

paradise

in-flight with Air Niugini



An advertisement for Anais Anais perfume. The top half features a woman's face in profile, reflected in a mirror. The background is filled with large, soft-focus flowers. In the center, the word "Cacharel" is written in a large, white, serif font within a white oval. Below this, several perfume bottles of different shapes and sizes are displayed, some with labels that include "Anais Anais".

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paradise

Welcome aboard.

Papua New Guinea has inspired many artists from abroad, none more acclaimed than the German expressionist Emil Nolde. Yet his visit to our shores before World War I is not widely known. We are pleased to bring you his story in this issue.

We hope you also enjoy the other articles which focus on our country, its inhabitants and its traditions.

Have a pleasant flight.

Masket Iangalio
General Manager



No 58 August 1986

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Above: Masket Iangalio, Air Niugini's General Manager.

Cover: A sand painting from Enga Province, traditional design in a modern medium.

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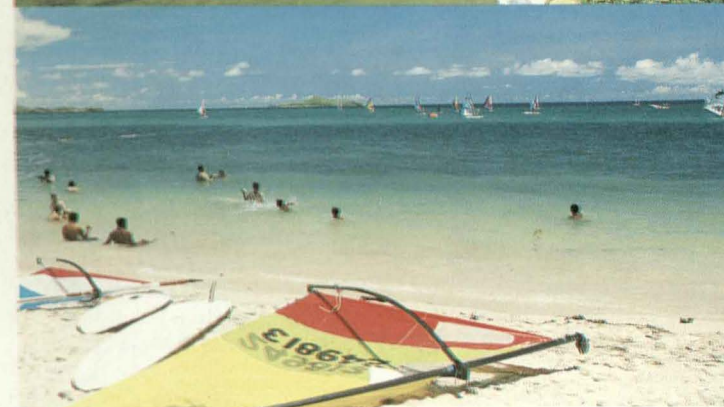
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sand painters of Enga

Story and pictures
by Jill Parry

Sand painting is helping the Enga people of the Papua New Guinea Highlands to preserve unique artistic traditions. It overcomes the impermanence from which much Enga art has suffered.

"Originally decorations on wooden objects or bark were made from clay substances," said Akii Tumu, an artist who developed the new techniques. "When water got on the colors they mixed and they also tended to fade."

Mr. Tumu's ingenuity took the traditional colors - red, yellow, white, black and brown - and combined them with a painting method that produces enduring works of art. The medium, far removed from the oils and watercolors of European art, is sand in the form of pulverised rock.

The "canvas" is wood. "In the coastal areas people made tapa cloth but in the highlands pigments went straight on to bark, similar to that done by Australian aborigines," said Mr. Tumu.

He has been teaching sand painting at the Enga Cultural Centre, of which he is director, since it opened 10 years ago in Wabag. Before that he was an art student at Goroka Technical College where as an undergraduate he took up the problem of rendering traditional art that would survive while still



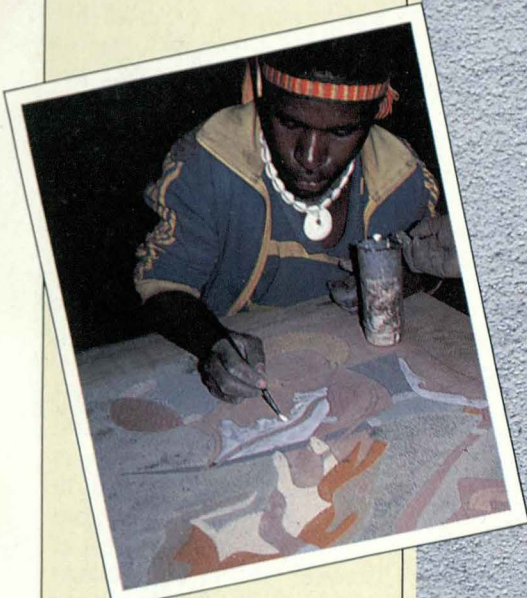
Man with dog and opossum, by Waki Waikali (left).

using cheap, readily available materials.

The Cultural Centre comprises an art gallery/studio and museum which nestle among trees and shrubs just below the town. Two small thatched roof bridges cross a stream which runs through the centre's grounds and provide access to the wooden buildings.

The sand paintings, seen in the subdued light of the gallery interior, create a strong impact on visitors as soon as they enter. There are vivid landscapes and human figures which depict Enga legends and tales. Many originate from stories passed down through the generations and include accounts of battles fought by warring tribesmen.

Waki Waikali, who later went to the National Theatre to work, was one of the centre's students who became an early master of sand painting. We saw him in action on a visit to the centre. The technique calls for preliminary sketches which the artist draws on plywood,



Wig man back from hunting opossum, by Waki Waikali (right). Student applying glue to sand painting (inset).



WAKI
WAKAL
1984

some pieces up to one-and-a-half metres long.

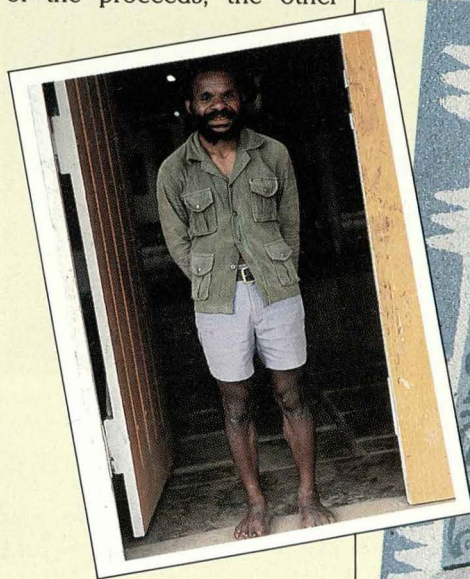
Each small area to be colored is painted with wood glue and sprinkled with ground stone, the sand. The excess is tapped off and the process is continued until the whole surface is covered. Often a white sand outline is used to intensify the image. Finally the picture is fixed with a spray. From start to finish the painstaking work may take a month.

Stone, ground for use in the paintings, comes in natural hues that vary from black through dark, clerical grey to orange, yellow, red and pink and finally, near-perfect white. It is found around Wabag and in the stream bed which courses through the grounds. A heavy hammer is used to smash it down to a size small enough to be screened into sand.

The director, Mr. Tumu, has as a fellow teacher, Watu Lopo, a graduate of the Port Moresby School of Art. Their students are drawn from 14 and 15-year-olds who attend local schools and who show an interest and aptitude in art. Tuition is free, the provincial government providing the funds to run the centre. When works are sold, the students keep 50 per cent of the proceeds, the other



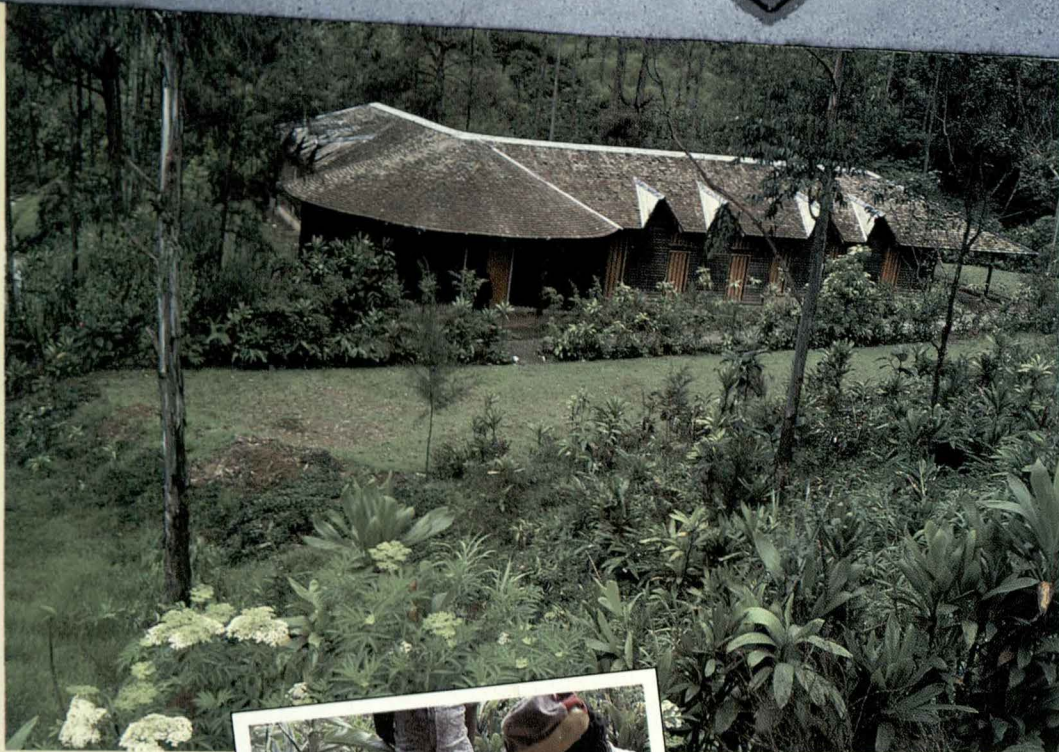
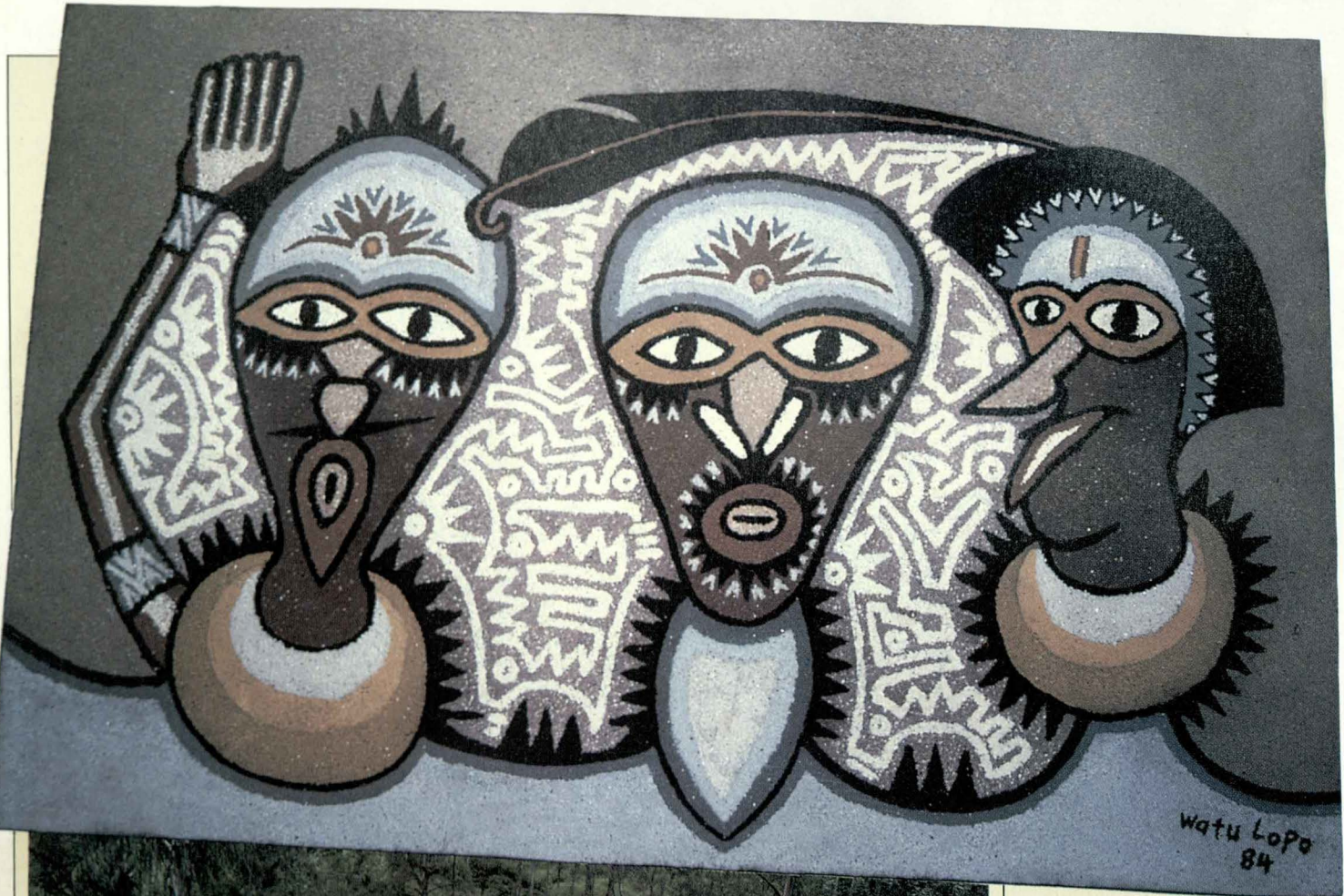
Watu
Lopo



Untitled, by Watu Lopo (above).
Untitled, by Pils (below).
Watu Lopo (inset).



Pils
1983



Untitled, by Watu Lopo (above). Enga Cultural Centre (centre). Students sitting sand (below).



Plans are afoot for an artifact shop to be stocked with crafts from all over PNG and to have craft demonstrations. In the future, Enga wig men may demonstrate their skills in making the distinctive wig headdress of the region.

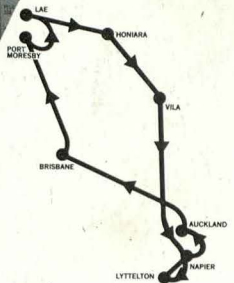
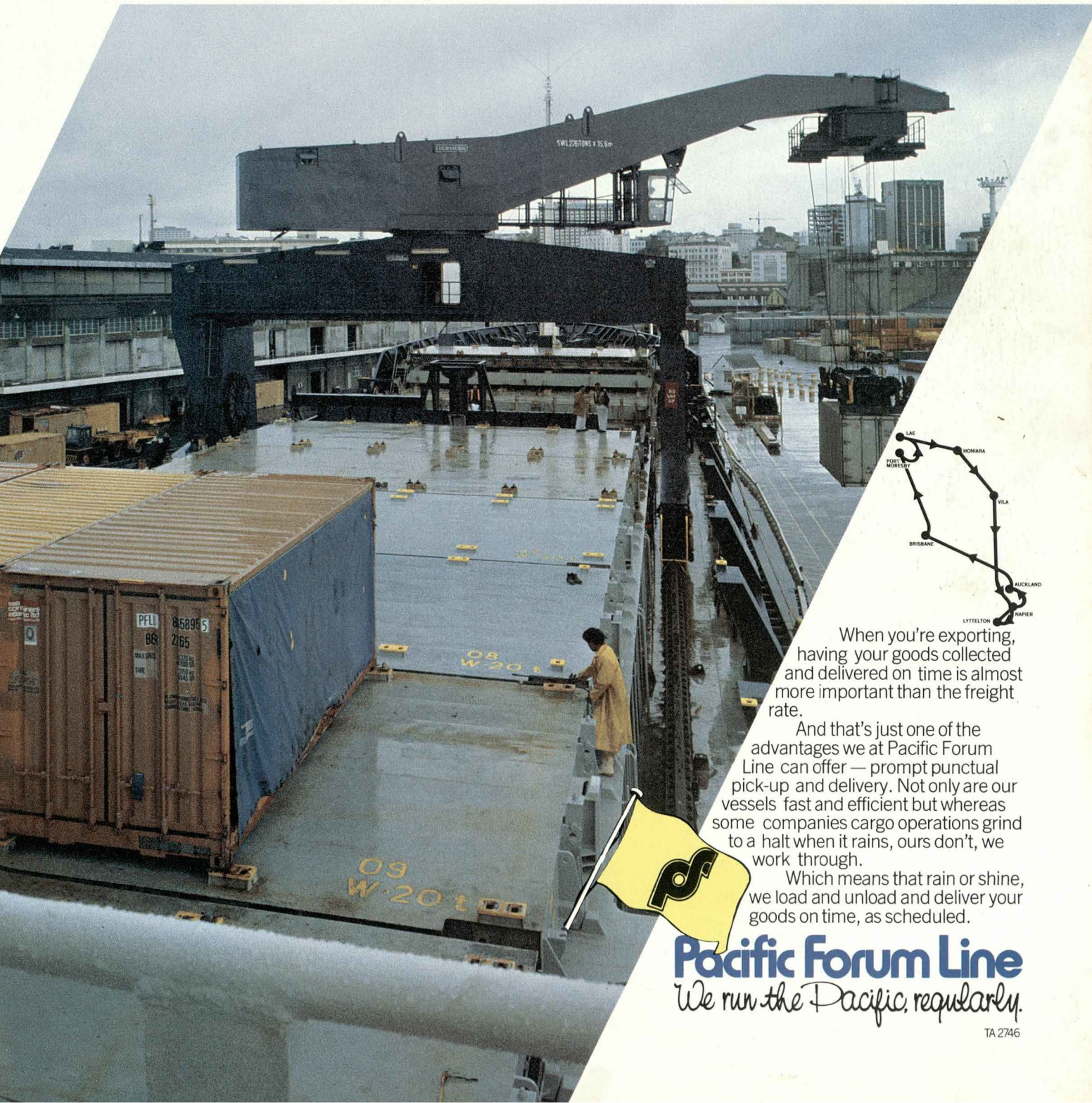
Enga artists at the Cultural Centre have shown considerable ability in working copper but it has one great drawback - its cost. "Most of the students come from an environment where cash is not readily available," said Mr. Tumu. "And copper is very expensive. Those who become artists in sand painting can go home and work on traditional forms with materials that are right there."

Nature's handiwork is also on display and visitors who take the time to walk through the gardens will have a chance to see the Enga Orchid among the other varieties that flourish there.

half going towards the purchase of materials.

Marketing is a problem in such a small town but the centre makes use of any opportunities that are presented. At a Pacific Festival in Townsville, Australia, last year for example, of 45 exhibits sent from the Enga centre all but five were sold.

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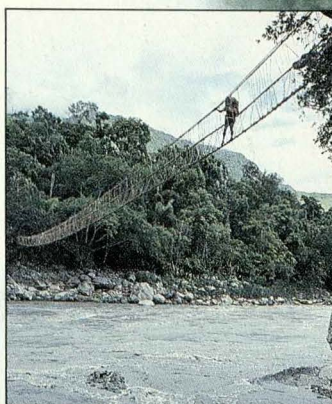


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Wild Waters

Story and pictures by David Eastburn



The Devil's Race, the most turbulent section of the Strickland River (left). An 80-metre cane bridge, one of the few crossings of the Upper Strickland (inset).

On the 28th July 1885, after ascending the Fly River for about 380 kilometres, a party of scientists representing the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, on board the steamship "Bonito", came upon a broad, strong-flowing stream entering from the east. This river was named the "Strickland" by the leader of the expedition, Captain Henry Charles Everill, in honor of Sir Edward Strickland who was at the time the President of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia.

The Strickland River is the major tributary of the Fly, the largest river in Papua New Guinea, which drains the vast forested plains and lowlands of the south-western part of the country.

The Strickland is formed by two other rivers, the Lagaip and the Om, which rise in the rugged mountains of the Central Range, the spine of

Papua New Guinea. To reach the lowlands the river passes through the awesome Strickland Gorge, a 110-kilometre canyon with walls towering 1600 metres on each side.

The physical barrier created by the Strickland Gorge is probably also the most significant cultural boundary on the island of New Guinea (Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya). It is the meeting place of four major cultural regions: the Papua New Guinea Highlands, the Papuan Lowlands, the Sepik, and the Irian Jaya Highlands (the Min cultural area of Papua New Guinea). Each of these four regions contains a multitude of different localised cultures but they are overlaid by a basic pattern which unifies them. The groups living around the gorge are representatives of the cultures of a large proportion of the population of New Guinea. Although the different cultural groups around the gorge live within a relatively small area, the rugged terrain allows very little contact between them.

The most obvious cultural boundary created by the Strickland Gorge is that between the loosely related highland cultures west of the gorge, including those in Irian Jaya, and the loosely related Papua New Guinea highland cultures to the east. The groups within these two cultural regions can be identified superficially by male dress.

The penis-gourd or phallo-



crypt is the traditional universal male attire of the cultural groups in the highlands west of the gorge while the traditional male covering to the east usually consists of a net apron at the front and a rear covering of cordyline (tanget) leaves. The traditional custom of wearing hair wigs, every day or for ceremonial occasions, is also

generally shared by the Papua New Guinea highland cultural groups east of the Gorge.

Some of the most isolated groups of people in Papua New Guinea live around the Strickland Gorge.

The Sinale, some of whom introduced themselves to the "outside world" for the first time in 1977, live on a narrow

forested plain wedged between the towering cliffs of the Muller Range and the Strickland River.

The Bogaia live in the Bulago Valley within the Muller Range; surrounded on three sides by steep walls and on the fourth by the Strickland Gorge.

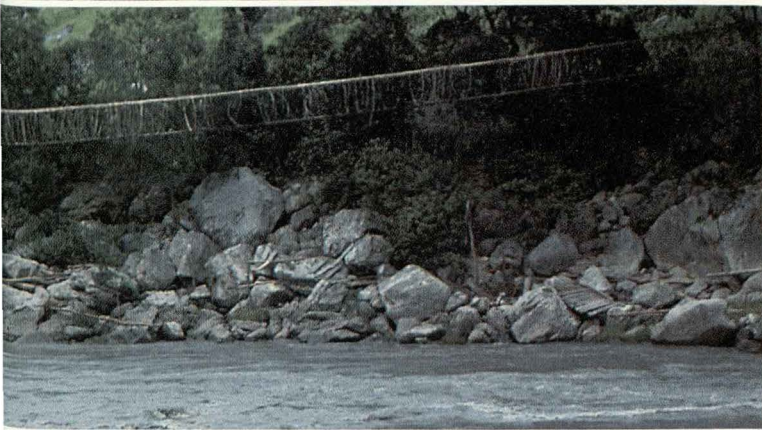
The sparse Hewa population occupies a large area

of rugged, heavily forested country around the Lower Lagaip River and the headwaters of the Strickland on the southern slopes of the Central Range.

Kwermin territory is bounded by the deep valley of the Murray (Wongup) River to the west, the Victor Emanuel Range to the north, the Blucher Range to the south



An Oksapmin man surveys the Strickland Gorge (left). Cane bridges are engineering feats (below left). Duna man from the eastern side of Strickland Gorge.



and the Strickland Gorge to the east.

The sight and sound of the Upper Strickland River as it crashes its way through the ruggedly beautiful limestone country to the lowlands, produces an almost indescribable feeling of awe, fear and magnetism. A feeling as much influenced by the stories which have become

the legend of the Strickland Gorge as by its spectacular scenery. In his book 'Kiap', James Sinclair describes the Gorge as:

"the terrible Strickland Gorge, that wonderful frightening channel through some of the wildest country on earth, the course of the Strickland River on its roaring descent to the vast plains of

the Fly, country that will never be forgotten by those few that have been lucky enough to walk it."

Neither Papuan nor European can view the Upper Strickland objectively, as each culture has its own stories about the river and its beautiful-tracherous gorge. To the people living around the Gorge, the silt-

laden grey swirling water of the river is the home of masalai (demons); confirmed by the many drownings and disappearances of people over the years and the sounds of "drums" beating in the water during floods. Huge boulders are swept along the river-bed during floods and bump together to make dull resonating sounds similar to

the beat of kundu drums.

The Duna and Oksapmin people who live on opposite sides of the gorge, usually avoid going into it because it is unpleasantly hot. It is a place where malaria is often contracted and infections occur readily. The steep sharp limestone spurs and loose scree make walking difficult and often result in badly cut feet. The floor of the gorge for the first 40 kilometres of its length is almost treeless with the exception of a corridor immediately next to the river and a few isolated clumps sheltered by cliffs or around springs. The unprotected floor of the gorge is stifling during the day if there is no cloud cover, as the sun beats down and the heat radiates back off the grassland and exposed limestone. There are few drinking places and the sharp kunai grass makes an ideal hiding place for snakes.

The Bogaia and Kwermin people are well aware of how quickly and high the Strickland can rise during a flash flood in the steep-walled gorge which passes between their territories. Except around the Om-Lagaip junction, no people live in the gorge itself.

The legend of the Strickland Gorge began for Europeans in 1937 after Jack Hides mounted a gold prospecting expedition to follow the Strickland to its source and enter the Highlands from behind the Kubea (Muller) Range. Hides thought that area to be the source of the alluvial gold which he discovered in the Strickland River during the Strickland-Purari Patrol of 1935.

During the expedition, David Lyall who accompanied Hides, became very ill and weak through loss of blood from a duodenal ulcer and it was necessary to get him to Daru for medical treatment as quickly as possible. The expedition was in the foothills of the Muller Range when the emergency arose which meant that the

only hope was to carry Lyall down the sheer cliffs to the river, raft him through the gorge despite the incredible risks and then take him by canoe down the Strickland and Fly Rivers to Daru. Hides described the events of this mercy dash very vividly in his book, "Beyond the Kubea":

"I tied an empty Muntz metal kerosene container to Lyall's chest to keep him

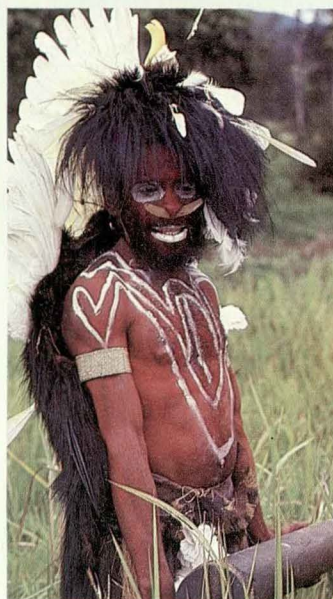


afloat if the raft smashed up. We said good-bye to Paki and pushed off together at 6.30 am. The flood caught us up and carried us off on the maddest trip I have ever made.

"We gathered pace with the flood, a frightening pace as we charged down between those steep rock walls that seemed to reach to the sky. I stood nervously over Lyall's body on the swaying raft, my eyes never off the swirling flood and the rock walls as they sped by. I watched each bend we approached, knowing nothing of what lay beyond it and expecting anything, just hoping and hoping that we would remain on top of the rafts and they would not go to pieces.

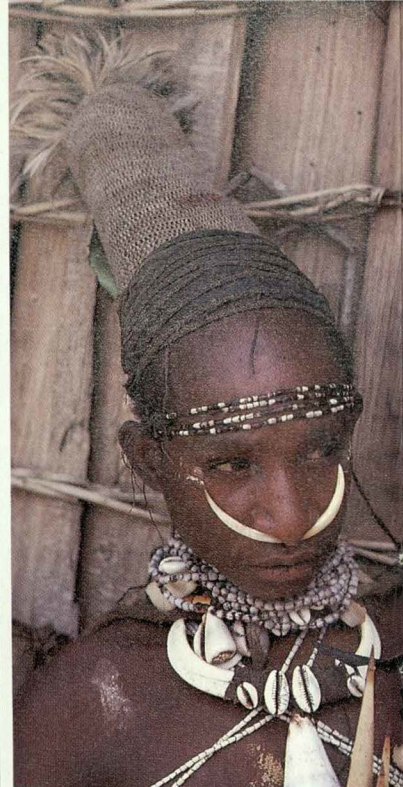
"Mile after mile I felt an inexpressible feeling of relief as each danger passed, only to be fearful again of the dangers still ahead. Once as our three-ton raft shot through a line of rapids with waves five and six feet high, I lay over Lyall and gripped the decking. We were engulfed several times and the raft rocked dangerously; but we

A young Hewa warrior from the Strickland headwaters (right). And (clockwise from below) a Hewa house being built high for defence; a Bogaia man from the Bulago Valley; a Sinale man in his finery; a typical Sinale girl from the river's lowlands.



came out of it all right. I was beginning to think that nothing could stop us from winning through, when suddenly we were drawn from the flood into a huge whirlpool formed by a bay in the wall of the gorge.

"As we went crashing into this wall of rock, I shouted to everyone to crouch down and hang on. The backwash at the horn of the bay could not stop the rush of our heavy craft and we crashed into the rock with a sickening sound of tearing timbers. The raft tilted over on its side and I thought the end had come, but the raft righted itself, and went careering around the rock wall at the edge of the



whirlpool, with one log hanging loosely and more cross-pieces breaking and splintering. An extra swirl of current picked us up and carried us safely out into the main stream again. We came out of the gorge to see the rain-soaked hills again."

Sixteen days after entering the Strickland Gorge for the dash to the coast, and after several other incidents Hides managed to get Lyall to a doctor in Daru. Unfortunately it was too late and Lyall died within 24 hours of his arrival. The gold expedition to the Upper Strickland had also cost the lives of five carriers and had weakened Hides and shattered his health so much that he too was dead within

nine months, four days before his thirty-second birthday.

In 1954 a patrol led by Assistant District Officer Desmond Clancy accompanied an Australian Petroleum Company geological survey team, in search of oil, into the land between the Tari Basin and the Strickland River. This patrol was the first to pass down the entire length of the Strickland Gorge. Progress was often painfully slow, at times less than three kilometres a day. It was impossible to follow the river and the patrol was forced to climb along the walls above it. The patrol members felt and cut their way along narrow ledges in the cliffs

above the raging torrent and clambered over the slippery limestone through the rain-swept moss forest.

The sight of the Strickland throwing up clouds of spray high into the air as it poured over waterfalls and boiled down through sheer-walled chasms was so awesome as to inspire Clancy to give such names as the "Gates of Hell" and the "Devils Race" to various parts of the river in the gorge. After the patrol had passed the Falls Gorge and entered the foothills of the Muller Range the turbulent current eased. It was decided to give the exhausted carriers a rest by building canoes in which to complete the journey to the Fly. The crew of a

Catalina flying-boat which had dropped supplies to the patrol reported that the river downstream appeared to flow calmly. Twenty canoes were built and each put in charge of an experienced canoe handler. Clancy was in the lead canoe and the men in charge of the other canoes were instructed to follow him closely.

Tragedy struck after less than two kilometres on the river. A policeman took his canoe too wide around a bend and into a whirlpool. Within seconds the canoe was sucked under and the policeman and eight Huji carriers, of the 12 on board, were drowned. Another tragic incident to add to the sinister reputation of the Strickland. The river claimed the lives of two more men before the patrol was completed.

As recently as 1979 the Upper Strickland reconfirmed that it must be treated with respect. Eight men with extensive whitewater experience decided to attempt to descend the gorge in two inflatable whitewater boats as a part of Operation Drake - a series of projects and adventures around the world to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Sir Francis Drake's voyage.

The first incident occurred on the second day of the descent as the first major rapid was being challenged; one of the boats was stood on its end and its occupants tossed into the swirling water. Everyone managed to struggle to safety but two valuable movie cameras were lost. A few days later the expedition lost one of its boats as it was being floated, unmanned, on a line over a difficult section of rapid. It floated too far out and was swamped by a wave and swept away in an instant. The expedition was abandoned but fortunately no lives were lost. The Strickland had been lenient.





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SHOW TIME

Story and pictures by R. Kibble

Papua New Guinea's annual Highland Show is one of the world's more colorful cultural events. Alternating between Mt Hagen and Goroka, it is a gathering place for mountain tribesmen and a breathtaking spectacle that lures curious visitors from afar.

Although it is perhaps the best known annual show it is not the only one. Most of the country's 20 provinces have similar annual gatherings. They too provide entertainment on the grand scale.

The most lavish Hollywood extravaganza would hardly equal those of the annual shows. Bright, beautifully colored costumes, simple but infinitely varied rhythms of traditional dance groups all performing in the one arena, combine to produce stunning effects.

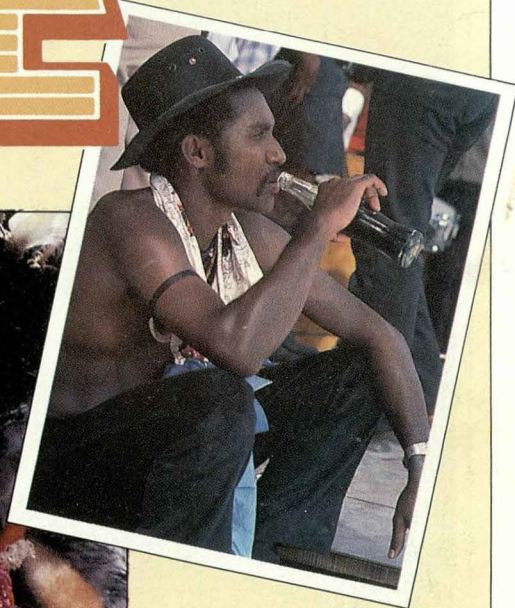
As in the state fairs of the United States and the agricultural and pastoral shows of other countries, music and dancing are but one aspect. There is the serious side of competition between farmers who display their best produce and livestock.

The shows are an important forum and exchange for primary producers who want to improve their techniques and stock blood lines. Even the rodeos help farm hands maintain and improve their skills.

Yes, there are rodeos in PNG, not too different from



Sepik Tumbuan dancer at Highlands Show, Goroka (above). Musician takes a break at Port Moresby Show (inset).



those of the cattle raising areas of North America.

But forget Stetsons, stirrups and stockyards at the annual festival in Mt Hagen or Goroka. This is the venue of the fascinating highlands dancing displays and competitions.

Inaugurated in 1956, it was a sensation when outsiders saw for the first time things that explorers and patrol officers had been describing for years. Since then it has been photographed and written about extensively in magazines and books. Ian Downs, a founder of the show, in 'The Stolen Land', described the scene 30 years ago:

"Suddenly the arena exploded into life and the crowd around the fence went wild as the warriors came streaming in. The dancers began moving their bodies vertically up and down, half bending only from the knees so that bodies were straight and their plumes rose and fell in slow unison until 20 thousand men went moving in time with the rhythm of



Papuan dancer at Port Moresby Show (above). Siasi Tumbuan dancers at Lae Show (inset).

which the feathers had not been plucked so that when the dancers moved the birds seemed to be alive and dancing on their heads."

The Morobe Show, held in Lae for the past two decades draws performers from all over the province and from other provinces, including Sepik, Papua, Oro and New Britain. Siasi Tumbuan, covered from head to foot in shredded sago-leaf skirts topped by elaborate masks; high, brightly colored head-dresses (sabi) worn by

Morobeans; giant cassowary masks of the Sepik and rarely seen outside the region; upwards of a thousand performers in more than 30 groups, creating awe inspiring scenes.

Port Moresby has the longest running show in the country and a speedway track as well as a rodeo arena. But it too provides a regional flavor in its traditional dancing, using the same principle as Morobe and the Highlands. A separate cultural arena is set aside for groups to perform over the three days of the show.

Groups come from all along the Papuan coast as far west as Daru, the Gulf and Bereina through Rigo and on to Samarai in the east. In recent years there have been also groups from the Highlands

and islanders from Manus, New Britain and the Tobr-lands.

Each year the shows have more than 250 thousand patrons and more than 20 thousand participants. Cash incentives to cultural groups to attend help keep traditions alive. The Goroka Show in 1984 for example paid out 30 thousand kina in prizes, food and assistance.

Tough judging techniques maintain the accuracy of the traditions which are the basis of the performances. In this way the judges ensure that this aspect of PNG culture will survive unaltered for the generations to come.



the kundu drums. There were men wearing wide black wigs of human hair, topped by three-foot long feathers of the black longtail and the even longer white fronds of the ribbontail birds of paradise. Each plume was really the whole skin of the bird from

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Daru FLY RIVER

Kiunga

Ok Tedi Mine

Tari PORT MORESBY Mendi

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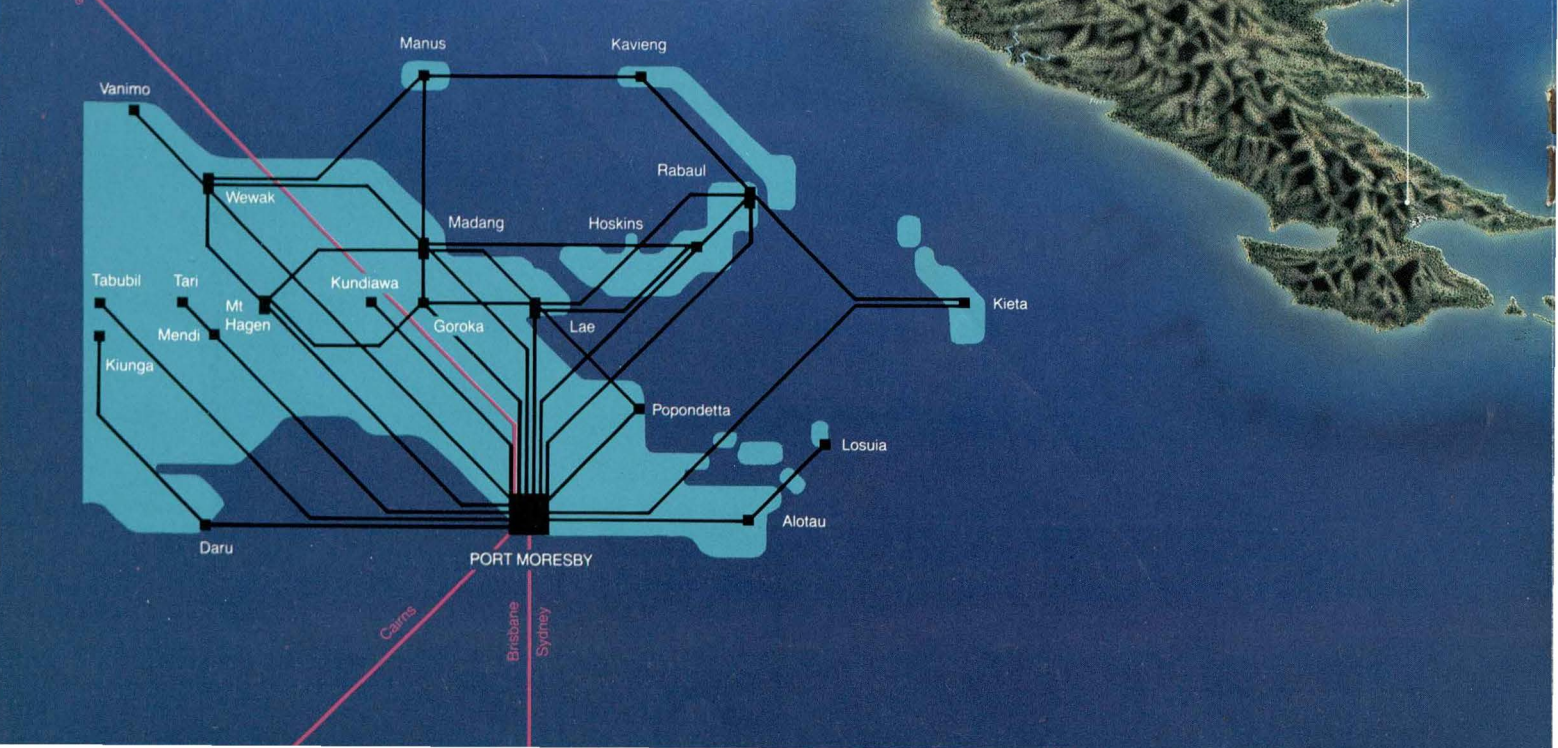
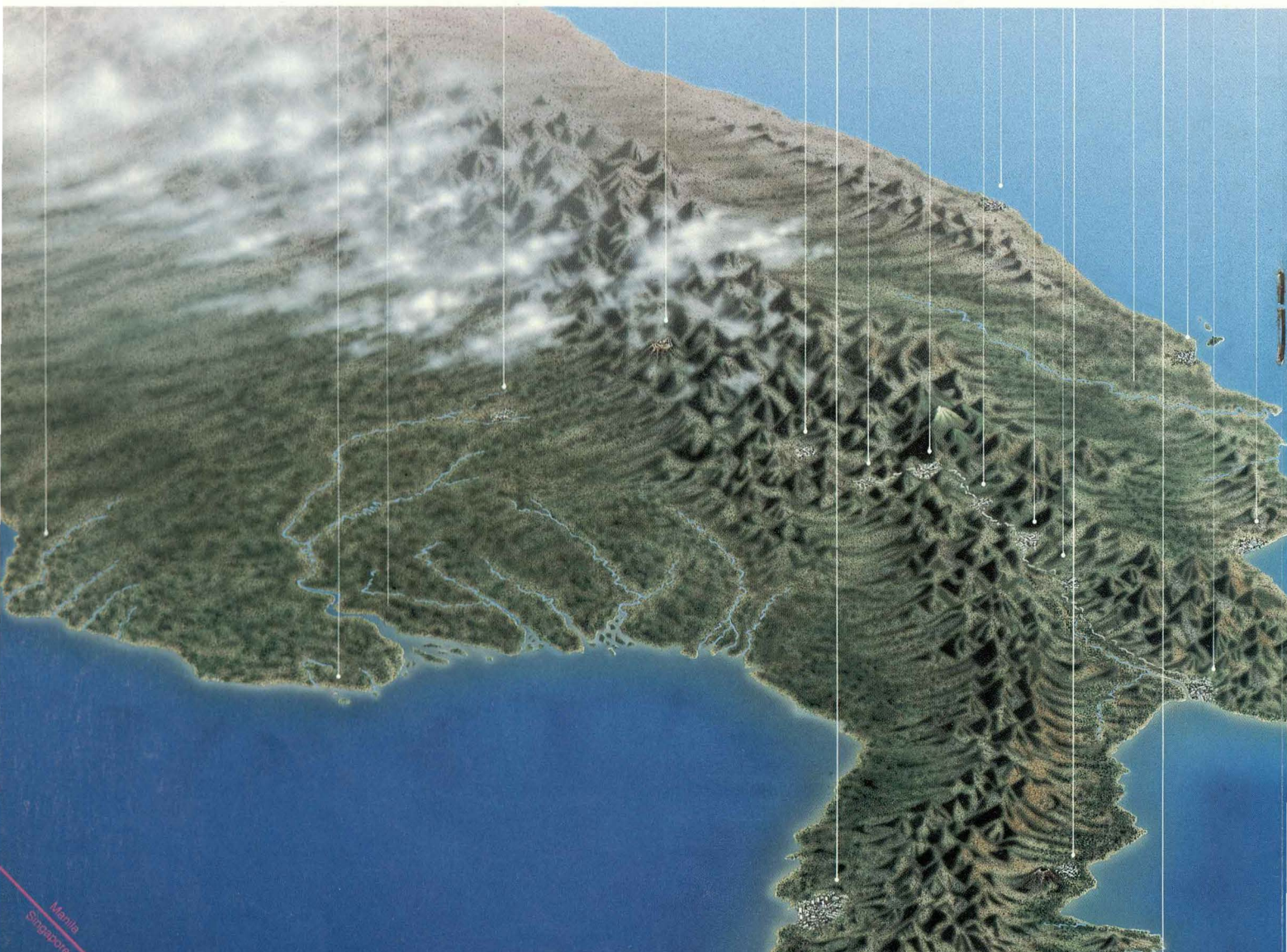
Goroka Kainantu

Popondetta

SEPIK RIVER

Alotau Wewak

Lae Madang



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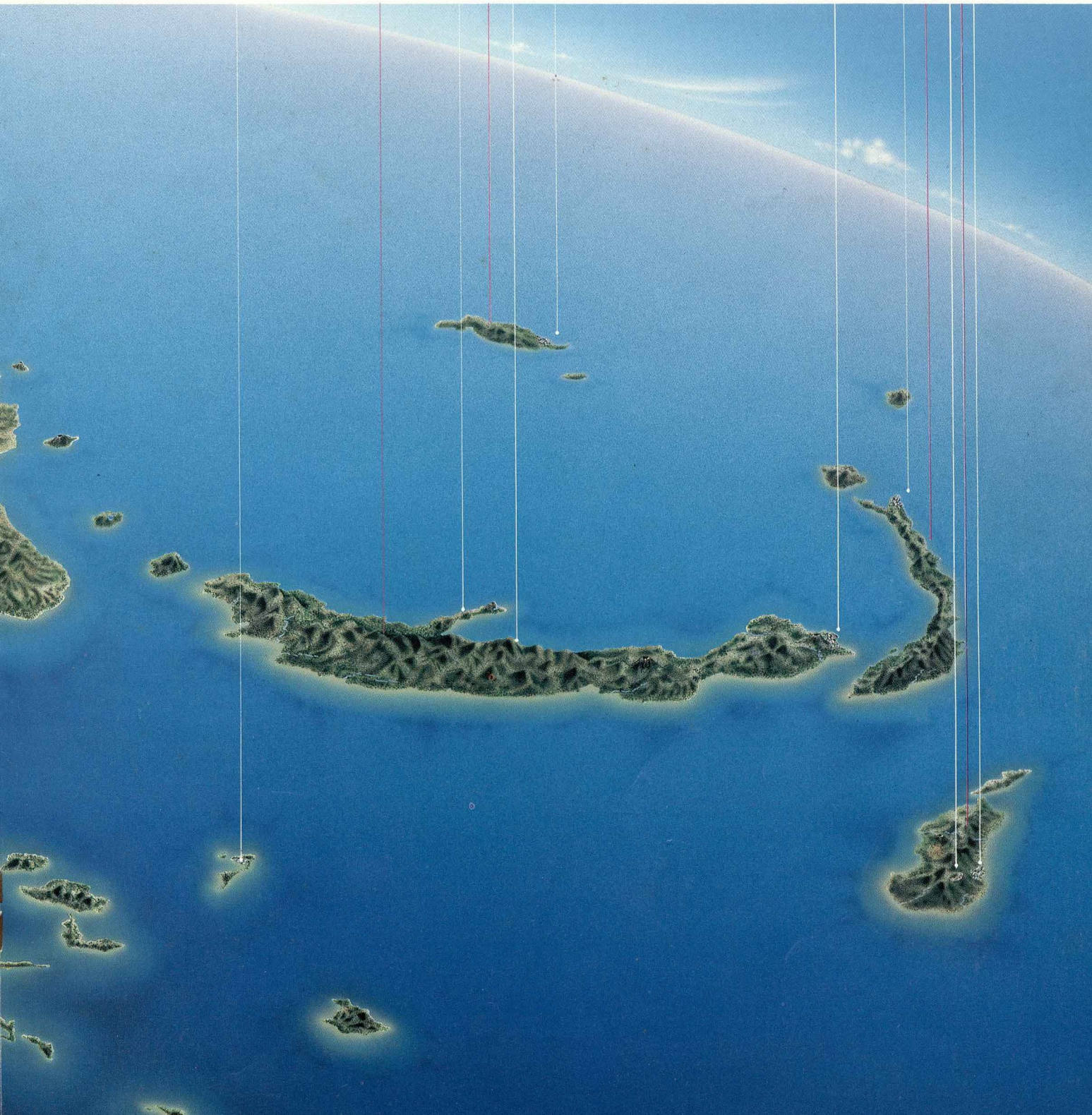
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MANUS ISLAND
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Lorengau

Rabaul

Kavieng
NEW IRELAND
Panguna
NORTH SOLOMONS
Kieta



Papua New Guinea

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By Ellen Dissanayake

In the early years of this century, European artists began to discover in carvings and artifacts from other parts of the world a kind of formal power and elemental quality they felt was lacking in their own art. Objects brought back by explorers from Africa and Oceania and displayed in museums as curiosities were used as subject matter or as direct inspiration for sculpture and painting by such well-known artists as Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani, Gaudier-Brzeszka and the German Expressionists.

Reacting with abhorrence to the mechanical, impersonal complexities of modern life, these European artists were among the first not only to regard primitive artifacts as "art" but to recognise that the ways of life of less technologically and economically developed parts of the world were not to be dismissed as savage and inferior but acknowledged as more natural, fundamental, and therefore humane.

The best known European painter of and seeker after this original or "primitive" way of life is Paul Gauguin who left France to live and work and spend the remainder of his life in Polynesia. It is not widely known that 25 years later another great figure of European painting, Emil Nolde, visited Melanesia. In 1913-14 he joined a German medico-demographic expedition in what was at that time German New Guinea, and spent six months observing and recording the life of the people in sketches, watercolors and paintings as well as in a journal and in letters home.

His impressions have been published in his autobiography, and in collections of his letters to various friends

Emil Nolde, a self portrait.



NOLDE in New Guinea

at home. Most of the pictorial works are to be found in the Nolde Museum at Seebull in northern East Germany.

With the expedition Nolde visited the Bismarck Archipelago, including the area about Rabaul in New Britain; the interior of the Gazelle Peninsula; Neu Mecklenburg (now New Ireland); Manus and other of the Admiralty Islands; and the northern part of Kaiserwilhmsland (now the northeast segment of the mainland of Papua New Guinea).

Although Nolde's journal describes many of the individual scenes he portrayed, it is difficult today to assign a particular work to any one description. Overall, in hundreds of vignettes of ordinary life as well as portraits and landscapes, the artist depicted not only external appearances but expressed something of his generalised awareness that the simplicity, harmony, and imposingness of the primeval peoples and their way of life was about to disappear forever. This sadness and regret of Nolde's seem to infuse the faces and even the poses of many of the figures.

In a letter to a former teacher and friend, Hans Fehr, Nolde wrote:

"The natives are a splendid people as far as they have not been already spoiled by their contact with the white culture. A few times we had the opportunity to meet absolutely original beings in their villages. That was beautiful. Magnificent figures with enormous hair, and ears and neck full of heavy ornaments. Their houses were built of bamboos covered with palm leaves and the surfaces were painted. Their canoes were full of carvings like their weapons and every household item was ornamented in

the most beautiful way, painted and carved from heavy wood.

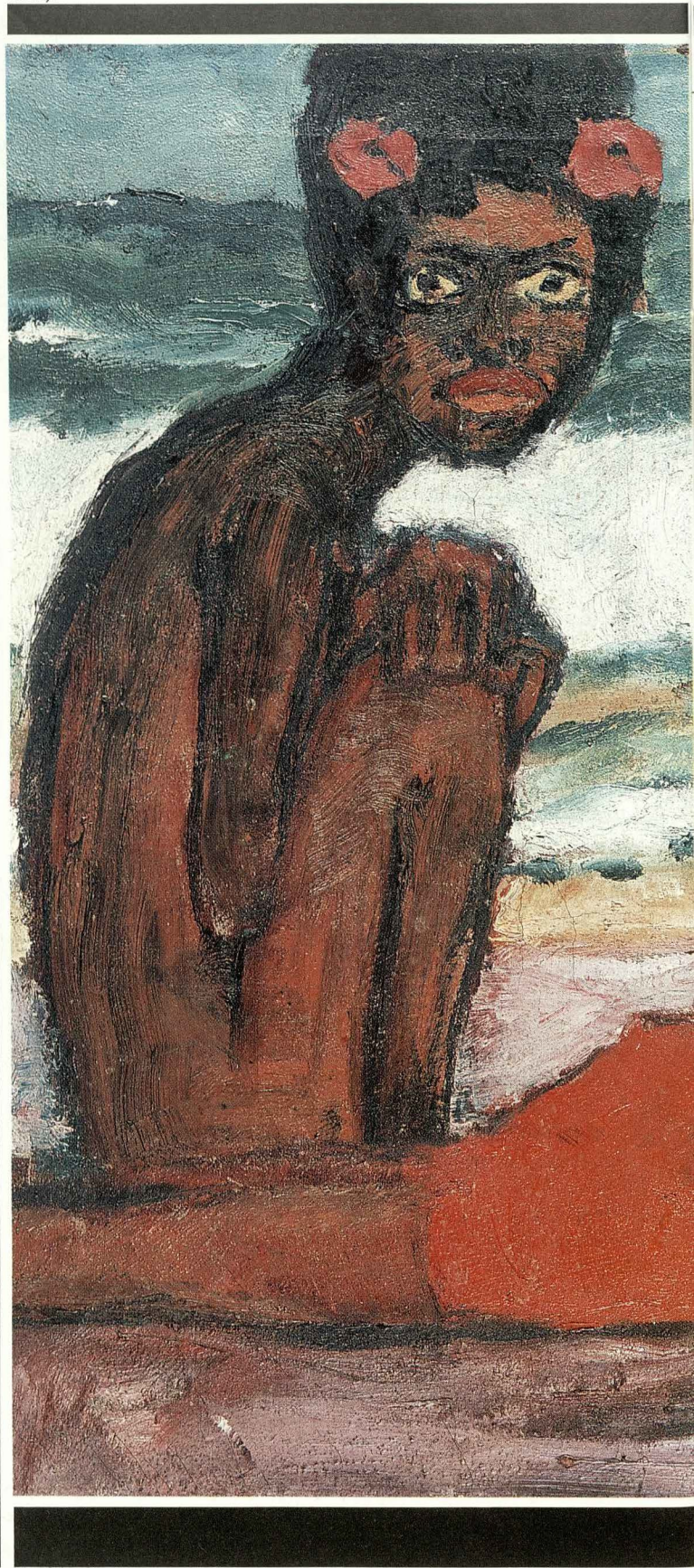
"Everything is made so purposefully and with uncommon artistic sense and love. For their religious cults they carve figurines; their legends, their songs, their chants, their dances, everything is so beautiful and complete in its manner.

"Reddish-brown people, men and women, almost without clothing, only with their ornaments, walk on the white sand between fruiting palms or banana trees, or the yellow-red bushes around their dwellings, an unusual, strong harmony. Then I think of our German apartments full of the most banal conglomeration of cheap flim-flam and bad manufactured goods, or of bodies distorted and deformed by clothing and footwear, in homage to the fashion magazines.

"Are we, the so-called civilised people, really so much better than the people here? Here when there is a disagreement a few individuals are killed, in Europe in a war, thousands. We must bring them culture, these savages, say in unison and self-assuredly the planters, officials, missionaries. And who after all are these culture-bearers? The police chief, former non-commissioned officers, planters, former sailors or petty officers, the missionary, former craftsmen-apprentices or church-school pupils, who know nothing of the world other than the smallest circle in which they turn around and around.

"One is being dictated to by his moneybags, the other by the state and commercial interests, the third the Bishop of Munster. There are only a few people here who have eyes and sense for the

Papua Young People (Courtesy Berlin National Gallery, GDR).







KARAWARI LODGE

'... located on the Karawari River, a tributary of the Sepik, the lodge is in the tradition of Treetops and other great wilderness hotels.' *Allan Seiden, Travel Agent Magazine.*

'Something like a National Geographic expedition. No roads. Thick jungle. Locals poling dugouts. Crocodiles. You wind up at the surprising Karawari Lodge. All kinds of comfort in the midst of a thousand miles of jungle.'

Robin Kinhead, Chicago Tribune.

'This was the primitive culture we had come to see — the culture so well delineated by (the late Dr) Margaret Mead and National Geographic editors.'

Betty Peach, San Diego Tribune.

'... the silence and peacefulness is deafening to unaccustomed city ears.'

Heather William, Sydney Sunday Telegraph.

'Perhaps the view from the Lodge alone is worth the effort... but the real attraction could be the people. They have lived as they have for untold generations... storytelling, rituals and music.'

Charles Sribner, Pol Magazine.



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NOLDE in New Guinea

Emil Nolde drawings of a dancer (top) and a group of young men (bottom).

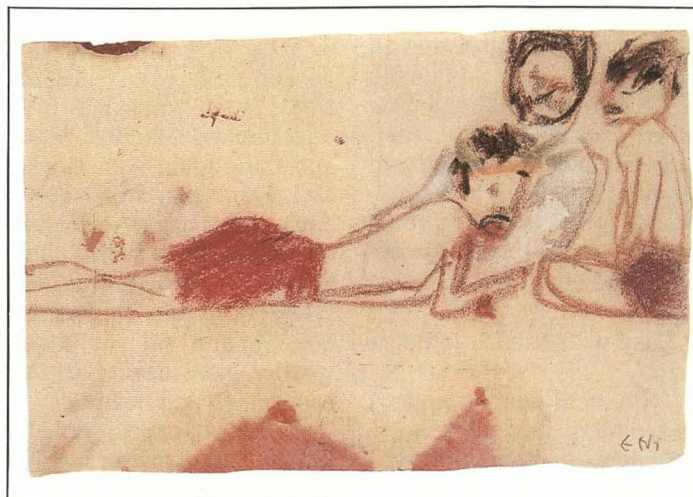
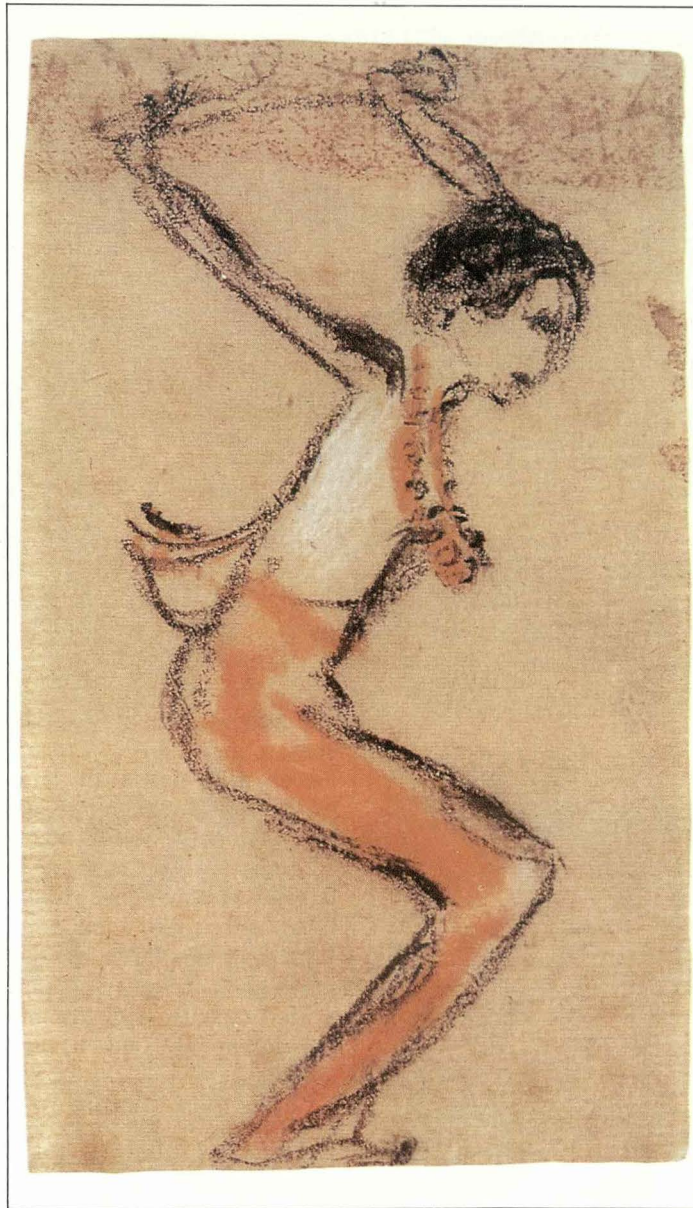
worth of the native culture. I have during these months so many times thought of the Spaniards and their blind, insensitive destruction of the Central American culture. However, he who speaks the truth will be stoned."

Nolde's first weeks in Melanesia were spent in Rabaul (then the capital city and administrative centre of German New Guinea). He found the local people to be disappointingly Europeanised and sketched local vegetation and landscapes instead. Eventually he was able to visit a few more pictorially-interesting villages in the interior of New Britain, and with the expedition to Gazelle Peninsula villages. While the doctors gathered demographic information and treated the villagers for various ailments, Nolde quietly painted and sketched.

Following a bout of amoebic dysentery he was treated at the hospital at Herbertshohe (now Kokopo) and recuperated in the pleasant climate of Tome (where, he noted, termites had eaten through 24 volumes of a dictionary belonging to a planter of his acquaintance), and later in Kavieng. With his German host there, a businessman, Nolde visited neighboring islands, once primevally beautiful but now monotonous and boring with neat rows of thousands of palm trees.

He noted that the languages differed from island to island and village to village as did the skin colors from light brown to deep black. Ada, his wife, wrote that when painted for their festivals the people were brighter and more colorful than the parrots.

From Kavieng the Noldes went to Manus which was of particular interest to Nolde



because it seemed more genuine and original, less spoiled by Western contact.

"On this quite big and lush island, the local people for decades forbade whites to enter. As soon as a foreign ship appeared hundreds of these tall men stood immediately with their axes, bows, and spears, armed in order to protect their island.

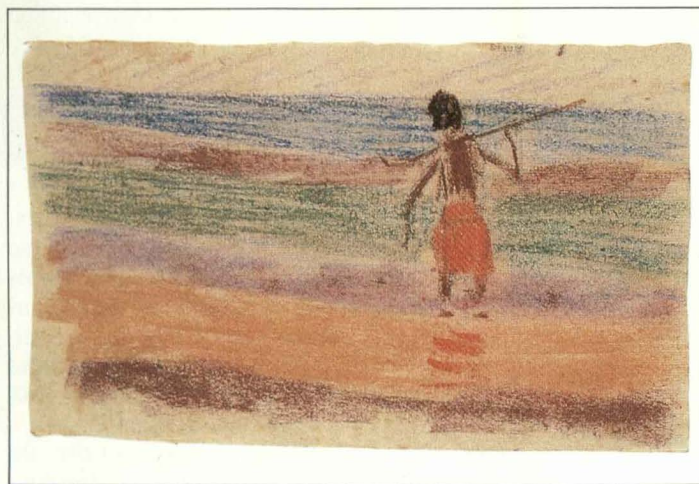
"Here as elsewhere if our ship came into the vicinity of an island we heard the strong drumming of one village to another, spreading the news so that in almost telegraphic speed the entire island became informed. These drums made out of a thick tree trunk hollowed and most often artfully decorated on the outside are beaten with a stick, short and long, soft and loud. The people can say whatever they want. They all know this language.

"Household goods, houses and boats, just like the drums, are elevated to have a higher significance or existence by being decorated with meaningful ornaments and unusual grotesque figurations, especially their jewelry and their weapons and shields are also created with a great deal of handwork.

"These brown people are in a phase of their development at which we Germans were 2,000 years ago. The Romans at that time had only a patronising smile for the artifacts of our (German) forebears; today, however, we place these earliest rough artifacts, clasps, rings, emblems, and ornaments higher than the contemporary Roman, supposedly-tasteful ones."

Noting that few of the colonialists had any appreciation of the decorative or cultural worth of the original native arts and artifacts, Nolde persuaded a local

Emil Nolde drawings of a PNG seascape (top) and a spear fisherman.



official in Rabaul to co-sign a letter urging the government authorities in Berlin to do something about their preservation. They pointed out that the South Sea region was probably the last remaining source of original art, soon to be exhausted as travellers from other countries were radically stripping the country of its cultural treasures.

The Noldes were able to observe Manus life at close hand. Apparently Frau Nolde was the first white woman to be seen in the village where they stayed.

“When my Ada went outdoors, she was welcomed by cheers and jubilation, and all surrounded this white-clad white lady like an apparition from Heaven. With their brown hands they patted and touched her dress, and stroked her long chestnut-brown braids in great awe, all the time speaking and gesturing.”

They witnessed a funerary feast.

“The local people made it understood that they were planning to celebrate a feast and on the flat ground for

approximately 20 metres they spread great green banana leaves and bowls of taras were placed on it. Quite large black ornate wooden bowls came, carried on the heads in a solemn way. These were filled with sago, fried corn, yams and tree fruits, and on top of each of these bowls lay a fried cuscus, with his thin tail rolled up into a high spiral.

“It all was unusual and almost like a fairytale. The men sat down to both sides with crossed legs. They ate for awhile and then one of the men stood up; orating he went up and down the long decked table with measured steps, soon speaking in a high-pitched excited voice and then again with weaker and then again softer voice, and then again forcefully repeating single words three times in a row. It was very impressive. We understand nothing and yet we understood a great deal, eyes and ears seeing and hearing.”

Nolde reported that in Manus he experienced “a strong, primeval way of life in

its purest original form”, and foresaw its destruction with sorrow.

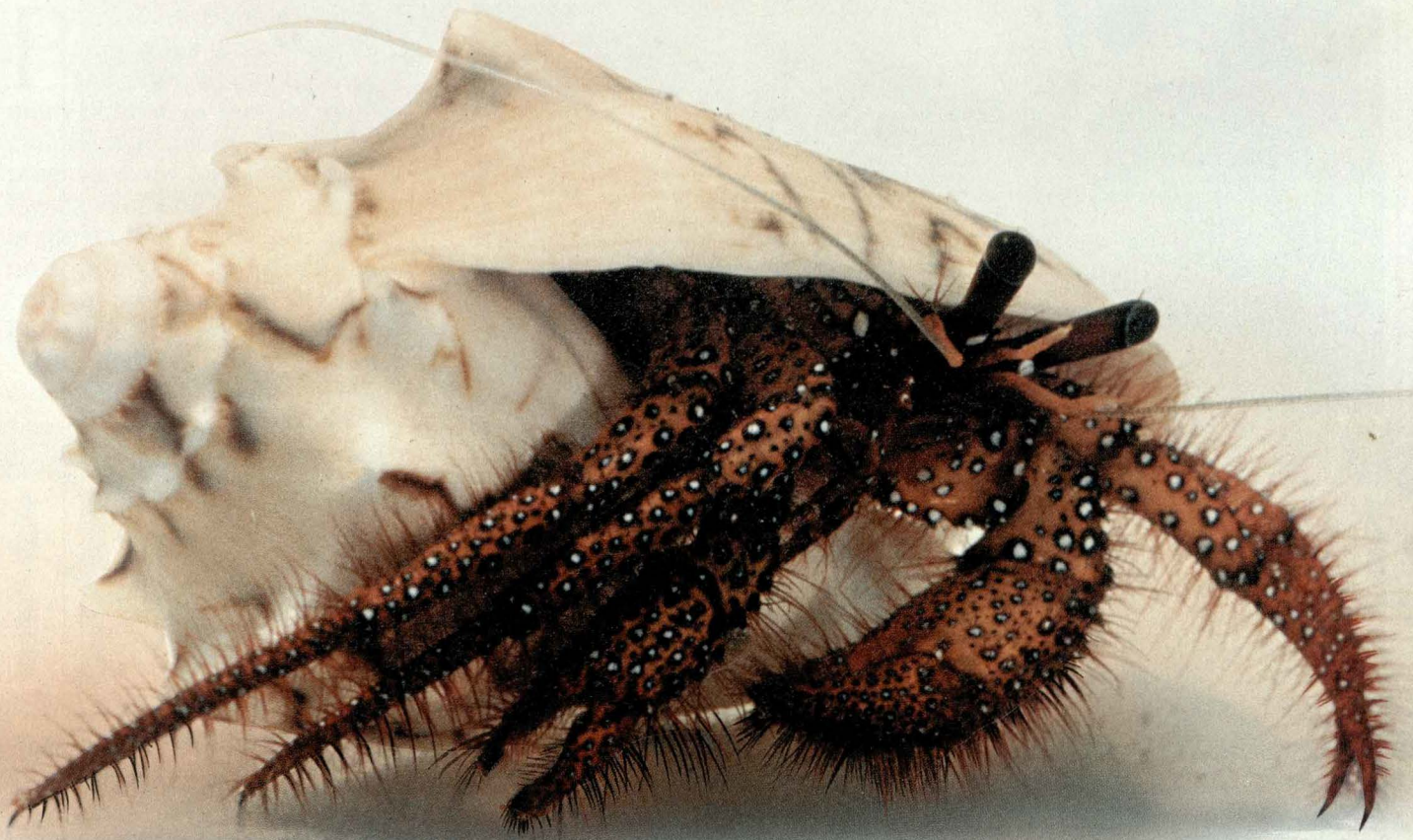
“We live in the time when all original customs and people are perishing – all becoming Europeanised. In 20 years it will be gone. In 300 years scientists and scholars will toil and ponder to touch the riches that today we so frivolously and shamelessly destroy.

“The original people live in their nature, are one with it and a part of the entire All. With the disappearance of their ways goes a portion of the being of the planet Earth. I sometimes have the feeling that only they are truly men, and we are fabricated marionettes, artificial and full of conceit.”

On the return voyage, Nolde’s ship docked briefly at an unnamed port on the northern coast. His journal ends.

“It was the last and most beautiful of the entire coastal voyage. The people here were big, proud, original marvels of nature. And their large, extraordinary, grotesque spirit houses rose as high as the palms. After I had sketched a few men on my sheets of paper I was able to paint a very young woman. She came out of the darkness of the hut squinting in the bright light, and she was enchanting in her naturalness, in her shy modesty. The few minutes of twilight came while I was still at work. We said our good-byes. Departure followed.

“We stood on deck. It was a farewell-taking of this light, dark, other-world. The lights of the dwellings slowly died away and then it was deep, quiet, heavy night. That was New Guinea. You wild, beautiful land.”



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Papua New Guinea's birds are among the most spectacular and unusual in existence, many of them extraordinary creations of nature. But only a privileged few people get to see these avian wonders in their original habitat. Others must rely on zoos and bird parks for the opportunity of seeing elusive wild birds at close hand.

One of the finest wildlife enclosures now flourishes in Sing-



BIRDS *of a* FEATHER

Story and pictures by Clifford and Dawn Frith

apore, the island republic that is one of PNG's South-east Asian neighbors. It is Jurong Bird Park, begun by the government in 1968 as a major recreational and educational attraction to cater for the two million local inhabitants and several million annual visitors.

Jurong was built on a 20.2 hectare site of ordinary, red clay land on the slopes of Bukit Peropak or Lookout Hill near an industrial estate. Landscaping transformed the area into a lush oasis in contrast to the city environment.

Papua New Guinea was among the first countries to donate birds, along with Australia, New Zealand, the United States and some European countries. Today the park is home to some 3,200 birds of more than 320 species in dozens of aviaries, paddocks, ponds and lagoons. Walkways between the displays are bordered by flower gardens and shaded by tropical vegetation.

PNG's fabulous palm cockatoo is one of the first birds visitors see after passing through the entranceway and into an open tropical courtyard. The palm cockatoos, the largest cockatoo species, share the yard with other big parrots from all over the world and the magnificent macaws of South America.



South American toucan (above).
PNG's magnificent Victoria
crowned pigeon, the world's largest
(below).



Tramcars with taped commentaries ferry bird lovers around the park continuously so visitors can alight and reboard at stops as they wish. The first stop is one of the park's most recent and extravagant exhibits, The World of Darkness.

This well-designed nocturnal bird house is the first of its kind in Asia. By controlled lighting, night and day have been reversed so that once visitors' eyes have adjusted they can see nocturnal birds behaving as they normally do at night.

Owls, frogmouths, night herons, stone curlews, wekas and a pair of very rare New Zealand kiwis live within the large, glass-fronted enclosures, each meticulously landscaped to suit the birds' ecological requirements. The presence of the New Zealand national birds is a testimony to the park, for only institutions that meet rigorous conditions are fortunate enough to obtain them. Fewer than a dozen of this particular endangered species of kiwi are outside New Zealand.

Beautiful birds of paradise share aviaries with goura pigeons and hornbills further along the tramcar route. Then come large, flightless PNG and Australian cassowaries roaming freely in the open, grassy paddocks. Nearby are aquatic enclosures for the ibises, spoonbills, herons and other waders.

Further up the slopes of Bukit Peropak stand the massive bird-of-prey aviaries housing hawks, kites, falcons and eagles. Two of these animals, which grace the skies of PNG, are star performers in the popular live bird show.

They are a brahminy kite and a wedge-tailed eagle which swoop down the hill from their aviaries to demonstrate their hunting skills. They take meat from their trainer on a stage that was built in 1982. All the other performers are birds, free flying like the kite and eagle, trained to move on cue. Circus tricks are out and the birds do

Flamingoes (top). PNG birds of prey are stars of the live bird show (centre). Palm cockatoos from PNG (bottom).



variations of their natural behavior.

Jurong has the world's largest walk-through aviary which covers 2.1 hectares. It has an average height of 20 metres and a man-made waterfall of 30 metres at one end, feeding a stream and lake. Water birds are in their element and the lushly wooded banks are feeding and breeding grounds for parrots, pigeons, kingfishers, mynahs, honeyeaters and thrushes.

Some six to seven million people a year visit Jurong Bird Park, of which 70 per cent are tourists, according to the authorities. The cost of running the park is more than two million Singapore dollars a year. The staff of about 100 includes keepers, veterinarians, gardeners and administrators.

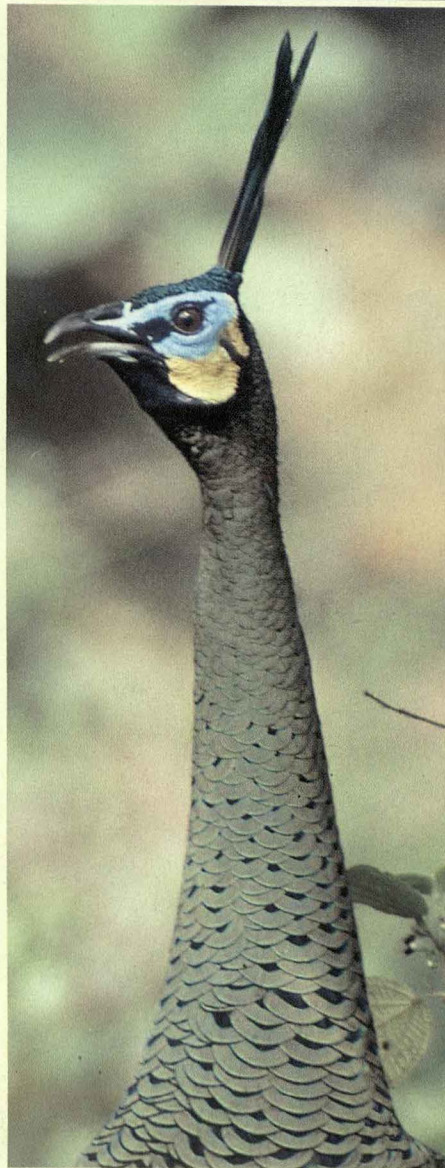
The park is regarded as a paradise for photographers, an ideal classroom and a school for ornithology, ecology and evolution. But its most important function may be its breeding program. The program replenishes the park's own stocks and also increases the world's captive breeding populations of endangered species.

BIRDS of PARADISE

Birds of paradise inspired a legend when they first became known to the outside world four-and-a-half centuries ago, the legend that gave them their name.

Magellan's ship *Vittoria*, the single survivor of his expedition around the world, brought two bird of paradise skins back to Spain. Prepared in the traditional way, they lacked wings and legs, for the men who killed them were interested only in the brilliant feathers of the body and tail.

"It is not surprising then that the arrival of these specimens on 6 September 1522 immediately gave rise to the story that these birds came from an earthly paradise,



Green winged macaw from Iouth America (left). Male Raggiana bird of paradise, symbol of Air Niugini (top). Tame birds enthrall visitors (centre). Pea fowl (centre).



Malaysian fishing owl (top). Pleasant surrounds for visitors and birds (centre left). Rainbow bridge inside a two-hectare cage (centre right). Wreathed hornbill (bottom).



gliding on the wind with their long plumes," wrote Dutch ornithologist Abram Rutgers.

"When another shipment arrived with birds without wings and legs there was much speculation and conjecture among the naturalists which lasted until research was carried out on a scientific basis in the Eighteenth Century. Mr. Wallace brought the first live specimens to London in 1862. During the voyage they were fed on boiled rice, bananas and cockroaches. In spite of very unsettled weather and poor accommodation, where they were in a continual draught, they survived and were subsequently kept alive for a few years in the Zoo."

Raggiana's bird of paradise, symbol of Air Niugini, is an animal whose passionate nature matches his lavish plumage. He breeds indiscriminately with the greater and lesser bird of paradise hens, giving rise to five sub-species of raggiana and very many hybrids.

The hybridisation is due to the fact that the cock goes into a state of ecstasy when courting and evidently pays little attention to the hen that comes in answer to his mating call. The hen nests and rears the young by herself and since these resemble her at first and are not confronted right from the beginning with the sight of the cock, their 'loyalty' to their own species is less strong than among birds reared by both parents. The young stay with the hens in parties for a considerable time.

"Like other members of the genus, this species lives in dense forest in the lowlands and at altitudes up to 5,000 feet. They visit fruit-laden trees and have even stayed in areas where they are hunted a lot. They are polygamous. The hens build a shallow, cup-shaped nest out of creeper stems and leaves and lay a single egg which is creamy-white with reddish-brown vertical stripes, especially at the rounded end."

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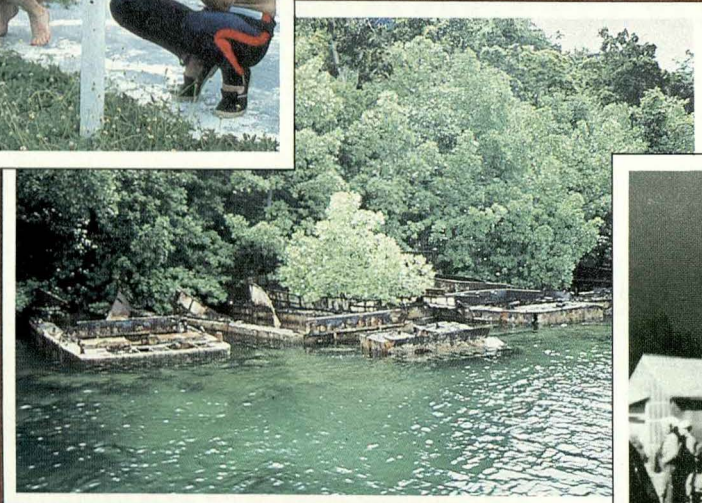
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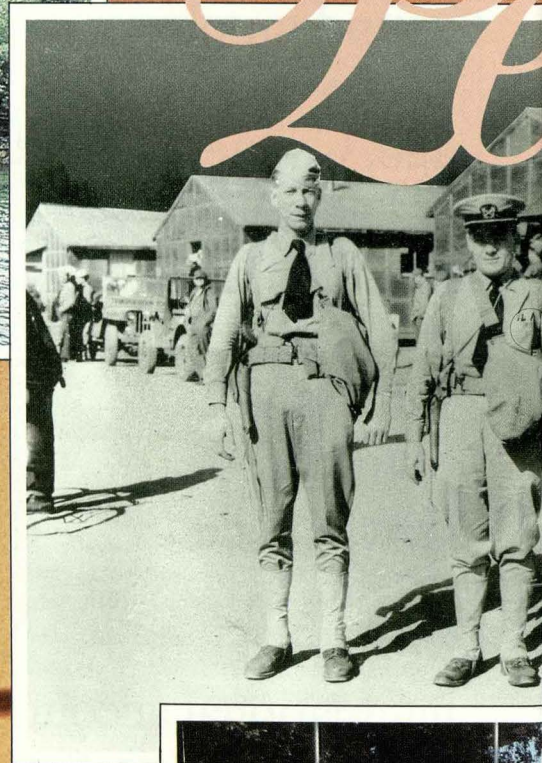
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Rusting machine guns and landing craft are memories of war **(above)**. Four American GIs on Manus during World War II **(right)** and their memorial at Hyane Bay, visited by members of the PNG Defence Force **(below)**.



Story and pictures

Invaders have come and gone to Manus Island, disrupting life and scarring the landscape, but the islanders and their gentle customs have endured. Japan and the United States fought bitterly for Manus which was then turned into a huge military base from which the Americans launched their liberation of other Japanese-held territories.

Pioneer anthropologist Margaret Mead described the

impact that had. "(On Manus) American forces occupied one of the largest American bases between Pearl Harbor and Guam. It is claimed that over a million men poured through the Admiralty Islands (of which Manus is the largest), a million Americans representing all the services, all the major races of mankind, every sort and kind of American male, fighting a war with the most highly developed technical equip-

ment the world had ever seen.

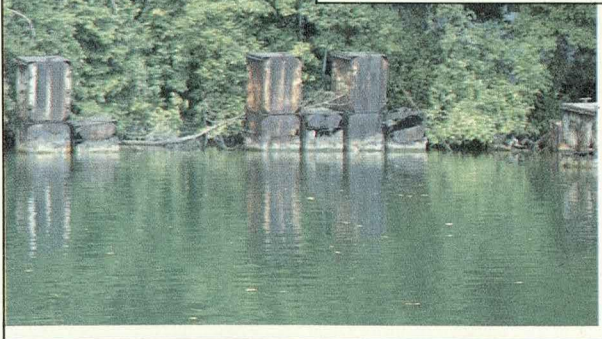
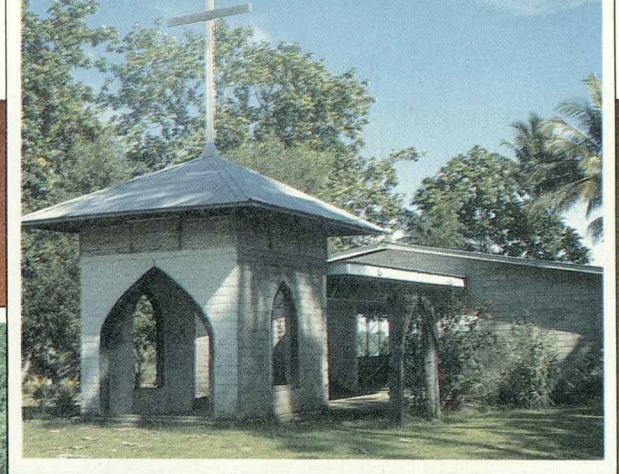
"... miles and miles were packed with barracks, built on the spot from wood sawed in saw mills set up in the bush. The Americans knocked down mountains, blasted channels, smoothed islands for airstrips, tore up miles of bush — all with their marvellous 'engines'."

Those who come as outsiders to Manus in the 1980s are happy to leave things as

they find them. Although the physical evidence of war is there in abundance the friendliness of the islanders is unchanged. Most visitors are unaware of the events of February and March 1944 when General Douglas MacArthur watched from the cruiser USS Phoenix as the First Division of the US Cavalry landed in "Operation Brewer".

W L

WAR & Peace



The German mission at Lorengau survived a battle between American liberators and Japanese occupiers and the remnants of a US Navy floating dock (above).



by John McLennan

MacArthur's flagship was not to make history again until as the Argentine Navy's General Belgrano it was sunk by the British during the Falklands War.

After MacArthur's forces secured Manus at a cost of 15 thousand Japanese casualties, the island became a fortress and safe harbor. It was from here that the US Seventh Fleet left for the

invasion of the Philippines, making good the general's promise: "I shall return".

Our party of four had come to scuba dive on Manus, aware of its place in the annals of World War II. And there were other good reasons. This island is just two degrees south of the equator and enjoys a year-round water temperature of 27 degrees Celsius. And because the island is volcanic, the water is very deep.

After unpacking our gear at comfortable Kohai Lodge we drove around Lorengau, the capital of the smallest province of Papua New Guinea. We found an amazing number of remnants of the base which was at one time the home of 200 thousand servicemen waiting to sail with MacArthur to Leyte Gulf.

Next morning we drove to the village of Narangau and a spot under the coconut trees only 10 metres off the road.

Our naval chart showed that just 500 metres out from shore the water depth was 243 metres.

We were all somewhat high in anticipation of our first dive in this exotic location. We had chosen the area for our first dive as we knew it was used by the US Army after the war to dump materials which it did not want to take back to the United States.

Whaler sharks were our



ed up by the idea of people who could stay and breathe underwater.

The dive boat was a canoe, 10 metres long, made from hollowed-out softwood, with a platform two metres wide, stabilised with an outrigger and powered by a 15-horsepower outboard.

With four divers and four villagers on board and all our gear, we sped across tranquil waters at 15 knots. We anchored inside the reef at the small Ndrova Island, swam over the reef and down in water shown at 306 metres on the chart.

This practice, usually not recommended, was possible because there was little wave action and the water was smooth. Our hosts could follow our bubbles and pick us up at the finish of the dives.

Day after day we shared the sea with marine animals – grey reef sharks, big eye trevally, hurrying as if late for an appointment, barracuda hanging in the currents, coral trout with colored lines like tattoos, large sweet lip, Maori wrasse, turtles, silver tip whaler sharks, eagle rays, elusive hump headed parrot fish and the usual myriad colored reef fish.

Evenings were spent often with the village children. One of our group was a sometime professional singer and guitarist and the singalongs were almost as memorable as the diving.

Our hosts at Mbunai provided us with a “numbawan” diving and cultural experience. Also a look at a place which exploded into the Twentieth Century in the war years - but which, four decades later, has returned to the calm of a previous era.



War is history to this villager and her child (top) and to this diver approaching a butterfly cod (bottom).

tyres, truck parts, building material and beer bottles. The only thing of value however was a large stone demijohn.

Next morning found us diving off the end of the airstrip at Momote, once a military airfield and now, serving the whole island. We knew some planes had crashed into the sea there during the war years.

The drop-off starts some five metres from the shore and a diver peering down sees inky blue water that

seems to continue forever. Because of the depth our search for a plane was fruitless. But we found some aluminium objects obviously from aircraft.

Outboard powered canoes took us the next day through the passage dividing Manus from little Los Negros Island, the actual landing place for the US Cavalry on February 29, 1944. The rusting hulls of 200 discarded landing craft remain where they were abandoned, attended now by the occasional crocodile enjoying the sun.

Three hours later the canoes arrived at the village of Mbunai, a community of a thousand people. A hundred helping hands unloaded our dive tanks and portable compressor, equipment seen there for the first time.

Our accommodation was a comfortable house in the middle of the village and our departure next morning on our first dive caused all the children to be late for school. The whole village was pump-

companions, attracted by the noise of the bubbles from our scuba gear. When they are used to divers they pay less attention. Because diving is in its infancy on Manus Island, they were with us on all our dives there.

We dropped down to 20 metres and the coral wall was covered with pipes, axles,

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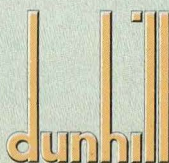
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