

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

RETURN TO WEWAK

P.O. BOX 206,

WEWAK. NEW GUINEA

As Secretary of the "Return to Wewak" Committee, I think that I can say quite safely, on behalf of all the Committee, that Progress made in the last few weeks have been very encouraging.

Various functions we have held in conjunction with the "RETURN" HAVE ALL PROVED SUCCESSFUL and tickets in the "GOLDEN CIRCLE" which carries a prize of a car valued at \$3,000.00 with five intermediary \$200/00 draws are advancing quite well. however, we still NEED A LOT OF SUPPORT to ensure that all tickets in the Raffle are sold.

Accommodation, which at one stage appeared to be a very serious problem is now firmly under control. My committee is quite certain that all visitors to the town will be suitably housed.

Transport arrangements are proceeding very smoothly and the committee does not envisage any transport problems whatsoever, apart of course from the possible breakdown of a vehicle en route of which we will be ready to rectify if this happens.

Representative from overseas looks as though it will be quite rewarding and we are at present making arrangements for a special 16 m.m. Black and White Film entitled "WEWAK VICTORY" in New Guinea. to be forwarded to us, so that actual events leading up to the Surrender at Cape Wom can be re-lived by some of our visitors who were actually present there at that time.

One or two queries that have consistently arisen from intending visitors I feel should be mentioned here:- they are...

TYPE OF DRESS TO BE WORN:

As far as dress in the tropics is concerned, Social Functions call for an "After Five" dress for the Ladies and long trousers, long sleeved shirt and tie for the men. Daytime wear should be as light and comfortable as possible for both male and female and we would also recommend a hat and raincoat be carried, since tropical weather is at times very unreliable.

MIGRATION ENTRY PERMITS:

Intending visitors must be in possession of an ENTRY PERMIT. Any travel agent or Airline Company Booking Office should be able to arrange for the necessary PERMITS to be issued.

My Committee and I look forward to meeting all Visitors to Wewak for the "Return" celebrations weekend.

"When the last of the troops shipped out, the Wewak Rear Party as we were to become known, shifted to the old administration buildings on Cape Boram, and it was here that I looked after the administration of the army work that was to be done. Kiap Niall had then arrived and he had his headquarters on Wewak Point. Mrs. Niall also arrived and became the first white woman to whom I had spoken in two years.

"It was during this time that we came to know some of the locals as they returned to their villages. There were five "monkey boys" that worked for us in the mess, and when they heard that we were going for a trip to Vokeo gave us five shillings (holey ones) to buy them a "piccanini meri pig" which they intended to keep in the compound until it grew large enough to be mated with the Admin. boar, so that they would then be assured of having a pig each to obtain a bride.

"There was a police boy named Bouwa attached to us who was a better "con man" than many whites, and even in those days had a Commonwealth Bank savings book with many hundreds of pounds in it.

"The interesting thing is that at no time there did we come across a native who could speak English, and one cannot help but be surprised and impressed when one sees and hears them on television today speaking such fluent English. The advances of the past 25 years appear considerable."

(From Bill Arnott of the Rotary Club of Caringbah.)

the WEWAK RETURNED SERVICES SUB-BRANCH THANKS ALL THOSE
WHO HAVE MADE POSSIBLE THE CAPE WOM MEMORIAL PARK.
SPECIAL THANKS TO THE OFFICERS, WARDERS AND INMATES
OF THE BORAM CORRECTIVE INSTITUTE WHO DAY AFTER DAY
LABOURED TO MAKE CAPE WOM PARK PRESENTABLE.

PRINTED PROGRAMMES OF EVENTS IN DETAIL WILL BE DISTRIBUTED
TO VISITORS ATTENDING THE RETURN TO WEWAK EVENTS.

SPECIALLY PREPARED BOOKLETS ON THE DISTRICT WILL ALSO
BE MADE AVAILABLE DURING THE RETURN TO WEWAK FUNCTIONS.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES ON TRANSPORT AND ACCOMODATION:

by Ron Thomason.

Executive Member R.T.W. Committee.

Even if the Committe receives no further bookings, the Return to Wewak, is a resounding success.

Including service personnel, we have in excess of 300 persons coming to the event, and we understand that many people from within the Territory have arranged accomodation privately and will be also coming.

To date we have the four major participants in this area during the war who will be represented:

1. The Australian Army, Navy, and Airforce;
2. The Papuan Infantry Battalions;
3. The U.S. Army, Navy and Airforce;
4. A Japanese contingent.

ACCOMMODATION

All commercial accomodation has been booked out. As stated in our initial circular, it would be allocated on a "first in best dressed" basis, and it has long since been allocated. It must be understood by these parties who have such accommodation that NO single rooms are available. There will be two persons to each room.

The overflow will be catered for by private billeting and dormitory type accommodation.

It is anticipated that tentage will not be required.

It would be helpful to the Accommodation Committee if names could be provided for the block bookings we have. This is essential, as to co-ordinate accommodation with transport, early planning will make the organisers' lives a lot easier.

Wewak is no longer just a settlement consisting of a few grass shacks. The people accommodated will be spread over a ten-square mile radius, and we must know as soon as possible who they are and where they live.

TRANSPORT

There is sufficient transport to cater for everyone; as with accommodation, however, no hire cars are left. Every bus and hire car is booked out and we will be using a lot of private transport as well.

A hire car will be allocated to one visitor who can drive, but the car will be filled with other visitors who will be staying in close proximity. All travelling will be virtually on the convoy system to the places of celebration.

GENERAL INFORMATION

We hope the above does not give the impression that the period you spend here will be rough and ready. The contrary will be the case. Everything which we have done or will be doing will be based on making your stay a pleasant and enjoyable one.

As you all know, the campaign here was a hard and bitter one. The residents of Wewak are looking forward to showing you with pride the results of your efforts 25 years ago. We feel this will be the last celebration of its kind in the South Pacific. We are determined that we will put on a good show, and we look forward to seeing you in six weeks.

S. Congress Number: 14 in a series.

It was late evening, August 13th, 1942. at Amberly Field, Brisbane, Australia, American Air Force Officials were gathered in the fading light, awaiting the welcome sound of multiple engines:

Scheduled to arrive was the first complete group of B-25 aircraft ever flown from the United States to Australia. The men and the aircraft of the 38th Bombardment Group had departed Hamilton field, California on August 6th, island-hopping across the vast expanse of the Pacific, to join the air war against Japan. The total flight encompassed something over 6,700 nautical miles.

Within minutes of their scheduled arrival time, the twin-engine Mitchells turned into the pattern and began to settle on Australian soil. Only four of the group's aircraft did not reach Amberly Field, but all arrived safely "down under". - the four truants landing at alternative strips, their tanks dry.

One of the flight leaders of that historic hop was Captain Ralph CHELI, soon to distinguish himself as one of the true heroes of the Pacific phase of War. Within a month, aircraft of this group went into action, and from mid-September, 1942, until well into the early months of the following year, the 38th Bomb Group, was virtually the only B-25 Unit in operation in the entire area. Captain CHELI was among the first to see aerial combat, flying his first mission on September 15th. General George Kenny, 5th Airforce Commander, moved the squadrons from their Austrian bases to Port Moresby. Shortly after this move CHELI was promoted to Major and given command of the 405th Bombardment Group.

The Battle of the Bismarck Sea broke in all its fury in March 1943; here CHELI distinguished himself in the fighting. On March 3rd, he led his squadron in the first mast-level attack ever executed during daylight hours against enemy shipping in the Pacific area.

CHELI and his unit made two highly successful attacks on the large, well-armed convoy, despite withering anti-aircraft fire. After the smoke of battle had cleared, American aerial forces were able to claim total destruction of no fewer than 22 armed merchant vessels and two destroyers. In the months that followed, the B-25 squadrons played a major part in local actions, thus supporting the gaint Allied Offensive.

Prior to the assault on Lae and Salamaua it was necessary to knock out the Japanese air power which was concentrated in the Wewak area 300 miles west of Lae. To aid this new aerial offensive, an advanced base had been established at TSILI, TSILI, about 50 miles west of Salamaua, far enough inland to be free from immediate enemy ground attack. The base was in full operation in time to coincide with the pre-Lae air assault. For several weeks it escaped Japanese attention, but August 15 and 16, the enemy launched concerted attacks against the advanced base. Though they enjoyed fair success on their initial air raid, American fighters were ready when they pressed their second attack. Japanese losses were so heavy they never again attacked Tsili Tsili.

Throughout late July and early August, the enemy moved dozens of aircraft into the areas of BUT, DAGUA, BORAM, and WEWAK proper. On the night of August 16, the Americans struck. Fifty heavy bombardment aircraft roared over Wewak in a night raid and, at dawn, the medium Mitchells swept in. Destruction estimates of the combined attack reached as high as 50 per cent of the Wewak-based planes. Despite the success of the first attack, the heavies again inloaded on the night of the 18th, and at dawn again the B-25s (Mitchells) swept in strafing and bombing. It was in this latter action that Major CHELI was leading his squadron in a dive attack on the heavily defended Dagua Airdrome, intercepting enemy aircraft centered their fire on his plane, causing it to burn into flames while still two miles from the objective. His speed would have enabled him to gain necessar altitude to parachute to safety, but this action would have resulted in his formation becoming disorganised and exposed to the enemy. Although a crash was inevitable CHELI courageously selected to

- 1 Aerial Tours Office
- 2 Sepik Air Charters Office
- 3 Boram Hospital
- 4 Kreer village & market
- 5 Lutheran Church
- 6 Seventh Day Adventist Church
- 7 Roman Catholic Church
- 8 Wirui Air Services Office
- 9 Japanese War Memorial & Lookout -
Mission Hill
- 10 Windjammer Motel
- 11 Swimming Beach
- 12 Wewak Golf & Country Club
- 13 Assemblies of God Church
- 14 Wewak-But Council Chambers
- 15 Wewak-But Council market
- 16 Aerial Tours Town Office
- 17 Sepik Motel
- 18 Wewak Hotel
- 19 T.A.A. Office
- 20 Sepik Club
- 21 Post Office & District Office
- 22 Ansett Airlines Office

