

# ARMI WANTOKS JOURNAL

**VOL 1/12**

**Journal of the Australian Teachers Who Served in  
Papua New Guinea 1966-1973**

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## **EDITORS' NOTE**

Welcome to the first edition of Army Wantoks Journal for 2012. The principal aim of this Journal is to tell the stories of the Chalkies who did their National Service in PNG in the RAAEC. All day-to-day organisational detail will, in future, be sent to you in our newly instituted 'Newsletter'.

We live in rather exciting times! As a result of the extraordinary diligence of Terry Edwinsmith, we have been able to contact many more Chalkies. For those of you receiving this Journal for the first time, we welcome you to our network and trust you will enjoy the association. The purpose of the network is to tell the Chalkie story so if you are able to contribute your account of your time in PNG (and after), please contact me and we will publish it either in this journal or our website ([www.nashospng.com.au](http://www.nashospng.com.au)). It is only through the broad range of accounts of experiences in PNG will the complete story be told.

The other exciting thing that is happening is the developing new awareness of the origins of the scheme. We now find our earlier attribution to the beginnings of the scheme to Brigadier Ian Murray Hunter is not correct. This story is continuing to unfold and will be the subject of a future Armi Wantoks Journal when we hope to be more definitive about who was responsible for this scheme that was so significant in our lives.

Much of the credit for this goes to Dan Winkel who we have only recently contacted (thanks Peter Darmody). Dan has been generous with his time and his knowledge to allow this to happen. Dan was, of course, well-known to

many of you as the organiser of many trips to all parts of PNG. He tells his story in the article below.

The other article in this edition was written by John Morris (Goldie River 1970/71). It attracted our attention because of the detail John was able to remember about his time as a Chalkie in PNG.

We hope you enjoy both of these articles.

Ian and Greg

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## **THE STORY OF DAN WINKEL'S TOURS**

(As told by Dan himself at the Kenmore Tavern - March 2012)



Dan Winkel

**Q.** Dan, you have come through in many of the stories of the Chalkies as the organiser of many of the tours throughout PNG taken by the Chalkies. These, in fact, were highlights of their time in PNG. Can you give us the story of these tours?

**DW.** These were the circumstances where I came to be providing trips for

National Servicemen and others to see parts of New Guinea that were not otherwise available to them.

The first lot of National Servicemen arrived in August 1966. One member of this group (whose name I cannot remember), was the son of a member of the Victorian Legislative Council. This man held a fairly senior position here and was a good mate of Malcolm Fraser who was the Minister for the Army at the time. There may even have been family connections. This young fellow wrote home to his dad and said, 'This place is terrible. We have chicken coops for accommodation and we cannot go anywhere as there is no public transport. If we want to go to Port Moresby we have to walk. It really is terrible.'

The father took these complaints very seriously. He thought that they had taken his son up there as a sergeant and treated him really poorly when he could have been an officer. So, he rang up his mate Malcolm Fraser and told him how bad it was up in PNG. This would have been in late November of that year. 'Hound Dog' Payne (Lt.Col. Allen Payne - Assistant Director of Army Education) had taken over by this stage.

I went up to his office one morning as I usually did and he said, 'Come in, Dan and sit down. Look at this,' he said and showed me this sheet of paper from AHQ instructing him to do something for these young National Servicemen. He told me that I had to go down to the Chalkies, get them to elect a leader, sit him down and find out what they wanted.

This I did and he was able to report to me that they wanted to do a bit of reef fishing, see native villages, visit a native school and finally they said they wanted to see a volcano.

So, instead of going back to see 'Hound Dog' Payne, I went up to the mess and found the skipper of the Army work boat in Port Moresby. He said he would be happy to take the Chalkies out if I could get approval and authority from the relevant officers.

Then, I went back to 'Hound Dog' that afternoon and told him that they would like to go fishing and that I had talked to the skipper of the work boat and he was prepared to take them out. At that, 'Hound Dog' said, 'I'll be in a day's fishing, no problem at all.'

I said, 'We'll take them out one Saturday'.

'No, no, no,' he answered, 'we'll go out on Wednesday.'

I suggested that they all put in \$5.00 each to cover the cost of meat for a bar-b-que and beer. Again, he said, 'No, no. no. They are entitled to full rations and they should not have to pay anything.'

In the end, we did three or four of those trips out into the waters near Port Moresby.

Anyway, then they wanted to see a volcano.

There was, at that time, a RAAF contingent in Port Moresby - a squadron leader, pilot officer, flight sergeant and so on. I was walking back to the mess one day and I happened to meet the Squadron Leader. I said to him, 'I have a bit of a problem and I wonder if you could help me. You have Caribous down there at the airport and I have a bunch of National Servicemen who would like to do a flight to a volcano. Could you help us out?'

'No, no,' he said, 'we couldn't use the Caribous for that. There are, however, all of those DC-3's sitting down there. Hire one of them and I'll give you someone to fly them.'

So, I checked around and was able to get a hold of one of these from TAA. The organisation proceeded and we all assembled down at the airfield early in the morning ready for our flight. We could not believe it but the Squadron Leader turned up with a pilot officer ready to fly our plane!! He said that this would be the last chance he would get to fly a DC-3 and he was not going to let that opportunity go by.

So, off we went down the coast and then into the Owen Stanleys. We reached our volcano, Mt Victoria, and we must have flown around it half a dozen times! After that we went to Popondetta, landed, had breakfast and then later went down around Milne Bay. We landed again and had some tucker and a few beers. About 1 o'clock the Squadron Leader said that we would have to get moving because the storms were starting to build up. So we all filed back in again and away we went. It took less than an hour to come back to Moresby.

Later on, I did about four flights to Popondetta which included the volcano visit.

Another popular one was the Goroka trip. We used DC-3's with side-saddle seating and could take about 35 people. The cost of the flight was \$20 to \$25 each. On weekend trips, accommodation was occasionally made available at the drill halls of the PNGVR.

Over the three-year period I was in PNG, we used to do a trip around about one every month. There was even a trip from Port Moresby to Singapore using a British Airways Comet. However, it was not a success and I lost money on it.

Overall, we used to do about 10 or 11 trips a year covering a wide range of places such as Popondetta, Goroka, Mt. Hagen, Lae, Madang, Rabaul, Bulolo, Yuile Island, Kerema, Milne Bay, Kavieng, Tarpini and the Trobriands.

Before I left, I found a bloke at Taurama who indicated he would continue the flights. I gave him my book with all of the information needed to run them but it seems that further trips did not eventuate.

*(Editor's Note: We are aware that further trips were organised very late in the Nasho Chalkie period by Doug Rathbone, possibly 1971/72. If anybody would like to write about these, do not hesitate to contact us.)*

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### **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GOLDIE CHALKIE**

***In many ways, Goldie River was the 'forgotten' posting for Australian Chalkies. It was separated from Port Moresby by 30 kilometres of rough road and certainly not located on an exotic coastal location. However, each year of the Chalkie scheme, five or six National Servicemen were sent there to carry out the educational requirements of the Army.***

***John Morris was sent to Goldie in 1970/71 and has written his account of his time there. We have included an excerpt from his writing which deals with the detail of life as an Education Sergeant in this fairly remote posting. We are sure you will identify with such memories as the sweat marks on the overhead projector slides!***

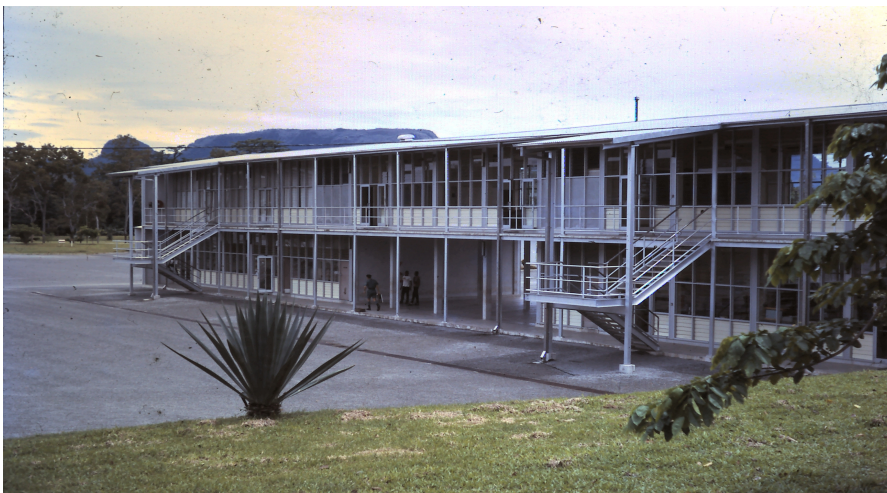


***John Morris***

It was the radio that woke me at 6.00am each day (being so close to the Equator it was twelve hours of sunshine and the equivalent in darkness). A song in English crackled across the airwaves 'Papua New Guinea, your day has begun, natives are watching the rise of the sun'..... that's all I can remember after forty years!!!! The news would be initially read in English, followed by Pidgen and to round off the broadcast, Police Motu. By the time the news was over I could see the recruits lined up outside their barracks ready to be issued with their Paludrine tablets (designed to suppress any malaria in the body) by the duty corporal, supervised by a sergeant. My early morning journey was out of the room and down for 'ablutions' as it was referred to in the army. Returning from this task it was on with the juniper greens (ensuring my boots and puttees were clean) and down for breakfast in the Mess. I quickly learnt that the only milk available was powdered milk so it was a cooked breakfast each day along with a cup of tea and my two Paludrine tablets. The menu was written out using numbers so if you wanted scrambled eggs and bacon you would say "Number 3'. Sometimes the menu would vary and having built up a good relationship with the serving boys, I would ask them about the new menu item. If it was a good option they would nod their head but if it was not very good, they would reply 'Number 10!!!!!!'. Back to 'Number three'!!!!!!

Once breakfast was over we sometimes moved to the lounge to read the Port Moresby paper or the occasional Australian paper. Time for a brief chat to other breakfast 'dwellers' and then back to the room, to get ready for a day's work. If you were the duty sergeant for the day, you were required to wear a red sash and have your lunch and tea in the orderly room with the duty officer. Work commenced at 8.00am. The day worked on a high school timetable, fifty minutes teaching and a ten minute break. Whilst at Taurama, we observed some PIR soldiers wearing a badge that reflected the degree to which they could speak English. So it was not surprising, in our initial months anyway, that we would forgo our cuppa and get the recruits to teach us significant words in Pidgen. This also assisted in cementing a good teacher-student relationship and somebody suggested we develop our own Pidgen badges!!!!!!

## Goldie River Education Centre





All lessons were taught using 'English As A Second Language' approach. Each student had his own book and the necessary stationery while class sizes ranged from fifteen to twenty (again, going from memory!!). As the only primary teacher, I was allocated the recruits who had the least understanding of the English language. My lessons in Social Studies and Mathematics were few and far between. It did not take long to work out the differing physical characters of the students and soon I could tell the boys from the Highlands (Wabag, Goroko, Chimbu, Mt Hagan – all muscle!!) from the tribes living close to the sea (Sepik, Lae, Rabaul and the Trobriand Islands as well as people from the Fly River area.) Many of the Highlanders were not natural swimmers as compared to their lowland counterparts. Also the influence and time spent with Europeans reflected on their ability to speak English. With over 700 different languages (due to mountainous terrain and valleys) and dialects, the soldiers would often possess a tribal name and also a Christian name and, depending on their geographical location, many spoke place talk, Pidgin (New Guinea section) or Police Motu (Papuan side) with a smattering of varying degrees of English. Some early words of Pidgin I learnt were, 'How much Christmas belong you?' That gave a rough indication of their age. During the Australian winter months, our classrooms were often visited by colonels and brigadiers to see how we were going. I felt it was more that they wanted to get away from the cooler weather down south so their visits were known as 'swans'. With the top brass drifting in and out I had no fear when I returned to teaching after my discharge and having the principal or district inspector in my classroom!!!!

The only real teaching aid was the advent of the Overhead Projector. Slide preparation did take some time and often my slides had smudge marks from the sweat off my arms because of the heat and humidity. However, I was 'privileged' to use an epidiascope (a machine that would project the page of a book onto a screen – the forerunner to a data projector) as my classroom tended to be the one with the curtains.

During the luncheon break it was back to the Sergeants' Mess. Morning and afternoon tea breaks were taken in the Education building where our beloved George, a Waban 'warrior', delighted in making us our tea or coffee according to our requests. A gentle and shy man, with a sense of humour, George would do anything for you. At one stage during our year he disappeared, later to reappear as a labourer. We all developed a great rapport with George.



John at Goldie in 1970 in 'anti-mosquito rig'. (See below.)

Our last lessons for the day finished at 4.00pm. For both Ian and I it was back to the Sergeants' Mess to change for tennis. With the sun dropping behind the hill just before 6.00pm it was time for a shower and dress in long sleeves, plus a tie and long trousers (as promulgated by the Army) to guard against the bite of the malaria carrying mosquitoes. In the mess, it was the same routine as for breakfast - order by numbers. After our meal we usually had a chat in the lounge area that included a bar. Neither Ian nor I were interested in South Pacific green or brown so often it was a cool drink and a chat to Neville or the other barmen. Of major interest was the topic of independence as the Highlands barmen, whose villages had only had contact from Europeans since the 1930s, were keen to find out what this meant. Not an easy topic due to our language barrier!!! Usually, by about 7.30pm, it was back to our rooms to engage in writing letters to family and girlfriends. Both Ian and I enrolled in a correspondence course through the University of Queensland. I lasted one assignment in Economics while Ian demonstrated greater application and finished the year. If you wanted to telephone Australia, it required a booking at the Orderly Room so these calls were saved for special occasions – birthdays, anniversaries and Christmas.

Friday night was the exception when the outdoor movies were shown. Families gathered for this regular outing and for the wives and children of the PI sergeants and WOs this was probably the highlight of the week. It was always a concern to me the percentage of the PIs fortnightly pay that was spent on alcohol especially on this night. Throughout the year there was also Christmas and 'Territory Night' where often a pig was cooked in the traditional way.

About once a month all sergeants were rostered on duty for twenty four hours with a duty officer. Meals were taken in the orderly room and both duty personnel were required to sleep there. Prior to 6.00pm we were required to change into our jungle greens and place striped epaulets (one of the PI sergeants told me that this was pek pek belong Goldie) on our shoulders as well as wearing the red sash. Usually it was a fairly routine duty, raising the Australian flag at 6.00am and lowering it twelve hours later and dealing with any arrivals after hours.

Our other duty was to observe the PI corporals issuing the Paludrine tablets at 6.00am each morning. For some reason, I missed one of my duties and had to answer to Captain Nelson. He was not a popular officer amongst the education sergeants but I proved guilty as charged. I knew this would result in two additional sergeant duties and I was not surprised when they turned out to be Christmas and New Year days. Christmas Day was routine but New Year's Eve was something else!!! The duty officer rostered on with me was a PI and I thought I would never see the night through. When we both visited the Other Ranks wet canteen at about 11.00pm most soldiers there were 'spark pinis algeta.' (drunk). They had gathered anything that they could bang together to make a deafening noise (garbage bins and lids were plentiful). This was the first time I had confronted such a situation and I looked to the PI officer for leadership and my own survival. Somehow we managed the group and 6.00am 1 January 1971 could not come



quick enough for me. I never missed any duties again!!!!

*(Editors' Note: John's full article is available on our website - [nashospng.com.au](http://nashospng.com.au). John returned to Australia in 1971 and pursued a career in the NSW Education Department retiring as principal of Bowral Public School in 2009. His references to 'Ian' are to none other than to yours truly.)*



**GOLDIE RIVER**

(Editor's Note: Thanks to Terry Edwinsmith for standing in as proof reader for this AWJ while Greg has been away at distant and exotic locations in the South Pacific.)

