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# paradise

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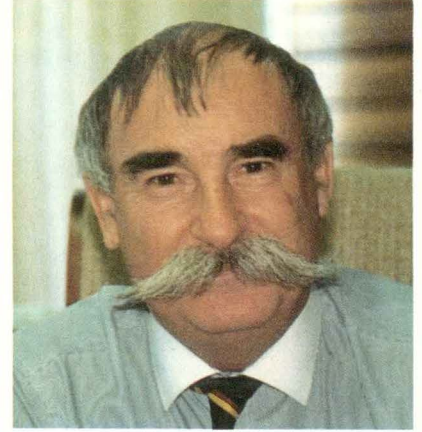
Welcome Aboard,

As Minister for Civil Aviation may I welcome you on board and trust that you enjoy reading articles from four different provinces of P.N.G. together with details of Papua New Guinea's participation at Expo 88.

I am certain that Papua New Guinea's Expo 88 display will encourage investors to our country and that the display of our culture by a wide range of traditional dancers will entice visitors and tourists to visit this our Land of the Unexpected.

Enjoy your flight.

Hon. Hugo Berghuser, MBE MP  
Minister For Civil Aviation



Hon. Hugo Berghuser, MBE MP  
Minister For Civil Aviation

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# Invest in gold.



# Expo 88

Story by David Russell

**P**apua New Guinea has taken its place proudly on the world stage through its stunning exhibit at the K375 million World Expo 88. The six-month Expo is being staged in Brisbane from April 30 to October 30, and is the major feature of Australia's Bicentenary celebrations.

As Australia's nearest neighbor, and with more than eight million visitors expected to pass through the gates, PNG has a unique chance to stimulate interest in its tourism and business opportunities.

Addressing the Expo theme of "Leisure in the Age of Technology", the PNG pavilion highlights four aspects of the national identity. These are the natural beauty of the country, the lifestyles of its many peoples, their unique cultures, and its vast resources and developing industrial base.

Most of the 30 nations and 30 international corporations participating at Expo are showing they are at the forefront of the high technology revolution. Visitors are dazzled by a series of displays designed to stun the senses.

PNG is providing a contrast - equally stunning but achieving its impact by refreshing the senses. The pavilion is nestled



**Above** South Pacific Village is built around a waterfall and a lagoon filled with tropical fish. **left** A richly decorated drum.

# Expo 88

in a tropical lagoon of grass huts, caves and waterfalls. It is an oasis of serenity but it beckons visitors to embark on a voyage of discovery.

A stylised bird of paradise, similar to that on Air Niugini jets, is the outstanding feature of the external wall of the pavilion. Its bright colors catch the eye as if the bird was taking wing from the thick greenery of the magnificent surrounding landscape.

The entrance lies under a giant canopy, echoing PNG's Parliament House. The front panel is painted in traditional patterns, similar to those on the original.

Inside, visitors are greeted by the contrast of modern and

traditional cultures. To the left, the name Papua New Guinea is spelt out in 20th Century stainless steel letters. On the right, three small artifacts represent the antiquity of the nation's cultural heritage. PNG's national flag is projected from the wall and surrounded by a halo of light.

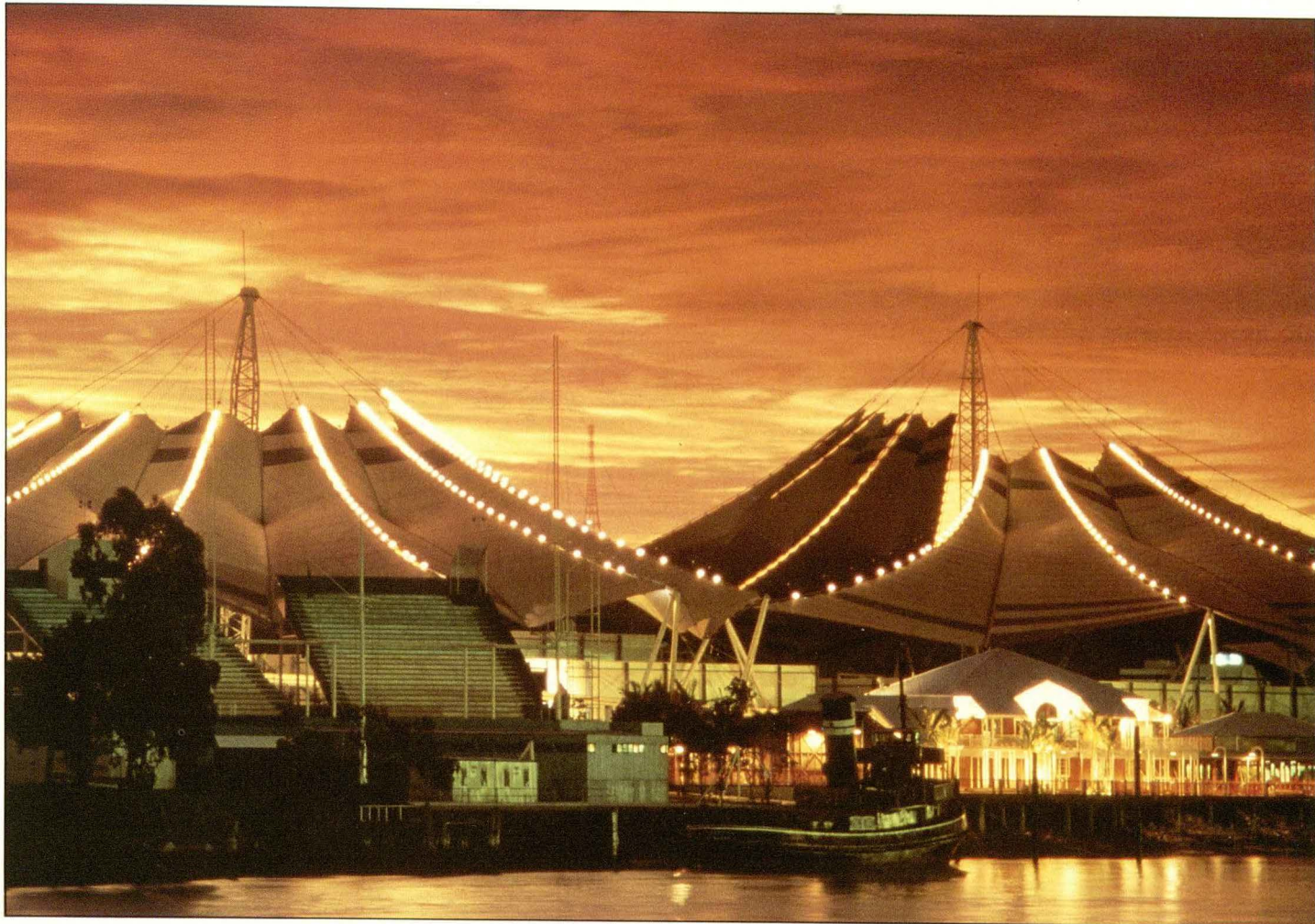
Visitors now begin to climb a gentle ramp as the path enters a rocky grotto. This is where the public is introduced to the mood of a dark jungle. A waterfall and pond form the backdrop to a revolving Sepik carving. Lighting, enhancing the greenery, creates an atmosphere of moonlight. This effect remains as you emerge from the grotto and enter the formal display area. The pathway between exhibits is lit with gentle pools of light, with an overlay of dappled, leaf-pattern shadows.

The first representation is "The Earth". A hilly formation of granite rocks forms the backdrop to a display featuring the vast resource wealth of PNG, now being mined with increasing sophistication.



**Top right** PNG Prime Minister Paias Wingti meets the media during an inspection of construction. **bottom right** Landscaping cost K6,000,0000. **below** A 'bilum' bag.





**Top** Expo's eight sun sails light up the evening sky. **bottom** A Sepik River story board.

Images associated with this theme slowly dissolve in a cave setting.

The pathway turns to a larger area where a selection of rare artifacts is shown in a series of alcoves. The artifacts are highlighted, not as quaint items of traditional culture but in their true nature, as artworks held in reverence by their creators.

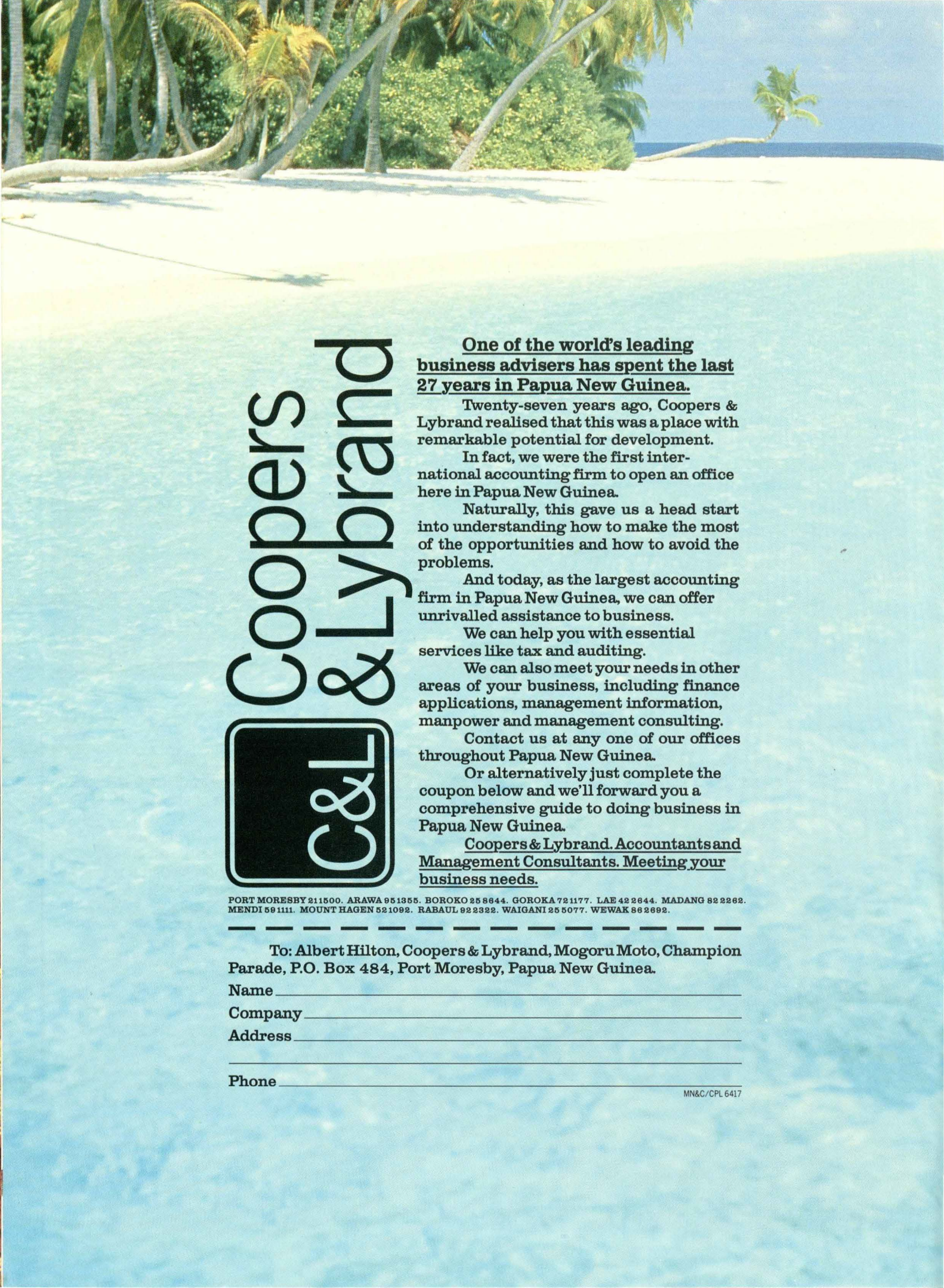
Opposite the largest of the artifact areas are three special exhibits.

The first is "The Sea". Its encompassing role in this island nation, as a source of leisure, food and industry, is emphasised by a mixture of graphics and photographs.


Adjoining this is a second display showing distinctive coral jewellery on a background of a bubbling wall of water.

The third exhibit is "The Land", emphasising its nurturing role as the provider of food for the people of PNG.

The remaining major theme



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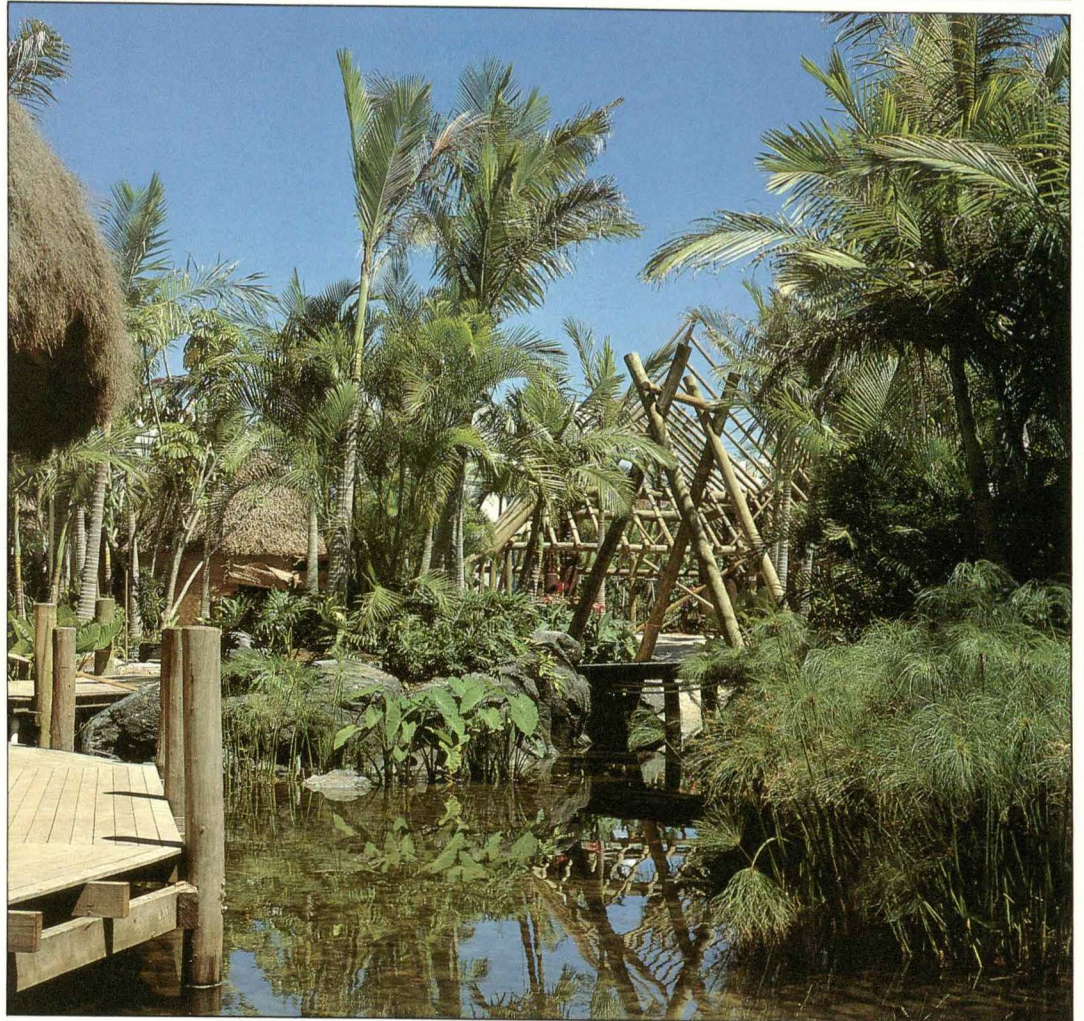
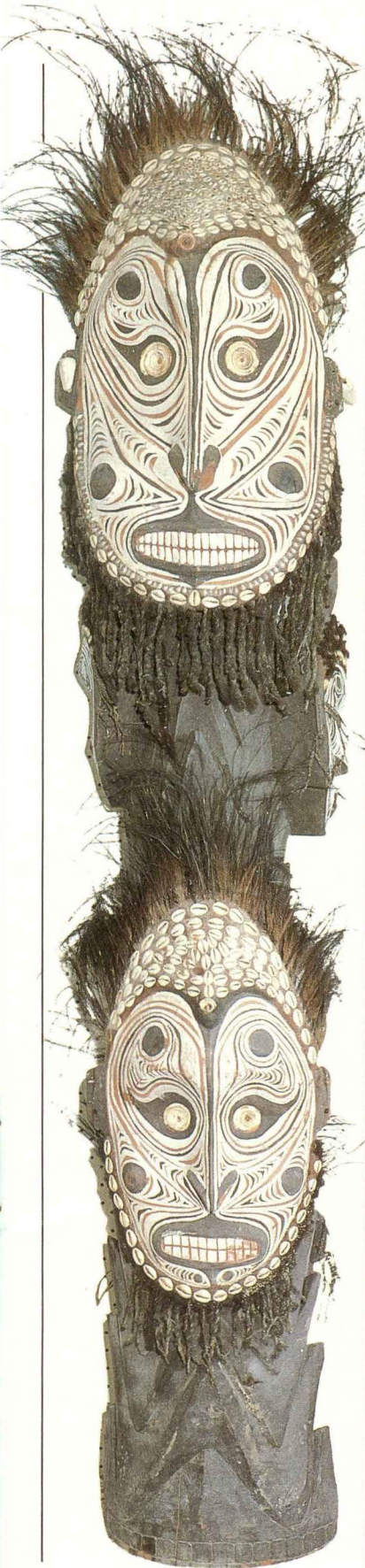
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**Above** A tropical paradise created on the banks of the Brisbane River. **far left and left** Masks and figures created by the Sepik's master wood carvers.

of "The Forests" is depicted by timber artifacts displayed in alcoves. Stylised trees form a backdrop to a central display of furniture, with dissolving graphic images of forests.

Another formal display of modern PNG paintings reflects the impact of traditional cultures.

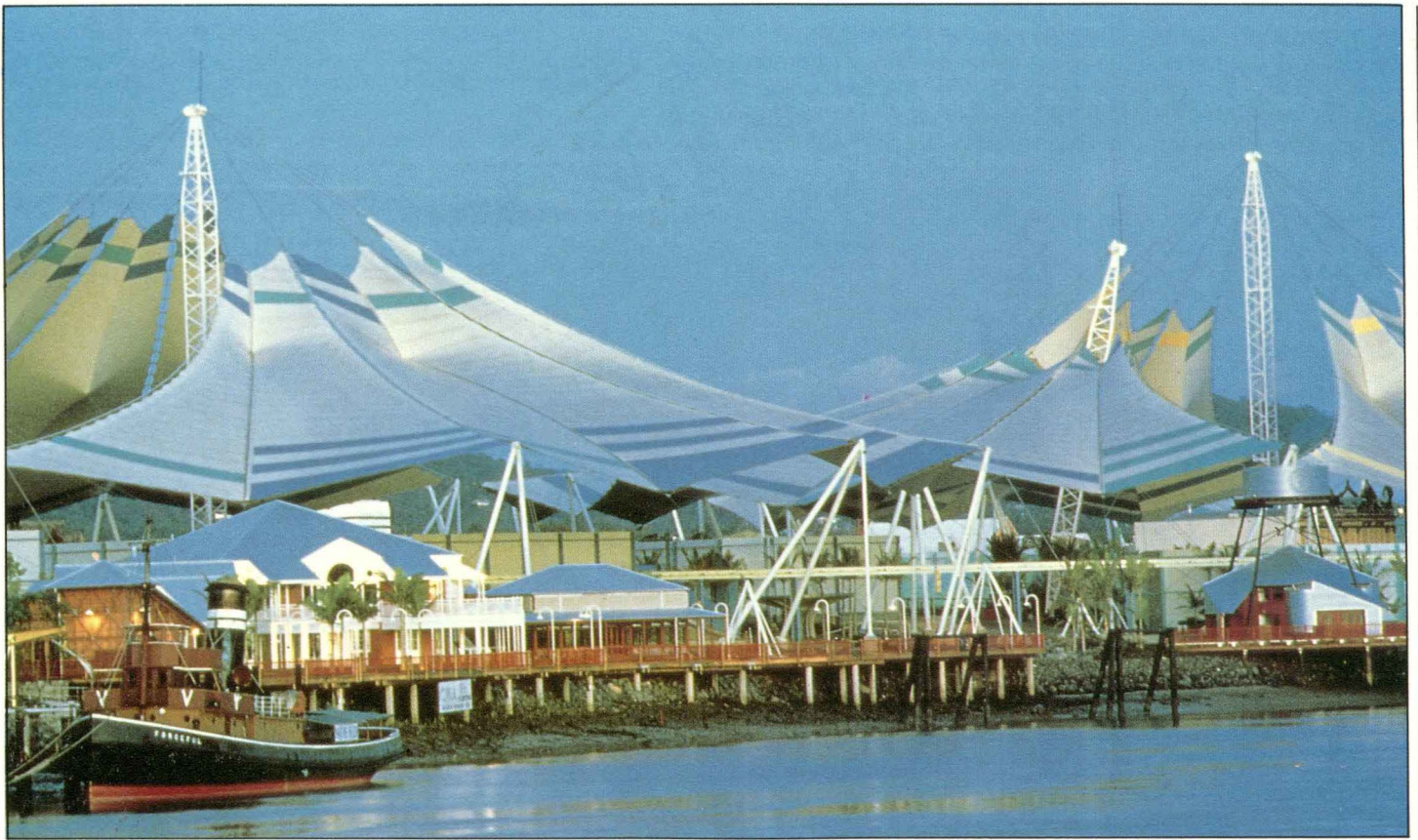
The next area, an audio-visual theatre, creates the effect of a cave, with a moonlight ambience fading to black as the front wall lights up in striking colors from the rear-projected screen. PNG is presented in an exciting, vibrant way as impressive

visuals co-ordinate with a pulsating, rhythmic sound track.

Filled with images of this extraordinarily diverse country, visitors leave the pavilion through a light-controlled labyrinth, to encounter the reality of a magnificent "haus win", which features a soaring thatched roof set on genuine carved poles.

Beneath is a marketplace, central to PNG life, where weavers and carvers display their crafts and mingle with the visitors.

The man shouldering the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring smooth operation is PNG's Commissioner-General, Peter Colton. Peter has been a driving force behind the South Pacific Organising Committee. This committee developed



**This page, above** Expo's eight massive sun sails dominate the site. **right** Monorail trains carry visitors on an elevated ride through the exhibits. **below** A weaver's art created this cassowary.

**Facing page** Intricate wood carvings based on ancient traditions are in stark contrast to the Expo model superimposed on the South Brisbane site.



from an initiative by PNG and the Solomon Islands to create a cost-effective means of enabling all the major South Pacific nations to take part in World Expo 88. Seven nations – PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Western Samoa and the Cook Islands – are pooling resources for administration of the various pavilions.

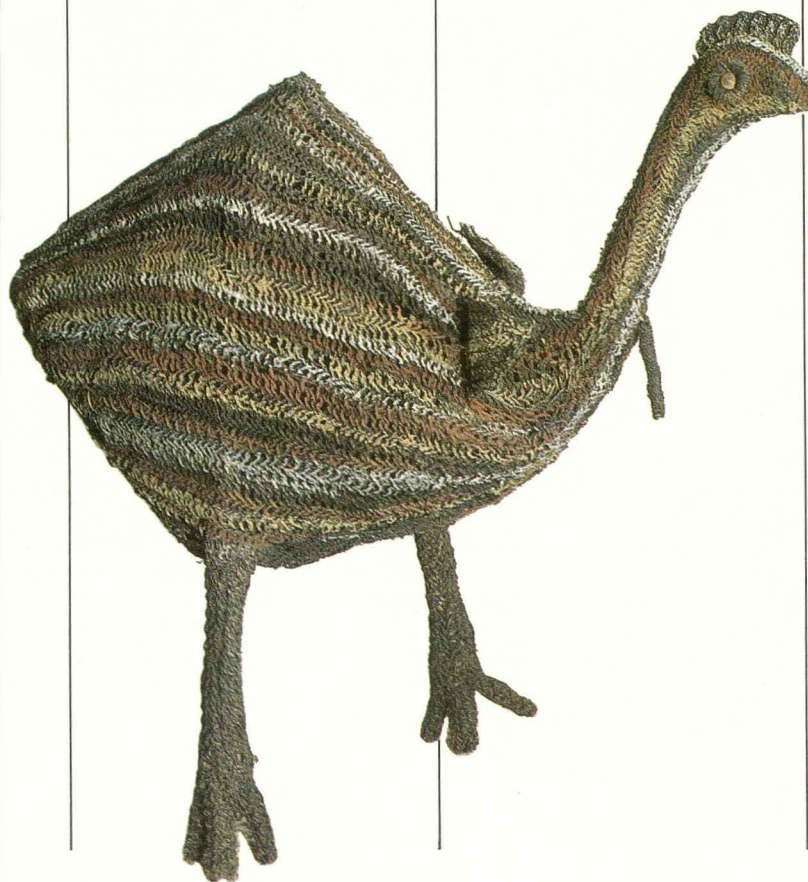
The Prime Minister, Paias Wingti, made an official inspection of the pavilion during its construction in December last year and

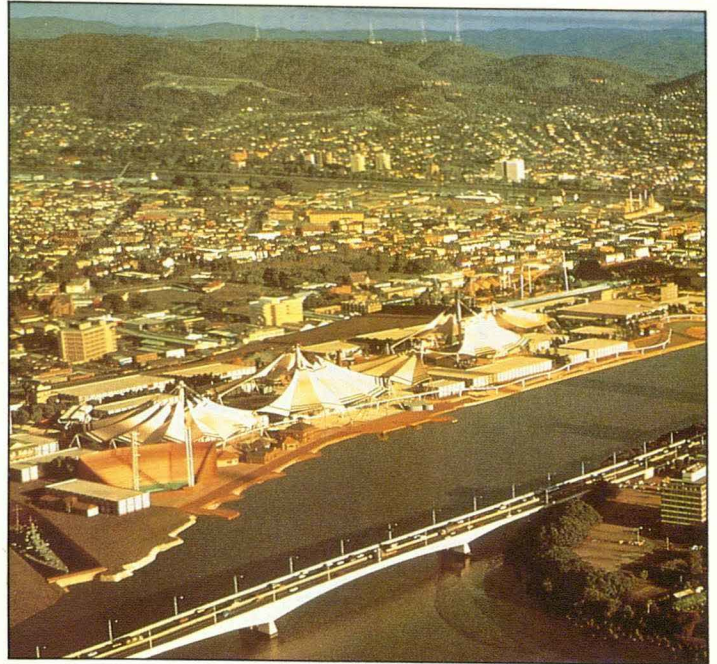
expressed enthusiastic support. He was keen for PNG to play a significant regional role and to build bridges with her sister nations.

“As well as being a tremendous opportunity for PNG, it is also a great way to help Australia celebrate its Bicentenary,” he said.

In PNG, Deputy Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, is the Minister responsible for the Expo pavilion and has been its strongest supporter.

“To have a World Expo on our doorstep is an opportu-





ity which will not present itself again in our lifetime," Sir Julius said.

"It is vital that we take full advantage of our participation."

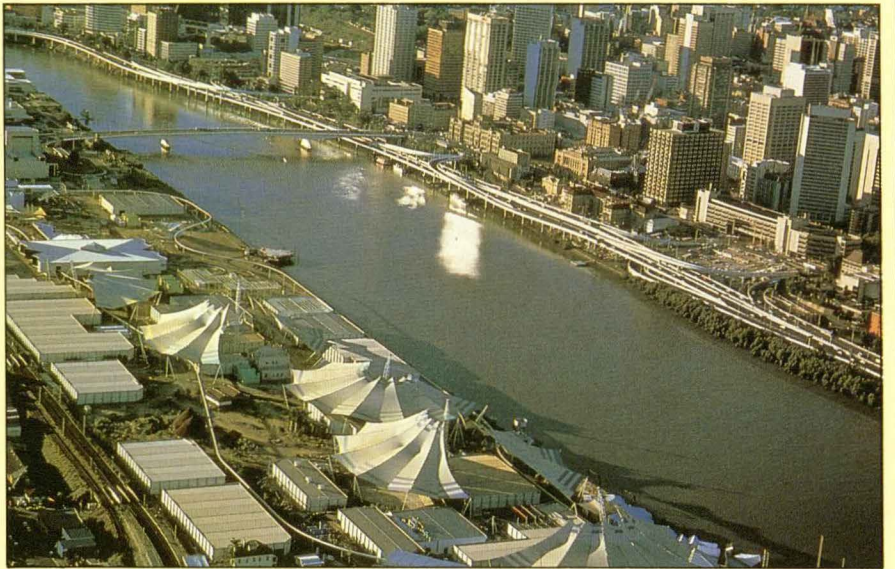
He encouraged the National Government to make a grant of K500,000 to partially fund the costs. This amount was matched by the private sector. The result is a thoroughly professional promotion campaign during the six months of Expo 88 which will stimulate interest in PNG's tourist and investment opportunities.

Mr Colton said the major message PNG wanted to convey was that it was a strong, vibrant young country with a sound economic base. "It is a good place to invest," he said.

Whether for tourism or business, the thousands of people who visit the PNG pavilion will have their appetites whetted to explore PNG for themselves.

# Shaping the Dream

Story by Euralia Paine



**P**NG is participating in one of the most desirable locations on the Expo '88 site. PNG is the only country that has a pavilion in the South Pacific Village. Neighbouring countries have huts for their exhibitions.

The pavilion features the technology behind PNG's mining, forestry, manufacturing and agriculture. Rare and valuable artifacts contrast with an elaborate audio visual presentation to highlight traditional PNG. Handicrafts will be made, demonstrated and sold in the hut (haus win) in the village.

Besides carvers, weavers and other artists, PNG entertainers will include the Bainings fire dancers from East New Britain, the mud men from Asaro, Eastern Highlands and Sanguma Band of Port Moresby.

I visited the site last September, when this ambitious project was in its early construction stages.

My hostess, whose husband is engineering consultant at the Bougainville copper mine and other major projects in PNG, gave me a tour.

The SP corner, with two round grass huts with pointed roofs and maturely planted palm trees was under way. Excavation of the deep pit, where the lagoon was to be, had begun. The lagoon edge, where New Zealand and Japan

was sited, was already taking shape.

The overbearing Kauri trees stood tall to mark New Zealand's spot and an oriental stage juttied from a dusty cocoon to mark the Japanese area.

The Kauri tree is to New Zealand Maoris what the Dreamtime is to Australian Aborigines. The Kauri forest dominating the exterior of the Kiwi pavilion, uses trees cast in fibreglass. Inside the tree trunks are many sophisticated activities for the young at heart. Lockwood Lodge, a restaurant nestled in the forest, serves authentic New Zealand cuisine.

Even at that stage we could imagine the completed pavilion. As a dramatic entrance, a series of cascading waterfalls will part every 15 minutes, admitting up to 200 people.

In the Japanese area, glittering kimono fashion shows, traditional tea ceremonies as well as music and dance are highlights of the daily performances. The Japanese pavilion, designed by one of its most famous landscape artists, has a large mirror at the front so people outside the garden can see the performances.

The South Pacific Lagoon is a refreshing, tranquil haven in the midst of the exciting Expo site. The area is used by PNG, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Western Samoa, Vanuatu and

the Cook Islands.

Swaying palms and lush vegetation create an oasis in the centre of the site, surrounded by thatched roof huts depicting the theme of the South Pacific. Water flowed into the tropical lagoon in January, bringing new life to the palm trees. Filling the 100-metre man-made lagoon was one of the final stages on the construction. The lagoon was re-filled several times to check for water tightness.

It was then laden with water lilies and aquatic plants. Schools of tropical fish were then released to delight onlookers with their flashes of color.

Officials regularly test the water to maintain the delicate balance created in the living pond. An elaborate filter system maintains the water quality as it eddies over waterfalls, under bridges and past canoes moored at the lagoon edge.

Highlights of the lagoon include a Samoan oval fale (island house), a Fijian meeting house (bure kalou), pan pipes, traditional dancing groups, war canoes and hand carving demonstrations.

Visitors are encouraged to enjoy the tropical atmosphere and savor the tropical treats at the Polynesian, Japanese and New Zealand restaurants on the banks of the lagoon.

Decorated floats cross the lagoon daily by bridge and

*Aerial view of the World Expo '88 site under construction on the Brisbane River and 800 metres from the city centre.*

parade through the island paradise setting. There is also island dancing and displays of traditional crafts. At night, flaming torches and special lighting illustrate the romance of the Pacific.

Above, the K7.5 million monorail travels the 2.3 kilometre loop of the Expo site, winding in and out of the canopies, crossing over the South Pacific Lagoon and through the Queensland Pavilion.

A member of the Expo South Pacific Co-ordination Committee, Mrs Keithie Saunders described the SP Village: "We intend to entice people with the feel of the Pacific. Tourism naturally fits with Expo's theme of Leisure in the Age of Technology, and handicraft is also a leisure activity."

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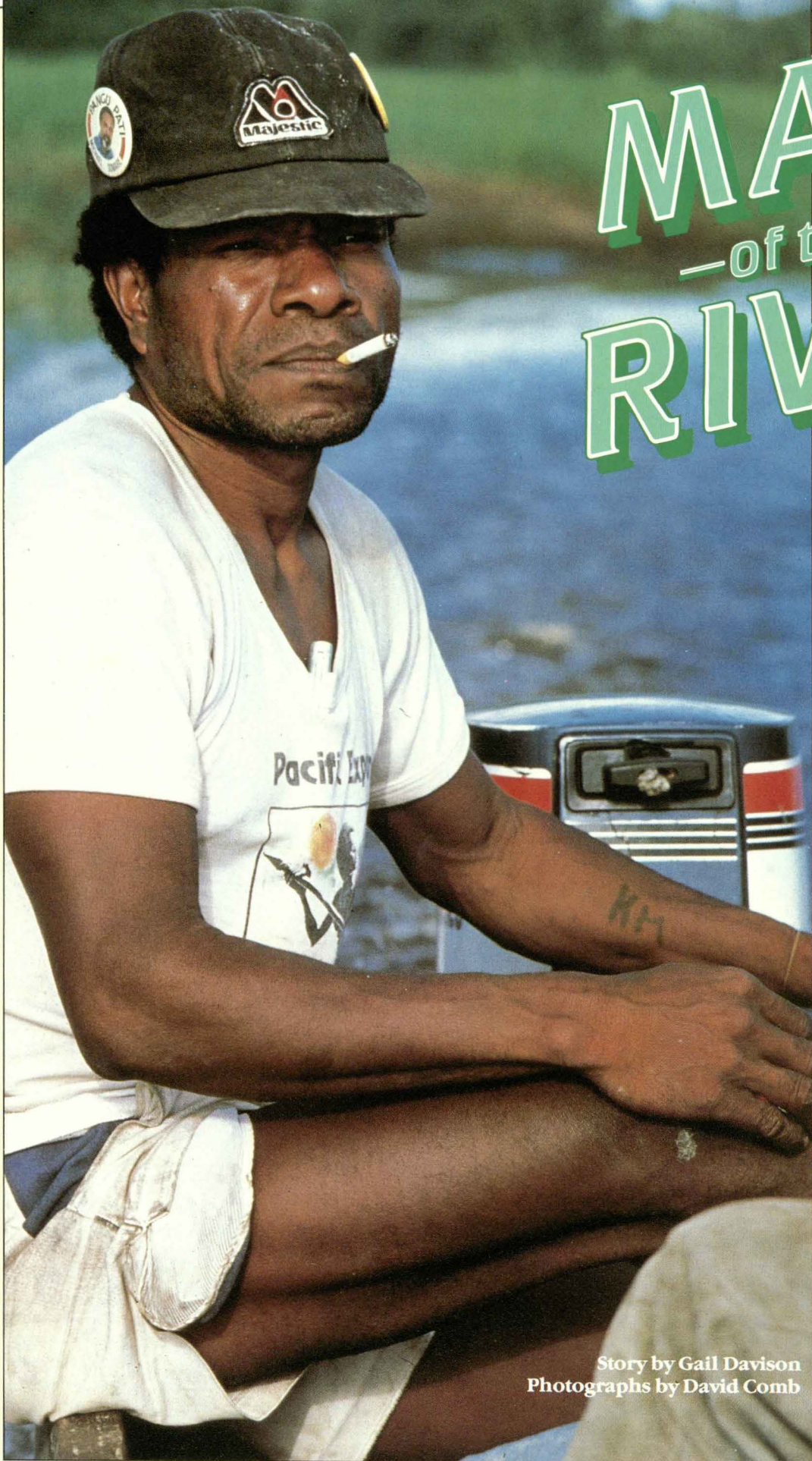
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# MAN —of the— RIVER

**K**owpsi explained how he hunts crocodiles on the banks of the muddy Sepik. “The crocodile,” he said, “he sink under the water at night. I just go down there to the river by myself. Then I put my hands under the water and try to touch him.”

“How do you know he won’t bite your arm off?” he was asked.

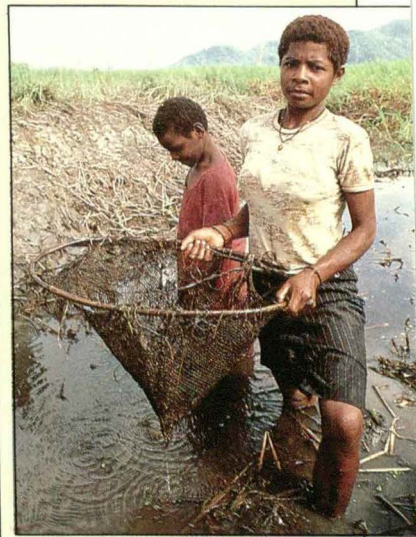
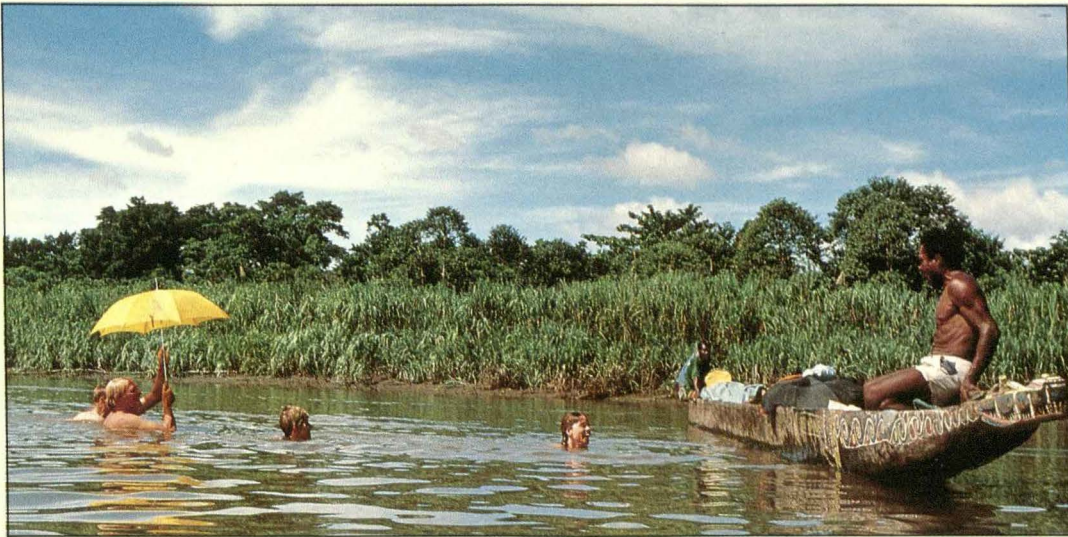
Kowpsi smiled. “If he open his mouth under the water, the water would go in and he would drown.”

To us, five Americans on a canoe trip down the Sepik River, this was a thrilling story, tinged with danger and romance. To Kowpsi, hunter of 100 crocodiles, it was straightforward fact. Catching a croc was as natural to him as hailing a taxi is to us.

After all, he grew up on this river and he has always made his home here. He seemed to know every bend, every birdcry, along its great serpentine length. Many said he is the best tour guide in Papua New Guinea. He certainly looked every inch the modern entrepreneur, in his baseball cap and Pacific Expeditions T-shirt.

Kowpsi Marek, however, was born in a world that people from industrialised nations can scarcely imagine. He has seen changes that both his parents and children would find incomprehensible.

Story by Gail Davison  
Photographs by David Comb



Today he represents a generation of Papua New Guineans who have lived about 2,000 years' worth of Western civilisation in a single short lifetime.

A member of the Wani clan, Kowspi was born in the village of Waskuk. The locals, who worship the Victoria bird, the cassowary, and the ironwood tree still believe in tribal medicine, spirits, spells and a rough payback system of justice.

When Kowspi was a boy in the late 1950s, headhunters still roamed the lowlands, raiding enemy villages in search of skulls – a child's was as good as a warrior's. Each skull was then buried under a post of the village's haus tambaran (spirit house). "For a spirit house to have power," said Kowspi, "you need many skulls. They help the men in the next war."

He remembered the first white people he saw. They were Catholic missionaries. "We are all very frightened," he recalled. "We think they are devils who come to Earth in white skin. We try not to let them see us."

The arrival of the missionaries saw a change of life, with many of the old customs giving way to Western traditions. For example, the penis gourds men wore were replaced by shirts and shorts, the practice of headhunting was outlawed and the endless cycle of inter-village raids began to slow down. White

faces, by and large, were no longer a source of terror.

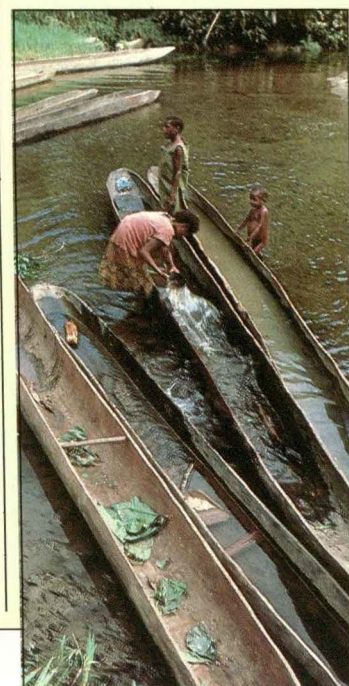
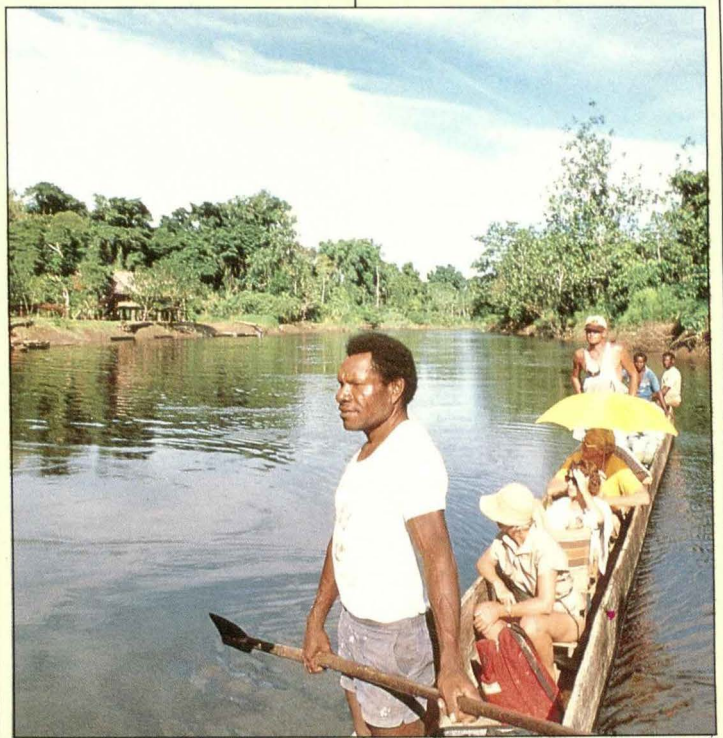
As a teenager, Kowspi used to take Westerners up and down the Sepik and its tributaries. His first clients were missionaries, business people and adventurers or "missionaries, mercenaries, and misfits" as they're usually described.

Kowspi soon found he was a natural-born tour guide. He was an expert navigator and he never needed a map – except to show people where they were. Besides, he spoke some English and the country's common language pidgin, as well as a handful of the regional languages spoken on the rivers.

Clients liked him because he was easy, friendly and approachable. He anticipated their needs and understood something of the Western mind. Kowspi could interpret what people saw of an alien culture in a way that made sense to them.

Today, 20 years later, Kowspi works for Pacific Expeditions, running trips up and down the rivers. Being enterprising, he has also set up his own river-touring business called Sepik Spies. And if that is not enough he also owns a small crocodile farm. He lives in the middle Sepik town of Ambunti with his wife and four children.

On this trip Kowspi met us in the tiny village of Maposi, guiding us to the luxury



**Facing page** Kowspi in his canoe. **this page, top left** Kowspi keeps watch over a refreshing dip in the Sepik. **top right** Waskuk girls fishing. **centre** The canoe slips past a tranquil village. **bottom** Bailing out a canoe beached at Maposi village.



Karawari Lodge resort more than 400 kilometres away. He stood in the prow of the canoe like a statue, smoking a cigarette and scowling absently at the water beneath us. In his hands he held a long carved oar while his ear was tuned to both the sounds of the river and to the canoe's outboard motor.

"You hear that?" he asked us suddenly. "Weatherbird. It is saying the day will be fine." We listened to the strange thrilling sound as the sun rose higher and the last ribbons of mist dissolved in the damp, cloying heat.

At lunchtime we beached by the riverbank. Kowspi and his assistant Benedict built a fire and put tea water on to boil. Some of us went into the river for a swim and wash, keeping a wary eye for "puk-puks" (crocodiles). Kowspi sat in the canoe, shooting at birds with a home-made slingshot and watched us as we splashed about.

After resuming our journey, the late afternoon light became unpredictable. A whining insect chorus rose around us. Over our heads a lone bat dipped and swooped in the gathering dusk.

"Black box," I ventured in my best pidgin. "Black bokis," Kowspi corrected me politely.

He shot at it with his slingshot. He shot at everything that moved, but idly, not really aiming.

"Gutpela kai kai?" I asked, still interested in the bat. "Yes," he agreed. Good to eat.

As we arrived in Sei, Kowspi greeted the big men of the village, the most important men of the most important clans. Speaking what sounded like half-pidgin and half the local language, Kowspi rented a hut in which we slept. It was luxurious, divided into four bedrooms, a kitchen with a big cooking fire and a spacious living area.

Kowspi also bought a rooster that was soon transformed into a stew. He served it with "kaukau" (sweet potato) and greens, cooked in coconut milk. It was delicious, but he would not share his recipe. "Secret," he said.

After dinner we sat around the fire for hours. Someone asked Kowspi about the missing joint on the fourth finger of his left hand.

"My mother, she have it cut off when I am born," he explained. "She have two children before me and they die. My finger is cut off to let out the bad blood." He shrugged. "It work. I live, also my brother after me." He smiled ironically. "Only my

brother, he cut off his own finger by mistake, last week. He is cutting down a tree and his bush knife slip."

We listened as Kowspi told us of his childhood and people. He told us of battles with wild boars and impossibly fierce crocodiles. He related stories of magic and sorcery, of the woman who dressed in the skin of a cormorant to fish every night, changing back into human form at daybreak, and of the spirit men who live in the ironwood trees of his village.

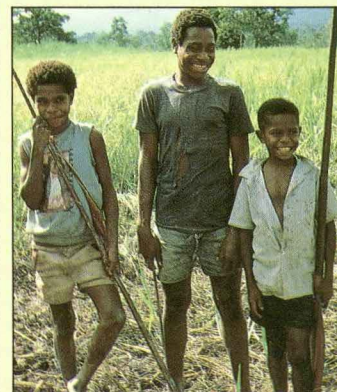
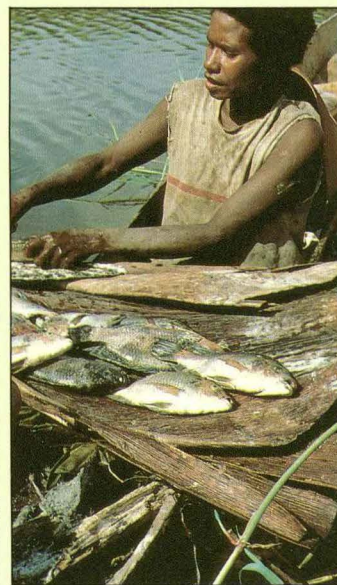
He told us of James, a friend who has recently been released from prison, where he had spent four years for murdering a spirit woman from his village. The spirit woman, apparently, had caused James' brother to die.

"So the men of the village," recounted Kowspi, "they say, 'this spirit woman, she must die now'. Then the men sit in a circle and cut the head off a chicken. The chicken, it run around with no head, then fall down. The neck point toward James, so James know he must kill spirit woman."

So he did and then he turned himself in to the police. He received a fairly lenient prison sentence and is now out, having satisfied two systems of justice.

Does Kowspi Marek believe in spirit women? Does he believe that people can change into cormorants? How many of the old ways does he still live by? His face, hidden in shadow, revealed nothing.

Outside the hut, we could hear the occasional snap of a crocodile's jaw closing. A dog barked. The distant strains of a Melanesian guitar drifted in the wind and, softly, the Sepik river flowed on towards the sea.



Waskuk village scenes. **top** Villagers prepare to journey on the Sepik River. **centre** Preparing fish for a meal. **bottom** Village youths.



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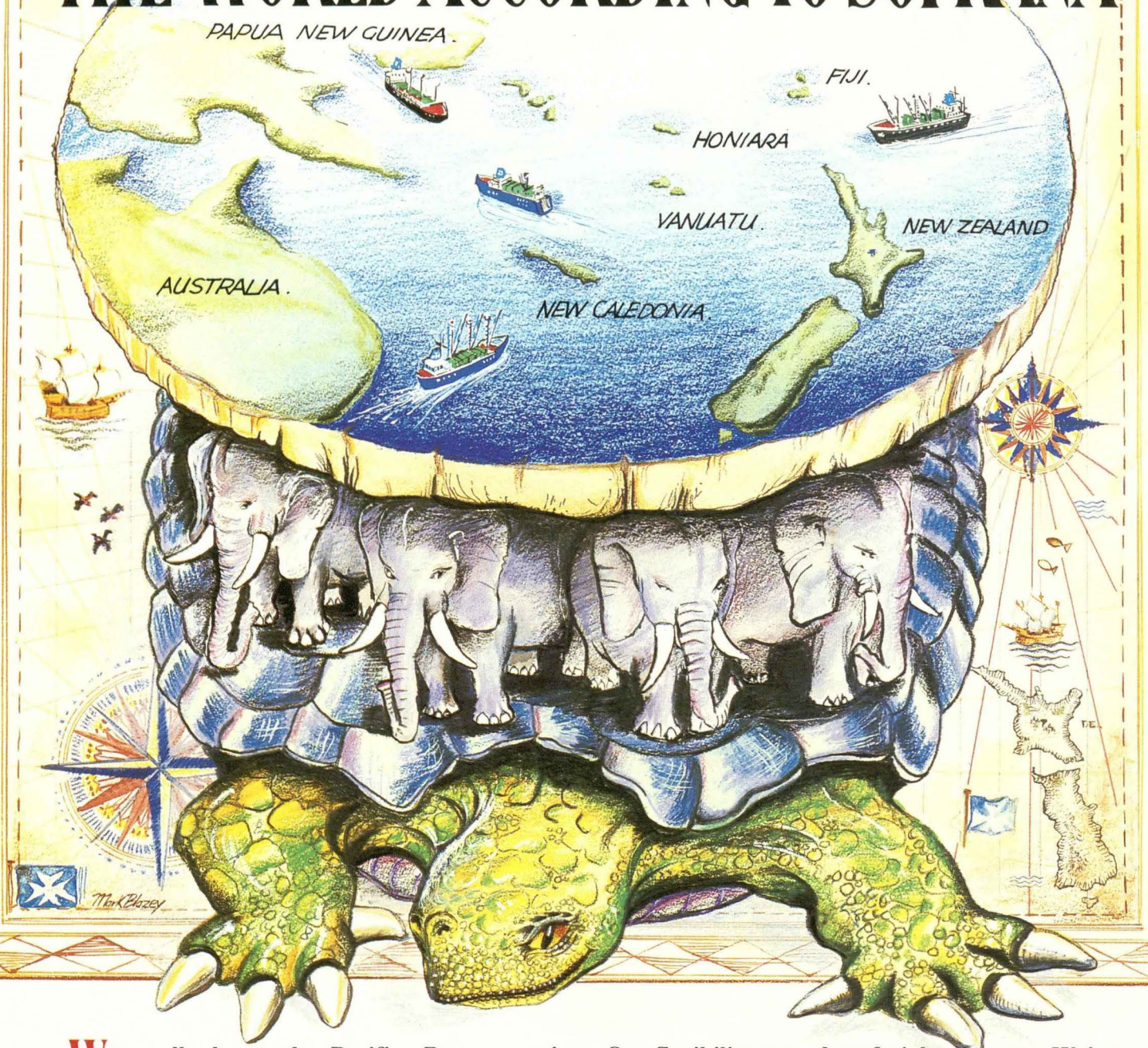
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# paradise

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In the far west of Papua New Guinea rises one of the most rugged mountain ranges in the world. The spectacular Star Mountains jut abruptly from the jungles of the Fly and Sepik River plains, their summits piercing the thin, chill air above 4,000 metres. First seen by Europeans in 1910, their peaks remained as mysterious and inaccessible as their heavenly namesakes until 1965. In that year, after six months of grinding effort, members of the British Climbing Expedition reached the summits of Mts Capella and Scorpion, to become the first humans to set foot on these peaks. The uninhabited peaks remained largely untouched, and their animals unknown, until an Australian Museum/PNG Division of Wildlife team undertook a survey in 1987.

Even today, the Star Mountains are not an easy

# Wildlife of the Stars



H. Cogger

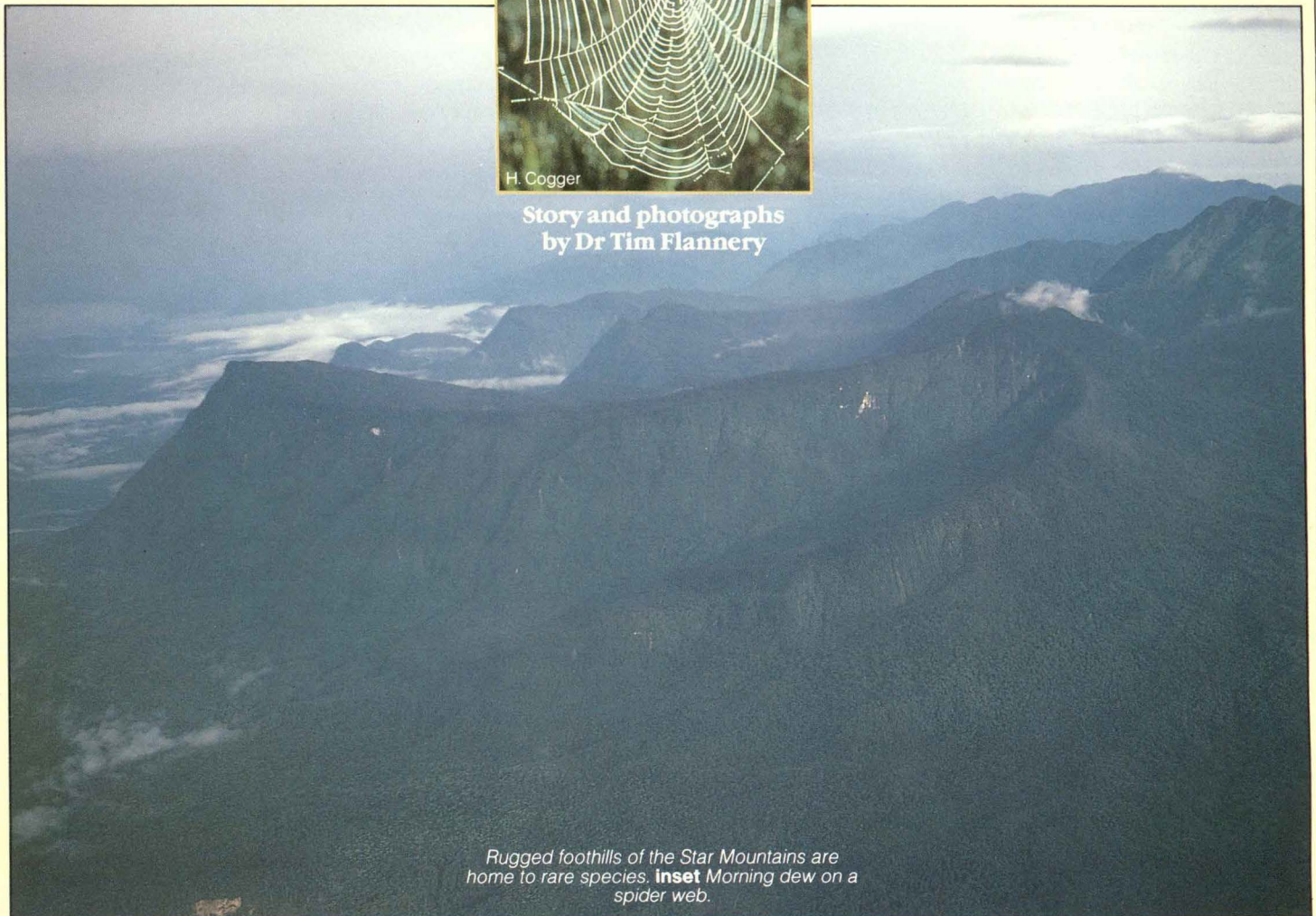
Story and photographs  
by Dr Tim Flannery

place to reach. Access has been greatly facilitated by the building of the mining township of Tabubil in the southern foothills of the Stars. With the help of Ok Tedi Mining Ltd, we were able to reach the peaks by helicopter.

A round trip from Tabubil takes 45 minutes, but has difficulties and dangers. We had not seen our proposed landing site on Mt Capella and didn't know if it was suitable or had drinking water nearby. Local weather conditions are treacherous and the helicopter would be operating near its altitude limit.

I made the ascent first. More than half the load was taken by my body weight; the remaining 75 kilograms, had to include clothes, personal equipment, a tent and enough food to last for a week or more in case the weather closed in and left me stranded.

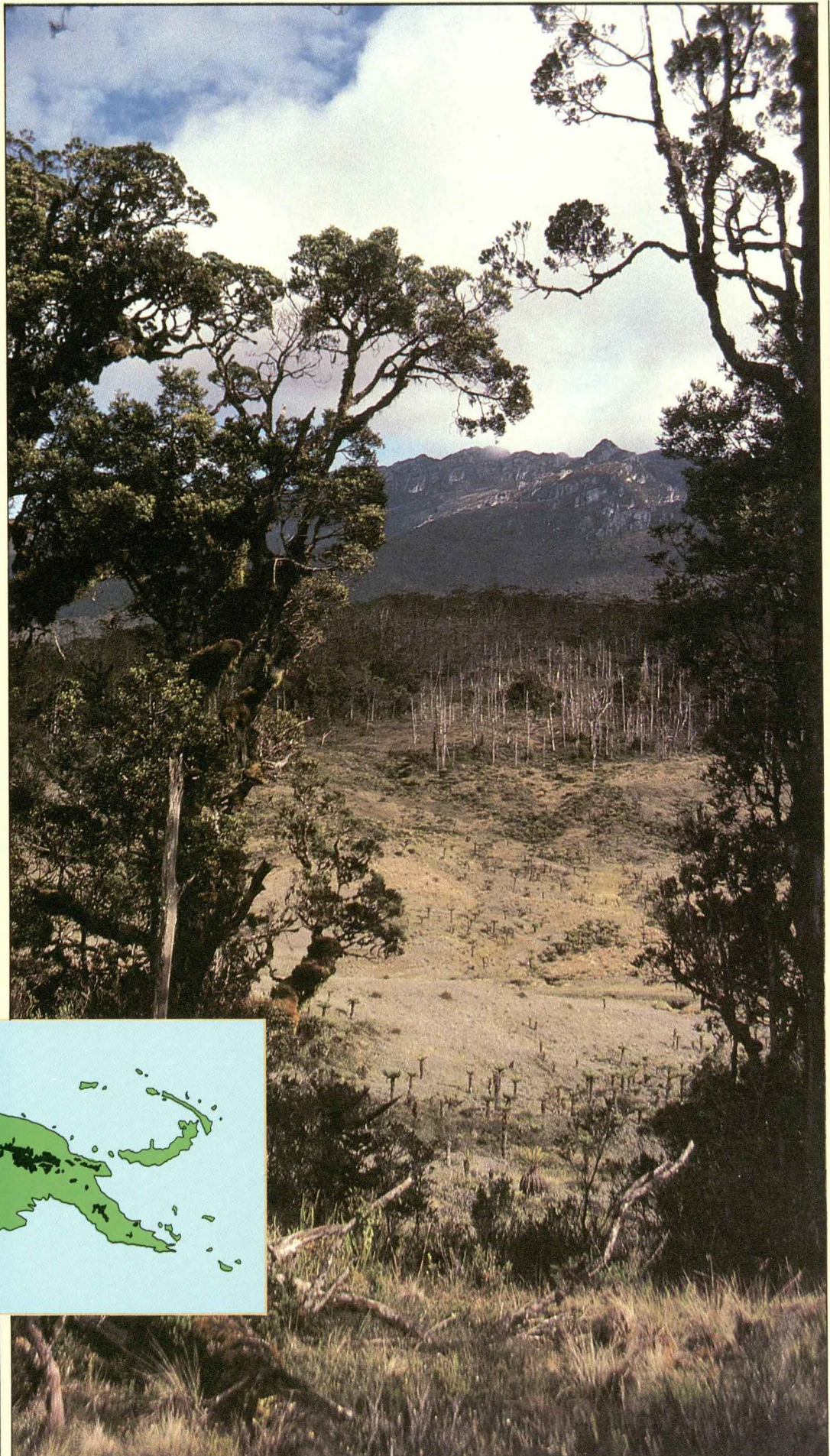
Stepping out of the helicopter, onto the herbfield



Rugged foothills of the Star Mountains are home to rare species. **inset** Morning dew on a spider web.

that was our chosen campsite, was like entering another world. I had been standing 25 minutes before in the noisy, crowded mining town of Tabubil. In contrast the herbfield, called Dokfuma, was silent and freezing. Mist was still hanging over much of the tiny valley but, through it, I could glimpse the mossy, gnarled southern pines that ringed the field. A tiny frog called from a moss mound and nearby I could hear the distinctive wingbeats of the majestic McGregor's bird of paradise (*Macgregori pulchra*), which remained hidden in the mist. For a short time I felt I was the loneliest person on Earth, standing in a dank, almost silent valley, in a spot where perhaps no human had stood before. As the faint sound of the returning helicopter grew louder, I was reminded that there was work to be done. Our time was limited; a camp had to be set up, equipment sorted, and made serviceable, and traps laid. As Dokfuma was at 3,200 metres the smallest exertion left me gasping for breath and feeling altitude sick.

During our week at Dokfuma, we slowly became familiar with its topography and plant and animal life. The mixed vegetation of the small valley is a testament to the intermediate position of PNG. Many of the trees were southern pines, with *Dacryc-*



**Right** Southern pines ring Dokfuma herbfield. **above** The expedition to the Star Mountain peaks (circled) was in rugged terrain in an area that receives over eight metres of rainfall per year.



**Top** Baby mosaic-tailed rat, one of the many mammals active by night at Dokfuma. **centre** Capella, camp mascot and a form of Doria's tree kangaroo discovered by the expedition. **bottom** A species of tree mouse discovered by the expedition.



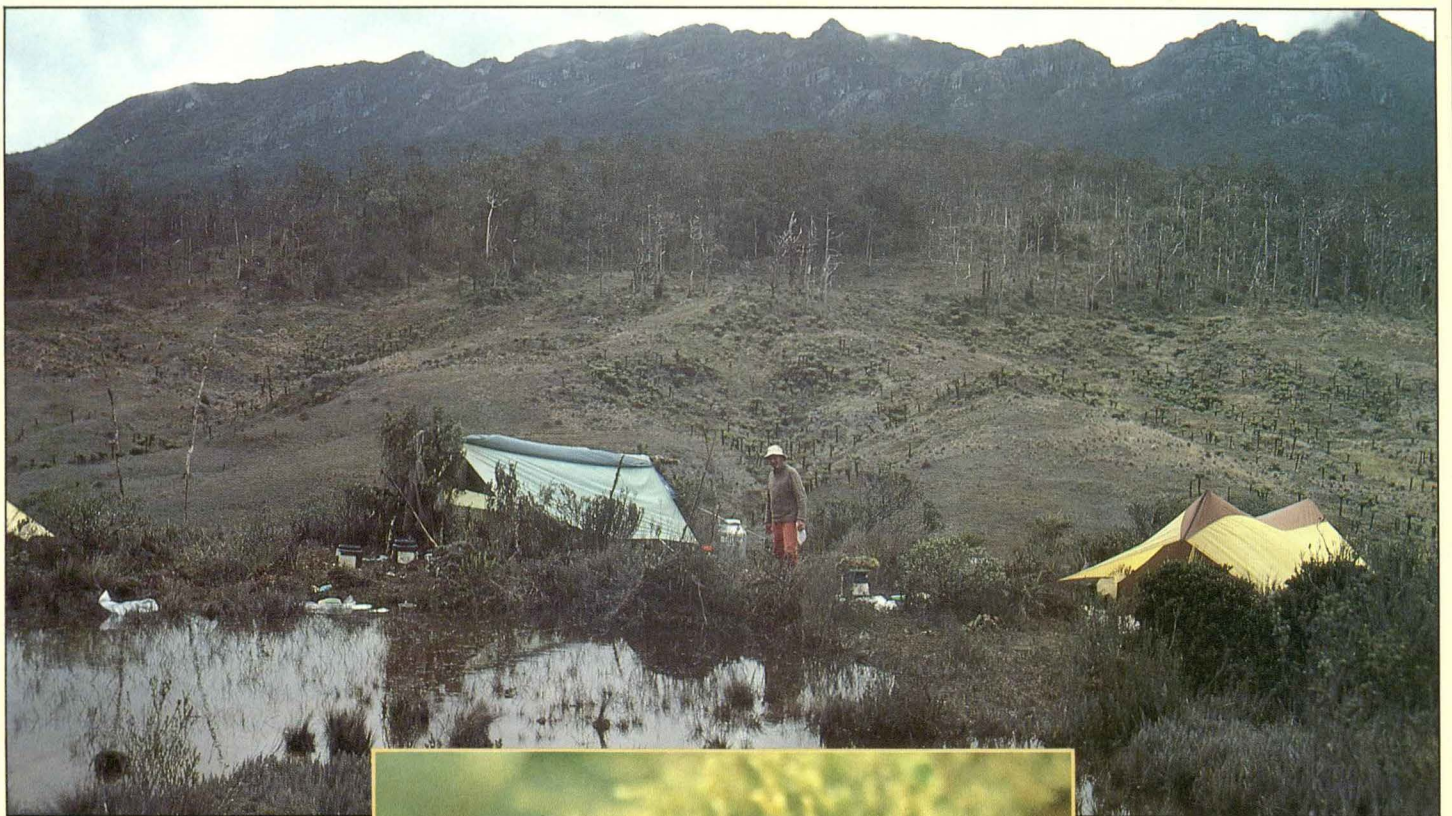
arpus (similar to the huon pines of Tasmania). *Phyllocladus* (celery top pine) and *Papuacedrus* (native cedar) species being the most common. The nearest relatives of these trees are found today in Tasmania, New Zealand and South America, and they are evidence of Gondwanan connections (ancient continental links between India, South Africa, South America, Antarctica and Australia). Yet among these relics grew some surprising newcomers: a beautiful red-flowered rhododendron of Asian origin, epiphytic orchids of the genus *Dendrobium* and a small umbrella tree (*Schefflera* sp.) that attracted flocks of small green parrots.

Daily the camp was enlivened by visits from a McGregor's bird of paradise, the least-known and rarest member of its family. This striking crow-sized bird fearlessly approached our camp and, after observing us, would fly (or more often glide) off with the characteristically loud "whoosh" made by its wing feathers. As it hopped about among the branches of its favorite food tree (*Dacrycarpus*), its extraordinary orange eye-wattles would wobble comically. McGregor's bird of paradise is only found on the highest peaks of the

Snow, Star and Owen Stanley Mountains, and its fearlessness, large size and restricted distribution make it vulnerable to any kind of habitat disturbance or exploitation.

The mammal fauna of Dokfuma was harder to find, but also provided its share of surprises. On our first afternoon, the three local men who accompanied us had gone hunting with a dog. In the distance we could hear the uncanny howling typical of Papua New Guinean dogs when they've located an animal. Griem, our most active and diminutive hunter, arrived at the camp first, with a large "bilum" (string bag) slung across his chest. "D'bol!" he cried, as he opened the "bilum" to reveal a large brown tree kangaroo. I became increasingly excited as I examined the animal. It looked unlike any tree kangaroo I had ever seen before. While clearly related to Doria's tree kangaroo (*Dendrolagus dorianus*), which is common in eastern Papua New Guinea, it differed in a number of ways. It is now clear that this specimen represents a new form of Doria's tree kangaroo, surely one of the last large mammals to be discovered anywhere in the world.

In my excitement at examining the large tree



kangaroo, I had overlooked a second man, Serapiap, who was carrying a small brown ball of fur. It turned out to be a nearly independent young tree kangaroo. "Capella", as he soon was named, became our camp mascot.

On still mornings the eerie, chorused howling of Papua New Guinean wild dogs would drift across the misty valley. Signs of their presence, in the form of well-worn trails and droppings, were abundant yet we never sighted one of these shy animals.

Shortly after dark, Dokfuma's abundant mammal inhabitants became active. The rats of the alpine herbfields come in many shapes and sizes. We found three different kinds. The most common is a species of *Rattus*, not very different in appearance from the bush rats found in Australia. However it is only half the size of these and is clothed in long luxuriant fur. It may well be unique to the Star Mountains and is possibly an unnamed species. Only slightly less common is a mosaic-tailed rat. This handsome beast may also be an un-



H. Cogger

**Top** Campsite beside an alpine pool. **centre** Long-tailed pigmy possum which nests in Dokfuma's tree ferns. **bottom** Mountain rhododendron.

described species, as it doesn't closely resemble any mosaic-tailed rat I had seen in Papua New Guinea. A baby mosaic-tailed rat was found in a moss nest in a small tree around the herbfield margin.

Towards the end of our stay we found the third rodent

species. It was a tree-mouse (*Pogonomelomys ruemmleri*) found in other high mountain peaks in Papua New Guinea. It is a curious little animal with a short face and large eyes, and a prehensile tail with a grasping tip for climbing in low bushes and trees.

Two additional mammal species were found. One was a tiny marsupial, the long-tailed pigmy possum (*Cercartetus caudatus*), which is common in Papua New Guinea's high mountains. The other was a tiny bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus macrocneme*), which was attracted to the innumerable moths (who in turn were mesmerised by the kerosene lamp at night) at our camp. Few bats are found high in Papua New Guinea's mountains, so it was surprising to be visited nightly by these tiny insectivores.

By the time we returned to the hot and humid mining town of Tabubil, it was easy to believe Dokfuma had been just a dream. It was such a different place, an 'island' of alpine plants and freezing peaks in a sea of tropical verdure. For the zoologists of the expedition, our journey to this unique environment had been as exciting as travelling to the heavenly stars themselves.

Dr Flannery is research scientist from the division of vertebrate zoology at the Australian Museum, Sydney.

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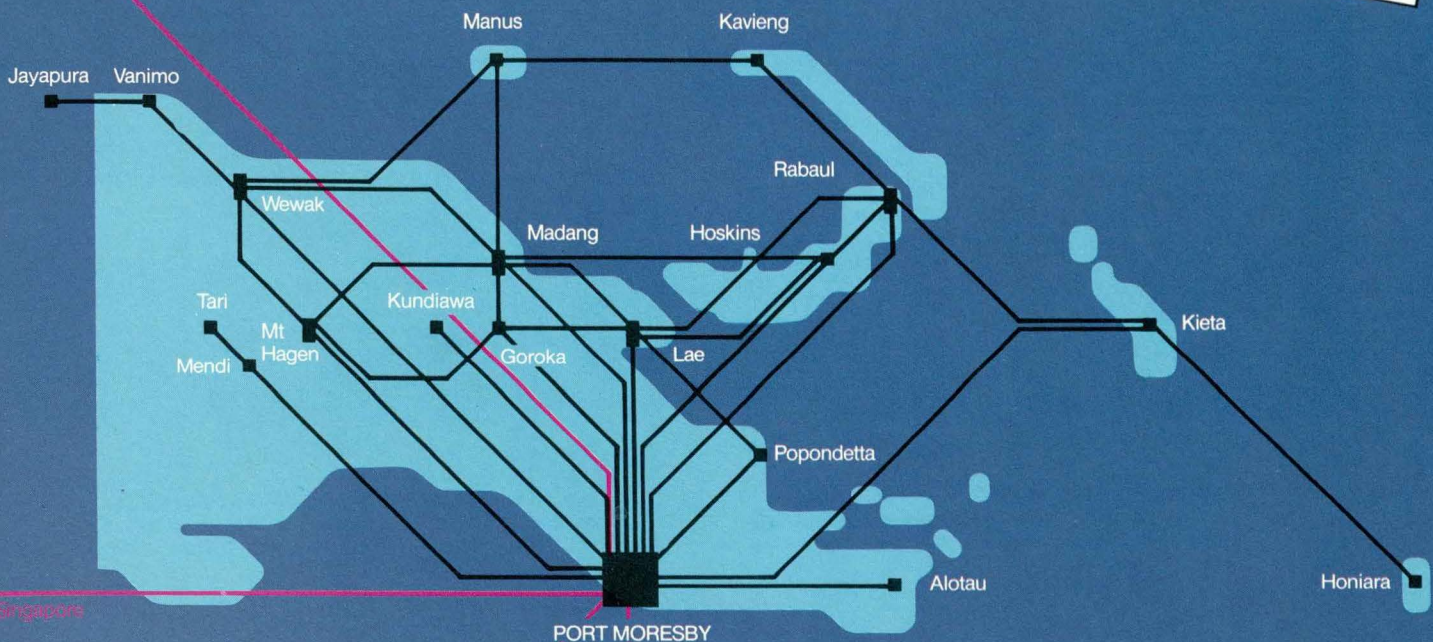
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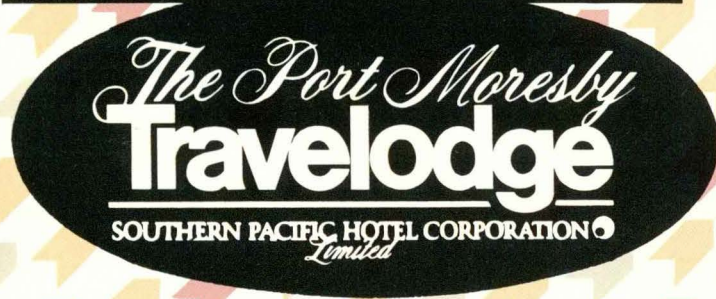
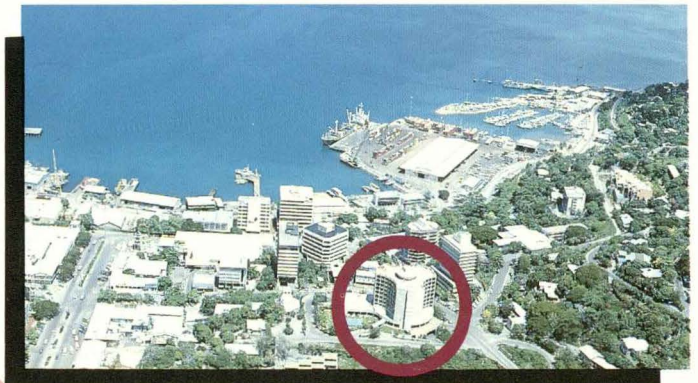
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# PORTRAITS OF DIVERSITY

Story and photographs by Rob Walls/Rapport

**P**apua New Guinea is a modern nation, but not all aspects of 20th Century culture are seen necessarily as progress. When a television service of two channels was introduced into PNG in 1987, it occurred to me that there was a

possibility that such an influential medium could bring about an homogenisation, if not a deterioration, of what is probably the richest and most varied cultural heritage in the world.

Although this communication innovation had been approached



**Overleaf** Arua Paru from Central Province. **This page, top** Chimbu children. **bottom** Elizabeth Mema from Mount Hagen. **Facing page, top** Koi Pabusinumai from Chimbu Province. **bottom (from left to right)** Matthew Buka, Simon Neap and Pegi Dupio from Southern Highlands Province.

with admirable caution by the PNG Government, I decided to record as much traditional dress and style, in as much detail as possible, before it was absorbed into a more unified PNG culture.

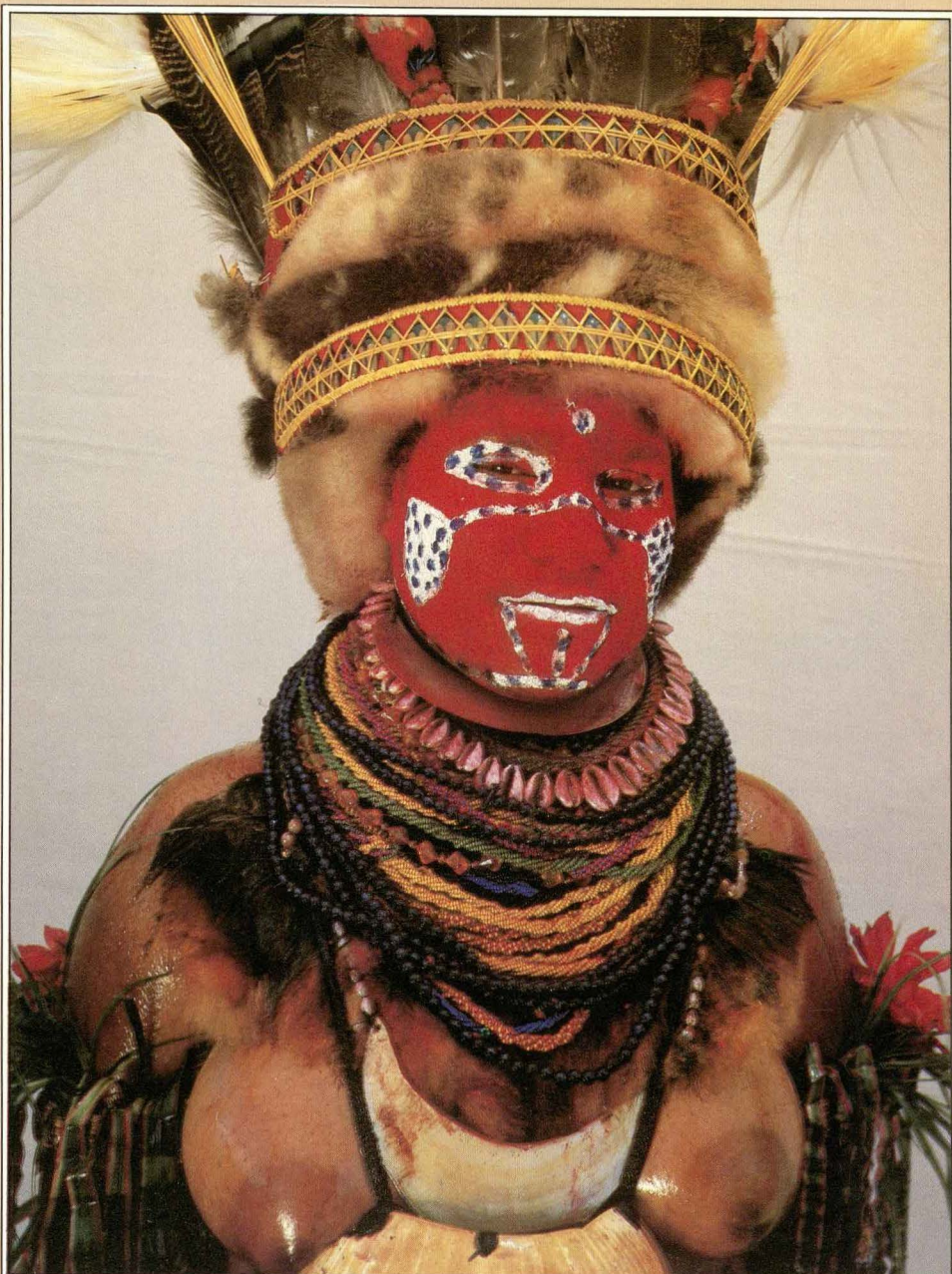
Having visited the country eight times since 1964, I was well aware of the logistical problems such an undertaking would present. The Highlands Show, which that year was to be held in Goroka, would be the ideal starting point.

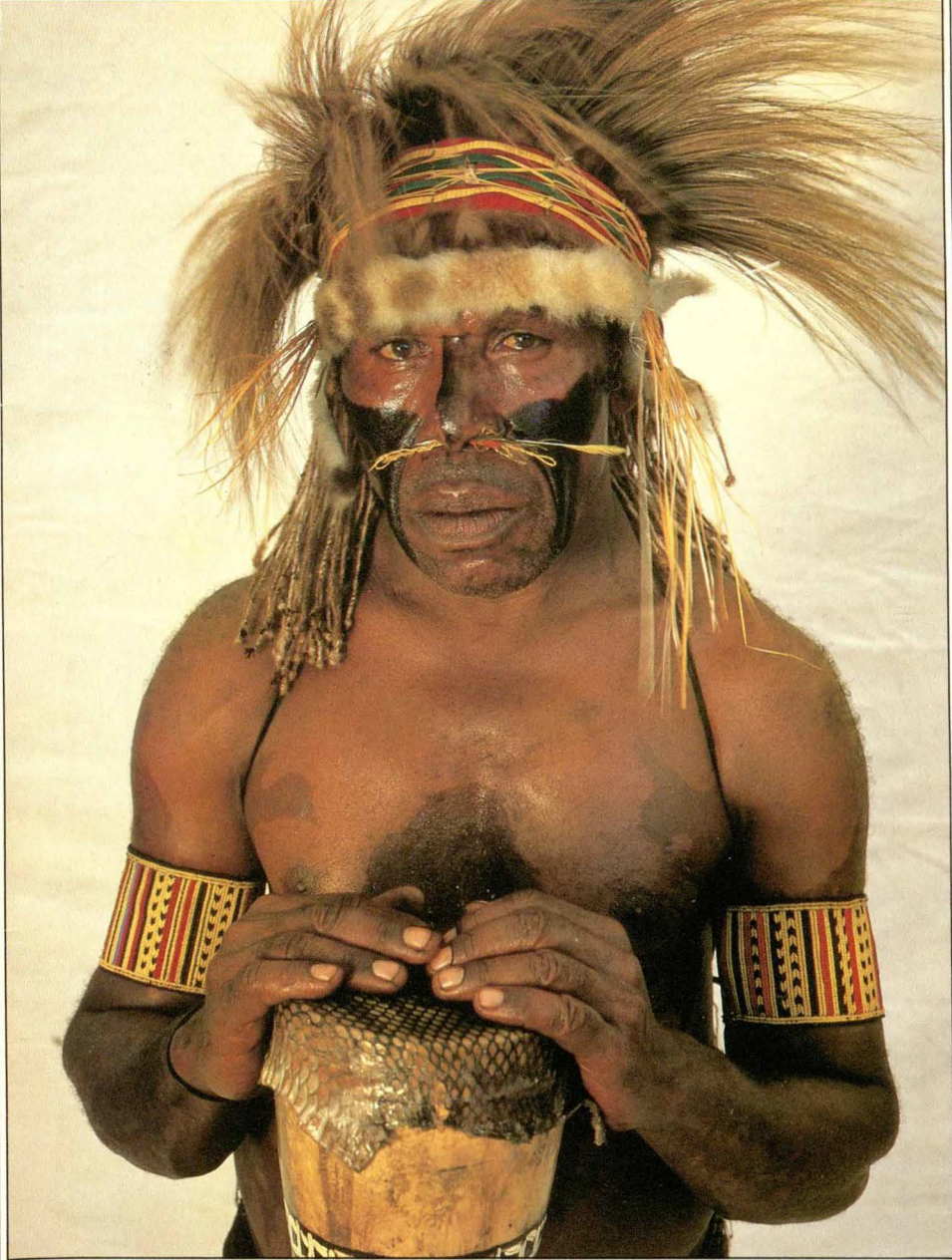
For excitement and color, the Highlands Show is probably without parallel anywhere on Earth. It is held on alternate years in either of the principal towns of Goroka or Mount Hagen.

Superficially, these shows resemble similar affairs held anywhere else in the world: sideshows, hoopla, trade displays, rock concerts and rodeo. But they differ in one specific aspect: the singsing.

A singsing is principally a display of traditional dancing and singing. The Highlands Show gives an opportunity to the tribes and clan groups to get together and compete in a mass demonstration of the differing singsing styles of their various regions. It is also a chance for the people to show off their "bilas", the customary tribal finery, which can be anything from a simple black body-coating to the most flamboyant combination of bird-of-paradise feathers, gold-lipped pearl shell, flowers and face paint.

To get even the slightest perception of the complexity of these occasions, one must realise that PNG is home to 750 distinctly different languages and a staggering 3000 dialects! Highland Shows were originally introduced in 1957, as a means of bringing this diversity together and as an aid to preparing the country for Independence. The idea was first met with some trepidation because the possibility of intertribal conflict





at that time was high and an officially sanctioned tribal fight would reflect badly on the country's readiness for nationhood. However, the first show went off without incident, an unmitigated success that set the precedent for what was to become a significant tradition.

The singing takes place in a conventional showground arena. On the first day of the show, thousands of participants dance unflaggingly in the heat of the mountain sun. The second day is approached with even more enthusiasm. Then they are competing in earnest, often for prize money in excess of 12,000 kina. Serious business indeed.

A major criterion for judging is authenticity of presentation. The wearing of sunglasses or a digital watch is sufficient to bring about elimination from contention. This concern for details has been responsible for a renaissance of traditional values.

The need to reproduce this wealth of detail meant that I would need to use a large format camera. I knew that 5 x 4 transparency film called Professional Chrome was shortly to be released in Australia by the Polaroid Corporation. Unlike other Polaroid instant products, this new film required conventional color processing, but liberated the large-format photographer from the tyranny of dark slides, changing bags and the supplementary paraphernalia required in the field. Each sheet of film is pre-packaged in its own individual paper envelope, making it compatible with Polaroid's 5 x 4 instant print film system. With the help of Polaroid Australia, I was able to obtain an advance supply of 200 sheets of this new transparency film.

I was determined that the best way to go about this undertaking was to set up a small daylight studio and coax likely subjects to pose for my camera in exchange for complimentary prints. Highlanders are more than familiar with the concept of Polaroid and the prints were going to be vital, as they would be expecting to see instant results.

Two days before the commencement of the show, my assistant John Champion and I

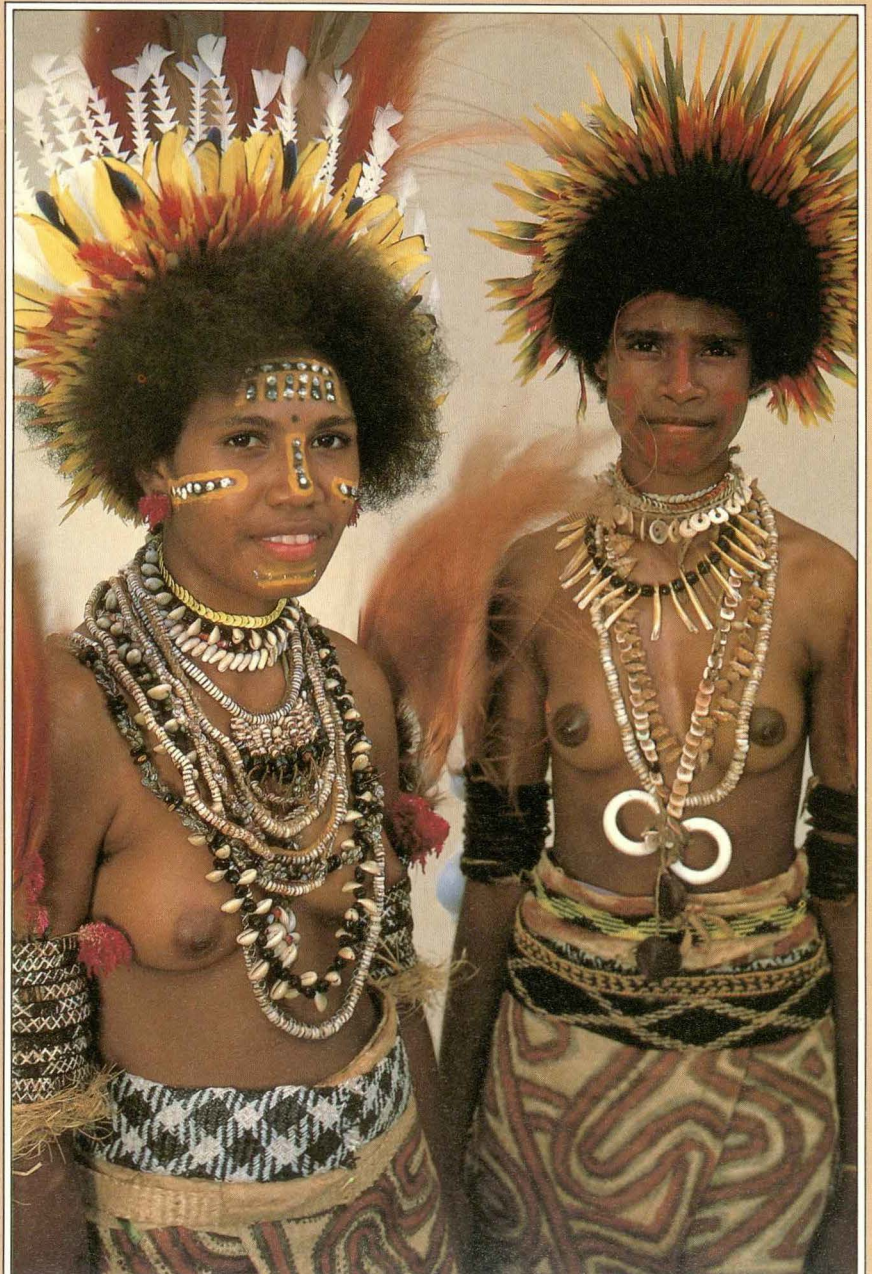


**Top** Pimaga villagers from Southern Highlands Province. **bottom** Bowma and Jelma, sisters from Northern Province.

assembled our "studio" from a new, unbleached calico car-cover and some bamboo poles that we had scrounged from around the ground. Although makeshift, this tent would provide the soft, even light we required.

At sunrise on show day, the weather promised clear working conditions. At first, trade was slow. Few people seemed to realise we were offering free portraits. To kick things along, I took a camera into the main arena and began handing around prints to a wildly colorful band of Huli warriors from the Southern Highlands. I arranged for a few of them to come to the studio and soon after, they returned to the arena, happily clutching their photographs.

About 30 minutes later, I heard a thunder of drums and a deep warlike chanting through the layer of suffocating velvet covering my head. The photographs were paying off! A platoon of 30 painted and feathered warriors from the Enga Province was marching majestically in formation across the ground, cutting a swathe through the crowd. Imperiously, they demanded to be photographed. We were in business. The only question left was whether we would have enough film to keep everyone happy.



In August 1987 Rob Walls completed the third session of portraits at the Mount Hagen Show. He has since been invited to exhibit the resulting photographs at the prestigious Western States Museum of Photography in Santa Barbara, California, USA, from 18 July to 26 August.

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# BLACK JACKS



## LAST MISSION

Story and photographs by Lyn and Pat Manly



**W**recks of planes, shot down during World War II, are being discovered still in the seas around Papua New Guinea.

We were working on Lord Howe Island when we were told of the discovery of a Flying Fortress bomber in 45 metres of water at Cape Vogel in the Milne Bay Province.

The B-17 Fortress was one of the largest aircraft commissioned in the Pacific war zone by the United States 5th Air Force. Powered by four 1200 horsepower engines, the B-17 was more than 22 metres long, with a wingspan of more than 30 metres, and weighted more than 20 tonnes. Thirteen machine guns jutted from her turrets and gunports.

The newly discovered bomber was accidentally found by our friend Rodney Pearce and his dive buddies, David Pennefather and Bruce Johnson, during a diving safari in December, 1986.

Rod, skipper of the charter vessel MV Barbarian, and part owner of the Salamaua Diving Lodge, has nurtured an interest in World War II ship and plane wrecks for more than 20 years. He has been credited with locating seven aircraft and ten shipwrecks in PNG waters.

Invited to photograph the B-17 relic, we joined Rod at Lae to cruise to Cape Vogel, a 480 kilometre journey. A daily routine was quickly established. Each day we would fish for spanish mackerel to complement galley supplies and once hooked a blue marlin. This magnificent creature of the open seas leaped high into the air, thrashing its head from

side to side in an effort to free itself. We all hoped it would break free but the hook was unrelenting. Rod slowly pulled the marlin up to the manta board where we dislodged the hook. With a flick of its tail and a gentle splash, it was gone.

Our vessel's echo sounder often picked up uncharted reefs as we cruised around 25 kilometres offshore. To break the monotony of constant travelling we dived at least once a day. These uncharted reefs probably had never been previously explored. The visibility was always excellent; sharks were abundant but cautious and only ventured close when we speared fish. We photographed immense sea fans, called gorgonians, which were adorned with multi-colored feather starfish along their three-metre span. The encrusting hard coral growths on these remote reefs were lush. Rare angel fish darted in and out of the staghorn coral and led us a merry chase as we tried to capture them on film. We marvelled at giant clams embedded in the substrate corals on the crest of the reef.

On the fourth day we reached Cape Vogel. A strong wind was pushing a south easterly swell over the bomber site. We couldn't dive in these conditions. The sea would have to be calm if we wanted to dive to the bomber lying at 45 metres depth, and there was always the added concern of strong currents. Conditions

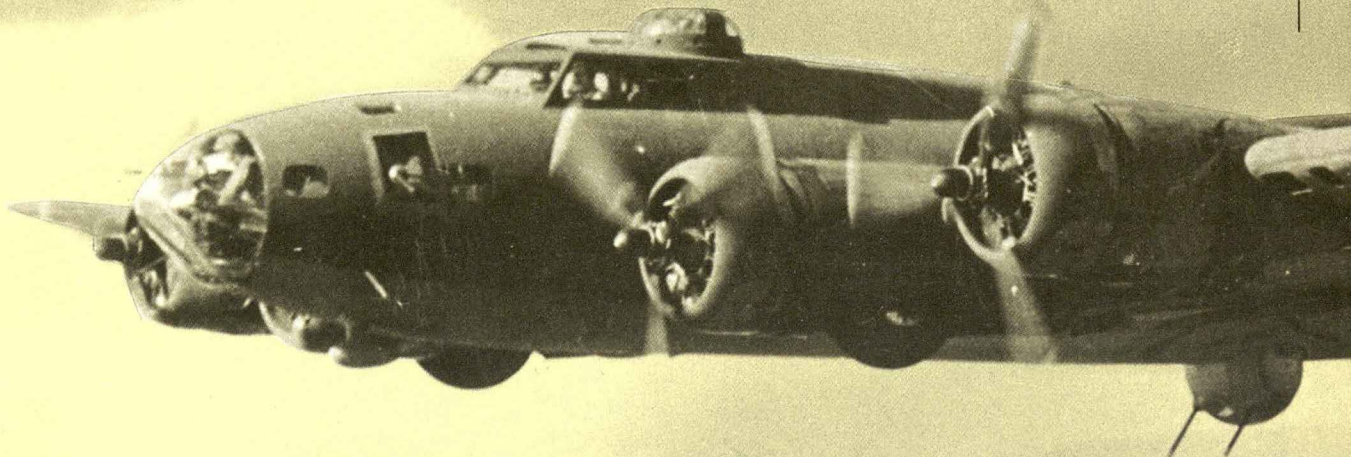
did not appear at all promising and our spirits were low as we edged Barbarian into the lagoon to move to the mouth of the river and the deep water wharf which would be our overnight anchorage.

But the weather and the sea can be kind. The next day the wind had abated and the swells were much smaller. Before we could dive we had to obtain permission from the chiefs of Boga Boga village. They knew we had come from Australia to dive on their plane, but we had to advise them of our intentions and reassure them that we would not damage the bomber or the surrounding reef.

The village adjacent to the plane wreck is one of three villages which comprise the Anglican mission at Tarakwaruru. Boga Boga village is very isolated and had been visited only once before, in 1980 by tourists on the Melanesian Explorer. The visitors purchased shells and shark-bone necklaces as well as the beautiful tapa cloths produced in this area. We invited the chiefs on board for morning coffee and presented them with a letter from the Provincial Government headquarters in Alotau. The four chiefs gave us permission to dive on the plane and invited us to stay in their village and be their guests at a feast and singing that evening. We



**Overleaf** Divers approaching Black Jack's tail guns. **top left** Inside the fuselage. **top right** Blue marlin was released unharmed. **bottom** Two Flying Fortresses of the 43rd Bomb Group over New Guinea in 1943.





accepted, with pleasure, and were thrilled that we would be the first Europeans to stay in their village.

Many of the villagers came out to Barbarian to say hello and wish us safe diving. They were intrigued as we geared up in brightly colored diving suits, scuba tanks and associated equipment for the orientation dive. Their outrigger canoes followed us out of the lagoon and beyond the edge of the reef. We waved goodbye as we placed regulators in our mouths and commenced the long descent to the reef wall.

Rod Pearce volunteered to show us over the site and point out items of interest. At a depth of 27 metres I could see the bomber on the sea floor below, sitting upright, wings spread out like a giant eagle ready for flight. I noticed the tail, about six metres high, a dominating feature of a B-17. Both waist-gun windows and the escape hatch on top of the fuselage were open. The life-raft hatch was empty. Good, we thought, that means the crew must have escaped.

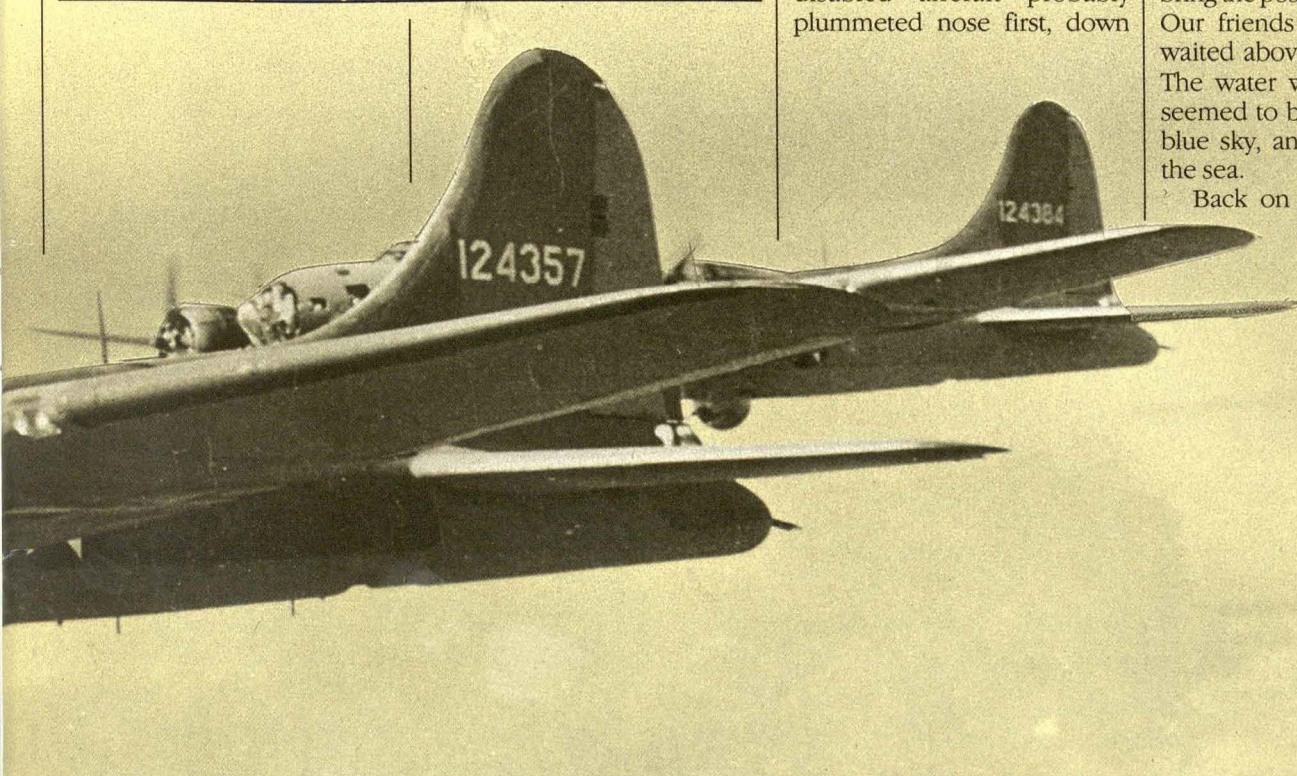
The only apparent damage was to the nose which was torn and crumpled. The disabled aircraft probably plummeted nose first, down

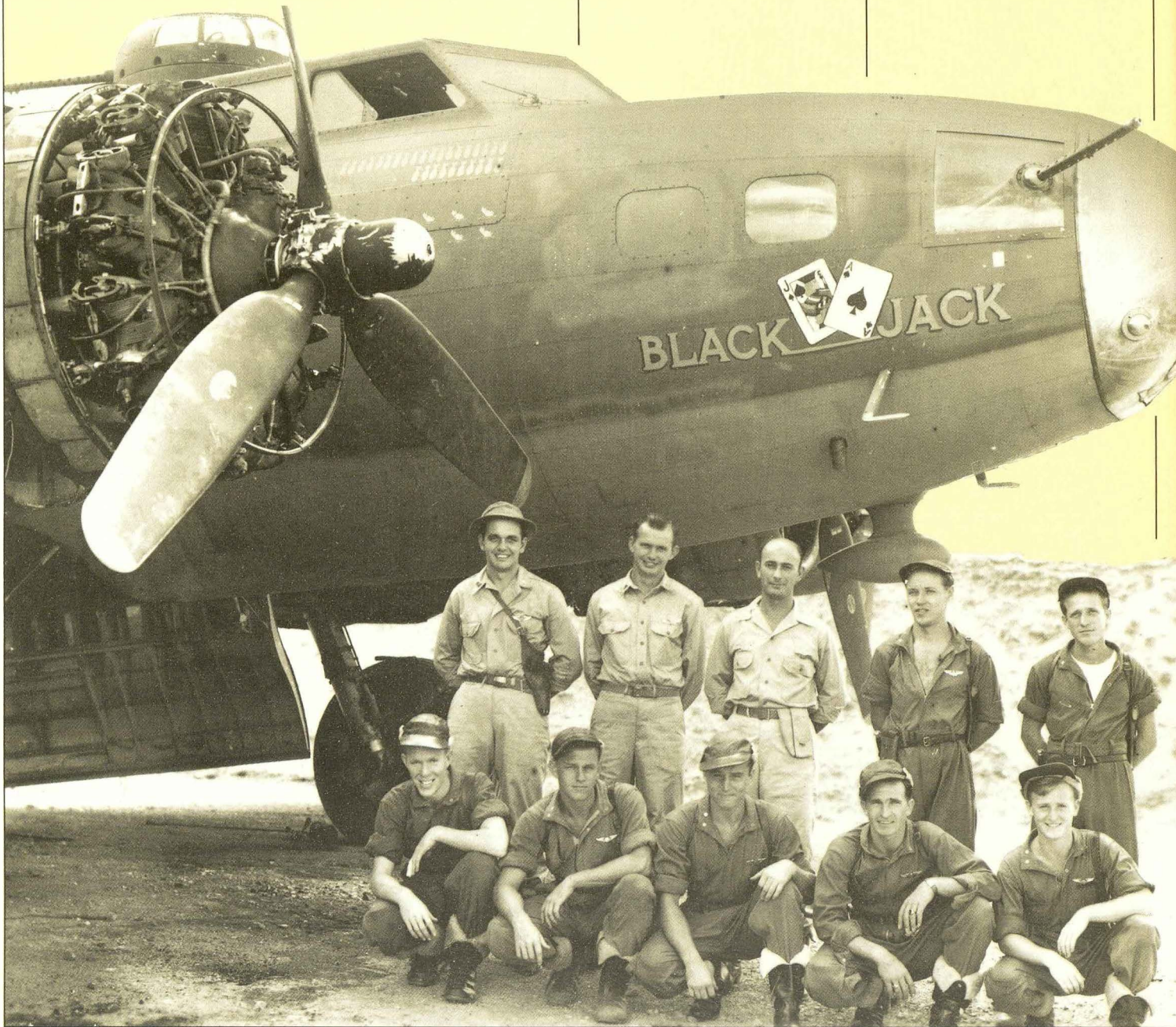
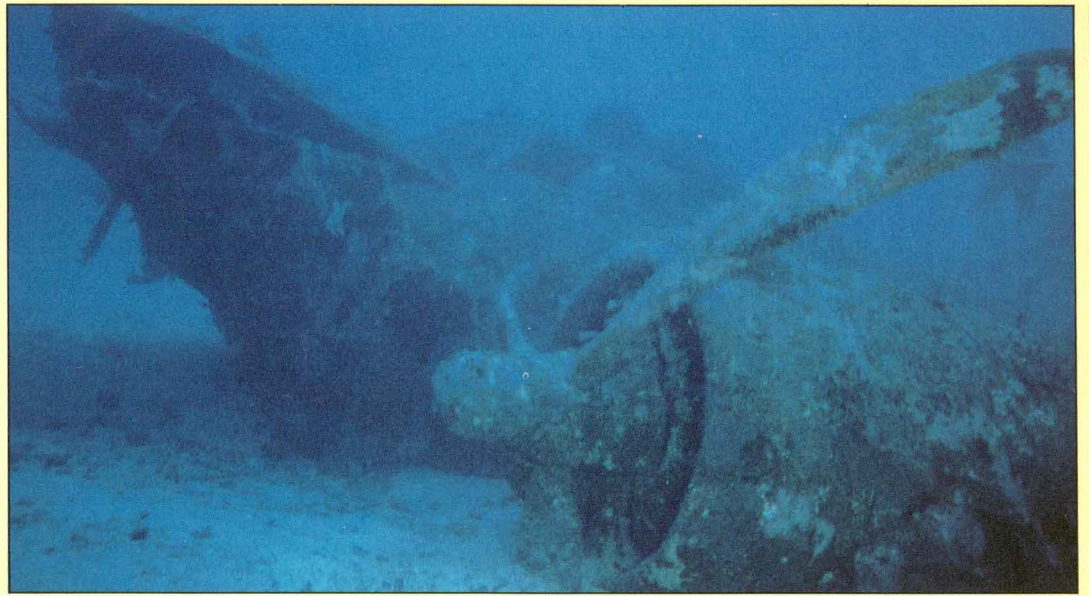
the drop-off, and landed heavily on the sand.

Our exploration was becoming difficult. A current was running along the bottom of the wall and over the plane. I could clearly make out the top gun turret, as well as the twin guns on the tail which still moved up and down. Rod pointed out the gun sight near the tail gunner's window. We swam along the fuselage and stopped at one of the waist-gun windows to glance inside. I focused in the gloom and saw boxes of ammunition. To the right was the belly turret which had jammed up into the fuselage and beyond that I could see the radio room. Belts of 50-calibre ammunition lay across the turret. We had time for only a quick look. Next dive we could venture further and examine the contents more closely.

After 15 minutes at 45 metres, we started our slow ascent up the sheer wall, past the billowing trees of black coral. We finned over tangled masses of sponges and delicate corals. Decompression stops were observed at six metres and three metres for total of 25 minutes. Surfacing without these planned stops could bring the possibly fatal "bends". Our friends from the village waited above in their canoes. The water was so clear they seemed to be suspended in a blue sky, and not floating on the sea.

Back on board Barbarian,







**Top left** Black Jack's damaged nose section. **top right** Pilot's controls in the cockpit. **bottom left** Lieutenant Harry Staley (closest to propeller) spent more time at Black Jack's controls than any other pilot. **bottom right** Diver Bruce Johnson in the cockpit.

we wanted to know how the three adventurers had found the amazing war relic. We were told Richard Leahy and David Pennefather had been seeking information on a Beaufort Bomber which reportedly crashed in the Cape Vogel area in 1943. They asked the old men of the village if they had seen any planes crash into the water during the big war. Two of the villagers had witnessed a large plane fly in low over the village and land on the sea. The crew members were helped ashore and were cared for in the village till a rescue could be mounted. Richard and David dived but could not find the plane so they enlisted the help of Rodney Pearce who organised an expedition back to the site at Christmas 1986.

Rodney realised that a plane that carried a crew of ten could only be a Fortress or a Liberator. They decided to search in the area described by the eye witnesses. Rod located the B-17 Flying Fortress on the first dive. What a thrill it must have been for Rod when he had just about given up finding anything at all in the blue haze. He decided to swim in a large semicircle that placed him on the port wing of the aircraft. He looked up and in front lay the old war plane.

After stowing our dive gear, we decided to accept the villagers' invitation. The people of Boga Boga village speak their own dialect as well as English which is taught at the mission school. The villagers have very little contact with English-speaking outsiders, and consequently their language is very innocent and charming. We found ourselves in the middle of a community of Christian villagers whose sincerity and hospitality was overwhelming.

Our official welcome into the village was spectacular. We waited on the beach under the shade of frangipani trees till the welcoming party arrived. A triton shell, made into a horn, sounded a greeting in a deep strong tone. Dancers in traditional dress danced to the

beat of log drums. They weaved their way towards us through the coconut palms. We followed the colorful procession through the village to the specially prepared guest house. The lodge was delightful, made of thatched material on the roof and walls, with a bamboo floor covered in pandanus mats. Baskets of tropical fruit and flowers adorned the verandah. Woven mats were placed under the adjoining trees: an exquisite setting for meeting our hosts.

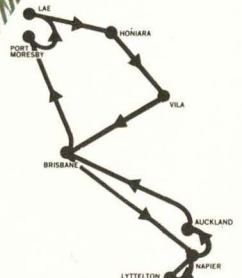
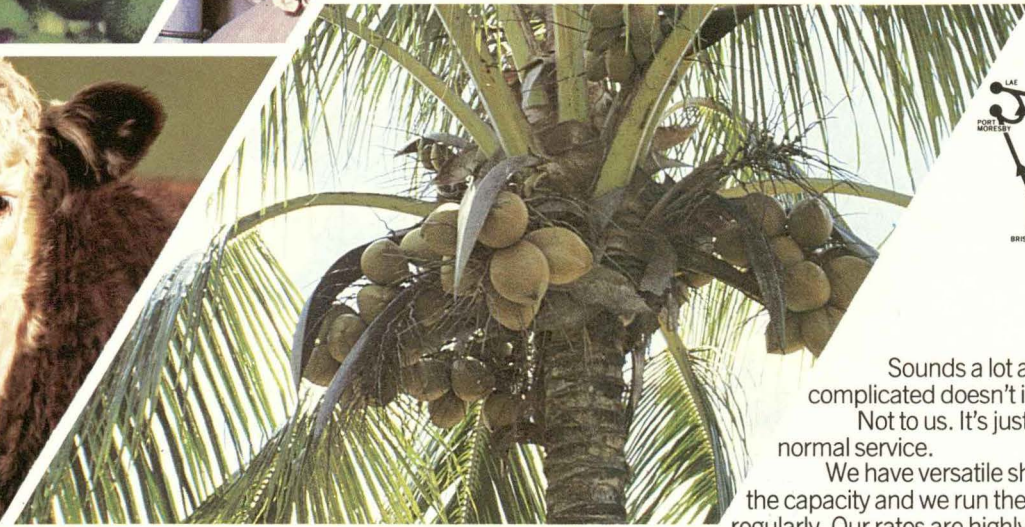
After the evening meal of fish boiled in coconut milk and served with taro, pumpkin and sago, we exchanged gifts with our new friends. They entertained us with traditional songs and dances and, in return, we sang songs from Australia.

We talked at great length to the village elders who rescued the crew from the crashed plane more than 40 years ago. They told us how they heard the roar of the engines as the plane flew in low over the village. The women and children were frightened by the "monster in the sky" and ran off to hide in the jungle. The noisy intruder crashed into the sea at the edge of the reef, disappearing in a show of bubbles. The crew hung on grimly to the life-rafts as the tide carried them out to sea. The men of the village scrambled into their canoes and quickly paddled out to help the struggling airmen.

An Australian spotter notified air-sea rescue of the crash and a Royal Australian Air Force aircraft evacuated the three wounded members of the crew; the others were taken by motor launch to Goodenough Island. There they were picked up by a transport plane and taken back to Port Moresby. The story was beginning to unfold; we were getting closer to solving the mystery of the sunken Fortress.

The next day we dived again. We all felt much more at ease as we descended the same path down the wall towards the wreck. I noticed

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several turtles gliding along the reef drop-off. Turtles are sacred to the villagers who will not harm them. This is reflected in their traditional dances and explains the abundance of turtles in these waters.

Once again visibility was good, at least 36 metres, so we were able to photograph the entire plane from above. The divers swimming along the wings of the aircraft below looked like tiny models in an aquarium.

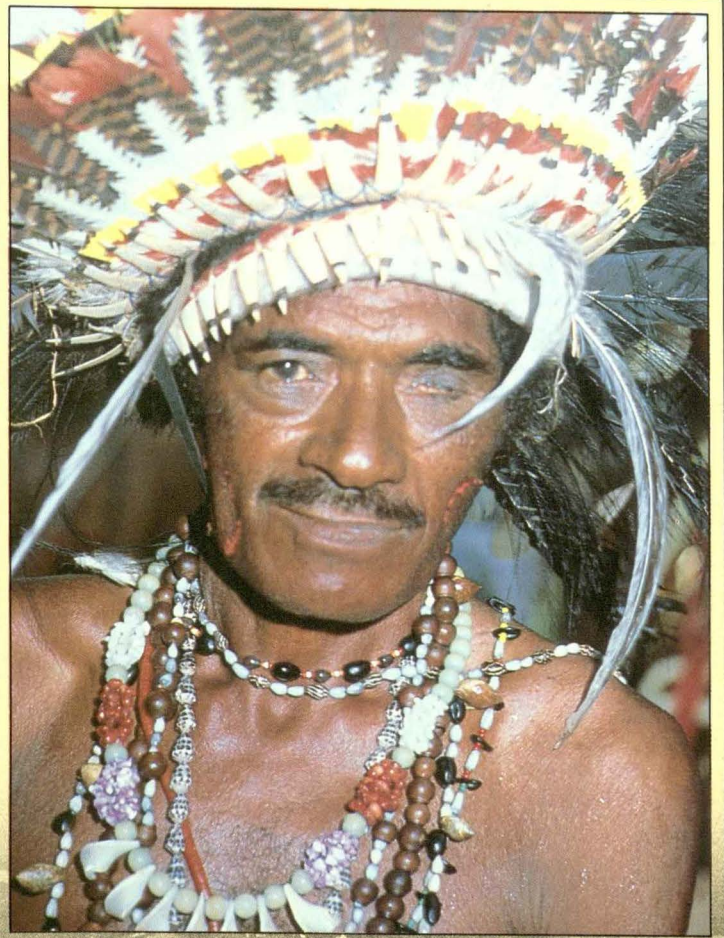
My entry in through the waist-gun window was barred by an enormous cod, probably weighing in excess of 100 kilograms. The giant fish looked as startled as I felt. It pushed past and escaped through the window. By the time I turned, it was moving at great speed towards the open water.

I glanced around and tried to make out objects in the fuselage that were covered in a fine layer of sediment. I could see fire extinguishers, seats, and radio equipment in what must have been the radio room. The bomb racks were empty; they were either dropped in a bomb raid or ditched before the crash. I noticed 50-calibre ammunition at my feet and hoped I wasn't standing on any.

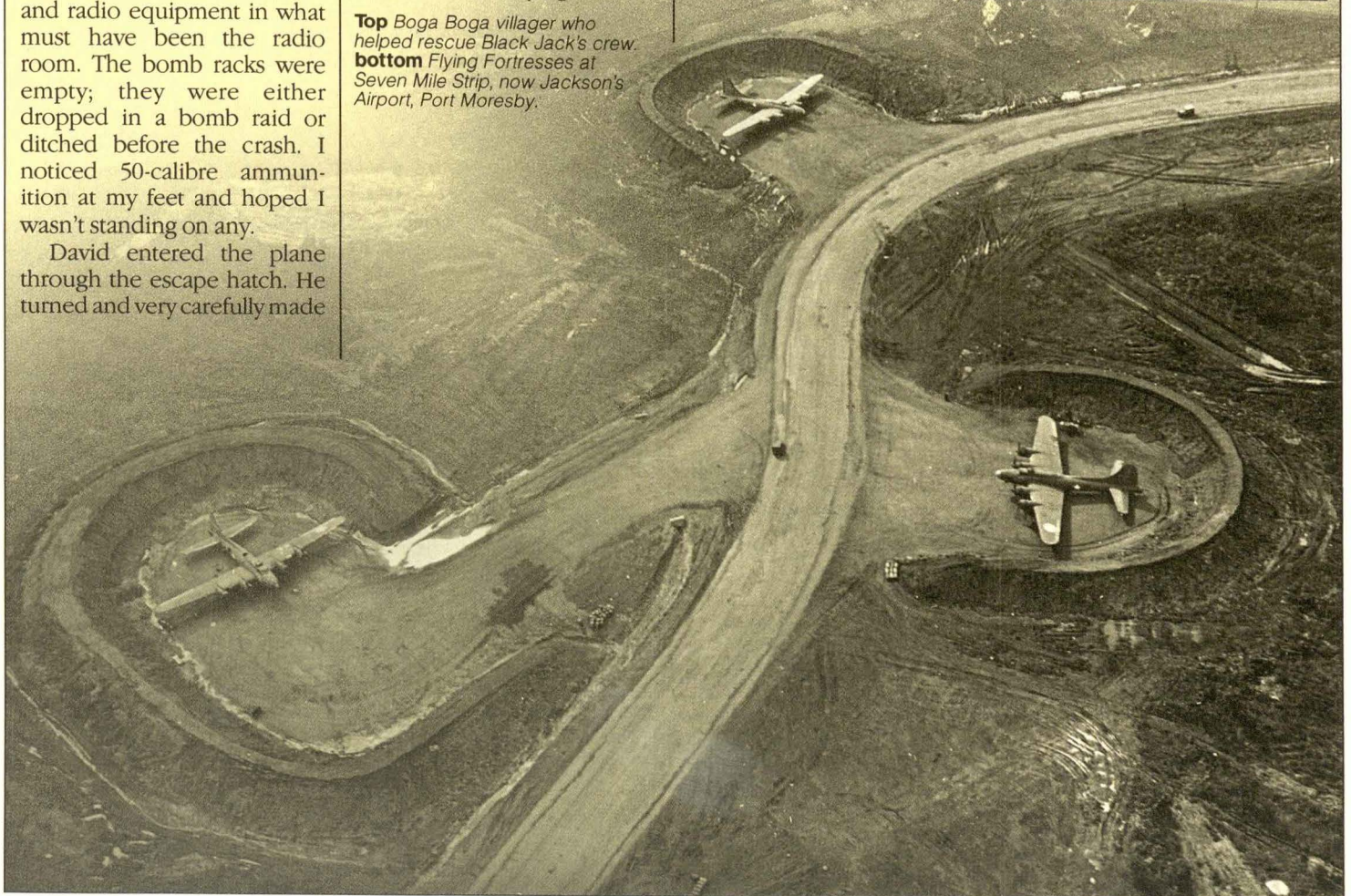
David entered the plane through the escape hatch. He turned and very carefully made

his way through the radio room, past the bomb bays and into the cockpit. He was in there for less than a minute, then he came out feet first, as he could not turn around in the confined space. Clutched tightly in his hand was the radio call sign. One by one we eased ourselves outside and continued the dive plan.

Next on the dive agenda was a photographic session with a diver in the cockpit. Bruce volunteered. On our signal Bruce removed his scuba cylinder and made his way to the cockpit, pushing the heavy cylinder in front of him. We waited on the outside, lining up electronic strobes and taking light readings. Bruce positioned himself in the pilot's seat with his air cylinder on the seat reserved for the co-pilot. The grin on his face told me he was in heaven. As a pilot working in PNG, Bruce has a natural interest in aviation history, in particular World War II planes, and the one he was 'flying' at the



**Top** Boga Boga villager who helped rescue Black Jack's crew.  
**bottom** Flying Fortresses at Seven Mile Strip, now Jackson's Airport, Port Moresby.





*Peaceful Boga Boga village, Cape Vogel, today.*

moment was a devastatingly effective war machine.

Bruce ran his hand to the pilot's flight controls and over the instrument panel then gave us the 'this is okay' signal. I signalled back that we should wind up the dive for time was nearly up. Carefully Bruce levered himself out of the seat, which was now reduced to bare metal after its long submergence in the sea. Slowly the group finned along the fuselage towards the tail section. We regrouped at the tail, signalled to each other that all was well, then proceeded towards the reef wall and the surface which seemed such a long way off.

On board the dive vessel, we crowded around David to see his prize – the small radio call sign plaque. Carefully David removed the thin covering of coral to reveal the number we were all anxious to see: 124521. We were closer to finding the plane's identity.

A few days later David was able to contact the Curator of the Aviation Museum in Port Moresby, Bruce Hoy, who was able to inform us that the plane was called "Black Jack".

The rest of the story was completed in Sydney when we met aviation writer Steve Birdsall, author of "Flying Buccaneers" which tells the

story of the U.S. 5th Air Force during World War II.

B-17, number 41-24521, was rolled out of Boeing's Seattle factory one humid day late in July of 1942, and six weeks later she joined the 43rd Bomb Group, based in northern Australia. The 43rd was part of the 5th Air Force, which had been formed to provide aerial support for General Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines and the defeat of the Japanese Empire. In September 1942, Japanese forces were within 30 kilometres of Port Moresby, the last major Allied position in New Guinea and the 5th Air Force was fighting a desperate holding action.

Flying Fortress 41-24521 was assigned to Captain Ken McCullar and his crew, and was given the nickname "Black Jack", an obvious choice when the last two digits of her serial number were 21. Ken McCullar was a flamboyant gambler and a fearless, aggressive pilot. He even had his ground crew fit an extra machine gun in "Black Jack's" nose, fired by a button on his control wheel, so he could use the big bomber to duel with Japanese fighters. He pioneered a tactic known as "skip bombing" – night attacks against Japanese shipping in port or at

sea. The Fortresses would roar in the moonlight, at minimum altitude, releasing their bombs 30 metres short of the target and skipping them off the water into the sides of enemy ships at the waterline. It was dangerous, but effective.

"Black Jack" and Ken McCullar became a legendary team. His name is still spoken with awe whenever 5th Air Force veterans gather. Flying as many as three combat missions in one day, "Black Jack" and McCullar always came back. They led charmed lives together and the Japanese could not stop them.

McCullar moved on to command a squadron and was killed in the fiery takeoff crash of another airplane. His copilot, Lt Harry Staley took command of "Black Jack" until he had completed his tour of duty. Lt Ralph DeLoach then took over the controls.

A little after midnight on July 11, 1943, "Black Jack" took off from Port Moresby to attack a Japanese airstrip at Rabaul, New Britain. Severe problems developed with two of the engines but the bomb load was dropped successfully. The crew's main concern was to leave the region quickly after the raid because of the threat from Japanese night fighters. Luck was against them. "Black

Jack" was caught up in a violent storm, with a malfunctioning engine vibrating so badly it threatened to tear itself from the wing. The other engine on the same side was giving limited power. Soon the crew, unable to hold a straight course, became hopelessly lost. With fuel running low they tried to land on the shallow waters of a reef, but missed and landed in deep water. Three of the crew were injured in the crash – the rest of the story we have heard from eyewitnesses at Boga Boga village.

PNG abounds with reminders of the waste of war, but most of the relics have been stripped or salvaged for their value for scrap or souvenirs. Finding such a complete airplane is unique, a genuine historical treasure trove. Protected under the Wreck Act of PNG, "Black Jack" will remain untouched, and in her present state for many years to come.

But the old warplane will not be forgotten. The story of "Black Jack" and the people who flew her, is the subject of a documentary film: "Black Jack's Last Mission".



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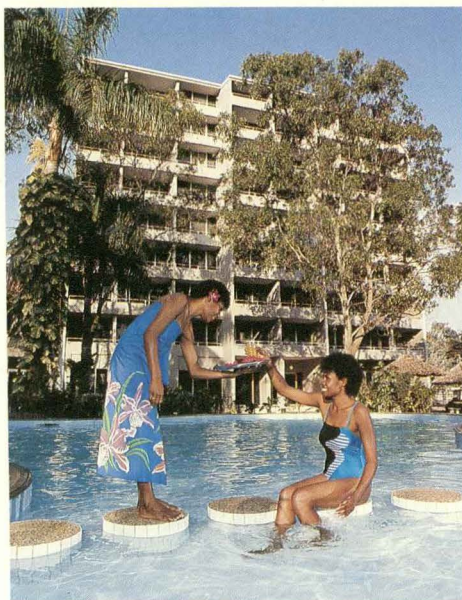
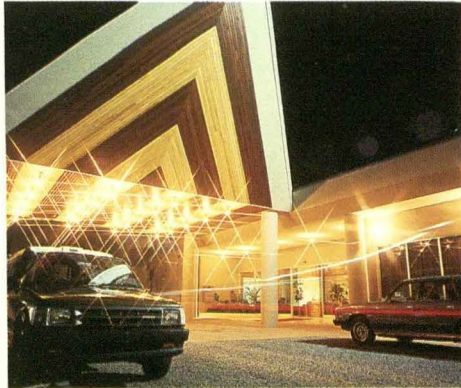
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