.

Born George Argyle Glassey, in Ashburton, New Zealand, Dick acquired his nickname through a childhood fascination with a radio serial about Richard the Lionheart. Thus he became known as Richard, which was inevitably shortened to Dick. After leaving school, Dick joined the New Zealand Army, serving several years with the occupation forces in postwar Japan.

He then moved to Australia, where he cut sugarcane before applying to join the Royal Australian Air Force. After pilot training he was posted to No. 87 (PR) Squadron, flying Mosquitoes on photo reconnaissance and aerial survey work. At this time 87 Squadron was commanded by Ted McKenzie who was later to become Chief Pilot and Operations Manager of Adastral.

Ted McKenzie's successor as Operations Manager, Mike Wood, also served in 87 Squadron, as did Adastral pilots Graham Holstock and Leon

Gordon. Sadly Graham Holstock lost his life in the crash of Hudson VH-AGO at Horn Island.

Dick Glassey joined Adastral in 1955, flying Hudsons, mainly in PNG. The nomadic lifestyle of a survey pilot did not appeal to Dick, as he was then raising a young family, so he joined Mandated Airlines flying DC-3s out of Madang.

After Mandated Airlines was taken over by Ansett, Dick managed the light aircraft division of Ansett-MAL. With the decline in the numbers of the light aircraft fleet, Dick became Chief Pilot for Ansett Airlines of Papua New Guinea (formerly Ansett-MAL).

In conjunction with another Ansett pilot, he sponsored flying training for PNG's first national pilot, Napoleon Onsem. Dick's ongoing involvement in promoting the training of national pilots was one of his proudest achievements.

With the approaching independence of PNG, Dick was appointed Chief Pilot of the new nation's carrier, Air Niugini. After his subsequent promotion to Operations Manager of Air Niugini, he helped set up the National Pilot Training Scheme. Up until his retirement, Dick was flying Fokker F.28s on domestic and international services. After a distinguished flying career he retired to Brisbane, where he drove a taxi for relaxation!



Capt. Dick Glassey receives the traditional pilot's retirement after his last flight with Air Niugini. Pushing the wheelchair is Capt. Peter Sharpe. At left is Capt. Malcolm Douglas, on the right is Capt. Val Lysenko.

(Photo: Post-Courier courtesy of Peter Sharpe)



Captain Billy Johns (photo taken by Dennis Gray)

Dick Glassey passed away in Brisbane on 3 August 1995 after a short illness. The pallbearers at his funeral were Captains Aria Bouraga, Lockly Sabumei, Peter Sharpe and Malcolm Douglas, all wearing Air Niugini uniforms, representing three decades of PNG aviation.

Captain W (Billy) J Johns

Bill Johns was born on 14 February 1928, in Proserpine, North Queensland. The Johns family was keen on music—Billy's father played in a band in Proserpine and young Billy got a taste for it. Later on, Bill was raised in Hobart, Tasmania, and became a timpanist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, playing the kettledrums.

It seems that young Billy got a taste for flying and was trained initially at Archerfield Airport in Brisbane on 12 October 1950, possibly at the Royal Aero Club of Queensland.

In 1951 he relocated to Hobart in Tasmania and continued flying training at Cambridge Airport under Chief Flying Instructor Lloyd Jones. From 1951 to 1953 Bill completed his private pilot licence and continued his training to commercial pilot standard for the next two years. During this time Bill flew various aircraft such as DH-82 Tiger Moth, DHC-1 Chipmunk, Auster types, Percival, Wackett and Miles, which included Aerobatics. Other types flown were the American Grumman, British Beagle and Thorp aircraft.

Later in 1955 Bill moved to the Territory of Papua New Guinea to continue his aviation career. He joined Territory Airlines of Goroka which, at that stage, was owned by Jack Gray and Jack Smith. When at TAL, Bill flew the DH-84 Dragon, Beechcraft 58 Baron and 95 Travelair.

Around 1956 Bill began flying for Mandated Airlines (MAL), which started his amazing airline career. In the Territory, Bill flew the Piaggio P-166 and later the DC-3/C-47, in which he flew almost 9,500 hours. He also flew almost 300 hours on the DHC-4 Caribou, a devoted cargo aircraft from De Havilland, Canada.

Over the subsequent years, the PNG Airline industry expanded, and MAL became known as

Ansett MAL, later Ansett Airlines of PNG, and eventually incorporated into Air Niugini, which launched on 1 November 1973.

With Air Niugini, Bill flew the Fokker F-27 (over 7,000 hours), the Fokker F-28 (some 5,400 hours) and the Boeing 707 for some 365 hours. He continued flying in PNG until 1985.

Bill's next stop was Nuku'alofa in Tonga, where he was appointed to Friendly Islands Airways until 1988.

Later that year Bill relocated back to Queensland, where he flew for Flight West for seven years, working with Dennis Buchanan once more, following the cessation of Talair in PNG. Bill returned to PNG in 1995, working with Milne Bay Airlines for three years, flying the DHC-8 Dash 8.

Overall, Bill spent some 33 years flying in PNG which is the most distinguished career of any pilot associated with PNG. He also became Chief Flying Instructor of the South Pacific Aero Club based at Jackson's Airport Port Moresby. This was in conjunction with John Close and Vince Sanders.

During his 47 years in Aviation, Bill amassed a grand total of 31,055 hours, and we who remain are in awe of this wonderful 'legend of the airways'.

Overall Capt. Bill Johns will be known for an incredible flying record centred on Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Australia. A man of many talents, all the way from an incredible and well respected aviator to an accomplished musician and drummer as good as the best.

Capt. Johns passed away in Brisbane on 1 May 2012, aged 84 years.

Captain Graham Syphers

Graham Syphers, born 16 January 1944, passed away on 16 June 2020, aged 76, in Nambour, Queensland

Can I simply say just how highly respected Graham was in the aviation communities of PNG, the Solomon Islands and later in Australia? Graham was legendary amongst those of us who have spent our entire working lives in aviation.

I knew Graham from around 1964 when I was stationed at the Scone Aero Club trying to talk

farmers, graziers and businessmen into charter flights on behalf of the company I was working with at the time—Tamair of Tamworth. Graham was flying Col Pay's Cessna 180 from Scone Airport at the same time, and I often looked across the fence with envy and admiration for his lifestyle.

I was fortunate to fly with Graham shortly after we both joined Territory Airlines, initially based at Goroka in late 1965. I flew with Graham often, learning so much from him and sharing some wonderful times together.

Graham returned to PNG to form Macair PNG, while I ended up with TAA, first in Essendon and later back in the TPNG. I elected to stay on in PNG, flying for Air Niugini and eventually Singapore Airlines. Graham continued to fly in the Solomon Islands and elsewhere in the Pacific region, Norfolk Island Airlines being one of them. I lost track of Graham, as I believe he moved on to National Jet, continuing a stellar career.

I still miss Graham enormously. He was an inspiration throughout my career. I consider him as my longest aviation *wantok*, going back some 56 years. Graham might have carried out his final landing, but I am confident that his last landing would have been a real 'greaser' just like the ones we shared, and as an old veteran DC-3 Check Captain back in the TAA PNG days he would sometimes comment: 'Shags, that was like a cat pissing on glass!'

We still miss you enormously. Vale Captain Graham Syphers.

Garry Honour, Armidale NSW



Captain Graham Syphers

Editor's Note:

Tributes to Capt. John M Regan and Capt. W (Bill) Moore appeared in earlier issues of *PNG KUNDU*. John Regan's was in March 2024 and Bill Moore's was in September 2024.



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

Please send your obituaries and tributes for the next issue to the editor by 25 April 2025, if not before, the Copy Deadline for the next issue: editor@pngaa.net

HOWCROFT, Neville OBE d. 2 November 2024

Queensland-born Neville Howcroft joined the Queensland Forestry Department as a trainee in forestry survey and assessment, based at Byfield plantation, about an hour's drive from Rockhampton. He travelled to Papua New Guinea in the mid-1960s, joining TPNG Forests in Bulolo in 1966, where he assumed responsibility for the Araucaria tree improvement program from Leon Clifford.

Working closely with John Smith on the Pinus tree improvement program in the Bulolo-Wau area and the PNG Highlands, Neville's work extended to trialling eucalypts and casuarina. He went on to lead the establishment of the National Tree Seed Centre at Bulolo to support reliable seed sources, genetic resources, and conservation.

During the 1970s, at Bulolo, Neville conducted activities on grazing under the Araucaria and pine plantations, including making several new legume introductions. He was transferred from the Bulolo Research Station and National Tree Seed Centre to join the Forest Research Institute in Lae. Here, Neville enrolled with the University of Technology to study and research a terrestrial orchid genus part-time while working at the Forest Research Institute in Lae, receiving an

M.Ph. degree in Plant Taxonomy in 1994.

Neville and his team made several Hoop and Klinki (also spelt Klinkii) provenance seed collections in PNG in the late 1960s and early 1970s, funded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations. Klinki pine is a Papua New Guinean softwood usually made into plywood in Australia. Neville specialised in high-value plantations, plant propagation, small-holder agroforestry systems, regeneration of disturbed sites, tree improvement programs, training and extension.

Queensland's renowned vintage tree breeder, Garth Nikles, first met Neville at Byfield in the early 1960s. He wrote of how once Neville went to PNG, he was dedicated to all aspects of forestry to which he was assigned and started many other projects. His enjoyment of discovering and creating new orchid forms was legendary.

Ian Bevege, another ex-Queensland Forestry and



Neville Howcroft OBE

AusAID consultant, also knew Neville in Qld forestry before he went to PNG. Their paths crossed again in the 1980s to 1990s. While Neville was at Unitech Lae, he and Ian forayed into the Hoop/Klinki country and admired Alan Cameron's teak plantings. After Neville retired to Brisbane, their contact was ever botanical, involving Begonias and Rhododendrons. Ian spoke of Neville's orchid skills and knowledge as amazing. 'Neville was a real botanist of the old school as well as an accomplished forest tree man and, latterly, academic.'

In the early 1980s, Neville provided pollen from the Bulolo trees that were used in Queensland to produce provenance-hybrids contributing to advancing the Queensland Hoop pine breeding program.

In 1995, Neville accepted a position as project manager on a Balsa Project in East New Britain. With selected PNG staff, he re-established the industry in the Gazelle Peninsula, introducing a tree improvement program and improved tree seed sources.

He joined Vudal University in July 2007 to start a Forestry Department in the School of Natural Resources. Neville specialised in high-value plantations, plant propagation, small-holder agro-forestry systems, regeneration of disturbed sites, tree improvement programs, training and extension.

From 1966 to 2017, Neville

Howcroft was PNG's leading plantation tree breeder. His global botanical knowledge was second to none. Neville personally described several new species of orchids and published many forestry and botanical papers, including a wide range of scientific illustrations in overseas journals. He was recognised as a global authority on orchids, with an orchid, a shrub, and a new insect (a potential Pine pest) named after him.

Neville was awarded an OBE for services to eco-forestry and conservation of commercial tree species in the Pacific on 17 November 2011.

In 2017, Neville retired to Brisbane. A constant factor in PNG's forest tree plantation development program from 1965 through to his final days, Neville Howcroft OBE must be given special recognition for his professionalism and relentless devotion to forest tree plantation development in PNG.

Kanawi Poursu, President of the PNG Forest Industry Association and former longest-serving managing director of the PNG Forest Service, acknowledged the loss of Neville Howcroft to the PNG Forest scene. '*Mi sori tru long harim olosem Neville lukim yumi pinis.*' We've lost again another of our comrades and a cornerstone in PNG's Forestry history—a great silviculturist, tree breeder and a friend.

Dick McCarthy



DENOON, Emeritus Professor Donald John Noble

d. 3 July 2024

Professor Denoon, born in 1940, was on the academic staff of the Australian National University from 1982 to 2003 in what would become the School of Culture, History & Language. He was Professor of History at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) from 1973 to 1981.

The professor's inaugural lecture at UPNG in 1973, titled *People's History*, signalled the importance of oral traditions for national identity in a country on the eve of independence. His tenure at Waigani straddled Papua New Guinea's transition from territory to independent state, a watershed period on which he wrote extensively.

For those wanting to know more about his career, they can search for his papers at the ANU's Pacific Research Archive in the Menzies Library (ANUA 411).

(Photo and information taken from the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific website)

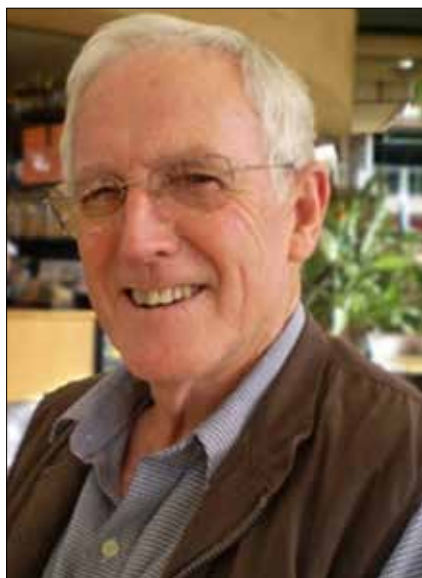
HARDY, Graham Gregory
d. 24 August 2024

Graham Gregory Hardy passed away peacefully in Brisbane, surrounded by members of his loving family.

Born on 22 May 1931 in Woolloowin, Brisbane, Graham lived a life defined by service, adventure and devotion to his family. The eldest child of Greg and Eileen Hardy, Graham spent his early years on the family's dairy farm at Springbrook with his siblings, Ian and Judith. From an early age he demonstrated a resilience that would mark his life.

Graham's childhood was one of exploration and solitude with Springbrook as his playground, barefoot and free-spirited, he developed a deep love for the land, a trait that would stay with him throughout his life. Graham attended primary school locally and later went on to St Joseph's Nudgee College for his secondary education.

After completing Senior, Graham embarked on a career



in the Queensland wool industry, working at Grazco's Woolstores in Brisbane and travelling to southwest Queensland for wool classing. His early career also included two years of service in the Citizen Military Forces.

In 1952, Graham's adventurous path took him to Papua New Guinea. Following the short course at ASOPA he was posted to Kikori in the Papuan Delta as a cadet patrol officer. Subsequent postings included Minj in 1955, Wabag in 1957, Mt Hagen in 1959, Tambul in 1961, Kaiapit in 1964 and Lae in 1966, before culminating in 1974 at Port Moresby where he was appointed Deputy District Commissioner of Central District.

A defining moment of Graham's time in PNG came in 1957 when he was assigned as the defending officer in the Supreme Court trial of Aro, a tribesman sentenced to death for the murder of his two wives. This case, which culminated in Aro's execution, forever changed Graham's view on capital punishment. Aro was the last person to be executed under Australian rule in PNG.

In 1958 Graham married Patricia Barry, his lifelong companion and the love of his life. Together, they raised eight children—James, Michael (Mike), Christina, Timothy, Anna, Matthew, Helene and Ben.

After PNG's independence in 1975, Graham and Patricia returned to Australia where Graham transitioned to a new career with the Health Insurance

Commission and later the Commonwealth Department of Health. His humanitarian spirit shone during a six-month secondment with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Ethiopia during the devastating 1984–85 famine.

Graham and Patricia retired to Springbrook in 1995, spending their later years operating 'Hardy House' a bed and breakfast surrounded by the natural beauty that shaped his childhood. Graham's involvement in the community continued with participation on various local committees including the chamber of commerce and land care.

Graham was not only a man of action but also a man of reflection and letters. In his later years, he took to writing his memoirs, capturing his life in the pages of notebooks filled with memories of his adventures in New Guinea, his childhood on the farm and his career in public service. His legacy, however, extends far beyond those pages. He was a man of great integrity, compassion, and loyalty—a quiet leader who made a difference wherever he went.

Graham loved singing, he was an active member of the Queensland Bach Society Choir and his parish choir. His Catholic faith was a steadfast guide throughout his life, and he was especially proud of his involvement with the Secular Franciscan Order in his later years.

On 24 August 2024, Graham's long and remarkable journey



came to a peaceful close. His passing marks the end of an extraordinary yet unpretentious life and he leaves a legacy of service, love, and resilience. He is survived by his beloved wife, Patricia, their eight children and families, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

His memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

Mike Hardy

(Photos courtesy of Mike Hardy)

LOCKLEY BEM, Ian

d. 13 August 2024

A full and interesting life!

Ian was born in Adelaide on 11 December 1942, and the family moved to Brisbane when he was seven years old. As a young child Ian was fascinated with how things worked. His favourite present was a battery, a torch light bulb and some wire so he could rig up a light for a model house he was building with pieces of timber and other oddments, right under his mum's clothesline.

During Ian's growing years he became very interested in underwater activities, which led to his learning to dive and sail. Ian learned to sail on the Toowong Reach of the Brisbane River and, later with a mate, built a 22-foot plywood catamaran in the backyard. The 'cat' provided for great diving holidays around the Great Barrier Reef, establishing Ian's great interest in all things marine.

Ian started his working life as an apprentice fitter and turner with the Department of Main Roads in Brisbane. On the weekends he enjoyed racing motorcycles and diving on odd jobs with Engwirda Marine Salvage & Construction. In 1964 Engwirda Salvage was called upon to assist the Danish-owned and operated dredge, *Kaptajn Nielsen*, that capsized in Moreton Bay with much of its 24 crew members trapped. One by one, twelve survivors were brought to the surface. Ian and other divers were awarded the British Empire Medal in honour of their gallantry.

Ian was doing diving work on a cofferdam (a temporary enclosure built around a body of water to create a dry working environment for construction) at Burrum Heads in 1967 when he met a Maryborough Queensland girl, Betty Crawford. Ten days after meeting Betty, Ian left to join the MV *Craestar* as the ship's engineer for three years. Owned by CRA Exploration, the ship travelled through the Pacific Islands with geologists on board

to explore for minerals. Ian and Betty married in January 1969.

In 1970 Ian and a friend modified a 45-foot vessel, the *Salmar*, to make it suitable for salvaging aluminium from a wreck in Southern Lau, Fiji. A planned six-month trip to Fiji lasted 20 years, with Ian completing numerous salvage contracts throughout the Pacific. For example:

- *Ragna Ringdal* (Fiji 1971) recovery of aluminium ingots, *Southbank* (Rossellini Is, Kiribati) recovery of lead ingots.
- *Nam Hae 210* (Fiji 1971) salvaged *Maplebank* (Fiji 1975) from a reef in the Fiji Islands.
- *Tasgold* (PNG 1978) salvaged from Rossel Island, *Waigani Express* (PNG 1981) from Hood Point, *Manhattan Duke* (PNG 1983), an oil tanker salvaged near Port Moresby.
- *President Coolidge* (New Hebrides 1976) — removal of oil, *Espiritu Santo*, Vanuatu, *MS Mikhail Lermontov* (NZ 1986) removal of oil, Port Gore, South Island. New Zealand.
- *Anro Asia* (Aust 1981) salvaged from the beach at Caloundra Qld, *Co-Op Marine* ore carrier (WA 1981) salvaged near Port Hedland, Western Australia.

Ian later purchased a larger vessel, MV *Pacific Salvor*, concentrating on 'under the ocean work' using robots from Benthos in the USA. Unfortunately, the coups in Fiji and the 1980 recession in Australia affected his ability to gain parts for machinery and finances for some ventures. Returning to Australia after Fiji's second coup, Ian was

asked to manage the operation at Bing Bong Loading Facility in the Northern Territory for the McArthur River Mine. He did this for five years before returning to Brisbane.

Following Ian's next contract with the Australian Reef Pilots overseeing the building of new pilot boats and supervising the running of boats already in service, Ian and Betty chose a relaxed retirement on the Gold Coast.

Ian is survived by his wife, Betty, of 55 years, a daughter, Kirstine and son-in-law Anthony Healey (who was brought up in Port Moresby), a son, Stuart and grandchildren, Caitlin, Ayden, and Keelan, Ian's sister, Barbara and her family.

Keitha Brown

**RIDDELL, Robert
Binnie (Bob)**

d. 16 December 2024

Bob was born in Brisbane on 5 September 1939. Dissatisfied with life in Brisbane he saw an advertisement for several positions in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and applied for a patrol officer position and was successful. He started his career in the PNG public service as a Cadet Patrol Officer on 17 July 1961. Bob was 21 years of age when he attended an induction course at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA).

Popondetta was Bob's first posting and, later in the year he was transferred to Tufi. After three months of leave, he returned to Popondetta in July

1963 and was promoted to Patrol Officer Grade 1. After six months Bob successfully completed ASOPA's external entry exam to qualify for the long course which commenced in February 1964. After six months he asked to return to Port Moresby and the request was granted.

Bob was later transferred to Daru and, following a short stint there, he was transferred to the Western Highlands where he stayed for several years in Tabibuga (Jimi River) and Mount Hagen.

Morrie Brown, the officer-in-charge at Tabibuga in 1965, had always wanted to climb Mt. Wilhelm, which can be seen on a clear day from the patrol post, so Morrie, Bob and Father Joe, a Catholic missionary from Ambullua, set off with a couple of carriers. They reached the summit early on the third day. The sky was clear and the view spectacular.

In January 1966 Bob was offered a place in ASOPA's last long course, which he needed if he wanted a promotion beyond the rank of patrol officer.

Tinka recalls: *'We met at the Manly Hotel opposite Manly Wharf in Sydney and married in November 1966. Bob was posted back to Tabibuga while for me it was the start of a whole new life—the most wonderful experience and adventure. After three months of leave Bob was posted to Mount Hagen. Our first two daughters were born there in 1969 and 1972.'*

After that leave period, Bob requested a change of posting, which led to him being transferred to Alotau in Milne Bay District. He was offered a generous redundancy package and towards the end of 1974 he applied for it. We left Alotau for Port Moresby so that Bob could take up his transfer to headquarters while waiting for the redundancy package to be processed. The house we were staying in was broken into twice and Bob decided that I and the girls should return to Sydney and stay with my parents until he could join us.'

Bob recalls: *'By the time I finally said goodbye to Papua New Guinea in March 1975 I considered that the pinnacle of my career had been reached when I had been promoted to the level of Acting Deputy District Commissioner for the Milne Bay District. I was just 35 years of age.'*

As I stood in the doorway of the TAA DC9 jet at Jackson's Airport in Port Moresby that was taking me back to Australia, I gazed out at the airport terminal and, with some degree of sadness, I bid farewell to a country where I had spent the past fourteen years.' (Extract from Bob's book that he wrote for his grandchildren).

Bamahuta Bob

Tinka Riddell

**WEARNE, John Mowat
d. July 2024**

John was born on 16 May 1933. He passed his final year of high school in Queensland and tried one year of university, but found

the freedom of being a uni student was too much fun. When he was 19, another opportunity presented itself. In 1952 when he replied to a call for vacancies as a cadet patrol officer in Papua New Guinea. He had long, strong legs and, along with about 20 others, was selected.

Following an induction course in Port Moresby, John went to the Sepik District at Maprik and then to Yangoru. The young men of that intake formed strong friendships which lasted for many years.

John was posted to Maprik in the Sepik and used his legs to walk to Yangoru and vice versa. He was keen to learn about the local culture and, most importantly, his role in the area.

As I understand it, John had good training and a quick understanding of enforcing the law and keeping people happy. He occasionally enjoyed the use of a small motorbike to get around, but mostly used his own strong, long legs. The Maprik posting was a great introduction to the job.

After 21 months John was transferred to Namatanai in New Ireland, where travelling was as likely to be on a boat instead of in his boots. This was a great change from the Sepik. John spent another 12 or so months in New Ireland before being called to attend a course in Sydney, at Middle Head, with his colleagues.

The Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) consisted of highly valued lecturers teaching subjects from Law (and how to administer it) to Geography and others in between,

which in Papua New Guinea is very varied.

I met John while he was at ASOPA, as I worked in the library, so we became members of the group of patrol officers married to ASOPA employees.

In 1958 John returned to Kagua in the Southern Highlands to work on an airstrip for me to land on when I travelled up. This did not quite work out and, to his great disappointment it was not inspected until we started the walk from Ialibu. It was certainly an introduction to me, but the walk only took a day and a half.

Kagua was a lovely place to live—hills and not too hot which was helped by living in a grass hut. We didn't mind, and before our first child was born one year later we had a wooden cottage. All was well.

After two years we took leave, and in 1960 John was posted to Manus, which was different. Baluan, a lovely tropical island, became our home in 1961 for 12 months, which saw John being very busy with patrols and preparation for the coming local government elections.

Our neighbour was Paliu Moloat, who won first place in the voting, a position he kept for some years. John was responsible for keeping an eye on the Millennium Movement which Paliu had formed.

In 1964, after four years in Manus, John was posted to Telefomin, so it was back to the mountains, a move we enjoyed. There were some concerns owing

(continued on page 55)



**THURSTON,
Elizabeth (Liz)
d. 1 December 2024**

Author of two books and a great friend to the PNGAA, Liz joined the Management Committee in 2004 and was a vibrant and creative part of it for five years, continuing to help in various ways over the following years. In 2007 the PNGAA DVD, *Walk Into Paradise*, was launched, produced by Liz, with assistance from Ross Johnson and the PNGAA committee. Always interested and engaged, she spoke thoughtfully and was a kind friend to many of us. Liz was also a founding member of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society (initially called the 'Montevideo Maru Committee'). More to come on Elizabeth Thurston in the next issue.

Andrea Williams

**CADDEN, Elizabeth
Gloria, née Dibbs
d. 24 January 2025,
aged 108 years**

**MARCHMENT, Isobel
d. 16 January 2025,
aged 103 years**

Vales for these two PNGAA Centenarians will be included in a later issue of *PNG KUNDU*.

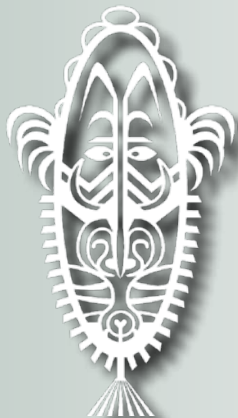


**A TRIBUTE BY
ANDREA WILLIAMS**

**Sir Charles
Watson Lepani
KBE, CBE, OBE**

**28 October 1947
–10 January 2025**

PART ONE



The Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (PNGAA) was greatly saddened to learn of the death of Sir Charles Lepani on 10 January.

Sir Charles was a tremendous supporter of the PNGAA over his many years as PNG High Commissioner to Australia, where he was based in Canberra from 2005 to 2017. The many ways Sir Charles generously supported the PNGAA are too numerous to list, but nevertheless are well recorded and remembered by its members.

He was humble and articulate; a gentleman with a wonderful sense of humour, passionately committed to the people-to-people links between Australia and PNG and was a dear friend to many Australians and Papua New Guineans.

A few special highlights of his connection with PNGAA were his interest in and attendance at many of the PNGAA and Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Memorial events. He was instrumental in the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Memorial occurring on time by ensuring a generous donation from Papua New Guinea acknowledging the WWII losses from both Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Sir Charles was a great supporter of the 2014 PNGAA ANZAC Centenary Commemorative Dinner and Symposium on 17 and 18 September 2014, titled *From Pacific WWI battlefield to Pacific Powers: A Century of Australia Papua New Guinea Relations*. He also kindly participated in an interview, which can be seen in PNGAA’s film, *Kiap: Stories Behind the Medal*.

Sir Charles always wished to spark the academic and research interests of Australian students and scholars in PNG and similarly with PNG students. Sir Charles advanced PNG’s profile through education by speaking at schools and encouraging them to form close relationships with schools in PNG.

Sir Charles considered his role in nation-building and the period from PNG’s self-government to independence in 1975 as a highlight in his life. The feeling of enthusiasm and sense of excitement was unique. As he tried to explain those feelings, he drew on past discussions with *kiaps*. ‘When you talk to some expatriate *kiaps*, those who go out in the jungles, take patrols—that sense of nation building. For us—it was independence.’

Thus, when Sir Charles met Australian *kiaps* through the PNGAA and while living in Canberra working in the

role of PNG High Commissioner to Australia, he encouraged them to write their stories. ‘What you did is part of our history; it’s important that you put it in writing for future generations, both Papua New Guineans and Australians, to learn how PNG came to be what it is today.’ Sir Charles was always keen on ongoing discussions about PNG. He believed it was the right of Australians to do this, ‘because today’s PNG is your creation also.’

Knowing that the road beyond independence would be both exciting and challenging, Sir Charles well understood the country’s available capacity at independence; that people with little experience had to run a new country, build leaders and a nation.

It was important to Sir Charles that his roles and experiences were both successful and enjoyable. He believed in equitable growth and development for Papua New Guinea. He greatly respected those Australians who were in PNG to help the new nation transition. This respect was mutual. Another tribute focusing on the life and career of Sir Charles Lepani will be included in the June issue.

The Papua New Guinea Association of Australia feels an enormous loss and extends its heartfelt sympathy to Dr Katherine Lepani and her family.

In keeping with Sir Charles’ wishes, a *haus kraik* was not held but a man of his standing cannot leave without recognition. A memorial service will be announced in due course.



Andrea Williams and the PNG High Commissioner, Sir Charles Lepani, at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1 July 2012

(continued from page 53)

to the Konfrontasi, a dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia that ran between 1963 and 1966 in a dispute about the border. There was no dispute with Australia, so it wasn’t a problem, but we did have more visits from the Australian armed forces than usual.

The routine transfer was proposed for John, and our next home was in Kundiawa with its colourful dancing and costumes. We enjoyed that time but it was a short posting, as John applied for a position in Port Moresby with the Department of Labour.

Our family had grown to six, and three of our children were in school—one on home correspondence and two at the local school. John then applied to change departments, as we were thinking of making a change to Australia.

Following our next leave, we could see that sooner or later there would be more Papua New Guineans taking over, which was a good thing. John decided to try for something in Australia, as he felt he was a long way from retirement, and of course he was right.

John applied to the Commonwealth and got a job with AIDAB, which meant he would still be dealing with the PNG government, even if it was from a completely different place.

In 1970 we left our long-time home to become Canberrans.

John died at home in July 2024 after our very happy times and years in Papua New Guinea, which were always in his mind.

Patricia Wearne

A TRIBUTE BY ROBERT MAGIN

Sir Julius Chan GCL, CGMG, KBE, PC

29 August 1939–30 January 2025

THE LAST MAN STANDING

I was saddened like many others to hear of the passing of Sir Julius Chan in his home province of New Ireland at the age of 85. He will always be remembered as the 'Last Man Standing' for many other reasons.

Julius was first elected to the House of Assembly in 1968 as the Member for Namatanai. In 1970 he founded and was the leader of the People's Progress Party. In 1972 he was re-elected to the Assembly, and shortly thereafter I had the good fortune of meeting him.

Following the elections Michael Somare, the leader of the Pangu Pati, became the Chief Minister, and Julius Chan (knighted in 1981) was appointed Papua New Guinea's first Minister for Finance. He was absolutely the right man for the job. Julius was already a very successful businessman, being involved in coastal shipping in Rabaul with his good friend Henry Chow. Julius was thus able to apply his business acumen in this new role for the benefit of the entire country.

At that time I had been in PNG for nine years and was working in the Dept of Treasury at Konedobu. Julius had asked the Departmental Head, the Treasurer, to nominate someone suitable in the department to be his private secretary. Two of us were nominated, and following an interview with Julius, I was fortunate to be appointed to the position.

Working with Julius was an honour and a privilege. He was always calm and dealt methodically and pragmatically with issues, no matter how complex. Having responsibility for the state of the economy and the financial health and wellbeing of PNG's diverse peoples did not phase him at all.

Soon after joining Julius's staff we travelled to Rabaul where his home was located. There I met his wife Stella and young children. The next day we



travelled by helicopter from Rabaul along the full length of New Ireland, stopping first at Namatanai, Julius's electorate, to meet and have discussions with his constituents, then to other villages along the way to Kavieng on the northern tip of the island. The island is so narrow in most parts you can see the ocean on both sides of the island for much of its length.

Amongst the top priorities for the Minister was the future of the Reserve Bank of Australia; the commercial banking system generally (currently all Australian banks); the PNG Investment Corporation; the PNG Development Bank; and importantly the future replacement of Australian currency with PNG notes and coinage.

In preparation for ultimate independence, which was to come much sooner than most people expected, the Reserve Bank of Australia became the Bank of Papua New Guinea in 1973, the country's central bank. It was a smooth transition, and Henry ToRobert (later knighted) was appointed the first Governor, a position he was to hold for 20 years.

The year 1973 was to be an even bigger year for PNG, the year the country was to attain self-government, the date which had already been

agreed by the PNG government to be 1 December 1973. However, PNG was a United Nations Trust Territory, and consequently the Australian government was required each year to report to the UN Trusteeship Council on its administration of PNG.

Julius Chan was appointed by the PNG Cabinet to lead a delegation to the Trusteeship Council meeting in New York to put PNG'S position on impending self-government and ultimately independence. In addition to Julius, the delegation consisted of Thomas Kavali and Joe Nombri as special advisers, John Nowles, Imbakey Okuk and me as secretary to the group.

Along the way we had a stopover in Hawaii. There the Australian Consulate had arranged (would you believe) a pink Cadillac convertible to take us on a sightseeing tour of part of this beautiful island. Being a sunny day, the top of the Cadillac was down. Julius and the group thoroughly enjoyed the outing. I didn't mind it either.

In New York we were joined by Mr Hay, Special Representative from the Dept of Territories in Canberra, and a Papua New Guinean, Ben Sabumei, who was attached to the Australian Consulate in New York.

In preparing for our first meeting with the UN, a humorous event occurred that deserves recording. Imbakey Okuk lost the keys to his suitcase. In sheer frustration and using brute strength, he literally ripped the case apart. On hearing of this, Andrew Peacock, whom we had met by chance in New York, purchased Imbakey a new case. Subsequently he was reimbursed through the system, and then PNG was charged through the financial arrangements. Being a former Treasury employee I knew how the system worked.

Andrew Peacock had been extremely popular in PNG as Australia's Minister for Territories in the Liberal government. Whenever Andrew visited PNG it was said he would bring a new shirt for Boyamo Sali. Boyamo was always the best dressed politician in town.

At the UN Trusteeship Council meeting Mr Hay, Julius Chan, Thomas Kavali and Joe Nombri sat at the Council table, and the rest of us sat behind. It

was agreed that Thomas Kavali would speak in Melanesian Pidgin, and when this occurred Ben Sabumei would translate into English. The questioning from the UN representatives was quite intense.

Concern was expressed by a UN member that PNG was being rushed into self-government and subsequently independence by Australia so the latter could rid itself of the responsibility of administering the country. Julius assured Council this was not the case. He said it was clearly the PNG government that had decided upon the date for self-government and would decide the date for future constitutional changes.

Julius mentioned that concerns had been expressed, particularly by Highlanders in the PNG government, that they had less exposure to the outside world and hence they might have less opportunities than others in the country. Julius said these concerns were taken seriously and were being addressed (I recall when I first arrived in PNG in 1963, there were areas in the Highlands and in the Western District that had not been contacted by Europeans).

Another matter of interest to the Council was what powers if any would be retained by Australia following self-government and independence. Australia might retain only defence and foreign affairs although internal security might remain in Australian hands beyond self-government.



Sir Julius Chan with Andrew Peacock in 1976

A further concern of Council was the general question of localisation of the public service. Localisation of positions, ie the replacement of expatriates with Papua New Guineans, had picked up pace by the late 1960s and early 1970s (permanent expatriate public service appointments had ceased as early as 1963).

Many other questions and issues were raised by Council and were all satisfactorily answered by Julius, Thomas, Joe or Mr Hay: matters such as the judiciary, the cost of borrowings, foreign investment, economic and social progress and even the price of copra, a major PNG export.

At the conclusion of the UN Trusteeship Council meeting, Ben Sabumei had made some arrangements to ensure we used our time constructively. First stop was a meeting with the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Most surprising to Julius and the rest of us was the amount of knowledge they had on PNG, and they were keenly interested to learn more about progress towards self-government and independence. A useful two-way flow of information occurred.

In the evening the Australian Consulate had arranged drinks for Julius and the delegates to meet local politicians and business leaders.

The next day executives from Kennecott Copper Corporation, who were mining copper at Ok Tedi, took Julius and us all to lunch at the famous 21

Club. And that was not all. On the way home they flew us to Salt Lake City in Utah to visit the Bingham Canyon Mine. At that time it was the world's largest copper mine. Julius was most impressed, as we all were, when we stood on the viewing deck, looking down into the enormous pit below. No doubt they were saying the mine in PNG could one day be as large and profitable as this one.

The trip to the Trusteeship Council meeting had been hugely successful, and Julius and the other delegates were very pleased with the outcome. Only six months later, on 1 December 1973, PNG attained self-government, and in less than two years after that the country was independent. Julius was knighted in 1981 and during his lifelong political career was Prime Minister on two occasions, Deputy Prime Minister four times, Minister for Finance on three occasions, and all the while a member of the House of Assembly. From July 2007 until his passing, Julius was the Governor of the New Ireland Province.

Sir Julius Chan was a great man and an impressive politician. He loved Papua New Guinea and all its people, and he spent his entire adult life serving the country. It was a great honour to work and spend some time with him.

My deepest condolences to his wife, Lady Stella, and to the family.



After the signing of the Raratonga Treaty Protocols, 1996—with the South Pacific Forum Chair PNG PM, Sir Julius Chan and Fiji's PM, Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka



MEMORIAL NEWS

RABAUL & MONTEVIDEO MARU GROUP

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

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

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



Events 1 July 2025

On 1 July 2025 there will be services to acknowledge the *Montevideo Maru* and the fall of the New Guinea islands at the Last Post Ceremony, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, and also in the morning, at the Brisbane Cenotaph. Further information will be in the June issue of *PNG Kundu*.

'The Battle for Australia has commenced'

Australia's Acting Prime Minister and Minister for the Army, Frank Forde, made an emergency broadcast on the day following the Japanese invasion of Rabaul (23 January 1942). Forde said:

Anniversary Day 1942 is a solemn day for Australia. For the first time in her history, an attack has been launched against her territory; for the first time her soil has been violated and the militia has probably seen battle. The Battle for Australia has commenced.

These significant words are now ignored in Australia.

Note: A link to the recording of those words is included in an interview by Ian Townsend at: <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/earshot/the-war-we-forgot/9083624>

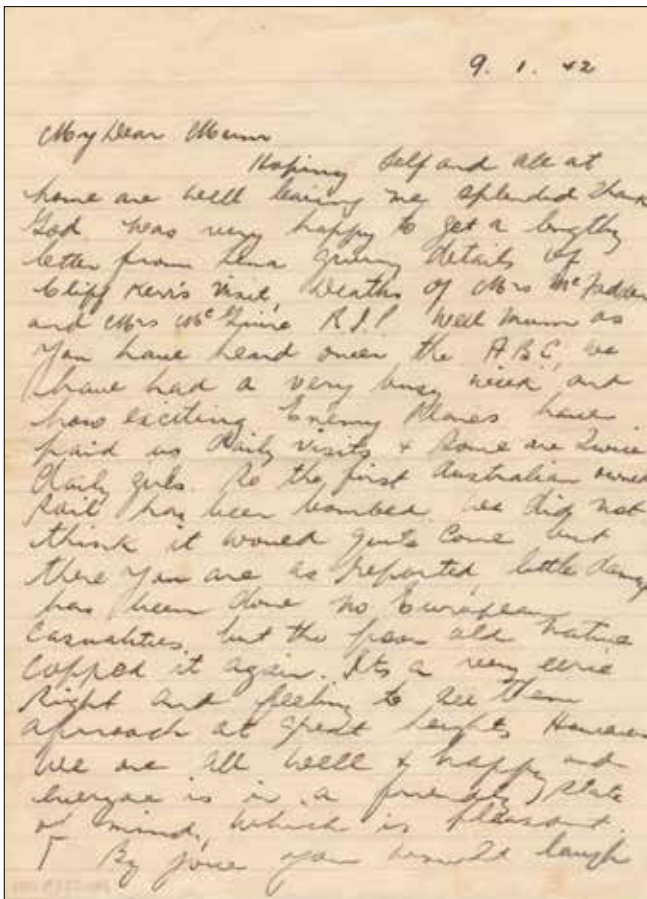
New Display in the Second World War Galleries at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra

So the first Australian owned soil has been bombed.

In mid-January 2025 we were advised that new objects from the Research Centre's collections have been placed on display in the Second World War Galleries. These original items include a letter from Thomas Walsh in Rabaul, who became a prisoner of the Japanese as a civilian internee, and who died with other civilians and soldiers in the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*.

The explanation with the letter in the AWM includes that Thomas Walsh was a telephone technician with the Postmaster General's Department in Rabaul.

Air raids on Rabaul had started on 4 January 1942. 'Enemy planes have paid us daily visits & some are twice daily, girls', Walsh wrote to his mother Catherine in January 1942, 'It's a very eerie sight and feeling to see them approach at great heights.'



Thomas Walsh's letter

Catherine Walsh did not receive formal confirmation of her son's death until October 1945.

The Japanese attacks on New Britain pre-dated those on the Australian mainland.

The letter displayed by the Australian War Memorial contains one important line from Thomas Walsh's notes: 'So the first Australian owned soil has been bombed.'

This is a significant sentence in the letter and yet ignored ... and not explained by the Australian War Memorial.

One can imagine their feelings as the softening up continued for three weeks. Hope, courage, bravery, vulnerability, concern and, for some, even fear. The men protecting their homes, and the soldiers who joined up to save their country, believed they were on Australian soil. Yet, no-one acknowledges this in Australia now.

Not only is there a fair share of misinformation and hard to find information, Rabaul does not get the credit it deserves for being a bombed Australian town.

Whilst PNG is now an independent country,

how sad for those Australians of Lark Force and the Australian and other civilians then under Australia's protection in an Australian town, that their sacrifice is often brushed over because the country does not now exist as an Australian territory.

Curtin had more details about the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 than he did about Rabaul. When he made a similar statement after the fall of Singapore, it was three weeks after Rabaul.

This year is the 50th anniversary of PNG independence from Australia. The men were fighting for their Australian territory. It was very much the start of the 'Battle for Australia'.

One wonders how those men would feel if they knew that what they went through for their country would be ignored.

This display influences Australian history and the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group has asked that the sentence, and an explanation, be publicly noted.

A reply from the Curator of Private Records in the Research Centre at the AWM states:

Thomas Walsh's letter offers some really fascinating insights into the experiences in Rabaul at the time, though I believe his letter refers to rail rather than soil (that is, 'So the first Australian owned rail has been bombed'). And: there is limited scope ... to explore the significance of the bombing of Rabaul in the collection highlights article. I am pleased to say, however, that the greater significance of the attacks on Australia (including its external territories, like Papua and New Guinea) are covered in much greater depth in the Second World War Gallery, where Walsh's letter is now on display.

It's interesting that Walsh would consider the 'rail' more important than the 'soil' being defended, and that the AWM appear to have 'limited scope' to explore and highlight this important historical statement.

Maxwell 'Smacker' Hazelgrove— Survivor of the Tol Massacre

Maxwell 'Smacker' Hazelgrove N109824, one of the Australian POWs who survived the Tol Plantation

Massacre, will have his war service commemorated with a commemorative plaque in the NSW Garden of Remembrance. The commemorative plaque for Max Hazelgrove is being provided by the Office of Australian War Graves.

All Australian Ex-POWs are eligible for commemorations from the Office of Australian War Graves, which is a section of the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs.

With thanks to Patrick Bourke

Lark Force Trek by Australian Army Awardees

Each year, the Chief of the Australian Army announces recipients of the Jonathan Church Good Soldiering Award on the Army's birthday. The award serves to 'recognise those soldiers whose actions embody all that we aspire to be in our Army,' Lieutenant General Stuart said.

The award is given to junior leaders in the Australian Army and recognises the courage and dedication of our soldiers.

The 2024 recipients of the Jonathan Church Good Soldiering award were Lance Corporal Lachlan Goulding, Private Caleb Walker, Sergeant L, Lieutenant Lachlan Maill and Corporal Jordan Neal (*pictured below*).

In November 2024, the Jonathan Church Good Soldiering Award recipients followed the Lark Force withdrawal route in New Britain.

These modern soldiers did not face the malnutrition, malaria, or desperate isolation that plagued World War II diggers, but experienced firsthand the dense, unforgiving landscape.



(Photo: Leading Seaman Nadav Harel/defence.gov.au)

At Tol, they honoured the 2/22nd Battalion soldiers, New Guinea Volunteer Riflemen, and other Australians killed on 4 February 1942, in a commemorative service.

Award recipient Lance Corporal Lachlan Goulding, a medic awarded for his work re-establishing a hospital ward at Moem Barracks in Wewak, read a closing prayer at the memorial.

It was such an intimate and opportune setting but also confronting to be standing on the same ground where so many lives were lost in such barbaric ways.

The contingent also honoured the 1,053 lives lost on the MS *Montevideo Maru*, Australia's worst maritime disaster. Prisoners, including men of the 2/22nd Battalion, drowned when the unmarked ship was torpedoed by an American submarine in the South China Sea.

Earlier that day, the contingent trekked from Marunga Village to Tol, the same jungle path the Lark Force used in their desperate attempt to evade the Japanese.

The soldiers later visited 2/22nd Battalion St Paul's Tol High School, named in tribute to the battalion's service and sacrifice. The soldiers shared stories of their journey and chatted about home and military life. Award recipient Sergeant L said:

The students were shy at first, but when I spoke about jungle bushcraft and how camouflage can conceal someone right in front of a tree, they were eager to learn more.

<https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2024-11-06/contingent-commemorates-lives-lost-tol-massacre>

Remembrance Day Second World War Plaque Unveiling

On the afternoon of Remembrance Day 2024 over 200 people gathered at the St Peters Heroes Memorial in St Peters, South Australia, for the unveiling by the Governor of South Australia, Her Excellency Frances Adamson AC, of a new bronze plaque.

The plaque records the names of 89 men from the former town of St Peters who died as a result of their service in the Second World War, and



SA Governor at the St Peter's Heroes Memorial

was funded by a grant to SPRA from the SA Government's Anzac Day Commemoration Fund.

The names included three men who perished with the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*:

- HOSKING, Herbert Champion
- MATTHEWS, Gordon Frederick
- SEARCY, Maurice Roffe

The reading of the names of those on the memorial by the School Captains of Prince Alfred College and St Peter's College was particularly poignant, as many of those who died were their age, or not much older.

Led by the St Peter's Residents' Association, under the guidance of local heritage consultant and historian, Denise Schumann, the team of volunteers explored resources including the Australian War Memorial, local council minutes, school records, honour rolls, newspapers and genealogy records to identify local names to be commemorated.

President of the St Peter's Residents' Association David Cree said the memorial underscores the significance of preserving historical information that is important to the local community.

Dr Herbert Champion Hosking was one of the

civilians aboard the *Montevideo Maru*, although he had also enlisted in the 2nd AIF and had been allocated a service number.

Hosking had also served in the Great War as a lieutenant in the 10th Infantry Battalion, enlisting on 19 August 1914, a few days after the declaration of war, and served at Gallipoli, leading his platoon ashore on the early morning of 25 April 1915.

Correction for December 2024 Memorial News

In the article about the Coastwatchers Memorial, on page 62 Bruce Collins is mentioned as a member of the Volunteer Rifles. This is incorrect as the name should have been Bob Collins, who is the present Vice-president of the NGVR/PNGVR Association.

The NGVR/PNGVR Museum

The NGVR/PNGVR Museum is open on the first Saturday of each month from 10 am to 1 pm. Visitors all welcome! Entry is from Nashos Place, Wacol (street address is 907 Boundary Road, Brisbane). \$5 entry helps the volunteers with their work in displaying/maintaining items. For those interested in PNG—go visit and be surprised!

The museum (*below*) is also available to be opened for special group visits.

Contact Paul on 0402 644 181 or email: paulbrown475@gmail.com



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

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

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

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

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

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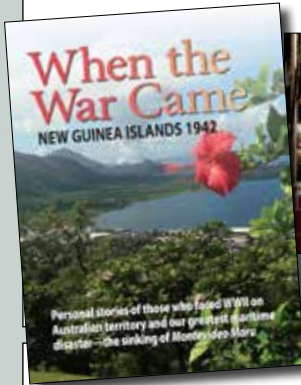
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For members receiving a printed journal, the address label shows the current status of your membership. Digital members can check their status by logging on to the website and clicking on *Membership* then *My Subscription*. Username is your email address. A list of the names and addresses of PNGAA members is now available on our website:

<https://pngaa.org/membership-directories/>



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

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Membership of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Inc (PNGAA) provides you with access to a contemporary organisation dedicated to strengthening the people-to-people links between Australia and Papua New Guinea, respecting our joint history, and promoting social interaction between a broad network of people.

Papua New Guinea & Australia are two nations sharing an ongoing story. This is a central focus of the PNGAA—fostering healthy conversations, activities, and the importance of our shared futures in a rapidly shifting international landscape.

The PNGAA welcomes anyone with an interest in the Papua New Guinea & Australian connection. With modern technologies and social media, we are now closer than ever to our geographic neighbours with increasing opportunities to improve that relationship—and we encourage you to explore and become actively involved with the PNGAA, so that we can all tell this story together.

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

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

◀ **Copy Deadline for the June 2025 issue: 25 April 2025** ▶

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

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In memoriam: Emeritus Professor Michael Alpers AO, CSM, FRS, FAA

Gregory Leech
& Kylee Andersen, WA



On a bright sunny morning, a memorial service took place in the spacious West Chapel at Fremantle Cemetery, Western Australia, for a truly pioneering scientist and compassionate humanitarian, Professor Michael Alpers AO, CSM, FRS, FAA. The chapel was filled with friends, esteemed colleagues and loving family members. Tributes intertwined with anecdotes sparked reflection, gestures of agreement and much laughter.

Professor Alpers was recognised not only as a world-leading medical researcher but also as a talented anthropologist, as well as an enthusiast and patron of literature, poetry, music, graphic arts, and more. His life was truly well lived, leaving behind a significant legacy.

Among the approximately 100 attendees were a dozen individuals from Papua New Guinea, including Dame Meg Taylor, a PNG diplomat known for breaking glass ceilings, and Dr Igitava Yoviga, a mentee of Professor Alpers and the current Director of the PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR). Professor Fiona Stanley, whose family has had deep ties to medical services in PNG, since the early 1900s, also shared a few words:

Professor Alpers, Emeritus Professor of International Health at Curtin University where he had been since 1999, was one of the best among us. He was Director of the PNGIMR from 1977 to 2000, making him their second and longest-serving Director.

Whilst at the PNGIMR, Professor Alpers established major research programs on the four major health problems, viz Pneumonia, Malaria, Malnutrition and Enteric Diseases.

He is renowned for his groundbreaking research on Kuru, a disease that affected only people in the Okapa District of Eastern Highlands Province. He was deeply committed to the communities with whom he worked, immersing himself in the lives of the Fore people and earning their trust and respect while unravelling the mysteries of Kuru.

Professor Alpers was a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, the Australian Academy of Science and the Third World Academy of Science. He was appointed an Officer of Order of Australia (AO) in 2005 and in 2008 was awarded Companion of the Papua New Guinean Star of Melanesia (CSM)—an award of which he was immensely proud.

In 2020 Professor Alpers received the Australian & New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science medal for his extraordinary impact on medical research.

At The Kids Research Institute Australia, which has had a longstanding collaborative relationship with the PNGIMR, Professor Alpers again mentored and inspired researchers and teachers alike.

In 2020 Professor Alpers and his partner, Honorary Emeritus Fellow at The Kids, Associate Professor Deborah Lehmann AO, initiated the STARS program (Supporting Training of Aboriginal Researchers & Staff) to build on the strengths and lived experiences of Aboriginal staff, students and researchers across The Kids.

Both highly regarded for their extensive work with PNG communities, Professors Alpers and Lehmann recognised the transformative power that a strong Aboriginal research community has on engaging the community and sustaining health outcomes.

As the founding donors, their inspirational and generous gift launched this important campaign which continues to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and staff at The Kids.

Our deepest condolences to Professor Alpers' family.

FEATURED: Professor Michael Alpers during his field work
(Image: UNSW Kirby Institute)

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