

Scattering the ashes of Captain James Campbell in 1979

Former vice-commodore of the Royal Papua Yacht Club, Trevor Kerr, tells of a supernatural experience in 1979 when the ashes of the late Captain James Campbell, skipper of the *Macdhui*, were laid to rest with his ship. The powered launch *Tina*, owned and skippered by yacht club committee member Russ Behan, approached the wreck with Captain Campbell's two sons, a United Church minister, and Kerr on board.

"The weather in the harbour was unusually placid, not a zephyr stirred," writes former Port Moresby diver Neil Whiting in *Wreck and Reefs of Port Moresby*. "The sea was so clear that the superstructure of the *Macdhui* could be seen below the surface of the water. "There was not a ripple on the surface or current drift to break the calm. "With heads bowed in prayer, the United Church minister upturned the urn containing Captain Campbell's ashes and scattered the contents into the sea.

"Trevor, observing the ceremony in a more-detached fashion than the others, observed the most-amazing sequence of events. "The ashes initially clouded the water as one would expect, but almost immediately condensed into a form similar to a teardrop. "Then, the most amazing phenomenon occurred. "The teardrop cloud quite rapidly crossed the six-metre intervening gap between the *Tina* and the *Macdhui* and disappeared into the hull. "At a nudge from Trevor, Russ glanced up and also observed the incredible event. "The engines of the launch were quickly started and in a state of chilled awe, the funeral party motored away. "Captain Campbell had returned to his ship."

Courtesy of Noni Brown, Australia, 2020