

Papua New Guinea patrol reports

Administrative control of Papua and New Guinea

Papua New Guinea's patrol reports have their beginnings in 1885 and are credited to Sir Peter Henry Scratchley who, as well as establishing Port Moresby as the seat of government and administration of British New Guinea, also developed a plan for administration and land policy.

The administration plan involved establishing government stations along the coast. These were staffed by a government officer, whose tasks included establishing contact and developing friendly relations with the inhabitants of the area. Once that was accomplished, further exploratory and administrative patrols were undertaken, either along the coast or into inland areas, for the purpose of opening up new country and to further expand administrative control.

By 1969 the Territory of Papua New Guinea had been divided into 18 administrative districts, with sub-districts and a host of patrol posts or stations and base camps. In 1971 the Territory was declared to be under full administrative control.

The purpose of patrol reports

Patrolling was not only for administration and exploration purposes. Written accounts of patrols were furnished by Resident Magistrates in former Papua, and District Officers (commonly known as *kiaps*) for the Territory of Papua New Guinea. Four copies were made: one for the officer, another for the station, the third for the District headquarters and the fourth for the Administrator in Port Moresby. According to Ian Grosart in the *Encyclopedia of Papua New Guinea*, it was the patrol officers with their patrol reports who were the 'sole sources of information for successive administrations of the Territory with regard to villages, their numbers, hopes, fears and reactions to changes'.

During the Pacific War, under the supervision of the Australia New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), patrols and the furnishing of patrol reports were undertaken by former District Officers who had been absorbed into the ANGAU administration. After the war, administrative patrols continued under the supervision of the following Territory of Papua and New Guinea departments:

Department	Dates
Department of District Services and Native Affairs	1946–55
Department of Native Affairs	1956–63
Department of District Administration	1964–68
Division of District Administration, Department of the Administrator	1969–71
Division of District Administration, Department of the Chief Minister and District Administration	1972–75

Patrol reports ceased to be created after 1975, the year Papua New Guinea attained political independence from Australia.

Papua New Guinea patrol reports and related records

The majority of patrol reports of former British New Guinea and the Territory of Papua were shipped to Australia at the onset of the Pacific War of 1942–45. However, most patrol reports from the former Mandated Territory of New Guinea did not survive the Japanese occupation. Such reports are now only available if patrol officers kept their copy.

Documents related to the patrol reports include the annual reports for British New Guinea, Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea and later separate annual reports for the territories of Papua and New Guinea. From 1946 to 1975, a District annual report was created and served as an overview of the affairs of each district. District annual reports are held by the National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea. Direct inquiries to:

The National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea
 PO Box 734
 WAIGANI NCD
 Papua New Guinea

Email: rabbi_kairu@educationpng.gov.pg or vicky_puipui@educationpng.gov.pg

Holdings of the National Archives and the Australian War Memorial

Papua New Guinea patrol reports and related series of records held by the National Archives and Australian War Memorial are listed in the table below.

Collection references

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence, station journals and patrol reports from outstations [British New Guinea Protectorate, 1884–1888, Possession of British New Guinea, 1888–1906, Territory of Papua, 1906–1941 only]</u>	1890–1941	G91
<u>Correspondence files (includes external territories function) – Department of the Interior [I]</u>	1903–38	A1

<u>New Guinea campaign records (1914–18 war)</u>	1914–26	AWM33
<u>Maps relating to patrol reports – Office of the Lieutenant-Governor</u>	1914–38	CP1/36
<u>Papua and New Guinea patrol reports</u>	1922–55	A7034
<u>Microfilm copies of PNG Patrol reports collected by Mr Ivan Champion, mainly from the Lake Kutubu region</u>	1927–40	A7357
<u>Correspondence files – Department of Territories</u>	1928–56	A518
<u>Microfiche copies of PNG patrol reports from the National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea</u>	1936–74	A9844
<u>Written records (1939–45 war)</u>	1939–51	AWM54
<u>Written records (1939–45 war) – second series</u>	1939–50	AWM254
<u>General and civil correspondence files – Department of the Army</u>	1943–51	MP742/1
<u>Correspondence files – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</u>	1948–89	A1838

For more information

The Menzies Library at the Australian National University (ANU), holds two boxes of microfiche copies of patrol reports from the National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea. Check the [ANU library catalogue](#).

The [Pacific Manuscripts Bureau](#) (PAMBU), also the ANU, will answer inquiries about patrol reports.

The [Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Studies](#) at the UC San Diego Library have a set of the [Papua New Guinea Patrol Reports](#) available online.