

1968 to 1971 was, I believe, to be the best time to be in New Guinea.

I arrived in Wewak as a newly married in January, 1968, 3 months after Stewart as we had to wait to be allocated a married quarter.

I had never encountered military life or army protocol before I arrived in Wewak. The same shock I am sure for the National Servicemen.

Having arrived by the "fokker" regular flight on a Saturday afternoon I was met by Stewart in a staff car. Unfortunately he had told his associates that I was a blonde haired stripper from Kings Cross, well that was his interpretation for someone who danced part time for the NSW Arts Council.

As we drove into Moem Barracks to our Married Quarter I felt as if the lace curtains of neighbours were parting to see what this so called stripper looked like.

Unfortunately, they were quite disappointed as the next afternoon we strolled down to the Haus Lotu on Sunday afternoon Mass and was immediately commandeered by Padre Austen Crapp to take the religious instruction classes at Moem School. I very quickly got a job in town at the Wewak Hospital and then at PWD working for "Chalkie" Kim Rothe's brother in law, the District Works Engineer.

Whew thank goodness for that, it was hard for a non teacher to give religious instruction to the likes of the Wease, Campbell, and McCormick kids

I loved my time living in Moem. It was a tropical paradise, nice highset houses with reasonable furniture, a public beach for picnics and swimming and lush tropical plants. There was a real community spirit. There was a base supermarket where Graham Wease's sister worked, you could buy clothes from one of the wives, you could even model in her fashion parades. I became the duty hairdresser for some of my friends for Sergeant and Officer Mess functions. The PTI conducted circuit training for the wives 1 night a week. We joined the Wewak Drama Club and because I worked in town this meant we could have other friends besides military. Then on a Sunday we would go water skiing or fishing in our little boat we purchased in town. One even got creative in cooking as supply of meat got low each time a ship was due in.

There was still evidence of WWII, with bomb holes and plane relics.

When Stewart got his second posting to Vanimo, I was able to transfer with PWD to Vanimo as well. The Caribou transported our ski boat up there. I worked in a haus saksak building on the beach and each Wednesday afternoon there would be Kym Rothe, Rob and Stewart skiing past my window.

Of course, nothing is perfect, I hated all male dining in nights, hated Stewart getting extra duty officer (for no reason at all) and being told to go home and put shoes on instead of wearing frangipanis between by toes - obviously the PMC didn't know who Maryanne Faithfull was as that was the fashion. Being scared sometimes (for no reason) when Stewart was away, I solved that by sleeping under the bed in the 3rd bedroom on the odd occasion if I felt scared. Usually though on a weekend I would go and stay with friends in town or else wait until dawn to go home from a party.

Parting words at our farewell:

Oi i - sore tumas  
Yu no gat tink tink long stap  
Mi save nambawan opisa i salim yu pinis  
Na mekim yutupela i-go long hap