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The Journal of the Queensland teachers who served in Papua New Guinea in the Royal Australian Army Educational Corps from 1966 to 1973

Editorial Team: Greg Ivey (Contact: greg_ivey @msn.com)
Ian Ogston (Contact: ozoggies@hotmail.com)

Our first volume of "Armi Wantoks Journal" for 2009 is an important one. It includes an address by Professor George Kearney at our annual barbeque at Norm Hunter's place. In this address, George gave us an insight into the political and social background that led to the decision to send us to Papua New Guinea. This address added immeasurably to our knowledge about the origins of the whole scheme.
As well, we have included a piece written by Bill Bailey. Bill is an old Chalkie who was posted to Goldie River in 1968/69. He is a recent contact for our group and has given his impressions of his time in PNG and also how his life has moved along since those days. Our thanks to Bill for this.

Do not forget the Anzac Day march in Brisbane which is rapidly approaching. The after-Anzac Day get together will be different this year as the Riverside venue is no longer available. You will soon be receiving information regarding this.
Ian and Greg

ADDRESS TO QUEENSLAND CHALKIES BY PROFESSOR GEORGE KEARNEY 18/10/2008

I initially went to PNG for the Australian National University to develop a program which would allow people to develop entrepreneurial skills. PNG was mainly a subsistence economy. With this system, you can never gain capital and therefore not be able to build infrastructure. The early programmes in 1963 put people on coffee and cocoa plantations mainly in the Northern District around Popondetta.

I completed my PhD at the University of Queensland and then the Army asked me if I would start a research unit in PNG. I had been in the Army Reserve as a Captain but promoted to Major to go to PNG. In 1966, I started on full-time duty. At this time there was a developing interest in Social Science in developing countries. Before this, it was the colonial mentality. You kept people in line. You could run a line of Gurkhas or the King's Own African Rifles or whatever to keep the locals from causing too much trouble.

It was clear that this was never going to happen in Papua New Guinea. First of all, we had the limitation of the fact that we had 1/3 of the known languages of the world. There were over 800 different languages - not dialects, but genuinely different languages. As well, a policy developed by the Australian Army that they did not want to develop the same sort of colonial military service as existed in Africa, in India and other parts of the Empire. These systems were built around single tribal groups becoming a regiment. They had, for example, in India a Gurkha Regiment, a Sikh regiment and so on. It would have been the easiest thing in the world to do that in PNG - a Tolai Regiment, a Hanuabadan Regiment and the like. What they decided was that because of the great diversity of the country, there was a critical need to bind the country together. Secondly, there was the problem of the Confrontation with Indonesia. They needed people for border patrols who had some semblance of a variety of languages. This meant that they tried to get as many languages as they could to be represented in the Army. This all added up to immense difficulties. From the point of view of an educationalist, it meant that the task was increased dramatically. It would have been very easy to recruit people down at Koki

Market or anywhere else, filled the Army with them and given them all a Standard 6 education. That, however, would not have worked because the next thing that would have happened would have been the same thing that happened in Africa. That is, that a group of Tolais or whoever all of a sudden decide that the civil government is not very good or too slack. So what do they do? They say to themselves, "We can run this country better than those people. We will do the job properly." So immediately, you have a coup. This was one of the real fears that the Army had.

So there was a real problem that the government faced. We had had several mutinies and these were of significance. One of the worst and probably the most frightening occurred when the battalion at Taurama had two of its soldiers arrested by the police. To the PIR, this was an absolute affront. That these rubbish policemen would take two soldiers away and put them in Bomana Prison was absolutely unacceptable. The battalion as a whole marched through the gate, walking straight over the officers who tried to stop them. That was frightening as this had never happened before. They were all steamed up and they wanted to get their comrades back. They were able to get down to the Four Mile on the corner of Murray Barracks and the shops where they were eventually stopped by an old kiap called Tom Ellis. He managed to stop them and calm them down and get them back to the barracks. This was the first indication that the soldiers might not see themselves as being responsible to the civil authorities. That was a frightening area to go into.

So what was this all about? First of all, the police were not well-trained but the military was. Had they taken weapons they could have overrun Port Moresby without any trouble at all. No one could have stopped them. That really frightened us.

There were also a couple of other mutinies. This begged the question, "What do we do about this?" Our Army Psychology Corps had been involved since the early days because there had been, at Goldie River, a very high waste rate at training. We had lost 20% of the people in the initial recruit training. This was far too high. It had the dual effects of the shame that went with failure to be trained as a soldier, the difficulty of going back to your community along with the huge cost of getting back to the distant and widespread home areas of these men. Flying for a couple of days and walking for a couple more back to their homes was immensely expensive. At the time, we had two psychology officers - one involved with promotion and selection and that sort of thing. I was the other and I was trying to look at the social impediments that might affect the military from becoming an

independent army. It was a small unit - one major, one captain and a sergeant. The other officer was Dennis Armstrong who later wrote the thesis on Chalkies in PNG (see *Armi Wantoks* Journal 2/2008).

The man who had the big vision was the Brigadier in the mid-1960s, Ian Murray Hunter. He saw clearly, and he knew absolutely, that you could not use the military to put down civil disturbances. If you tried to use the Army as a punitive, coercive force you would fail. Once that happened, the civil government failed because there would then be no way of holding the problems in place. If you think how many divisions that Australia and the Japanese had to employ on Bougainville alone during the war, you would realise that one battalion of troops had no hope whatsoever of controlling things. This meant that we had to come up with a much better understanding of what we were doing. Hunter had the view that when soldiers went off on patrol, they became very involved in civic action. They would teach people how to build wells and basic sanitation. They aimed to leave them a little better off than they were when they arrived. They were not to be seen as a frightening force in the area.

The work I was involved with was to try to identify where we were going to achieve this. One of the first things was to reinforce the concept that soldiers had a civic responsibility. Therefore, a big part of Army Education was the teaching of Civics. The second part was the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy.

So Hunter went down to Canberra to the Chief of General Staff and they got an agreement that they would take as many Army educators as possible to PNG to become instructors. National Servicemen who were selected were guaranteed promotion to Sergeant and a teaching role in PNG. It was a big input. It meant that Education was the biggest Corps other than the battalions (1 and 2 PIR) in PNG Command. This happened because Hunter had taken the view that if we could stabilise the Army and make it realise its civil and civic responsibilities, then we had a chance of that Army being useful when independence came.

You have to remember, at the time, there was immense pressure from the U.N. and we were obliged to meet the timetable that they had proposed. This catapulted the country towards independence.

At the end of the day, we knew that the Army was going to be successful. We did not want a takeover of the civil government. Australia only had one purpose in being in PNG and that was to ensure that we had a friendly neighbour on our doorstep. That is really what foreign affairs is all about. So the attempt was to leave it in as strong a position as we could and

support it with big sums of money to try to keep it a stable country.
Since then, things have gone a little bit differently because there have been some attempted military coups and, as well, PNG has been described as being the third most corrupt country in the world. This is quite amazing because in the 1960's there was no evidence of corruption of any sort. It was totally foreign.
In the sixties, you could walk down to Boroko and do some shopping in the evening. When I was back in the eighties every shop there was barred and boarded up. The whole thing had deteriorated. Also, it had become the way that you could not board a plane unless there was a ten kina note inside the ticket that you passed over the counter.
So the role of Army Education was central to the concept that the Australian Government had for creating a stable and responsible military that would work cooperatively with the civil administration. This was critical to a successful, independent Papua New Guinea. Given the passage of time, you have every reason to be proud of the work you did while you were serving in this
country.

REFLECTIONS ON GOLDIE RIVER AND LIFE THEREAFTER

Bill Bailey

Exactly forty years ago, I was based at the PNG Training Depot at Goldie River as a Chalkie - a National Serviceman with the rank of Temporary Sergeant in the Royal Australian Army Educational Corps. Looking back now, I can honestly say that my posting to Goldie River was one of the most enjoyable and influential experiences of my life.

Getting to Goldie was achieved by enduring the normal obstacles imposed by the Army; recruit training at Puckapunyal, Infantry Corps training at Singleton, Educational Corps training at Middle Head and then a posting to the Army Apprentices' School at Balcombe where I marked time until I was due to go to Papua New Guinea. With hindsight, although I might not have said so at the time, all of these postings taught me a lot about myself and provided me with skills and experiences I might not have had if I had remained as a relatively poorly educated special education teacher from Melbourne.

In November 1968, I was the last of my group to arrive at Goldie River and as a consequence, apart from my fair share of teaching assignments, I inherited the two additional responsibilities none of the others wanted: looking after the Unit library and managing the Sergeant's Mess bar. While both were time-consuming, they had their advantages. Today, if I had the opportunity, I could tap a keg or classify a book!

My day-to-day life at Goldie was reasonably routine; doing a stock-take of the bar every morning, conducting a few teaching lessons (a really minimal load), looking after the library and annoying Nasho officers by not saluting them at every opportunity they thought necessary. The senior officer in the Education Unit at Goldie, Captain Dick Robinson, was a very nice man and although very keen on military life (he later transferred to the infantry corps) he was affable and put up with our peculiarities with friendship and

humour.

Life at Goldie was not all work, though - far from it. Our little group involved ourselves in a number of extra-mural activities to help pass the time. Most notably we participated in the Port Moresby Arts Council's production of "Lock Up Your Daughters". While I looked after the lighting for the production, the more musical among us joined the cast. One of these Chalkie colleagues was Bernard Neeson, later known as Doc Neeson, lead singer in the "Angels".

We also took every opportunity to travel to other destinations in Papua New Guinea when the occasion presented itself. Luckily we were able to visit Rabaul and Lae on some Army business. I cannot recall exactly what sort of business it was. Perhaps it was just a "swan" as I remember we travelled on a Caribou sitting side-saddle in webbing seats. Other trips we organised ourselves were a memorable weekend to the Trobriand Islands, a few days in Mt. Hagen including a scary drive into the Baiyer River valley, and a trip by lakatoi down the Papuan coast to a village at Paramana Point.

One of the most life-affecting things I did while I was a Chalkie at Goldie was to enrol in the newly opened University of Papua New Guinea where, with two of my colleagues, I studied Anthropology and Sociology. As I had not matriculated (having entered Teacher' College with a meagre Leaving Certificate) I had to do an intelligence test before I was accepted. While the course was extremely interesting, it also had an effect on my life after the Army. As I had been successful in the course at the UPNG, the Australian National University granted me matriculation status and enrolled me as an undergraduate. I was lucky enough to be awarded a Services Vocational and Educational Training Scholarship - courtesy of my National Service - to pay for my first year, a "later years" Commonwealth Scholarship looked after the other two years.

Having attended ANU to do my degree, I stayed in Canberra. I first taught at the AME School - a progressive school - and I then went on to work as an educational psychologist and later as an administrator with the ACT Schools Authority. My last teaching assignment was in Canberra as a deputy principal at Belconnen High School.

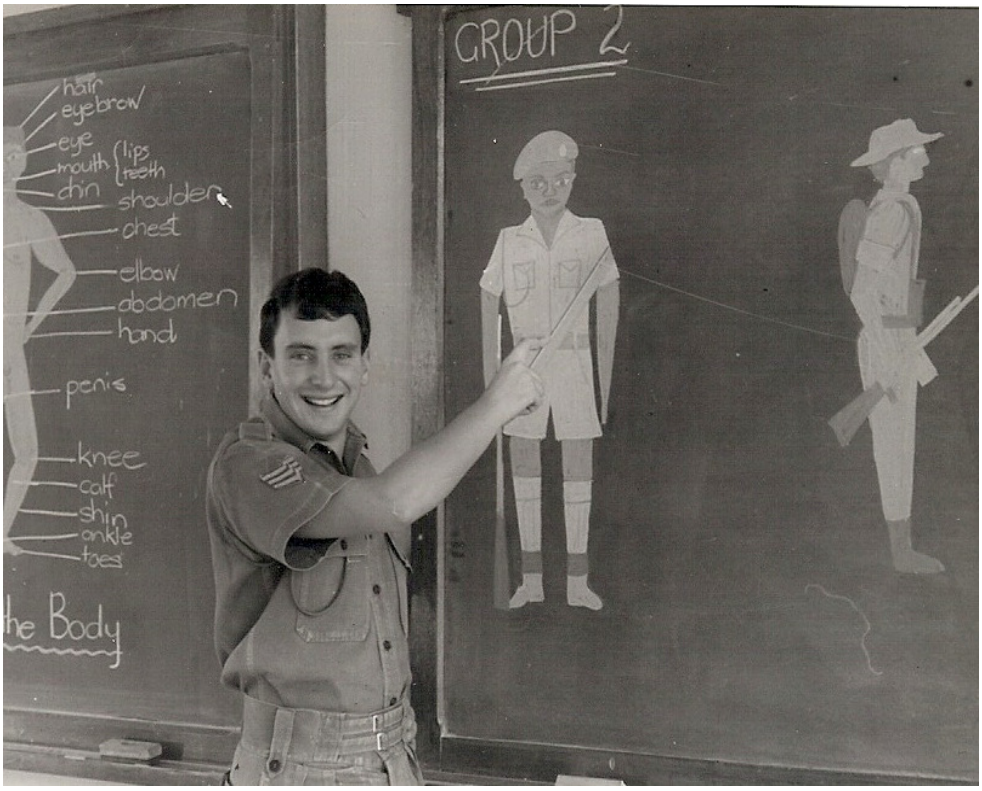
I have to confess that I defected from teaching in 1991 to join the Australian

Sports Commission as Manager of Policy and International Relations. During my time in the education system, I had developed an interest in school sport and had become involved as an official and team manager in the sport of athletics at the national level. So the move into sports administration was not too dramatic. My experience at the Sports Commission and athletics let to my being appointed as Athletics Competition Manager for the Sydney Olympic Games. This was a full-time position that I occupied for over five years and was a wonderful, if not at time frustrating and challenging, experience.

Following the Sydney Olympic Games I became the Executive Director of the Oceania Athletics Association - a position that took me back to Port Moresby on a couple of occasions. I regret to say that the Port Moresby I knew in 1968-69 no longer exists. The carefree, laidback approach of those days has been replaced by an ominous feeling of threat.

I resigned from the workforce in 2003 and now spend most of my time as a volunteer in the sport of athletics at the international level. I am a member of the Council of the International Association of Athletics Federations - representing the Oceania Area - and I travel the world advising those involved in the organisation and staging of major international competitions. I did so as Technical Delegate for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens and the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and will do so again for the 2012 Olympic Games in London (having just received my appointment).

On a personal note, I now live with my partner of 36 years, David, on the Gold Coast where we are enjoying our “golden years”. Our major interest is travelling in south-east Asia, particularly Bali, where we help support our adopted family - Budi, his wife Onik and their two daughters, Monica and Alena. The kids call us both “Kakek‘- grandfather.



Bill as a Chalkie at Goldie River 1968-69

Bill with Cathy Freeman and Danii Minogue in 2004