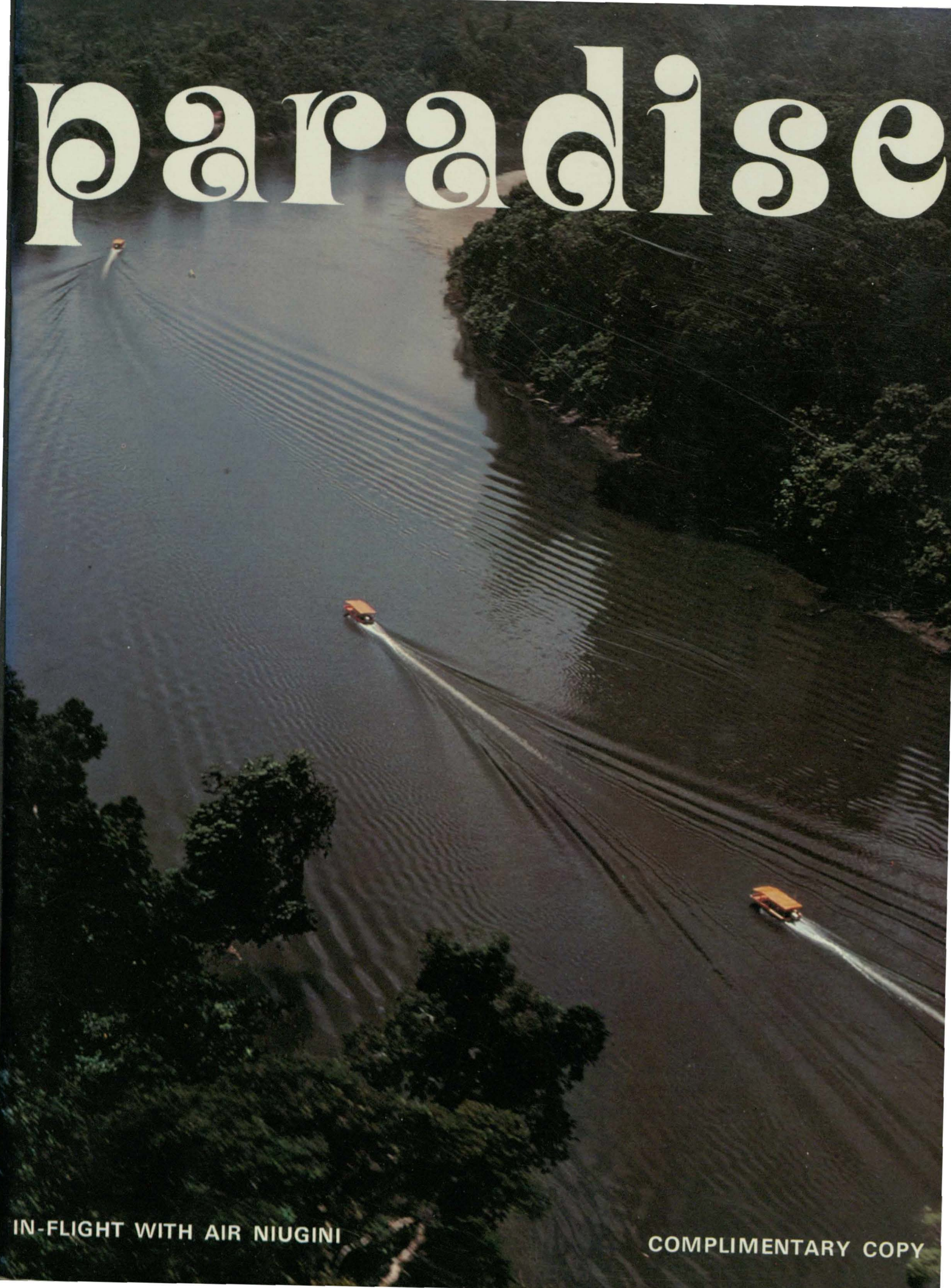
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**No. 9 January 1978**

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**IN THIS ISSUE**



## Welcome aboard

The echo of F28 Fellowship jets down the Markham Valley is a far cry from the days more than 30 years ago when Japanese and the Allies vied for supremacy over this strategically vital area of Papua New Guinea. But what is the same is that the centre of air operations in the Morobe Province is once again at Nadzab, 40 kilometres up the valley from the provincial capital, Lae.
Sir Horace Niall — better known as Horrie, former Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (Angau) officer, Morobe District Commissioner, Member and Speaker of the first PNG House of Assembly, and now retired — has vivid memories of Nadzab's chequered career. In an article on page 27 he writes of the hectic days after paratroopers dropped into Nadzab to secure it for the Allies — and makes a prediction which probably will find a lot of support on the north side of the Papua New Guinea mainland . . .

C.B. Grey
General Manager

**PHOTO CREDITS**

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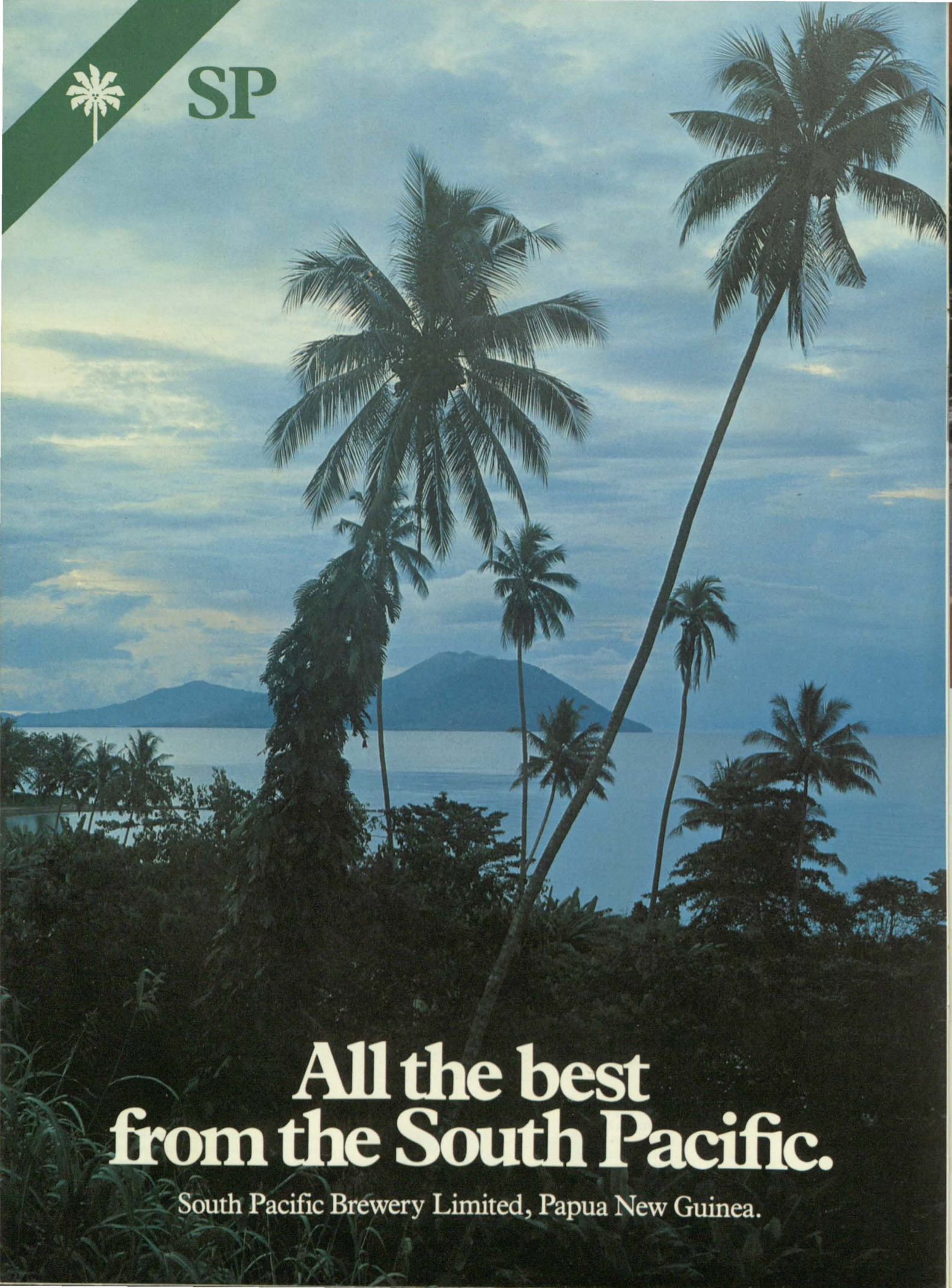
Bob Hawkins
David Bamford
Brian Mennis
Ulli Beier
Veronica Williams
Malcolm Kirk
PNG Office of Information

**COVER**

Heading into adventure, three River Trucks motor downstream from Amboin airstrip in the East Sepik Province bound for Karawari Lodge. Bob Hawkins, who took the photograph with the help of Talair, writes of his visit to the Karawari River region on page 5.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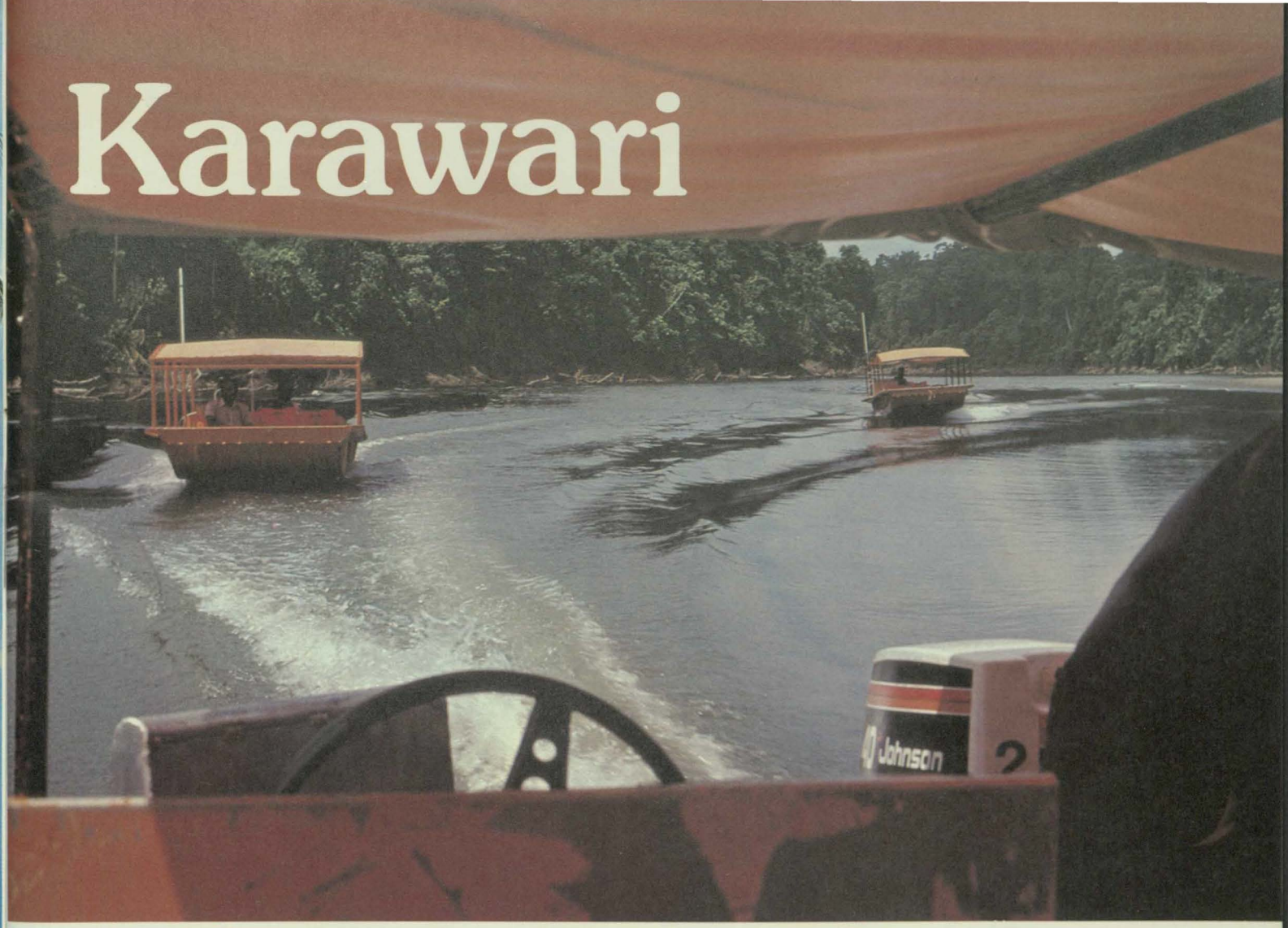
# Karawari




Karawari, the river, moves lazily. At Amboin, more than 100 kilometres inland as the crow files in the East Sepik Province, the Karawari is only a few metres above sea level. So it really has nowhere to fall. Merely to meander from Amboin perhaps 200 kilometres before it joins the mighty Sepik, liquid freeway of Papua New Guinea's northwestern flatlands, less than an horizon away.

Karawari, the people, move easily. The leathery muscles of an old lady push her pencil-slim dugout doggedly up-current to the Yimas Lakes. Children, born to water, bask in the shallows just off Amboin patrol post, life just one long summer. Mother patiently washes sago at the water's edge. Father, up the beach, measuredly chops at the palm source of this Sepik staple, the taste of the sago shreds akin to that of coarse coconut flesh.

Karawari, the place, leaves one perplexed — at least it did me. In 1964 a World Bank report hinted that inland Sepik regions had little to offer the economy of this then embryo sovereign state. Perhaps they

**Story and photographs by Bob Hawkins**

didn't in the sense of Bougainville Copper, or highland coffee. Maybe they still haven't. Yet one gets the impression, while motoring from the tiny riverside airstrip downstream to Amboin, of a people who will never clamour to the centre for sustenance. In 15 years of travel in Papua New Guinea, never have I sensed such a quietly confident, non-aggressive, taken-as-inevitable, self-sufficiency.

The perplexing anachronism of the Karawari scene at Amboin is the tourist hotel astride a ridge behind the patrol post -- and even that is clad in the veneer of tradition. There's a superb *haus tambaran* (spirit house) as dining room and bar, and a dozen or so neatly thatched buildings providing accommodation for management and 40 guests at two beds to a room. Is the Lodge a threat to the stability of Karawari country — or a gentle stepping stone for the people to a fuller understanding of a cash economy?

Proprietor Peter Spencer prefers to believe the latter — and he's stepping delicately in his determination to provide outsiders with a glimpse of the wonders of the Karawari without throwing the everyday life of the local people out of kilter. In fact he sees the Lodge serving the more valuable purpose of a stimulus to the preservation of Karawari culture and crafts.

The view from the Lodge to the north-northwest is of jungle flatness, broken on a clear day only by lonely Murder Mountain, perhaps 30 kilometres away, and by the Alexander Range, well over 100 kilometres to the north and almost on the coast.

To the south, hidden by the hill rising steeply behind the Lodge, lie the Yimas Lakes and then, in a series of breathtaking sandstone bluffs, begin the ridges which build, range after range, to the lofty cordillera which forms the nation's backbone.

From Karawari Lodge, Peter Spencer wants to show visitors the abundant wildlife of the lakes and the well preserved traditional life-







*Karawari Lodge astride the ridge; right: Yimas villager, multi-purpose fire aft, heads to market; far right: father cuts sago*

style of the Karawari river people.

To do this without ruffling the sensitivities of both the local people and the provincial authorities, requires diplomacy and tact. Peter Spencer hopes his present approach will make it possible for outsiders to enjoy the sights while simultaneously providing an opportunity for the local people to benefit.

Central to good harmony is an *ad hoc* committee which meets whenever a major decision has to be made. It comprises the local patrol officer, agricultural officer, police sergeant, president of the local government council, headmaster of Amboin school and Peter or his deputy.

To share the cash benefits that a venture like the Lodge generates, an effort has been made to make villages of particular areas responsible for specific services. Woven into this system is the reason that visitors go to Karawari — the guided tour which usually takes about three days, parties setting off from the Lodge each morning.

Most of the staff at the Lodge are from Yimas village, the senior man and assistant manager being Lucas Tangut. The Yimas villagers also sell their handcrafts to the visitors. Another Yimas project, still underway, is the construction of two canoe houseboats which the Lodge plans to fit out with air conditioning, toilets, plumbing and all amenities and then hire out to visitors.

Kuvenmas village is way across the jungles, almost in the shadow of Murder Mountain. From Kuvenmas come the Blackwater craftsmen who have carved so boldly and magnificently the incredibly heavy bar furniture and main pillars in the Lodge's *haus tambaran*. There is always a reason to call on the skills of the Kuvenmas people.

Just downstream is Kundiman village, known as Kundiman 1, Kundiman 2 being just across the river from the Lodge. The Kundiman villagers' contribution to the entertainment of visitors is to provide demonstrations of cutting, making and cooking sago as well as a tour of the village during which the traditional ways in which village life has been made to work over the centuries are pointed out.

Another half-hour downstream from Kundiman 1 by flat-bottomed Australian-built River Truck is Manjamai. The people here demonstrate a custom still practised by many villages in the area — skin cutting. Part of the initiation to manhood, skin cutting is performed today usually by using razor blades.



In the past, sharp bamboo was used to nick the skin, usually on the back, as it was held by a relative or chosen one between thumb and forefinger. The result is a pattern of scars which stays with the bearer for life. For the faint-hearted, rest assured that the people of Manjamai only simulate the cutting. But even that can be a little disconcerting.

Back upstream from Manjamai there's a tributary coming into the Karawari from the left. At the time we went along it the dry season had long taken a hold on the surrounding country. The water was low and scores of obstacles, mainly fallen branches from earlier flooding, added to the hazard of rapidly failing light.

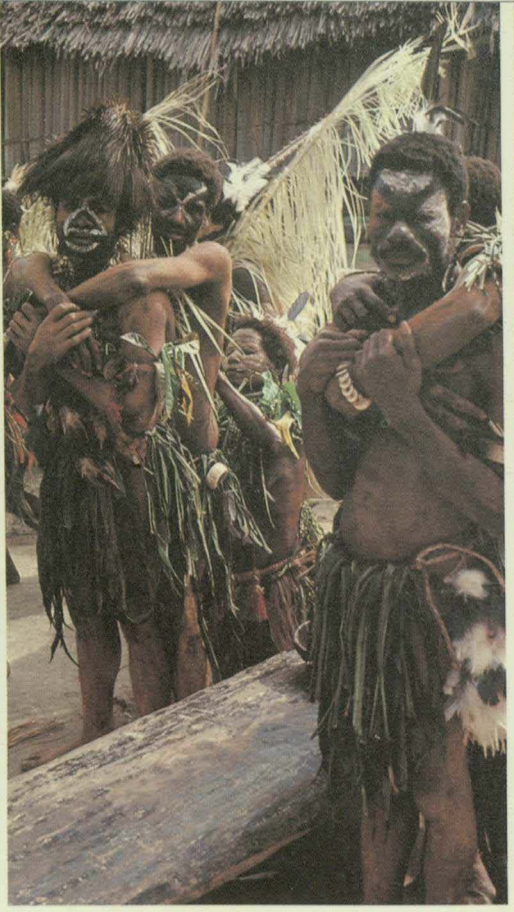
Our destination was Konmei, about 15 minutes of tortuous motoring through many snags from the mainstream of the Karawari. Clouds rolling ever lower and total silence — not even the call of a river bird — bred a tension not even the most lighthearted of tourist could have failed to sense.

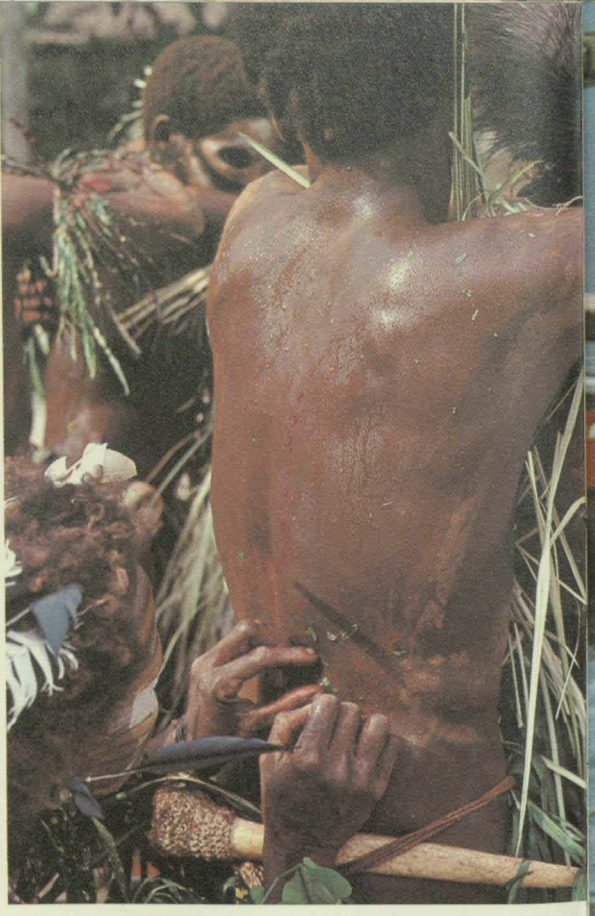
There was no welcome at Konmei as there had been at Manjamai. From a rough landing stage we plunged to our knees into clinging black mud on the river bank. Up the bank and through a short stretch of garden before entering a clearing in the village. Nothing. Except a sensation of eyes. Further in. A covey of listless children under limp palm fronds.

Konmei is built on a loop in the tributary. It would not be much more than 30 metres through the village from bank to bank. When we reached the far side from where the River Truck had been moored, the action began. Two war canoes were being stealthily worked along the river's edge toward the village. What followed was a credit to the people of Konmei, their natural acting providing a thoroughly convincing re-enactment of a headhunting raid.

Because of the failing light and lack of water in the river we were unable to press on upstream to Ambonwari where, apparently, there is an impressive display of artifacts and one of the few remaining traditional *haus tambaran* in the Karawari region. (Earlier at Yimas we had seen what was once the site of a *haus tambaran* which, we were told, had been burnt down many years before. The Yimas people are now talking of building a new one.)

Yet another people contribute to the working of Karawari Lodge. They are the Alanblak people from the headwaters of the Karawari, accessible only in the wet season. The Alanblak bring down their carvings as well as timber for carv-





**Left to right:** *Karawari flute players at the Lodge; support for two initiates about to be cut; the cutting starts at Manjamai*

ing and construction work by other groups.

The clockwork way in which the program Peter Spencer had prepared for us worked out was a tribute to the co-operation of the people of the Karawari. It would appear that as long as visitors to the Lodge respect the customs and feelings of the people, there is no reason that both sides cannot benefit — the visitor getting a decided 'cultural kick' out of it, the villager making a kina and, more importantly, enjoying a regular opportunity to re-enact longheld traditions.

In too many areas of Papua New Guinea, the plunge into the twentieth century has seriously eroded traditional village life. The presence of Karawari Lodge at Amboin, despite the 'jet set' overtones it might suggest, may prove a useful influence in helping the people of the Karawari to retain much of the custom and folklore of their ancestors. — *Bob Hawkins is Counsellor (Information) at the Australian High Commission, Port Moresby.*

* All names are in accordance with the *Papua New Guinea Village Directory 1973.*

**Below:** *mother washing sago while father looks on at Kundiman;* **below right:** *young victims being carried away in headhunting re-enactment at Konmei*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# The Widow wows 'em

Story: John Loughlin
Photographs: Jim Fenwick

The first full-blown balletic version of Franz Lehar's romantic operetta *The Merry Widow* has been more than a box office windfall for The Australian Ballet. It has also been for the company a heady experience of full houses and enraptured audiences, all 165 performances of it in Australia, the United States and Britain.

And it has been for the dancers an experience, not common in ballet performances, of an emotive flow back across the footlights, the fusion of feeling between audience and performers that has characterised the productions of the original operetta over the years.

*The Widow* has its different appeal to the different generations among audiences. For the middle aged and 'oldies' it is the recapturing of the romantic flavor of that first viewing and hearing of the operetta long ago. For the young, a totally escapist experience from the hard rock and soft porn of the contemporary entertainment scene. Escapist it is, and whether as operetta or ballet, *The Widow* is perfect for the times — full of elegant costuming, lavish period sets, melting love scenes, dance, froth and gaiety. And added to all this, now the artistry of a splendid company, trained and firmly set in the classical ballet tradition.

The Australian Ballet performs this charming extravaganza with elan and polish. The enthusiastic reception Melbourne audiences gave the company's production when it was given its world permiere there in November 1976 was re-echoed overseas. After an unbroken run of record-breaking houses in Australian cities, the company opened a spectacular season in Washington DC and New York in June 1976, with Dame Margot Fonteyn as guest star. This was followed by an equally successful month in London.

It is ironic that this money-spinning first full length ballet version of *The Merry Widow* — now an exclusive property of The Australian Ballet — should have been the parting achievement for the company of its co-artistic director Sir Robert Helpmann. He left the company when his contract ran out in 1976 after disagreements with the directors.

The copyright holders for the Franz Lehar operetta, the Glocken Verlag publishers of Vienna, have tightly controlled their valuable property over the years. They have rejected every attempt to present it other than in its original form — except for a single one act ballet in 1953 which only confirmed them in their opposition to any tampering with the original.

Helpmann had long wanted to produce a *Merry Widow* ballet for the Australian company which had grown in international stature under the joint direction of himself and Dame Peggy van Praagh. It is a compliment to his prestige and perhaps his determination that he was finally able to persuade Glocken and Verlag to break their taboo.

Helpmann had prepared a scenario faithful to the original operetta and the company's English musical director, John Lanchbery, had been working for a long time on a musical arrangement of the score for ballet.

Helpmann's first approach to the Lehar heirs was turned down. His next chance came when an executive of the Vienna firm was visiting Melbourne on other business. Helpmann and Lanchbery were able to convince him that they had a ballet that did no violence to the spirit or form of the famous operetta, indeed one that would very likely add lustre to the Lehar tradition.

An agreement with the Vienna principals followed, giving the Australian Ballet rights for performance under strict conditions. One was that as a gesture to tradition, some of the choruses should be sung. This is met in the Australian production by having a group of hidden singers to accompany some of the ensemble dances.

Helpmann and Lanchbery were joined by two Englishmen to mount the ballet. One was Ronald Hynd, a choreographer of wide experience. The other was Desmond Heeley, a

*Gary Norman as Danilo and Marilyn Jones as Hanna in* The Merry Widow, *Act 1*

Above: *Can Can, Act 3*

Above: *Act 1*

Below: *Act 1*

Above: *Gary Norman as Danilo, Marilyn Rowe as Hanna*

Below: *Chez Maxim's, Act 3*

Above: *Waltz, Act 1*

Above: *Pontevedrian Dances, Act 2*

Below: *Norman and Alan Alder, Act 1*

top London designer with an established reputation in ballet, opera and theatre — the man responsible for the sumptuous costumes and sets in the Australian production.

A few critics have scorned the company's venture into 'fairy floss' theatre, but to the directors it is the most important production in the 15 years' history of the company. *The Merry Widow*, they enthused, 'seems certain to be placed among the timeless classics like *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*'.

An understandable flight of fancy, this, considering *The Widow's* box office performance. In 1975 it turned the company's previous operating deficit into a surplus of K210,000. Again in 1976 it earned the company another net surplus of K275,000. Looked at another way, the financial picture isn't so bright. Inflation in 1977 was expected to boost total expenditure by the company to K3.65 million. Box office earnings — with *The Merry Widow* again in the program — were hoped to reach K2.5 million. The company counts on government subsidies and private endowments to close the gap.

In other words the financial squeeze is on and this is the obvious cause of conflict in the company over production policy which clouds its future. The resignation of Miss Anne Woolliams, formerly of the Stuttgart Ballet, after less than a year as artistic director is symptomatic of the conflict.

The Australian dancers are overworked and over-travelled — seven or eight overseas tours in the company's brief lifetime plus national tours covering the widely separated capital cities, a total of 226 performances in 1976. It amounts to a tremendous drain on the stamina of the dancers.

The directors in their 1976 report ask some of the questions other people are asking. 'We travelled further and gave more performances than any other ballet company anywhere,' they said and went on to talk of the 'dilemma' facing the company. They ask: Is it real success? Should they slow down output, perform less often and be more certain of maintaining their world standards? They talk of trying to steer a middle course and it is evident that the troubles have arisen from the artistic compromises forced on the company by box office demands.

'We are first and foremost a classical ballet company,' the directors said in the same report. 'Our primary aim has been to present to our supporters great classical ballets and their contemporary equivalents. But radical changes may be forced on us by the economic climate.'

And the directors admit that because of soaring costs they had had to make 'significant and unwelcome changes' in the repertoire for 1977. These changes included postponing some new productions, increased performance schedules and briefer rehearsal times.

Dame Peggy van Praagh, who retired in 1974 because of arthritis, is returning as artistic director for the 1978 season. This is to give the company time to look for a new permanent director. Whoever is appointed will have little scope for risky experiments venturing too far outside the company's artistic philosophy. 'It will be made clear to any new director,' said a senior administrator, 'that this is a classical ballet company. The traditional works are the roots of our existence and our training. Our role will be to continue to dance the standard classical ballets and to vary this to a degree with new works by Australian choreographers of proven worth.'

And box office performances show that this is giving the local customers what they want. — *John Loughlin is an Australian Information Service journalist based in Melbourne.*

*Pas de deux for Valencienne and Camille, Act 2*

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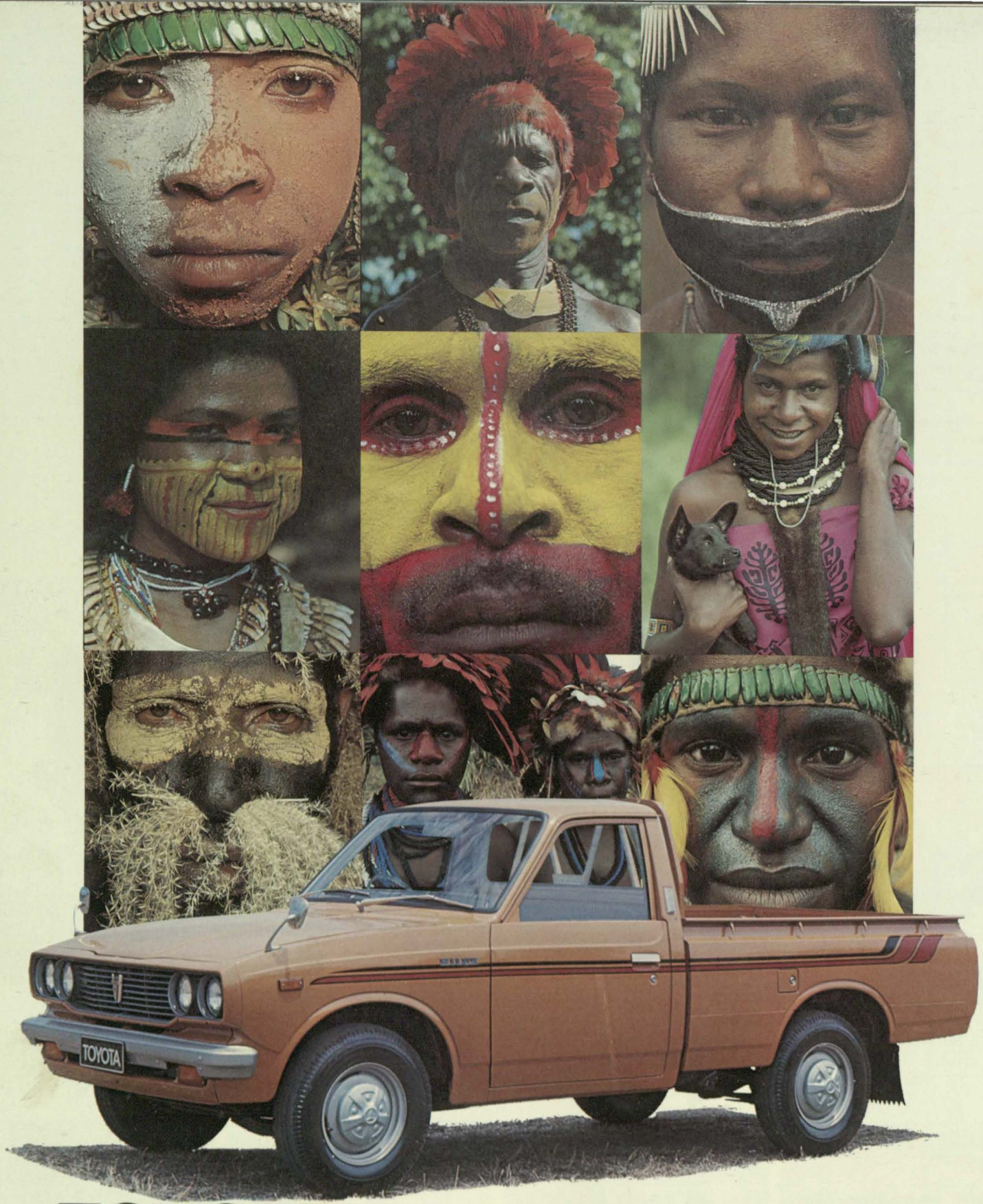


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# *Voice of the sea*

**By Kumulau Tawali**

*That was it,*
*The old man and I sailing.*
*He with the knowledge of years,*
*I with nothing but a sense of adventure.*
*He took the steering,*
*While I, as he said,*
*With my good seeing*
*Would keep my eyes ahead.*

*The sun had just gone to swim*
*After its day's work.*
*The seagulls were flying home*
*In groups of four or five,*
*Singing those ancient songs*
*Of ceaseless bread seeking.*
*And who knows*
*Whether those stomachs may be full or empty?*
*The silence.*

*As the sail moved it,*
*The canoe slashed its way*
*Through the phosphorescent water,*
*Giving those sounds*
*Pleasing to the ears of the old man.*
*But then my eyes could see no further*
*As the sky was flooded by darkness.*
*So I thought of the old man's eyes*
*And the countless times*
*He went through safely.*
*What was his secret?*

*Remember son,*
*When darkness comes*
*And you are sailing,*
*Listen to the voice of the sea,*
*With its unending chorus*
*Of water splashing on the rocks*
*And the sea-sawing sounds of waves*
*On sand bars.*
*Then safely shall you guide your boat*
*Among the sharp rocks of the reefs*
*Without seeing.*

# Madang

Story and photographs
by Mary and Brian Mennis

'The Islands of Contented Men' is how Miklouho Maclay described the islands in Madang's superb harbour. Who could not be contented living there, on a tropical island with numerous secluded sandy beaches, ringed by reefs which abound in colourful fish?

This famous Russian explorer was the first outsider to make anything more than a fleeting visit to the Madang area. He lived near Bongu Village in Astrolabe Bay, about 30 km south of Madang in the early 1870s. His extensive explorations of the area and stories of his various activities are part of the oral history of Madang villagers. The people of Kranket can, for instance, tell one how and where Maclay landed and what he did. On Bilibil Island, opposite the present day village of the same name, the old men can point out exactly where he had his house, when he lived there for some weeks, and on which rock he stood to watch for the Russian ship which was due to relieve him.

Maclay's reports of the area ultimately caused the Germans to decide to colonise New Guinea. This

was done by granting a charter to the New Guinea Kompagnie which was to administer and develop it commercially. The Kompagnie's first headquarters were on Madang Island at Finschhafen, some 270 km south-east of present day Madang. Finding this place unhealthy because of malaria, they shifted to Stephensort in Astrolabe Bay, not far from Bongu. However, they soon found that the anchorage was too exposed for shipping and ultimately, in 1897, shifted to the site of present day Madang, then known as Friedrick Wilhelmshafen.

When it became known as Madang after Chinese and Malays moved from the original Madang Island near Finschhafen in 1903, the town had a German population of 26.

The New Guinea Kompagnie proved a failure at administering the colony and this aspect of its operations was taken over by the German Government in 1899, the colonial capital being established at Kokopo near Rabaul on New Britain with Madang reverting to the status of a district office, responsible for mainland German New Guinea.

Not much is left in Madang of the German era. The town was virtually flattened during the Pacific War. The trees which line some of Madang's streets, the cemetery, and a set of cement steps at the harbour master's wharf are the only reminders of German times.

The Pacific War has left its own reminders. At the old Alexishafen airstrip a number of wrecked Japanese bombers remain as mute testimony to the devasting American air raids that played a large part in forcing the Japanese to retreat.

Coastwatchers lighthouse, which guards the entrance to the harbour, was erected as a memorial to the coastwatchers who stayed or were placed behind enemy lines to give early warning of Japanese air-raids and to relay intelligence on shipping and troop movements.

Present day Madang however retains the character and flavour of the old town even though it is now much larger. Until the war, Madang occupied only the area which today contains the shopping centre, market and trade stores. The rest of the area was a plantation. Near the Coastwatchers memorial was a track for horse and foot races.

The town area was rather swampy with several lagoons but the Germans filled in most of them leaving only two, one of which has just been filled in by the Madang Town Council. The lagoon in Sir Donald Cleland Park is covered in a profusion of white and pink water lilies and is set in a park of grass and tropical flowering trees. A crocodile is occasionally seen in the lagoon, hence the warning signs *Lukaut long pukpuk*.

In common with most towns in Papua New Guinea, Madang has a regular market. People from nearby villages bring in their garden produce. Kaukau, taro, fish, betel nut, tomatoes, bananas and all manner of tropical produce fill the market.

Sepik River people, who now live permanently in Madang, show their fine carvings and artifacts done in traditional Sepik style. Potters from Bilibil and Yabob bring their traditional clay pots.

Apart from being an interesting town in its own right, Madang is an important centre for shipping, trade and tourists. Within the Madang Province, attractions not too far from Madang include the offshore islands of Manam, Karkar, Bagabag and Long. All are of volcanic origin, and all, with the exception of Bagabag, have erupted in recent years. Unfortunately, access and accommodation are rather difficult for the casual tourist on a tight schedule, but Karkar and Long Islands, both of which are partly wildlife santuaries, are well worth a visit.

Outside the province, the Sepik River is only an hour's flight away. Highlands centres are even closer. — *Mary and Brian Mennis are residents of Madang.*

Left: *Karkar volcano putting on a performance;* far left: *Coastwatchers memorial at the entrance to the harbour*

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(Tanysiptera sylvia)

# Kingfisher kingdom

**Story and photographs by William Peckover**

The richest collection of kingfishers in the world lives on the island of New Guinea. Twenty-six species are found in Papua New Guinea alone while a further three, which do not extend across the border, live in West Irian.

Australia has only 10 species scattered throughout its vast continent, eight of these also being found in Papua New Guinea. New Zealand has only two, the widespread Pacific species *Halcyon sancta* or sacred kingfisher, and the quite recently introduced Australian kookaburra.

New Guinea's diverse collection ranges in size from the little and dwarf kingfishers (*Ceyx pusillus* and *Ceyx lepidus*) that are about 12 cm long and weigh around 14 grams, to the 'giant' blue-winged kookaburra (*Dacelo leachii*) which is 40 to 44 cm long and weighs up to 440 grams.

True to its name, the little kingfisher is always seen near water and catches most of its prey there. It is a common inland bird as well as being found in mangrove and river estuaries. The blue-winged kookaburra is a woodland, not aquatic, bird.

The woodland kingfishers belie their name and do not catch fish. However, they all eat relatively large animals and most have similar

hunting habits. They sit still, on quite open perches, and dive onto a moving animal below. They then usually carry the live prey back to a suitable perch, on which they beat and thrash it before swallowing it.

The dwarf kingfisher, although it belongs to the water kingfishers, is a forest bird which eats mainly insects, especially dragonflies. It will dive into streams for tadpoles and other aquatic animals.

The handsome little sacred kingfisher (about 20 cm long) is possibly the plainest member of the family in Papua New Guinea. It is also the commonest for half the year and the scarcest for the other half of the year. It is the widest ranging, being found on the mainland and on practically every island and islet. It is the highest ranging, from an altitude of 2,300 metres right down to sea level. Altogether a most versatile and adaptable bird.

About late August to early October each year, sacred kingfishers stream south, probably around the south coast of Papua and then, island hopping, to Australia. There they pair, establish breeding territories, rest and bring up a family, returning north about March and April. Paradise kingfishers are a handsome group. All have unusually long tails, colourful bills and bright body plumage. The common paradise kingfisher (*Tanysiptera galatea*) is the longest of the New Guinea kingfishers at about 46 cm. It does not develop its colourful blue and white plumage until adulthood. The young, however, with their dress of variegated browns, are themselves quite handsome creatures. The whitetailed paradise kingfisher is one of the most colourful of the group, all of which are rain forest birds, although the common paradise is very occasionally seen in the more open savannah country.

Two other species beside the sacred kingfisher migrate between New Guinea and Australia — the white-tailed paradise kingfisher which may have both migrant and resident New Guinea races and the forest kingfisher (*Halycon macleayii*) which has a resident breeding race as well as a race that winters in New Guinea, migrating south to breed each spring. The New Guinea race, *H.m. elizabeth*, is a mixture of deep rich spectrum and cyanine blues while the migrant *H.m. macleayii* is a paler blue-green. Both are white underneath. The forest kingfisher is a smallish bird, about the same size as the sacred. It inhabits similar open forest country and secondary growth.

The lesser yellow-billed kingfisher is another forest bird. Common and resident throughout two lowlands of mainland New Guinea and on many of the large adjacent islands, it also reaches Australia's Cape York Peninsula. It seldom perches in sunlight and is not easy to see, but its distinctive call is often heard in the jungle: a long ascending trilling whistle.

A kingfisher in the true sense of the word, the beach kingfisher (*Halcyon saurophaga*) is a bird of the seashore, never venturing inland. Its food is small fish, crabs, soft-shelled crustaceans and, whenever the opportunity offers, lizards and insects. Like other kingfishers, they nest in holes and lay white eggs.

Animals that become isolated on islands for long periods of time tend to develop different characteristics to those of their parent stock. At first these differences are not great and the island population concerned is treated as a sub-species. As time progresses however, if the island population continues to remain isolated from its parent stock, a new species, quite different from the original, develops.

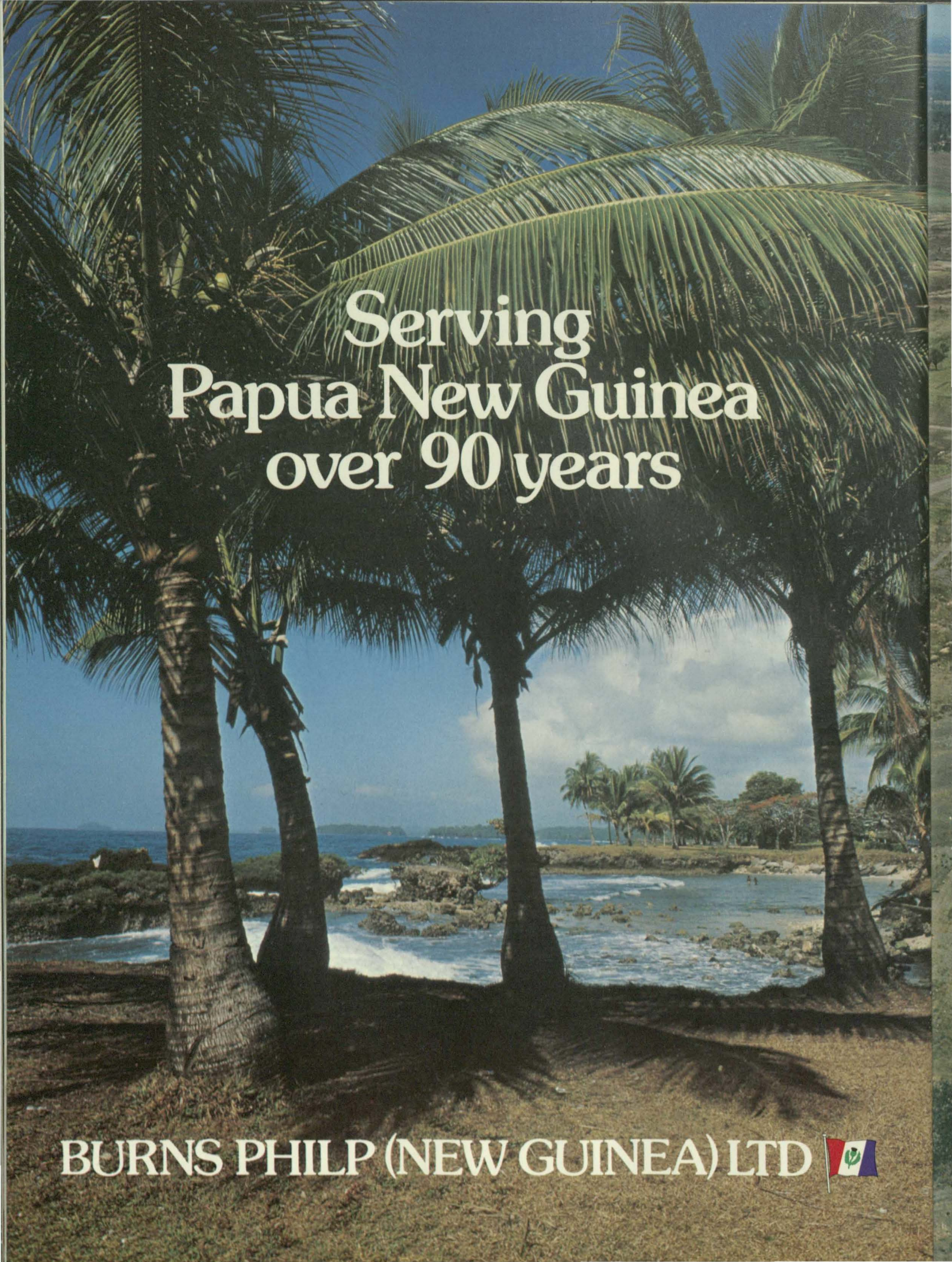
The collared kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*) of the Saint Matthias Islands (about 170 kilometres northwest of Kavieng), is a good example of this 'speciation'. In form and behaviour it is a very different bird from the collared kingfisher elsewhere, so much so that some workers have treated it as a separate species, *Halcyon matthiae*, instead of as a sub-species, *Halcyon chloris matthiae*.

Every family has its black sheep. The rufous-bellied kookaburra (*Dacelo gaudichaudi*) is sometimes considered to be the kingfisher

villain. It is very partial to a feed of small forest birds. It is a forest bird but comes out to the forest edge, into secondary growth and into garden areas. Dead branches in exposed positions are much favoured perching spots. From these it can watch below for the movements that betray the presence of a potential meal. Although it will eat anything that moves, insects form the largest portion of its diet. — *William S. Peckover of Port Moresby is co-author of* The Birds of New Guinea and Tropical Australia, *published by A.H. & A.W. Reed Pty Ltd, of Sydney, Australia.*

**Top:** *blue-winged kingfisher* (Dacelo leachii); **above left:** *common paradise kingfisher* (Tanysiptera galatea); **above right:** *lesser yellow-tailed kingfisher* (Halcyon torotoro)

**Below left:** *dwarf kingfisher* (Ceyx lepidus); **below:** *collared kingfisher* (Halcyon chloris)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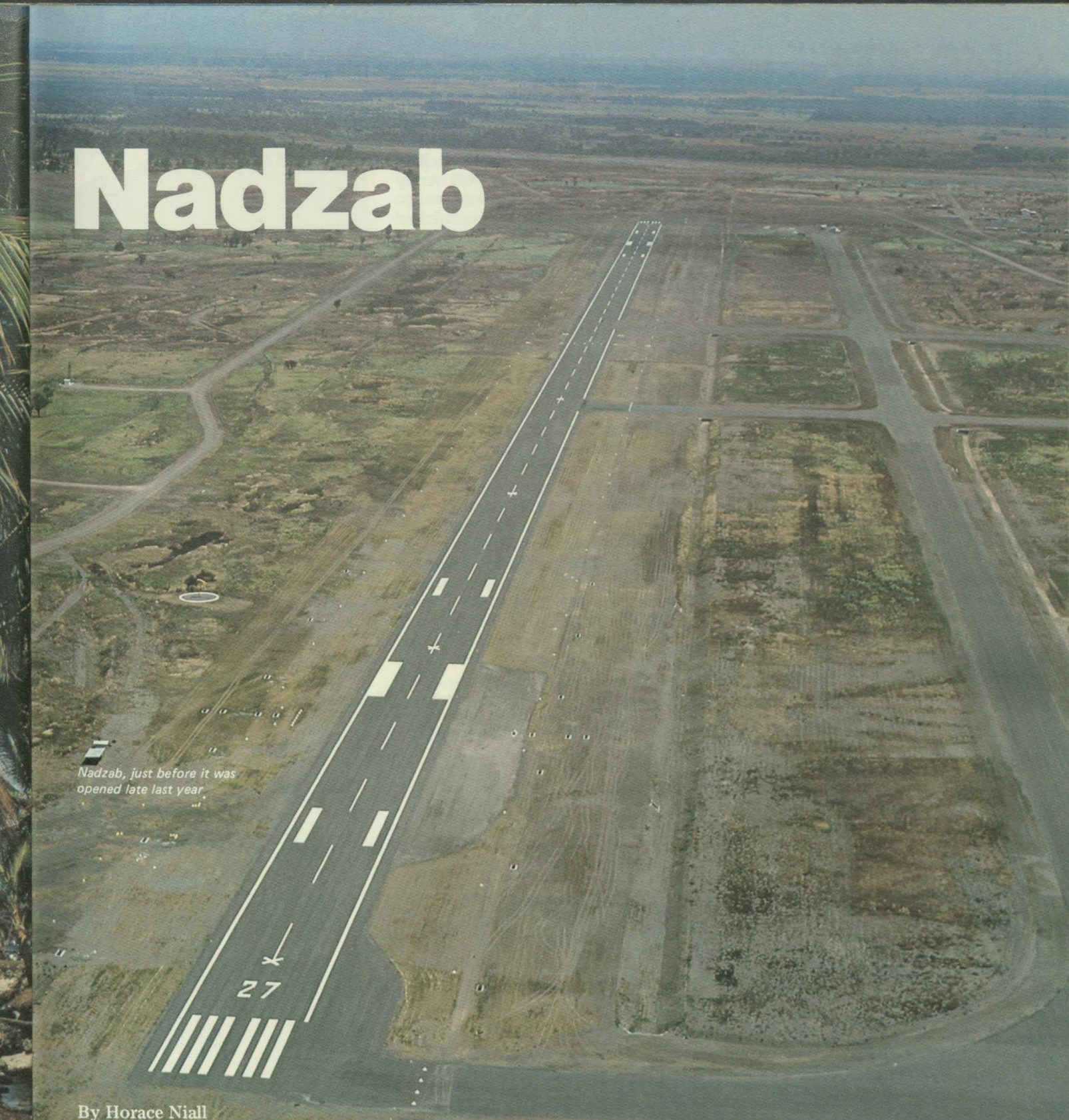
# Nadzab




*Nadzab, just before it was opened late last year.*

By Horace Niall

The first airfield in the Nadzab area of the Morobe Province's Markham Valley was established by the Lutheran Mission for use by small planes serving the mission station at Gabmatzung. It was not used very often and, after the outbreak of the Pacific War, it soon became overgrown with dense *kunai* grass.

It was with the capture of Japanese-occupied Lae in mind that the Allied forces decided to use the Nadzab area as a landing ground for Dakota and other aircraft. On September 5, 1943, about 1600 men of the 503rd American Parachute Infantry Regiment, with an Australian battery of 25-pounders, were dropped at Nadzab. The Americans were in 82 Dakota transports, the Australian gunners in five.

Before the attack, part of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion, with a Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) company and an Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (Angau) detachment with almost 1000 Papua New Guineans as carriers and labourers, had been assembled at Tsili Tsili airstrip in the Lower Watut area, to the southwest of Nadzab. The Angau detachment was under my command.

All of us made a three-day march from Tsili Tsili to a point overlooking the Markham River and almost

opposite the area where the paratroopers were to land. Before the drop, the site was heavily strafed by Mitchell bombers and fighter planes. At the same time the Lae airstrip was also coming under heavy bombardment. During the strafing large areas of *kunai* grass were set alight.

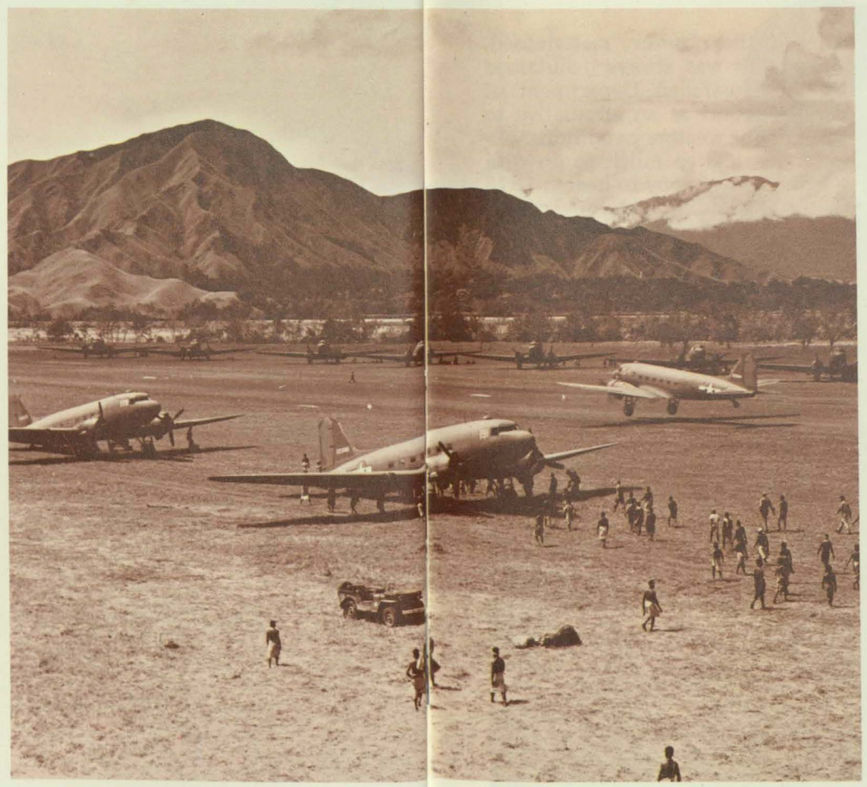
The paratroopers landed with no opposition. The overland troops and carriers crossed the Markham River just west of the junction with the Erap River but their progress to the drop area was held up because a track had to be cut through the tall *pitpit* (a wild sugarcane). By dark, only Lieutenant Colonel J.T. Lang, CO of the Pioneers, and myself had reached the site of the proposed new airstrip. Word was sent back along the track for all to sleep where they could and to be at the old airstrip site by first light.

This happened and by 7.30am I was able to report that, by a superhuman effort on the part of the Papua New Guinean labourers, the old strip was cleared and ready for planes to land on it. On hearing this, the 5th Air Force headquarters began moving troops of the Australian 7th Division, the first arrivals landing about 11.30 am. Cover for the incoming aircraft was provided by the US paratroopers.

*Within days of the September 5, 1943, landing, a major new airstrip had been laid*

The next day I was told to report to Colonel Price of the US Army engineers, who instructed me to accompany him to a site, marked on aerial photograph of the area, which appeared suitable for a large airstrip. We travelled at breakneck speed across country to the site of the present Nadzab airstrip. After driving up and down the proposed site a few times the colonel said he was satisfied it would be suitable. We then arranged for 50 labourers to be put to work clearing the *kunai* and other rubbish. A camp site, which is still recognisable, was selected for Angau personnel near the present turn-off from the Highlands Highway to the airport.

Grass knives and machetes were dropped and some large tractor drawn mowers were sent from Port Moresby. However, they could not be used until large stones and bush covering the area had been cleared. Then six bulldozers were flown in. They cleared a track as they drove



*Black dust, caused by burnt* kunai *grass, billows as C-47 takes off*

to the site of the planned strip. That track was almost in the same position as the track which today leads from the airport to the racecourse.

The 'dozers quickly levelled the area but in doing so they raised a pall of black dust, caused by the *kunai* having been set alight, which made working conditions unpleasant, especially as drinking water had to be carried several miles.

Another danger was the death adders which turned up by the score. Most were large and angry at being disturbed and each had to be caught and killed before work could proceed. Luckily no one was bitten and I think the adders helped augment the meat rations of some workers.

Next came the Marsden steel strip matting. The rate at which it was moved from its landing site and laid on the new strip by the US engineers was amazing. Great was the joy, two days after work had begun, when the first flight of Mitchell bombers landed. The strip had been tested by a few Dakota landings and a makeshift control tower, made from poles cut from the nearby bush and tied with wire and *kunai* vines, had been erected.

In the days that followed Lae was captured and the US 5th Air Force headquarters was moved from Port Moresby to Nadzab. Two more strips were prepared plus an emergency landing ground. Dispersal bays were made and connecting roads, most of which were sealed with bitumen flown from Port Moresby, were laid. An Australian Construction Squadron also built two strips near the entrance to the present day Nadzab airport for use by RAAF aircraft.

The main airstrip was, at first, used mostly by medium and heavy bombers such as Liberators and Flying Fortresses which were attacking Madang, Wewak, Rabaul and Hollandia (now Jayapura in West Irian). They came and went from dawn till dark. This went on until Hollandia was captured by US troops. The heavy aircraft were then moved to Hollandia, and to Morotai in the northern Moluccas.

Nadzab then became home to the Combat Replacement Training Centre (CRTC). Planes were flown in from Australia and the United States and the crews were given their final training before combat. Nadzab was in almost every respect an international airport. All day long one

*Douglas C-47 lands at Nadzab on September 11, 1943, while men sort out supplies dropped earlier*

could hear loudspeakers calling for passengers to Honolulu, Los Angeles, Australia, and many other faraway places.

Most air operations for the transport aircraft were controlled by civilians in uniform. One told me they were getting ready for the period after the war when they would be traffic controllers for US civil airlines. It must have been excellent training for them.

We were hoping to have the use of a lot of the army-built huts at Nadzab after the 5th Air Force moved on but to our disappointment nearly all were dismantled and flown to Hollandia. Only the concrete floors were left, many of which can be seen at Nadzab today.

The war over, Nadzab fell into disuse, nearly all air movements being made from Lae. Two years later the only sign of activity was at the 'graveyard' of dozens of wrecked Liberator and Fortress bombers plus a few Dakotas and fighter planes. These were bought by an enterprising group who set up a furnace, smelted down the pieces into ingots and shipped them from Lae at what was said to have been a very handsome profit.

It was sad to see the old bombers being chopped up. On their sides was a great selection of humorous paintwork — fancy names, markings signifying the number of missions, numbers of ships hit or sunk and other aircraft shot down in combat. Practically nothing is left today of the 'graveyard' which was at the western end of the present airstrip.

In 1962 the main strip at Nadzab was resealed by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Works and lengthened to make it suitable for Mirage fighters, even though they never materialised. However it was always maintained by the Australian Department of Civil Aviation as an alternative to Lae in poor weather conditions.

Having had so much to do with Nadzab I was happy to hear in 1973 that it was to be made operational again. I doubt that it will ever be as busy as it was from late 1943 to 1945 but I have a feeling in my bones that one day it will become the main international airport for Papua New Guinea.

*Lae airstrip, now closed except to light aircraft movements*

*Bush materials lent themselves to a precarious but practical control tower*

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# JEEPNEYS

Story and photographs
by Ulli Beier

To think of Manila is to think of jeepneys. No other feature of the Philippine capital is as gay, prominent or characteristic, as the brightly coloured, exuberant looking vehicles that go by the name of jeepney. Heavily decorated with chromium plate, bright paintings and aluminium cast horses and mirrors on the bonnet, they seem to dominate the traffic in the busy highways as well as in the suburbs of the capital.

Jeepneys seem so much an integral part of the city that it is now hard to imagine that they came into existence only after the end of the Pacific War. Before the war, most public transport in Manila consisted of smallish vehicles, drawn by two horses and carrying about 10 passengers.

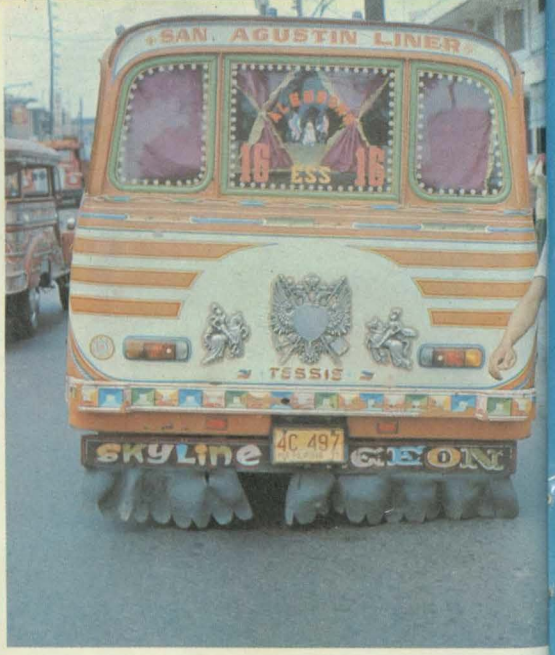
But the war caused a complete breakdown of the public transport system. Then the people got hold of discarded US army jeeps, repaired them, built new bodies and created their unique, individualised transport system. Some jeepneys of the early post-war years are still in circulation.

Nowadays the jeepneys are, of course, no longer vehicles rescued and revamped from army dumping grounds. They are now produced in small local factories and sell for Pesos 30-35,000. The engines are imported from Japan but every other part is produced locally.

The Francisco Motors Corporation jeepney factory employs 867 people and produces 10 bodies a day. Employees include welders, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, machine operators, mechanics, upholsterers and painters. The painters are trained on the job. Any one of the workers who feels he is talented in that direction might try to move into the painting section. Most have never done professional painting before. The Francisco factory produces two main types of bodies — 'streamline' and 'egg shape'. The latter is named after the bulging fender of the rear wheel, which looks like half an egg.

According to the amount of decoration supplied, the different models are graded standard, semi-deluxe, deluxe, and super-deluxe. The deluxe models have more chromium, more indivudal paintings and a larger number of horses and rear mirrors on the bonnet. Jeepneys decorated with as many as a dozen horses on the bonnet are not uncommon.

The aluminium cast horses are a reminder of the origin of the jeepney. They are, incidentally, not produced in the jeepney factories, but in small private metal casting


workshops. The client who wants to buy a jeepney will specify the amount of decoration he wishes to have. He may also commission some special painting on the side or back of the vehicle — his patron saint, his native town or perhaps a landscape or volcano from his home district. Often he has the name of his wife, girlfriend or daughter painted on the side of the jeepney.

Inscriptions on the flag dangling from the rear of the vehicle are most often the work of the driver rather than the owner of the vehicle. Usually they have to do with the driver's interest in girls. A few samples: *Eager to please! If you like love — get me! Lucky couch — treat me nice! Chick lover! Exclusive for Chicks only!* Drivers are also usually responsible for the temporary decorations such as streamers and flags.

A few jeepneys are owner-driven but many form part of a small fleet of three, four or as many as 20 owned by people who are gradually building up their transport trade. A driver pays the owner Pesos 50 a day to rent a jeepney.

Despite the popularity of the jeepney, there is talk that it may be banned. The main arguments against them are that petrol consumption is relatively higher in the jeepney than in big buses and that jeepneys block the traffic. The second argument is dubious because jeepneys are much more flexible than large buses and can manoeuvre more easily in heavy traffic. The first argument is valid but it is difficult to see how so many drivers and small businessmen could be deprived of a livelihood.

Jeepneys are so popular that currently the factories cannot supply the demand. Francisco factory reckons that it could sell three times as many if they could be produced quickly enough. Curiously, the Francisco factory is also producing a vehicle that competes with the jeepney — the Pinoy, a slightly smaller version of the jeepney but rather dull, angular and completely undecorated. Other jeepney factories are going in for undecorated, plain competitors of the jeepney. Examples are the Fiera and the Harabas, both quite unattractive. It is said, however, that in the provinces the Pinoys, Fieras and Harabas are being painted locally.

A more modest form of transport, though no less flamboyant than the jeepney, is the motorised tricycle. This was introduced from the South-east Asia mainland about 20 years ago. It is, perhaps, even more individualistic than the jeepney. The tricycle is almost always owner-driven and the decorations are usually added after they have left the factory. Most feature attractive paintings. Owners add elaborate sculptural decorations from discarded hub caps of cars.

Filipinos have achieved something that the Western world has forgotten: they have humanised the motor car. The jeepney is a genuine form of folk art. — *Professor Ulli Beier is director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.*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