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Papua New Guinea Patrol Reports

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67 - 4 - 23

PATROL REPORT No. 3 - 64/65

By

G. R. Hamilton

RABARABA

MILNE BAY DISTRICT

67 - 4 - 23

MEMORANDUM OF PATROL

Patrol No. RBA 3/64-65 Subdistrict DANIARA District NIINE RAY

Officer Conducting Patrol G.F. HAMILTON G.P.O.

Census Division Patrolled DAGA CENSUS DIVISION

Objects of Patrol (a) RE-CONSTRUCTION AGAIN AIRCROOME

(b) ROUTINE ADMINISTRATION

Date Patrol Commenced 9/2/65 Date Completed 13/6/65

Duration—Days 88 (BROKEN PERIODS)

SUMMARY OF CORRESPONDENCE ARISING FROM PATROL

67-2-16/4-2-3 Re -construction report - again airstrip

G. F. Hamilton
Patrolling Officer's Signature

I certify that all necessary local administrative action has been or is being taken on matters arising out of this patrol and that the correspondence above indicated by a "tick" has been forwarded to the Headquarters, Department of Native Affairs, Port Moresby.

District Officer

57-4-25

17th March, 1965.

District Commissioner,
Milne Bay District,
SARAJI.

BARABARA PATROL REPORT RE. 3/1964-65

1. Receipt is acknowledged with thanks of a patrol report by Mr. Hamilton, covered by your memorandum 57-1-5 (2) of 26th January, 1965.
2. Your comments and those of Mr. Johnson have been noted.
3. Mr. Hamilton seems to have done a good job on the AGAUN airstrip and has submitted an informative report. It is a pity that the delay in submission of this report has detracted from its value.

(J. E. McCARTHY)
DIRECTOR.

67-4-23. 9

XXXXX Discom.

67-1-5(2)



District Office,
SAMARAI,
Milne Bay District.

26th January, 1966.

The Assistant District Commissioner
RABARABA,
Milne Bay District.

Patrol Report - RABARABA - No. 3 of 1964/65.

1. Receipt is acknowledged with thanks of the abovementioned patrol report together with your covering memorandum reference 67-2-16(4-2-3) of the 21st July, 1965.
2. Advice has been received from the District Works Officer at Samarai that the expenses incurred in the inspection of the airstrip surface etc., may be charged against your Aerodrome Maintenance Funds. Please take relevant action along these lines.
3. Mr. Hamilton is to be commended on the excellent nature of his detailed report. Claim for camping allowance is being processed.
4. For your information, please.

E. J. Emanuel
(E.J. EMANUEL) *B*
a/District Commissioner.

c. c. Director,
D.D.A. Konedobu.

The Director,
Dept. of District Administration,
KONEDOBUBU.

For your information and records, please.

E. J. Emanuel
(E.J. EMANUEL) *B*
a/District Commissioner.

XXXXX 11/10/66

67-1-5(2)

9
District Office,
SAMARAI,
Milne Bay District.

26th January, 1966.

The Assistant District Commissioner
RABARABA,
Milne Bay District.

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E. J. Emanuel
(E. J. EMANUEL)
a/District Commissioner.

c.c. Director,
R. B. A. Konedobu.

The Director,
Dept. of District Administration,
KONEDOBU.

For your information and records, please.

E. J. Emanuel
(E. J. EMANUEL)
a/District Commissioner.

67-2-16
4-2-3

ERJ/pj

Sub District Office,
Babaraba,
Milne Bay District.

21st July, 1965.

The District Commissioner,
Milne Bay District,
SAMARAI.

PATROL REPORT - BABARABA 2/64-65

RECONSTRUCTION AGAIN AIRCRODOME

Attached please find three copies of memorandum 67-2-16/4-2-3 of 30th June, 1965 together with Memorandum of Patrol and existing allowance claim submitted by Mr. G. Hamilton, Cadet Patrol Officer.

2. This patrol, which was of a special nature, was primarily concerned with the reconstruction of Aguar aerodrome to Class "Y" standards (3000'x150'). This task was completed shortly before the close of the financial year and all vouchers were acquitted through sub-treasury prior to June 30th.

3. Maintenance of this aerodrome will be a constant problem until the grass, recently planted, covers the actual surface. The District Works Officer has recently allocated £250 on airstrip maintenance for the first quarter of 1965/66. This is adequate for all known maintenance requirements of aerodromes (Administration) within this sub-district.

4. Supervision will be a problem and will necessitate monthly trips to Aguar to check on progress, airstrip surface etc. Funds on 42-2-2 have not as yet been allocated and as the return airfare to Aguar from Babaraba is £8, a minimum of £24 per quarter is required for this task alone. My radio 9 refers.

5. Mr. Hamilton should be complimented on the manner in which this task was carried out. It augurs well for his future in the service.

6. For your information please.


E.P. Johnson

Assistant District Commissioner.

c.c. Mr. G.R. Hamilton,
Cadet Patrol Officer,
Babaraba.

4-2-3
67-2-16

GER/PJ

Sub District Office,
Rebaraba,
Milne Bay District.
June 30th, 1965.

Assistant District Commissioner,
Baniara Sub District
BADARABA.

BADARABA PATROL REPORT 3/64-65

This report has been constructed along similar lines as the usual patrol report but due to the nature of the work carried out, a patrol was not conducted as is normally the case. Matters relating to patrol work such as Agriculture, Health, Education etc., will be discussed as these matters came in contact with the field party during its time in the field.

2/ The field work, as has been mentioned above, consisted primarily of the re-construction of Agaun Airstrip to Category "Y" standards. The airstrip is situated in the Daga Census Division of the Baniara Sub District, at an altitude of 3200' above sea level. It is thirty air miles from Rebaraba, the Sub District headquarters. The airstrip follows a general direction of North-South. It is now a one way airstrip with all aircraft using the northern approaches for landing and taking off. The present length of 3000' and width of 150' makes the airstrip 600' longer than previously although the width remains the same as the former mission airstrip.

3. The first initial steps in this reconstruction programme were undertaken from the 6th-8th October 1964 when Mr. E. Forster D.C.A. surveyor, surveyed the approaches and landing area and at the same time marked out the centre of the airstrip. I accompanied Mr. Forster on this work.

4. Funds to a total of £2000 were authorized in November 1964, but the actual work did not begin immediately, due to one of the many holdups experienced during this programme. The Department of Civil Aviation had a maximum amount of plans to be drawn up during December and so took more time than expected in completing and forwarding the required plans. From these funds of £2000, the amount of £1570 was expended on wages, and the amount of £400 was expended on equipment.

5. Actual work was begun on Thursday 11th February, 1965, after being flown into Agaun on Tuesday afternoon 9th February, 1965. Mr Forster again was able to give his knowledge and guidance, and his help during the week he remained at Agaun proved invaluable. Wednesday was taken up arranging the village people and issuing out equipment to them.

6. The actual work on this programme, as mentioned before, was begun on Thursday 11th February, 1965 with the commencement of a drain along the entire length of the airstrip. A drain had already been constructed when the airstrip had first been built, but it was proving ineffective for the amount of rainfall experienced on previous occasions. For the most part it was overgrown with weeds, the depth and width was also insufficient for the amount of rainfall. The present new drain is 3' wide at the top and approximately 2 1/2" at the bottom, the sides are each 3' high.

7. While construction work on the drainage problem was being carried out, marker pegs every 100' along the centre of the airstrip were placed. At 85' in a direction of 90 degrees to these markers, another set of marker pegs were positioned on either side of the centre pegs. Immediately beside these markers stakes were placed at a height relative to their cut and fill respectively.

8. With the finish of the work on the new drain, the people were transferred to between 2400' and 2700' marks, where the first actual airstrip surface work was begun. At this stage there were approximately 480 people working; this grew in over two weeks to 520 people. A cut varying in height from 4'6" to 3'11" was made between these various mentioned distances. The soil from this area was carried by copra bags to the areas between the 2800' and 3000'. As great as this amount of soil was, it proved to be insufficient for the amount of soil required for the height level at 3000'.

9. Work progressed slowly but with a fair amount of efficiency. Relatively level surfaces were always attained and the peoples ability grew as they gradually understood what work was required of them. The method of cutting to the required level was gained in a number of steps. The procedure was as follows. The grass was removed with as little soil as possible, this grass being carried off to the side of the airstrip. A trench was then dug around the perimeter of the 100' section to give the workers an idea of what depth they had to cut to. This 100' section was divided into approximately 4 equal sections, and in some cases to as much as 8 sections. Each section had a series of trenches dug around its perimeter, all to the required depth of cut. This gave the workers a greater chance of achieving a level surface over the whole 100' section.

10. Three teams equipped with boning rods kept a constant check on all trenches, making sure that all trenches were dug to the required level. This entailed a team of three to four people with these boning rods moving from trench to trench checking. Two members stood at either ends of the trench while the third and fourth members slowly moved from the first member to the second. Both members 1 and 2 kept watch to make sure that the tops of the third and fourth boning rods were at the same height constantly. This method later proved to be too slow and cumbersome and was discarded in favour of the speedier string line method. This entailed the positioning of a string line at regular intervals along the 100' sides and cross ways along the 85' sides. This gave a slightly better result in the completion of the section, but the people could not be made to realize that they were not supposed to walk or unload their bags of dirt on these lines, which became slightly annoying towards the end of the whole project.

11. Difficulty was experienced in trying to obtain level surfaces at certain sections of the airstrip. This was especially so between the 1200' and 1000' marks where there was a cut of ~~3' and 1'11"~~ 3' and 1'11" respectively, but at the 1100' mark there was no cutting at all. Invariably when ones attention was centred on the other workings being carried on farther down the airstrip, trenches would be cut too deep and too much soil removed from the places where it was not to be touched. It was here that the cord line proved invaluable but many mistakes were still made.

12. Many problems of finding enough soil to complete the filling of the Eastern side were experienced. For the most part this side was completely filled and even with the removal of soil to a depth of 4'2 1/2" the insufficiency of soil proved a problem. Finally the problem was solved when the decision to dig a large hole, longer than it was deeper, was taken. This made the transportation of the soil quicker and easier as it was dug adjacent to the areas where filling was required at 1'4" at the centre and 3' at the Eastern edge. These fill heights were the maximums for the airstrip fill.

13. The levelling of the airstrips finished surface proved rather a problem even with the use of boning rods and string line. It did not seem to matter how hard the people tried there seemed always to be "hills and hollows". The task of levelling was not eased very much seeing that the only piece of equipment for the work was the spade. A front end blade in a frame, and pulled by forty people would have made all the difference if only used for the task of levelling. However as always with bulky machinery there is the problem of airfreight charges and to obtain a plane large enough for the task. Although the airstrip is not "billiard table" smooth, it is an improvement on the former airstrip surface, and with the growing of grass it should make the airstrip quite reasonable.

14. There were two major causes for delay in the completion of this programme in faster time than was eventuated. Rain proved to be the greatest worrying delay. Examples of the delay are shown in these figures: out of a total of 53 work days there were only 33½ days of work recorded, and of these 33½ days only 16 days were full working days. This delay became fairly annoying as time kept moving on but work could not. During the months of February, March and May the rainfall figures were 15.2", 21.55" and 11.8" respectively giving a total rainfall for these three months of 46.57".

15. The continuance of all this rain also caused a great reduction in the work force. This was the second cause in the delay in finishing the airstrip. Of a total of 503 names held in the daily register book, on the 19th February the total number of people absent was 103. This figure steadily mounted until the climax was reached on 26th February when only 146 people were absent from work. This figure constituted nearly one third of the total work force. So it is shown that rain was the influencing factor in slowing down the daily amount of work carried out on the airstrip.

16. There were other delays experienced during this project, such as my return to Rabaraba for three weeks to take over the office duties and the responsibility of the cantation during Mr. Johnson's 2 weeks local leave. Unfortunately this three weeks had to be extended to four due to my having to seek dental treatment in Samarai. My return to the airstrip work would have been sooner except for the regular daily cancellations in sailing times of the "M.V. Kalili", which was to transport myself from Samarai to Rabaraba.

17. Mr. Single, D.O. Baniara and his patrol were the cause for a day or two's work not being carried out on the airstrip. The people who had returned to their respective villages had decided to remain there and await the arrival of Mr. Single. An agreement was reached, however, so that there was only a minor delay. As each village came to the Local Government meetings at Kakaia, Mr. Single asked for their opinions on the formation of a Daga Local Government Council and when the meeting had concluded, the people walked up to the airstrip and recommenced work. This patrol of Mr. Single's proved very invaluable as regards attendance at work and the attitude of the people to the airstrip work.

18. At the close of each Local Government meeting emphasis was placed on the fact that there was only a very limited amount of time left to finish this work. It was also stressed that the airstrip was not the Administrations but may be said that it was the Daga peoples airstrip, as they were the people reconstructing it and it was their produce which had to be flown to the coast.

19. The enthusiasm and morale of the people soared at this juncture, despite all previous efforts by myself for a speeding up of the work. This same enthusiasm was experienced when the first work on the airstrip was begun. As in the beginning too, this enthusiasm did not last for very long. This could only be expected when the people were doing the same work everyday and their wages were not too adequate.

20. The idea of giving the people a three weeks break in the middle of the work was well received by them and was one factor why so many turned up and so much work was completed in such a short time. (300' being filled in 1½ days.) The people were tending to become sick of the daily routine which can only be expected since this was really the first large scale programme they have undertaken and were not used to daily routine which had been continuing for over two months. This three weeks break also gave the people a chance to tend to their gardens and replenish their foodstocks which were fast failing. Food for all these people was starting to become a problem and in the latter half of May and the beginning of June, became a major problem. It seems that this season was the worst they have known for sometime due to the lack of rain in November and December. The period away from work also gave the Daga people a chance to attend to their coffee trees which were beginning to bear coffee in May and June. Previously they only had Saturday and Sunday away from work and this was their only time spent in the gardens. However, this period away from the airstrip work gave the people a chance to catch up on their garden work since their weekly work had taken all their time.

21. The finishing work on the airstrip was carried out during the last week, 7th to 11th June. It had previously been arranged for myself to return to Rabaraba on Tuesday 8th June, raise all necessary contingencies, and complete a report on the work carried out and thence proceed to Port Moresby to attend No 3 Training Course. However the aircraft to transport myself and some of my equipment did not arrive and so I was able to supervise the finishing work to my own satisfaction. This work consisted of angling the perpendicular cutted sides of the airstrip to a gradient of between 1:6 to 1:9; a levelling of the whole airstrip; the digging of three minor drains each angled into the present drain; and the work finished with planting of couch grass over the entire airstrip surface. Couch grass was found to be a better type of grass as it does not need cutting 2-3 years after planting, keeps a tighter compactness in the soil and gives a slightly softer landing for aircraft.

22. Thus the work ceased on 11th June, 1965 after beginning on February 11th, 1965. This was not a constant period of work due to the above mentioned delays in my absence from supervision, illness but mainly due to the excessive rainfall throughout this period.

J. Hamilton
Cadet Patrol Officer

MEDICAL AND HEALTH.

Some fears were held for the population of the Daga area especially those working in the windy and cold climate at the airstrip site. Epidemics of influenza and whooping cough broke out in the Cape Vogel area and began to spread towards the Daga area.

2. When this movement of the epidemics was seen, a Medical Assistant and five Aid Post Orderlies were supposed to arrive from Port Moresby and immunize the people living in the Daga Census Division. The drugs did arrive and were administered to those requiring them but not by the Medical Assistant nor any of the five Aid Post Orderlies. They failed to arrive following a mishap in transport connections. The Medical Assistant based at Baniara, Tobakes Kabina and the Rabaraba Aid Post Orderly conducted a full Daga patrol immunizing those people who had already caught influenza and whooping cough.

3. A great reduction in the work force numbers was experienced at this time. However not enough time elapsed between the period of first contact with the epidemics and the medical patrol. Therefore many probable deaths were staved off but unfortunately some younger people who had come in contact with the influenza and had a recurrent attack of Malaria were not so fortunate. Happily though there were only 8 known deaths recorded.

4. The whooping cough epidemic did not prove much of a problem at this time, it caused difficulties during the latter half of April and all of May. Again Tobakes Kabina, conducted a patrol through the Daga, this time with Triple Antigen injections. However this epidemic travelled relatively fast and a near majority of the people immune became immune to the injections. In six weeks 10 deaths were recorded, the climax being reached when 6 deaths were recorded in one week.

5. The work of the wife of an S.I.L. translator, Mrs E. Murane proved invaluable during these outbreaks. Mrs. Murane, being a qualified nurse and being in constant attendance, was able to save a number of young children's lives from whooping cough.

AGRICULTURE.

As this was not the usual type of patrol where a field officer visited each village and was able to notice the way in which the people of that village were following the advice of the Agricultural Department officers and field staff, no full detailed report can be made.

2. Coffee was the main centre of interest of the people in this Census Division. The lack of people working on the airstrip in the latter days was mainly attributed to the ripening of the coffee beans and their subsequent rotting when not picked. It was noticed on various walks through Kakua Village that the washing, drying and pulping of the coffee was in progress. Judging by the amount of coffee now being picked, in the early days of the season, a record crop should be picked if all the villages in the Baga follow Kakua Village's example.

3. However this may not be so due to the people's neglect and incorrect treatment of the coffee trees. It was reported to myself and to Mr. Payne A.O. that the people would not prune their trees as shown by the Agricultural Field Workers. The people were also disregarding the field worker's advice on many other aspects which would improve their output of coffee. The field worker attributed this attitude of the people to not seeing an Agricultural officer for over three years. The present Agricultural officer is preparing for a Baga patrol which should give the people the incentive which was lacking during the previous Agricultural Officer's one day visits to Agum.

4. There was a major drop in the growing of the normal food for this area such as English Potatoes, Sweet Potato, Taro etc; during the early weeks of 1947 and continuing through until the airstrip work was completed. On a number of occasions a group of people from each of the more distant villages, was sent to bring back food for their people. The supplies which had been previously bought from Kakua had dropped to a drastically low level.

.7.

EDUCATION.

1. It seems to be the trouble everywhere, the usual request to the government officers to force certain children of school age to attend school was made by the head teacher of the mission school at Agun. It was explained to the teacher that education was not compulsory and so the only way to try and get the children to attend was through a discussion with the parents concerned.

2. A request was made by one young boy from Biman village to see if he could enrol at the government school at Babaraba to continue his education, even by repeating a year at Standard 3. He had previously been educated at Menapi Mission School where he had studied for standard 3, and had succeeded in passing the necessary examinations. He was however, expelled from Menapi Mission school for a rather trivial matter of not waiting until he was told to return home. He had waited until after Christmas and when no further word came, he left and walked back to Biman. Thus he was not able to enrol at Babaraba due to the Department of Education's policy of not enrolling pupils who have been expelled from mission schools.

3. This lad was then advised to walk to Degura and see if he could be enrolled there in standard 4 class which did not seem likely. He was finally enrolled at the Mission station at Boianai and was able to continue his studies without repeating a year.