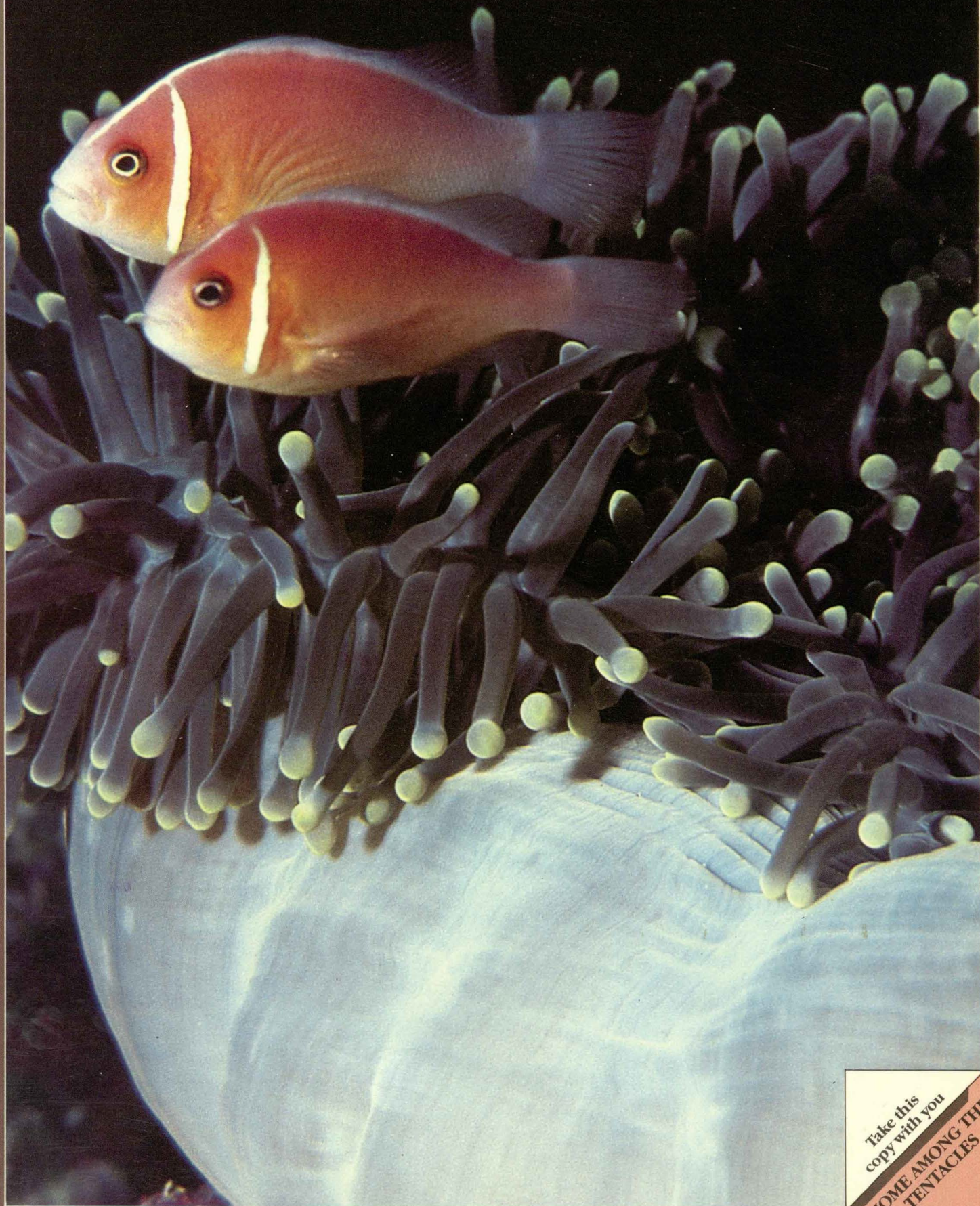


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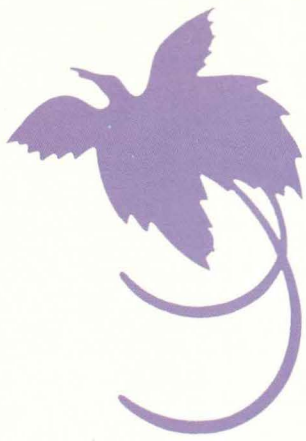
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No 70 Sept-Oct 1988

Paradise is published bi-monthly
by Air Niugini, PO Box 7186,
Boroko, Papua New Guinea
(telephone 273415;
telex NE22225).

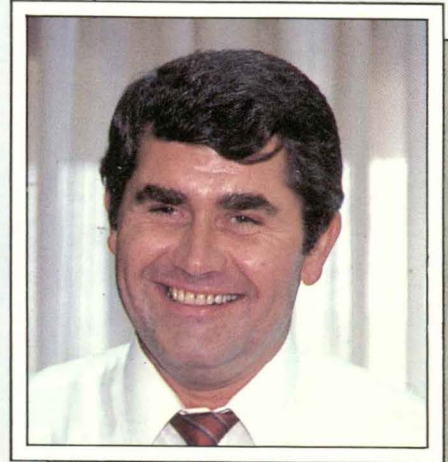
Welcome aboard,

The bravery of villagers in New Britain during World War II continues to benefit their children and grandchildren who attend Ewasse Memorial Airmen's School. In this issue we learn about the story behind the school.

We also look at the history of Port Moresby's revived Hiri Moale Festival. We describe our pottery revival and explore the bizarre life of the clownfish. We hope you find interesting reading in these and other stories.

Enjoy your flight.

Dieter Seefeld
General Manager
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Advertising

Papua New Guinea — c/- The Editor,
Paradise Magazine, P.O. Box 7186,
Boroko.
Australia - Samuelson Talbot & Partners Pty. Ltd.
236 Dorcas Street,
South Melbourne 3205.
Telephone Melbourne (03) 699 8677

Subscriptions

Annual subscription rates for six issues are: USA, Europe, UK and Africa Kina 23 (US\$28)
Australia, New Zealand, Asia and South Pacific K19 (US\$24, A\$25)
Papua New Guinea K13 payment by international bank draft.

Printed in Singapore by Times Publishing Group.
MCI (P) 236/1/88

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Highlands hospitality knows no bounds when a visitor joins in.

Cover: Clownfish (*Amphiprion percula*) live safely among the poisonous tentacles of the sea anemone. PNG has more species of clownfish and bigger sea anemones than anywhere else.
Photograph by Carl Roessler.

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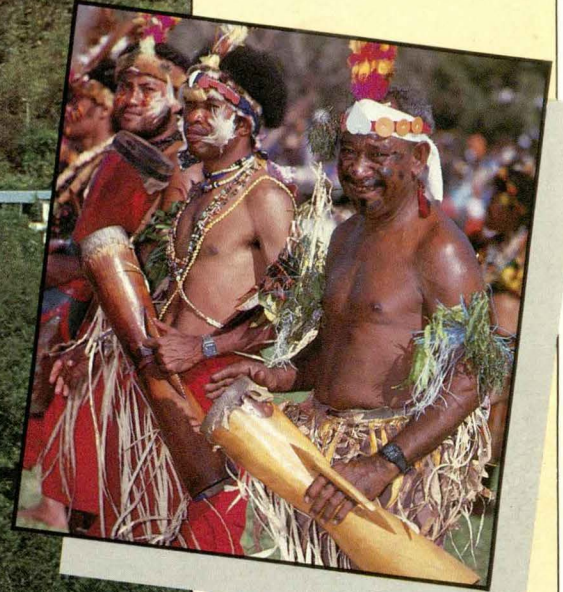
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KING SIZE

Story and photographs by
Elizabeth Kogomoni

Left Ela Beach, Port Moresby, is crowded with revellers and canoes for the re-enactment of the Hiri trade. **inset** Kundu drummers beat out a celebration rhythm.



Port Moresby is the place to be in the second week of September when the colorful Hiri Moale Festival is held. A host of activities, from traditional dancing to modern sports, are on show.

The festival is held to commemorate the annual trading expeditions to the Gulf of Papua by the Motu-speaking people of ten villages around what is now Port Moresby. They would exchange clay pots and armshells for sago and logs among the far-off tribes of the Gulf.

This does not mean that only Port Moresby people will be taking part in the celebrations. Everyone is welcome.

The Hiri was begun by a man from Boera village, who lived in the late 17th or early 18th Centuries. According to Boera village elders, the man had a vision in which he received instructions on how

HIRI Moale





to build a double-hulled canoe (called a lakatoi), with crab-claw sails, to trade with people far away in the coastal villages.

Other villagers laughed at him when he told them about his vision – especially the idea of trading with strangers. At that time travel was restricted; venturing into unknown territories could mean death. People also had little or no idea of what lay beyond the horizon.

But Boera villagers and other Motu people soon learned what to expect on expeditions. Reaching the Gulf, they made friends with the strangers who soon became their trading partners.

For the Motu people, the Hiri became an extremely important event because large quantities of supplies arrived with the returning traders. Before the Hiri began, the Motu villagers often went short of food, especially when the yam harvest failed. The lakatois set sail for the gulf between September and December when the south-east trade winds were blowing. The return journey began at the beginning of the following year until March, or later, when the north-west monsoon was blowing.

The voyages were full of danger and lives were lost. Many lakatois sank near the shore because they were overloaded. There was always the danger of being swept out to sea and the canoe lost. Sometimes crews were attacked and killed by hostile villagers.

A Boera village elder told me about how he and his team lost their lakatoi in rough seas on their way home. At first there was only little damage which they managed to repair. But the constant crashing of waves against the craft slowly tore it to pieces. The men were clinging to floating logs when they were picked up by a passing ship. During the expedition the men sang about their loved ones back at home, their loneliness and what they might find on their return. Many women would

remarry after months of waiting for their husbands, thinking that they would never return.

As soon as the women spotted the lakatois approaching, they would run to the beach and a week of singing, dancing and feasting would begin. The lakatois would not be unloaded until after the feasting. Whatever was brought back from the gulf would be shared among the villagers.

The Boera traded cooking pots, clay bowls and dishes, pots for carrying water, armshells, pig tusks and mother-of-pearl shells for sago, logs and pigs from the Gulf villagers. The last expedition by Boera villagers was in 1956.

Some of the earliest settlements in Port Moresby, such as Vabukori and Kilakila, were established as a result of the Hiri trade, some 200 years ago.

The first Hiri Moale Festival was celebrated in 1976 with the assistance of the Port Moresby City Council, now known as the National Capital District Interim Commission. In 1978 the second festival was held but unfortunately the third had to wait until last year, when it was again revived.

The highlights of last year's show were the re-enactment of the Hiri trade and the crowning of Miss Hanenamo and Miss NCD (National Capital District).

Festivals this year, and in the future, promise more entertainment and fun, coinciding with the country's Independence anniversary celebrations.

When the crab-claw sails went up to sail the lakatoi from Local Island to Ela Beach last year, they brought memories back to old timers who had joined the Hiri expeditions to the Gulf. Such expeditions will not be repeated as the lakatois have been replaced by modern cargo vessels that sail daily between Port Moresby and Kereman.

The 1988 Festival includes traditional singing and dancing, stringband competitions, a

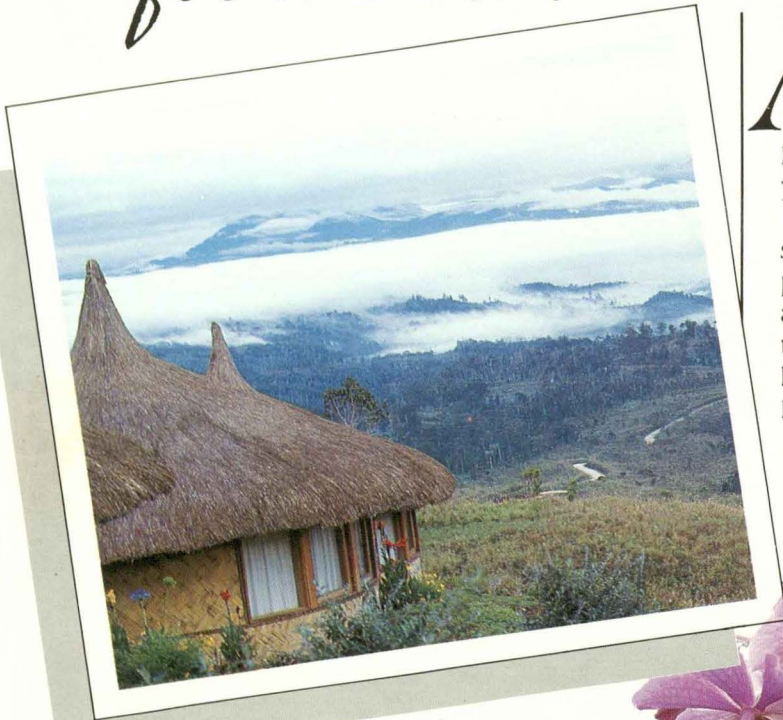
float parade, canoe racing, art and craft demonstrations and sports.

It is jointly organised by the National Capital District Interim Commission, Central Provincial Government, South Pacific Holdings, the Police Department, WD & HO Wills and the National Broadcasting Commission. Other organisations are taking part by sponsoring candidates for competitions or by donating money and prizes.

Top and below left Swirling skirts and towering headdresses are a feature of the singing groups at Hiri Moale. **below centre** Distinctive crab claw sails distinguish the Hiri trade canoes. **below right** A local dance troupe displays its talents.

Two Great Lodges

-for the traveller extraordinaire



Ambua Lodge, at 7000 feet, has its head in the clouds and looks down on a valley that first saw Europeans less than 50 years ago. Completed in 1985 the lodge has 20 spacious cabins with private modern bathrooms and huge picture windows that look out over the Tari basin. This is home to the Huli people whose body decoration is still a part of everyday custom - bold,



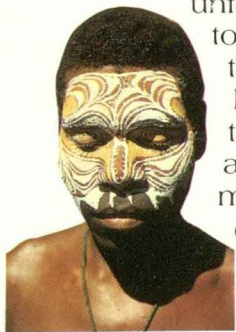
dignified and quite startling. The surrounding mountains are frequented by 13 species of the Bird of Paradise and these can be seen in the orchid studded forests behind Ambua Lodge. Send for our brochure "Papua New Guinea - tomorrow it won't be the same"



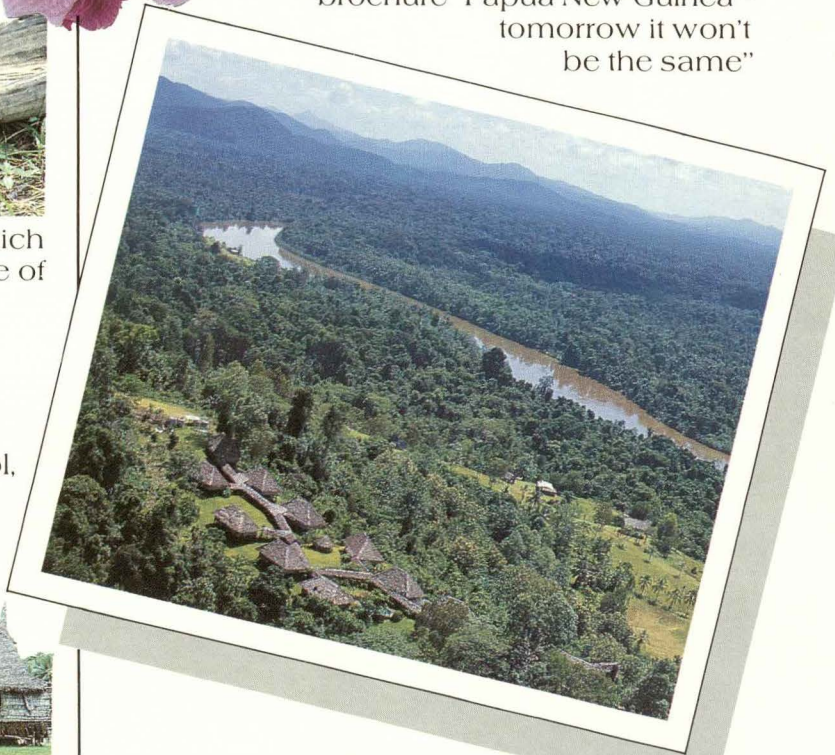
Karawari Lodge takes its name from a tributary of the legendary Sepik River. It is renowned the world over as a luxurious base occupying an



unforgettable setting from which to explore the unique culture of the Sepik basin. The main lodge is designed as a traditional haus tambaran and guests enjoy all the modern comforts of bar, dining and swimming pool, etc. amid stunning examples of Sepik sculpture and folk law.



Karawari is built on a ridge, high above the river, the view goes on forever. Each of the 20 guest rooms have private bathrooms and verandahs - the ideal place for early morning tea with fresh cinnamon rolls. The river is your roadway to villages and people who delight to show you their culture and skills - a glimpse of life generations from the 20th century.

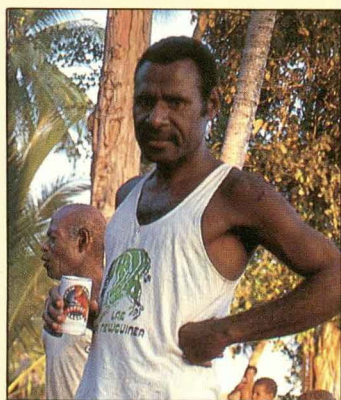


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I am not a drinker these days but I am attracted to frosted cans of South Pacific Export lager. It has nothing to do with the contents, although my beer drinking friends assure me it is a palate-pleasing and refreshing brew. I just happen to believe that the labelling is the most attractive and stylish of any brand of beer in the world.

Quite by accident when embarking on a Sepik River cruise, I learned that the creator of the label, Andrew Warepa, was living nearby in his home village, Murik Lakes, near the mighty river's mouth. Art comes naturally to the people of the Sepik River. Their work is widely admired and eagerly sought after throughout the world.



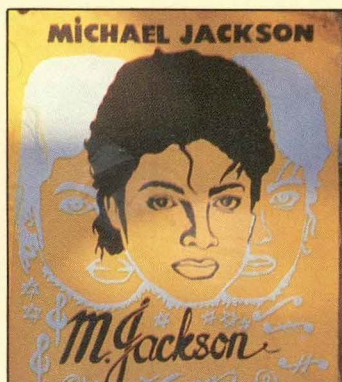
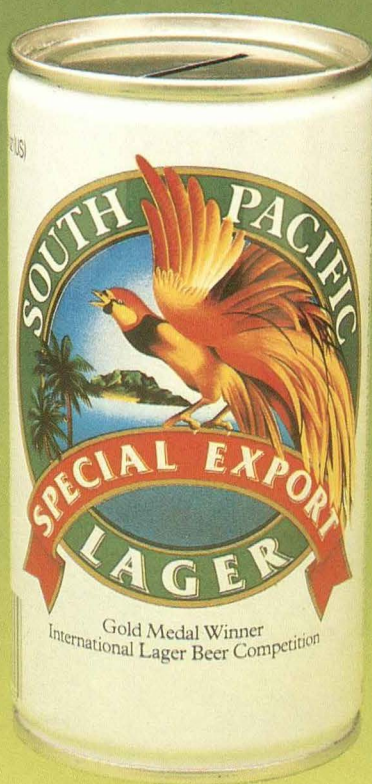
Andrew is a soldier turned artist who still retains the military bearing acquired from five years in the Papua New Guinea armed forces. After being discharged he developed his natural artistic gifts with five years' study at the National Art School in Port Moresby.

While at the school, he and his fellow students were invited to submit designs for the South Pacific lager container. His concept was chosen to adorn the beer cans which are now exported to many parts of the world.

A brilliantly plumaged bird of paradise dominates the design. It appears to be uttering an exclamation of delight over a green volcanic island set in blue sea and sky. Two coconut palms complete the scene.

DESIGNERS BREW

Story and photographs by Neil O'Reilly



Centre top The beer can which started the commercial art career of Andrew Warepa.

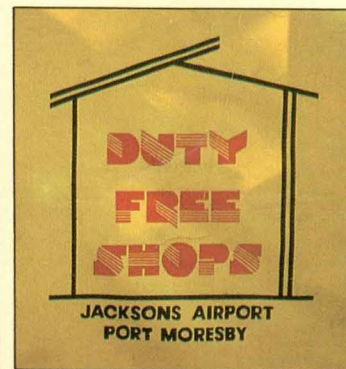
Left Andrew Warepa.

Above & Right The artist's work adorns his studio walls.

Some artists display exasperation when asked to explain the "meaning" of their works. Andrew Warepa is not one of this breed. Softly spoken, Andrew explains that the bird of paradise is the acknowledged emblem of PNG.

If there is a subtle significance about the design it is the presence of the coconut palms. As Andrew Warepa explains, the coconut was the traditional refreshing drink of Papua New Guinea. It comes in nature's airtight container. Beer is a refreshing drink and it too comes in an airtight container.

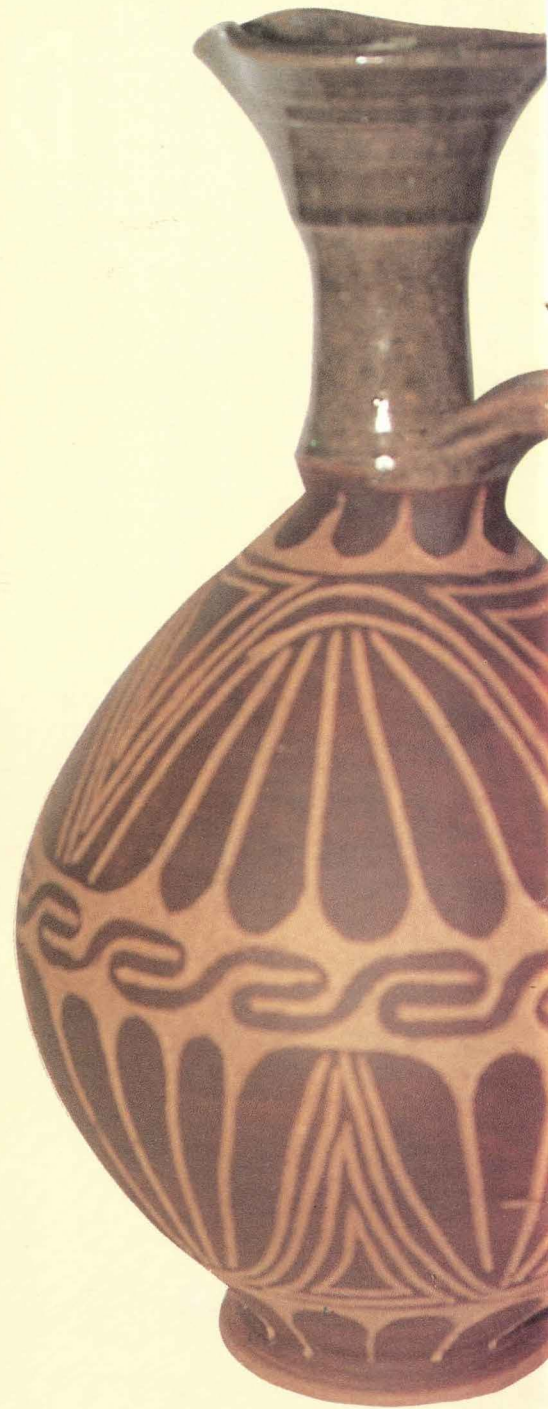
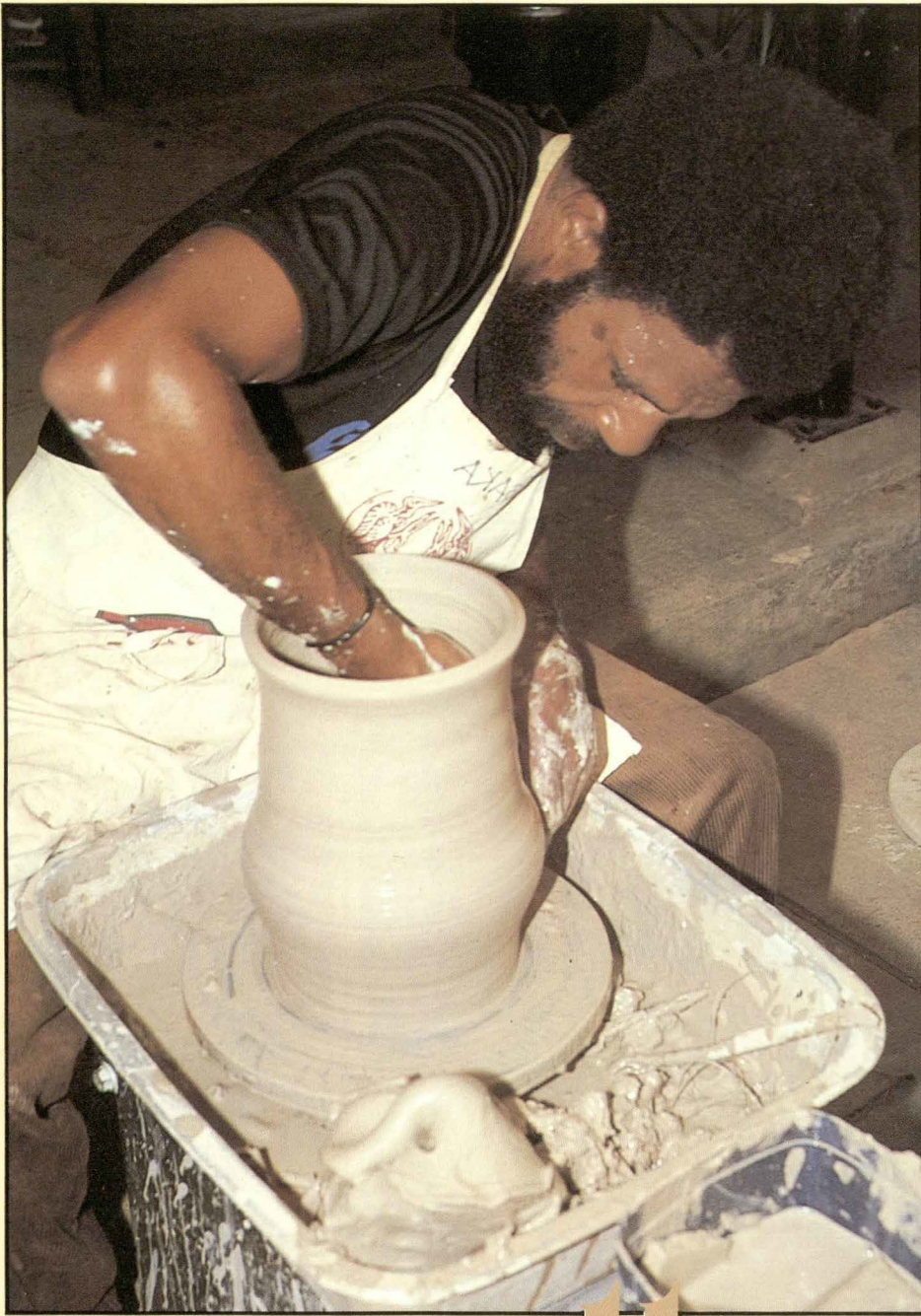
Andrew's success with the beer container design set him on a commercial art career. He has since designed other logos including one for general nurses.



Until recently he operated his commercial art enterprise from Wewak, several hours from Murik Lakes, by ocean-going canoe. He commutes between his home village and Wewak but has started to build a studio at Murik Lakes.

Among other things, he plans to transfer his designs to T-shirts and sell them to the growing number of tourists visiting the Sepik. Judging by the reaction of several American women aboard the cruise boat Andrew Warepa should do some brisk business in shirts bearing his designs. One fashionable New Yorker remarked that normally she would not be seen dead in clothing proclaiming the merits of a particular brand of beer.

"But this one is different. It has real style," she said.



new potters

FIRE UP

Story and photographs by Arthur Weal

Pottery in Papua New Guinea is enjoying a renaissance. Local potters are combining modern techniques with traditional designs to produce bold pieces of functional art.

PNG's earliest pottery remains have been dated at 3,500 years old. It has a south-east Asian influence, but with a distinctive PNG flavor. There is almost no traditional pottery in the Highlands, New Ireland or New Britain. Instead it is

Below Potters' art (from left): urn by Abaka John; vase by Tinoi Morea; jug by Ian Tuntigi.
left Abaka John at his wheel.



found on the mainland coast, Sepik River and inland from Madang.

Traditional pottery techniques reflect these geographic boundaries. The coiling method is only found inland. This technique involves rolling the clay into long thin ropes then spiralling them into the desired shape. On the coast and smaller islands, the paddle and anvil technique is used: hitting the outside of the pot with a wooden beater and working the inside with a

smooth river stone.

Pots were traditionally used mainly for cooking. Other pots included water and sago storage jars and ceremonial serving bowls or objects. At Aibom on the Sepik, which enjoys a rich pottery tradition, huge fire-clay hearths were produced into which a fire was made for cooking.

Modern potters have moved away from traditional methods, using the pottery wheel which gives more

speed and flexibility.

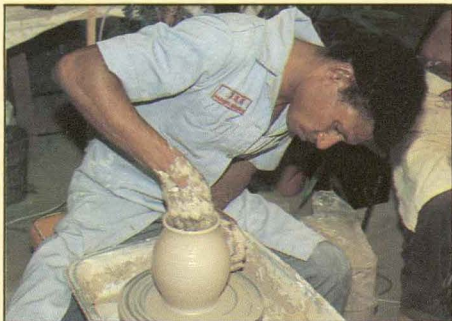
There is no tradition of wheels. These were introduced within the last 20 years. Overseas teachers such as Jorgen Petersen, a Danish potter working for the International Labor Organisation, set up cottage industries. Petersen introduced wheels in Madang around 1967 and in Port Moresby in 1968-69. Muriel Larner, well known in PNG for her craft workshops, brought the pottery wheel to the Highlands. Another

influence was the European expatriate women who in the last 20 years have set up small schools for themselves and locals.

Teachers also brought glazes to PNG. The use of glazes has introduced an element of design not previously available.

Traditionally, firing was in open fires (bonfire firing) not kilns. Temperatures would reach 900C to 1000C. After firing, the pot was coated in various vegetable solutions such as sago, to temporarily seal it. Normal cooking techniques finished the sealing process. Color was added after firing using earth pigments. Today, gas and electric kilns allow temperatures of 1200C, giving greater strength and durability. Glazes are applied before firing, producing different effects and colors. The modern techniques also help to make the pots waterproof.

Today's potters draw on traditional influences. Their bold designs are eagerly sought by collectors.



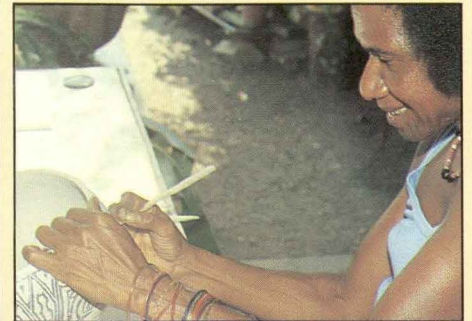
Tinoi Morea and Frank Eafeare started potting at Small Industries, now called Hanuacraft in Hohola, Port Moresby. One of the main influences on their work was potter Trevor Almond from Australia. Tinoi now has his own workshop at home and does some firings at Waigani Arts Centre. Frank continues to work as a potter at Hanuacraft.

Potters Abaka John, Jakob Jekevu and Tayas Mavin have grown with the Eastern Highlands Cultural Centre at Kainantu. Striking sgraffito decoration make their work prominent. Several potters such as Ian Tuntigi have been sponsored by the PNG Potters Society. Eke Yarwa was taught by Tinoi, then worked at the Potters Society before becoming resident potter at the YWCA in Lae.

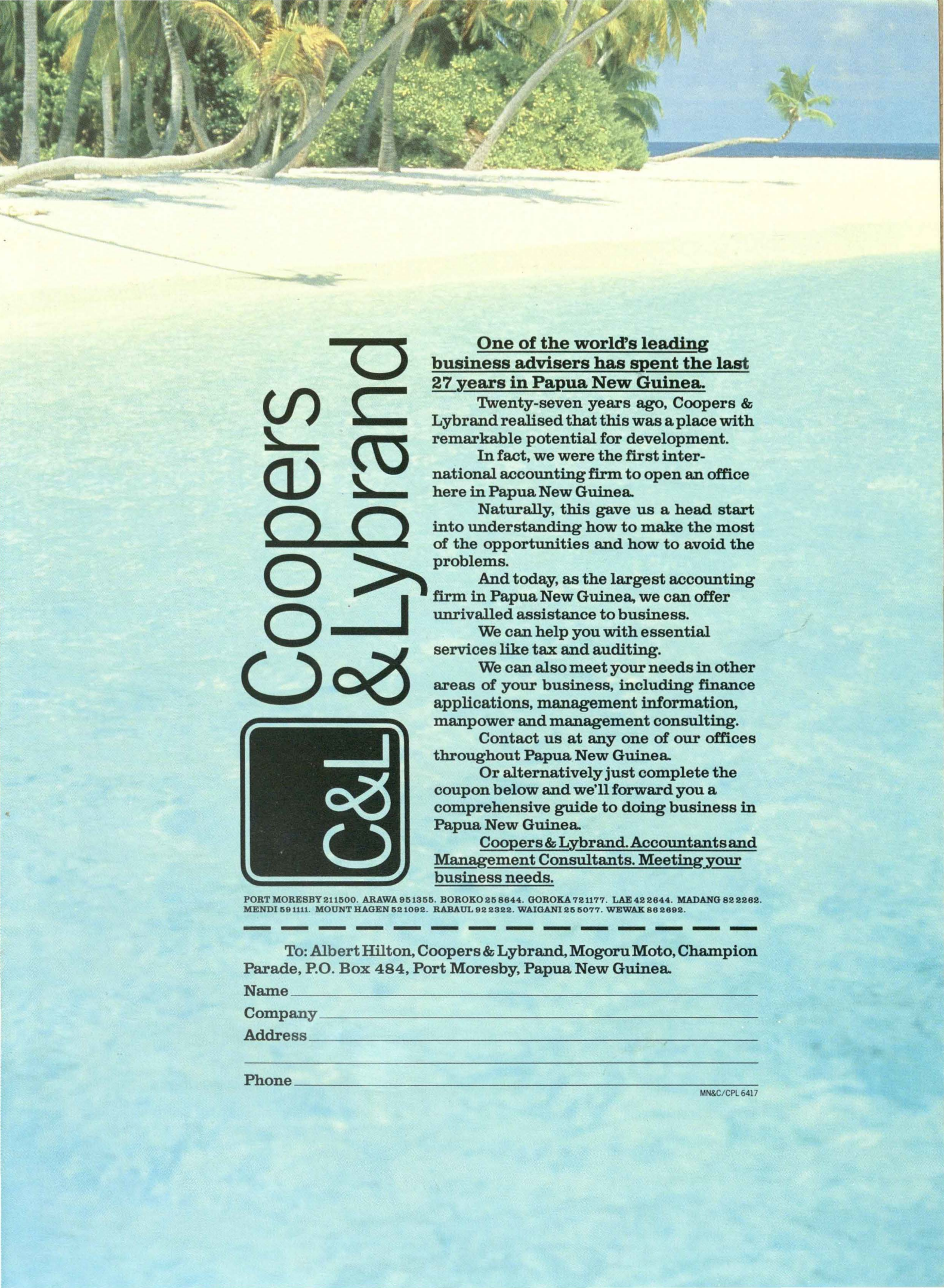
Mary Gole was born at Kevana Village which was destroyed when Mt Lamington erupted in 1951. It was not till 1976 when living in Australia that she started potting. She was asked by some potters in Sydney to demonstrate traditional PNG pottery and, from memory of her mother's work, started her pottery career. She works at home, doing bisque firings at Waigani Arts Centre and using sawdust firings for decoration.

PNG potters have a rich tradition from which to draw. "The Traditional Pottery of PNG" by Patricia May and Margaret Tuckson vividly documents the design, production, function and distribution of PNG pots. The book, which has become the authoritative text on PNG potters, is based on eight years of field work. It gives a first-hand account of clay preparation, pottery formation and firing techniques, interwoven with information on the functions of pottery and approaches to decoration. Their book also identifies particular types of pottery, by analysing clays and language divisions.


Patricia May is a lecturer in the history of art at the Australian National University, Canberra and Margaret Tuckson is a well-known potter and teacher of pottery. "Traditional Pottery of Papua New Guinea" is published by Bay Books, 61-69 Anzac Parade, Kensington, NSW 2033, for a recommended retail price of \$99.50.



Centre Casserole by Abaka John.
left inset Tinoi Morea. **right inset**
Mary Gole working a sgraffito
design.



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CROCODDILE FARM

Top Twine safely binds crocodile jaws. **below** Fresh carcasses await the skimmers' knives.

Story and photographs
by Peter Van Fleet



Angoram is the main town on the Sepik River as well as the major centre for food and administration for local villagers. In the dry season, Angoram is an oasis for the traveller, its small hotel and stores a welcome sight at the end of a long dusty trip.

There are two main attractions of interest for the tourist – the haus tambaran and the small crocodile farm down the road, where crocodile skins are produced for overseas trade.

After a short but bumpy trip along the side of the river, we

stopped at a collection of houses, storerooms, thatched sheds and timber-walled enclosures, surrounded by neatly cropped lawns. I walked down to a wood and wire palisade which was shaded by tall trees and palms.

Soft barking sounds floated over the fence in front of me. It sounded like dozens of young puppies calling their mothers. The sight as I peered over the fence was as different as one could imagine. Hundreds of crocodiles, big and small, lay basking in the sun on the banks of a large muddy pond. Hundreds more floated in the



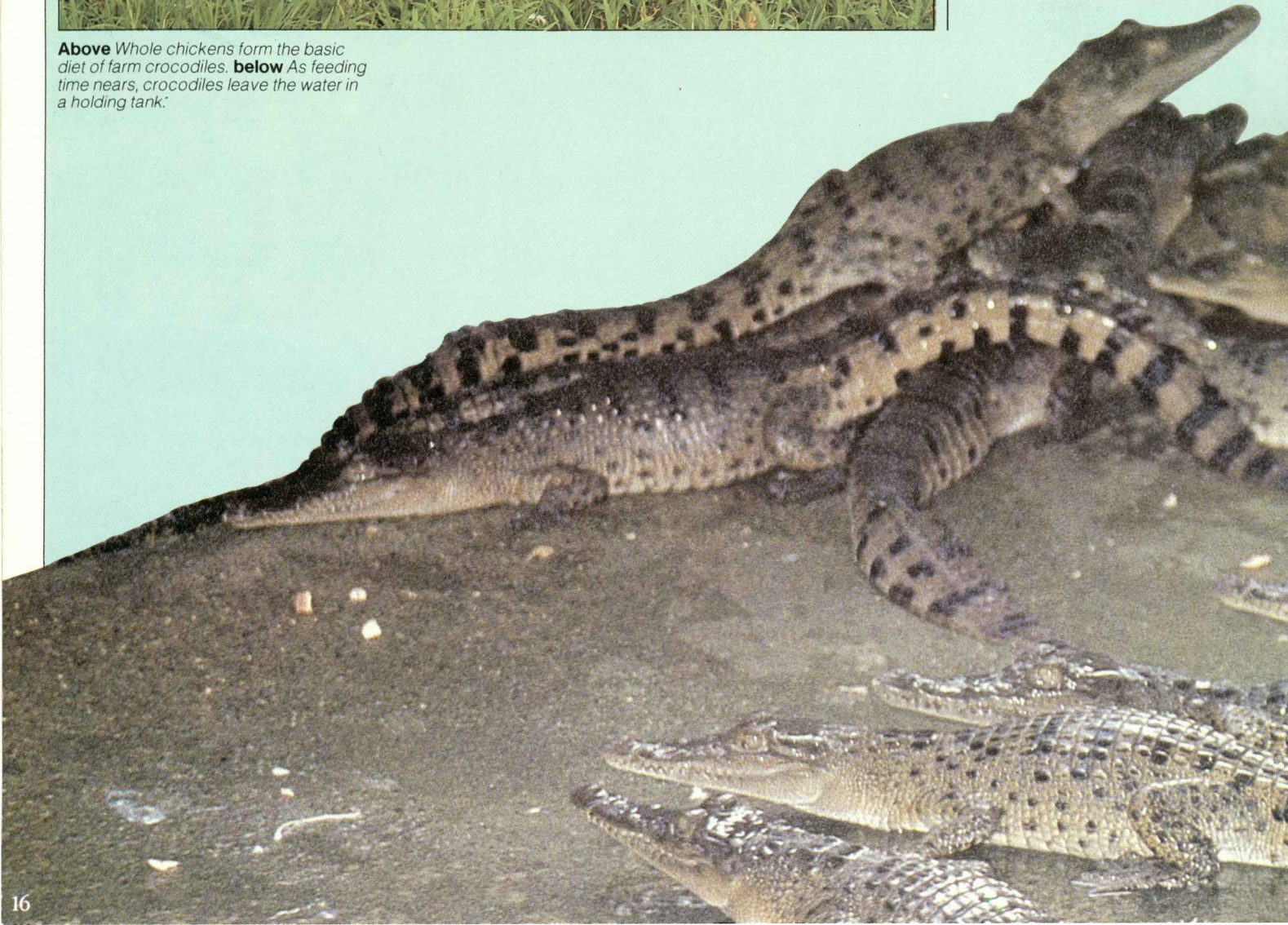
Above Whole chickens form the basic diet of farm crocodiles. **below** As feeding time nears, crocodiles leave the water in a holding tank.

water with only their eyes and nostrils visible.

As they were less than a metre long, I guessed this was the crocodile nursery area so I walked on to the next fence where a group of excited Sepik men were gathered with ropes and copra sacks in hand.

As I came closer to the fence, the snapping and growling sounds grew louder. The antics of the men on the fence grew more excited. I climbed the platform and saw that one man was holding a rope on which revolved a 1.8 metre crocodile. When a crocodile bites its prey, it spins around in what is called the death roll.

With a rope firmly around its neck, the crocodile was fighting for its life. Eventually, the spinning stopped and the crocodile lay quietly, emitting soft barking sounds. The other crocodiles in the pen barked back in sympathy. Some



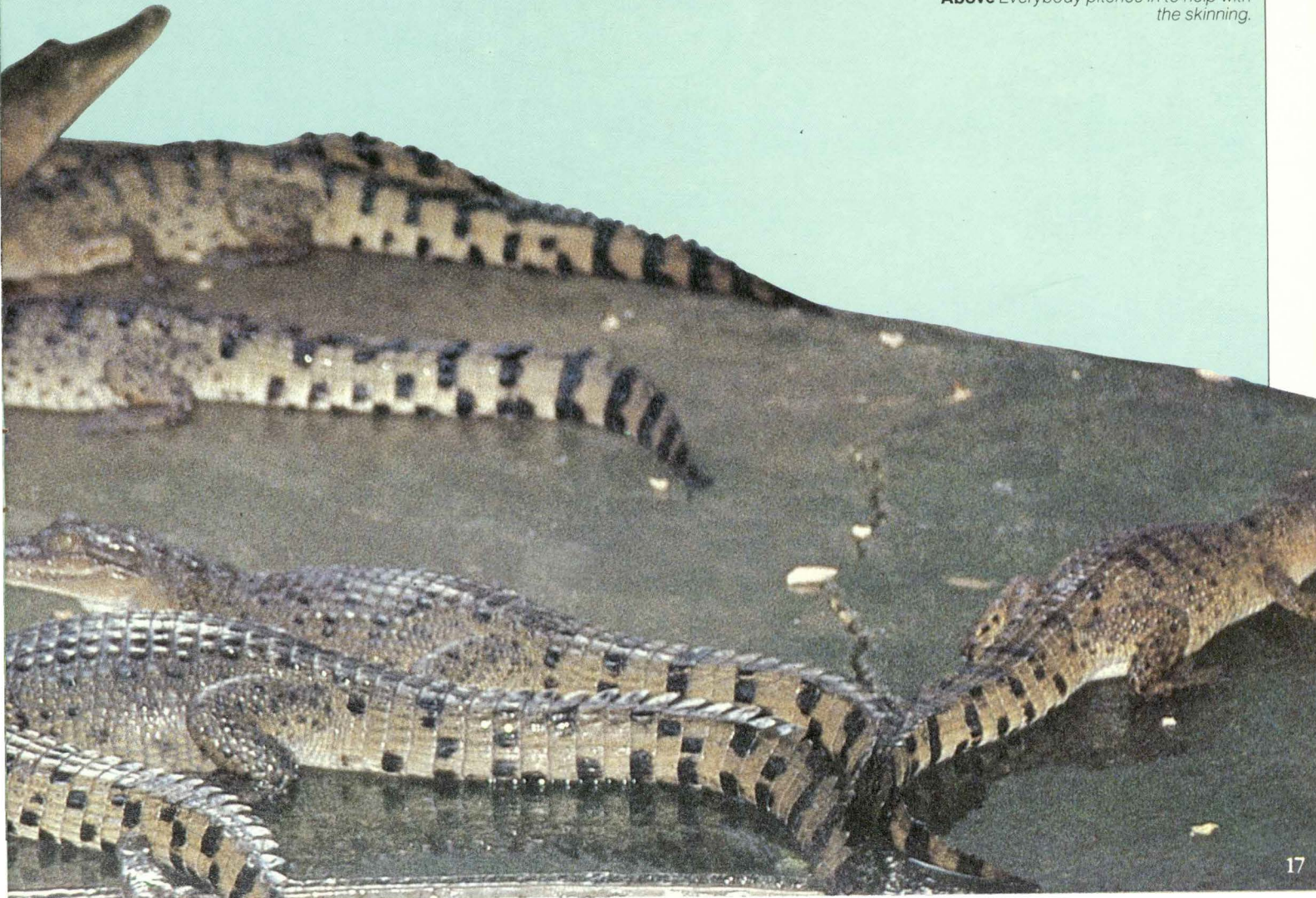
watched, but most merely basked in the hot Sepik sunlight.

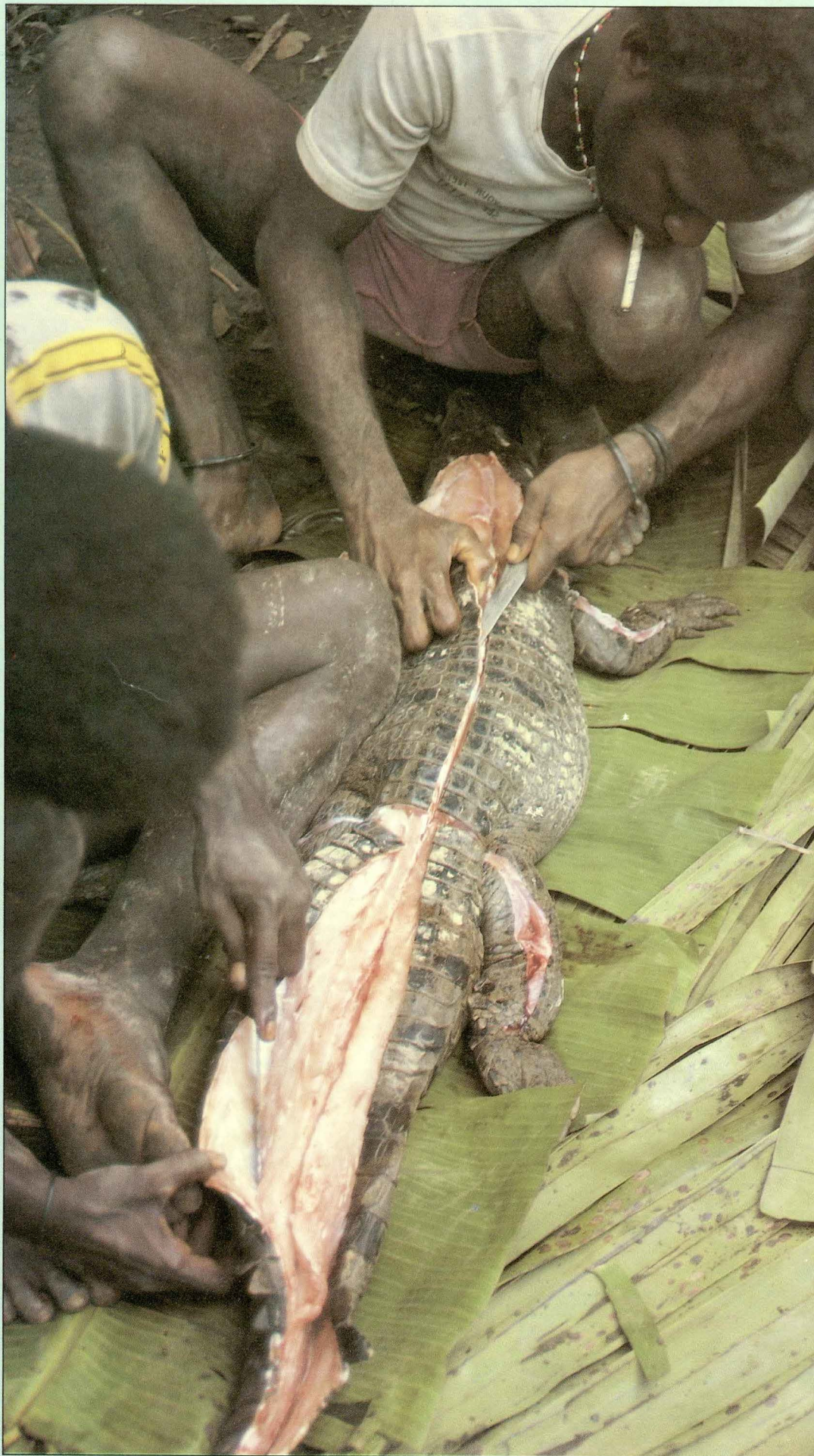
One of the men jumped down into the pen and approached the stunned crocodile. With a deft flick, he cast a copra bag over the crocodile's eyes and immediately it lay still and quiet. Slowly the man walked up closer with a length of twine in his hands. Even this size of crocodile can pack a nasty punch with its tail, its claws are long and sharp and teeth are like needles. In a flash the man jumped forward, clapping the crocodile's jaws shut and binding them with twine. The now squirming crocodile was hoisted over the fence where waiting hands grabbed it.

Quickly and cleanly, the crocodile was killed then washed down with a hose. Almost two metres of gleaming green and black beauty lay spread on the grass. Someone



Above Everybody pitches in to help with the skinning.



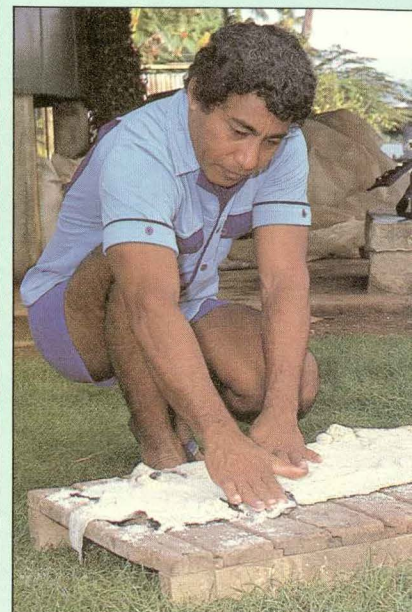


with a tape measure recorded various measurements then the crocodile was carried to the skinning tables where sharp knives and sharp eyes awaited it.

I moved to watch the skinning teams, where the valuable skin would be removed by two skinners at a time. Smoky fires produced a shroud of smoke, keeping flies and mosquitoes at bay.

The crocodile was laid belly down on a carpet of brilliant green leaves and a long slice was made down the middle of its scaly back, head to tail. As the skin was split open, the startlingly white flesh of the crocodile was revealed. Cuts down the backs of the legs and around the neck were gradually expanded by careful nicks and slices until eventually the skin was pulled from the carcass like a glove from a hand. On one side lay green mottled skin and on the other the pearly pink body of the crocodile.

As the stack of freshly killed crocodiles grew larger, the frantic energy of the skinners grew until knives were flying over the carcasses. Such is the skill of the skinners that no false cuts were made and no skin was holed or marked. As soon as the skins were removed, they were washed and salted and stacked into wooden crates. The salt preserves the skin so that later



tanning will produce superb leather products. The cleaned bodies were washed, wrapped in plastic bags and placed in large freezers, for sales to restaurants in the city.

Even the crocodile heads were used. The teeth and jaw bones made attractive souvenirs.

The Angoram crocodile farm is run by Ludwig Schultz and a local group of villagers, with large numbers of men and women employed at the killings. After the day's quota was skinned and processed, Ludwig showed me a beautiful crocodile-skin briefcase from Singapore, made from Angoram skins. The skin was brown and gold and glowed in the sunlight. It had retained the beauty of the living crocodile.

Visitors can inspect the crocodile farm in Angoram at any time although killing and skinning occurs only once or twice each year.

Left Skilled hands separate body and hide. **centre** Salting the skins preserves them for export. **right** A whole carcass will become menu items in a city restaurant.



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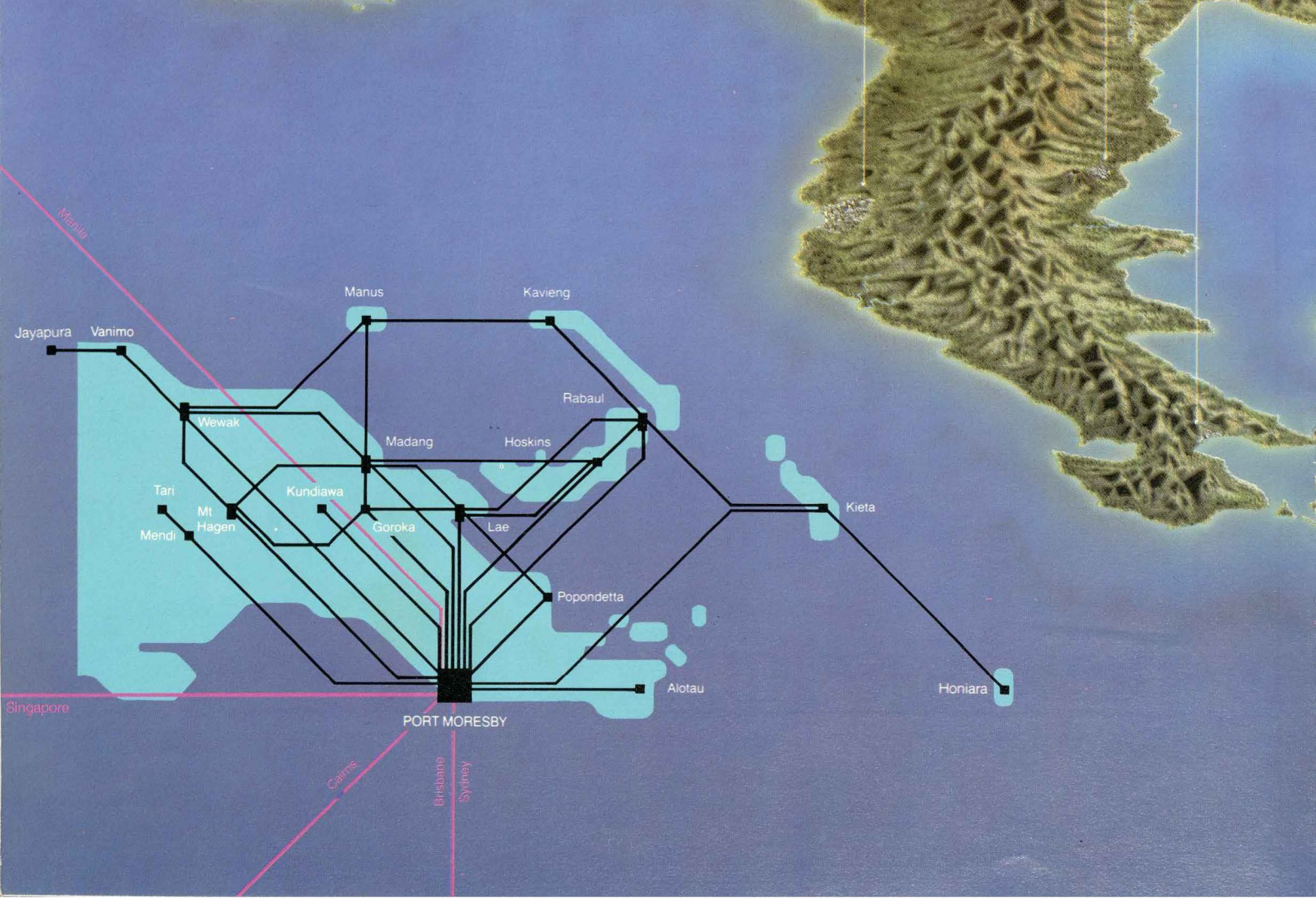
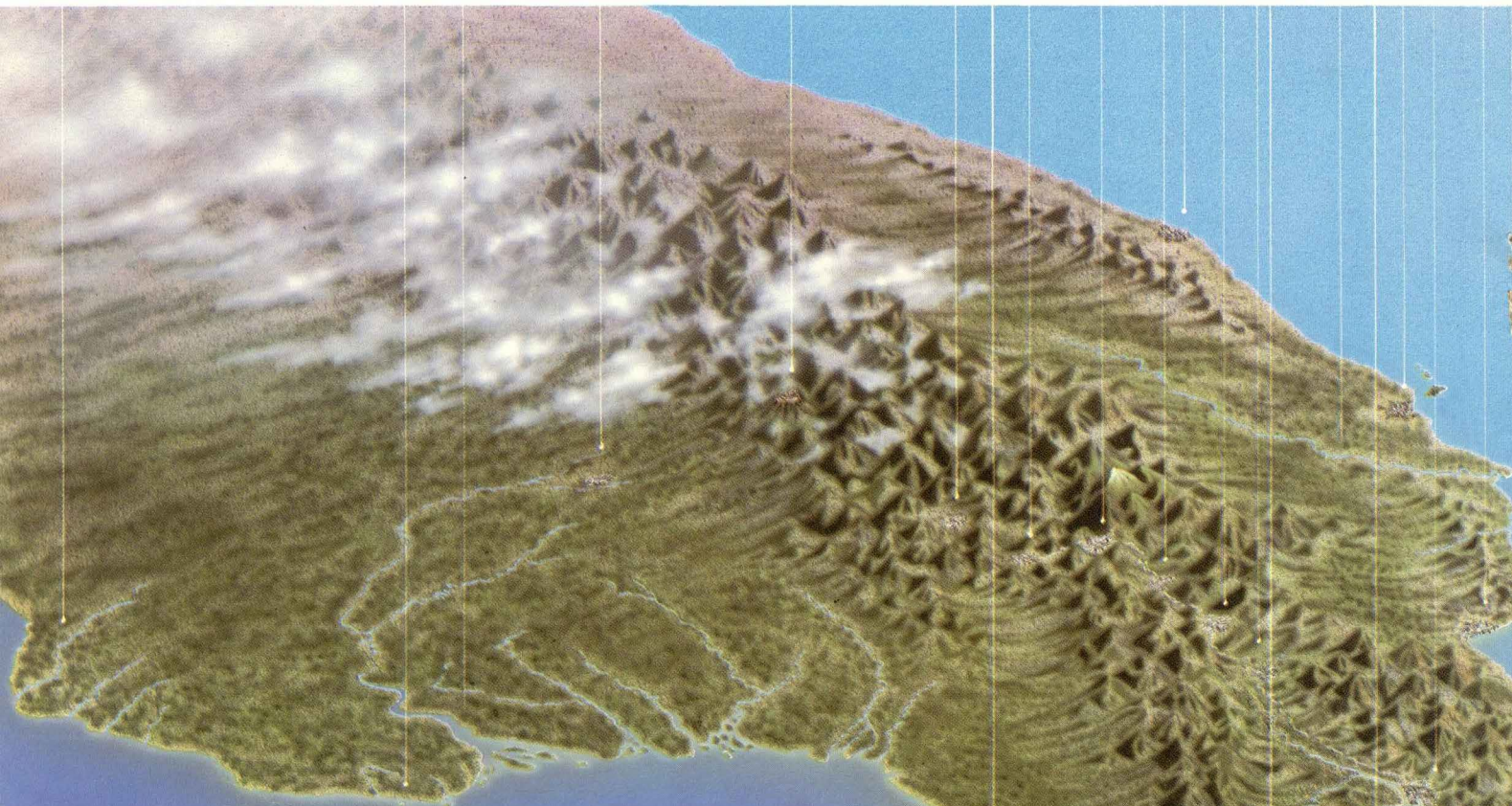
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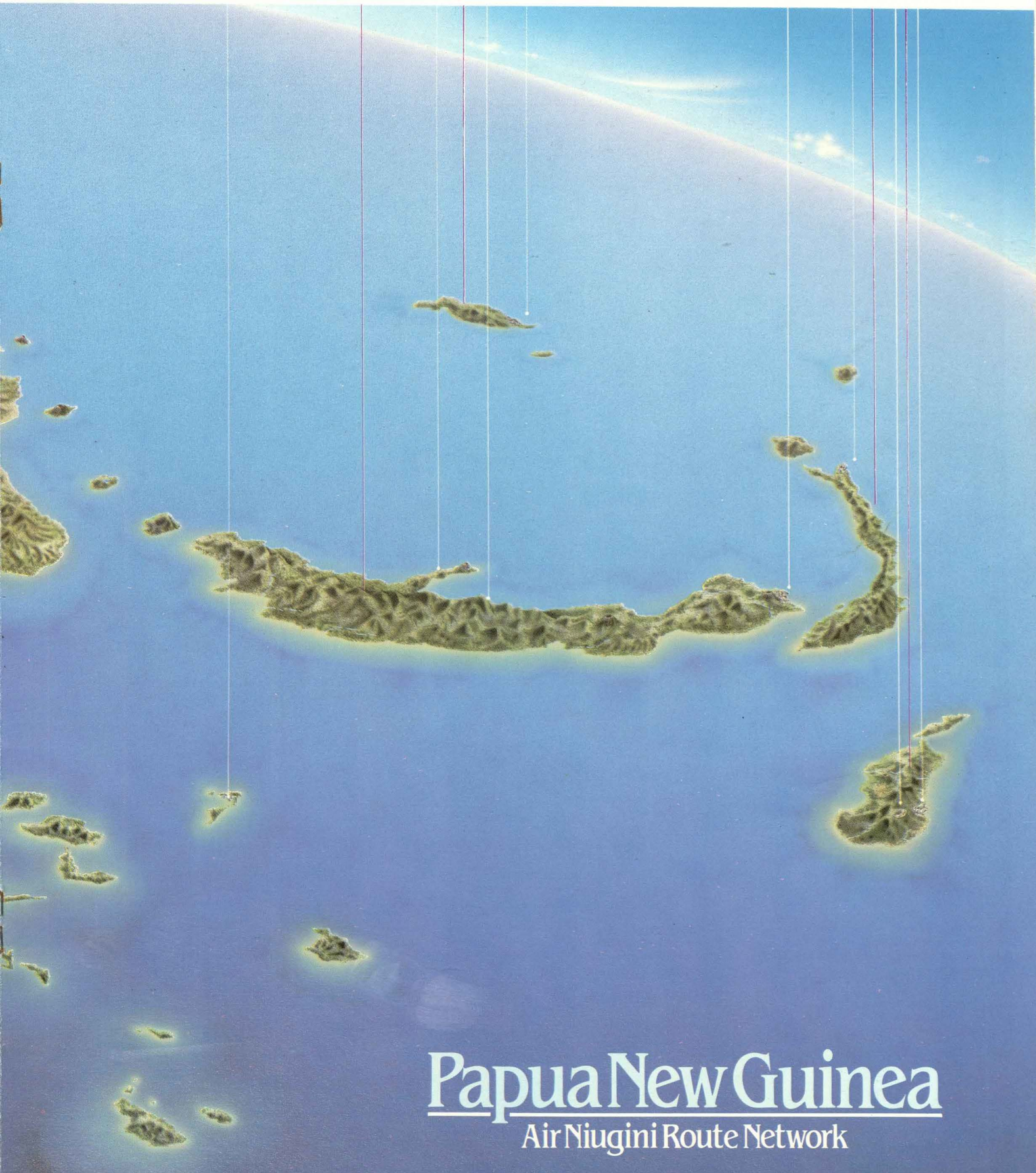
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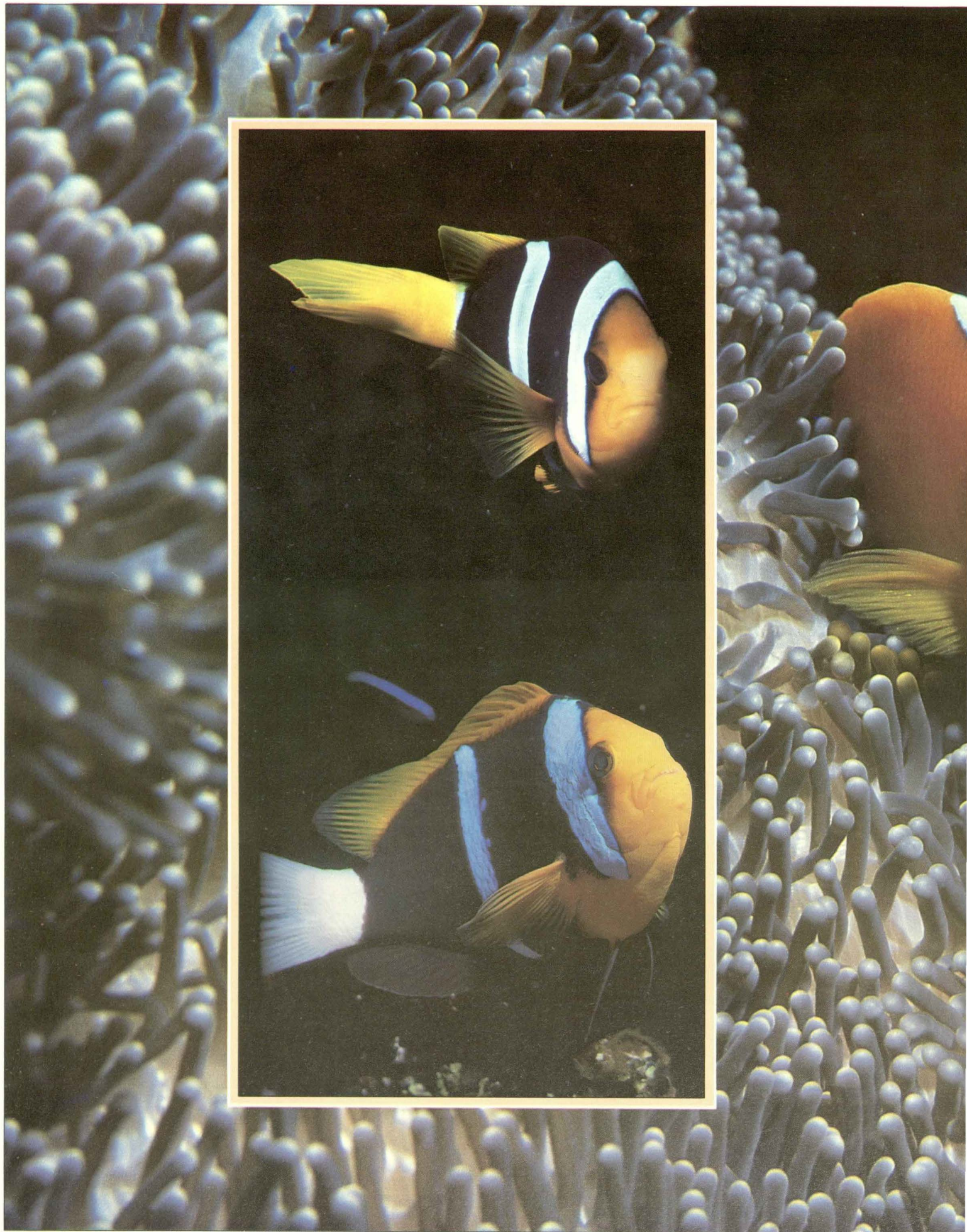
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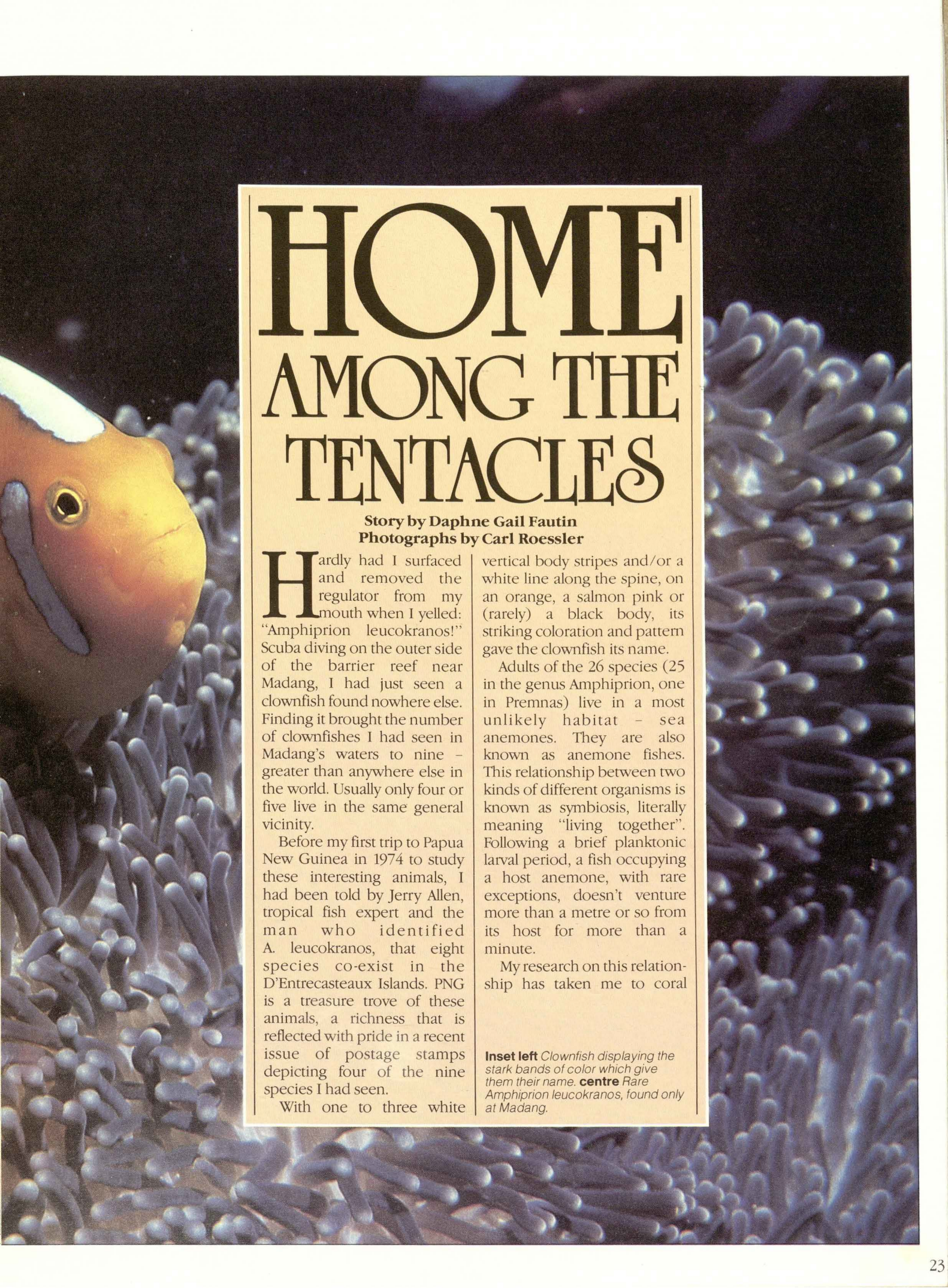
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Kieta



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HOME AMONG THE TENTACLES

Story by Daphne Gail Fautin
Photographs by Carl Roessler

Hardly had I surfaced and removed the regulator from my mouth when I yelled: "Amphiprion leucokranos!" Scuba diving on the outer side of the barrier reef near Madang, I had just seen a clownfish found nowhere else. Finding it brought the number of clownfishes I had seen in Madang's waters to nine - greater than anywhere else in the world. Usually only four or five live in the same general vicinity.

Before my first trip to Papua New Guinea in 1974 to study these interesting animals, I had been told by Jerry Allen, tropical fish expert and the man who identified *A. leucokranos*, that eight species co-exist in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands. PNG is a treasure trove of these animals, a richness that is reflected with pride in a recent issue of postage stamps depicting four of the nine species I had seen.

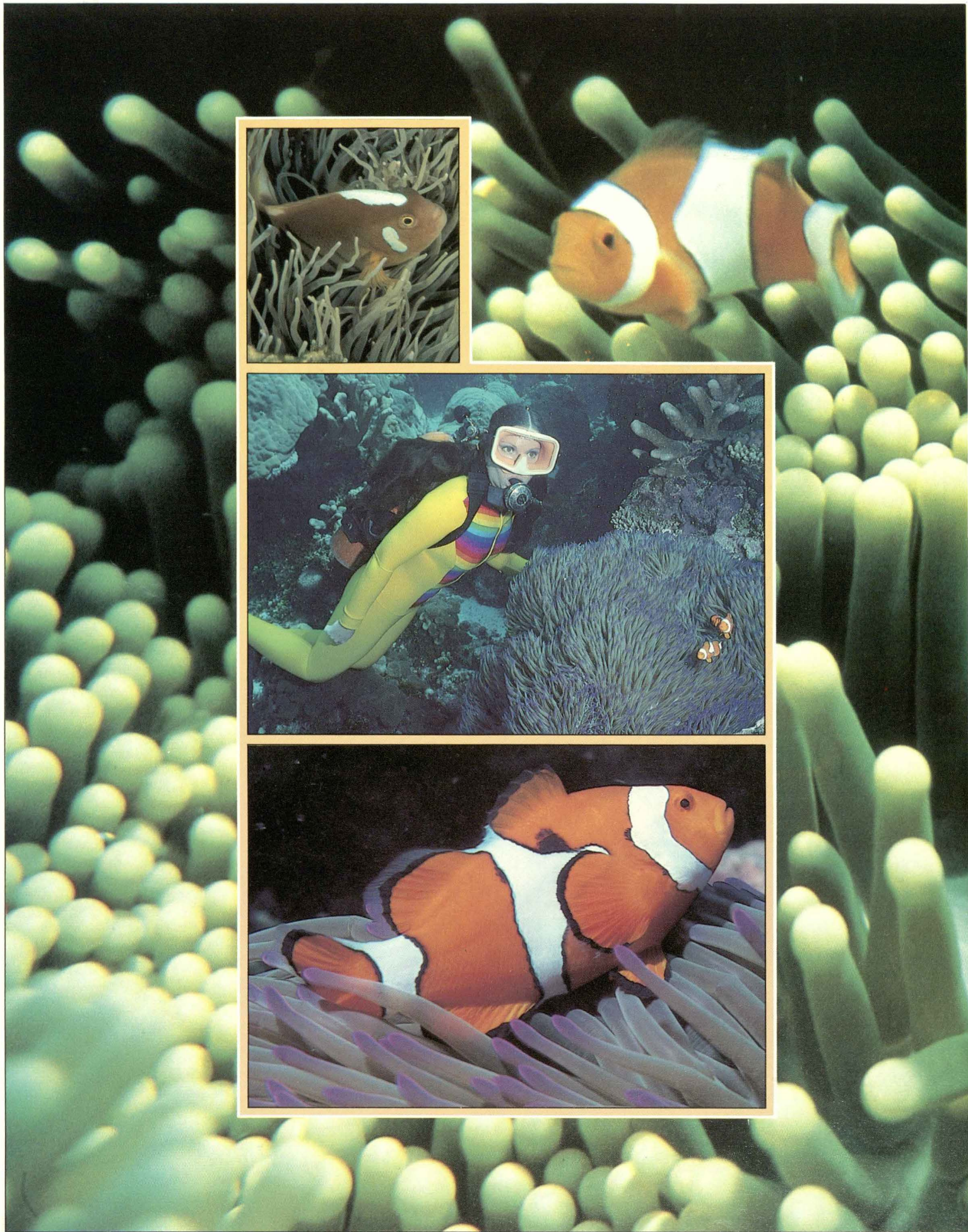
With one to three white


vertical body stripes and/or a white line along the spine, on an orange, a salmon pink or (rarely) a black body, its striking coloration and pattern gave the clownfish its name.

Adults of the 26 species (25 in the genus *Amphiprion*, one in *Premnas*) live in a most unlikely habitat - sea anemones. They are also known as anemone fishes. This relationship between two kinds of different organisms is known as symbiosis, literally meaning "living together". Following a brief planktonic larval period, a fish occupying a host anemone, with rare exceptions, doesn't venture more than a metre or so from its host for more than a minute.

My research on this relationship has taken me to coral

Inset left Clownfish displaying the stark bands of color which give them their name. **centre** Rare *Amphiprion leucokranos*, found only at Madang.





reefs and submarine sand flats of Indonesia, Japan, Guam, Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand, as well PNG, during the past 15 years.

It is not just any sea anemone in which they can set up housekeeping. Clownfishes are restricted to ten species of hosts. Among these are the largest sea anemones in the world – with a diameter than can exceed a metre – and the most colorful – with columns of magenta, avocado green, pink, white, and (my favorite), coerulean blue. These sea anemones occur only in shallow, tropical waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Their realm is warm, attractive, and within easy skin – and scuba-diving depths. And like their partner fishes, these anemones are more diverse in the waters of PNG, where I have found all ten species.

Sea anemones are members of Phylum cnidaria which also contains corals and jellyfishes. Only cnidarians produce microscopic stinging capsules known as nematocysts or cnidae. The firing of these harpoon-like devices, which may contain toxin, enables cnidarians to protect themselves and to capture their animal prey.

Their ability to hide in a sea anemone gives the weak-swimming and otherwise defenceless clownfishes an essential protection. The moment it is threatened, a clownfish will take refuge among the tentacles of its host. Clownfishes sleep at night nestled into the tentacles, and a female lays her eggs beside the column of the host, where they are guarded and fanned

by the male.

The presence of an anemone is vital to the existence and reproduction of the small fishes. Most sea anemone “full” of clownfish – from two to eight fish, usually of only one species, in a single host. Limited availability of anemones controls the size of the fish population.

How do clownfishes tolerate their association with an organism that proves deadly to other animals? The complete answer still eludes science.

Sea anemones harboring clownfishes have just as many nematocysts as other anemones, and are capable of capturing other prey, even in the presence of clownfish. This eliminates the possibility that the anemone fish prevents the firing of anemone’s cnidae. Moreover, the fish’s skin is of normal thickness and does not seem particularly impenetrable to nematocysts.

In aquaria both fishes and sea anemones survive when separated. After a few days or weeks, when the partners are reunited, the fish will be stung if it swims into the host’s tentacles. Thus the protection for the fish is acquired and can disappear. A fish that had been living alone will be stung by an anemone in which another clownfish is being harbored – the fish rather than the sea anemone is responsible for the protection.

But a stung anemone fish returns to its host repeatedly, going through an elaborate, stereotyped swimming dance, gingerly touching tentacles first to its ventral fins only, then to its entire belly. After several minutes to several hours of such acclimation behavior, it is

able to dive right in.

As some anemone fishes nibble at their host’s tentacles, it had been speculated this might immunise them against the sting. Experiments have proven the protective agent resides in the mucus-coating that anemone fishes, like all fishes, have on their surface. One theory is that during its elaborate acclimation swimming at initial contact with its host, the fish smears mucus from the anemone over itself. As the sea anemone does not sting itself, it does not sting a fish covered in its mucus.

The latest theory provides evidence that both fish and anemone are active in forming the symbiosis. Average acclimation time following prolonged separation of the fish *Amphiprion clarkii* from its anemone *Macrodactyla doreensis* is two and a half hours. A fish that had been kept in an aquarium with a surrogate sea anemone (made of rubber bands glued to a petri dish) requires an average of only 20 minutes to acclimate to a real anemone. It appears that the fish produces an especially protective mucus when living in what it perceives to be a sea anemone, but that alone does not suffice. Presumably, the anemone alters what is there, or adds to it.

Advantages of the symbiosis to the anemone are not

Insets from top *Discovery of this A. leucrokranos clownfish brought PNG's known species to nine.*
centre *Clownfish pair hold their ground against Jessica Roessler's inspection.*
below *Amphiprion baronessa.*



obvious – but neither do the fishes seem to harm their hosts. This one-sided relationship is supported by the existence of empty anemones.

At Lizard Island on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, I removed clownfishes from their hosts to see how long it would take for new fish to repopulate them. I returned the following day to find no sea anemones at all! Instead, many butterfly fish were poking their long snouts into the cracks and crevices in which the anemones had been anchored. I repeated this experiment in PNG, where I kept a closer watch. For this species of anemone (*Entacmaea quadricolor*), once the clownfish are no longer there to protect their hosts,

butterfly fishes move in to dine on them.

The partners influence one another in a variety of ways. Particular combinations show unique interactions. Some kinds of anemones harbor only juveniles of certain fish species. Somehow, these anemones prevent sexual maturation of the fish, the mechanism of which is totally unknown.

A fish can also affect its anemone. In the sea I had noticed a correlation between bulbous tentacles and presence of anemone fish. I placed some anemones with straight tentacles in an aquarium with anemone fish; a short time after, their tentacles developed bulbs. The reverse occurs

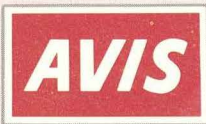
when a fish is removed, although more slowly.

As in all of science, each question answered results in more queries. For all my research on clownfishes and anemones, I shall probably leave behind more puzzles than I solve.

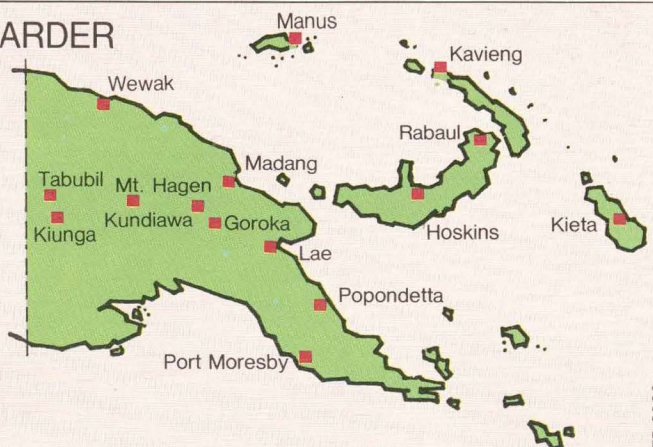
Top Scarlet skin identifies *Premnas biaculeatus* the only member of the *Premnas* genus of clownfish.



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More than four decades have passed, but one school in New Britain is reaping the rewards of parents' and grandparents' bravery which saved Allied aircrew during World War II. The late Air Vice-Marshall William "Bill" Townsend set up the Ewasse Memorial Airmen's School to thank the islanders he met when evading capture by Japanese troops.

Then Wing-Commander, Townsend headed Royal Australian Air Force Squadrons 67 and 22. On November 3, 1943, he led a low-level attack into Jacquinot Bay with 12 Boston Havocs and 15 planes of the Kitty Hawk squadron. Townsend and his wireless operator-air gunner, Flying Officer David McClymont ditched into the sea after being hit by ground fire.

Townsend later told the story:

"The enemy knew they had shot down the leader when they saw me go into the water. We got the dinghy ashore; cut it up then buried it after taking out five tins of water and some chocolate. We had kits which held milk tablets, the substance M & V (which meant meat and vegetable but more truthfully was sawdust), quinine tablets,

SCHOOL FOR HEROES

Story and photographs by Joan Holman



Above Fred Hargesheimer (left) and Bill Townsend outside the school in 1984.
below David McClymont (left) and Townsend in enemy territory 40 years earlier.

a bit of sulphalidimide powder for worms and things, a tourniquet of rubber tubing, a tin of 100 cigarettes and two revolvers.

"Using our tiny compass, we headed inland north-west. We wanted to stay away from the

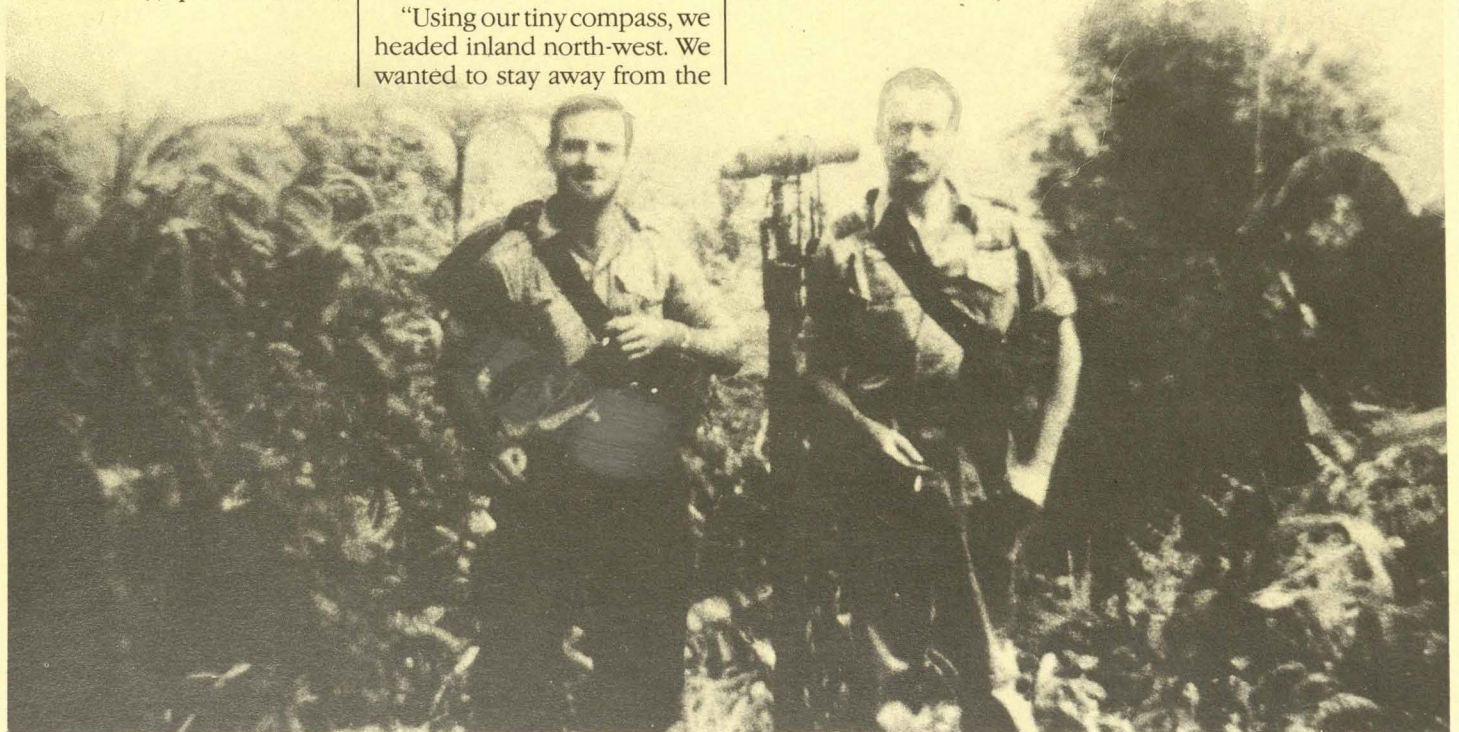
coastline as the whole island was Japanese occupied. There was also no way we could walk back to our troops - the nearest was our base, more

than 300 kilometres away across the water!

"The toughest time for Dave and I were the next two weeks in the jungle. We didn't have much to drink or eat. We rationed the chocolate because, by this time, we had ascended several hundred metres where a lot of things, like coconuts, don't grow. We had a little book called 'Friendly Fruits and Vegetables' but we couldn't find any friendly or even unfriendly food.

"We had a pretty rugged time. We had no shelter for we had to keep moving. There was no stage at which to build protection. We lay on the jungle floor to sleep, with the rain running down our collars and out our socks. We were exhausted. I think if it had been one of us alone, he wouldn't have made it. We needed each other for encouragement.

"Mountain climbing as well as being without food and water during that time allowed me to pull in my belt about 20 centimetres. We looked closely for cuts on trees. We had been told that locals, walking through the bush, wave a knife around to cut the



foliage and mark trees. Eventually a trail led us to a tiny village higher in the mountains. It was called Carnigi and has never been found since.

"There were about 30 people there in three huts. I don't think they had ever seen a white man and they couldn't speak Pidgin. We managed to communicate that we were hungry. They fed us those great big cooking bananas, which tasted like mouthfuls of hot flour but were worth eating. We spent the night there with huge fires because it was so cold. The thick smoke came down to eye level. Sitting there I had the sense of comfort, of being with other human beings.

"The headman had explained he wanted us to meet The Captain. Neither Dave nor I was too sure if this might be possibly a Japanese but we realised if we ran back into the jungle it would be to die.

"We followed the villagers, hanging back in case they were taking us to a Japanese camp, and finally arrived to a much larger place. There was an oriental sign over one



Above Hargesheimer at the school's 20th anniversary party in 1984. **below** Attack led by Townsend on enemy shipping, Lolobau Island.

house. Our guide motioned us to hide while he sought information. The Tutu of that place told us in Pidgin we were to proceed to the south coast to meet the Number 1. This Number 1 had sent messages to all villages (and there were lots of them) that if any Allied airmen were shot down, they were to be brought to him. We were then given guides to take us to Sali, near Jacquinot Bay where we'd been shot down. We therefore had trekked in a circle. We got to Manten village above Sali, where the Lului realised how weak we were and suggested we stay a few

days. He even got out a battered old safety razor and gave it to me saying, "Mastu, yu katim gras". So I shaved, with the whole village looking on in interest.

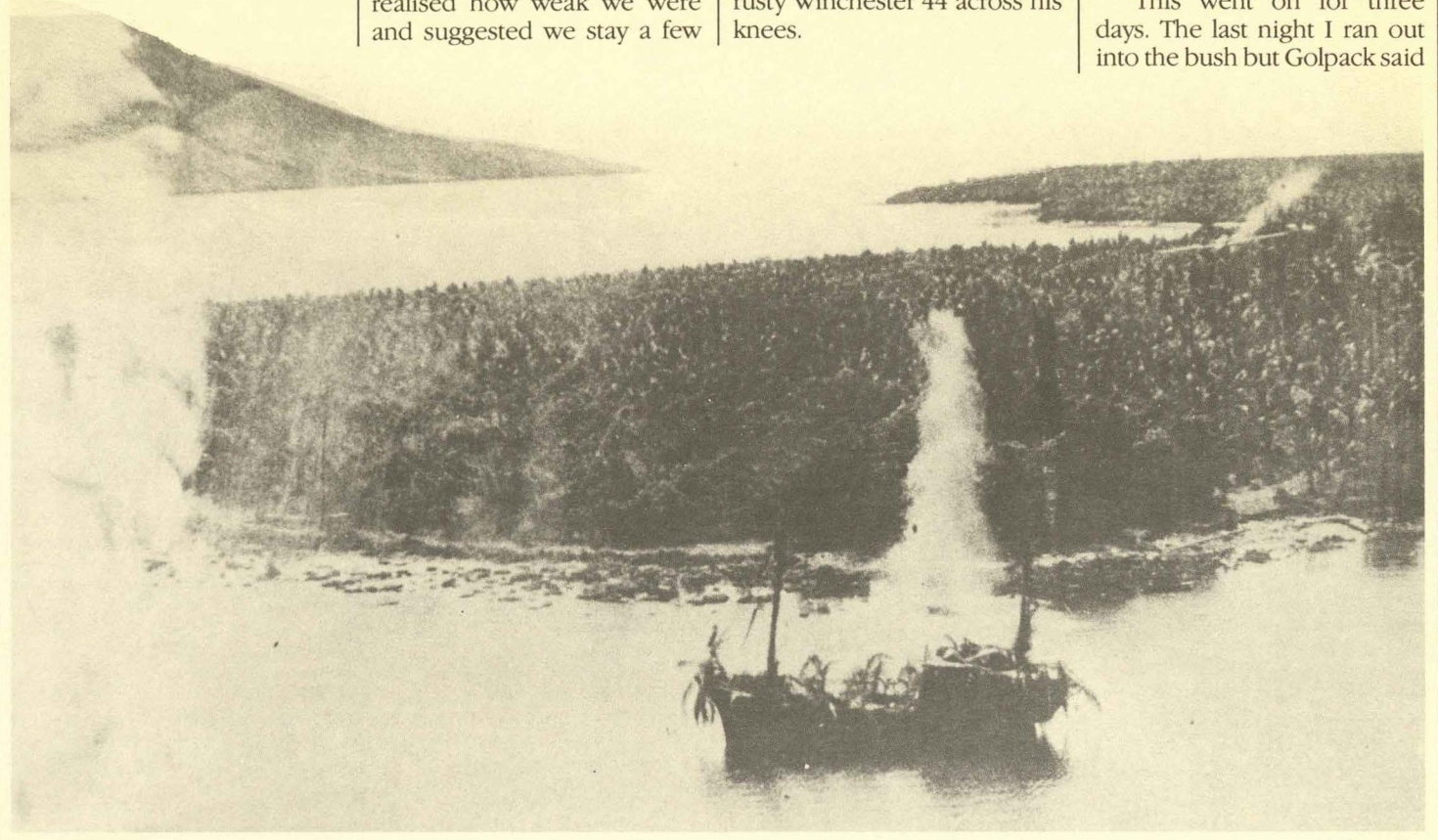
"After a few days the message came that Number 1 would be waiting for us at the mouth of the Pomio river. I first saw Number 1, Golpack, as he greeted us, "Mi fren bilong Australia tru". It was quite a welcome - and very reassuring. He was sitting in front of the canoe, wearing an Australian army hat with a rusty Winchester 44 across his knees.

"Golpack understood tactics. Walking from Pomio to his village of Sali, he had one man 300 metres in front and another an equal distance behind. This area was covered by the Japanese. He built us a hut in the 'garagara' behind the village and looked after us for some weeks.

"During this time the Japanese became suspicious. They knew we had escaped from the airplane and were hunting for us day and night. I kept telling Golpack to give us a guide and we would go over the mountains to find Coastwatcher "Masta Wallace" (Skinner) or to another Coastwatcher near Cape Orford, Peter Figgis.

"Golpack was not willing for us to leave. The Japanese had called a big meeting at Jacquinot Bay and all Lulus and Tutus were told to attend. Golpack made a mistake when he didn't go, for he was a chief leader. Troops came in at dawn to arrest all the meris and pikininis at Sali. The men were told to search for the flyers - if they didn't come back, all captives would be killed.

"This went on for three days. The last night I ran out into the bush but Golpack said



no, we would go along 'nabis'. He was right. We travelled close to the water, leaving no footprints. It was not pleasant and I subsequently got ulcers. There were about 20 of us but I could see David and I were causing trouble for the men kept deserting.

"Eventually Golpack was worried too. He wasn't happy to be so far from Sali so we hid in a cave for nine days with Golpack and his small daughter. He would sing out each night to the village to bring food and his tabac. He loved his tabac, a green leaf which he would fry over the fire and roll in a page from a New Testament. He thought this was the best smoking paper.

"During that time, I got to know him. He used to talk at night, never lying down. He had 430 Pounds in the Rabaul bank and wanted reassurance it would come back. He also told stories of when the Germans had been in New Britain. He was young in 1914 but remembered a lot. He died in 1962 during one of my visits to New Britain.

"The final time with Golpack in 1943 was spent on top of a large mountain. He agreed we should leave and felt we had been given away. The Japanese came in shooting at dawn.

"We slid in to a stream and concealed ourselves to our



Above Hargesheimer and Townsend greet old friends and new at Ewasse. **below** Townsend's Squadron 22 Boston Havocs on patrol over New Britain.

noses in the water. We lost David in the run but Golpack was more concerned with the cigarettes he didn't have. Towards dusk, I heard a noise and asked, "Japan?" Golpack listened then said "Emi no Japan, emi pukpuk (crocodile)". That's when the danger gets relative! We left the water after dark, to dry off, when Golpack suddenly said, "Arapela masta emi stap. Yu tok em". In a stage whisper I said, "David". About six metres to the right, there he was.

"We started to cross the island with a guide arranged by Golpack. By this time, we had figured how to get water. Using heavy bamboo, which

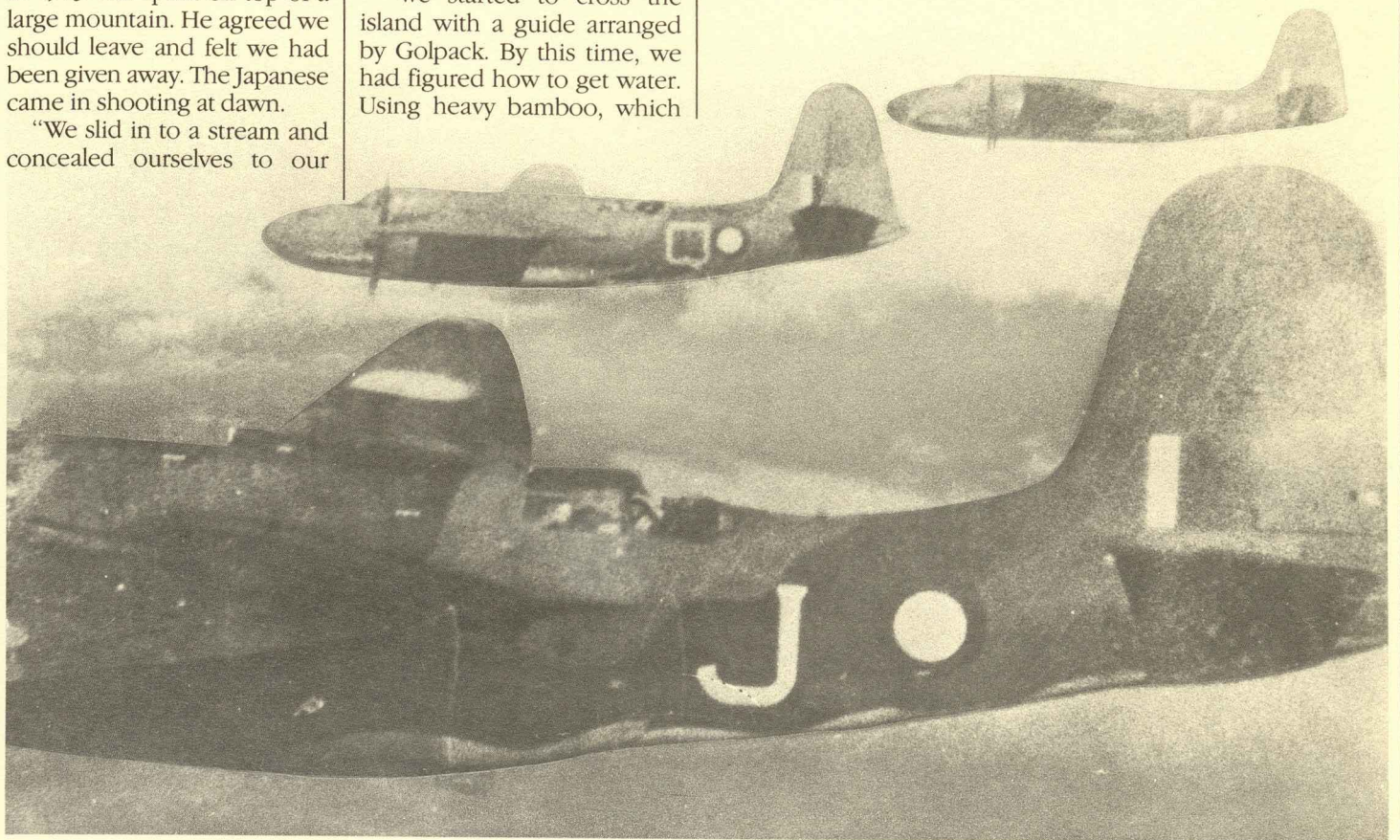
filled up during storms and acted as a carrier afterwards, we were never thirsty.

About three days later we were in a hut in a village near the top of the island. We heard someone approaching. Looking from a small hole in the back of the house, we saw the visitor's legs were clad in Australian gaiters. It was Skinner. He had been told we were having a hard time coming from the south coast. We went back to his camp, up in the mountains behind

Ulawun, about three days' walk.

"Our ordeal had lasted from November 3 to December 18. I had kept track of time with my air force Longines watch, which had lost only 15 minutes. Dave had marked the days on a square of stainless steel which we had to catch the sun and attract planes for rescue or for use as a mirror. It worked best as a calendar. Things were more exciting with the Coastwatcher. The Japanese wanted to capture this enemy far more than a couple of downed flyers doing nothing.

"This is where I met Fred Hargesheimer, a downed American flyer. He was brought in suffering from extreme dysentery and he had lost so much weight, we didn't think he would live. A message was sent to Milne Bay Headquarters to send medicine. A drop was made, with directions to take 16 sulphur tablets daily, four every four hours. I thought this amount would kill him so I queried it. I

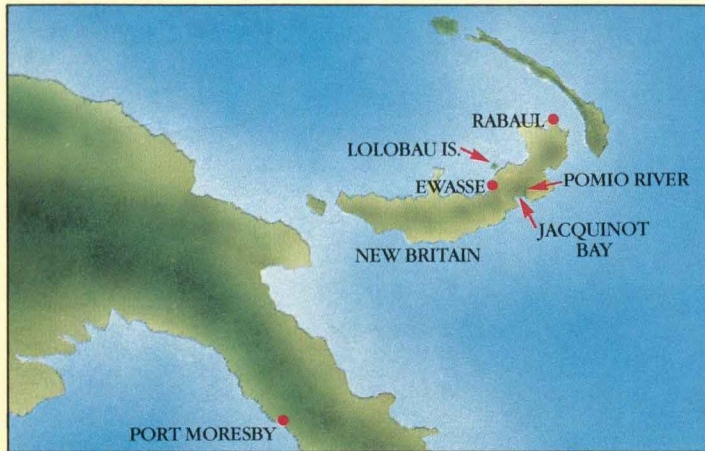


was told to listen to the radio at such and such a time and heard an Australian doctor talking about dysentery. He was saying . . . "16 tablets - and I repeat 16 tablets . . ."

"The Allied landing on Cape Gloucester took place on Boxing Day, 1944. Japanese bombers brought up about 60 dive bombers at Rabaul plus 40 Zeros. They flew past us on the beach, so I counted and identified them, giving the Allies an hour-and-a-half warning. Eighty per cent losses were claimed but actually it was 90 per cent. Only three made it back, with two crash landing at Rabaul. That was the last big air raid from the island; the enemy just didn't have the planes.

"Concern now centred on getting us out. Cryptic messages followed . . . three airmen were to be at a location at a certain time . . . information to follow. A map was later dropped from which we could identify the place. It meant a three-day walk. I was sure the pick-up would be a Catalina aircraft.

"Locals led us to Baia village. We got to the pick up point at 8pm and made sure our guides were away in canoe. We were stomping up the beach, going north, when Hargy (Hargesheimer) exclaimed, "Good God, it's a sub".



Above The area of conflict. **below** An Australian coastwatcher with New Britain villagers.

"The submarine had stayed after picking up Ian Roberts, a sick Coastwatcher, and a couple of American airmen. We boarded the US Gator, under the command of Foley, who would later become Rear Admiral. It was interesting being under water for three days, lying back between torpedoes. With 85 men there wasn't much room. We were down all day with the periscope coming up 30 seconds out of each two minutes. Two torpedo boats met us when we surfaced at Vitiaz Strait.

"No sooner were we ashore than dive bombers unsuccessfully came after the sub. David

and I went on to Milne Bay and then Townsville, which was headquarters for Allied intelligence."

Townsend and Hargesheimer met again in 1948 when Townsend was with the Joint Military Staff in Washington DC, as Defence Advisor to the Australian delegation at the United Nations.

In 1945, Lord Portal, UK Air Chief of Staff, formed the Royal Air Force's Escaping Society. The idea behind the group was to comb Europe and the Low Countries to locate families who had helped escaping British and Commonwealth troops to freedom. While the majority of the 'helpers' were in Europe, Townsend knew of at least 100

Australians who had survived the Pacific due to the help from PNG locals.

When he met Hargesheimer again in America, both men were determined to help people from New Britain. Hargesheimer started his own campaign in the US to raise resources to fund a school while Townsend looked to the Escaping Society for money. In 1964 the beginning of a continuing thank you was started when Ewasse Memorial Airmen's School was opened.

William 'Bill' Townsend has been recognised many times: Deputy Chief of Air Staff RAAF, 1967-69; Air Officer commanding Operational Command, 1969-72; OBE, 1957; CBE, 1965; and CB 1971. But, according to him, attending Ewasse's 20th anniversary in 1984 was his most personal accolade.

In that year, he and Hargesheimer arranged for the school to be self-supporting through oil-palm cultivation. (West New Britain Province is presently PNG's Oil Palm Province.) Some of the Ewasse school ground has been planted in palms and Hargy Pty Ltd at Biialla has agreed to take the harvest and pay proceeds to the school.

Bill Townsend died in 1987 but the Ewasse Memorial Airmen's School remains proof of his gratitude to the brave villagers of PNG.



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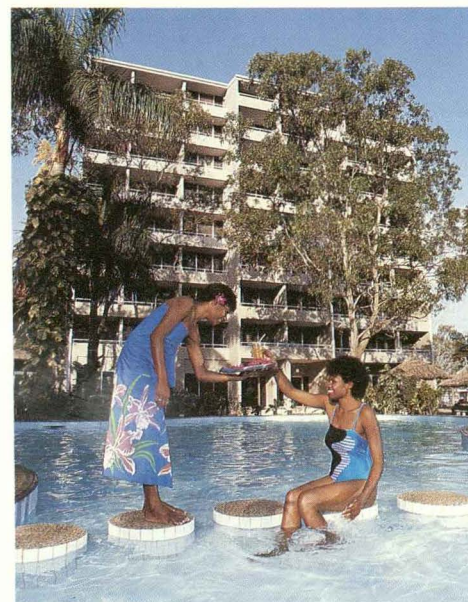
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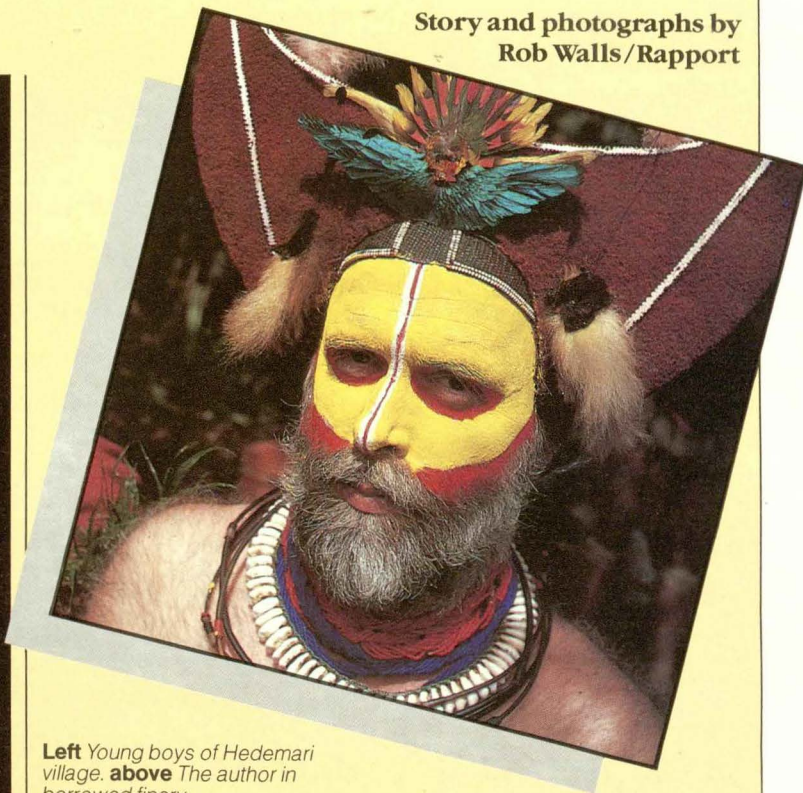
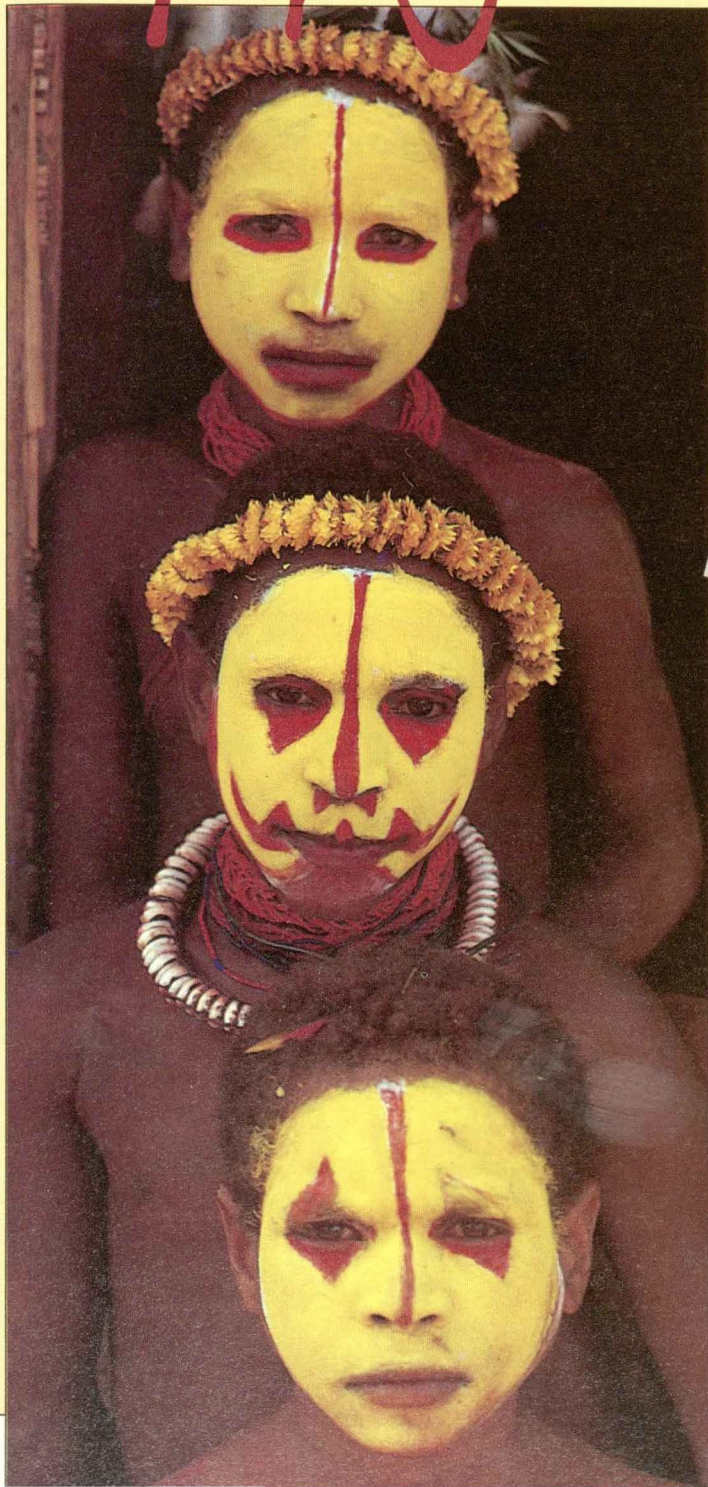
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Little House in the Highlands!

Story and photographs by
Rob Walls/Rapport



Left Young boys of Hedemari village. **above** The author in borrowed finery.

Rare in my experience is the host who invites you to visit, then goes to the trouble to build you a house. But that is precisely what happened to me a little over a year ago in Papua New Guinea.

I was walking through the Highlands city of Goroka, when my PNG assistant, Saimon Hare pointed to a group of the famous Huli wigmen of the Southern Highlands sitting in the shade of a large tree. Indicating a man of middle years he said: "That man wants to talk with you."

The gentleman was Saimon's

uncle, Peter Payape whom Saimon had met the previous night. I sat down to talk with these armed warriors who wore banana-shaped wigs decorated with everlasting daisies. Peter was obviously their leader. Taller than the average Huli, he possessed an air of command. His expression indicated he was both intelligent and shrewd and his manner was kindly, with a humorous spark to his eyes. When Peter looked me in the eye and said, "Come and stay in my village", I hesitated only for an instant, and replied in the affirmative.

Eight months were to slip by



before I could take up this invitation. An airmail envelope, post-marked Koroba, arrived containing a letter which had obviously been dictated to a third party; probably a village school teacher. Apart from wishing me well and reminding me of our meeting, its contents stated simply that, having built me a house, Peter would like to know when I was arriving so that he could make final preparations. I replied immediately that I would be in the Southern Highlands in early September.

After working at the Mount Hagen Highland Show, I set out for Peter's village,

Hedemari, accompanied again by Saimon Hare. We hitched a lift on a passing truck heading in the direction of the village, and hurtled along the winding, white limestone road through rugged mountain country. We rumbled across the old Bailey bridge over the Tagari River which borders Hedemari and soon we were in the centre of the small village.

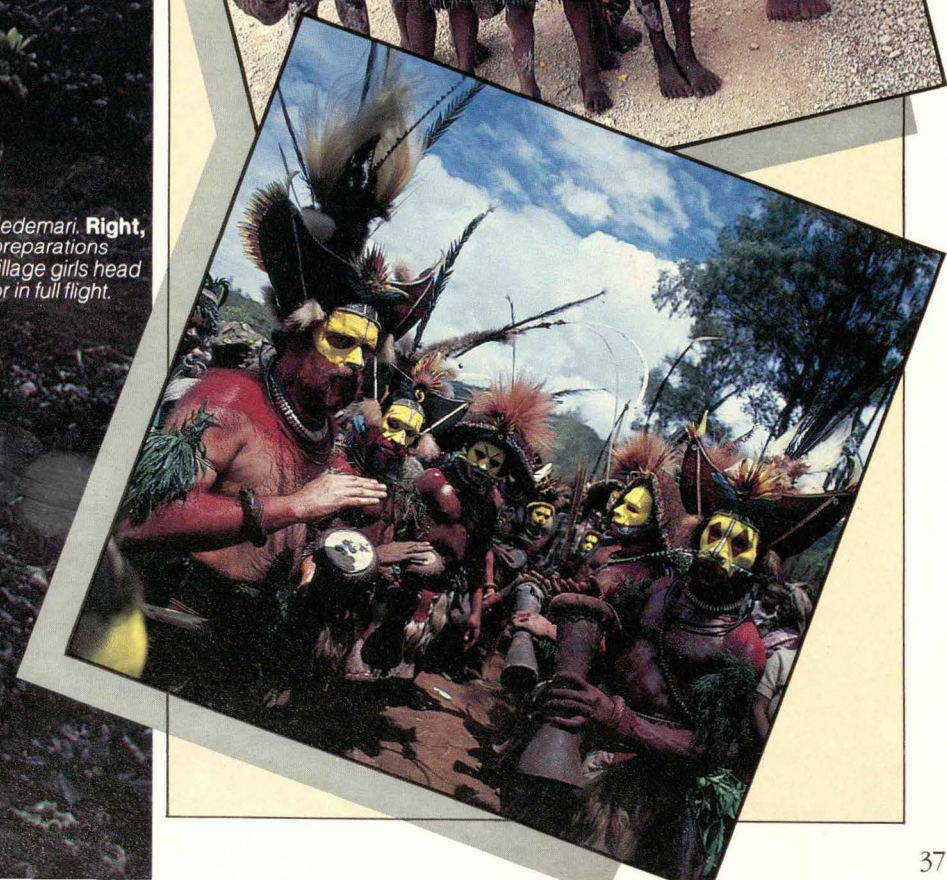
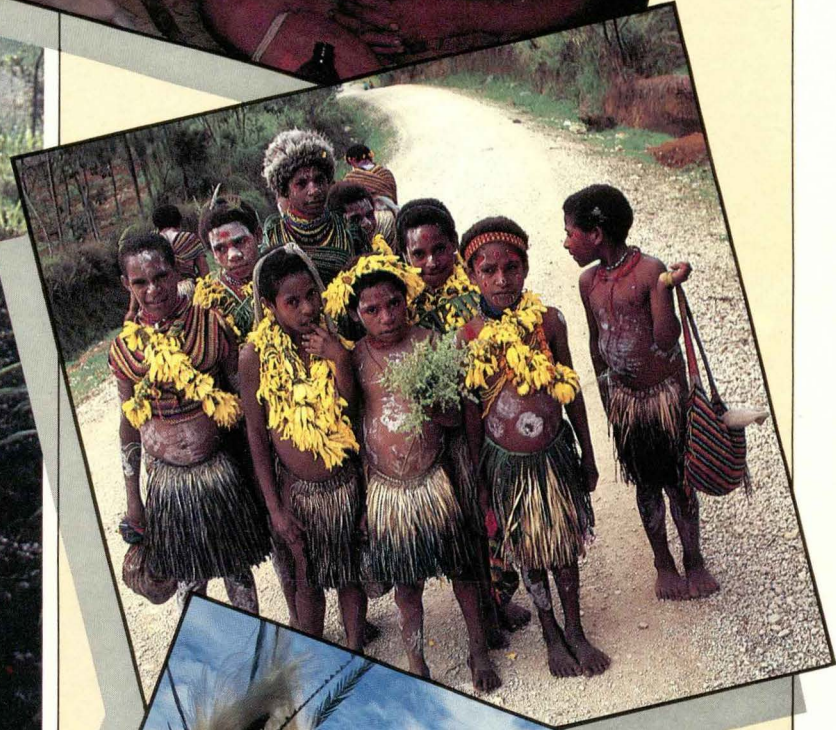
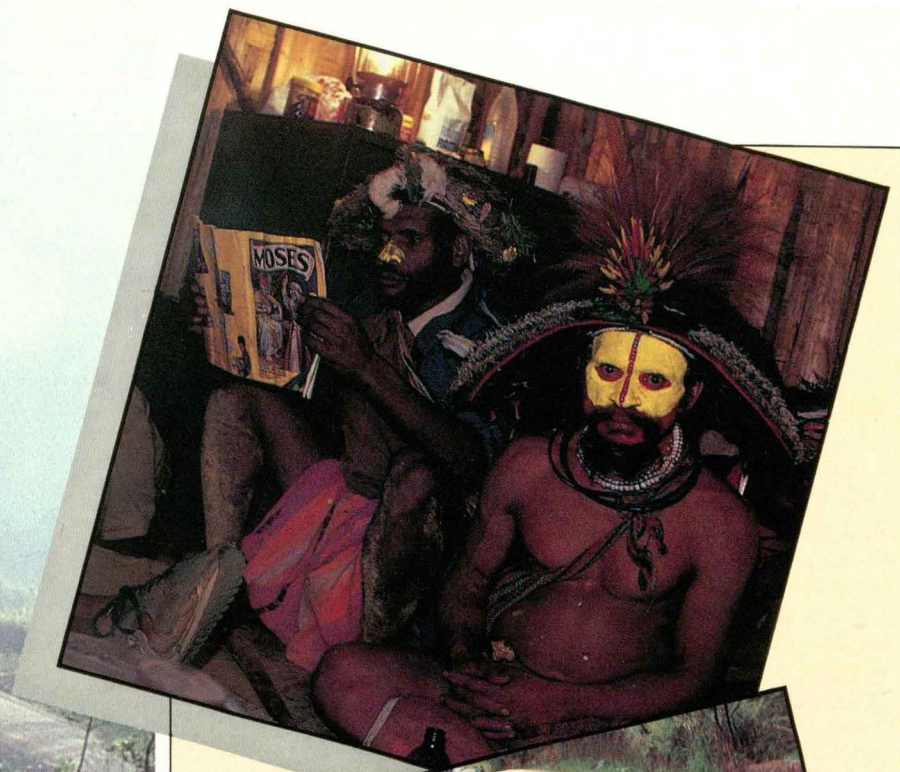
Peter and what seemed like every one of his relatives were waiting to welcome us outside the mud wall that defends each of these mountain hamlets. A beaming Mr Payape led me through the spiked, fortified gate, along a short

path to a small taro garden and my house - a rectangular structure of about four by five metres with a thick thatched roof. It was neatly and sturdily constructed of timber with woven cane walls. In honor of my stay, Peter's family had decorated the exterior with small sprigs of fresh green leaves.

The house was divided into three rooms, the largest of which had a woven cane floor at the centre and a fire set on a platform of cement. I rolled out my sleeping bag near the fire before Peter gave me a tour of his domain. His pace was brisk and that of a man

half his age. I was to learn more about the walking ability of the Huli in days to come. We "patrolled" from the base of the mountains down to the Tagari River, along the river bank and back up along the western borders of his land. Peter nimbly balanced on logs over creeks that he and his friends referred to as bridges.

After a rest, Peter arrived at my door with a large enamel bowl filled with chicken, pork, sweet potato, pumpkin and greens. It had been prepared on hot stones in the ground in the style Highlanders call "mu-mu". The following day was a Sunday and we had been



invited to a pig feast in the "next" village. The village was set in a valley on the other side of a mountain!

A party of six, carrying bows and arrows, set out at about 10am. Somewhere near the top of this "hill" Peter commented that I walked like a Huli. I was past exhaustion and it was all I could do to croak out my thanks. Until he had proffered this encouraging pat on the head, Peter had been carrying on a continuous conversation all the way up that "hill" - he wasn't even breathing hard.

The pig feast was under way when we arrived. Five men

Left The house at Hedemari. **Right, from top** Singing preparations start before dawn; village girls head for school; the author in full flight.

were butchering an equal number of carcasses with bamboo knives and I realised that references to “razor-sharp bamboo knives” were not exaggerating. These 30cm lengths of bamboo cut and slashed better than many kitchen knives. When the edge grew dull, the butchers peeled a new edge with their teeth. One man, who was using a steel blade, was having a hard time keeping up with the adherents to tradition.

While the pigs were being mu-mued, an archery competition began. Soon arrows were whizzing into the hillside around a length of banana-palm trunk that had been set up some 50 metres away. I was handed a long black-palm bow and some arrows. My first arrow flopped impotently to the ground halfway to its intended destination. With more luck than skill, my second smashed through the palm trunk as though it had been a butter sculpture. Whooping with excitement, they told me that if I were on their side in a fight, five men would die. I retired with credit from the lists before my true ability as an archer was found out.

As the days went by, there was always something of interest to see or do. But it was my final day that was to put all the rest in the shade. My last day had been declared a holiday, as they planned a farewell “singsing” for me. I was invited to lead the performance in full traditional Huli costume. To ensure I knew what was expected, a lantern-light rehearsal the night before was initiated. The dancing wasn't so difficult but I was worried whether I would have the stamina to maintain the pace. That night, I tossed and turned, rehearsing the dance in my sleep. When the dancers came to rouse me at first light, I was already awake, waiting and apprehensive. We left the house carrying an assortment of wigs, feathers, paints and ochres. They led me to a quiet glade out of sight



of the houses. For the next four hours, I was transformed into a Huli. My head ached from the tightness of the lacing of the wig, but my only qualm was when I discovered the white paint used as a base for the colors was gloss enamel. I was confidently assured that kerosene would take it off.

Painted, bewigged and ochred, the final touches were added to my attire. My upper body was coated with a fragrant oil applied with a bunch of leaves. I had heard about this custom and had been told a couple of differing stories about the oil's source. The first was that it came from a tree, the other that it came from the ground. In curiosity I asked its source and was told the latter. My informant looked at me quizzically as he replied

and it was then that I saw the one-litre, white plastic bottle labeled “Mobil Super, Friction Modified Motor Oil – guaranteed for 20,000km”.

Finally it was curtain time. Forming two facing lines, we warriors began to dance. The dancing of the Huli consists mainly of jumping up and down in unison to the drums' accompaniment. I was soon able to pick up the step and felt I was doing quite a creditable job. It was not until we danced out in the area reserved for the singsing that I fully realised what I had got myself into. Nearly 400 people had turned up to watch me participate.

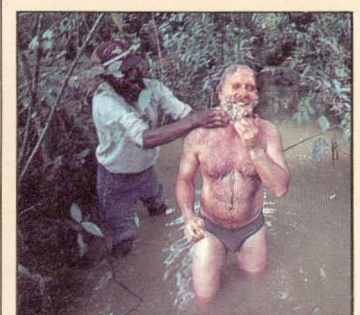
I danced for almost two hours with the occasional water break before our audience began to drift away and a halt was called. Not a

minute too soon. My legs felt as though they had been asked to run a marathon. I spent the next two hours in a nearby river working hard with both kerosene and soap to remove the last traces of my role as a Huli warrior.

As we sat around the fire that night, I was saddened that my brief career as a part-time Huli was coming to an end. I had enjoyed this break from the pattern of my life. As for my dancing, I felt that the critics had been somewhat fulsome in their praise, but I revelled in it anyway.

With a touching speech, Peter presented me with a gift of Huli weaponry – just in case I decided to return to their way of life. This wicked-looking fighting axe, sharply tipped with a cassowary claw, was accompanied by a dozen or so arrows.

No one can truly step outside his own upbringing and culture and into that of another but my experience had provided me with some wonderful insights into the Huli culture. Looking at the animated faces of these proud men in the glow of the firelight, I was grateful they had allowed me to participate in their lives, no matter how superficially.

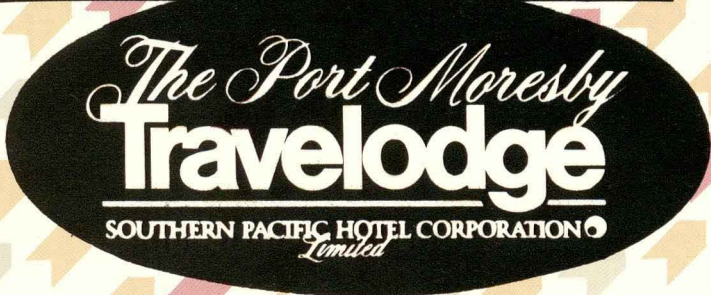


Top The author in his makeshift studio at the Goroka Show.
left Rehearsing for the singsing.
above Coming clean with help from a friend.

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