

After we became more proficient in Pidgin English, Tofor told us about the first white man to visit Ambrim Island and meet his ancestors.

He began, "This fella belong England and name belong him Captain Cook." Since we had been following in the path of this famous explorer for literally thousands of miles, we sat in rapt attention as Tofor went on with his story.

Captain Cook had landed on Ambrim Island to gather food for his ship. He met "father belong me and father belong him and father belong him, long time," referring to the Chief's ancestors, one of whom was Chief at the time. Captain Cook traded for yams — for which Ambrim, meaning "yam," is named.

Tofor continued, "This fella, Captain Cook, him gave father belong me one 'boom-boom' and steel." Tofor directed one of the village elders who left and went in the direction of the Chief's hut. We were thinking that Captain Cook had traded a gun and something made of metal. The elder returned with an adz made out of the same piece of steel which Captain Cook had presented to Tofor's ancestor 199 years earlier! We were amazed. It was like a piece of history unfolding right in front of our eyes.

We spent several days in Rannon Anchorage and became quite familiar with Tofor and the elders of his tribe. One morning we awoke to find that

Tofor had come down from his mountain village to visit us at the anchorage. After touring the Nyby's yacht, *SILMARIL* out of Lahaina, the chief made a tour of *SKYLARK* (Photo 12). Kristi is getting a banana or two for breakfast from the ever present bunch on the stern pulpit. Following breakfast, we accompanied Chief Tofor to a distant mountain village where we observed a burial dance for the chief of that village.

(Photo 13) Kirk Nyby and I celebrate with Chief Marofam of Na-riamel Village and Chief Tofor.

When we left his village, Tofor presented Kirk and me with parting gifts of "tom-toms." It turned out that these small gifts were the tall carved drums which stood in the ceremonial glade of his village (Photo 14). Robby and I looked at the five-foot tall drum (in front of Bob) that we would have to carry down the mountain while Tofor offered Kirk one which was eight feet tall!

"Thanks Tofor," said Kirk, in careful Pidgin English, "but all same you, small one more better me."

When we said goodbye to the Chief, he told us he was proud that we came to visit him. "Me no go school," he said, "You go school. You much smart come find one bushman belong New Hebrides."

Well, maybe not smart, but sure grateful.

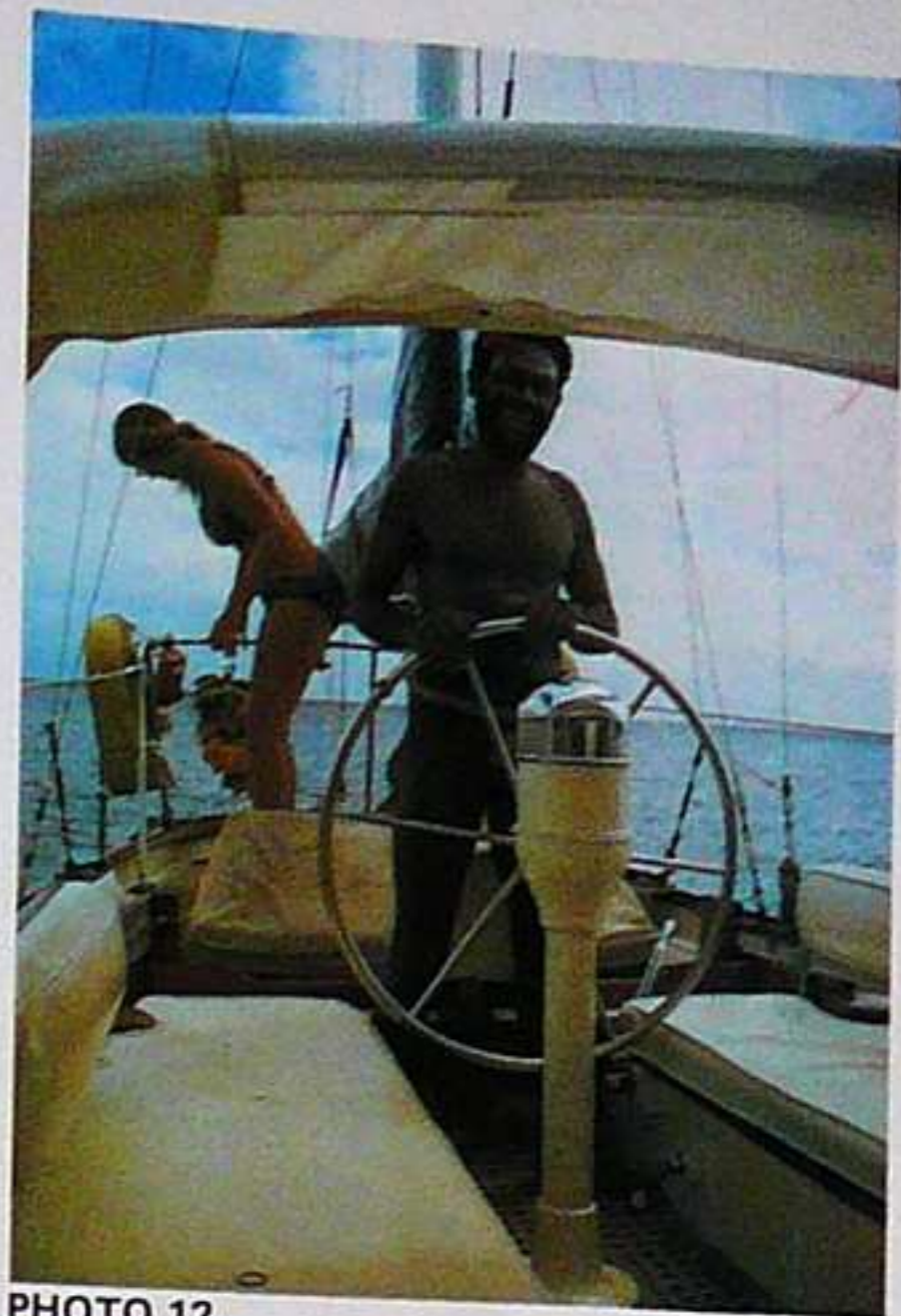
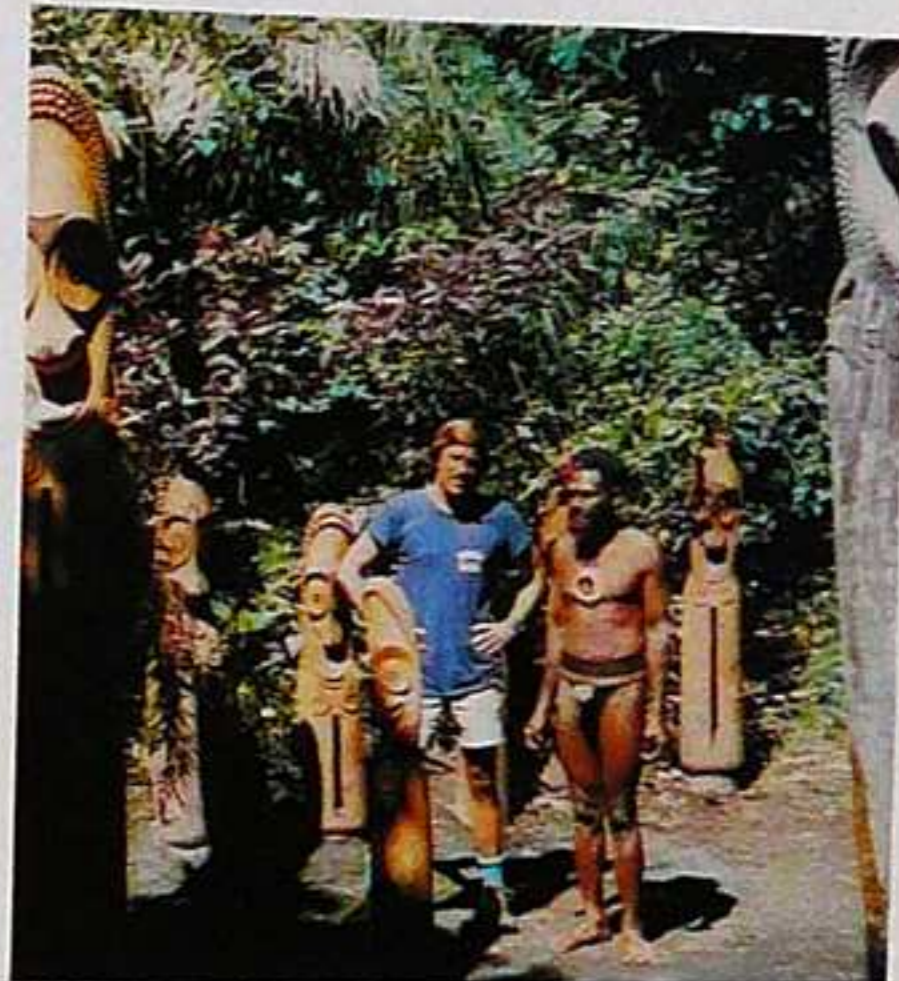


PHOTO 12



▲ PHOTO 14

PHOTO 13

