

January 11, 2007

Dear Sir Ian,

Thanks very much for your letter. I hope your birthday was a smashing success, and I appreciate your understanding about Pam Ribbey. She's certainly dedicated to her research.

Your reflections on Gerald Gallagher reminded me that I'd been meaning to send you the enclosed photo, said to be Gallagher in the Rest House on Nikumaroro (but see below). We received it from Gerard Gallagher, a maritime attorney who lives not too far from you in the Edinburgh area and is Gerald's nephew. He contacted us several years ago seeking information on his uncle, of whose history and accomplishments he had heard rather vaguely in family stories. We had quite an active correspondence for awhile, but lately he's dropped out of sight. He was talking about writing a book about Gerald's life, and trying to find out what had happened to his effects, which at last report were in Fiji at the beginning of the War, awaiting shipment to his mother. I don't know what has ever happened with either enterprise.

Rather ironically, we honored Gallagher with a small graveside ceremony when we were on Nikumaroro in 2001, and installed a replica of the bronze plaque on his grave marker – I imagine you were among the officers who contributed to the original, which had disappeared – only to learn a year or so later that his remains were disinterred in the 1950s and reburied in the Catholic cemetery on Tarawa. This is also where the original plaque ended up. So we were honoring an empty grave, but the respect was heartfelt, anyway. I puzzle about how anyone could have removed a body from under that great heavy monument, which shows no sign of having been moved in any way.

I have a question for you about the enclosed photo (please keep it with our compliments, by the way). It's supposed to show Gallagher in the Nikumaroro Rest House, but I have my doubts about the venue. In one of his quarterly reports Gallagher described construction of the Rest House, and said that the furniture was being made locally out of kanawa, on whose fine grain he commented. Obviously most of the furniture in the photo is covered with wickerwork in such a way as to make any grain invisible. I'm wondering if it might be another house altogether, on another island. Does it look at all familiar to you?

And this actually reminds me of another question. The late Ratu Mara, in his memoir *The Pacific Way*, mentions that during his tenure as District Officer the requirement that all DOs keep a diary was discontinued. We've made a pretty thorough search of the WPHC archives (now in Auckland) and never encountered a diary or any mention of one. Quarterly reports, yes, but not diaries (other than entirely personal ones, like the one Eric Bevington has shared with us). Presumably we've missed them somehow, but I wonder if you can shed any light on what the requirement was, and if DOs did keep diaries, where they might have wound up.

Thanks, and congratulations on your birthday; we all wish you many happy returns.

Best wishes,