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Papua New Guinea Patrol Reports

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TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

PATROL REPORT

District of.....WESTERN..... Report No. 2 of 67/68 (Emati P.P.)

Patrol Conducted by.....E.B.C. JOHNSTON, P.O.....

Area Patrolled...Upper and Lower Bamu, Gama, and Wahwei Rivers.....

Patrol Accompanied by Europeans...K. Wilson, E.O. (Assistant Presiding Officer)

Natives...B. Nede, Interpreter.....

Duration—From 15/2/1968 to 12/3/1968.

Number of Days...27.....

Did Medical Assistant Accompany?.....No.....

Last Patrol to Area by—District Services...Jul/Aug 1967..

MedicalOctober 1967..

Map Reference.....Attached sketch map.....

Objects of Patrol.....General Elections (Bamu-Gama Motilo Poll).....

Director of District Administration,
PORT MORESBY.

Forwarded, please.

23/4/1968.

J. Bensted
District Commissioner

Amount Paid for War Damage Compensation \$.....

Amount Paid from D.N.E. Trust Fund \$.....

Amount paid from P.E.D.P. Trust Fund

.....

.....

.....

67-3-21

9th May, 1968.

The District Commissioner,
Western District,
DARU.

EMER. PATROL NO. 2 -67/68

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of the above Patrol Report covering a patrol by E.B. Johnson, Patrol Officer to BAMU-GAMA Census Divisions.

The details of the alleged attacks on candidates and details of the action taken or proposed in relation to them are awaited with interest.

Regarding the criticism of Mrs. Standen and interpreter BAFANU NEDE, Mr. Johnson should be advised that little attention can be paid to general remarks. If groups or individuals have made official complaints to him about people, he should record the full details of the complaint and the circumstances in which it was made, the names of the informants and some comment on their credibility and motives. I do not think that patrol officers should be discouraged from making and passing on comments in their reports if they are pertinent to the situation. However, as these reports are placed in the library and will be used for historical reference, they should be careful that comments are not lightly made, the bases for the comment is as fully described as possible, and the reporting is objective.

The closure of Aid posts in an apparently unhealthy area is difficult to support merely because orderlies were not supplied with food. As food in the area is apparently mainly fish and sago, a local orderly should be able to support himself without much difficulty. It is hoped that the health authorities have some plans to remedy the situation.

I cannot agree that our policy should be to regard the area "as a source of potential labour, and no more, with a view to its eventual depopulation". Our aim must remain to improve the health of the people, improve their educational standard and to assist them to utilize as far as possible their limited economic resources.

Patrol Officers are required by Standing Instruction to submit a full and formal report after each patrol. The lack of full details in the matters raised in this report is an example of what occurs when these instructions are waived.

J.W. Ellis
(T.W. ELLIS)
Director.

67.3.21
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TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

Telegrams.....
Our Reference... 67-11-1
If calling ask for
Mr. RAC.bd



Department of District Administration,

Western District,
DARU.

23rd April, 1968

The Director,
Department of District Administration,
KONEDOBUI.

EMETI PATROL REPORT 2/67-68

Please find herewith a short patrol report, submitted by Mr. E. B. JOHNSON, Patrol Officer, following his election patrol of the BAMU-GAMA area. Also appended is memo 67-3-1 of 5th March, 1968, from the Assistant District Commissioner, BALIMO.

2. In explanation of the brevity of this report, it must be explained that because of outstanding duties in the KWAI Islands, Mr. JOHNSON was instructed on his return from the patrol to DARU to submit only a short patrol report, for what was essentially a special patrol. In this respect, Mr. HARDIE's criticism in paras 1 and 2 is therefore not justified.

3. However, Mr. HARDIE's remarks at para 4 are very apt. Mr. and Mrs. STANDEN deserve nothing less than praise for the work they have done in the BAMU for so many years, despite the fact that their efforts have largely proved unavailing, bearing in mind their lack of funds, staff and support. Their tenacity and endurance under difficulties could well be emulated by certain of our junior field staff.

4. Mr. BATANU NEDE has been the Administration interpreter at EMETI for many years, and has a good record of faithful service. Mr. JOHNSON's short tenure at EMETI has apparently led him to certain conclusions which I feel he holds in good faith, but his criticism of Mr. NEDE (see para 1, page 6) is a scurrilous attack, more so in this context as Mr. NEDE has no opportunity to defend himself.

5. The incidents involving Messrs. W.N. OLIWALE, M.H.A., and Mr. R. TABUA, ex-M.H.A., will be dealt with in separate correspondence.

F.A. Bensted
(F.A. BENSTED)
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

67-3-1

BALING,
Western District.

5th March, 1968.

District Commissioner,
Western District,
DARU.



REPORT - BANU/GAMA ELECTORAL PATROL

Please find herewith two copies of a report by Mr. E.B.C. Johnston P.O. on the Banu/Gama electoral patrol. Only three copies of the report were received here, although four copies should have been made to allow one for EMBTI's records. It will be noted that Mr. Johnston has submitted neither a full-scale report nor a Memorandum of Patrol plus memo - he seems to have evolved a cross between the two. Would you please check your records to see if the number given to the patrol is correct; I cannot find a copy of the report of EMBTI Patrol No. 1 at this office.

(Peter A. Hardie) s/A.D.C.

2. The report is disappointing and, in my opinion, of little value. The people of the Banu/Gama area are noteworthy for the indifference and hostility to the recent elections; one would therefore have hoped that an attempt would be made to explore in depth their reasons for not voting. Mr. Johnston would have had a good opportunity to discuss such matters with them, seeing that polling in this area would have occupied only a few minutes in each day. Instead, Mr. Johnston has submitted an abbreviated and impressionistic report which reflects no attempt to discover the motivations of the people involved.

3. Mr. Johnston's account of threats to Mr. Olewale is disturbing and could be of importance. Unfortunately, he does not quote the source of his information.

4. My only other comment on Mr. Johnston's report is to deplore the savage remarks he makes in his introduction about Mr. and Mrs. Standen. I cannot see that this attack on an elderly mission couple who played no role at all in the elections casts light on anything except, perhaps, Mr. Johnston.

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PREAMBLE

EMETI PATROL POST
BALIMO SUB-DISTRICT
WESTERN DISTRICT

Patrol No.2 of 67/68

Patrol conducted by E.B.C.Johnston, P.O.

Area patrolled: Upper and Lower Bamu, Gama, and Wahwoi

Personnel accompanying: K.Wilson, E.O. (Assistant Presiding
Officer)
B.Nede, Interpreter

Duration of patrol: 15/2 to 12/3/68 (27 days)

Last patrol to the area: D.D.A. - July/August '67

D.A.S.F. - No full patrol of late

P.H.D. - October '67 (survey of
District water resources)

Object of patrol: General Elections

Map reference: Attached sketch map

2.

INTRODUCTION

Of all the places in the Western District, I have encountered none more depressing than the Bamu. The villages, with a few exceptions, are vast rubbish heaps, and small-houses, where they exist, are not used and one has to tread carefully. The only water available in the lower Bamu is saline, and looks like gravy. One has to go well up towards the headwaters before the water clears appreciably. There are no tanks or wells in the area. The attitude of the people is one of total disinterest. There were formerly two government aid-posts in the Bamu but both had to be withdrawn as the people refused to supply the orderlies with food. There also used to be an Unevangelized Fields Mission aid-post, but that too has been withdrawn. The only medical facilities now provided are at the Bamu River Mission. The Mission operates a school, which is the only school serving this area, although some six or seven years ago the Administration led the people to believe it was shortly going to establish a school in the area.

The Bamu River Mission is run by Mrs. Eva Standen (or Sinabada, as she prefers to be known), who has announced her intention of leaving her bones in the Bamu, though one has the impression that she is more terrified of the outside world than enamoured of the Bamu. Mr. Harry Standen makes no secret of the fact that he would leave the place instantly if he could persuade his wife to do so. Mission influence is very limited. Considering the number of years, thirty or more, that the Standens have been in the Bamu one would expect them to have gained more influence in the area than they have. If the village people appreciate the medical and educational facilities provided for them by the Mission, they do not show it; and there exists a fair amount of friction between Mrs. Standen and the villagers, though one may gain an exaggerated impression from the former's propensity for making mountains out of mole-hills. Mrs. Standen is opposed to the continued presence of the government station at Eneti, and to any increase of government activity, in the field of health, education, local government, or any other sphere, on the grounds that this diminishes her own influence.

The soil in the middle Bamu is probably the poorest anywhere in the Territory, although the silt of the Delta and the soil of the headwaters region are an improvement on this. The more enterprising members of the population have

left the area and work on plantations, mainly on the Milne Bay side. Others have settled in or around urban areas, as witness the Bamu corners on Daru and at 2-mile, Moresby. This area should be regarded as a source of potential labour, and no more, with a view to its eventual depopulation.

(5)

DIARY

1968

- February 15th Sailed from Daru 1015 hrs., aboard m.v. 'Tarua'. Arrived off Dameratamu about 2000 hrs., and anchored for the night.
- 16th Up the Aramia and through the Kuria Passage to Emeti Patrol Post, or Buruburu as it is known locally. Met Mr. Keith Wilson, education officer and assistant presiding officer to the Bamu-Gama Mobile Poll.
- 17th Elections at Emeti, and D.I.E.S. films shown in the evening.
- 18th Sunday. Elections at Iowa and the Bamu River Mission.
- 19th Preparations. Departed upriver to Bebisa.
- 20th Elections at Bebisa and Wareho. Films shown.
- 21st To Kubeai, then down the Bamu and up the Wahwoi.
- 22nd Diwame and Sipoi.
- 23rd Parleme; no votes cast.
- 24th Gagoro.
- 25th Sunday. Garu and Kuria.
- 26th Mirua and Bimaramio. Films shown at Mirua.
- 27th Wakau and Sogeri. Anchored on the Bunigi Creek.
- 28th Bamio and Aniadai. Films shown at Bunigi.
- 29th Bunigi, Upati, and Darave.
- March 1st Torobina and Pirupiru No.1
- 2nd Sibara and Pirupiru No.2
- 3rd Sunday. Observed.
- 4th To the Gama River. All inhabitants of the seven villages refused to vote.
- 5th Sailed for Maipani to replenish fresh water supplies. Anchored at Bina No.2. Films shown.
- 6th Observed.
- 7th Bina No.1, Bina No.2, and Wario.
- 8th Oropai and Amagoa. Anchored at Sisiamé No.2
- 9th Sisiamé Nos. 1 and 2.
- 10th Sunday. Observed.
- 11th Asaramio and Aragi. Then to Emeti and finally to Balimo.
- 12th Left Balimo by PATair DC-3 for Daru. End of the patrol.

5.

THE ELECTIONS

Only 24% of the electors in the Bamu-Gama area voted in the elections. The figure for the Gama was 0%, which slightly raises the proportion of electors who voted in the Bamu itself above the figure for the area as a whole. The low voter turn-out might be partially attributed to the fact that many did not know the elections were in progress as only a very few villages have radios, and even those few that had radios had no batteries for them. Word had been sent out but did not percolate to all villages. Some of the upriver villages are three weeks paddling time from Emeti, a fact that is appreciated with difficulty by those travelling in powered craft. However the voter turn-out would probably have been no greater even had everyone known of the impending arrival of the election patrol, as they showed a complete disinterest, based at least partly, and probably in the main, on ignorance of candidates, election issues, the functions of the House of Assembly, etc. Those who voted were those who had nothing else to do; otherwise they did not vote. The fact that the inhabitants of the seven Gama villages declined to vote may be attributed to reaction against their former Member, Tetley of the Gulf Open, who when campaigning prior to the 1964 elections made a lot of promises he had no intention of keeping. Although this was a *causa sine qua non* to their decision to abstain from voting, political naivety was an important factor. Perhaps they had something in common with Mrs. Standen who said that she was not voting as there was no-one worth voting for. No political education had been carried out in this area beyond the distribution of literature they were unable to read.

Robert Tabua was the most favoured candidate in the open electorate, with Jock McIntyre leading in the regional. This was undoubtedly because their names were most familiar to the people, Robert Tabua being their former member and having visited a number of the villages personally on his electioneering campaign, and Jock McIntyre being the former manager of Delta Stores, Bamu. A large number of persons who came up to vote did not know or could not remember the name of any candidate, although the names were publicized at each village visited. With the exception of a handful of persons at the Mission, all voters required assistance in marking their ballot-papers.

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Non-Bamu villagers from the Upper Ramu and Wahwoi Rivers not only did not know that the elections were in progress but had not the least idea what elections were or the purpose of them, although they had previously voted in the 1964 elections. The fact that they voted as they did was possibly, though not necessarily, a pointer to the unscrupulousness of the government interpreter whom long acquaintance has taught me is notoriously unreliable and who, for some reason or another, is much disliked by members of his own ethnic group. The upriver people are distinctly different in appearance from the Bamus, and are, incidentally, much more open and friendly than the latter. They have had far less contact with Europeans, partly due to the fact that they live further upriver, but principally because they are a forest people and have only recently established settlements along the rivers. There can be little doubt that there remain a number of unrecorded villages whose inhabitants have never figured in any census.

Niwia Olewale, a candidate for the South Fly Open, visited Mirua village on his electioneering campaign, and he was told by the village people on his arrival that he was a patrol officer who had come to collect council tax (there is, however, no council in this area). He denied these accusations, but an angry mob of villagers collected about him and one of them said that if he did not stop talking they would decapitate him, adding point to the words by brandishing the axe with which they proposed to effect their purpose. Mr. Olewale mentioned this incident to no-one until the elections were over, for fear that an official hullabaloo on his behalf might prejudice the voters against him. Not long afterwards, Robert Tabua, another candidate for the South Fly Open, also visited Mirua village on his electioneering campaign and was likewise greeted in a hostile manner by the inhabitants who informed him that he was a patrol officer who had come to collect council tax and also to abduct their women (note: Mirua, together with Kuria, used to provide regular if unofficial 'services' for employees of the Australian Petroleum Company; the men showed no compunction in prostituting their wives). The candidate apparently had a knife held against his spine and had to do some swift talking, leaving the village somewhat precipitately. Only a couple of days later, the election patrol visited Mirua and the elections passed off without anything untoward happening. The patrol remained overnight, or rather half the night as a safer anchorage was sought since a large bore was expected in the morning. Films were shown in the evening at the villagers' request.

The reception at this village was if anything slightly better than the usual reserve and indifference with which one expects to be greeted in the Bamu. Not that they welcomed us with open arms, but we were offered drinking coconuts and they brought food to sell. Nothing suggested that there was aught amiss, and I was at the time in ignorance of what had occurred a few days earlier. Their behaviour towards the candidates seeking election was probably triggered by annoyance at politicians in general, engendered by Mr. Tetley's unkept election promises. They would no doubt be rocking with mirth at their latest practical joke if such a jaded people were capable of laughter. I have spent nearly six months in the Bamu and have yet to see one of these people laugh. Even the occasional, forced smile is only given in a pretence that all is well.

PARJEME

KUBEAI
WAREHO

WAMU
WAMU

SAROKO

ONE W
PATROL POST

IOJAO

BAMU RIVER
MISSION

BAMU RIVER

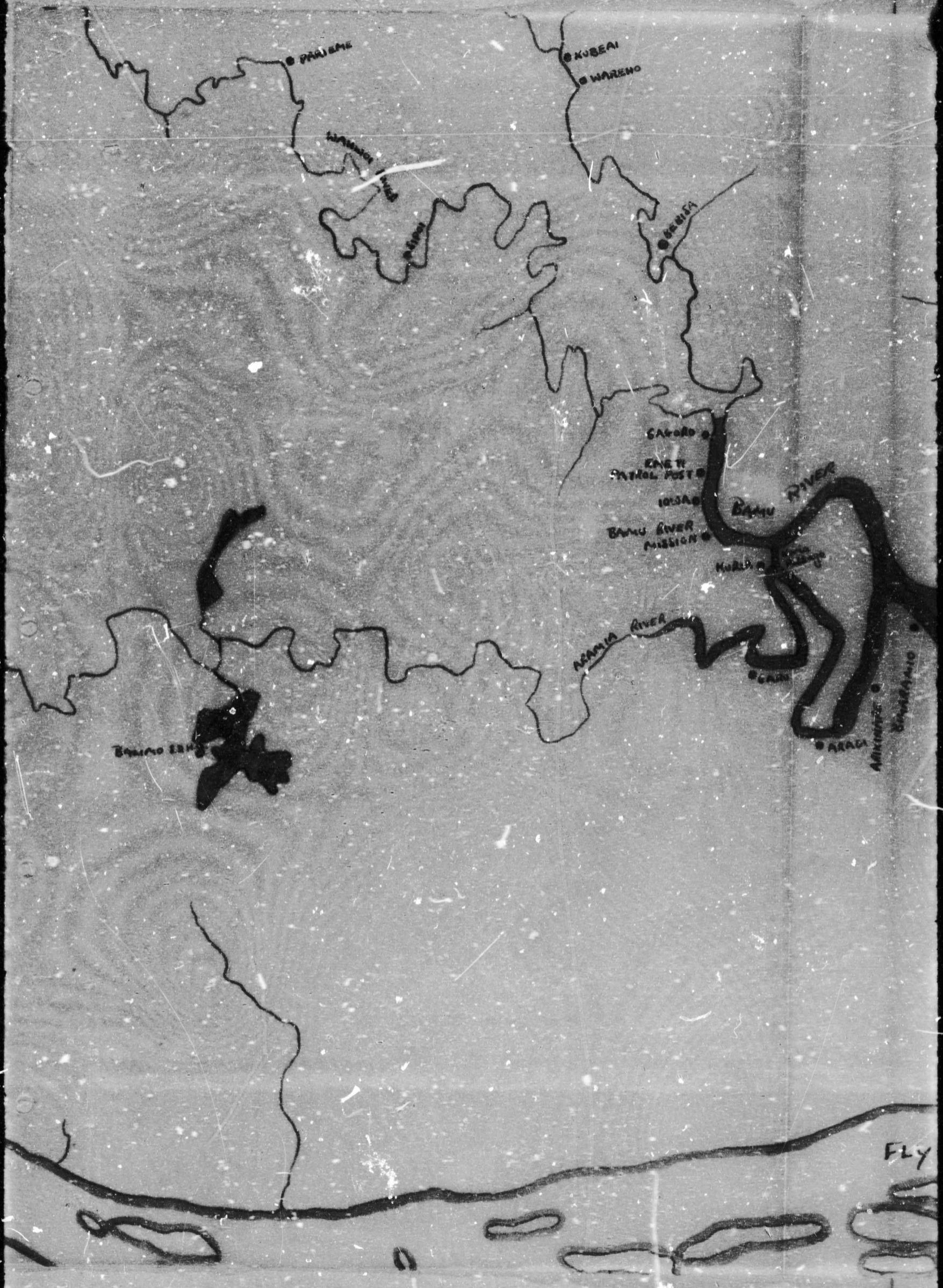
MUJIA

ACAMIA RIVER

BAMU RIVER

ARADI

FLY





FLY RIVER ESTUARY

BAMU DELTA

SISIAME No. 1

SISIAME No. 2

AMAGO

WARIO

MAIAMI

TIDEA

BINA No. 1

BINA No. 2

OLOPAI

BAOBINA

AMADAI

ENAKAU

BAMU

SOGORI

AMIRUA

BIMARAWIO

AMINADE

GARDU

KUDIA

SUKUSI

SUKNETI

CANA RIVER

SAGORU

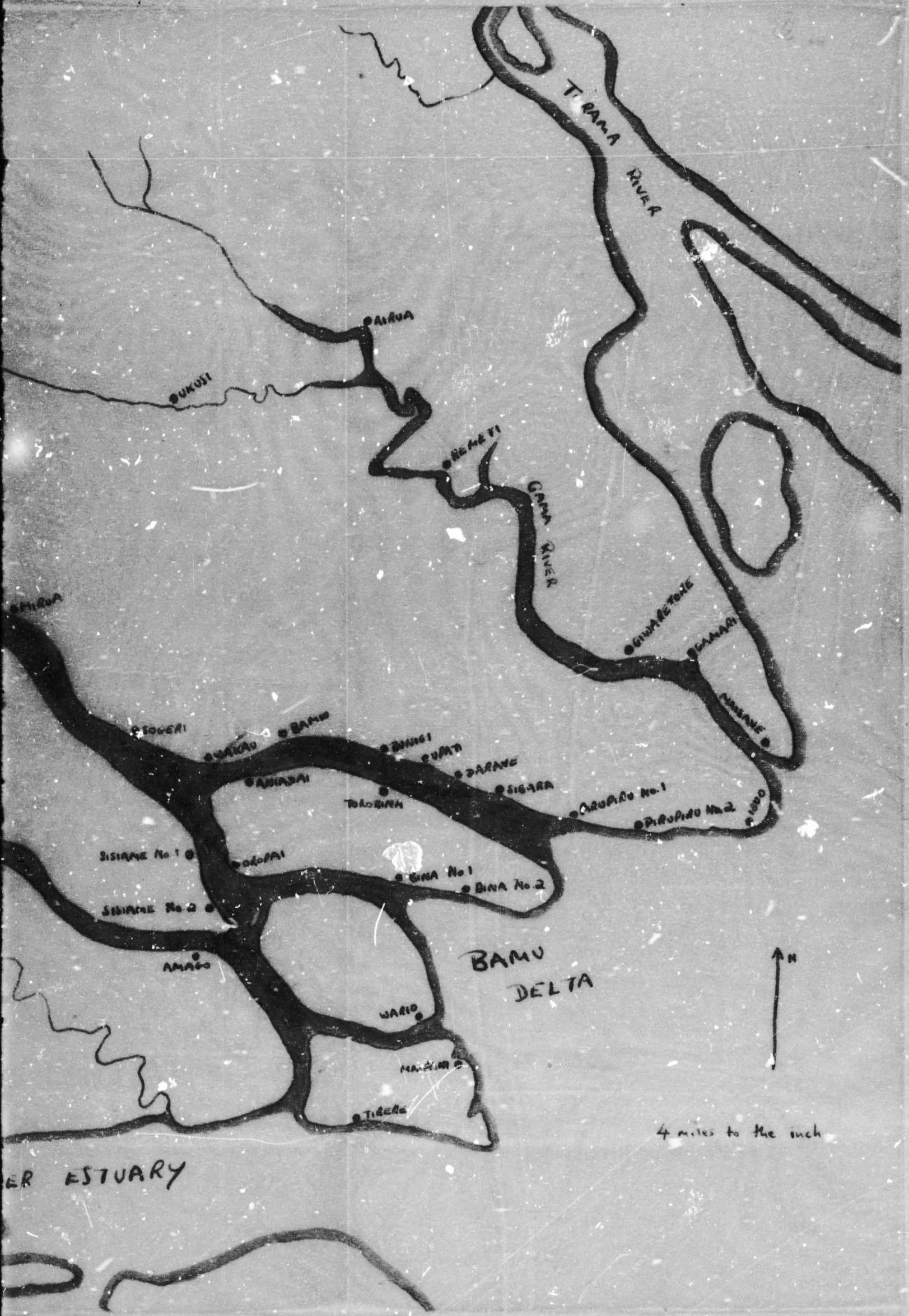
EMET

RICAL POST

AMU RIVER

FASSION

RIVER



4 miles to the inch

ER ESTUARY