

fame for its exploits on New Georgia and Vella Lavella; the 2nd Commando fought on Bougainville, where another Fijian unit, the 1st Docks Company, Fiji Labour Corps, worked seven days a week, three shifts a day, unloading supplies for the Torokina beach-head. All these units earned commendation from the commanders of the American forces under whom they served, and at Mawaraka, Bougainville, on June 23, 1944, Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu, of the 3rd Battalion, won, posthumously, the V.C. Many others, eager to see active service, were left behind in Fiji on garrison and home defence duties.

That, briefly, is the history of the Fiji Military Forces. With 43 photographs, five good maps, and three full-page black and white sketches, Lieutenant Howlett, has had to tell the story of these 11,000 men in a thin book of 267 pages; fewer than that, for a Roll of Honour, lists of honours and awards, and nominal rolls of officers of the Fiji

Military Forces, the Fiji Home Guard, and of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. who served with the Fiji forces fill many pages. He has made only fair use of the space left to him. Relying largely on unit war diaries for his material, he has borrowed from them much of the official language in which they were written. Too many of his sentences in the early part of the book begin with the date ("On the 25th of . . .") and include that unhuman word "personnel"; too much space is used to record changes in officers' appointments and the moves of units from place to place; and the arrangement of the text has meant some repetition. No attempt is made to assess Fiji's contribution to the war in the Pacific; instead the writer prefers the florid generalisation: "the flower of the country's manhood was assembled and trained and then sent into conflict against a cunning and vigorous foe."

It is easy to pick holes and find fault. Lieutenant Howlett's book is more than the souvenir history its two-coloured cover with the Fiji badge make it seem at first sight. His account of the difficulties of raising and training the force in a community unprepared for war points its lesson of the folly of this lack of preparation, a lack given emphasis by the examples used throughout his narrative to illustrate it: the two dummy guns (borrowed from New Zealand) that comprised the heavy defences of Suva harbour for the first three months of the war; the difficulties of training, with inadequate staffs and equipment, Fijian recruits with little or no knowledge of English, who preferred bare feet to wearing Army boots; the camping ground that had first to be freed ceremonially of its *tabu* before a company could occupy it. —W.A.G.

## FRANCES HODGKINS

FRANCES HODGKINS: with Biographical Note by Myfanwy Evans. Penguin Modern Painters. Penguin Books.

IF Frances Hodgkins had painted nothing after 1930 she would still rank as one of the best painters in England this century. In her later work, however, she continued to develop, becoming bolder and more lyrical as she went on. Some of the paintings she produced during the war years show a greatly simplified and highly personal type of graphic symbolism, combined with elements of texture and shape that have almost the immediacy of nature itself. The whole effect is, as a rule, poetic in quality, and must be approached on this level if it is to be understood and appreciated. Frances Hodgkins might almost, in fact, be taken as the archetype of the "neo-romantics." Her strong personal vision, and her boldly imaginative flights in which nature is at once displayed intimately and transcended in terms of art, are characteristic of the most recent de-

velopment in English painting, the most vigorous that has appeared for a century.

Towards the end she was using natural images and fragments drawn from the man-made world, and combining them in new and exciting patterns. Her "Walls, Roofs and Flowers," painted in 1941, is almost an anthology of various shapes, brought within a pattern worked out in her bright imagination; and "Dorset Farm" (1946) is, in the same way, a sort of inventory of the farm, ex-

## ICARUS

NOW on the shining  
back breaking water  
while the lucid  
bird in his high tree  
sings, and the ploughman  
opens the hillside,  
it is of no matter  
that a boy should fall  
no planet, human  
entering the water.

AND ships in furrows  
and fields in their waves  
neither a bird  
nor a boy attend,  
and the proper grief of  
his father who watches  
a while may be heard  
till the song, the sorrow,  
are lost on the waves.

—Kendrick Smithyman

pressed in graphic - poetic symbolism. It is doubtful if she could have developed much further; but for what she attained to, we must be profoundly grateful. Her eye was bright, her imagination unimpaired, until the very last; and she died, as she would have wished to die, at the height of her powers. There was no fading out. On the contrary, she ended in a blaze of glory.

This is a logical, and (for New Zealanders especially) a welcome addition to the Penguin Modern Painters series. Myfanwy Evans' text is beautifully written, and gives the reader just the right amount of sensitive and intelligent comment to guide him to a fuller appreciation of the paintings. —A.R.D.F.

## LONELY ISLANDS

THE AUCKLAND ISLANDS: Their Eventful History, by Fergus B. McLaren, with an introduction by Angus Ross, A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington.

UNTIL quite recently the average New Zealander's knowledge of the Auckland Islands was about as shadowy as the usual rain-veiled landscape of sub-Antarctica. Very few people knew that a fully constituted colony had been planted in the Aucklands, independent of New Zealand, with a Lieutenant-Governor holding the Queen's commission; that English people settled there, married, had families, and died, under

(continued on next page)

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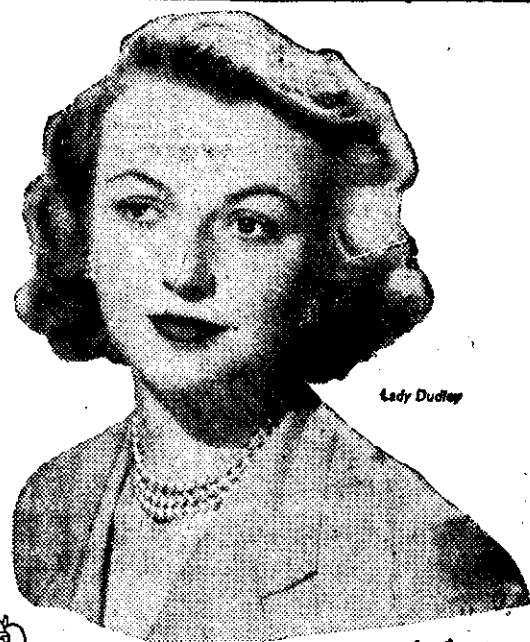
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