

## THE MT KAIJENDE EXPEDITION — PAPUA NEW GUINEA, 1982

Note: Do not read captions in brackets [ ] — these are titles.

1. This is the story of the first American—organized caving expedition to Papua New Guinea: the Mt. Kaijende expedition of 1982.
2. [ Show produced by Dave Bunnell and Carol Vesely. ]
3. Mt. Kaijende rises 12,433' above the jungles of the western highlands of Papua New Guinea.
4. Extensive pinnacle karst piqued the interest of expedition organizers Neil Montgomery and Donna Mrockowski.
5. The country of Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of the island, just north of Australia. The Kaijende area lies about 100 miles west of the town of Mt. Hagan.
6. The flight to Mt. Hagan provided expedition members their first glimpse of an area first seen by westerners less than 50 years ago.
7. From Mt. Hagan the journey continued another 8 hours along the "Highlands Highway": a rugged dirt and mud 4 wheel drive road.
8. The route 'passed through many small villages complete with thatch huts and natives selling kau-kau, a sweet potato.
9. One of the highlights of the journey was encountering a local sing-sing, or tribal celebration.
10. The focal point of the sing-sing was a line of swaying, drum-beating tribesmen sporting wigs of human hair adorned with bird-of-paradise feathers.
11. The young...
12. and the old...
13. the women in their "lap-laps"...
14. and the men in their "arse-grass" ....
15. all got into the act.
16. Further along the road more excitement occurred when the open-backed trucks ferrying expedition members were endangered by spear-throwing tribesmen in the midst of a tribal war.
17. With the drive completed, base camp still lay two day's trek. A site had been chosen at 9700' in one of the large alpine clearings which characterized the area.
18. While heavy supplies were brought in by chopper...

19. The team began their trek through the jungle...
20. carrying heavy loads along slippery trails.
21. Slogging through knee-deep mud...
22. crossing rivers on narrow logs...
23. brought the team to the large meadows at the base of Mt. Kaijende.
24. With the help of ax-wielding natives trees were cut,
25. lashed together with vines...
26. and covered with plastic tarps to provide shelter from the heavy rains.
27. The completed camp had 3 sleeping huts, a storeroom, a kitchen, and even a shower. A small spring provided water.
28. Food, primarily fish, rice, and corned beef, was partitioned into weekly rations so as to last the full two months.
29. Cooking in basecamps and fieldcamps was done on wood fires.
30. The surrounding jungles brought in unusual insect visitors...
31. and contained beautiful mushrooms...
32. and fungi such as this coral mushroom.
33. The search for caves was not discouraged by the daily rains.
34. Multi-day trips set out from basecamp with several porters who carried canned food, chopped the trail, and cut firewood for cooking.
35. Small fieldcamps were constructed with native help.
36. Early finds were disappointing: blind pits...
37. and small but scenic shelters.
38. The first significant cave was located by following a sinking stream shown on an aerial photo.
39. Lack of a natural anchor forced the team to use a stick pushed into the mud for the 50' rappel at the entrance.
40. Though only 250 meters was surveyed, it proved sporting and wet...
41. with the danger of flooding ever present.

42. Cavers on a reconnaissance trip to a distant clearing awoke to frost on a sinkhole plain.
43. The crew was greeted by a native hunting party..
44. who looked on while they searched the pinnacle for caves.
45. A small shelter in the pinnacle yielded this pictograph.
46. The hunting party became bored and lit a fire to amuse themselves. It went out of control, forcing a hasty retreat.
47. In a distant corner of this clearing, a waterfall sank and was pushed 100' to a sump of liquid mud.
48. Nearby, a small maze in an eroded pinnacle yielded the legbone...
49. Of a cassowary, a fierce, meter tall bird prized by natives.
50. An opening behind the pinnacle cave unexpectedly lead to...
51. a beautiful river passage emerging from the other end of the mud sump seen earlier in the waterfall cave.
52. Its 700 meters were well decorated...
53. Because the stream passage was totally unexpected, the cave was named "Surprise River".
54. Investigation of a nearby cliff...
55. lead to a 60' drop into a chamber illuminated by a spectacular sunbeam.
56. Several kilometers away a team followed a stream canyon through several short tunnels...
57. which finally lead to the main cave.
58. Iba Lu Kundu was devoid of formations but contained attractive heavily scalloped walking passage.
59. It also provided a first caving experience for a barefoot native.
60. After each week-long foray into the wilds, teams returned to the comparative luxury of basecamp for cleaning and repairing gear and replenishing supplies.
61. Because it lay beside a local hunting trail, basecamp received some interesting visitors.
62. These colorful characters were interested in trading their handmade jewelry for anything from soap to old t-shirts.
63. Encarle sports his bamboo smoking pipe, a "schmook-mambu."
64. What would you trade for this tree kangaroo?

65. After two months in the jungle the distinction between westerner and native became blurred.
66. Even in the deep jungle, abandoned hunting shelters could be found and used by expedition teams.
67. Near one such, a search for water lead to the unexpected discovery of this impressive pit.
68. Still within sight of daylight, the Jailbreak passage lead to another large sinkhole entrance.
69. Believing they had discovered the best cave of the trip, the discovery team christened it "Nambawan Ananda" (the best cave).
70. Just inside the main entrance the cavers encountered a bat colony that was never seen again after the first trip.
71. Profuse decorations were found in the very first chamber.
72. The cavers traversed a muddy slope above a pit while echo-locating birds flew overhead.
73. The Glossy-backed Swiftlets make an audible clicking sound which allows them to navigate to their homes deep in the cave.
74. Large passages took off in all directions.
75. Though no vertical gear was needed, slippery freeclimbs were common.
76. The copious mud produced a variety of forms including these reminiscent of the pinnacle karst.
77. The further the cavers pushed the more beautiful the cave became.
78. The floor was so densely covered with cave pearls that portions of the formation room were never traversed.
79. Pearls upon pearls...
80. At one point the formations threatened to choke off the passage.
81. The delicacy of the formations demanded that the teams take special care to preserve their beauty.
82. At the far reaches of the cave was the Winter Wonderland, where floor to ceiling were covered with white calcite and delicate nests of pearls.
83. This ring of pearls was little more than an inch in diameter.
84. At the end of the Wonderland was a delicate, pure white crystal pool. The smallest caver removed her muddy boots and coveralls to explore to an end shortly beyond.
85. Jungle trekking was not without its hazards. Expedition member Jim Pizarowicz severely injured his leg by falling into a small pothole hidden by brush in a clearing...

86. requiring a helicopter rescue arranged by radio.
87. As with all expeditions the largest discovery was made at the end. A distant field camp was established to explore Leiwaro Kundu.
88. Caving at this high elevation was cold, wet, and sometimes grim.
89. The cave was pushed down a series of short pitches...
90. Some requiring inventive rigging techniques.
91. With time running out the cave was pushed to -300 meters with no end in sight.
92. The promise of more cave and the primitive wilderness invite a return to the Highlands of New Guinea.
93. The team assembled for a group shot on the helipad..
94. The thirty expedition members represented five different countries.
95. [ credits ]
96. [ the end ]