

DOCTOR IN PARADISE

Challenges and Rewards in Medical Service New Guinea 1958-1970

In 1957, having graduated in Medicine at the University of Adelaide three years previously, Dr Mary Guntner (née Fritsch) accepted an urgent call to serve as a doctor with the Lutheran Mission in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. Setting out in 1958, she served first at Yagaum, near Madang, and then at Finschhafen at the Buangi and Butaweng hospitals. Later, she became the 'flying doctor' as she commuted frequently, incorporating Yagaum hospital again into her workload. Her work revolved around emergencies of all descriptions, while the continuing fight against tuberculosis and leprosy during this period saw her responsible for many patients at any one time. The Butaweng hospital alone had 600 beds!

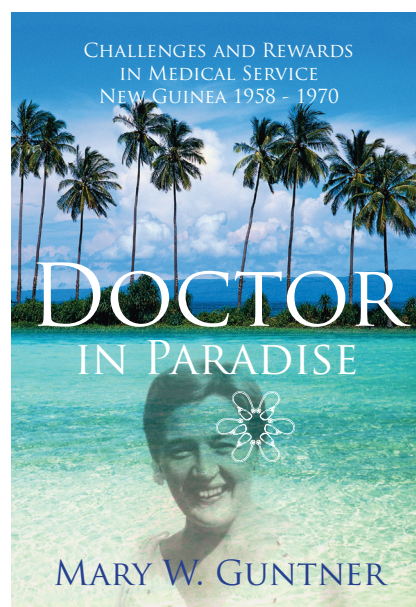
Coping with floods and the lack of transport and reliable communications also added to the vagaries of life in a developing Third World country.

The regular letters she wrote home during the nine years she lived and worked in New Guinea were preserved by her mother; together with her own memories, they form the basis of this book.

It is a lively, true account of her fascinating, often perilous, experiences, her love for this beautiful, challenging country and her devotion to the people whom she had vowed to serve.

Together with her fellow-workers she can rightly claim that there was 'never a dull moment'!

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Transporting nurse Gelomo in plaster body cast across the Mape River.

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