

ARMI WANTOKS JOURNAL

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EDITORS' NOTE

In our final Armi Wantoks Journal for the year, I should like to include an important piece of writing that Lt. Col. Roger Jones put together earlier in the year. Roger was the Assistant Director of Army Education in PNG from 1967 to 1969 and close to the decision-makers both in PNG and in Canberra. This has given him a unique insight into the way in which this scheme is likely to have been developed.

Roger also gives credit to Dan Winkel for his contribution to his perceptions of the origins of the scheme which had such a significant impact on us and the soldiers of PNG.

This Armi Wantoks Journal concludes with a review of '*Taim Bilong Misis bilong Armi*' by Greg. This is a book well worth looking at especially after the fascinating and remarkable session run by Chalkie wives, Lesley Boddington and Lindy Horton at our recent Reunion.

If you have not had a look at our website (www.nashospng.com) recently, we suggest you go in and check it out. Frank Cordingley has added some rather spectacular banner photos to each of the pages.

We would also like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy festive season. Next year brings the promise of more steps in the development of the Chalkie story and more contacts with others who served in PNG in this scheme.

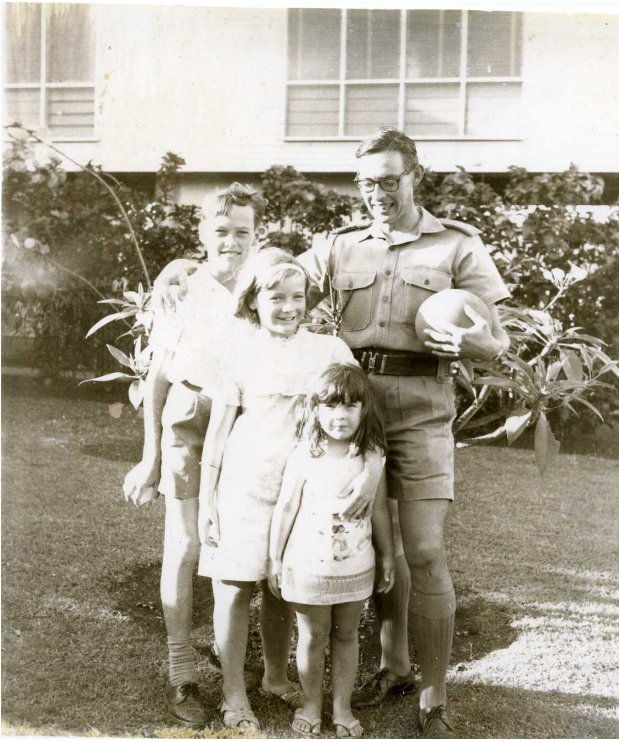
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THE ORIGINS OF THE ‘CHALKIES’ SCHEME

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROGER JONES

(Assistant Director of Army Education, PNG 1967 - 1969)



Lt. Col. Jones with his children in Port Moresby 1967.

I believe the scheme originated about 1965 and was promoted and developed very rapidly not long before the first National Service Chalkies appeared in PNG in late 1966. While I had argued earlier that the scheme was mainly another outcome of Australia's early-1960s drive to increase the defence capabilities of the PIR in the light of uncertainty about Indonesia's intentions 'over the border', I now believe that there were more complex issues at work.

A bit of necessary background: in the 1960s, it was not just Indonesia that was causing some concern in Australia. There seemed to be a growing instability in the whole of South-East Asia. We already had troops involved

in the 'Malayan emergency,' and in the first half of 1965, the Australian Government had announced: that some of those troops would be re-deployed to Borneo; that an Australian battalion would be committed to Vietnam; and that defence needs required the *National Service Act* to be amended to make National Servicemen liable for 'overseas service'. Indeed, the first National Servicemen were to leave for Vietnam only about three months before the first National Service Chalkies arrived in TPNG.

But there was already a not-insignificant regular element of the RAAEC in PNG, clearly as part of the reformatations introduced after the outbreak of indiscipline in the PIR in January, 1961. 2PIR was authorised to be raised in September 1963 (actually raised in 1965), although a later authorised third battalion was never eventuated. Also, indigenous officers were coming through Portsea. (There were some 30 in PIR by 1970.)

While there was a need for a further increase in indigenous officer production (being addressed through the pre-officer programs at Goldie River and later at Igam Barracks in Lae), the much broader civics program made possible through the Chalkies scheme is evidence of another 'driver'. It is my belief that it arose primarily out of the recognition within the Army of the rapidly-approaching PNG self-government and later independence-which the Australian government and PNG Administration were denying-and the need to ensure as far as possible that the indigenous army in such a nation would be less tempted to follow the path of so many armies in 'broken-backed' post-colonial states elsewhere.

It seems, then, that the Chalkies scheme had its origins in mid-1965.

Earlier that year, Brigadier A. L. MacDonald (whose background included command of an RAR battalion in Korea, Director of Military Operations in Army Headquarters and service in Bangkok as SEATO Planning Officer) had been appointed Commander in the newly-established PNG Command. He later became Chief of the General Staff and, on retirement, General Chief of the Defence Force Staff.

In mid-1965, an RAAEC Regular, Major Henry Keppel Dachs, was posted to HQ TPNG Command as DADAE. Henry was a Queensland-trained teacher who had worked in TPNG in Administration schools before joining the RAAEC and had subsequently served frequently with the Corps in PNG

prior to his DADAЕ appointment under MacDonald in 1965.

Henry was not popular in the RAAEC, having the reputation of being rather 'difficult', and he retired early as a rather disgruntled member, but he certainly had strong views on what he believed both the Army and the Administration were doing wrong in TPNG. He believed that the Army's education program should be expanded for the future benefit of the Territory. He also seems to have 'had the ear' of MacDonald, both when the latter was in TPNG and later in Canberra.

None of this, of itself, would necessarily lead to the supposition that MacDonald and Dachs between them 'hatched' the Chalkies scheme but for what happened shortly after MacDonald departed on promotion to Canberra - being followed in PNG Command by Brigadier Hunter.

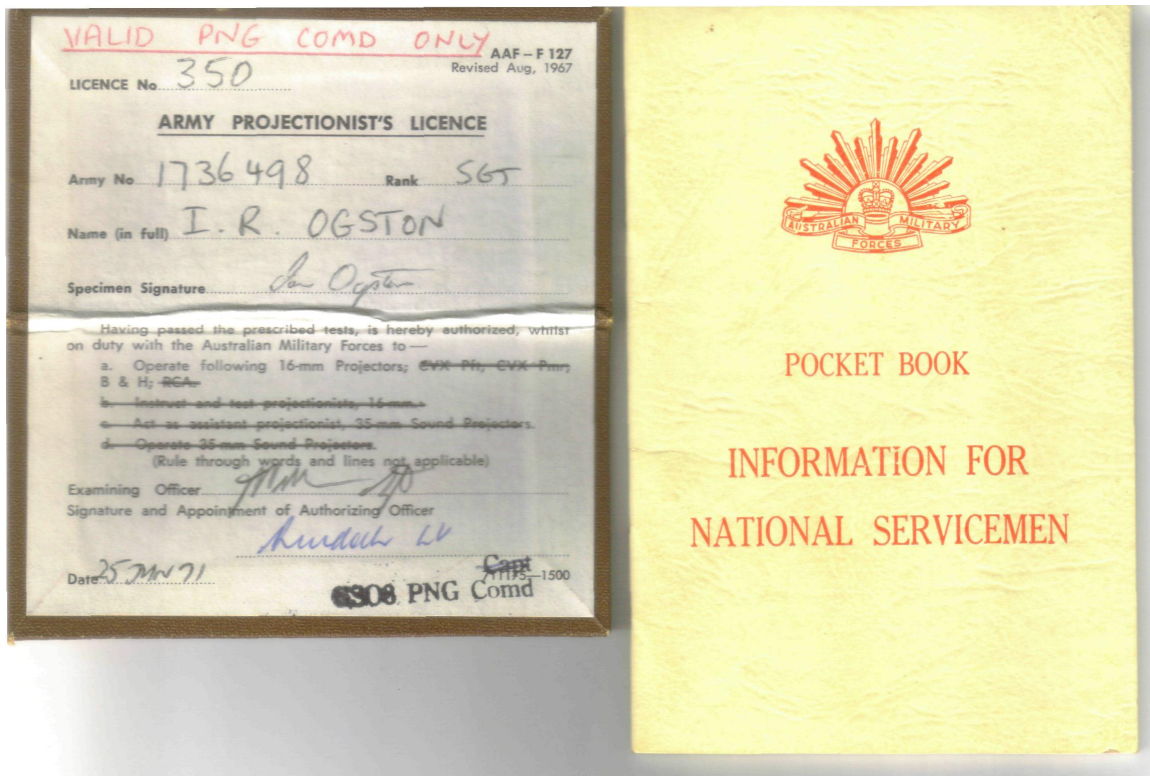
In early 1966, Brigadier Maurice Austin headed a small team which visited TPNG with the object of reviewing the case which had been made for a substantial increase in RAAEC staffing. He interviewed Dachs and is understood to have recommended the 'diversion' of trained NS teachers to TPNG. That recommendation was clearly acted upon very rapidly and at a time when the Army was struggling with both National Service training and its operational requirements. Indeed, I am sure that such a 'diversion' would have had to have been 'cleared' at a much higher level, and possibly the DCGS and Adjutant-General themselves.

All of those mentioned above have now deceased so we cannot seek personal confirmation of this supposition. However, I submit that a strong case does exist for a belief that the Chalkies scheme originated with MacDonald and Dachs in TPNG and was largely 'driven' by MacDonald and Austin in Canberra. As well, I cannot help feeling that somewhere behind all of this lurks the strong possibility of an indirect influence on the whole process by the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) at Middle Head in Sydney.

MEMORABILIA

Greg's Memorabilia table at the Reunion prompted a 'rabbiting' around my dusty archives and the following turned up:

1. 'Pocket Book - Information for National Servicemen' (3rd Edition 1969)
I have no idea why this survived the ebb and flow of my life but it did. All you need to know about being in the Army is contained in this book including pay rates. Interestingly, a copy of this book is in the Australian War Memorial display on National Service in Australia. How many of you still have this relic of the past?



2, The other document is my Army Projectionist licence (valid PNG only - in RED!!!). This brings back a few memories of the Westerns shown to great acclaim in the Goldie River hall. How many of you achieved the lofty heights of Army Projectionist (PNG Command Only)!!

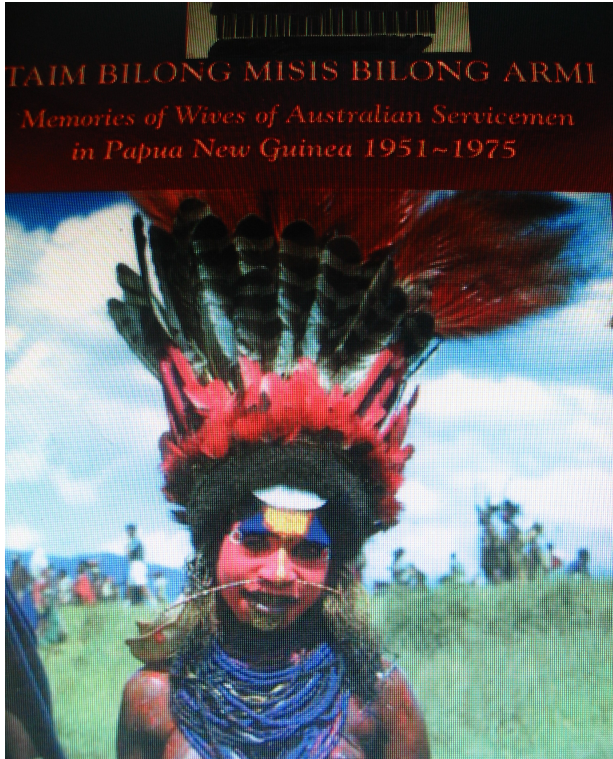
BOOK REVIEW

By Greg Ivey

TAIM BILONG MISIS BILONG ARMI

Compiled by S. Lloyd, M. Jeffrey and J. Hearn

(Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2001)



I found this book recently by accident when the title caught my attention. The small book contains factual, personal stories by European wives of PIR officers arranged in order from 1951 to 1975. Only 30 of the pages coincide with our Nasho period of 1966-73 but most readers could relate to the experiences of the women prior to 1967. The contributors number about one dozen wives and one widower.

The wives have contributed personal and government photos, black and white, to illustrate their stories. For example, Marlina Jeffrey has included two photos taken during her wedding to (now Major General) Mike Jeffrey at Taurama Barracks in 1967. Some stories relate to their working lives and some to their travels within TPNG but always to their relationships with the indigenous people.

In her preface, Jenny Hearn offers a taste of the stories:

“Unusual demands were made upon all of us. We had to cope with extra responsibility while husbands were away, often for several months at a time,

inadequate housing and hausbois, and contribute to ... schools, kindergartens, hospitals, church and charities. Nurse our children and endure tropical illness, the pervasive heat, insects, isolation, loneliness and years of separation from family, friends and even our children. Yes, there were sad and difficult times but there was also affectionate support, laughter, fun and good times too, in these predominantly youthful communities.”

The majority of the wives lived in married quarters at Murray, Taurama, Igam, Goldie River or Moem Barracks where they joined social and sporting networks with other wives in the Army or civilian life. Remarkably, several wives were able to find private accommodation to visit their husbands on duty at Vanim. Written in the first person, the stories (and poems) are immediate, clear and engaging. The glossary is useful as are the references to the pioneering accounts by Dame Rachel Cleland who retired to Cottesloe.

The outstanding historian, Professor Hank Nelson, provides his characteristic perceptive insight in his Introduction. This includes a brief overview of the PIB, NGIB and PIR from 1940 to 1975. So, although the stories will appeal mainly to female readers, it might do male readers no harm to skim through the book. You may be lucky, like me, to find a copy in a major public library (Dewey number 919.53).

The book was one of several donated to Australian libraries by the PNG High Commissioner in 2005 to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of PNG independence.

Greg Ivey