REPORT OF PATROL

IN JUNCTION BAY, LIVERPOOL RIVER, AND TOMKINSON RIVER AREAS

JULY–AUGUST 1939

A short patrol on foot was made in July of last year into the area between the King and Liverpool Rivers. The experience gained was invaluable in the more extended patrol of this year.

The patrol was again largely in the nature of an exploration, as there was little information to go on as to where the people were, how to get to them, and how far our social group extended. About four weeks were available, which just allowed sufficient time to locate and visit most of the tribal groups and the more important economical parts of the areas. In the patrol I aimed at visiting as many of the tribal groups and making contact with as many people as possible, and seeing what I could of their country in the time available, with a view to gaining some knowledge of the numbers, health, proportion of children; their main camping places and seasonal movements; the native food supplies and economic resources of their tribal areas; the tribal boundaries of each group, and how far east the Maung-Gunwinggu social system extended; any drift westward to the railway, Darwin, etc; and any other knowledge which would enable us the better to reach and help the people in these areas.

We left Goulburn Island Mission Station on July 10th and returned to the Station on Aug.9th.

In all we covered 230 miles by foot patrol, and travelled to the navigable heads of the Tomkinson and Liverpool Rivers and 14 miles up Gumadir River in the motor boat.

A watch and compass enabled me to make a rough traverse of the Tomkinson River, 14 miles of the lower Gumadir River and all the land patrols. A map is attached to the report shewing route of patrol, tribal boundaries and main features.

The following report is divided into:-

1  Diary of patrol.
11 Notes on each tribal group
111 Other notes
1IV Possible station sites and economic resources.
V  Notes on the Patrol with suggestions re future patrols.
V1  Map

1  Diary of Patrol

Monday July 10th –Left Mission Station in a 17 foot open motor boat for the mouth of the Liverpool River, a distance of 60 miles, arriving there on the following Thursday. Engine trouble accounted for one days delay and it was necessary to shelter one day behind Hall Point waiting for the wind to drop before crossing Junction Bay. We encountered fairly strong head winds the latter half of the journey which delayed us and made a hole in our petrol supply.

We reached the main camp of the Guanaviji speaking people, near North East Point, on the east side of the mouth of the Liverpool River on Thurs. July 13th.
July 14th — A maraian corroboree was being held so I was fortunate in seeing practically all this group at the camp.

15th — We walked thro to the main camp of the Nakara speaking people, following the beach round Boucaut Bay. This camp is on Boucaut Bay about 5 miles from the mouth of the Blyth River, and 20 miles from the Gunaviji camp. Several mangrove creeks had to be waded thro. An important corroboree was also on at the Nakara camp and I was able to see practically all this group at their camp.

16th — Returned to the Gunaviji camp (Jëdâ) where we had left our boat. Head winds and a shortage of petrol prevented the use of the boat for visiting the Nakara camp (Jâralâ).

17th — Spent the morning in the Gunaviji camp. Left on the incoming tide, at 2.30 p.m. to go up into the Liverpool River. At 5 miles from N.E.Pt. we landed on a short sandy beach to look at a cypress pine area. Entered the mouth of Tomkinson River at 6.15 p.m. The river follows a tortuous course running to all points of the compass. About 13 miles up the river we landed on the left bank at a plain (Nanjâ), and camped. A small hunting party of Gunaviji people were camped near by.

18th — Left camp in the morning on the incoming tide. Ten miles further up the river the channel had narrowed to 30 to 40 yards wide and snags were shewing; the water was nearly fresh although it was nearly high tide. At 30 miles from the mouth we passed the mouth of a creek coming in from the right. (Gunbatgarri Creek). River channel narrowing and blocked by fallen trees at low tide. Landed on the right bank just past mouth of creek and made our camp on a good landing bank. At the boat camp (Ingålbâk) there is a spring rise of 4 feet from low to high water. The river winds thro an open plain half a mile wide, each side of the river, the plains are edged by poor paper bark flats. As the tidal waters are brackish at the end of the Dry Season the plains are semi-salt and very poorly grassed, but they provide some splendid râkai areas where ibis, geese, native companions, etc feed. At low tide the water at the boat camp was practically fresh. We left at 4.30 p.m. for the main camp of the Gumauwurrk people about 3 miles across the plains, at the head of the branch creek near the boat camp; crossing the creek by means of a fallen tree; the tidal channel is deep mud. Gunbatgarri Creek winds thro an open plain, with splendid râkai areas similar to the upper Tomkinson River. The Gumauwurrk camp (Gunbatgarri) is in paper bark on the edge of the plain near an extensive râkai area. Most of this group were at the camp. We made our camp with them.

19th — Spent the morning in the Gumauwurrk camp, then walked thro to a main camp of the Goiyâkbe people 20 miles to the south east. This camp (Buđûgâdurû) is on a permanent waterhole in a bend of Mûgûrrdu Creek a tributary of Blyth River. The road followed the Tomkinson River to its head – a small creek in poor open forest country. At 2 1/2 miles we entered paper-bark flats and at 7 miles open forest country with poor gravelly soils. A few cypress pine shewed near Mugurrdu Creek. This creek has a large watershed area and carries a good body of water at flood time. It is the “supposed Cadell River” marked on some maps.

Only portion of this group were in the camp. The old men were away with a strong hunting party to bring in the bones of one of their group for a bone post corroboree at the camp.

20th — At the Goiyakbe camp.

21st — We walked thro to the Mânbûloi peoples’ camps on the upper Tomkinson, a distance of 20 miles. The camps were deserted as the people had gone to our boat camp 2 miles lower down the river. The upper Tomkinson, at this part, has a narrow tidal channel with deep mud, winding thro an open plain with râkai areas. A range of sandstone hills approaches the river to the south.
There are a few kulwiri palms along the river. We continued on to our boat camp where we found a camp of 70 people (Gumauwurrk and Mânbîloï).

22\textsuperscript{nd} – In camp. Traversed Gunbatgarri Creek in the afternoon. The people hunted on the plains during the day returning to our camp at night.

23\textsuperscript{rd} – 72 people at the camp. I held a short service in the morning, shewing them Mission pictures in which people of their own color were included and told them about our Mission work, using a Gunwinggu interpreter. We left in the afternoon on the outgoing tide to go down the river, making a traverse of the river with watch and compass. Landed and camped at Nanja (17 miles), where we had camped on our up river journey. We met 19 natives at this camp.

24\textsuperscript{th} – The tide was low and we had to push the boat off the mud in the morning. The water inlet pipe for the engine was blocked with mud and had to be cleaned. We entered the Liverpool River soon after the tide had turned and continued up the river. Passed the mouth of Murlidban Creek at 7 miles and continued to the red earth cliff, left bank, 16 miles from the mouth of the Tomkinson River and 25 miles from Entrance Island. We landed and made our camp. The water in the river was fresh. Inspected small area of cypress pine behind the cliff. Several Muralidban people swam over from the other side of the river, and several Gumauwurrk people came into our camp having followed us over from their camp at Gunbatgarri.

25\textsuperscript{th} – We left on the incoming tide to go on up the river. We landed about 1 mile past the mouth of Mânggàbor Creek. Here we located some Gungarregwên or Mânggàbor people and continued up the river to their camp on one of a series of sharp bends of the river, where the river is blocked at low water by snags and sand banks. The river is navigable at high tide for a further 2 miles by a small boat. The camp (Imâ-i-rût) is 36 miles by river from Entrance Island. We made our boat camp here. There is a difference of 8 feet between high and low water Spring tides at the camp.

(See later for description of this camp and environments.)

26\textsuperscript{th} – We left with a Gündëjëmë boy as guide to go up the Liverpool River on foot, to visit the next group of people to the south (the Gündëjëmë speaking people). We passed the tidal head of the river at 3 miles. For the next 10 miles the river follows several channels, with good permanent water holes. The channels are separated by some good flats and loam banks. One loam soil bank at 11 miles, was 1 ½ miles long and 5 to 10 chains wide. The surrounding country is uniformly poor sandy soil with open forest of stringy bark etc. Cypress shewed at 7, 10 and 13 miles. At 13 miles we met sandstone outcrops increasing in size as we went further south. We camped at 16 miles.

27\textsuperscript{th} – Continued up the Liverpool – a wide sandy channel winding thro sandstone outcrops and ridges. Poor sandy soil and spinifex. At 11 miles we came to an old camp, recently used, on the river at a large waterhold. Our guide left us here to make a detour to see if he could locate any signs of his people. He returned at dark without success. We camped on the waterhole. The sandstone ridges converge on the river at this place and from a hill near the camp I could see nothing but a waste of rough sandstone ridges to the south with some small forest pockets along the river, and higher sandstone ranges beyond.

There are only a few of the older Gundeijemë people left in the country – the younger people have gone over to the railway and buffalo camps. The river channel here is 6 to 8 chains wide with a loose sandy channel and a flood mark 10 to 15 feet high in the channel.

28\textsuperscript{th} – Continued up the Liverpool climbing over rough boulders thro a sandstone gorge with walls 50 feet high, half a mile above the camp. At 4 miles we came to a basalt pocket in the sandstone ridges. A creek came in from the left in this pocket. Bassalt shewed in the bed of the creek and the bed of the river.
The pocket was well grassed and had good dark soil. A black granite outcrop was seen in the river (east bank) 5 miles below this pocket on the return journey. We had passed an old camp in the morning but no sign of recent tracks, and were now close to the boundary of the Gundeijeme people. At 6 miles (ie. 33 miles from the boat camp) we turned back.

July 29th -- Continued down the River and camped just above the tidal head.

30th -- Arrived at our boat camp (Ima-i-rut). There were about 70 people at the camp - Gungareguwens, Muralidbars and a few Gumauwürks and Goiyakbés who had followed us over. The Goiyakbes carried an invitation to the local people to a bone post corroboree shortly to be held at their camp.

31st -- In the morning I held a short service shewing suitable pictures and telling of our Mission work, using a Gunwinggu interpreter. After the service we left to go up Manggabor Creek and then to meet our boat just below the junction of the creek with the River. We crossed Manggabor Creek 5 miles from its mouth and followed it down on its north side to the River. This creek heads in distant ranges to the south west and has a considerable watershed area. There were two channels where we crossed with a well grassed gum flat in between and another extensive flat off the north side of the creek. There is a large permanent waterhole in the creek just above the tidal reach. Cypress pine shewed where we crossed the creek and again near the mouth. Apart from the creek flats the soils were uniformly poor sandy to gravelly, with open forest of stringy bark, wooly butt etc. We joined our boat just below the tidal mouth of the creek and continued down the River to about 1 mile past the red cliffs. We landed at a good landing bank (west side) near a main camping place of the Muralidbean people. A plain of half to one mile wide extends between the river and the rising timbered country. We camped on the bank.

Aug 1st -- It was low tide before daylight and the Spring tide had left our boat inclined on the sloping mud bank with the bow in the mud. As the tide rose the bow was held fast in the mud and before we could get control of the boat in the sticky mud it was filled with water, the whole boat going under. We spent the morning drying stores etc. and cleaning engine and magneto. We left in the afternoon for the Muralidbar camp, 1 mile across the plain, in the edge of the timber, and made our camp there. Near the edge of the timber there are a number of shallow waterholes and good rakai areas which attract numerous ibis, geese, etc. The plain along the river is badly melon-holed but is less melon-holed near the rising timbered ground. This place (Naabalgóorrorri) is a regular camping place of the Muralidbean people. There were 80 people in the camp including Gungareguwen and Gumauwurk people. A bone post corroboree was being held at the camp.

2nd -- After seeing the planting of the bone post in the camp we left to go up Muralidgan Creek having arranged to meet the boat that night at Gurija, a sharp bend of the Liverpool River 2 miles below the mouth of Muralidban Creek. At 2 miles we med the tidal plain of Muralidban Creek and followed this to the head of the tide (7 miles from its mouth). We followed the creek 1 ½ miles above its tidal reach. The creek was running and there was a long permanent waterhole in the channel. This creek is smaller than Manggabor creek but is worth following higher up. On the north side of the creek below the tidal reach there is an extensive plain, partly tidal. These tidal plains offer good aeroplane landing grounds if dry. The edge of the plain is timbered with poor paperbark inside which are small waterholes, with rakai areas, which go salt at the end of the Dry Season. At a waterhole in the paperbark, we met a hunting party (14 people) of Muralidbars. There are extensive rakai areas on the non-tidal part of the plain the haunt of huge flocks of native companions, ibis, etc. in their season. Leaving the Muralidban plain we crossed a strip of gravelly soil and forest country and entered on the plain off
Liverpool River at the sharp bend (Gůrijā) We met our boat at the River and camped.

Aug 3rd – We left overland for Rolling Bay, the boat to meet us there on Aug 5th. The 16 miles to Nungbalgari Creek, which runs into Rolling Bay, was over poor sandy to gravelly soils with open forests of stringy bark, woolly butt, etc. We crossed no jump up from the Liverpool River valley, the watershed being a gradual rise and then a fall of about 15 feet, at 9 miles, into the Nungbalgari Creek. Seven miles further south there is a jump up of 150 feet out of Liverpool River. Small palms (a native food) were numerous. Cypress pine shewed up 10 miles from the Creek and odd trees were seen right thro with a good proportion of young trees. We met the creek at a large permanent waterhole. On both sides of the creek there were numerous cypress, good millable trees and thick patches of young trees. We camped on the creek opposite a good billabong. Fish are plentiful in the waterhole.

4th – Crossing the creek we followed it down to Rolling Bay. Cypress continued for 2 1/2 miles. At 3 1/2 miles we met the head of the tide and at 9 miles the mouth of the creek at the bottom of Rolling Bay, where our boat met us. The bottom of Rolling Bay is very shallow.

5th – We travelled in the boat round into Junction Bay to the mouth of Majari Creek and camped at the mouth, at a native well.

6th – Sending the boat on to near the Gůmādir mouth, where we would meet it on the 8th, we followed up the east side of Majāri Creek to its tidal head, an extensive sheet of water which goes salt. Above this there is a large rakai area, 5 miles from the coast, which later in the year attracts numerous ibis, geese, etc. At 6 miles we crossed Majai Creek which was running a small stream and turned west for the Wūrūgoj Creek. After crossing the head of two salt water plains, at 11 miles we crossed another small creek, running a small stream, just above its tidal reach. This is a branch of Wūrūgoj Creek. At 14 miles we crossed a ridge dropping into the Wurugoj Creek at a salt water flat near the head of its tide. (The Wurugoj, which 6 miles higher up is a well defined channel, branches in its lower reaches – one branch is a chain of flats and billabongs to the head of the tide, the other (a small running stream in August) enters a tidal branch of Majari Creek mouth.) We met 15 Muralidban people here, who were camped near the rakai areas at the head of the tide. We camped with them.

7th – Returned to the coast where we met our boat near the Gůmādir River mouth. Fifteen Gůrrābū people were camped at the boat. They belonged to the coastal area behind Rolling Bay. After a talk with them we left in the boat for the Gūmādir River to use the incoming tide to go up the river. We had just enough petrol left to make a traverse of 14 miles of the river. We passed the mouth of Jungle Creek, coming in from the west, at 8 miles from the mouth. The River follows a very tortuous course. Crocodiles were numerous in the River and on the mud banks at the mouth. On our return journey, it was nearly low tide when we reached the mouth and we had to follow the narrow winding channel for two miles thro extensive mud banks. We camped a few miles below Braithwaite Point. This side of Junction Bay is a good trepang area, there is an old Macassar camping place near Braithwaite Point.

8th – Left in the boat for Guion Point. We met a group of 18 people at Hall Point. Five miles from Guion Point we left the boat to see Iliwān an extensive rakai swamp half a mile behind the beach, and walked thro to Guion Point. Iliwān is the largest single rakai area seen on the patrol. A mangrove tidal creek from below Guion Point, enters one end of the swamp, which goes brackish later in the Dry Season. There is permanent fresh water in wells between the swamp and the beach. Useful paperbarks tall and straight edge the swamp. We camped at Guion Point near an old Macassar camping place. This is a good trepang centre.

9th – Arrived back at Goulburn Island Mission.
11 NOTES ON EACH TRIBAL GROUP

Note -- The word “rakai” is the Milingimbi word for a reed-like plant which grows in water, the nut-like root of which is a staple aborigine food. This term is more convenient than the local names. The Gunwinggu word is manggulaig.

The number in Roman figures in brackets refers to the number on the map.

(1) Ranba people. Nakara language.

At their camp, Jarala, we saw 25 men, 30 women, 28 children. Total 85 (in camp). A few people were away at Milingimbi and at the Gunaviji camp. Total people - one hundred. An important corroboree was on at the camp.

No cases of sickness were seen.

Their tribal area extends from the mouth of Blyth River west for 12 miles along Boucaut Bay, and about 8 miles inland. Their main camp, Jarala, is on the coast about 5 miles from Blyth River mouth, and is the main camp of these people thru the West Season and early Dry Season. Later the people go up to the plains off the Blyth River, as the billabongs are drying up, for fish, lily products, geese, ibis, etc. Their area is well supplied with native foods with 12 miles of the coastline, several mangrove creeks, and billabongs and plains off the Blyth, and an extensive open forest area for wild honey, yams, kangaroos, etc. The Ranba people visit Milingimbi Mission, a few come into Goulburn Island at trepang time.

Their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are still intact.

(11) Mabanat people. Gunaviji language

At their camp, Juha, we saw 28 men, 29 women, 20 children and 5m., 7w., 7ch. at a hunting camp on the Tomlinson River. 25 Mabanat people were at Goulburn Is. Total approx 130 people.

One man on the Tomkinson River had bad sores.

Their tribal area extends from the mouth of the Liverpool River east to the Ranba boundary, and inland to the lower part of the Tomkinson River. Their main camp, Juda, is on the coast near North East Point at the mouth of the Liverpool River. Several paperbark swamps behind the beach go dry but water can always be obtained by digging. The swamps provide rakai areas, lily roots and seed pods, and wild rice.

Their area is well supplied with native foods with a long coast line, the lower Tomkinson River, some inland plains with small billabongs where the people go later in the Dry Season for fish and lily products and an extensive open forest area for wild honey, yams, etc, kangaroos, etc.

There are good trepang areas near Skirmish and N.E.Pt.

A number of these people regularly visit G.I. Mission at trepang time and many stay for the Wet Season. Some also visit Milingimbi Mission. Members of this group visited the Control Base at King River. Their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are still substantially intact.

(111) Gunawyrk people. Gurru language (a dialect of Gunwinggu)

At their cap, Gunbatgarri, we saw 12 men, 12 women, 14 children. Absent in hunting groups 8m., 9w., 5ch. Total 60 people.

In the camp I saw one man with bad sores and one young baby with sores over the body and private parts.
Their tribal areas lie between the Tomkinson and Liverpool Rivers, taking in the plains off Gunbatgarri Creek. Their main Dry Season camp is at the head of this creek on the edge of the plain, near good rakai swamps. This camp is 3 miles from the boat landing, at the navigable head of the Tomkinson River. Rakai areas on the plains are frequented by ibis, geese, etc., and the narrow channel of the tidal part of the creek offers an excellent fishing ground. There are no flats or 'jump up' on the east of the Liverpool River in their country but the open forest country between the rivers provides wild honey, yams, kangaroos, etc. and camping places for the Wet Season. The upper part of the Liverpool River in their areas is fresh for the greater part of the year. These people do not visit the Mission Stations to any extent. Their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are still intact.

(V) Manbuloi people Gunggurangonni language

This group came into our boat camp, their Dry Season camps are only 1 or 2 miles further up the Tomkinson River. There were 15 men, 11 women and 10 children at the boat camp. A small party was still away up the Tomkinson River, a few were at Milingimbi and Goulburn Island Missions. Total about 60 people. There were two children with bad sores and one suspected case of leprosy (a young man), among the people at the camp.

Their tribal area includes the plains on the upper Tomkinson River, and takes in the hills to the north east. The narrow, meandering, tidal creek and the small side creeks are excellent fishing grounds; and rakai areas on the plains, with wild rice, attract ibis, geese, etc. The open forest and hill country offer camping places for the Wet Season and hunting grounds for wild honey, yams, kangaroos, etc. Some of the group visit Milingimbi Mission and a few go into Goulburn Island. Their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are still intact.

(V) Rauwarang people Gajalivja language

We did not visit this group whose country lies to the south of the Rumbâ people, to the west of the Blyth River and taking in the lower part of Mugurrdu Creek. This group does not belong to our social group but has affinities with Gajalivja speaking groups east of the Blyth River. From the evidence I could gather they have good native areas and are about equal in number to the Gunaviji people. Estimate 120 people.

(V1) Goiyakbe people Rembara language

A main camp of this group (Budigadururu) is about 17 miles south east of the boat camp, on permanent waterholes in a bend of the Mugurrdu Creek, a tributary of the Blyth River. There were 11 men, 8 women, 15 children at this camp. A strong hunting party was away with the old men who were bringing in the bones of one of their number for a bone post corroboree, and 15 of the group were at Oenpelli Mission. Total about 100 people.

One old woman at the camp had no fingers on her hands. (Leprosy). Their tribal area lies to the south of the Manbuloi and Rauwarang people. There are small waterholes in the head of the Tomkinson River and good permanent holes and billabongs along Mugurrdu Creek. Hilly country lies to the east of the creek. Billabongs along the creek supply fish, lily products, etc., and the extensive open forest country provides wild honey, yams, kangaroos, etc. A successful kangaroo drive had been held the previous day to our arrival. Flying foxes frequent the small jungles.
This group visits Milingimbi and Oenpelli Mission stations; they were well represented at the King River Control Base in 1937 and 1938, and members have been into the railway and peanut farms at Katherine and Pine Creek. Their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are still intact.

(V11) Gungareguwen people Nân-yû-rânggârr language (a dialect of Gunwinggu)
The Dry Season camp, (I-mà-irüt), visited, is on one of a series of sharp bends of the Liverpool River, 1 ½ miles above the mouth of Mânggâbor Creek and about 36 miles by river from Entrance Island. There were 10 men, 10 women, and 13 children at the camp. Some of the people were at Oenpelli or buffalo camps to the west. Total Gungareguwen people about 60. There were also 30 Muralidban, and several Gumauwurk and Goiyakbe people at the camp. Two babies at the camp had bad sores over their bodies. Their tribal area takes in the tidal head of the Liverpool River and extends east and west of the River. Manggabor Creek comes in on the west side with good gum flats and some good permanent waterholes and above the tidal head of the Liverpool there are permanent waters and good flats. Behind the camp there is an extensive sheet of water with tidal connections with the river, and small rakai areas which attracts numerous geese, etc. later in the year. Billabongs along the river provide fish, lily products, etc. and there is an extensive open forest country. These people visit Oenpelli Mission and buffalo camps to the west, and were at the Control Base in 1937 and 1938. Ceremonial life and tribal authorities are still to some extent intact but the drift to buffalo and cattle stations to the west is weakening this group. Their language is a dialect of Gunwinggu but is influenced by the Rembarrna language.

(V111) Đêtyêng people Gündeij-ê-mê language
We followed the Liverpool River to nearly their southern boundary but were unable to locate the remnant of this group. Only a remnant, chiefly old people are left of this group. The younger people have gone over to the railway and buffalo camps. Estimate 25 people still in the area. Their tribal area lies to the south of the Gungareguwens extending to the high rough sandstone country of the upper Liverpool River. The area is large but is poor country and the southern part is chiefly sandstone ridges. Food is scarcer than on the coast and harder to get. Main foods, wild honey, fish from waterholes in the river, yams, etc., kangaroos and other game from the bush.

(IX and X) Đàngôn and Nàlágên peoples
Their tribal areas are in the high sandstone and hilly country at the head of the Mûgûrrdû Creek and Liverpool River. Their country is relatively poorer in native foods than the coastal areas and the food is more difficult to get. Only remnants of these people are left, many of the younger people have gone over to the railway, cattle stations and buffalo camps. A messenger to the Dangbons inviting them to a corroboree failed to locate the people last year. Some of these people visit Oenpelli Mission. Estimate 50 people.
Gārrābū------7 men, 7 women, 15 children
Gùri-gùri---18 men, 10 women, 13 children) total 70 people
Both these groups speak Gùnbâlâŋ language.
We saw none of these people in their own country. The Garrabus we met near the Gumadir River mouth. The Guri-guris were at Goulburn Island with a few Garrabu people; a few were at Cooper’s Camp. Their tribal area lies behind Rolling Bay extending south to the mouth of Muralidban Creek. The Garrabus have the coastal part and the Guri-guris the inland part. The lower part of the extensive rakai areas off Muralidban Creek is in Guri-guri country. Nunbalgarrri Creek running into Rolling Bay has large permanent waterholes in which fish abound. Edible palms are numerous thro the extensive open forest area and the coast provides a good variety of sea foods. Cypress pine is plentiful off Nunbalgarrri Creek.
These people do not spend much of their time in their own country. They hunt in areas behind Junction Bay, and regularly visit Goulburn Island and Cooper’s sawmill camp. They were at the Control Base in 1937 and 1938. They have lost much of their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are breaking down.

(XII) Mùralidbân people. Gùnwinggù language
At camp 23 men, 13 women, 14 children. Absent in hunting groups 12m, 16w, 18 ch. At Cooper’s sawmill camp 10m, 7w, 9 ch. At G.I. and Oenpelli 15 people. Total about 140 people. The camp visited (Nàbalâggorrorri) is in the edge of the timber 1 mile across the river plain, from a good landing bank on the Liverpool River, 27 miles from Entrance Island. This is a main camping place in the Dry Season, also the billabongs and rakai areas off the lower Muralidgan Creek. Nabalgorrri is near good rakai areas and shallow billabongs on the edge of the plain. The Muralidban tribal area lies to the west of Liverpool River and to the south of the Guri-guri country. It is a small area for such a large group but native food supplies are good.
Muralidban Creek with good permanent waterholes above the tidal part runs thro the area. Extensive rakai areas off the northern tidal plains of this creek attract numerous ibisi, native companions, geese, etc, and small billabongs in the paperbark flats on the edge of the plains provide fish, lily products, etc. The “jump up” 8 miles from the river is 150 feet high. The open forest country up Muralidban Creek and above the jump up offers Wet Season camping places, wild honey, yams, kangaroos, etc.
About 30 of this group emigrated to Mount Norris Bay about 15 years ago on account of a “killing” trouble and have now settled there. Members of this group visit Oenpelli Mission, and buffalo and cattle camps to the west. They were at the Control Base in 1937 and 1938. Their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are still substantially intact but there is an increasing drift of younger people westwards.

Their tribal areas lie behind Junction Bay, taking in the middle part of Nunbalgarrri Creek, Màjârî Creek and Wûrûgoij Creek. These small groups have now lost their separate identity. Only a remnant is left. Total 20 people. We met a hunting party of Muralidbans and Mùmâls on the Wûrûgoij Creek, and a party of Gàrraâbûs near the mouth.
There are good permanent waters in each of the creeks, and rakai areas at the head of the tidal parts of the Majari and Wurugoij Creeks. The creeks head in sandstone ridges. Granites shew above the tidal part of the Gumadir River and across to the Wurugoij Creek. There is an extensive forest area.

(XIV) Birigang Gümädir (lit. people from the Gümädir) Gündangbujingâbêrrk language (A dialect of Gunwinggû)
There are several small groups in this larger group, all speaking the same dialect. Their tribal area takes in the middle Gumadir River and upper Jungle Crk. In 1938 we met 30 people at a main camping place (Gajābek) on permanent billabongs on the Gumadir River.
Native food supplies are good. There are permanent waters in the River and good billabongs off the river, and jungles and open forest country offer splendid hunting areas.
These people regularly visit Oenpelli Mission and buffalo camps to the west. A few have settled at Goulburn Island Mission. Estimate about 80 people. They have lost much of their ceremonial life and tribal authorities are breaking down.

(XV  A, B and C) Gündangbujingâbêrrk language (A dialect of Gunwinggû)
There are a number of small groups speaking this language at the head of the Manggabor and Nungbalgarri Creeks, and upper Gumadir River and Cooper Creek. They speak the same language as the Gabiri-Gumadir.
Sandstone predominates and native food supplies are poorer and harder to get than on the coast. These people regularly visit Oenpelli Mission and buffalo camps to the west, some have gone into the railway. Estimate 80 people.

(XVI A and B) Mâraileiaâ and Güwídibu people. Gunwinggû language.
Their tribal areas lie in the upper King River and between Tor Rock and Cooper Creek. Only a remnant is left of these small groups, and they have settled with the Maung and Iwaija people. Total 20 people.

(XVII) Oenpelli.
Between Birradak Creek and East Alligator River. The local people have practically all died out and Gunwinggu speaking people from the east have come in. From figures kindly supplied by Mr. Harris, Superintendent of Oenpelli Mission, there were, early in August, 160 people on the Mission or thereabouts or in buffalo camps across the East Alligator River. All belonged to groups from east of this river. They have been included in estimates of these groups.

(XVIII A and B) Maung language.
The people who speak the Maung language are divided into several small groups, each with a group name, but the groups have now lost their separate identity. There is no one name for all Maung speaking peoples. At Goulburn Island Mission, or in hunting camps, in August there were 22 men, 23 women, 21 children. At Cooper’s sawmill camps 4m, 2w, 4 ch, in Darwin 6men. Total 82 people. Their tribal area is the coastal area west of Junction Bay and the lower Gumadir River to Anuru Bay between Barclay and Ross Points, and about 20 miles inland; and
the two Goulburn Islands. The coastal area from Ross Point to past No2 Sandy Creek is strictly speaking Iwaja country, but the people of this area have intermarried with the Maungs and now use their language exclusively. The extensive coast line offers a good supply of sea foods. An extensive rakai swamp behind Guion Point attracts ibis, geese, etc. in their season. The permanent waters of the upper King River and the large open forest areas offer good inland hunting areas. There are good trepang areas at Sth. and Nth. Goulburn Islands, at Guion Point, and the west side of Junction Bay. The local beds are worked at the Mission each year; Gunaviji and Gunbalang people regularly come in for employment in this and other Mission work. Some of the Maung people visit Cooper’s sawmill camps and thence find their way to Darwin. This group has lost most of its ceremonial life and tribal authorities are fast breaking down.

(XIX) Iwaja language.
The Iwaja speaking peoples are divided into several small groups, each with a group name, but the groups have now lost their separate identity. There is no one name for all the Iwaja speaking peoples. At Cooper’s sawmill camps and in hunting camps – 17 men, 19 women, 17 children, total 53 people.
Their tribal area takes in the coastal area from Ross Point into Cobourg Peninsula and goes inland to Murgonella Creek. The extensive coastline offers a good supply of sea foods. There are good rakai areas and billabongs behind Malay Bay which attract numerous geese, ibis, etc. and billabongs on the Murgonella plains, inland, supply fish, lily products, etc. The plains are one of the centres where the geese lay their eggs. There are extensive open forest areas. There is good cypress pine behind Malay Bay and in Cobourg Peninsular. Reuben Cooper with four other half castes and a Torres Straits boy is working the cypress in Cobourg Peninsular, employing the local aboriginals.
About 30 Muralidban people have settled in this area. There were 20 Brera people in the timber cutting camp. (Breras come from east of the Blyth River.)

Their tribal area takes in the mouth of Cooper Creek. A mere remnant of these people are left. Total 10 people.

(XXI) Croker Island. Marrgu language.
Tribal area Croker Island. A mere remnant left. Total 5 people.

(XXII) Durwurulwarrwak (lit. people from a long distance away)
This is the term used by the Maung and Iwaja people for the people from the upper part of Cobourg Peninsular. They are the remnant of several small groups. Total 25 people.

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Total number of people between Blyth River on the east and East Alligator River to Cobourg Peninsular on the west is approx. 1,300 people.

Number of people speaking Gunwinggu or dialects of the Gunwinggu language is approx. 500 people.

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III OTHER NOTES

1. Notes on statistics
The coastal groups are on the whole better in physique, health and intelligence than the inland groups due to a better and more regular food supply, the work entailed in traveling on and winning their food from the sea in all weathers and the infusion of other blood (e.g. Macassar). A number of cases of yaws among children and adults, and several suspected cases of leprosy were seen among the inland groups.

Between the Blyth and Liverpool Rivers within 25 miles of the coast, the tribal groups are still substantially intact. To the south in the upper watershed areas of the Blyth and Liverpool Rivers and Mungurru Creek where native foods are relatively scarcer and harder to get the groups (Dangbon, Detyeng, Malagen, etc.) are represented by only a remnant of the old people, the younger people having gone over to the railway, cattle stations and buffalo camps.

West of the Liverpool River the tribal groups are in various stages of detribalisation. The Muralidbans (XXI) a strong Gunwinggu speaking group is still holding on, but there is an interesting drift of its younger people westwards. Among the Gungareguwens the drift is more pronounced. The Gunbalang, Maung, and Iwaija speaking peoples have lost most of their ceremonial life, tribal authorities are breaking down and they are gradually losing their identity as separate groups. A number of small groups are extinct or represented by mere remnants which have merged with other groups. The drift of the younger people westward still continues.

The birth rate west of Liverpool River is decreasing and there is an increasing number of venereal disease cases among these people. Contacts in buffalo and timber cutting camps to the west and with the crews of the Darwin registered pearling boats along the coast have been the cause of much of this. And the breaking down of the ceremonial life of the people and their tribal authorities without any adequate sanctions being built up to take their place has resulted in the estrangement of the younger generation and a lack of desire on their part, to fulfil their responsibilities to their people.

2. Social Area
All the people between Blyth River to the east and East Alligator River to Cape Don to the west form one large social group with the exception of the Rauwarangs (v), a Gajalivia speaking people who evidently belong to the group between the Blyth River and Cape Stewart.

The main characters of our social organization are -- two exogonomic moieties, each moiety divided into four subsections. Each subsection stands in a definite relationship (or relationships) to each of the other subsections. The relationship term between members of the same subsection, throughout the whole social area is “brother” and “sister” provided the marriage laws are adhered to. In the marriage system the subsections are divided into pairs, offering a first and second choice marriage, the relationship between the pairs is wiwi (a term which includes mother’s mother and her brothers and sisters) the term is reciprocal. The moiety descent is matrilineal and the subsection of the children is also determined by that of the mother.
The mythological snake who is looked upon as the creator of this world and all life in it, and is now “remembered” in an important corroboree periodically held at a sacred centre, in each tribal groups area, whose ceremonial life is still intact, is in our social group a female.

3. Language
The most widespread language throughout our area is Gunwinggu, which in various dialects is spoken by four important groups – Gumauwuruk, Muralidban, Gungareguwen and Gumadir – and many small groups west of Liverpool River, and is understood practically throughout the whole social area. About 500 people speak Gunwinggu or its dialects. Among the Rauwarang (v) and the Ranba (l) on the east of our area Gunwinggu is not so well understood but some of the older men know the language through contacts westward. Gunwinggu is undoubtedly the “lingua franca” for our social area and the language for translation work. The languages Maung, Gunwinggu and Gunbalang are noteworthy for the possession of noun clauses (five in the Maung and four in Gunwinggu and Gunbalang), an inflected article and a multitude of verb forms.

4. Circumcision
The tribal groups on the Blyth and inland between the Blyth and Liverpool Rivers still circumcise viz: Ranba, Rauwarang, Goiyakbe, Manbuloi and Gumawuruk. To the west a gradual decrease of the practice can be traced. The Muralidbans still circumcise but some of the boys escape the ceremony by leaving their area for a time and it is not rigidly enforced when they return. Among the Mabanat and Guri-guri people the practice now is discontinued but the older men are circumcised.
Among the Gungareguwen, Gumadir and Maung people none of the old men are circumcised but the old men say that their fathers told them stories of its practice in the past among their people and showed them the place of ceremony. The reason given by the old men for the discontinuance of the practice among these groups is that there were some fatalities among the young boys operated on.

5. Cannibalism
From well corroborated evidence a form of cannibalism is still practiced by three groups between the Blyth and Liverpool Rivers - the Rauwarang, Manbuloi, and Gumauwuruk peoples. The bodies of all except children, old people and diseased are cut after death, the bones taken out and the flesh is cooked and eaten. There appears to be no special ceremony at the time or ceremonial significance attached to this practice at least among the latter two groups who allow men, women and children to eat the cooked flesh; the Rauwarangs do not allow the children to eat. The bones are shortly afterwards handed to the relative who is to carry them at the usual Būgūbūrt corroboree which under this name is practiced throughout our social area. The reason given for the cannibal practice in all three groups is that the people think that eating the human flesh will make them clever at hunting – at spearing the kangaroo, finding the wild honey, getting yams, etc. The practice extends across the Blyth River among the Gajalivia speaking peoples. The old people of the surrounding groups – Mabanat, Guri-guri, Muralidban, Gungareguwen and Detyeng – tell stories of this practice by their people in the past but that it is now discontinued owing to Mission influences.

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IV RE STATION SITES AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

In the parts of the country I was able to visit I saw no site equal to that of Goulburn Island for position, anchorage and resources (native food supplies and economic resources). The mouth of Liverpool River would be an ideal position for a station and needs further examination. At Juda, the Mabanat main camp near North East Pt., the soils are poor and sandy; there are some light jungles and paperbark swamps behind the beach but the soils are light and poor. There are no permanent waters (surface), although water can always be obtained by digging. Good trepang beds lie off Skirmish and N.E. Pts.

Five miles inside the mouth there is a good area of cypress pine on the east side; and at Red Cliffs, 28 miles from the mouth there is a small patch of this timber with some good millable trees.

At the head of the navigable part of the Liverpool River, about 36 miles by River from Entrance Island, there is a possible station site behind the Dry Season camp (Iam-i-rut) of the Gungareguwen people. This camp is on a good landing bank on one of a series of sharp bends of the river, 1 1/2 miles above the mouth of Manggabor Creek. An extensive sheet of water with small rakai areas, lies behind the camp; it has several tidal connections with the river and goes brackish at the end of the dry season. A large permanent billabong about half a mile behind the camp offers a possible station site, above flood level, with open forest country behind. There is good brown loamy soil between the camp and the billabong, and a strip of good soil along the billabong. Kulwiri palms are plentiful in the area. The country near the river is liable to flooding. There is a difference of 8 feet between low and high water spring tides at the camp. Manggabor Creek has permanent waters and well grassed flats in its lower part. From the tidal reach of Liverpool River (3 miles above Ima-i-rut) to the beginning of the rough sandstone country, at 13 miles the River follows several channels with large permanent waterholes and permanent running water in the lower half. The channels are separated by good loam banks and some well grassed flats. Mr. D. Lindsay, the explorer, met the Liverpool River in 1883 a few miles above the tide, and remarked on its agricultural and pastoral possibilities at this part. Cypress pine shows up 5 miles up Manggabor Creek, on the northern side of the mouth and from 7 miles above Ima-i-rut on the on the Liverpool River. Natives cross the River at low tide at a sandbank just above Ima-i-rut and a few miles higher up have a track around the tidal part. Goiyakbe, Gumauwurrk and Muralidban people visit this part.

Thirty one miles above Ima-i-rut there is a basalt pocket on the River, in the sandstone, with dark soils and strong growing grasses, and a good permanent waterhole.

Cypress pine
The best cypress pine area seen on the whole patrol lies behind Rolling Bay. Cypress extends for 10 miles east of Nungbalgarri Creek and on both sides of a long permanent waterhole in the creek. There are many patches of good millable timber on the creek extending to within 7 miles of the bottom of Rolling Bay and at least three miles up the creek.
The tide goes about 6 miles up the creek. The tidal part needs investigating as to navigability. The long w. hs. In the creek abounds with fish, edible palms are plentiful, and there is a good rakai area 4 miles west of the creek at the tidal head of Majari Creek.

Trepang.
Trepang beds are worked at South Goulburn Island by the Mission. Other proved trepang areas along our coast are at North Goulburn Island, Guion Point, the western side of Junction Bay and the mouth of the Liverpool River.

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V. NOTES ON THE PATROL WITH SUGGESTIONS RE FUTURE PATROLS

All the main groups in the Liverpool River and Tomkinson River area can be reached by a River Patrol. The Mabanat (II) camp, Juda, on the coast near N.E. Pt. is a main camping place of these people.
The main Dry Season camping place of the Gumauwurrka (III) is 3 miles west, and of the Manbuloi (IV) 2 miles east of a good landing, Ingabak, at the head of the navigable part of the Tomkinson River, 30 miles by River from its mouth. Ingabak was our boat camp and both the Gumauwurrk and Manbuloi people came to our camp and camped with us. There are good hunting areas and fresh water within reach of the camp. A main Goiyakbe (VI) camping place, Budugadururu, lies 17 miles to the South East on Mugurru Creek, a tributary of the Blyth River. Many of these people would also come into the boat camp and a foot patrol could be made to their camp. The plains about the boat camp are melon holed but suitable aeroplane landing ground could be found near the landing.

A main Dry Season camping place (Ima-i-rut) of the Gungareguwen or Manggabor people (VII) lies at the head of the navigable part of the Liverpool River, 36 miles from Entrance Is. At the mouth, on a good landing bank on a sharp bend of the River. This camp is also visited by the Gumauwurrks and Goiyakbes from the east, and Muralidban's from the North.

A main Dry Season camping place, Nabalgorrorji, of the Muralidbans (XII) lies on the edge of the open forest country, 1 mile from a good landing bank on the River, about 27 miles from the mouth. The camp is alongside good rakai areas and shallow billabongs on the edge of the plain off the River. The plain is badly melon holed near the River but is less so near the timber. The tidal plain of Muralidban Creek about 1 mile from the camp affords a good aeroplane landing ground when dry. The Muralidbans also have Dry Season camps on the rakai areas off the Muralidban Creek tidal plain. This camp is visited by the Gungareguwens and the Gumauwurrks.

A regular patrol in this area from June to September could do a valuable work among these people. From bases at the navigable heads of the Tomkinson and Liverpool Rivers, the Muralidban camp 9 miles lower down the Liverpool and at the Mabanat camp at the mouth, the great majority of the people in the area could be reached; and many of the people would follow round from one base to the next.

A real need exists for medical work. There are a number of cases of yaws and associated diseases throughout this area especially among the children.
Gordon Sweeney on Patrol. Liverpool River Area 1939
Note the water bag and surveyor’s measuring chain being carried by the Aboriginal on the right