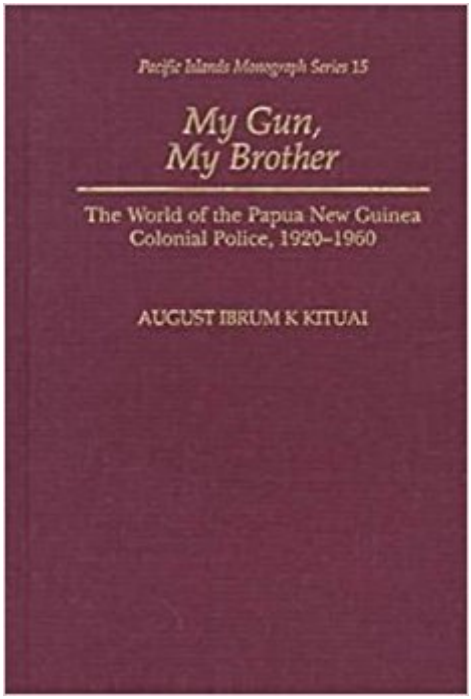
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My Gun, My Brother: The World Of The Papua New Guinea Colonial Police, 1920-1960 (Pacific Islands Monographs Series)



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Synopsis

Despite the heated competition for colonial possessions in Papua New Guinea during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the personnel required to run an effective administration were scarce. As a result, the Australian colonial regime opted for a quick solution: it engaged Papua New GuineansÃ¢â ¬â ¢often to perform the most hazardous and most unpopular responsibilities. Based on extensive interviews with former policemen, written records of the time, and reminiscences of colonial officials, this book links events involving police, villagers, and government officers (kiaps) over a forty-year period to wider issues in the colonial history of Papua New Guinea and, by extension, of the Pacific Islands and beyond.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This is a big, dense book, one of the most impressive pieces of historical scholarship to come out of Papua New Guinea. . . . Full of rich stories, synthetic histories of colonial rule."

Prior to WW2 The Territory of Papua was an Australian administered colony and New Guinea a Mandated Territory administered by Australia under the auspices of the then League of Nations.Each territory had separate police forces, The Royal Papuan Constabulary and the New Guinea Police Force. Following WW2 New Guinea became a Trust Territory under the auspices of the United Nations and in the early 1950’s the two police forces were amalgamated as the Royal

Papuan and New Guinea Constabulary.The constabulary was in many respects para-military armed in later years with the standard SMLE Lee-Enfield .303 rifle on issue to all British Commonwealth military forces plus leather equipment, ammunition pouches and bayonet.Dr Kituai has written what is no doubt the definitive history of the native constabulary covering the period 1920 to 1960 and makes the point that the large bulk of the force was under the command of the field staff of the then Department of District Services and Native Affairs responsible for administering the various districts, sub districts and patrol post areas throughout both territories.Field staff officers held commissioned rank in the police forces but did not wear uniform.Towns like Port Moresby, Lae and Rabaul were gazetted as such and European uniformed police officers had jurisdiction and command of native police posted in confines of the town.The native police were recruited from village life and after training were posted as required to outstations. Generally speaking few were literate and with very few exceptions spoke English. With over seven hundred language groups in PNG, Melanesian "Pidgin" or Police Motu were the common languages spoken within the police force and by field staff officers. On one of my own postings as a single officer on an isolated post in an uncontrolled area in the early 1950's I spoke no English for just over two yearsAs an ex Patrol Officer, later District Officer I believe that Dr. Kituai has written the definitive history of the native constabulary in Papua New Guinea during the years covered by his book. Those were the years of small isolated outstations manned by a Patrol Officer or two plus his native police detachment. Exploration patrols were still being carried out into what were termed uncontrolled territory and in my own case as late as the early 1960's I had come under attack by hostile tribesmen using spears and bows and arrows.Without the loyalty, courage and devotion to duty of the native constabulary it would have been impossible to have brought PNG into the modern age. Some Patrol Officera and native police were killed in the line of duty by primitive tribes people during the early years of administration and into the 1920's and 30's. During WW2 field staff officers who had been commissioned into the Australian Army supported by native police operated in the areas under Japanese control gathering intelligence and engaging in covert guerilla warfare.It is fitting and long overdue that such recognition has been given to the PNG native constabulary and Dr. Kituai is to be commended for doing so.J. D Martinex Patrol Officer/District Officer

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