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Welcome aboard

Last May, Air Niugini was privileged to participate in His Holiness Pope John Paul II's tour of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

For a few days the spotlight of world media attention was focussed on this country, and in particular, on the Papal visit to Mount Hagen which must have constituted one of the most colourful stops ever on any Papal tour.

In this issue we review that day in pictures and tell a little about the happenings in the background, happenings missed by the huge corps of journalists present at that time.

I hope you will enjoy joining us in looking back at that special day in the history of Air Niugini.

Masket Iangalio
General Manager, Air Niugini



Top: Mr Masket Iangalio, the General Manager of Air Niugini meets Pope John Paul.

Above: Pope John Paul did a lot of flying aboard Air Niugini during his brief visit to Papua New Guinea. Here, he alights at Port Moresby after spending a day at Honiara in the Solomon Islands.

Cover: Why is this man all dressed-up in his finest attire? And why the glazed eyes and goofy grin? Answer — he's just shaken hands with the Pope. For the story on how it all came about, see page 17. Photo by Peter van Fleet.

No. 48 September 1984

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John Samo

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KARAWARI



MY arrival at bustling Mt Hagen airport after a flight from the coastal capital of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby, was as casual as catching a cab. Things became even more casual when I checked at the Talair desk for my connection to the little river airstrip at Amboin in the East Sepik. There was no record of my booking and it looked like I might have to compete for a seat on the eight seater aircraft that would be making the flight. Fifteen minutes before the flight was due to leave and long after I was having a conventional anxiety attack, Tara Monahan, the very charming, very appropriate and in this case very breathless, Trans Niugini Tours representative turned up with confirmation that I was in fact a bona fide booked passenger for the trip to Karawari Lodge.

Hotel of the headhunters

Story and photographs by Rob Walls

The plane, a well-used (like any aircraft in PNG) Britten Islander was loaded up with passengers and whatever free space was left between, then packed with cargo. We were jammed, albeit comfortably enough, amongst vegetables, wine, camera bags, luggage and a mound of those universal 'carry-alls' of Papua New Guinea, the brightly woven string bags called 'bilum'.

Fellow passengers for Karawari turn out to be a New Orleans doctor named Bill and his photographer friend Deborah. A twenty minute flight takes us over scenery, which despite this being my fourth visit to Papua New Guinea, never fails to lose its capacity to impress. We begin

our approach to Amboin, where we are just as equally impressed by how short the red dirt strip appears to be. The Islander manages it with plenty to spare. Apart from a few locals, a wind sock and some battered markers, it already seems as though we are in the middle of nowhere. Suddenly from the direction that we shortly discover to be the river, the management of the lodge comes bustling. A quick check to see that all their guests, freight and luggage have arrived as promised and they escort us to a tiny raft-like jetty where we board the "river trucks" with which we are to become most familiar over the next week.

A river truck in this part of the country, where all travel is

by river, is almost exactly what one would imagine if one had never seen one before. An orange, box-like punt, about twenty feet long, covered by a flamboyant orange awning to protect the passengers from the sun. A serviceable vehicle, which reduces a little of the glamour of being on one of the world's frontiers, by having well designed plastic patio furniture as seating. To us 'adventurers' it is a little too comfortable.

A fast skim up river of some ten minutes and the unreality of the place begins to set in. The river is wide, brown and fast flowing; its surface streaked with the wake of just submerged trees. Long crocodile prowed, dugout canoes lie drawn up on the mud banks unattended, their spear-like paddles stuck in the mud next to them. An unkind thought

Below: River trucks travelling on the Karawari river. These high speed boats are not only functional but comfortable too; bottom: a typical river scene, with the more traditional form of transport; left: sunset view from Karawari Lodge



crosses my mind that they have been placed strategically for our benefit . . . set dressing! They are real.

The lodge comes into view. Built of native thatch and strung along the top of a ridge high above the river we already begin to anticipate its commanding views of the country around. From the river trucks we walk practically from the boats into the back of Karawari's one vehicle. A battered Toyota four-wheel-drive, the only function of which will be to carry us up the hill from the boat to the lodge and vice versa. We are riding the only road and at that there is only two or three hundred metres of it. It is immediately obvious that one is

not going to be kept awake by traffic noises.

Our welcome at the main lodge house is preceded by iced towels and iced drinks, a custom that we discover is the natural conclusion to all of the expeditions during our stay. The main building is in the form of a 'haus tambaran' or spirit house. Rather appropriate in that it houses the bar as well as the dining area. The interior is like a museum of so-called 'primitive' art. Right up to the high, beamed, thatched roof there are carvings, masks and spirit figures, most of a quality rarely seen outside museums.

The accommodation is on a smaller but no less comfortable

scale. Modern bathrooms and ceiling fans and a view to the horizon that takes in three separate mountain ranges some fifty miles away. There is a small swimming pool which is ideal for cooling off after a long day on the river. It is set in a garden that contains specimens of the famous Sepik Blue Orchid, which was discovered by a gentleman with the unlikely name of Captain Neptune Blood. Captain Blood literally stumbled upon the flower while escaping from the Japanese during the second world war. There is a garden solely of these orchids near the patrol post. A stroll from the lodge to the patrol post can be heartily recommended. The diversity of flora and fauna is enough to send one diving into the small reference library which is kept at the lodge for enthusiasts. The sheer variety of butterflies, birds, lizards and flowers makes for slow progress. There is something to stop for at every step.

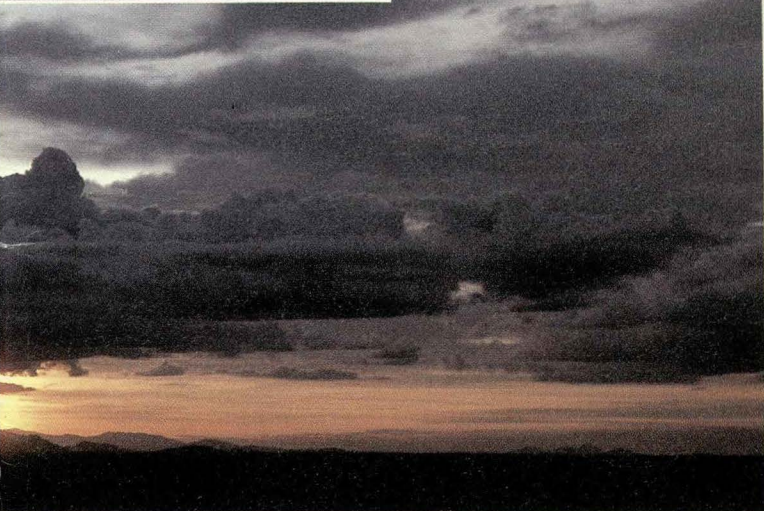
The verandah of my room and the 'haus tambaran' both face due west and that evening

the sun sets as symmetrically as one could wish for between two of the mountain ranges. After a quiet dinner in the rather awe-inspiring haus tambaran, we retire to the ghostly comfort of our mosquito nets.

The dawn at Karawari has to be experienced to be believed. The birds here have obviously never heard the phrase 'dawn chorus'. Bird song, bird screech, bird cacophony rent the air as though this is to be the last dawn. The sun seems to be torn from the jungle by the vocal might of these feathered terrorists. As it gets lighter they pack it in and they go off in search of breakfast. A waiter arrives with morning coffee and as if to add to the fantasy the coffee is accompanied by hot, fresh baked cinnamon rolls. Through the mist, which obscures the river, the sound of chunking axes drifts up. Breakfast fires are being prepared in the village below.

Not all birds go off to seek their breakfasts in the conventionally accepted manner for the avian species. A street gang of black-capped lorries has taken





to mugging the guest if they don't get their way with the cream and sugar on the coffee trays. These rainbow-coloured thugs destroy the trays of anyone unwary enough to decide to have their coffee on the open verandahs. Of late they have also taken to joining drinkers at the bar and imbibing the occasional glass of orange juice.

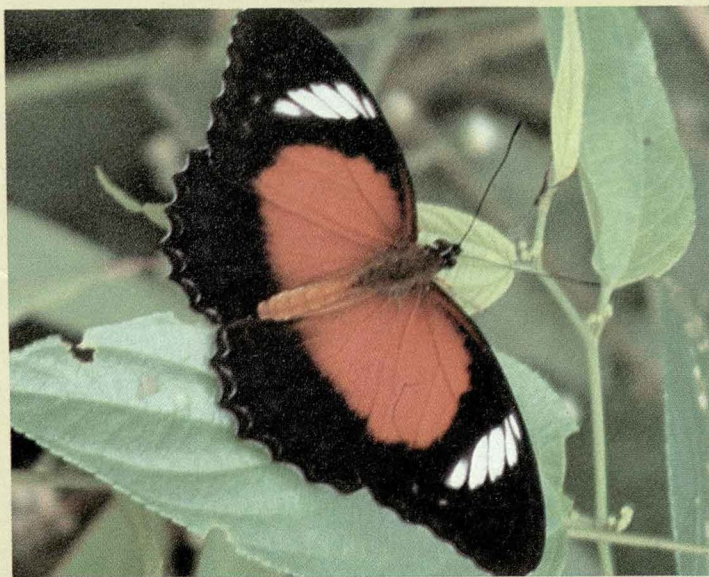
When I revealed to some locals back in Port Moresby that I was going to Karawari Lodge for a week, their reaction was one of horror. "No one, not even a photographer could find sufficient to interest them at Karawari for more than three days." How wrong they were. The ensuing days slid away, as smoothly as the dugout canoes negotiated the river system. Each day an adventure, each day experiencing the slight unreality that accompanies being deep in the Papua New Guinea jungle.

Skimming upriver in a slim, thirty-five foot dugout canoe, powered by an outboard motor is like living in a documentary film. Double rainbows arcing through the curving spray of

our bow wave add a breathtaking touch of beauty to our progress and it becomes easy to indulge in 'intrepid explorer' type fantasies. On our way, we pass the villages of the Amboin people; laughing children splash in the shallows and run along the bank waving and calling out to us. Occasionally we meet a canoe going the other way under human power and our boatman slows to a snails pace to avoid swamping them. A nod and a shy greeting acknowledges our presence and now and again there is a staccato exchange of news and gossip between boatmen. The river is the only highway and it will be a long time before its importance as a carrier of information is superseded by other means.

The 'expeditions' over the next few days take us up to a variety of villages on the river and depending on the number of participants, we travel either by canoe or river truck. I prefer the canoes as their progress is equally fast but more gentle. The skills of the boatbuilders of the Sepik, developed over centuries, have produced a boat

Left (insert): touring by dugout canoe on the Karawari River; below: one of the many varied butterflies that abound in the area; bottom: people from Wombramas village perform a dance that was usually staged to celebrate the return from a successful head-hunting raid



that travels in harmony with the river. Even when powered by a large outboard motor its disturbance of the surroundings is so minimal that even the egrets that fly off hurriedly on the approach of a river truck, rarely bother to interrupt their wading in the shallows.

Through an arrangement with the lodge, certain villages have undertaken to perform traditional ceremonies for visitors. It is possible to see simulated skin cutting ceremonies (tribal initiation) that although only simulated, carry all the mystery, magic and terror that would accompany the real thing. To stand in the gloom of a 'haus tambaran' and watch a group of feathered and

painted warriors perform this ceremony to the throb of drums and the haunting sound of the long bamboo flutes, is an experience to shake the nerve of the most intrepid traveller.

After one such ceremony, admittedly a dance in the open air, a group of Italian tourists expressed disappointment that the ceremony had been put on for their benefit and was obviously not the genuine article. Pointing out that the dance they were observing was a return from a headhunting expedition and that there should have been human heads swinging in the fish nets that the women carried over their shoulders soon put paid to any complaints about authenticity.

Below: Phillip, the 72 year old ex-headhunter in full 'bilas' is regarded rather warily by a tourist; right: patrol officer Yang Unua with four heads, confiscated under anti-sorcery laws

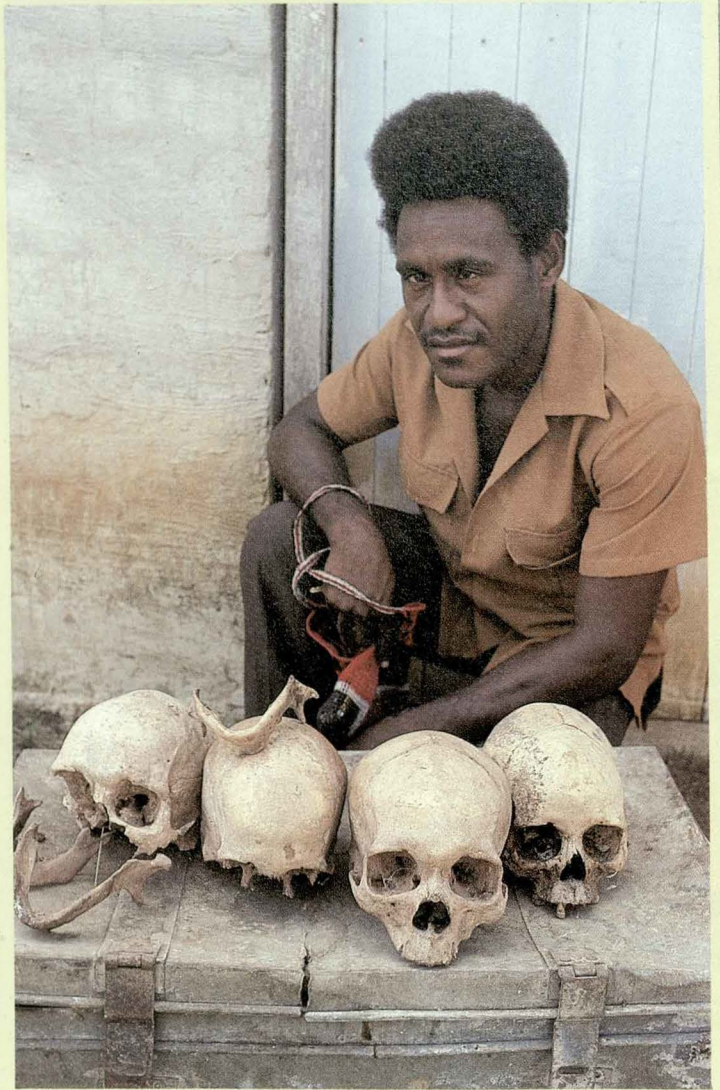


A couple of times a week the bamboo flutes can be heard in the comfort of the main lodge as a trio of musicians comes to the dining area to serenade the guests. It was here when I met Phillip, a true head hunter. At 72, Phillip is fairly old for a Sepik warrior. They are not known for their longevity. Although head hunting has been illegal for many years, Phillip has taken eight heads and claims to have eaten human flesh. As leader of the flute players a kindlier, more dignified man, one could not wish to meet. If your idea of collecting heads involves a camera, Phillip is more than happy to be photographed with you, so that you can go home and show everyone your friend; Phillip the head hunter.

Hearing that there was a confiscated head at the Patrol Post down at the river, I thought I might venture to ask the patrol officer if I might photograph such an object. The head, or to

be more exact the skull, was kept in the post and was impaled on a flute for display purposes. (Unlike the South American Indian, the head hunters of Papua New Guinea did not shrink the tissue, but kept the skull). I approached the subject with Young Unua, the patrol officer, as obliquely and as delicately as I could. We discussed my travels, the forthcoming elections in the Sepik district, orchids, etc. When I finally got around to broaching the subject, Young was more than helpful and told me that he had four more that he kept in an old patrol box in a store house down by the river. All of the heads had been confiscated under the Papua New Guinea anti-sorcery laws. No one was really sure how recently they had been obtained. The custom we are assured no longer continues. . .

When it comes to comfort, nothing is left out. Australian wine and beer is readily



available although sometimes because of the restrictions of airfreight, not always both at the same time. In fact it was revealed to me that when the incoming flight is a charter from one of the missionary organisations the booze has to be repackaged in soft drinks cartons as they refuse to carry liquor. If I were running an airline in the area, I think I would make a point of not carrying Christians.

Anyway if you should decide that you are the stuff that explorers are made of and wish at the same time to experience the tranquility that Karawari has to offer, then be prepared to part with a reasonable amount of money. Comfort anywhere does not come cheaply; comfort in the heart of the Papua New Guinea jungle least of all. Each night at Karawari will set you back about \$150 US, although this is inclusive of all meals and river excursions. You however save money, in that

other than spending your money on artifacts, there are no conventional shops within a hundred miles. The only additional expenses are for liquor. I can assure you that you will consider a stay at Karawari Lodge, a case of money well spent.

There is an undefinable appeal about the East Sepik that one can only put down to a yearning for innocence. A kind of simplicity that soothes the worn and frazzled psyches of city dwellers. As Rene Lecler describing Karawari Lodge in his book "The 300 Best Hotels in The World", expressed it ". . . what really counts is being here, at the edge of the world untouched and unsullied . . . In twenty five years of travelling, this is almost certainly the most unusual hotel I have ever visited." I can only agree. ☺



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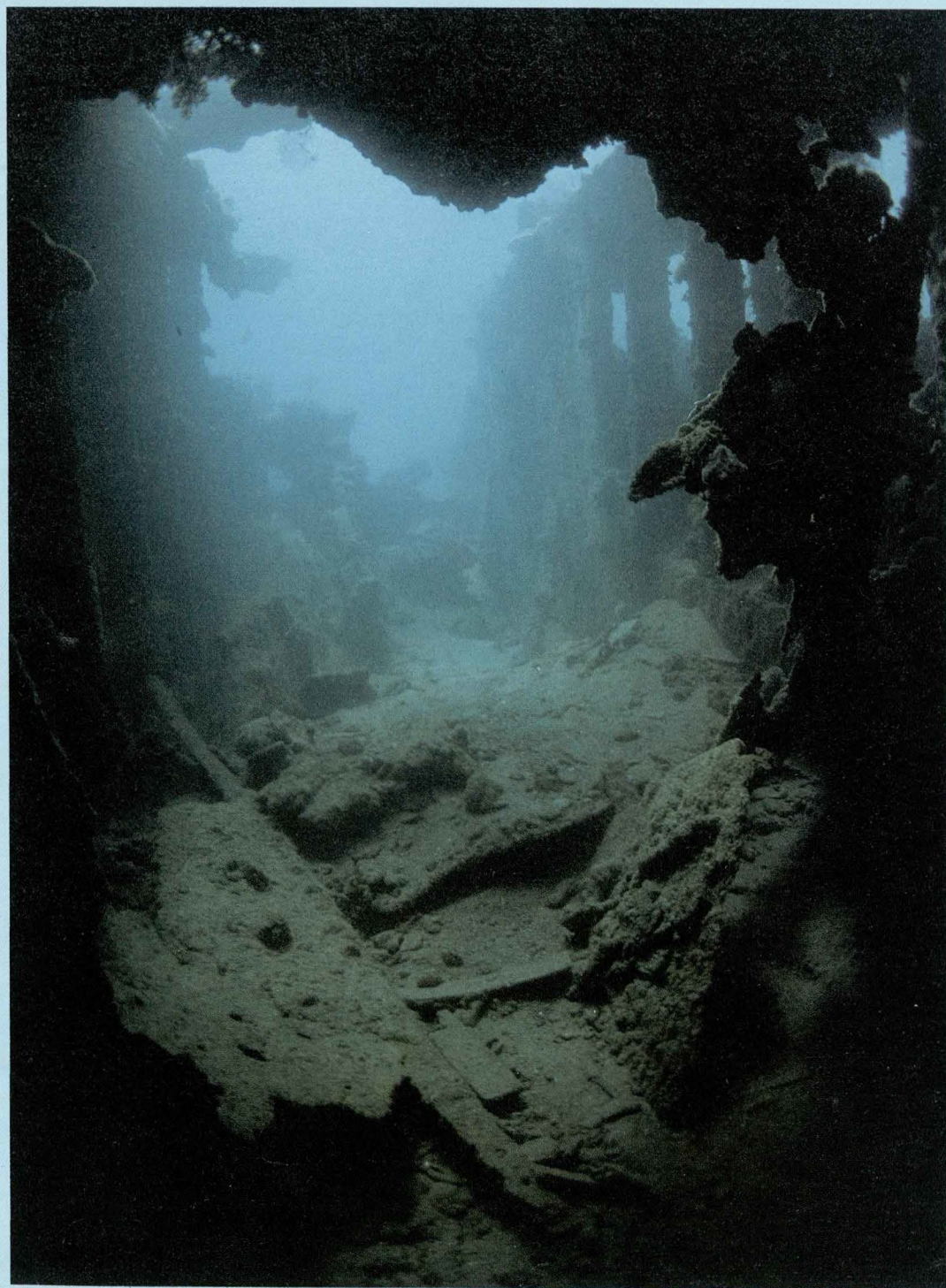
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BONEGI 1

Story and photos by Mike McCoy

“When day broke on 15 November the Americans saw lying at Tassafaronga in plain view, the four surviving transports of the force which had been hit the day before. The transports had no air cover. Three were beached and unloading, while the fourth was slowly pulling northwards towards Doma Reef. F. Battery of the 244th Coast Artillery Battalion had moved two of its guns from their field

artillery positions on the west bank of the Lunga to the beach. These guns opened fire at 0500 and hit one beached transport 19,500 yards away; the ship began to burn. The 3rd Defense Battalion’s 5-inch batteries opened fire forty-five minutes later on a second ship 15,800 yards away and hit her repeatedly. The beached target burned and listed to port. The destroyer Meade sailed over from Tulagi to shell both the ships and the landing areas, while aircraft from Henderson Field and bombers from Espiritu Santo attacked the remaining ships. By noon all four had been turned into burning, useless hulks which were abandoned to rust in the shallow water.”



THE foregoing succinct account is the official version* of the final destruction of a Japanese convoy attempting to land troops and cargo on Guadalcanal in November 1942. The “second ship 15,800 yards away” is not named in the account; it has come to be called “Bonegi 1”; “Bonegi 2” is the other ill-fated “beached transport 19,500 yards away.” Both of these wrecks are named after a nearby river whose mouth opens into the sea in their immediate vicinity.

Bonegi 1’s final resting place is on a reef slope of about 30°. It lies on its port side with the remains of the bow facing the shore in 4 metres of water. The stern of the ship is at a depth of around 60 metres.

Bonegi 1 is certainly the most dived-upon wreck in the Solomons — due largely to its easy accessibility and proximity to Honiara, 8 kms to the east. It is far from intact; the Americans did a thorough job in 1942 and the intervening years have not been kind. Wave action, earthquakes and the destructive work of salvage divers in the early 1970’s have all taken their toll and have combined to reduce much of the recognisable structure to little more than a twisted pile of rubble. It is the stern half of the ship in the deeper water that has more successfully withstood the ravages of time.

Nor can it be said that Bonegi 1 is a romantic wreck — its anonymity, together with its lack of history prior to its abrupt, traumatic end in 1942 ensure this. Yet when you dive on it a lot, it does become reas-

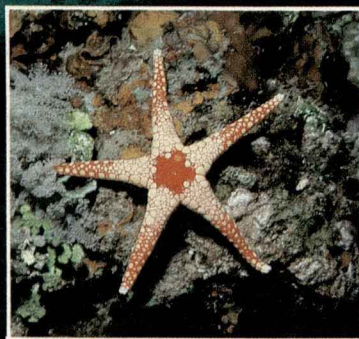
surprisingly familiar and perhaps its lack of pedigree is compensated by the characters of its inhabitants. The whole wreck teems with life — it has become a home for many marine animals and plants — virtually an ecosystem within itself.

I first dived on Bonegi 1 in 1969 and at that time and up until 1977 when a major earthquake collapsed the entire bridge section of the ship, you could swim through the still intact corridors and rooms in this area of the wreck. As the ship lies on its side, the rooms are of course 90° to normal orienta-

tion. Many times I went into what I assumed was the captain's private bathroom. Light blue porcelain tiles lined the entire room, the bath was more a miniature swimming pool — more than a metre square and deep enough to satisfy the most self-indulgent sybarite. There was a toilet in the corner of the room and living in the bowl of the toilet was a large lobster. I came to know this lobster well over the years though he would never allow a close approach backing down into the S-bend if you came too near him.

Several large Hawksbill

turtles have also been resident on the wreck for many years. These beautiful reptiles forage on the nearby reef during the day and at nightfall return to the same sleeping place — usually a sheltered crevice on the wreck. Some years back, diving at night on Bonegi 1 with some friends, we were making our way down the side of the ship when suddenly something hit hard on my right shoulder, spinning me around and knocking the light out of my hand. With an instant adrenalin rush I knew it was not another diver that had collided with me — I could see both of them below me. Inevitably thinking of

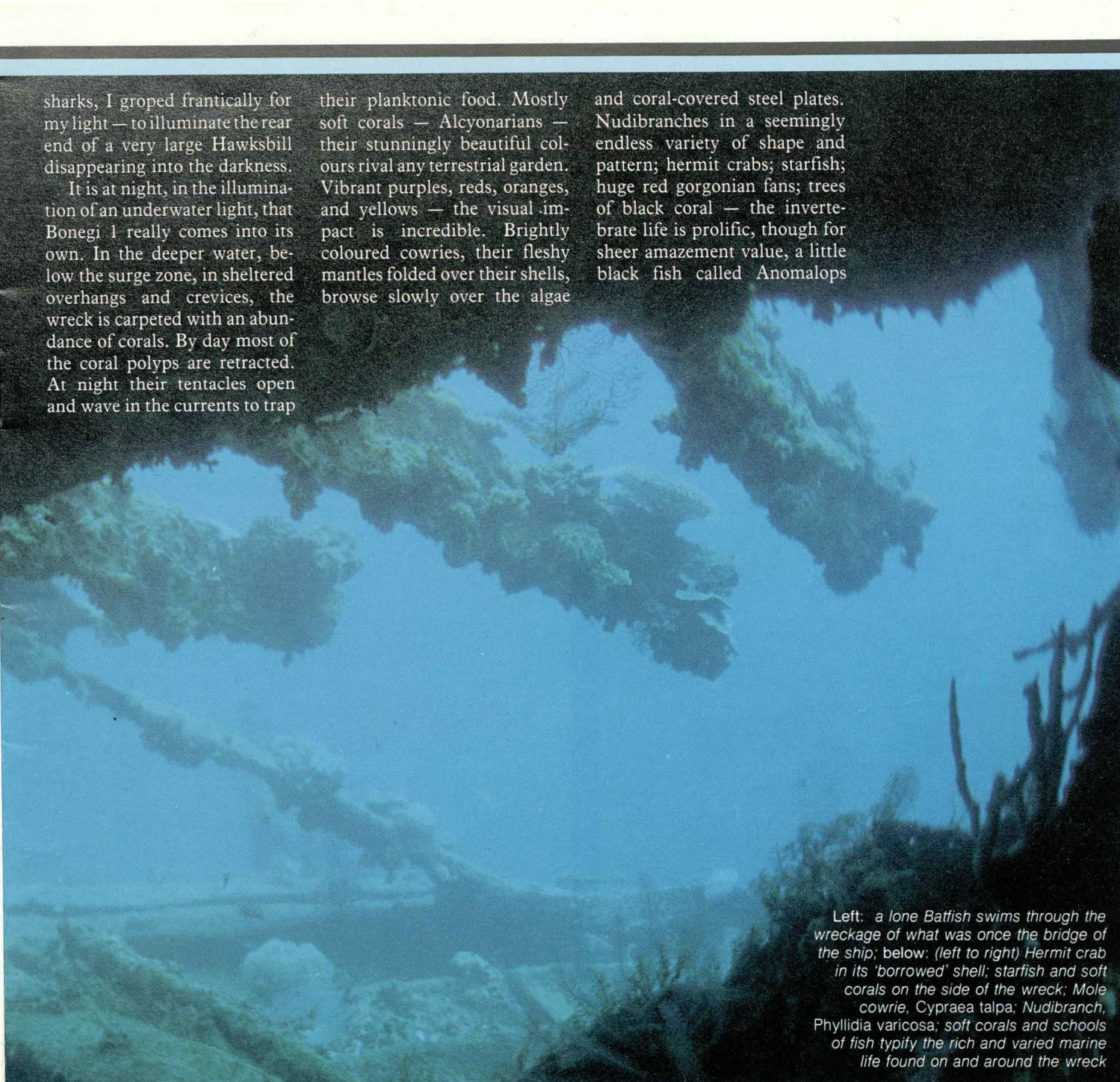


sharks, I groped frantically for my light — to illuminate the rear end of a very large Hawksbill disappearing into the darkness.

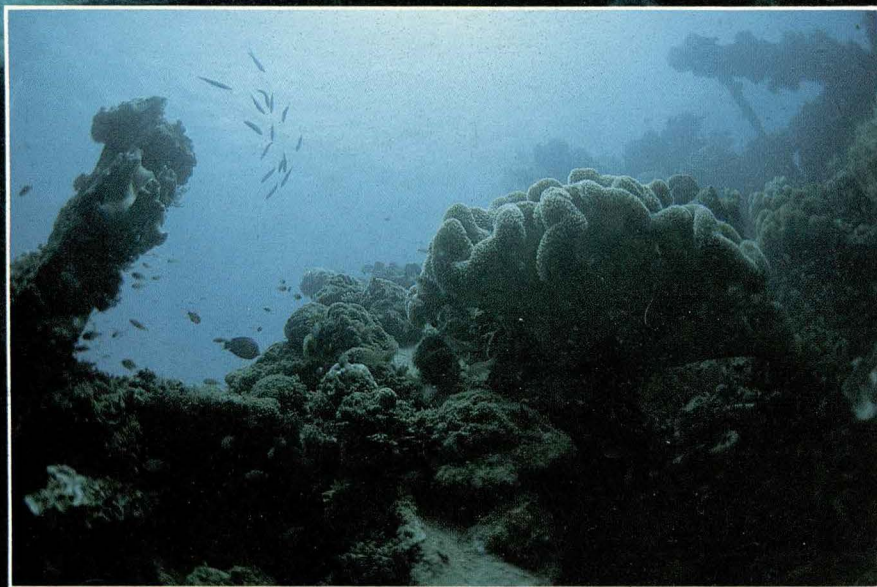
It is at night, in the illumination of an underwater light, that Bonegi I really comes into its own. In the deeper water, below the surge zone, in sheltered overhangs and crevices, the wreck is carpeted with an abundance of corals. By day most of the coral polyps are retracted. At night their tentacles open and wave in the currents to trap

their planktonic food. Mostly soft corals — Alcyonarians — their stunningly beautiful colours rival any terrestrial garden. Vibrant purples, reds, oranges, and yellows — the visual impact is incredible. Brightly coloured cowries, their fleshy mantles folded over their shells, browse slowly over the algae

and coral-covered steel plates. Nudibranches in a seemingly endless variety of shape and pattern; hermit crabs; starfish; huge red gorgonian fans; trees of black coral — the invertebrate life is prolific, though for sheer amazement value, a little black fish called *Anomalops*



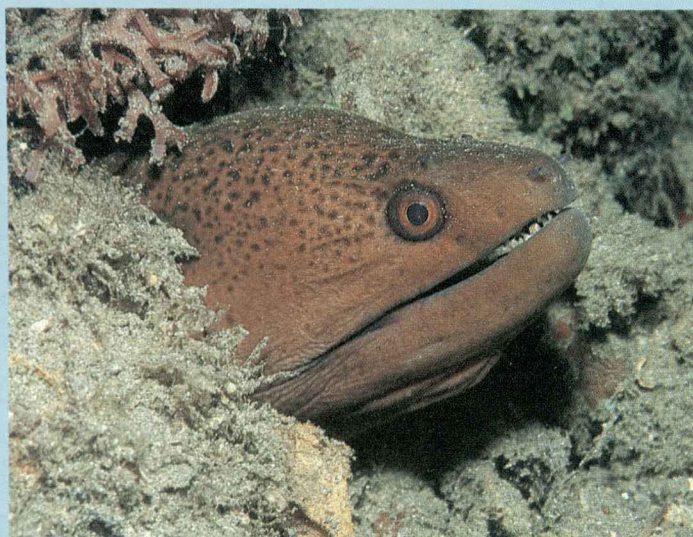
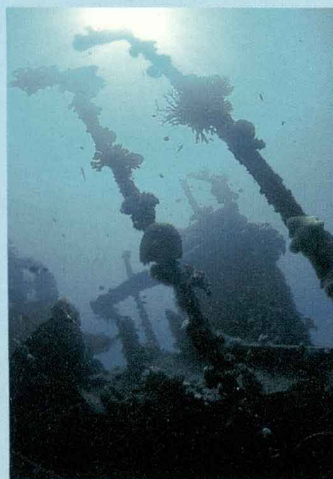
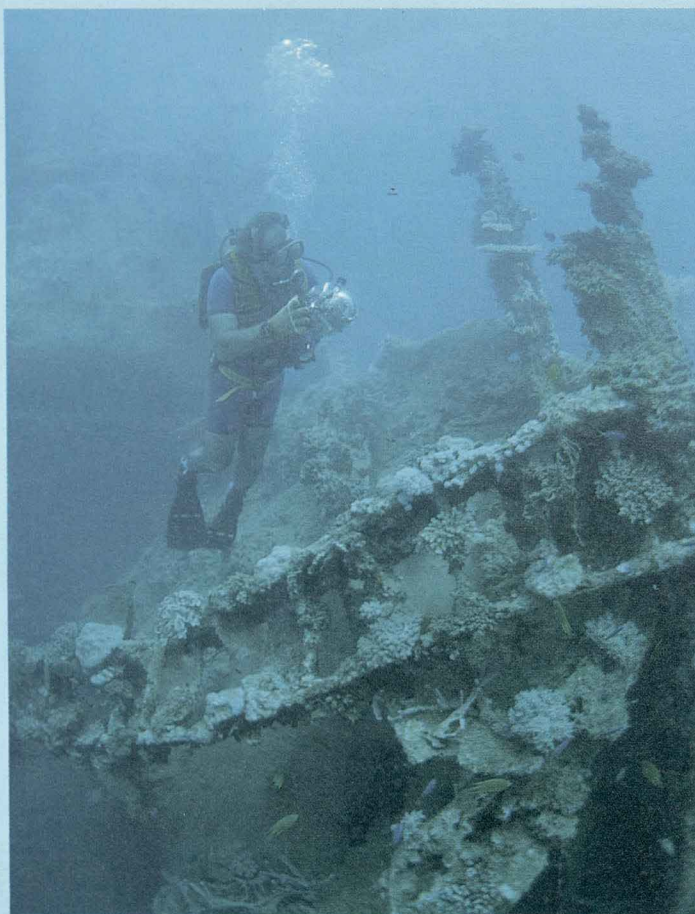
Left: a lone Batfish swims through the wreckage of what was once the bridge of the ship; below: (left to right) Hermit crab in its 'borrowed' shell; starfish and soft corals on the side of the wreck; Mole cowrie, *Cypraea talpa*; Nudibranch, *Phyllidia varicosa*; soft corals and schools of fish typify the rich and varied marine life found on and around the wreck



would be hard to beat.

Anomalops is about 7 cms long and at night schools through the wreck in its thousands. Under each eye it has an elongated bony flap. The fish can rotate these flaps on their long axis and also direct them forwards. On the outer surface the flaps are black. On their inner side they are brightly luminescent — a form of bioluminescence produced by bacteria. Anomalops uses its luminous flaps in a manner quite analogous to car headlights, illuminating the small planktonic animals that it feeds on. The lighted flaps are never still, they turn in and out rapidly. The sum effect of a school of these fish feeding at night is amazing — a moving mass of light, made up of thousands of flickering pin-points of pale green light. If the school is disturbed, all the lights are instantly turned off, suddenly appearing again a few moments later in another position. To encounter a school of these fish on the wreck, turn off your light and remain still as they mill about you — a miniature moving galaxy — is an unforgettable experience.

There is little on the wreck that immediately identifies it as a victim of those desperate days in 1942. The ship could be a relatively large cargo vessel from anywhere in the world, though if you were fortunate enough to find some of the ornamental crockery or the large metal vats for cooking rice, you would probably guess that it was of Oriental origin. It is likely that there would once have been anti-aircraft guns on the deck to afford some protection, however meagre, against air attack. If there were such guns they have gone now, perhaps souvenired by salvors or buried



in the general rubble. There are however, boxes and boxes of rifle ammunition scattered in fairly shallow water in what would have been the forward hold of the ship. Much of the ammunition is British, which, together with the Lion beer bottles from Singapore that are also found on the wreck, testify as to their provenance — captured as the Japanese forces moved through South-East Asia more than 40 years ago.

Bonegi 1 is slowly coming apart. Every so often you notice large plates of steel slowly swaying in the currents. Sometimes you find a section that has collapsed since you last dived there. Nowadays it gets dived on virtually daily by groups of diving tourists ferried out to it by dive tour operators in Honiara. It is difficult to assess what effect such activity has on the wreck and its inhabitants. Although the diving tourists are not permitted to spearfish nor to souvenir bits and pieces from the wreck, they do quite a bit of foraging as evidenced by the disturbed patches of rubble here and there. Such disturbance of the substrate, though minor, probably affects many of the smaller invertebrates by exposing them to predators.

I still dive on Bonegi 1 at least several times a month, more often than not at night and almost always to photograph the life that abounds there. I guess that I would have had over 200 photo dives there over the years and I feel that I have barely scratched the surface as far as photographic possibilities go.

The US artillery men could scarcely have guessed that their actions on that November day in 1942 would eventually come to provide so much scope for underwater recreation for so many people in the years to come. ♪

Air Niugini flies F28 jet services twice weekly to Honiara, capital of the Solomon Islands.

*Miller, J. 1949. *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*. Historical Division, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.

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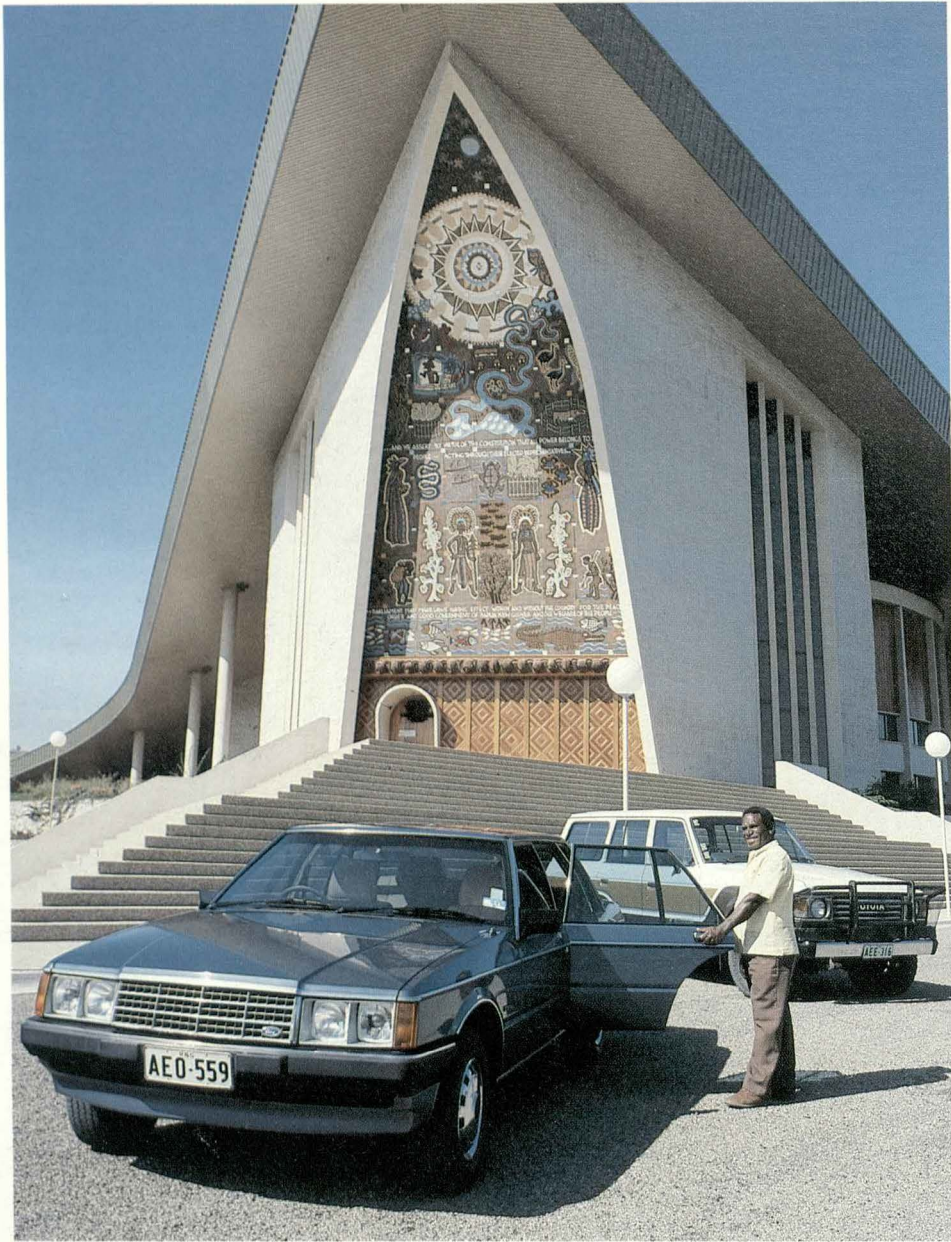
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There's no doubt about it — the recent visit to Papua New Guinea by Pope John Paul II was the biggest event the country had ever seen. It certainly received a lot of coverage by the world's news media. But the hectic pace of the Papal tour (“if it's Monday it must be Moresby; if it's Thursday it must be Thailand...”) left reporters little time to get the feel of the place. John Devereux looks back at the Pope's visit — and tells of events the newsmen *didn't* see...



Photo: John Devereux

THE BIG DAY

“**T**HE Pope is coming, the Pope is coming!” The message spread like wildfire, ever since it was announced that Mount Hagen was to be included in the proposed Papal tour of Asia and the Pacific.

About one third of Papua New Guinea's 3.4 million people are Catholics and by far the largest concentration of them are to be found in the Highlands. The good news spread from the churches and chapels of the major towns to the very remotest villages in the mountains. As the big day grew nearer one could sense the growing excitement all around.

Planning for the visit began well ahead of time, both in Port Moresby and in the Highlands. The two main venues in the Highlands were to be the airport at Kagamuga; where His Holiness would be officially welcomed; and the old golf course in Mount Hagen town, where an outdoor mass would be held. The whole event was

carefully thought out: tradition would be the theme.

Whilst it was certain that on the day masses of people would attend in their traditional attire, it was felt that a very special welcome should greet the Pope on his arrival. The responsibility for arranging this special welcome was given to the Plumes and Arrows Inn at Kagamuga, who specialize in cultural encounter tours of the highlands and whose personnel have an intimate knowledge of the area, the highlands people and their customs.

A guard of honour was called for — to be dressed in the very finest *bilas* (finery). Quite a tall order, as *bilas* takes time to organise. You can't just buy it off-the-peg at a store! Beads and kina shells have to be traded, belts and bilums made, and cuscus and birds of paradise have to be hunted. And then all these things have to be painstakingly put together to make the final product.

Fortunately, there happened to be two places in the area where, quite independently, big traditional celebrations were being prepared for. These were the villages of Kelua, just outside Mount Hagen, and Nondugl in the middle Waghi. Naturally they would be accumulating all the necessary accoutrements for their singings, so they would be the obvious people to ask for assistance. Of course, they jumped at the chance. What an honour to meet the Pope!

That was it then. It was all arranged — or so it seemed anyway . . . In the highlands, things are never that simple. Laws are made and laws are revoked, but there's one that never goes away — Murphy's law. If something *can* go wrong, it will. And on the night of May 2, it did.

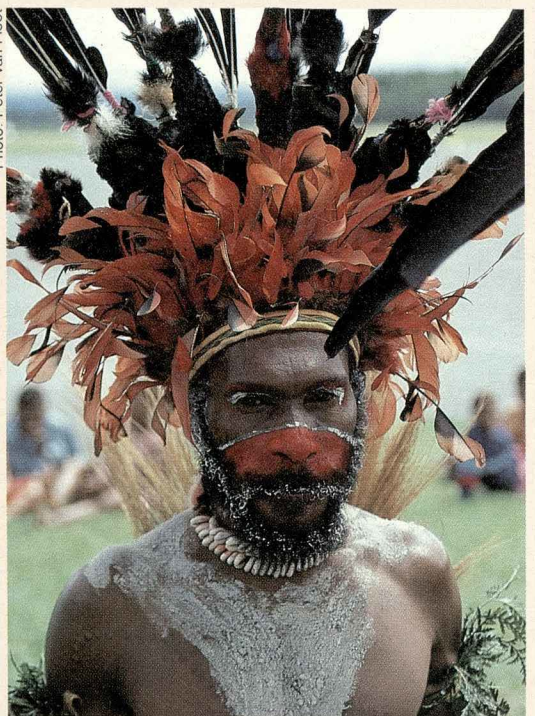
The Plumes and Arrows' driver had been sent out on an errand in one of the hotel's buses. It was dusk, the light was failing. As the bus pulled out to pass a parked truck, an old man stepped out from behind it. There was no chance. The bus swerved but hit the man and then careered into a tree. The old man died instantly.

A death in the highlands

Photo: Peter van Fleet

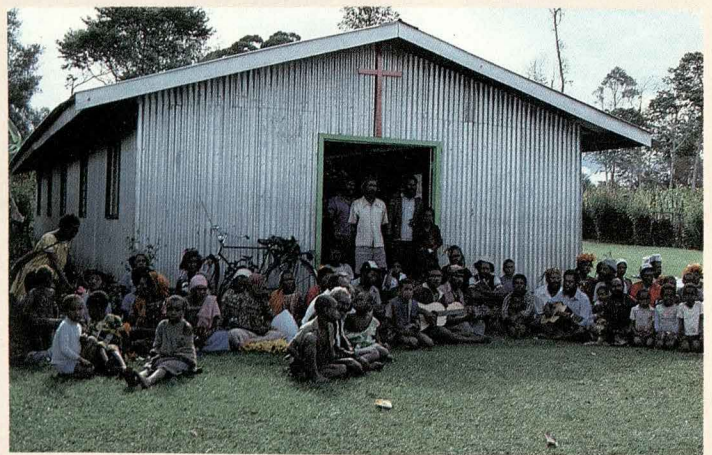


Photo: Peter van Fleet



A comparison of different styles of *bilas* (finery) — above: Kelua man in regalia; right: Nondugl man shows how it's done in the middle Waghi; below: making plans for the big day at Kelua village

spells trouble. In days gone by, the driver would have been blamed automatically and hacked to bits on the spot with no questions asked. A tribal fight would almost certainly have ensued. In these enlightened times, thanks to the influence





Left: the superb scenery of the western highlands; below left: a proud hunter shows off his catch, a Sicklebill Riflebird — largest of the birds of paradise; right: the pig that saved the day, ready for delivery as part of the compensation payment



Photos: John Devereux

of Christian teaching — and a modicum of respect for the law — people at least stop and think before taking reprisal action. Yet reprisals there could be unless action was taken swiftly.

The police acted swiftly. They locked the driver in the local police cell. Not because he was at fault particularly — it was purely for his own safety. Back at the hotel the manager, Peter Spencer, considered his position. It was *his* bus that killed the man. So in the eyes of the dead man's relatives he

could be held responsible. In this kind of situation, the only decent thing to do is to *accept* responsibility, pay up — and look big. If the deceased's family were not contacted quickly, they might just decide to seek revenge by attacking the hotel's other buses, which would be needed to transport the two singsing groups to the airport to greet the Pope. And nothing could be allowed to jeopardise the Pope's visit, now only a few days away!

Clearly, something had to be

done. The phone lines buzzed: clan leaders and councillors were summoned from surrounding villages to hear accounts of the accident and act as impartial adjudicators. The talks went on into the night, but there were discrepancies in the eye-witness reports. Still there was the possibility that the deceased's relatives might take the law into their own hands anyway.

It was decided that a token payment — in pigs — should be made immediately, to show

good faith, pending the results of the insurance claim.

Next day, Peter arranged to have some pigs brought from one of his farms (which he keeps for precisely such contingencies). However, when the truck with the pigs drew up, faces dropped.

"They're a bit *small* aren't they?" someone asked. They were. No use fronting-up to a group of angry villagers with just those — what an insult! Clearly a bigger pig was needed but where from?

Tradition to the rescue. In the highlands, the borrowing and repayment of debt is a routine occurrence, a way of life, and pigs are the currency used. The hotel had over the past year donated quite a few pigs to various clans, as gifts for celebrations of various kinds that the hotel takes its guests to see. It was a simple matter of asking one of these debtors to repay a pig to make up the deficit. Eventually one was located and a pig changed hands. It was a large, noble looking pig too: just right for the occasion.

On the afternoon of May 6, a slightly apprehensive hotel manager, with a bus load of even more apprehensive sightseers from the hotel, plus a truckload of pigs, made their way in convoy far up into the mountains to the village where the deceased's relatives would be waiting.

Around a bend and then — stop. The entire village had turned out to block the road. The relatives formed the front row and they all wore faces like thunder. It was an awesome sight. All done for effect though, Peter assured us.

The negotiations were long and tense, but eventually the pigs were accepted, together with the promise of a cash payment from the insurance. Sighs of relief all round. Instead of being condemned as a villain, Peter had now earned the deep-



photos: John Devereux

est respect of the villagers. There would be no trouble now.

On the return journey, the hotel guests could hardly contain their exuberance. They had witnessed a real-life drama of the real 'grass roots' highlands people. Not one of them will ever forget those faces . . .

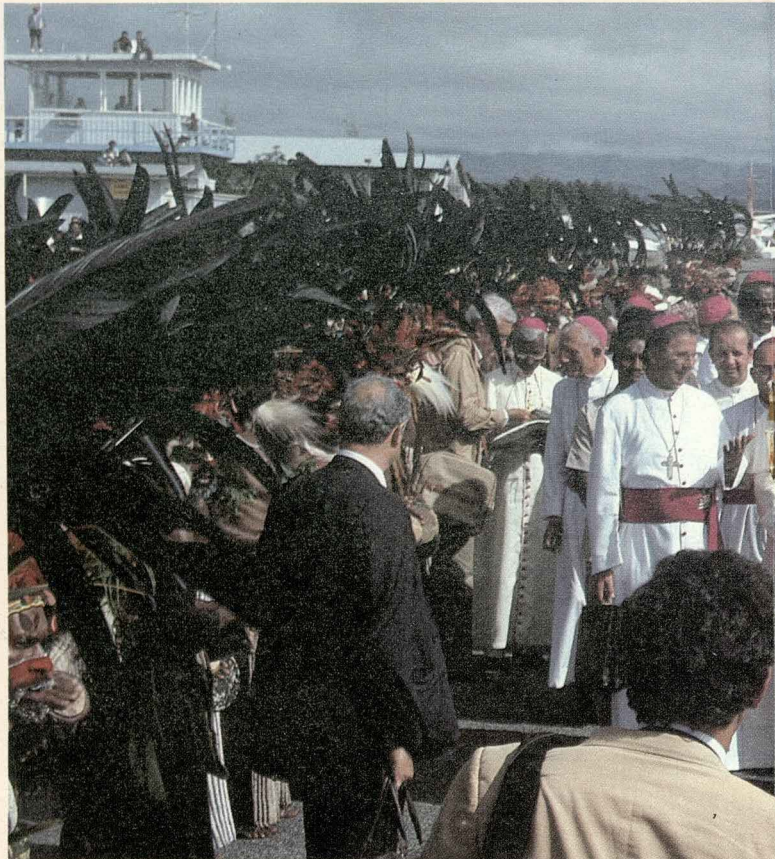
With the threat of disruption thus averted, attention could now be turned to final preparations for the Pope's visit, now only a day away. While the eyes of the world were on Pope John Paul, being greeted upon his arrival in Port Moresby, the villagers of Nondugl were being inspected by the sharp eyes of Peter van Fleet, resident anthropologist at the Plumes and Arrows. He was checking that the finery they were wearing was the genuine, traditional article. "Bilas bilong tambuna *tasol*", he insisted. He needn't have worried — they looked spectacular, with brilliantly coloured faces and feathers.

And so to Kelua, where all was going well too. At a village meeting, two old gentlemen got up and made a moving speech. They said they were just young lads when the first white men, Jim Taylor and Mick Leahy, came across them during their

Top left: eager recruits for the Pope's guard of honour line up for inspection at Nondugl village; above: His Holiness steps out into the sunshine; right: a moment they will always remember, as these proud highlanders shake hands with Pope John Paul; below: three little children are blessed by the Pope

first exploration of the highlands. They remembered it well, how they thought at first the white men were spirits. Now they were to be honoured by the visit of another important white man: the *nambawan man bilong jisas* "and he will bring the good spirit."

All night long, people came from all over the highlands. Traffic poured into Mount Hagen, together with many thousands who had only their own two feet as transport. A group of 25 people from Enga Province had been trekking for days through some of the most rugged country carrying an 18 foot long wooden cross. Yet in spite of all this, on the morning





Left: the scene at Kagamuga airport as the Pope, together with entourage of clergy, pressmen and police, pass along the guard of honour; below left: Pope John Paul conducting a night-time mass in Port Moresby; below: blessing the sick at St Joseph's church, Port Moresby; bottom left: the Prime Minister, his wife and the Minister for Foreign Affairs greet the Pope on his return from Honiara

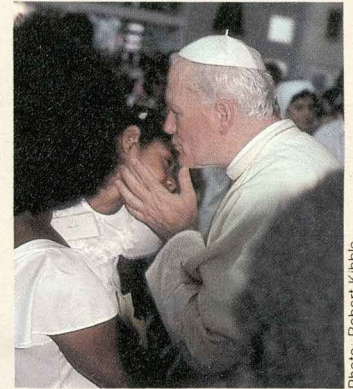


Photo: Robert Kibble

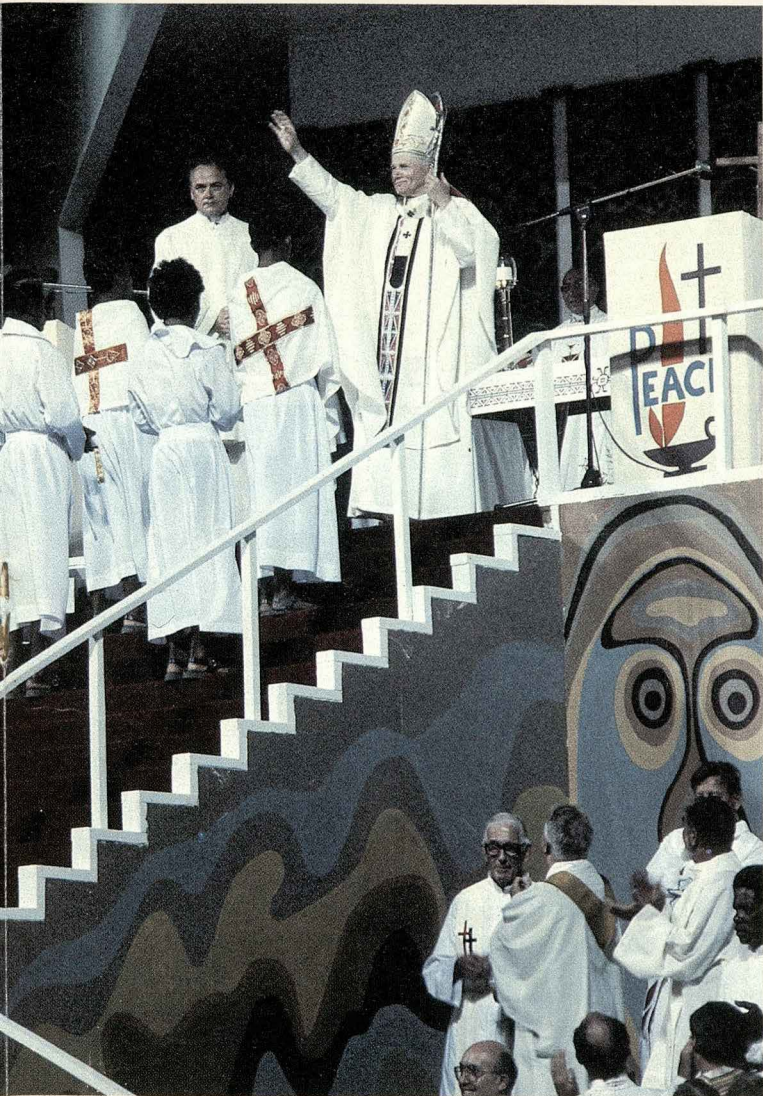


Photo: Robert Kibble



Photo: Robert Kibble



Photo: Vatican Servizio Fotografico



As he climbs the aircraft steps, Pope John Paul II bids a fond farewell to Papua New Guinea

Photo: Paul Taylor

of the Pope's arrival there were still coffee buyers going about their business, scales in hand, apparently oblivious of what all the commotion was about!

Precisely on time, the Air Niugini jet touched down at Kagamuga with His Holiness aboard. Rumours of an engine failure were baseless — proof indeed that if the media want a crisis badly enough, they invent one.

The guard of honour took up their positions either side of the aircraft's steps: Nondugl

people on one side and Kelua people on the other. They looked magnificent, all the careful preparation was worth it. The press and TV crewmen had a field day. All eyes shift to the aircraft doorway as Pope John Paul emerges. Looking calm, serene and dignified, he waved to the crowd and beamed the happiest of smiles — visibly elated at the warmth of the welcome. He greeted the dignitaries, then passed along the line of warriors, shaking a hand here, giving a rosary there. For

the people gathered here, this was their moment. All were touched by the aura he seemed to have about him. His every gesture was one of gentleness and love.

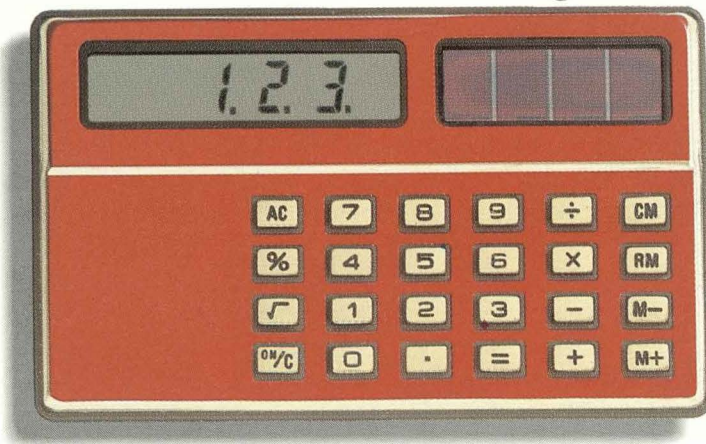
At the mass in Mount Hagen, he won hearts of everyone of the 150,000 spectators as he began the Lord's prayer in pidgin; "Papa bilong mipela, yustap long heaven . . ." Cameras clicked and film rolled, the event would be published and screened the world over. But for this brief encounter, the

the world may never have heard of Mount Hagen. Now it was famous.

Later on his tour, in Port Moresby, he attracted more crowds and won more hearts. He met the people, blessed the sick, delivered his addresses. Somehow though, it was not his words which communicated best to his Papua New Guinea flock — but his hard working, warm, human self. They will remember him always. And surely, this too was a visit he will never forget. ☺

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AMERICA'S MISSING ANGELS

by Bruce Hoy

YOU are sitting back, enjoying your flight between Port Moresby and Lae, Goroka, Madang, or a multitude of other places within Papua New Guinea, oblivious to the fragmented remains of four-decade old craft lying in the matted undergrowth below.

It was then a time of war, and the skies were filled with Liberator, Fortress, Mitchell, Havoc bombers, Airacobra, Kittyhawk, Thunderbolt and Lightning fighters and Dakota transport aircraft; their crews, young men from America, filled with the vigour of youth, whose thoughts were primarily

on when they would be going home.

To a great number of them, Papua New Guinea was just a name on a map; a forbidding, unknown, tropical island, filled with unknown people, impenetrable steaming jungles, foetid swamps, malarial mosquitoes, and, men from Imperial Japan.

For hundreds of these young warriors, this land was to become their final resting place, lost, but not forgotten, on some tall, cloud-covered mountain, or hidden amongst the tropical foliage of a steep valley or lowland rain forest, their mortal remains lying amidst the shattered wreckage of what was once a proud fighter, bomber or transport aircraft. Many were

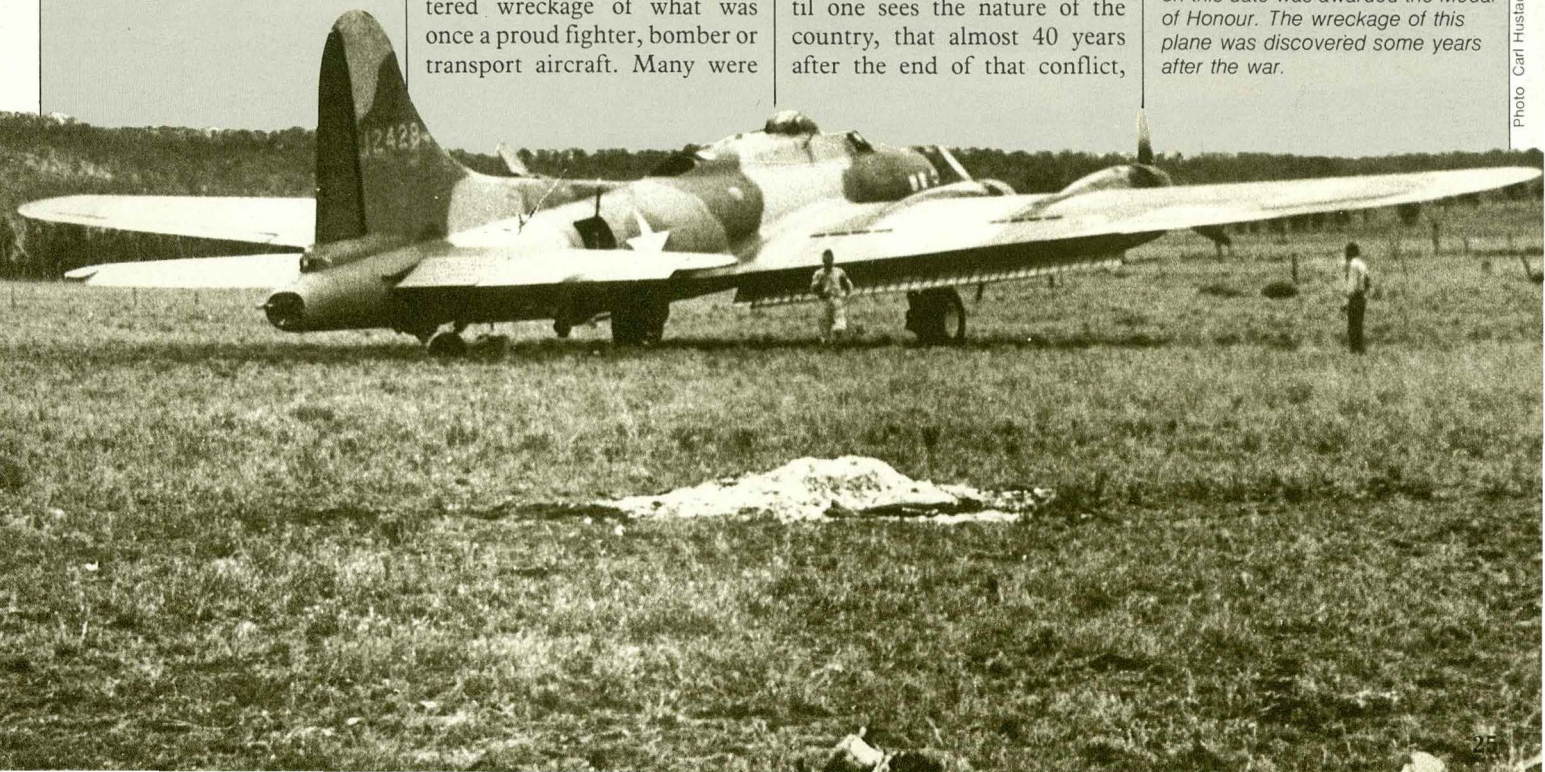
finally found and buried in one of the Allied war cemeteries that dotted Papua New Guinea during World War Two. But for many, their only memory were those harsh words, "missing in action, presumed dead".

Following the end of the war, the Royal Australian Air Force, in conjunction with the United States Graves Registration Service, mounted an extensive programme to search for and locate those allied aircraft still missing. In the course of this programme that lasted for almost 20 years, numerous missing aircraft were located. It does seem quite incredible, until one sees the nature of the country, that almost 40 years after the end of that conflict,

aircraft are still being found.

The responsibility for continuing this programme is now vested in the National Museum's Aviation, Maritime and War Branch in Port Moresby. The Branch is responsible for documenting and recording the aircraft losses incurred by Australia, the United States, New Zealand and also Japan during World War Two. Extensive records are now held on most United States aircraft losses and many Australian losses.

This B-17 Flying Fortress disappeared over Rabaul on 7th August 1942. Capt Harl Pease Jr was the pilot, and for his actions on this date was awarded the Medal of Honour. The wreckage of this plane was discovered some years after the war.



Information is being added continually. The Branch is the National Government's agency to which all aircraft finds are reported, and is responsible for the notifying of that find to the appropriate country's diplomatic representatives.

In April 1982, a combined National Museum-United States Army team located the wreckage of a B-24 Liberator on Mt Thumb that had disappeared on 22 March 1944 on a flight from Port Moresby to Nadzab. The remains of the 22 crew and passengers were located and brought back to Port Moresby for return to the United States. From a C-47 Dakota crash-site near the Kokoda Trail, the remains of the last missing crew member was located and recovered. At another site near Nadzab, the remains of one crew member was found in the scattered wreckage of a B-24.

In August 1983, the US

Army again visited Papua New Guinea and recovered the remains of several crew members from a 43rd Bomb Group B-24D at the base of Variarata National Park. This aircraft had crashed into a cliff after take-off from Jackson's Airdrome on 31 August 1943, killing all on board. The site was visited not long after the crash, but no bodies were recovered due to the presence of several unexploded, booby-trapped bombs and overhanging wreckage. Two years later it was visited and some of the crew's remains recovered. The aircraft was then "lost", not being found again until 1983, by a Port Moresby bush-walker. A B-17E near Rabaul, East New Britain, was scheduled for clearance, except the site had been tampered with, preventing a thorough search being made. However, a B-25 also in the Gazelle Peninsula of East New Britain was successfully

cleared of all recoverable human remains.

For other aircraft, the search is on-going. On 13 January 1944, three 312th Bomb Group A-26G Havoc medium bombers, after circling the crash-site of their squadron commander until he and his gunner were rescued by a Catalina flying boat, set course for Gusap in the Ramu Valley and disappeared somewhere between Saidor and Gusap. Two of these aircraft were found by several enthusiasts from the Summer Institute of Linguistics who reported it to the Museum. These two sites were investigated during 1983, and the search for the third aircraft continues.

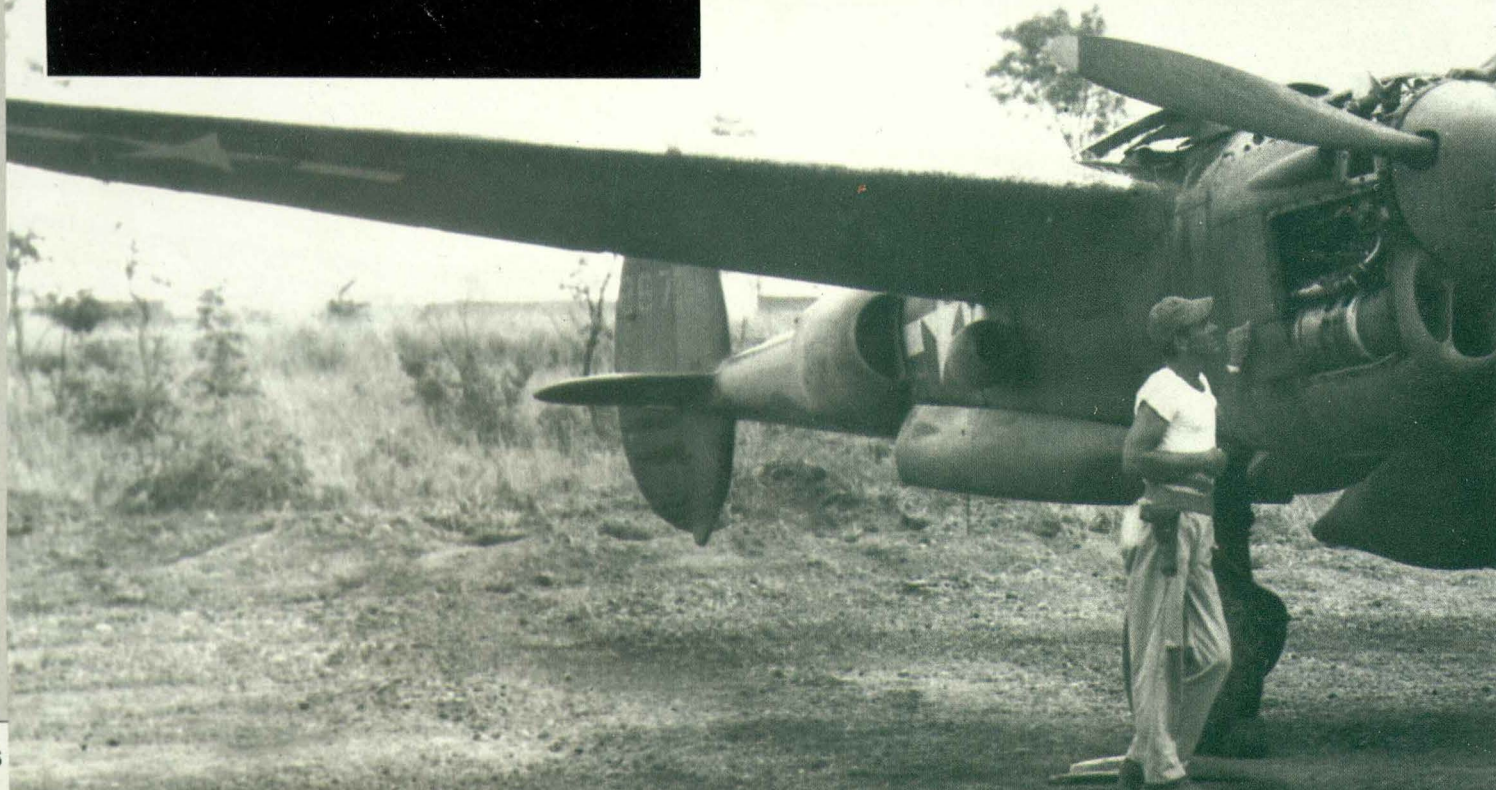
A B-24D from the 90th Bomb Group with ten men on board, returning from a mission on 20 December 1942, radioed Port Moresby to turn on the runway lights at Jackson's Airdrome as it was approaching the

Below: B-25 Mitchell in a revetment at Jackson's airdrome. This plane was declared missing on a flight in 1943. It was found 14 years later; bottom: F-5A Lightning which disappeared in 1944. It has yet to be found.



US AirForce photo

Inserts: the expedition to Mt thumb (left to right) — helicopter en route to the crash site; the US army team at work locating the bodies; remains of the B-24's tail; unexploded bombs are a real hazard.



area from the north. The plane and its crew never arrived. Another B-24D from the same group with an experienced pilot at the controls, took off from Wards Drome on 2 September



1943 for a local test flight. It never returned.

While coming back from a bombing mission to Japanese-held Lae on 15 September 1943, a B-17F from the 43rd Bomb Group with a crew of eleven, left the squadron formation in bad weather and was last seen northeast of Wau, apparently in no difficulty.

Two Medal of Honour recipients are also included in the missing aircraft files at the Museum. One was Brigadier General Kenneth A. Walker. His B-17 and crew disappeared on 5 January 1943 in the Rabaul area. The other was Capt. Harl Pease Jr. whose B-17E disappeared during a mission over Rabaul on 7 August 1942.

The list goes on. Not only involving large bombers, each containing between nine and twelve crew members and medium bombers with between two and six crew members, but fighters and transport aircraft also vanished. A C-47 transport on a supply mission to Tsili Tsili on 15 August 1943 was attacked by Japanese fighters and was presumed to have crashed in the same area. No trace of this aircraft has ever been found, although another C-47 that was also shot down the same day was located several days later.

One of the most poignant stories from the files at the Museum concerns the disappearance of a young American

2nd Lieutenant who took off from Nadzab in a single seater P-27 Thunderbolt fighter, accompanied by a young American Red Cross nurse, for a local flight on 12 May 1945. They never returned.

A formation of four P-39 Airacobras fighters took off from Port Moresby on 28 October 1943 for Nadzab. Bad weather was encountered southwest of Wau, and the flight leader turned back to Port Moresby. He last saw the rest of his formation turning with him.

For most missing aircraft, combat damage, or action with the Japanese was not always the contributing factor. The main causes being Papua New Guinea's notorious and unre-



photos: Bruce Hoy

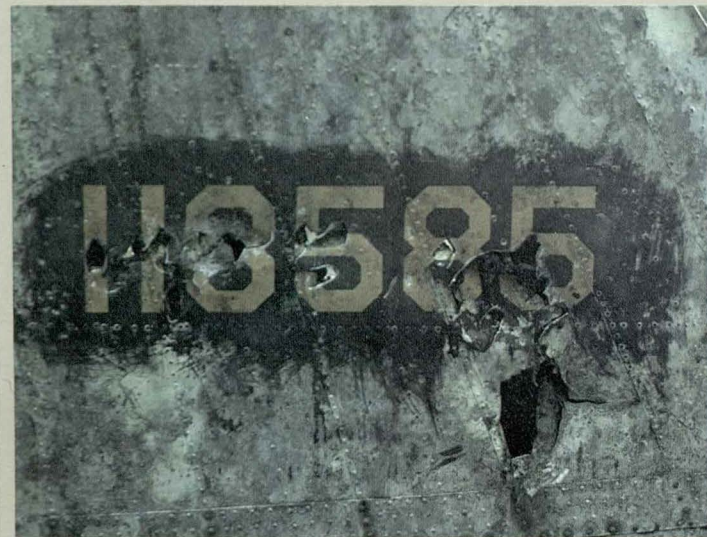




dictable weather, inaccurate maps, lack of navigational aids, mechanical failure, and occasionally, human error.

To those people who stumble across an aircraft wreck a word of warning. Most aircraft were carrying live ammunition, bombs, flares, and oxygen cylinders at the time they crashed. Do not pick up anything, but report the location of the wreck and its serial number, if visible (large yellow or white numbers painted on the tail, or a series of numbers painted below the pilot's side window), to the National Museum's Aviation, Maritime and War Branch, who will arrange for a Defence Force team to visit the wreckage.

When an aircraft has been found and the Museum notified, the records are checked, and if the aircraft is American,



Top: the camp at the crash site of B-24 Liberator on Mt Thumb, near Port Moresby; centre: close-up of the serial number which is the most important thing in identifying an aircraft; below: the last crewman from this C-47 Dakota was located in 1982, forty years after the plane crashed at Bodinumu near Port Moresby



and still classified as missing, the United States Army's Central Identification Laboratory is informed, and a mission is planned to visit the site and, if possible recover the remains of those on board the ill-fated aircraft. The remains are then flown back to Fort Shafter, Hawaii, for scientific analysis associated with positive identification, following which they are buried with full military honours in the cemetery of the family's choice.

The several recent successful missions to Papua New Guinea by the US Army has meant that for many American families, the Second World War and their long vigil has finally ended.

There are still approximately 360 missing aircraft from the American 5th and 13th Air Forces in Papua New Guinea, comprising 148 fighters, 163 bombers, 21 transports, and 28 miscellaneous aircraft types, representing about 1,500 personnel. Of this number of aircraft, approximately 35% are thought to have crashed into the sea. The Museum has not completed its research into missing Australian, New Zealand and Japanese aircraft, but it is hoped the authorities in these countries will assist in the acquisition of the necessary records. When these records finally arrive, no doubt the total number of missing aircraft will double.

With the help of the villager on a hunting trip, the forestry survey worker, geologist, bushwalker, and other interested people, many of these 360 aircraft will be found in the years to come. These young men who died in the service of their country as well as PNG deserve a better fate than to be left where they are lying. Let us hope that the missing aircraft files at the National Museum will be reduced in number in the years to come through the unstinting efforts of the people of this country. Finding these Missing Angels is one way of showing that we really care, even after all these years. — Bruce Hoy is the Curator of the National Museum's Aviation Maritime and War Branch in Port Moresby.

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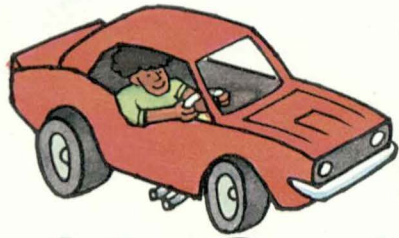
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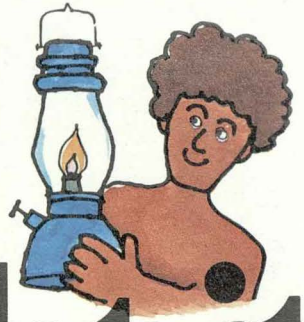
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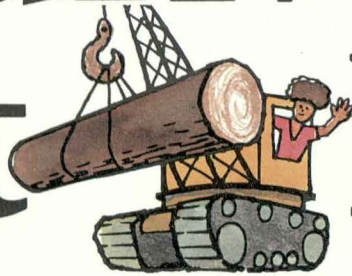
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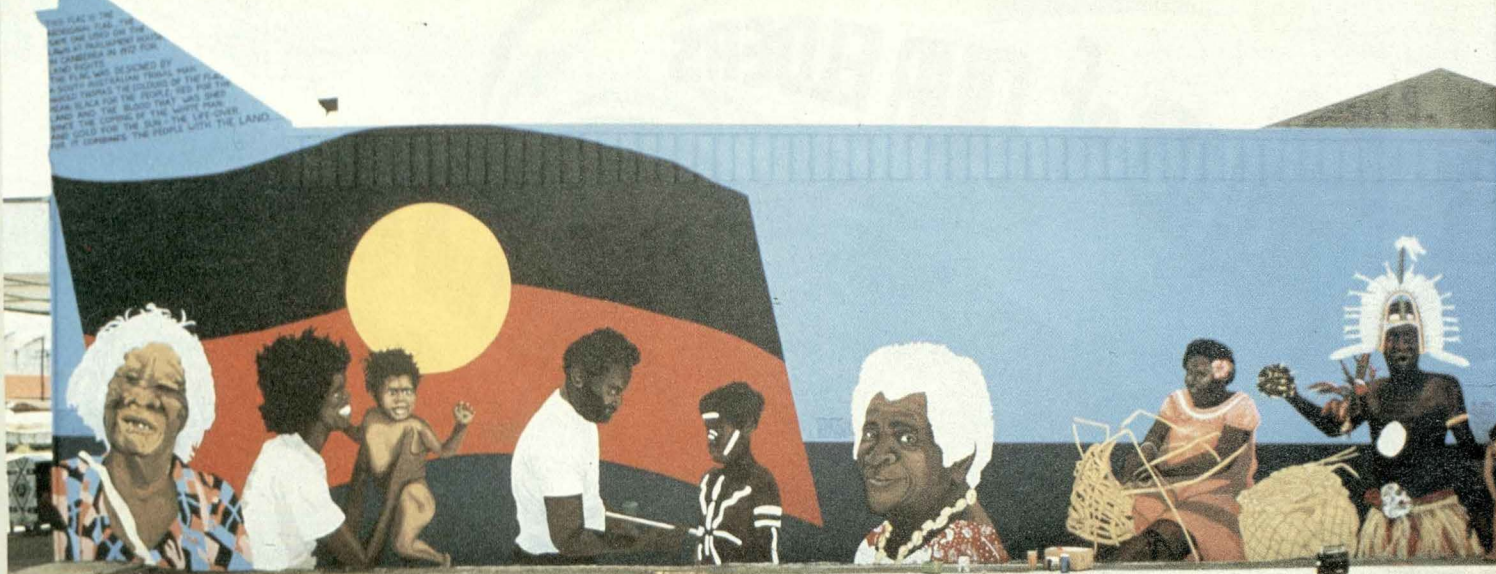
Story and pictures by
Carol Ruff and David Healy

WALLS to most people are brick structures designed to hold up a roof. But to mural artists like Carol Ruff they represent a challenge, a two dimensional surface which can become a painted world where fantasy and reality know no bounds.

Our towns and cities are made up of walls of all kinds, so often flat and featureless imposing limits and boundaries both to the landscape and to the senses, but in the hands of the muralist they become gateways for the passer-by, providing us with a reference point against which to see the fabric and design of our lives.

Sydney-based Carol Ruff is one of Australia's best known public artists. Her work can be seen overlooking the amphitheatre at the Adelaide Festival Centre, the Townsville





Aboriginal and Islander Medical Centre, the Domain Park in Sydney, the railway bridge walls of the inner Sydney suburb of Redfern and numerous other sites scattered around Australia. Her work is startling and unexpected, transforming dull city streets with giant portraits and colourful designs, encouraging and demanding appreciation and reaction.

Carol sees her murals as community projects — not only working with local artists in the execution of her work, but also expressing in her art community concerns.

On the surface her murals are exquisitely executed, calling on all her skill as a trained painter to create large scale works. But her images are more than mere decorations, and are always meticulously researched within the community to produce a statement which reflects the nature of the environment, the needs of the people living in the area, their history and their culture.

The work is highly collaborative, the final designs being drawn up with local artists, many of whom have had no previous experience with work on such a scale.

Mural sites are exciting places. One day barely-noticed walls will be covered with scaffolding, cleaned and measured up, and suddenly the scaffolding is alive with artists putting together the pieces of the jigsaw which gradually transforms the wall before the eyes of the fascinated passer-by.

The final ideas for community murals are, in large determined by a number of



people, rather than being the product of any one person. Once the general design is worked out, in a series of work sessions the design is sketched out in detail and to the scale of the wall itself. At this stage a large sheet of architectural tracing paper is placed over the top of the original sketch and the design traced in black ink. All the original shadings of the pencilled version are left out, leaving only the outlines of the objects in the design. The final stage for the tracing is for a grid of squares to be superimposed and the tracing copied into half a dozen blue prints. With the multiple copies available the mural artists set to work to rule up the wall into a grid of squares. Although a tedious process this ensures the accurate transfer of the design to the wall.

Mural painting today is a rapidly growing movement, but it is by no means a recent innovation. It is one of the oldest art forms in existence. Aboriginal people were painting on cave walls forty thousand years ago

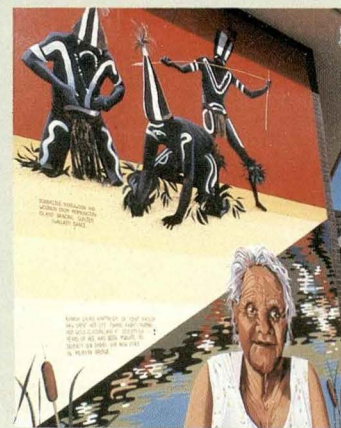
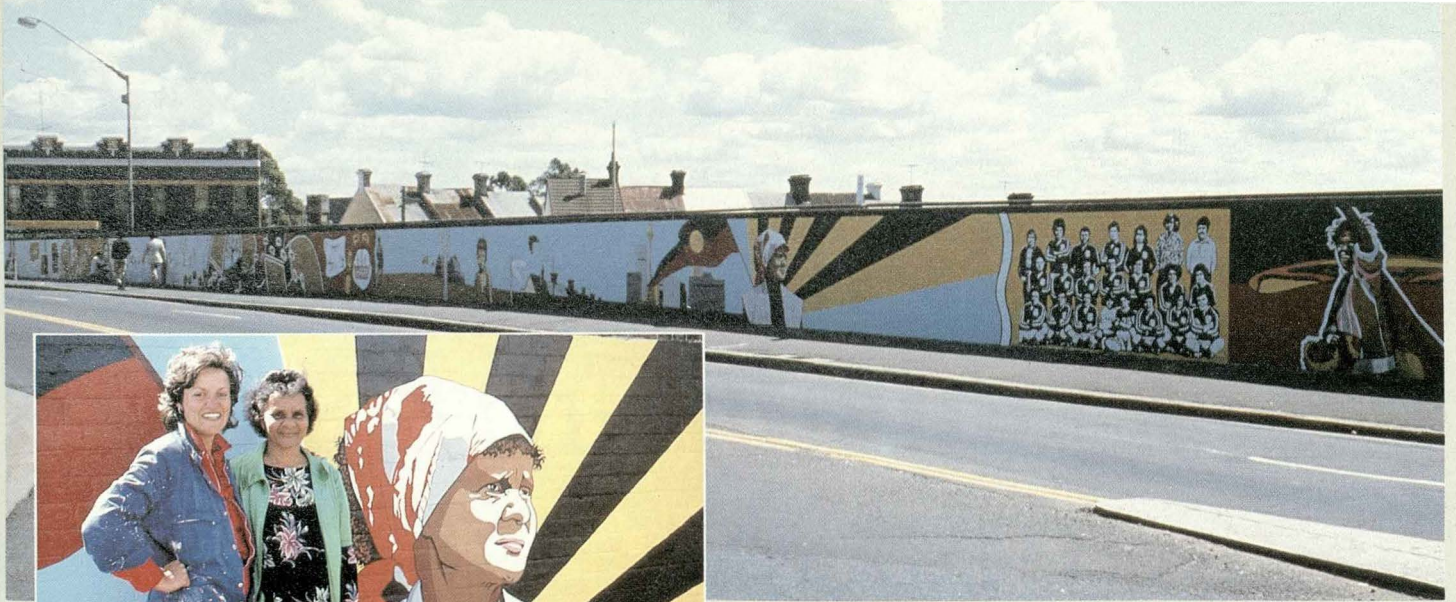
and are still prolific mural painters. The inner Sydney suburb of Redfern has a large Aboriginal population, and last year a team of local artists, co-ordinated by Carol, transformed the ugly railway bridge walls of their community into a three hundred and sixty foot long visual celebration of their culture, their history before and since white government — a statement of strength and culture revitalisation in Redfern. The team set up a design premises close to the mural site, and received immense input from local residents and black organisations. The result was the successful mural "40,000 Years Is A Long Long Time", with extremely positive response not only from local Aboriginal residents, but also from the many different cultural groups in the area. The mural is fiercely protected by locals, and in spite of dire predictions from some cynics about its survival, it remains unmarked to this day.

There are many ways of approaching a mural project — Carol remains diverse in her ap-



proach. Her particular love is portrait painting so she is always delighted to meet a good landscape painter, as their skills are combined and shared. There is always something new to learn from other artists which is why she travels far and wide working with contemporary and traditional black artists, women artists, older people and even children.

The huge mural, "Women On The Edge Of Town" was executed for the Women and Arts Festival in the Domain Park, Sydney, 1982. The theme here was a much broader one encompassing immigration, women and work, culture identity and the effects of new technology on women all over Sydney. Women's participation in the creation of culture, and in the direction of their own lives was realised in the painting of the mural, and during the festival, the park directly in front of the mural was used as an outdoor performance space for many musical groups, bands and poets to further enrich the atmosphere of creativity sur-



Opposite top: mural at the Townsville aboriginal medical centre; below: Ester Hennaway, in portrait and real life; right: Carol Ruff poses in front of Adelaide mural. This page, from top: Lawson St railway bridge, Sydney; Domain mural, Sydney; Adelaide Festival Theatre; with detail; "40,000 years is a long long time" is a 360 foot long mural at Redfern

rounding the five hard-at-work artists on the scaffolding.

After the Festival only the mural remains a lingering testimonial, faithful to the original inspiration for the whole Festival.

Carol Ruff visited Papua New Guinea for the first time in mid-84, as resident mural artist at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby. In collaboration with the staff of the National Arts School, Carol conducted workshops on mural painting, and worked with the staff and students on a large mural at the University. The initial design work was completed at the National Arts School before Carol arrived. Carol gave advice on making their design work on the grand scale needed for the mural. A class-room exercise with a difference, the result will be Papua New Guinea's largest professional mural. 🐸

the first PawPaw tree

A legend from Buka, North Solomons Province

by Dorah Getsi

LONG ago in the Buka area, there lived an old man. His name was Hamioko, which means 'Paw-Paw' (papaya). He lived all alone in a house made of sugar cane stalks beside the Gagan river. He was unhappy because no one from the nearby village wanted to talk to him.

On the other side of the Gagan river there lived a giant snake. The village people were afraid of the snake because they believed he liked to eat people. Hamioko wasn't afraid though. He had never seen the giant snake. In fact, he didn't even know what a snake was.

One day, the snake began crossing the river and eating animals and insects on the side where Hamioko and the village people lived. The people believed that the giant snake would soon start trying to eat them too. They collected large amounts of food and water to store in their houses, then they went inside their houses and

locked the doors. Hamioko was too old and weak to gather lots of food and water by himself, so he had only small amounts in his house.

A few days after the village people locked themselves in their houses, Hamioko ran out of water. He took his coconut water container to the river and had a drink. After satisfying his thirst, Hamioko stood beside the river and listened to the sounds made by the moving water. He didn't know that the giant snake was lying on the riverbank close to where he was standing. The snake smelled Hamioko and became very hungry.

Hamioko liked watching the moving water and listening to its sounds so much that he decided to sit down for a while on a nearby log. The log was really the giant snake! But Hamioko thought he was sitting on an ordinary log.

After a while, Hamioko decided to go home. But when he started to stand up, something knocked him to the ground.

Poor Hamioko! It was the giant snake that knocked him down. The snake curled its body around Hamioko and then bit him, killing him instantly. The snake then ate all of Hamioko's body except for his head. Hamioko's head was left lying on the river bank when the snake moved off into the bush.

Many weeks later, the village people finally stopped hiding in their houses. They noticed that Hamioko didn't come around the village and

wasn't at his house. They decided that the giant snake must have eaten him. Then one day, they noticed a new kind of plant growing on the river bank. It was growing on the spot where the snake had left Hamioko's head. The plant grew and grew very quickly and after a while it bore fruit.

The plant that grew on the river bank was the first Paw-Paw tree. Since that time, the Buka people have plenty of Paw-Paws to eat. 🍌

Illustration by John Samo



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Looking after people who fly

NATIONAL

LAW WEEK

Story by Luke Lucas,
photos by Simon Willby

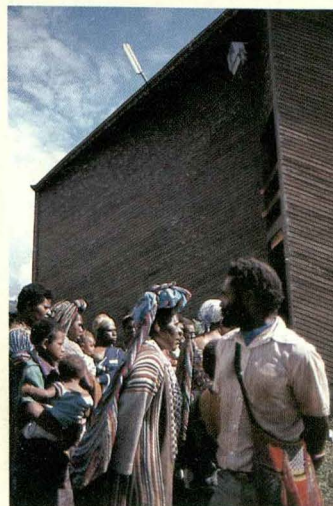


DURING the month of September, Papua New Guinea holds its first National Law Week. From the ninth until the sixteenth of the month a special effort is being made by the National Law Week Committee to bring awareness of the laws of Papua New Guinea to all its citizens. The aim is to make it clear to them that they all have obligations as well as rights.

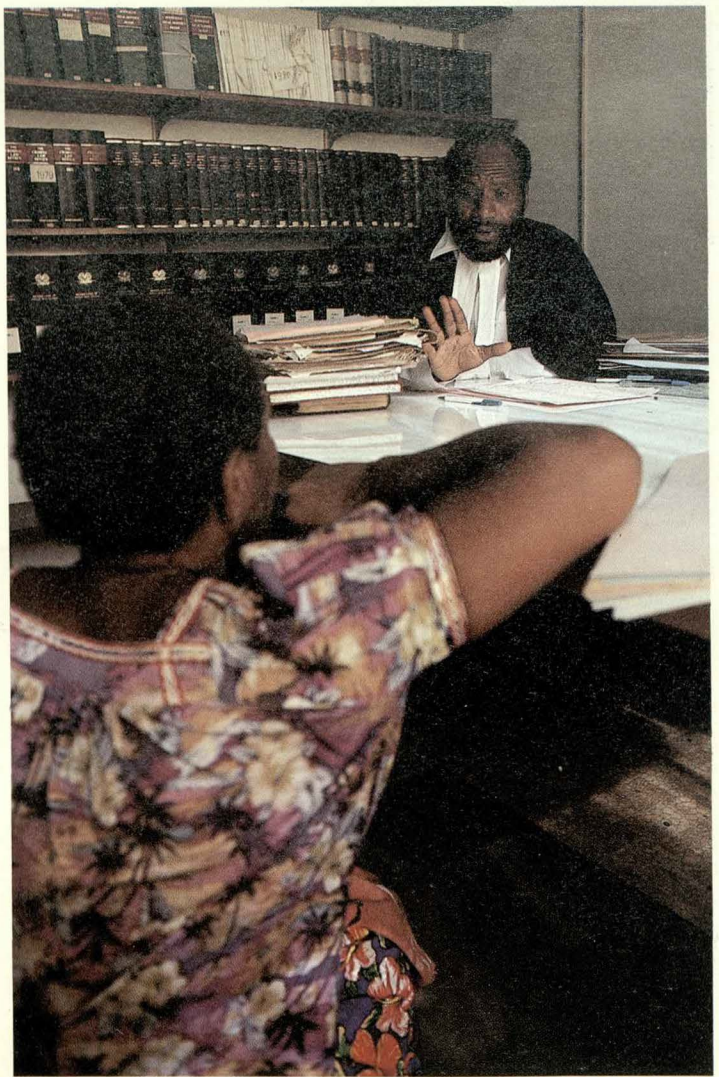
To achieve this aim, the committee has, since its inception in November 1983, under the patronage of the Deputy Prime Minister the Hon. Paias Wingti MP, conducted and led a host of activities which will culminate in the National Law Week itself. Such activities include poster competitions, debates, speeches, slogans, car stickers, radio and newspaper articles.

This therefore is an opportune month to illustrate one very important aspect of maintaining law and order in a country where there are so few roads, to enable travel by the Port Moresby-based judges to hear National Court cases in all the main centres of Papua New Guinea. Before the introduction of aircraft, the court circuits were conducted by whatever modes of transport that happened to be available — which as often as not meant walking!

Papua New Guinea has ten full-time appointed judges and two judges on an acting basis. Each month at least eight to ten of the judges travel throughout the land to conduct the court circuits which may last three weeks or longer, depending on



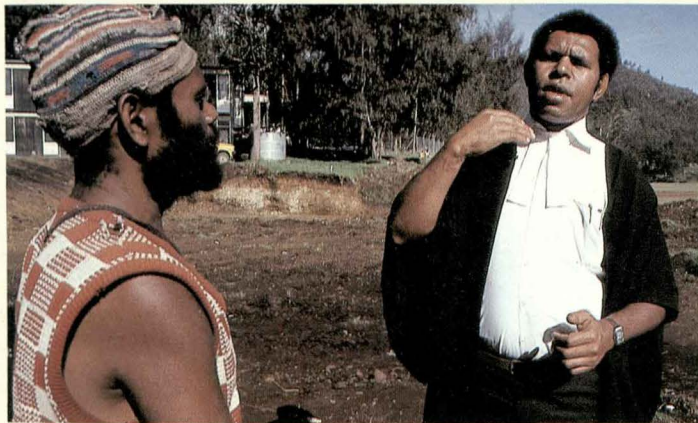
Top: handshake symbol forms the theme of the publicity drive; **centre:** Judge Amet presides at Wabag session; **far left:** police parade at Wabag; **Left:** people gathering at the courthouse



the number and complexity of the case to be heard.

Each judge is accompanied by his associate who looks after him, taking care of such things as accommodation, travel arrangements, ensuring his travelling library is up to date, and a hundred and one other tasks to ensure that the judge himself can concentrate on the court work proper. A good and efficient associate is of paramount importance to the smooth running of a circuit.

The public prosecutor's and state solicitor's representatives also travel the circuit with the judge. It is the custom in Papua New Guinea that the public defender and the state prosecutor are in the circuit town in sufficient time to ensure that the police, witnesses, defendants and interpreters are properly organised before the arrival of the judge and his associate. The state prosecutor is responsible for the actual conduct of the circuit and his tasks are by no means simple. There are over 700 hundred languages spoken



in Papua New Guinea, and the arrangement of necessary interpreters is often very difficult. To have witnesses ready in time is also a task which sometimes defeats the imagination.

Another custom is to hold a police parade on the day of the first visit of the year to a circuit town. This is a colourful occasion as the judge is attired in the full regalia of wig and robes.

Thanks to the national airline, those circuits that were previously known as "crippling circuits" are a lot less crippling. Previously, the journey time to a circuit town could take days or weeks. Now it takes, at most, just a couple of hours. That's progress. 🍀

Top left: Judge Amet boarding the Air Niugini Dash-7 plane at Port Moresby. His associate carries the wig box; **Top right:** Mr Simile Amouk, Legal officer, discusses his defence with the accused; **centre:** Mr Joseph Mek Teine, State Prosecutor, in discussion with a witness; **below:** warriors stand trial for tribal fighting

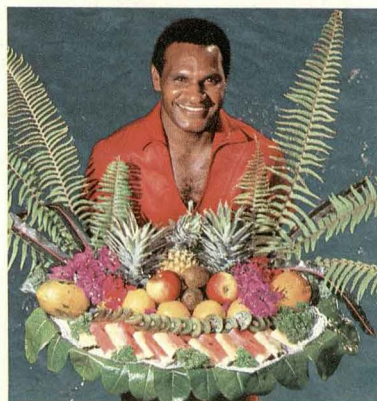


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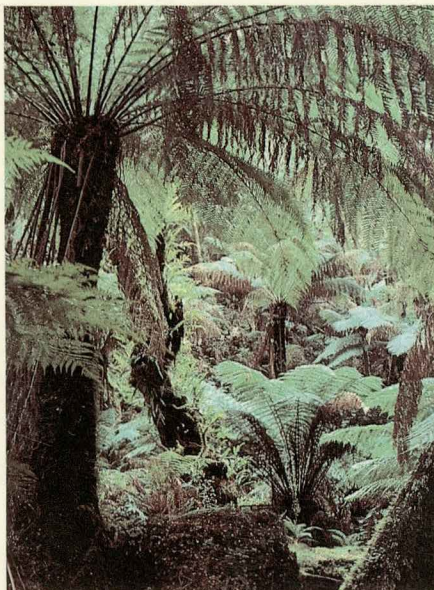
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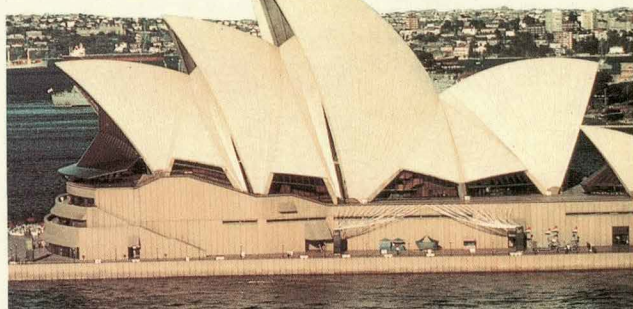
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