MAORI SETTLEMENT PAGE 3

VOL. 2, No. 11. JUNE 5, 1944.

# KORERO

## IN THIS ISSUE



### Contributions to Korero

You are reminded that a maximum sum of £3, payable in canteen orders where there are canteens under New Zealand control and in cash where there are not, will be divided among contributors in each issue. It is necessary, therefore, that all contributors should send us number, name, and full address. Remember, too, that articles are not the only contributions we are looking for. We would like to see also short paragraphs, black and white drawings, and verse. There is space, too, for your comments and inquiries, provided you keep them short. The address is: "D.A.E.W.S., Army H.Q., Wellington." Mark your envelopes *Korero* in one corner.

# Maori Settlement

## a Koreko Report

IT'S NOT far from Whakatane on the coast to Taneatua, the railhead of the Bay of Plenty line. Neither is it far on from Taneatua up the Opouriao Valley to Ruatoki. It is a short trip, but a worthwhile one especially if you time your arrival for about 8 a.m. Then you will be rewarded with a sight unique in New Zealand to-day. In front of the cheese-factory and the double-decker store that is Ruatoki's shopping centre you will see dozens of old spring carts and an odd four-wheeled wagon standing about the road while their Maori owners hold a *korero* on the footpath or make their day's purchases at the store. Between the shafts, strong, shaggy, horses stand quietly, and on each cart two or three milk-cans gleam in the morning sunlight. It's the end of the "Milk Cart Derby."

For the last hour or so the carts have been rattling in along the rough roadways leading in from the 120 farms that comprise the settlement. Driven by laughing brown-skinned men and women and carrying, in addition to their load of primary produce, some part of the farmer's family, they have come from the flats across the Whakatane River, from the rolling hills beyond and from as far as six miles up the valley that is the gateway to the Urewera Country. Occasionally a foal trots beside the mare drawing the cart, and around the crunching wheels lope scores of dogs of doubtful pedigree. From all parts of the valley the threads of the procession have wound in to be drawn into a colourful cloth here in the commercial centre of Ruatoki.

Now the work that began at 4 a.m. is for the moment ended and every one is chatting away in Maori and laughing merrily at some local wit while the cans rattle busily down at the factory and the horses stamp on the metal road.

The "Milk Cart Derby," as it is known to many who have seen it, is the key to Ruatoki. This valley is Native land and is being farmed by the Maori owners with the assistance and supervision of the Native Department. It is only one of the many Native-land-development schemes scattered throughout New Zealand, but it is one of the most compact and successful. Less than fifteen years ago the valley was being haphazardly farmed by the Native owners. Land titles were neither secure nor well defined, and consequently the land was badly fenced. Pastures were poor, and the dairy herds well below the average in butterfat-producing capacity. Housing conditions and the milking-sheds were most unsatisfactory. Nor were the Tuhoe,

the tribe owning the valley, anxious to allow their land to be included in the land-development schemes operated by the Native Department. Not so many years before they had turned back a party of surveyors attempting to survey the Urewera country, and the confiscation of some of their richest lands as recently as the Great War because of local disturbances had made them suspicious of the pakeha. They viewed the approaches of the Government as merely a blind to deprive them of their remaining lands.

Space does not allow full explanation of the Native land titles. It is sufficient to say that they are extremely complex, with sometimes scores of owners in a small block of land. Thus a condition precedent to any planned development of the country was the consolidation of interests by the Native Land Court. Generally speaking, this was done by exchange and purchase of interests. The aim was the establishment of secure titles to economic holdings. Tedious and skilled work, it is to the credit of the Consolidation Officers and the Native Land Court that by 1930 the project was completed. It is to their credit also that they were able to allay the suspicions of the Natives and convince them that their only object was to make waste lands productive and to ensure a livelihood for the owners and their descendants as well as a lasting benefit to New Zealand.

So in 1931, with the consent of the owners, the Ruatoki Development Scheme was undertaken. Thirty-one thousand acres of good river flats and fern and bush clad hills were involved. Some of this land was ready for individual farming, but much of it required clearing, drainage, and general development before it could support families. On the more advanced areas farms of fifty to a hundred acres were established and worked by units nominated by the owners and approved by the Native Department. For these units the Department supplied stock, fencing-materials, fertilizers, seeds, cow-sheds, and, wherever possible, better housing conditions. These advances were charged against the land and a proportion of the cream cheque taken for repayment. On the undeveloped land the men and women of the community undertook the necessary work to bring the land into production, being paid from Unemployment Funds for their labour. Most important was the appointment of a competent resident supervisor to assist and instruct the Natives and act as the Department's representative. Under him was a foreman-storeman (now distinct appointments) to direct the workers and handle the issue of stores.

Such is a short history of the beginning of the scheme. In 1932 the land produced £1,700. There were about 700 head of live-stock in the area. In 1942 receipts were over £42,000, and the herds produced half a million pounds of butterfat. The "Milk Cart Derby" in 1930 was a very small affair. To-day it has more starters than the Duoro Cup.

Fourteen years have seen many changes in Ruatoki. The fences whose battens leant towards one another in comradely fashion have been replaced by strong straight fences made from concrete posts cast on the scheme or from posts and battens taken out of stands of timber on the hills. Ramshackle cow-sheds where hygienic milking was impossible, and yards that resembled an Italian bog after heavy rain and a heavier bombardment, have given place to roomy weatherproof structures of the walk-through variety with concrete floors and yards. Instead of rutted tracks, graded roads now give good access to all parts of the settlement.

And they are kept in order by the Maoris themselves. Where once the meandering Whakatane had to be forded in all weathers if the suppliers were to get their milk to the factory, a £10,000 bridge now spans the river. Water, essential to every dairy-farm, was once a problem. Now two large dams built in the hills supply every house, *marae*, and cow-shed. And the deplorable housing conditions that existed when the scheme started have been considerably improved. Where a unit has proved a good worker and his loan account is in a sound position, simple three- and four-roomed houses have been built, and many of these are well furnished and surrounded by tidy gardens. Some of the older shacks are not so attractive, and you wonder how they house the large families that are the rule in Ruatoki. One hundred and thirty new cottages and houses have been built, but still more are needed to house adequately the population of about two thousand.

Yes, there have been changes in Ruatoki in the last fourteen years, and expensive changes, too! Yet to-day almost one-third of the settlers who have been financed by the Native Department have paid off their loans and are securely settled on the land.

## Seeing the Settlement

Coming into Ruatoki you see first the store which, with a smaller edition, serves the shopping wants of the community. Beside it is the cheese-factory, whose staff, including the key operators, is predominantly Maori and on whose board of directors sits one of the local farmers. On a large grassed *marae* behind the store are two meeting-houses. You may be lucky enough to see a *hui* in progress. Perhaps a welcome home to one of the many Ruatoki boys who are serving with the Maori Battalion. You may hear one of the *rangitiras* orating in Maori as he walks up and down in front of the meeting-house brandishing his *taiaha* while the smoke from the ground ovens drifts lazily across the *marae*. Don't be surprised if everyone is crying. It is merely an indication of joy at the soldier's return.

These *maraes* (there are eight of them—one for each *hapu*, or sub-tribe) are the centre of the Maori community life. The meeting-houses, carved, carpeted with mats, the walls hung with photos of chiefs long dead, serve as halls, temporary homes for those who have no house to go to, and Courts of Justice where the Tribal Committee periodically meets to discuss the affairs of the village and try those charged with anti-social offences.

There is legislative authority for these tribunals, who have power to inflict considerable fines. They usually deal with drunkenness and minor social offences and straighten out marital difficulties. The fines go to the upkeep of each *marae*, and the books are audited annually. Here, too, the women organize monthly "bring and buys" or *hangi* dinners at half a crown a time to collect funds for parcels for Ruatoki boys overseas.

The martial spirit of the Tuhoes was shown in the enlistments for the Maori Battalion. In Ruatoki itself a Home Guard battalion was raised and none could surpass its members for enthusiasm. In its early days when a new R.S.M. was being tried out there was some uncer-

tainty about one of his orders during parade-ground exercises. He started the order in English, broke into Maori, and ended it in English. The companies ended up in similar confusion. Appealing to his C.O., the culprit asked, " What I do now, sir ? " " Don't ask me, Sergeant-Major. This is your show," was the unhelpful reply. Saluting, the S.M. turned away to " C " Company which was in the worst fix. " C Company " he roared, " About turn." His next order was new to any parade-ground. It was : " C Company. Engage your partners for a waltz."

On another occasion the C.O., who thought he knew all the hat badges worn by his men, and they were many and varied, struck one that had him puzzled. When he questioned the owner as to its origin he was proudly informed that it was the parole badge of the Borstal Institute.

Beyond the *marae* you can turn off and cross the bridge that leads to the farms on the other side of the valley or carry straight on to where a neat cream-house shows up against the green of the paddocks and the red iron of large sheds in the background. This is the supervisor's home. Beside it is a small two-roomed office surmounted by a weathercock. Set in the well-trimmed lawn in front is a rain-gauge. Accurate weather records are kept at Ruatoki.

To-day the supervisor is a man of Maori blood, a returned soldier of the last war, a competent farmer and adviser on all matters connected with farming and on many not remotely connected with it. His is not an easy job. It needs patience, tact, and considerable ingenuity to solve the many difficulties with which he is confronted daily. A sense of humour is one of his most valuable assets, for strange tales are recounted to him in all seriousness, and his consultants pose many problems on a wide variety of topics. A half-hour's yarn with him on the lighter side of life at Ruatoki is a grand tonic. But his understanding of the Tuhoes, his respect for their customs, his ability, and unbounded enthusiasm have done much to raise his own mana and that of the Department with the people.

An old Maori lady strolls up the path. She want to see the supervisor. Her brother, who was working as a unit on a farm, has died. The supervisor wants to put another man on in his place or perhaps amalgamate the property with another in the meantime. The old lady has no interest in the place, but she has moved in to look after the dead man's children. Now she refuses to budge or let any one else on to the place. Logic makes no impression, threats are useless, cajolery fails. Her mind is made up. She says she has an interest ; the succession orders say she hasn't. " All right " says the supervisor, " Next time the Native Land Court sits at Whakatane we'll let the Judge decide." " *Kapai.*" says the old lady, and goes happily on her way. Now some one must be found to milk the cows and look after the property. A situation unlikely to occur in any European settlement, but commonplace at Ruatoki.

The little office, the core of the development scheme, is a model of neatness and efficiency. Its staff are all Maoris. A foreman, long trained in handling men and contracts ; a storeman who sees that all the goods that leave the store are signed for ; an attractive young typist who also acts as records clerk and able receptionist.

Beside the office there are three large sheds where stores are kept and concrete posts and troughs made. There are stock-yards at the end of the paddock and reserve stacks of posts and battens behind the store.

Walk a hundred yards down the road and you'll hear sounds of song—children singing in pleasant four-part harmony.

Behind the tall trees is a spacious school-ground and a large new school whose class-rooms get all the sun. It needs to be a large school. It accommodates amost two hundred happy Maori scholars and six teachers. From one class-room some are diligently, if vigourously, proclaiming that C-O-N-C-E-R-T spells "concert," while in a more advanced standard the headmaster is explaining the mysteries of a newspaper which his students imagined wrote itself.

Education here has its own peculiar problems. Every child must be taught English on arrival because little but Maori is talked in the home, and even the shopping at the store can be done in the native tongue.

The emphasis is on practical work with a cookery and woodwork department in daily use. All the children belong to one of three "houses," each with its own coloured flag. Each house has a weekly turn on duty doing the cleaning of the grounds and school. The girls make vegetable soup each day from vegetables grown in the "house" garden. Cakes and pies are also made and sold, the profits being used to pay off, amongst other things, an eighty guinea piano, lino for the cookhouse, two hundred enamel mugs, and a wringer for the laundry.

The boys make gates and pig-troughs for the local farmers, maintain the school fences, and do odd jobs about the place. There is instruction in personal hygiene, nutrition, first aid, and baby craft for the girls, and first aid and stretcher drill for the boys. The girls also make their own uniforms, smocks for cooking and sack aprons for cleaning.

But the event of the week is bath day. The school has a furnace and two bath-rooms, and every child is well lathered in warm water and then given a cold shower. Quite a job when there are two hundred children to be given a school-girl complexion all over. It also means two hundred clean towels for the school laundry.

Physical education is popular, and choral work, poi dances, hakas, action songs, and stick games are all of a high standard with such natural talents for harmony and rhythm in the pupils.

A school to tax the ingenuity and patience of any teacher, but one rich in the compensations of humour, the enthusiasm of the pupils and the knowledge that the work is well worthwhile.

Movies play an important part in the leisure life of the community, and the Taneatua Theatre has many Ruatoki patrons. An instance of their effect on education was given when the teacher asked Wiri "What is an oblong?" "A man, Miss," replied Wiri. "A man, Wiri?" queried the astounded teacher. "Yes, Miss," Wiri cheerfully affirmed; "You know, Miss. 'Obalong Cassidy.'"

A dental nurse from Whakatane comes out twice a year to attend to the children's teeth. They are good, but would be much better, she says, if there was a better diet in the home. It would be hard, however, to better the stoic qualities of her patients.

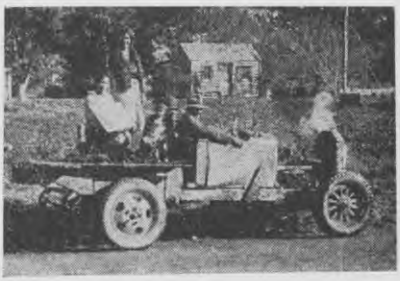
Above the school on a hill overlooking the valley is the Anglican Mission Station staffed by a European woman and a Maori assistant. A big rambling house, it was used as a girl's dormitory in the days before daily access to the school was possible. Now the kiddies come from distant parts of the valley on the school bus. The Women's Church Guild meets here each week and there are Sunday School classes for the children. Farther up the valley is a small church the interior of which is decorated with carved panels. Nearby lives the Anglican clergyman, also a Maori, who has just returned from service overseas as padre to the Maori Battalion. Many of the Maoris are followers of the Ringatu religion started by Te Kooti, the prophet, last century.

On beyond the school well-kept farms border the road with good houses and bad sitting in their patches of cultivated garden. Where the river has been eating into the land a gang are hard at work strengthening the bank with heavy pine branches sunk and weighted to the river-bed. Willows are planted along the top of this embankment.

Cutting across country to one of the houses built by Maori labour you find it well cared for and surrounded by a colourful garden. They have a custom amongst the Tuhoes that once you have been introduced to a family you never knock on entering their home. An hospitable custom, but apt to be an embarassing one. The few pakehas of the settlement usually call out "Any one home?" from a distance to give warning of their approach. The owner of this home has been adding a room or two to house his expanding family and has proved himself no mean carpenter. The home is well furnished; a sitting-room and bed-room suite, sewing-machine, radio, and rugs on the floor. Photos everywhere; many of men in uniform.

Around and around a nearby paddock chugs an old lorry with no engine cowling nor any rim to its steering wheel, towing a machine that scatters fertilizer. At the "wheel" sits a one-legged Maori who is a genius with engines and who is usefully employed in this and similar work.

Some of the houses around the *maraes* are the homes of the old people. Many of these are neither well built nor well preserved. Some seem to have been built when the moa was a chicken, and they still house a number of people.



Leisure is no problem at Ruatoki. A *korero* will always pass the time. *Tangis* and *huis* are always well attended. Too well, at times, the supervisor fears. There are pictures down the road at Taneatua. A mild gamble is always popular, one child at school even being known to gamble all the buttons off a new pair of pants. But the week-ends provide the men folk with their opportunity for recreation. The foot-hills of the Urewera Country are alive with pigs, and here the Tuhoe has a chance to indulge his hereditary passion for adventure. With his horde of pig dogs he often collects enough wild pork to feed the family for a week.

Little reading is done, but the radio is popular. Electric light serves some homes handy to the factory, but most depend on kerosene lamps.

Ruatoki is a compact and happy little settlement with a better chance for community life than many of the more scattered development schemes. It has its problems. Nevertheless, it is an example of the successful settlement of the Maori on his own lands and of the wisdom of the policy originated by Sir A. T. Ngata and carried on by the Native Department. It is also a remarkable example of transition of a warlike, suspicious people to a peaceful agricultural community. Another transition will probably take place soon after the war. Then trucks will replace the primitive but useful spring carts of the "Milk Cart Derby." Though mechanization may detract from the picturesqueness of the procession, may the contents of the cream it carries never grow less.

# Bomb Disposal platoon

**A KORERO Report**

BOMB-DISPOSAL PLATOONS work from three of the main centres in New Zealand — Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. They have never had to dispose of enemy bombs, since none has been dropped on this country, but they have work to do which is just as dangerous. They dispose of naval mines which are washed up on the coast or are sighted close inshore.

Just in case you should be inclined to underestimate the risks in this work, consider this little story. Members of a bomb-disposal section were lying on the top of a 200-ft.-high cliff watching a mine drifting inshore. Part of the mooring cable was still attached to the mine, and apparently this caught in a reef. Anyway, whether that was the cause or not, the mine exploded. The men on top of the cliff were spattered with water and other debris, and the windows in a house three-quarters of a mile away were broken.

Another story which the bomb-disposal people tell may be considered to prove that there are no risks in the work at all—or you may think it proves rather that a certain Maori who lives in an isolated spot on the New Zealand coast is a very lucky fellow.

A mine was reported at this remote coastal place. When the bomb-disposal men arrived they found that the pakeha population consisted of the school-teacher and his wife. So they asked the school-teacher where the mine was. "Tied to a tree," he replied. "A Maori found it and tied it up."

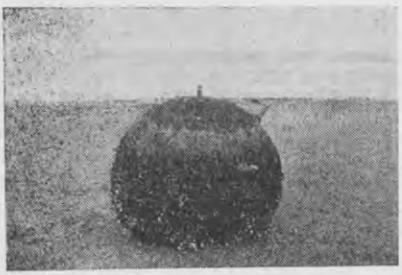
And when the Maori was asked to elaborate on this, he related the facts, in strictly chronological order.

"I get the cream," he said. "I put it in the punt and I start to row across the bay. Then I see something bobbing up and down and I say: 'That the mine.' So I get the wire and tow him in and tie him up to the tree. And then," he concluded, "I run like hell!"

It happened that the Maori had attached the wire to the only part of the mine it was possible to do so without exploding it!

The bomb-disposal men counter-mined this mine—that is, they blew it up with H.E. And when they turned over the mechanism plate which remained after the explosion, a huge crab, almost as big as a man's hand, scuttled off from under it—to safety.

All the men in the bomb-disposal platoons are volunteers, and all except one N.C.O. in each platoon are non-mobilized personnel. The platoons are divided into sections and subsections, and one subsection in each district is detailed for duty each week. That means that one subsection is on call each week. If a mine is washed up in the Auckland platoon's district this week, the men of the duty subsection are the men who will dispose of it. When the bomb-disposal men are away on a job they are on Army pay, with no family allowances unless the job takes more than seven days. Some employers, of course, continue to pay their men while they are away, but there are some who don't, and for their employees in the bomb-



**An enemy mine.**

disposal platoons this voluntary work may mean some financial sacrifice.

When a mine is located on the coast it is reported to the nearest Army District H.Q., which calls out the local bomb-disposal men. These men regard every mine as dangerous, even though they recognize its type and know exactly how to deal with it. They always have a minimum number—never more than two—within 500 yards of the mine, and they strip their clothes off so that there is nothing metallic about them. All doors and windows within a radius of three-quarters of a mile are opened to avoid damage by blast.

Whenever possible mines are degaussed so that the domb-disposal men can see whether there is anything new in the mechanism. When this inspection is completed a signal is sent to a naval base for directions on the disposition of the mine. Should the mine be counter-mined or burned ? And does the Navy want the shell or mechanism plate returned ?

When we say a mine is burned we mean that the 500 lb. of H.E. it contains is removed and burned in small pieces. The bomb-disposal men wear rubber gloves on this work to avoid the acute dermatitis which handling the H.E. would cause. Even though the H.E. is burned in small pieces the flame it gives is intensely hot and will fuse the sand for 50 yards round.

Counter-mining with an H.E. charge can be done only on a beach where there is no habitation within two miles. This is a method of disposition used when the mine is of a well-known type, and no more specimens of it are required. If the mine happens to be on an inhabited beach, and the bomb-disposal men want to counter-mine it they have to wait for the tide and then float it out to sea or remove it by other methods to some uninhabited place. Sometimes it is necessary to turn a mine over on the beach for examination. The procedure then is to pass a rope through two little holes in the mine, called " lifting eyes," and then, from a slit trench some distance away, to pull on the rope until the mine is in the desired position.

**The works of a mine.**

If you ask the bomb-disposal people to tell you exactly what a mine is they will probably reply, in Service style, that it is a non-mobile torpedo which may take any one of a number of different forms and which may be activated in any one of a number of different ways. The most common type is the anchored mine with all its variants, including several types of electric contact mine, antenna mines, mines which rise to effective position at a predetermined time after being laid, and mines attached to anchor nets. There are also floating mines, which may be dropped by a ship fleeing from an enemy, and, of course, the magnetic and acoustic types, which lie on the sea-floor. The experts will point out to you that all these differ from torpedoes not only because they are stationary, waiting for their prey to come to them, but because they are tactically effective in the absence of the craft that laid them.

Each type of mine has its special uses and peculiar limitations. Anchored mines can usually be swept up by the simple expedient of catching and cutting the cables holding them to their anchors. Ships proceeding in unswept channels use paravane sweeps for protection.

These are simply underwater kites attached by cables to the stem of the ship. As the vessel moves forward they draw their connecting cables out sideways. These outspread cables form a sweep to catch the cables of anchored mines that would otherwise strike the vessel. The mine cables thus snared are drawn out to the paravane, where a cutting-device severs them.

Since the cable of the anchored mine is of constant length, any movement of the mine away from a position directly over its anchor will tend to depress it below its effective position. For that reason this type cannot be used where there are strong currents or where the water is very deep, since the mine moves more freely with a long cable. A large fluctuation in tide-levels also reduces the mine's potential effectiveness.

Magnetic and acoustic mines are generally made to lie on the sea-bottom, where they cannot easily be swept up. They must, however, be laid in water which is neither too shallow for shipping to pass nor too deep for the detonating mechanism to be activated. The first magnetic mines used in 1939 exploded from the sea-bottom, but later types incorporated a compressed-air chamber which caused the mine to rise closer to the ship's hull before it exploded. Magnetic mines caused a good deal of destruction in the early part of the war, but they were quickly and effectively countered by the use of the "degaussing belt," which is simply a system of electric cables girdling the vessel. The magnetic field set up by the current flowing through these cables neutralizes the magnetic attraction of the ship's steel hull.

One advantage which mines have over torpedoes is that they can be laid, from aircraft, in areas which are not accessible to submarines. For instance, it was reported in the autumn of 1941 that planes based on Crete had dropped into the Suez Canal acoustic mines which sank three ships and forced the closing of the canal for eight days. Because of the danger of a repetition of this, the canal was considered unreliable for military convoys coming up the Red Sea. Cargoes were landed at the south end of the canal and transferred by rail to Alexandria.

By the summer and autumn of 1941 mines had ceased to take any substantial toll of shipping round the British Isles, but this state of affairs had been achieved only by a great effort. In September, 1941, Mr. Churchill said in the House of Commons :—

"We do not hear much about the mine menace now. Yet almost every night thirty or forty enemy aeroplanes are casting these destructive engines with all their ingenious variations at the most likely spots to catch our shipping. We do not hear much about all this now because twenty thousand men and one thousand ships toil ceaselessly with many strange varieties of apparatus to clear ports and channels of the deadly deposits of the night."

Little is heard of those who toil to keep our own coasts clear of mines. Perhaps some one some day will write their story, with a chapter about the men who wear the badge reproduced at the head of this article, the men who deal with mines which come ashore.

**One method of disposing of a mine—burning.**

# WITH THE NEW-ZEALANDERS IN GREECE

## Withdrawal to the Coast and Evacuation

### By a New Zealand Medical Orderly

CROWDED, CRAMPED, utterly weary, and uncomfortable as they were while the long convoy raced on, there was still spirit enough in the men to crack a joke, and to wonder profanely how Jerry was liking the carefully prepared traps set for him. Athens was reached once more, its streets dark and deserted, then on and on interminably. All lights went out. Not even a cigarette glowed.

Some time after midnight we became suddenly aware that something was amiss. The convoy stopped. Behind us a heavy truck pulled up with its fender touching our tailboard. Behind that again we knew, though we could not see, there were more trucks " nose to tail " almost endlessly. Plainly we could hear above the sound of brakes and idling engines the mutter of gruff voices inquiring, speculating, cursing the delay.

After a stop, which seemed endless, the vehicle ahead melted into the darkness. We were moving, but at a snail's pace, in fits and starts, a few yards at a time. Then trucks began to roar past us, going back the way we had come. Ahead, with infinite trouble in the narrow roadway, the transport was turning about. Someone complained bitterly " Another b—— muck-up ! "

Shortly before dawn the convoy halted and dispersed among olive groves. It was Sunday, and Greek civilians were early astir. They came to stare curiously at us, strolling couples, little groups of family folk out perhaps on their way to Mass. I set to work at once to dig in, as did all the others, in the shade of a convenient tree.

A little old workman touched me on the shoulder. " Why do you do that ?" he asked, " You will kill the tree. The Germans, they will not come here. They could not." It wasn't possible to desecrate such peace, such beauty. And looking at the green loveliness of the richly fertile gardens about us it did not seem possible to me either. This was no battlefield. The crops, the strolling peasant people in their ones and twos and their family groups, the smell of fresh turned earth, all spoke of peace. But I dug my trench.

From the time I dropped asleep lying full length in a narrow grave-like hole with little streams of soil trickling in on me until there was a sudden stir and a barking of orders about midday seemed only a moment. " Moving out at once," snapped an N.C.O. " You've got to march to a beach and wait till dark." Orders were given to destroy the vehicles. Men were smashing gear with picks and heavy hammers.

So this was the last stage. The end of the campaign in Greece. It was a relief at least to know, but why must we move in broad daylight ? As the first long files of men began to march away the story was passed from man to man that the enemy was entering Athens. We were in danger of being cut off, and must at all costs make contact with an embarkation point.

No sooner had the men begun to move than the air was filled with the roar of engines, and out of the sky a long line of black shapes came diving, screaming, towards us. Messerschmitts ! I thought of the old Greek peasant and his quiet conviction that the peace of his lovely countryside could not be broken. Above our heads was an inferno of noise with the deadly uproar of almost continuous machine-gun fire dominant above it all. The first attack broke into a series of many. The air seemed full of hostile craft. Every few moments would come a burst of firing.

Ahead of us, but out of sight, the Luftwaffe was still attacking when we moved off again, hurrying from cover to

cover, watching alertly for any sign of the enemy's return. It did not seem like a retreat to the beach, more like an advance under fire towards a front line. We would cover a few yards and then have to drop flat as planes dived, on again for a few more yards, down again among the grape-vines waiting for an attack to pass, then forward once more.

The midday heat, too, was a severe test for tired, heavily laden men, and before long the heaviest equipment had to be discarded. One soldier rested for a while to play a last tune on a fine piano-accordian which he could carry no further.

We passed through a small village which the planes had machine-gunned a a few minutes before. The population did not appear at all afraid, for they stood at their doors to watch us go by—men, and even women and children—in silence as a rule, but sometimes there would be a cheery word and a wave of the hand. Twice we passed homes where the whole family had turned out to form a bucket brigade, working furiously to rush cold water from the wells in their yards to the thirsty men.

It seemed as though that march would never end. All day the enemy planes were on the attack, and though the particular area in which we were was often free from their attentions they were always to be seen or heard not very far away. From time to time we had to rest, but as long as the light lasted we were constantly under fire or threat of fire.

It is important to realize that at the time it was not the actual military situation that concerned us, but the situation as we believed it to be. There may have been some considerable difference in actual fact. Even now we do not know for certain. However that may be, as those long lines of men, sweating, parched with thirst, pressed on under a burning sun, on and on, under threat of death from the air every moment of the day, this is the story that, passing from man to man, was generally believed.

That morning, when the convoy had been laboriously turned right-about, we had avoided, by the skin of our teeth, a Nazi parachute troops' ambush. Ahead of us in the darkness they had been waiting, holding a bridge which we would have had to cross. Behind us, advance German armoured units were pouring along the road we had just travelled. The enemy land forces were behind and before, advancing nearer every moment and threatening our line of retreat to the beach.

We believed ourselves to be in a tight corner, and it seemed highly probable that desperate fighting would be necessary before the withdrawal could be completed And always there was the Luftwaffe, hunting, harrying with machine-gun and cannon, seeking to terrify with screamers and bombs. The New-Zealander's skill at taking cover to the best advantage must have exasperated the enemy. It certainly resulted in his achieving the minimum of result for the effort expended.

As we neared our objective the illusion of approaching a battlefront became always sharper. Ahead was the thunder of bursting bombs. Every now and again a German plane could be seen swooping up and down the sides of the hills, so low that it appeared to be touching the ground, raking the valleys with fire. Over the road ahead hung a great pall of black smoke.

From a nearby field came the fierce crackle of flames telling where incendiaries had set the ripening grain crops ablaze. On the side of the road on which I was we came often across little patches

*" Why do you do that ? "*

and lines of charred ground. The scarred sides of a large concrete culvert showed where a diving, low flying plane had sent a burst of armour piercing bullets right along its length. A low clay bank along one side of a track had been swept with fire so that there were patches and lines of churned-up earth. All along the road

*"Along the road were burning vehicles."*

were burning vehicles, vehicles smashed and filled with holes, tributes to enemy marksmanship. Once we passed a small-arms-ammunition truck which was blazing fiercely, its load exploding in tremendous rattles of "firing" while spent shells whined in the air and thudded into the ground round about like a heavy shower of hail.

We lost count of time as the withdrawal continued. Never have I known a day to seem so long. Without arms we medical folk—there was a bare half-dozen of us together by this time, the others having taken a different route—felt helpless, dismayed. There seemed to be nothing we could do, we had no equipment, and we had lost the unit to which we had been attached.

In the meantime, however, some of our party were doing valuable work. We heard later how they had attended seriously wounded men under the most difficult circumstances. Two of them were working in a damaged truck when enemy planes again began to machine gun the road: but they carried on efficiently throughout the attack.

Later in the afternoon we passed a nest of our own machine-gunners ready for action. They expected the enemy to attempt a breakthrough. "But," they said, "he'll have a b—— hard job." The gunners were in excellent spirits, smiling, cracking a joke or two, but grimly confident. There were tanks in the village we had left a bare half-hour before, sheltering under the protection given by our refusal to fire on civilians, they said.

Even as we passed them our artillery began pounding away at the roads beyond the village. At last we regained contact with our adopted unit. We found them digging in, preparing to make, should it be necessary, a desperate last stand which would enable the main party to escape. In a dry river-bed we found a shelter, for it seemed that all we could then do was to await events—attack when we would go into action as stretcher bearers, or the time for withdrawal to the sea.

There was no attack, however, and when the coming of darkness brought safety from the Luftwaffe the last steps in the last stage began. The danger was by no means over, however, and one unit, ours, was detailed to form a rearguard while the remainder marched back to the beach. The company with which we medicals were was set to straddle the road in reserve of the remainder of the battalion. To us it seemed rather a strange anomaly for unarmed men to be waiting there a few yards in the rear of a rifle company also waiting tensely in the darkness, weapons ready, crouched in the scant shelter of irrigation trenches and behind trees in anticipation of a possible attack.

If the day had seemed long, that night of waiting beside the road was an eternity. Company after company, group after group of men, marched past us. Hours were centuries, minutes years, as we waited, waited, waited, unable to sleep, yet fatigued beyond measure. At last our turn came, and we marched a few yards down the road to a point where it branched. Here again we waited.

Time dragged by unbearably. Groups marched away into the blackness, under the guidance of naval officers, and clearly in the silence we could hear the welcome sounds of the sea, and at long irregular intervals the rhythmic throbbing of engines. Between us and the enemy there were only the ready rifles of our own men now—that and bluff, for it seemed that not knowing what we had in store for him he dared not come on until daylight. Some one passed the word that the naval authorities had declared that they would have to pull out at a certain hour, whether we were

on board or not. The named hour approached, and was passed, and still we waited, waited, waited. Waited until we began to plan with despair how we would disperse into the hills in twos and threes when daylight came, hoping to take our chance and perhaps find our own way of escape. By this time only a handful of men remained, and we knew that absolute zero hour for embarkation was near.

It was the darkest hour before dawn, both metaphorically and in fact, when at long last the efficient hand of the Navy turned to us, and we began to move, quickly, silently, down the last stretch of road to the beach. With smooth efficiency we were packed on to fishing-boats, barges, and a great variety of small craft, and soon, growing swiftly closer, we could see through the blackness the welcome shapes of British ships of war.

For the particular craft on which I had found a perch there was still a moment of anxiety before we reached final safety aboard a destroyer. There was a strong wind, and our ancient craft was so heavily laden that she proved most difficult to manage. Three times we circled the destroyer before coming near enough to clamber abroad.

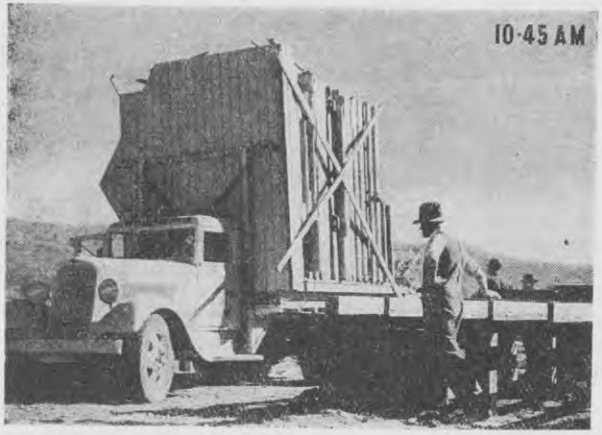
Once a ship's officer, hailing us through a megaphone, shouted impatiently " Do get alongside at once ! If you don't we will have to go without you ! " It was a tense minute or two while we made our final attempt. If we missed this time there would not be " another try." We would have to stay behind. But this time there was no mistake, and with the most wonderful feeling of relief in the world we scrambled on to decks of steel.

Even as we were being taken to spaces where we could spend the few remaining hours of night the ship began to move, and before long we were racing out to sea at over 40 knots.

It is useless for me to prate about the deeds of the Navy, to which so many of us owe our lives, for if you have not already been told the story there is something radically wrong. It was beyond the powers of human endeavour for men to have done more for us than those naval men did that night. The ship's doctor and his orderly worked like Trojans attending our wounded, while for those who suffered only from a weariness greater than ever they had known before the galley staff worked unceasingly.

So it was that we left Greece to land in Crete, where for a time there was respite, but where later the worst of the fighting took place. This part of the story, however, does not concern me, for my unit went straight to Egypt, and our small party rejoined them before the Nazi invasion took place. What we did see of Crete made it seem a very pleasant place, a semi-tropical island paradise. We did not at that time dream how soon Paradise was to be changed to Hell.

After landing from the destroyer we had a memorable march to a reception station, where rations and much-needed hot drinks were waiting, then on again to a bivouac camp among the olive-trees not far from a pleasant stream. We had just time to see something of the beauties of the island before the time came to leave for Egypt, where a heat-wave and sandstorms at their worst gave an ironical welcome.



# PREFABRICATION IN PRACTICE

## From Floor to Roof in One Day

### A KORERO Report

IS IT possible to erect a house in a day? We may be able in the near future to answer "Yes" to this question. Prefabrication is bringing big changes to the building industry in New Zealand. Some of its possibilities may be seen from the pictures on this and the following pages.

These pictures were taken at the Waddington Estate, Lower Hutt, where 650 State houses are being constructed from panels and sections prefabricated in factories away from the actual building-sites. The house shown in these pictures was erected to demonstrate the saving in time and labour on the site achieved by the new methods. Allowance should be made, of course, for time and labour used in making the sections in 14 factories.

The foundations and floor-joists were already on the site. A complete house, in ready-made sections, was loaded on to a truck in the factory at Miramar and erected on the site in a few hours. It was intended to complete the tiling of the roof in the same day, but the materials for this work were held up. The builders are confident, however, that it is possible to erect a complete exterior shell and roof in one day. These photographs show what was accomplished on the building site from 10.45 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There are dozens of houses in this particular State housing scheme in various stages of completion. Work is being pushed ahead with the erection of as many outside shells and roofs as possible. The builders will then be able to work under cover on the interiors during the winter. A feature of these houses is the straight floor. This is laid before any interior walls are put in. The prefabricated interior partitions are then nailed to the floor and are independent of the roof trusses.

**1. The panels for the complete exterior shell of the house are loaded on to the truck at the prefabrication factory at Miramar.**

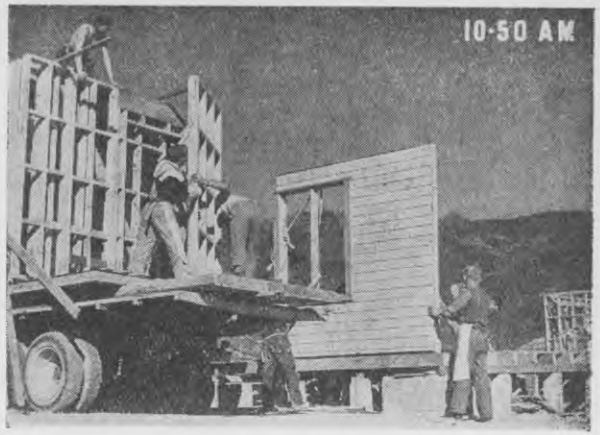
**2. The truck arrives at Naenae and the sections are ready to be unloaded piece by piece for erection.**

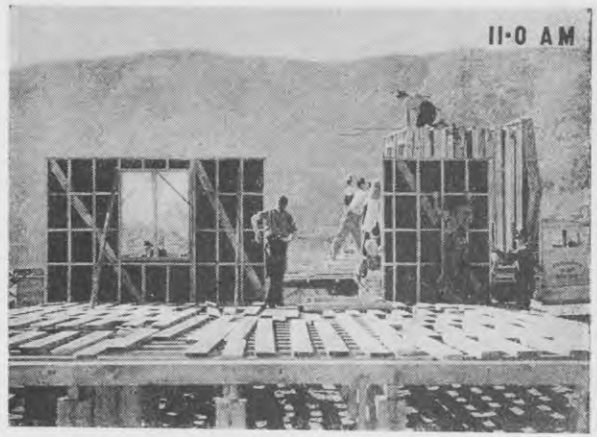
**3. A general view of the site showing the foundations and floor-joists already complete. In the right background are the roof-trusses which have been made in the workshop on the job.**

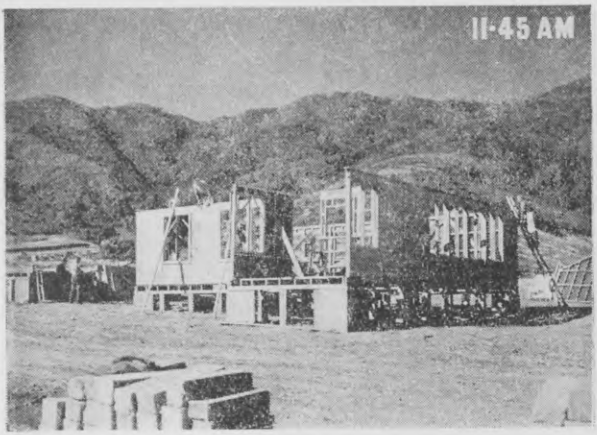
**4. The first panel off the truck is the first to be erected. Work begins in the left-hand front corner and proceeds clockwise round the house.**

**5. As the truck moves along the panels are taken off in order and erected.**

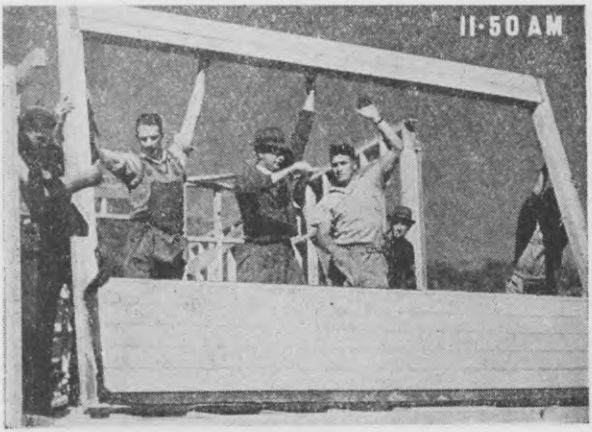
**6. The site of this particular house is in a crescent. You can see the variety of design in the other partly-finished prefabricated units.**



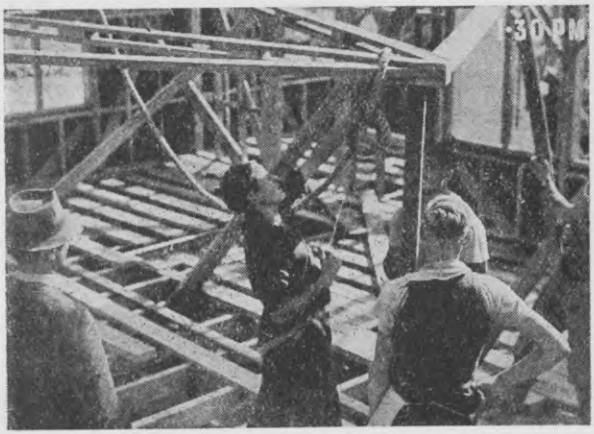




7. The outer shell is complete except for the sun-porch panel. You can see the joins where the panels meet. These will be covered with battens.

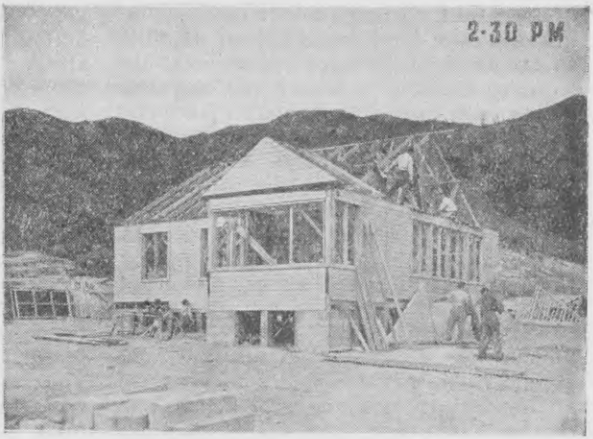



8. "Up she goes!" The last exterior panel—the front of the sun-porch—is placed in position sixty-five minutes after the truck arrived.

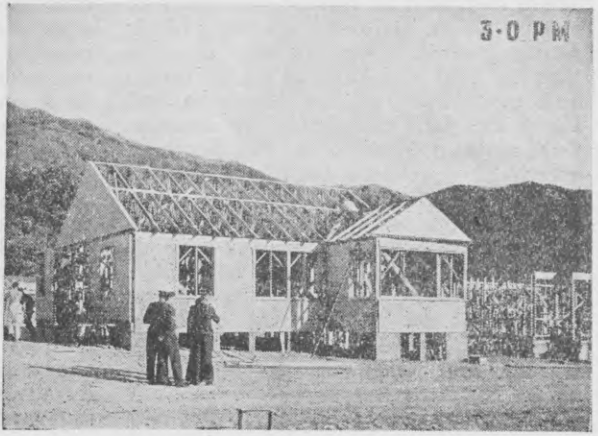



9. Here we see how the roof-trusses are pushed up one by one until the seventeen comprising the main gable are in position.


10. Another roof-truss coming up. A start has already been made on the hip covering the front sun-porch. Note that the main prefabricated trusses continue straight through regardless of the hip. This gives extra strength to the main gable.




11. The trusses are all up and the first end piece has gone up. The two men on the left of the sun-porch are putting on the lower weatherboards where the bottom of the panel joins the flooring.




12. The exterior shell complete, including entrance porches at side and rear, with the first priming coat applied at the factory. Erection time, including the foundations, was fifteen hours.

# DESTINATION: THE MARSHALLS

## An Eye-witness Account of the Invasion

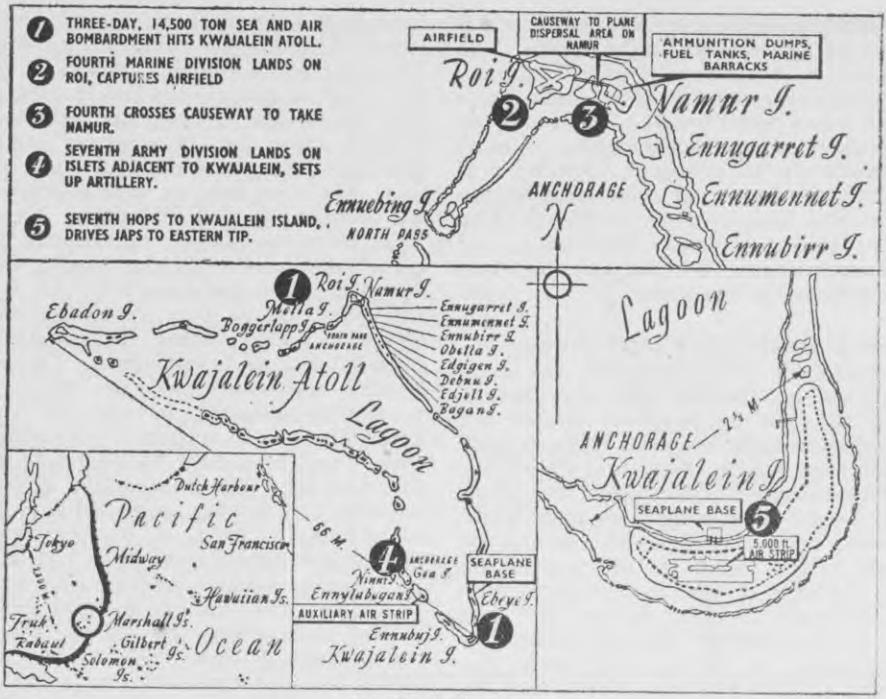
**By Commander ANTHONY KIMMINS, in *The Listener*, England, February 24, 1944**

WHEN I FIRST discovered that our destination was to be the Marshalls, I experienced exactly the same thrill as when, last year in the Mediterranean, I had learned that we were off to Pantellaria, and later to Sicily and Salerno. There was the same added zest in the knowledge that we were invading genuine pre-war enemy territory, and I thanked my lucky stars for guiding me in to such historic moments on both, and almost exactly opposite, sides of the world. I had another reason to be grateful also, for I found myself detailed to an amphibious force commanded by Admiral Connolly, whom I had last seen action with during the Salerno landings, where his personality and the determined manner in which he had handled his landing craft had gained him the respect and admiration of every Britisher out there. "If you really want a seat in the front row," he said, "I'd suggest that you go in the destroyer 'Phelps,' as she is doing a special job."

The voyage, week after week of monotonous steaming through the long Pacific swell, was completely uneventful; and when at last we approached our destination, every ship was in position according to the pre-arranged plan. There had been no loss or damage from enemy action, and very few signs of air reconnaissance. One can only presume that the bold plan of going for the centre and main atoll of the Marshalls had taken the Japs completely by surprise. Our main objectives in the northern attack force were the islands of Roi and Namu; but, unfortunately, both these islands are on the windward side of the Kwajalein atoll, where the heavy breakers and reefs make a direct assualt impossible. In other words, we must first capture the islands on the leeward or calm-weather side, force an entrance into the lagoon, and then attack our main objectives from inside.

As dawn broke on "D" day, "Phelps" added to the rest of the task force, was nosing in towards the first objectives. In the darkness we had seen lights burning on Roi and Namu, where the Japs were obviously trying to repair the damage from the previous day's bombing. Now, as the small, flat islands became visible in the morning light, with their clusters of palms sticking out of the vast expanse of water, they looked rather like the sort of mirage one would expect after a long march across the Sahara. Flying-fish kept skimming out of the water, wondering what all the commotion was about. At exactly the appointed second, the Captain ordered "Open fire," and with a blinding flash of her broadside, "Phelps" had the honour of starting the bombardment. Almost immediately there were more flashes from farther out to sea, as the battleships, cruisers, and other destroyers let fly. It was far and away the most staggering bombardment I have ever seen, and I have witnessed a good many in my time. Each ship took on not only her own particular island, but an actual spot on that island. The whole northern tip of the atoll ring was surrounded by ships pounding it from every side, and, if you watched carefully, you could see the bursts relentlessly and systematically creeping across each strip of land covering every possible point where there might be Jap emplacements or defences. And then, as if one master hand was controlling the trigger of every gun, the bombardment ceased, and as the great clouds of yellow cordite smoke drifted away in the breeze, guns' crews tumbled out of their turrets and enjoyed a quick smoke while empty shell-cases were heaved out of the way, leaving everything clear for the next phase.

But that temporary lull in the ships allowed no respite for the defenders of the islands. Even as the smoke and dust from the last shells were subsiding, dive-bombers were roaring in and carrying




*The Marshall Islands.*

on the good work. One after another they came hurtling down, and on the tails of the last dive-bombers came the fighters, tracers from their cannon-shells showing up brilliantly in the half-light of early morning and bouncing up, like grotesque illuminated ping-pong balls, as the shells exploded on the ground. As the last aircraft zoomed up into the sky and flew off to its carrier to reload, the warships opened up again. It was a triumph of planning and concentrated action. The " Phelps," being the closest inshore, had, in addition to her schedule bombardment programme, the responsibility of dealing with individual targets as and when they presented themselves. Now, as the light improved, emplacements and barges and observation posts became apparent : all of them were systematically blown sky-high. It was a gun-layer's paradise, and those gun-layers in the " Phelps " certainly knew their job.

By now the second phase of the operation was taking shape. While the preliminary bombardment had been going on, transports and other parent ships had been disgorging their landing craft, and scores of different types of amphibious tanks and assault boats were converging on the " Phelps," who had the additional duty of grouping them in their correct ways and then at the right moment launching them for their assault. The wind at this stage was freshening rapidly and had also backed a number of degrees. This meant that the beaches chosen for the first assault would not have as much lee as was originally expected. From where we were it was already plainly obvious that the surf was assuming considerable proportions. As the assault craft approached the nearest beaches it became even more apparent from the way they were being tossed about in the rollers that it would be extremely difficult to force a landing at those points. One or two craft, determined no doubt to live up to the spirit of their Colonel's final message, " Good luck to the first marine to land

on Jap soil," attempted to break through, were swung beam-on and capzised. The remainder, benefiting by their example, then concentrated on those points where there was a better lee, and before long the first marines were safely ashore. Almost immediately there was a rat-tat-tat of small-arms fire ; but soon these became more and more sporadic, until about an hour later they finally died away, and it became obvious that the first objectives were secure in our hands.

### First to Anchor in a Jap Harbour

Meanwhile there had been no let-up from the bombarding ships and aircraft, and the last fighters had strafed the beaches immediately prior to the assault craft touching down on first objectives. So the whole bombardment had lifted and moved to the next island to be taken. Having safely despatched the landing craft to the assault of the first islands the " Phelps' " next duty was to force an entrance into the lagoon, and take up a pre-arranged position where the next group of landing craft could rendezvous. As we steamed slowly through, now accompanied by minesweepers, everyone was keeping an almost sharper look-out than ever. This was the point, we decided, where the enemy would have placed every trap in the way of mines and under-water obstructions, to stop us and leave us a fitting target for his shore batteries. But almost before we had had time to realize our good fortune we were safely through the narrow channel and inside the roomy waters of the lagoon itself. From there on it was a comparatively simple task to arrive at the point from which to launch the next attack, and as we were receiving no interference from shore batteries the anchor was let go, the first U.S. ship to anchor in a Jap harbour in this war.

It was a strange and unforgettable sight inside that lagoon. There sat the " Phelps," rather like a dignified old duck with all her ducklings splashing and scuffling around her. I couldn't help thinking what a wonderful cartoon Walt Disney would have made of it all. From the entrance we had just come through, more and more ducklings were streaming in towards us, freed at last from their long captivity in their parent ships. There they came in hundreds splashing along, darting this way and that, and, as you always find in even the best organized circles, the occasional Donald either late or strutting around just avoiding collisions with some one else. On three sides we were surrounded by coral reefs and palm-tree islands. Some of these islands, particularly Roi and Namu, were belching smoke from oil-tanks which had been hit. All, with the exception of two we had already captured, were being systematically pounded with shells and bombs. Outside, beyond the atoll ring, we could see transports steaming to and fro from battleships and cruisers. Occasionally they would be hidden by an island and the flash of their guns would give an impression of having been fired from the island itself. Then, a moment later, they would have cleared from behind to be plainly visible among the white breakers and coral reefs, with great flashes and clouds of yellow cordite smoke issuing from their guns. And again, from beyond them, from carriers away on the horizon, dive-bombers and fighters were continually streaming in to drop their loads and return for more.

### Off to the next Islands

Then suddenly a terrific explosion, the loudest I have ever heard in my life, shook and rocked the lagoon, and an enormous volume of white and black smoke shot up as from Namu and belched outwards into a colossal mushroom. Debris and bodies could be seen spinning round like straws in a gale. Obviously a very large ammunition dump had been hit. By now all the landing craft were in position and, at a signal from " Phelps," they steamed off in perfect formation towards the next islands to be captured. Just as in the morning attacks, covering fire from larger craft and fighters cleared the way before them, and by dusk all the scheduled objectives were in our hands. And so, as the night closed down, " Phelps," a few minesweepers, and some of the largest assault landing craft remained inside the lagoon, while the larger ships watched from outside and the small amphibious assault craft were

high and dry on the beaches of the islands they had captured. As the night wore on there was little sign of enemy movement. Obviously the shells still dropping on the main islands and the tremendous weight of explosives which had been poured on them during the previous days had more than done the trick.

Daylight revealed a grim and murky day with low clouds and rain squalls, and the final bombardment of Roi and Namu started in earnest. I had thought that yesterday's bombardment and bombing would never be surpassed, but now it was intensified to a pitch that almost took one's breath away. It was so staggering one just could not take one's eyes off it, and when eventually I glanced over my shoulder the assault craft which I had last met outside the lagoon had by now effected a complete transformation. The whole northern end of the lagoon seemed to be packed with ducklings. Yesterday there had been scores of them, now there were literally hundreds and hundreds. Soon they were surrounding us, forming up in their proper lines and waiting impatiently the signal to attack. Many of the marines had their faces blackened, others had favoured a weird khaki background with black streaks. All were gripping their carbines and tommy-guns and obviously itching for action. The Stars and Stripes were proudly flying from the islands already captured. These men were determined that it would soon be flying over Roi and Namu.

At first, as the assault craft deployed and crushed down on the beaches, they met with little resistance, but as they moved inland across the islands there were still a number of stubborn Japs offering a last desperate resistance. The scene ashore was an indescribable shambles. Dead fish of all colours and sizes had been hurled on to the beaches by nearby explosions. Nearly every palm-tree had had its top blown off.


*Routes to Tokyo.*

There was hardly a square foot of ground which had not either been hit or covered with debris. Dead and mutilated Japs lay about in grotesque attitudes. Pill-boxes and air-raid shelters which had received direct hits revealed an awful scene of carnage; the stench was foul, and flies, a few lizards, some birds, a chicken, a pig, and a dog, and a few prisoners seemed to be the only living creatures who had survived the hell of the last few days.

And so, through all that day and that night and the following day and night, the grim business went on of exterminating Japs wherever they might be hiding, in drains, foxholes, or whatever cover was left, until the last one had been dealt with. The whole operation had cost us amazingly few lives, thanks to perfect organization, a bold stroke of planning and brilliant execution. I shall never forget my trip in the U.S.S. "Phelps." It is a privilege which I shall always treasure as one of my very proudest memories.

# We New Zealanders + are we like this?

**A KORERO Report**

A RECENT NUMBER of the English periodical *Horizon* included an article called " New Zealand : Answer to an Inquiry." The writer, Anna Kavan, tells us at the beginning that she is trying to convey something of her private picture of New Zealand, " very impressionistic, certainly, and incomplete. But," she says, " I believe that if you were to collect a sufficient number of such personal sketches from people who have been there you would have the most lively and valuable picture possible. I mean by this that there is much more of the living spirit in Tom, Dick, or Harry's confused idea of a country than there is in the factual exactitudes of reference books."

Well, we reproduce some of Miss Kavan's impressions here together with some comments from other sources about New Zealand and its people. We would like you to tell us what you think about all this. Are we New-Zealanders really like this ? Your opinions might make another interesting article for *Korero*.

To begin with, Miss Kavan says that in her picture the country itself is immensely more important than its inhabitants. She adds that she thinks this may be because the social instinct is not very highly developed in her ; or it may be that the population of the country is so small in relation to its size ; or it may just be because of the sheer, overwhelming splendour of the natural scene " in those weird islands, to hell and gone down there, near the south pole."

We haven't space to reprint Miss Kavan's description of the country and its towns and villages ; we must start with the paragraph in which she talks about the vague sense she has " of something having gone wrong somewhere " :

A new country (she says), a country so full of splendour and strangeness as this one, ought, one would think, to produce some new and splendid characteristics in its inhabitants. But does it ? Well, of course, here and there, splendid individuals do emerge, as for instance, Frank Smith, the ranger at Waikaremoana, a man of real, simple magnificence and in close contact with the natural world. And Mrs. Gron, brilliantly blue-eyed, with a magic touch for all growing things, toiling away in the backblocks year after year, in a man's hat and gumboots too often stogged in mud, and utterly undismayed.

But my impression of the mass of the people, the townspeople at any rate, and particularly those in the Auckland district, is that there's something lacking in them. Perhaps it's the humid climate that does it ; but anyway they seem to me to lack vitality, warmth, enthusiasm, whatever you like to call it. The women look fine sturdy specimens, like professional tennis players, but walking around their houses and down to the shops is about as much as their energy runs to. The men look hearty and tough, but when you get to know them they seem depleted somehow, frustrated perhaps, and dissatisfied.

It's a queer thing, really. For most of the year, anyhow, in this region, the sun shines and the weather is good. The country's good to look at with plenty of hills in the background and small mountains, some of them even extinct volcanoes. The sea's still better to look at, full of fishes and small islands. The smallest fishes jump up in shoals out of the water

to escape from the large fishes, the gannets fold up like umbrellas and dive after fish of all sizes, the cormorants hunt under water for fish and for shell-fish, the kingfishers fish from the rocks, the men fish from boats, the gulls hang about in the air, on the water and on the land for any portions of fish which the others may chance to discard. It strikes me that the dissatisfaction around here should be the prerogative of the fish.

Why the dissatisfaction, then, amongst the human inhabitants? Why the lack of energy, lack of cordiality, why the defensive attitude?

It's only their manner, somebody tells me. Sturdy colonial independence. The difference between the old and the new.

Well, then, all I can say is that I don't like their new manner. I don't like the postman who doesn't answer when you say good morning, it makes no difference if you say it once, twice, a hundred, or ten thousand times, he's shut up like a clam, you'll never get a response out of him, his independence goes on getting sturdier at every encounter.

I don't like the defensive attitude towards newcomers, the old insular "Here comes a stranger, let's throw a brick at him" attitude.

What happens when a stranger enters what's called intellectual circles? Do the sturdy colonial intellectuals care if Einstein or the Cham of Tartary is in their midst? Brother, they do not care; they do not wish to hear from you, and unless you can speak louder than they can you're as good as dumb. I suppose they're far too independent to display any interest in any one from outside.

I don't like the set-up between the sexes, either, the men getting together around the bottles and the women getting on with the chores. The men worrying about the Labour Government and the women worrying about something in the oven. The women not allowed to drink in a public place after five o'clock. Some wowser writing in the paper that a decent woman's place in the evening is in her home.

Individual New-Zealanders, when you get to know them, are as fine as individuals anywhere; but why all the defensive reserve? Why is getting acquainted such heavy going? What's behind all the display of sturdy colonial independence?

Well, if you ask me, it's dependency, and to these people independence means everything because, precisely, they haven't got it, they're still tied up to the home which they call England; they've never cut the umbilical cord, and when they realize their position they are full of inward trembling, and they depend on defending themselves with the defensive manner.

They depend on defending themselves with the good old middle-class atmosphere their predecessors brought with them from Bodmin and Nottingham, with china dogs on the mantelpiece, and the shades three-quarters down over the windows to keep the carpets from fading and the neighbours from peeping in.

Of course, you can see their point, they've got to defend themselves somehow against all that loneliness of water and the South Pole and the bush, all the hoary, enormous, spectral trees

*"——the postman who doesn't answer."*

standing massed against them, and getting them down, because, though they keep on burning and felling the trees, there's still the huge mass of Nature, indestructible, desolate, indifferent, dangerous Nature, the oceans and the ice cap and the antique forests and the earthquakes, massing upon them,

bearing down on them, separating them from Bodmin and Nottingham ; and who are they, anyhow ?

They are caused to tremble, being only a few transplanted ordinary people, not specially tough or talented, walking in gum boots or sand-shoes among the appalling impersonal perils and strangeness of the universe, living in temporary shacks, uneasily, as reluctant campers too far from home.

They are on the defensive because if they didn't put something between them and the awful, patient, immemorial bush and the imminent Pole and the ambiguous smile of the darker race, these things would fall in on them and crush them. They would be crushed thin like dead leaves and the Polar south wind would blow them away to nowhere.

Hence the depleted vitality, the weariness of the secret, eternal struggle, the heart unrecoiled, but at home in another place, the mind preoccupied and closed against strangers, being closed against the menacing strangeness of an alien hemisphere.

"—— women getting on with the chores."

At least (Miss Kavan concludes) that's how it looks to me in my picture. And how should I presume to criticize the people who venture to trust themselves to those weird, unearthly, resplendent islands, lost, lonely islands, implacably blockaded by empty antarctic seas ? In my picture these people look mad and heroic because they have courage to go on living at all in the face of that alien terror and loveliness, nothing between them and the South Pole.

That is all of Miss Kavan's article we have space for here. The paragraphs which follow are from a letter on the same subject — New-Zealanders — by a member of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. The writer of this letter was born in Europe, where he has lived for the greater part of his life. He has been in New Zealand for a few years.

One of the first things about New-Zealanders he comments on is what he calls their method of expressing goodwill. Instead of saying you are a very nice fellow and thank you for buying a penny's worth of lollies in my shop, the friendly woman behind the counter will say, "Turned out nice again." And the liftman, he says, having gone up and down for the 37th time and having safely guided the 150th person up to the second floor still smiles kindly at you and says "Rotten weather to-day."

And if, he continues, you should meet the wife of a member of the 1936 "All Black" team (in other words one of the highest dignitaries in the country) it will be quite impossible to start a conversation with her other than by saying : "This season is really much wetter than the last one," or the other way round.

It's important to note, this observer says, that the actual state of the weather has very little to do with the uttering of this strange good will signal. It may be overcast and windy, yet you will still meet a smiling face and affirmative reply if you say : "Nice day to-day." And, again, this summer may be the hottest for years, yet you will still find enthusiastic followers if you point out that this is the worst summer you have ever come across and that it seems a strange thing that the seasons should have changed such a lot.

And this will often be the starting-point for some inference that the world is no longer what it ought to be and that it is probably God's wrath that has caused these changes of weather and, if not God's wrath, that there is something strange going on somewhere ; or that the bad weather has been caused through the thunder of the guns on the plains

of Russia and that the weather in wartime is generally worse than in peacetime. With a lot of common sense, the average New-Zealander has a silent, or sometimes even a rather vociferous, love for the unexplainable and mystic. He prefers no explanation of any physical event to a rational and realistic one.

There is only one form of religion which is fairly generally accepted in New Zealand, and that is the cult of Rugby football. Rugby replaces the "Old School Tie" in this country, and in private conversation you simply musn't be critical of this divine sport, but you must say: "It does make men of them"—even if they now and then get a kick in the kidneys, or get rheumatism for life, or concussions and broken limbs. New-Zealanders are tough and they are proud of it, and their unreserved approval of Rugby is only their unreserved approval of toughness and the fighting spirit . . .

The average New-Zealander is very well educated—that is, he can read and write and has a fair knowledge of technical matters and is mostly able to get through all sorts of adversities under his own steam. There are only very few things a New-Zealander will not do himself. In the house he is his own gardener, his carpenter, his paperhanger, his electrician—not to talk of dish-washer and cook, of course. With his children he is often their hairdresser and his wife their dressmaker.

New-Zealanders read an awful lot. Three library books a week is nothing extraordinary. But if you asked them, after a fortnight, what they have been reading, the answer would be fairly unsatisfactory. I have a feeling that the answer wouldn't be more satisfactory if you asked them while they were reading. I don't know if their education is merely technical, but this seems to be their outstanding characteristic: they are mastering everything mechanical and mechanically. They can repair a watch, although they may be unable to make one; they can repair a radio set—even if they don't know the principles of radio-physics. They can build a house—if they have no sense of beauty. They can read a novel—but they might not understand it. And being the sort of people who don't pass their time sitting in the sun and having folk dances and sing-songs, they expand on their chesterfield suite at home, put on their slippers, and enjoy the joys of family life, reading "Blondie's Third Lover" and similar tripe. Father doesn't talk to mother,

*"—— read an awful lot."*

and the children are probably at the pictures or are reading their library books—if they are sufficiently grown up and the essence of family life is there. Thus family life is another of the pillars of New Zealand society . . .

If you accept physical standards, New-Zealanders are probably amongst the most mechanically minded, the most handy, the most practical people in the world. They are strong, well built, like their rather monotonous food consisting of mutton or beef and apple-pie and perhaps a sponge cake on Sunday . . .

On the other hand, if you accept intellectual standards, you will find that in most cases when a problem escapes their immediate grip they are unable to tackle it. They may not be unable, but they certainly are not interested. "Talk to me about what I can see and don't talk all sorts of theoretical nonsense"—

that is the attitude of the great mass. In their proud self-confidence they are rather stubborn, and argument won't get them very far unless it is backed by some very visible proof. Thus their socialism is more a matter of L.S.D. than of high-spirited hopes of a millenium to come; thus they have been able to build a society where every one can live in reasonable comfort, but where all those who have a longing for the more untouchable things in human life are frustrated and dissatisfied.

In all, whoever loves the soil, the sun and the sea, the mountains and the good earth generally, whoever believes in the things that make the life of the body pleasant—plain food, good climate, lots of outdoor work—whoever is interested more in the direct thoughts that spring from living in Nature and with people, he will find that the New Zealand character has to give him everything he wants.

But if you are fundamentally interested in the intellectual pleasures of life, in social thought, in art and culture, New Zealand's national character leaves a lot to wish for, and it may well take another hundred years for it to develop to the stage of the most backward European community.

We haven't given you all of this writer's comments on New-Zealanders. We haven't space to do that. Nor have we space here to quote other opinions. A book has recently been written on the subject. It's called "We New-Zealanders," and is by A. R. D. Fairburn. If you're interested, you might have a look at that and tell us what you think. In any case, let us know your opinions on the comments we have quoted here.

# PONAPE: A NUT TO CRACK

**By WILLARD PRICE in *Asia and the Americas***

**In the days before Pearl Harbour, Willard Price spent several months in the Japanese mandated islands, then jealously guarded from outsiders.**

ONE MORNING, shortly before these lines were in print a radio voice announced, "American planes have bombed Ponape."

Ponape, not far from Truk, attacked three days later by strong American forces, is as little known to-day as Guadalcanal or Bataan before we collaborated with the Japanese to make them famous.

But even before the war Ponape was less know than perhaps any other island of equal size in the Pacific, because it lay within the forbidden waters of the Japanese mandate.

Ponape is the largest single island of the 1,400 fragments of land composing Japanese Micronesia. It is in some ways, not all, the most important. It is the most prolific. The Spaniards called it "the garden of the Pacific" and made it their Micronesian headquarters. It is a strong defensive base, perhaps fully the equal of the more publicized Truk, which lies 400 miles to the west; and far superior to Kusaie, 400 miles east, bombed by American planes in January. But in all probability it will not, like the Gilberts, be a brief meteor in the newspaper-reader's sky. The fight for this rain-soaked, bug-infested, canyon-cut confusion of cliffs and jungle may be long.

Few foreigners have seen Ponape since Japan rang down the curtain a quarter of a century ago. Foreign ships were then barred. Foreigners could not be forbidden passage on Japanese ships, for the terms of the mandate required free access, but they could be, and

were, discouraged. The discomforts of travel in the Nanyo, as the Japanese called their mandated South Seas, were enlarged upon. Moreover, when you had won the privilege of getting on the boat, it was another thing to find a way to get off; for the Japanese captain at every port would suggest that you would be much more comfortable if you remained on board the ship. To stop over from one ship to another was still harder; so it is with some slight sense of achievement that my wife and I look back upon our four months' stay in the islands in 1935.

At Saipan and Yap we sneaked off the boat. At Palau we got away with the help of a German missionary. At Truk we were befriended by a Native. At Ponape it is doubtful what success we should have had if we had not acquired a princely patron.

A young man in amber glasses and golf pants asked us to join him in a game of deck golf. He spoke English surprisingly well. When I remarked on it he said that he had spent some time in England. It was only later that we learned he had been educated at Oxford. He had a frank, friendly manner, quite different from the clamlike inscrutability of many Japanese. He did not play deck golf with consummate skill, and Mary soon put him in the "pool." She was called "nasty" for her pains.

When he had gone to his cabin, the steward came to tell us rather breathlessly that he was Prince Saionji, grandson of the last of the Genro, the elder statesmen who guided the policy of the nation until the militarists seized power. His grandfather was the most influential man in Japan, hardly excepting the Emperor.

The young prince, not yet thirty, occupied himself in the treaties department of the Japanese Gaimusho, or Foreign Office. He was distinctly pro-American and pro-British, and loved to talk with any one acquainted with Europe or America. He had various fine plans, one of them to establish a university like Oxford in Japan.

We soon found that we had gained a powerful ally. We were, of course, the only American passengers on this ship, as we had been on all the others, and the closely enveloping Japanese atmosphere had sometimes been very oppressive. Now the lowering brows lifted, and suddenly nothing was too good for us.

Land on Ponape? Why, of course. A radiogram was sent to the Governor, and he radioed back that a house had been placed at our disposal.

Ponape is impressive as one approaches it by way of the twisting channel through the reef to spacious Ponape Harbour. The island is mountainous and wildly picturesque. It plays its role as an island of mystery. Its appearance is more ominous because of the inky clouds that habitually roll across its ranges. Lightning crackles and thunder roars around the mighty Rock of Chokach overlooking the harbour.

This huge natural fortress, two-thirds the height of Gibraltar, drops away in basaltic cliffs so steep that they can be scaled only in one place where the Japanese have constructed a dangerous trail. Without doubt heavy batteries are mounted on the flat crown.

More than once in the past this rock has been used as a stronghold. In German times a Governor noted for his harsh methods came to Ponape to put down a local rebellion. When he had the King arrested and flogged, the islanders retaliated by assassinating him, his secretary, and all of his higher officials. Then they fled to Chokach and pulled themselves up by lianas to its summit. But German soldiers trained in wall-scaling tactics climbed the precipice and captured the islanders. Some were executed, others deported to Palau.

Lofty Ponape attracts the storms. Rain descends in torrents as we draw near looming Chokach. A severe rainstorm is almost a daily event in Ponape. It has the dubious distincton of being one of the best-watered islands in the Pacific. Anything will grow here, including mould and madness.

Under thumping rain, a launch takes us on a half-hour trip through shallow passages between islands to the docks of the town. Busy streets, teeming with Japanese, climb the hillside to a high point crowned by a shicho, government building. It is a frame structure

in German style. Genial Governor Fushida shows us about the humming offices where heavy-spectacled, eager young Japanese brush columns of ideographs into ledgers and chatter in high-keyed self-importance; then walks with us down a street of bustling stores a mile long ("There was nothing but jungle here a year ago," he says) to our home-to-be.

It is a two-room German house with a verandah commanding an astounding view of the island-studded harbour, towering Chokach and the gleaming white reef. Fruits of every description droop from the trees around the cottage. Rain is still coming down relentlessly. A man is slashing out some jungle undergrowth that is encroaching upon the garden. "It comes in at the rate of a foot or two a day," says Governor Fushida. "And perhaps you haven't believed the stories you've heard about Ponape telephone poles sprouting branches. Well, look at that one." Sure enough, the pole before our house was rapidly reverting to type.

"But I'll tell you something stranger than that," he went on. "The director of our experimental farm stuck his walking stick into the ground. It was made of green wood. That was two years ago. Now it's a tree."

An early visitor described the island as "of a prodigious and inexhaustible fertility. Sago-palms, bananas, mangoes, orange and lime trees grow in greatest magnificence. Great beds of wild ginger carpet the ground, sending up a pungent aromatic reek from their trodden leaves . . . There is no lack of food in the land, for yams and taro are zealously cultivated."

That was in Spanish times before the Germans and Japanese began the agricultural development of the island. Now extensive plantations of tapioca and rice, as well as scientifically cultivated coconut groves and oil-palms, have been added to the natural products of Ponape. A remarkably efficient government experimental farm has brought in two hundred and thirty-six fruits and vegetables from all over the world and acclimatized them for use on the island. Ponape is a treasure chest.

But its chief significance at the moment is strategic.

Like a castle surrounded by a moat, Ponape is circled by a lagoon walled by a coral reef. The lagoon is from one to four miles wide. Much of it is a shallow and almost impassable mangrove swamp. The mangrove has a peculiar habit of sprouting what look like branches, but turn out to be roots, descending through the air until they reach the mud. These interlacing stilt-roots are hard to climb over or through. A mangrove swamp is not adapted to animals that walk on their hind feet; one must return to primordial serpentine habits to squirm through this muddy, slippery lattice as difficult as a barbed-wire entanglement.

Where the shallow lagoon is not choked with mangroves it is studded with reefs of live coral growing so rapidly in some places that charts, even if available, would be useless if not new. Violent cross-currents caused by the tides add to the difficulties of navigation.

Not all of Ponape's moat is shallow. In six places harbours pierce the reef and swamp and provide access to the shore or shelter for defending ships. These harbours are Ponape, Chokach (or Jokaj), Ronkiti, Mutok, Lot, and Metalanim.

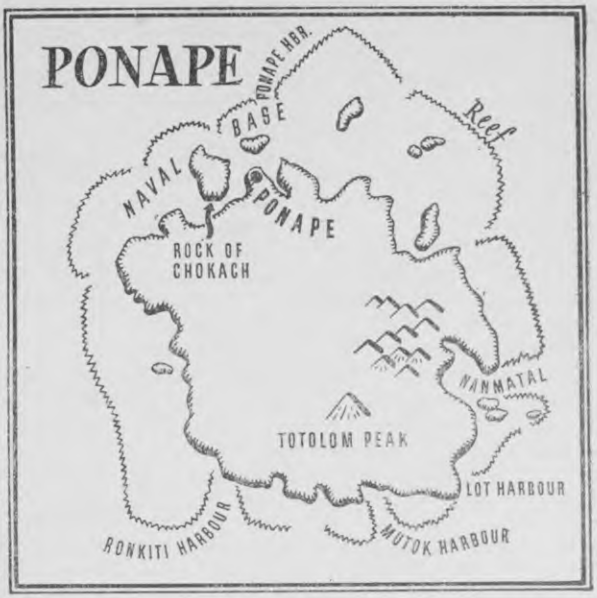
The first two of these harbours are in effect one harbour, since they join to form a magnificent fleet basin fully ten miles long and from one to two miles wide. In the heart of this stands Chokach Island with its 900 ft. cliff-faced rock. Also the harbour is commanded from heights on the main island. Ranged like carefully-placed sentry-boxes along the shore of the fleet basin are four summits, the lowest at the western end, 800 ft. high, the highest a mountain of 2,000 ft. overlooking the best part of the fleet basin on the east.

Moreover, all harbours around the island and the seas beyond them are commanded by the central peak of Ponape, Totolom, with an elevation of 2,579 ft. From this peak the distance to all parts of the reef averages less than eight miles, well within the range of big guns.

The several dozen rocky islands in the lagoon afford good protection for ships from sea attack. Ships of the greatest

draught can be accommodated. The depth of the basin averages 20 fathoms; and in some places exceeds 40 fathoms.

Bitter land fighting may be expected in Ponape, for no other Micronesian island is so replete with " natural fortifications " in the way of deep ravines, high peaks, precipices, and jungle. The Ponapeans have a superstitious dread of the interior, but the Japanese have penetrated it to start plantations and, doubtless, install armaments. Because of the difficult terrain, there are only 40 miles of roads as contrasted with, 171 miles on much smaller Saipan. Streams of any kind are almost unknown in Micronesia, but there are rivers on Ponape, tumbling down to the sea from upland lakes. American whalers used to come to Ponape for fresh water.




The basaltic cliffs are honeycombed with caves, which were used by the islanders to withstand the German siege in 1901, and will doubtless now be found faced with concrete and converted into forts and machine-gun nests.

Forts of the traditional sort are not built by the Japanese, but there is one on Ponape left over from the Spanish regime. It is still in good repair and will probably be used. It stands on a hill overlooking Ponape Harbour. Several acres are enclosed within a high stone wall 6 ft. thick, on top of which defenders may crouch protected by a 3 ft. escarpment. There are two heavy iron gates. Inside the compound is an old Spanish roundhouse, solidly built with gun-ports framed on the inside by the brass ports of some Spanish ship.

Also within the fort is a school facing a large playground. From the veranda of the school we viewed a tribal war dance. Stout Ponape youths removed their straw hats, Osaka-made shirts and pants, smeared themselves with oil and daubs of paint, and adorned themselves with wreaths of the lovely fragrant white flowers with yellow centre called on Ponape the Pomaria, or " Smell of Mary." Their well-oiled, naked, brown bodies flashed in the sun as they fought with staves to the rhythm of a shouting chorus. The chants of songs were stirring. The performance without a change would be a sensation on the New York stage.

The dance was in honour of Prince Saionji. His face wore a strained, almost horrified expression as he watched the blood-chilling ferocity of the savage dance and the very evident relish these head-hunters would have for real battle.

" Good men, if they are with us," he remarked. " I'd hate to have them against us ! "

The fort of Ponape was built for the express purpose of protecting the Spaniards from the islanders. It was the only island of the Carolines on which the Spaniards found a fort necessary.

In the old cemetery near the fort a gigantic mango tree broods over the graves of Spaniards and Germans killed in island uprisings. Granite stones commemorate the German governor Gustav Boder and three of his aides killed by Ponapeans on October 18, 1910. The Japanese dead are buried elsewhere.

It is interesting that the first white men to take up residence on Ponape were missionaries of the American Methodist Mission and they came in 1850.

The next visitors were also Americans, but not bound on so holy an errand. They were New England whalers, coming ashore to raise hell with Ponape women. But they met their match in the warriors of Ponape, and soon chose easier conquests on other islands. Therefore the Ponapeans do not remember Americans with bitterness, but rather with a certain degree of affection since the missionaries did them no harm and some good.

The third visitation was also American. During the Civil War certain Union ships fled to the refuge of Ponape Harbour. The Confederate cruiser "Shenandoah" caught them there and burned them to the water's edge.

So the Spaniards were comparative latecomers. It was not until 1886 that the Spanish flag was raised at what was called Ascension Bay, now Ponape Harbour.

The Spanish Capuchin priests did not get on well with the Methodists from Boston. In 1887 Mr. Doane, head of the Methodist Mission, was deported to Manila.

Two weeks later the resentful islands rose in a massacre of Spanish soldiers and their Filipino mercenaries, captured the fort, and killed Senor Posadillo, the Governor.

In 1890 the Ponapeans again rebelled. The Spaniards took revenge by burning villages and slaughtering the inhabitants. Believing that the American missionaries had encouraged the people to resist Spanish oppression, they ordered the Methodists out. The American corvette "Alliance" exacted 17,000 gold dollars as compensation for the expulsion of the Americans, then took them to the Island of Kusaie.

That did not end the trouble. Eight years later, when the Spanish-American War broke out, a Ponape chief friendly to the Americans and head of the mission schools inherited from the missionaries, led a revolt. He was promptly imprisoned, but his followers carried out a terrible massacre of Spaniards.

Perhaps the Spaniards, having suffered so many bitter humiliations in Ponape at the hands of savages, were not too sorry to lose the island to the United States at the close of the Spanish-American War. But when the United States refused to accept the fruits of victory, Spain sold Ponape, along with the rest of the islands, to Germany.

Rebellions continued under the Germans, the most savage being that of 1910, already mentioned. It occurred on Chokach Island, in the shadow of the great rock. A young German overseer in charge of a road-gang struck one of the men with a whip. In ten minutes he was dead. When the news got to headquarters, the Governor and a squad of soldiers boarded a sloop and came across the bay to Chokach. It was assumed that the Ponapeans had no firearms. But guns captured in Spanish days had been concealed, and the Governor had no sooner set foot on shore than he fell with a bullet through his head. A general massacre followed. Not one German was left on the island.

A few weeks later a German warship happened to call at Ponape. The only foreigner the crew could find was a London gypsy called "Joe of the Hills," who lived with the people. He was forced to tell the story of the massacre. German vengeance followed. The inhabitants of Chokach were rounded up, the ringleaders shot, and two hundred deported to the bleak Island of Angaur to work in the phosphate mine.

The same fates, death and deportation, have been meted out by the Japanese, but rebellions continue. The indigenous population is now probably about ten thousand as against six thousand Japanese. In the Town of Ponape the Japanese are in the majority and are safe enough. Strolling along the main street of Ponape one might think himself on Tokyo's Ginza. But let a Japanese step two miles out of town and he will be courting trouble, if not death.

The Ponapeans are not a soft people. They cut their arms and burn holes in their chests to prove their endurance. When reaching marriageable age they endure the mutilation called lekelek, the excision of the right testicle. They cut their flesh in elaborate patterns with knives and keep the wounds open until ridged cicatrices result. Some of these designs are quite artistic, and all of them are evidence of considerable physical courage.

**E. V. Paul, Government Printer, Wellington**