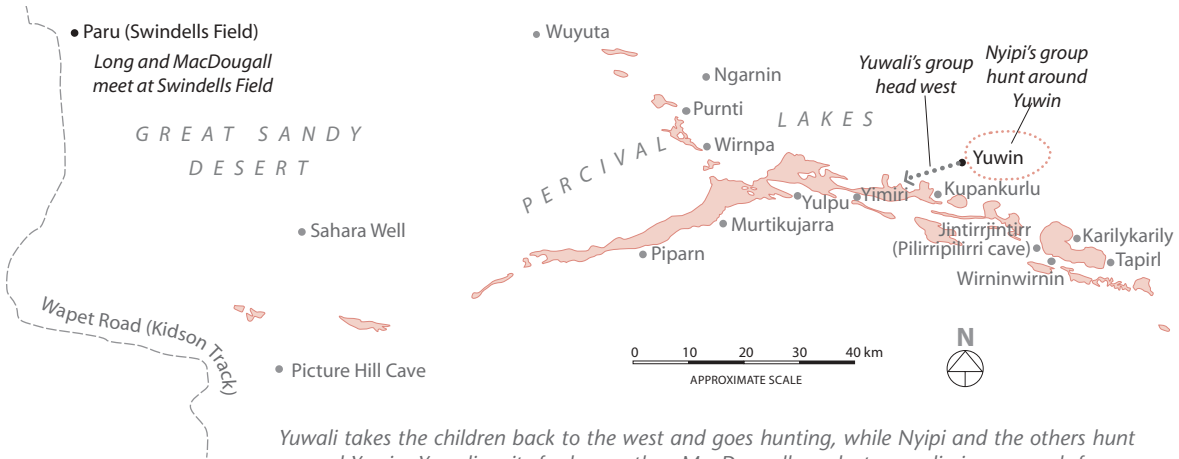


# Sunday 17 May 1964



*Yuwali takes the children back to the west and goes hunting, while Nyipi and the others hunt around Yuwin. Yuwali waits for her mother. MacDougall conducts a preliminary search from the air while waiting for Long to arrive from Port Hedland. Yuwali sees the plane.*

## Yuwali

☾ I was responsible for Ngarrka, Mangayi and Yiji.

We walked west, then I stopped and made my little brothers and my sister sit and wait for me while I went looking for lizards. I left them there in the morning and went east to get meat.

I heard an aeroplane. I went to some trees and I stayed under them. I came out when the plane went away.

I came back with four lizards. The kids were all crying for meat. I cooked them and gave them to my little brothers and sister. We ate all the lizards, then we got up and started walking.

We walked up the sandhill. We were all sitting down and then we were all playing. (We used to go and run up the sandhill, jump down, roll in the sand. We used to play hide-and-seek and climb the trees.<sup>2</sup>)



We got up and walked off again, to the next sandhill. We were waiting and looking for my mother, who was getting meat and some food. We waited all day till sunset. Then we left. We went down and found some *wamurla*, which we ate.

**Cat and lizards stored in a tree.**

PHOTO: BOB VERBURGT, 1960s



**Lizards.** Despite its aridity, the Western Desert has one of the richest reptile faunas in the world. Reptiles (particularly lizards) are probably the most reliable source of meat. Most lizards are nocturnal. There are four major lizard groups: geckos, skinks, legless lizards and goannas. They live in grasses, burrows, rocks or trees. Lizards and goannas are dug out of burrows in the sand, logs or trees and are killed by having their heads hit against something hard. Their legs are dislocated and intestines removed, then they are thrown onto a fire. Their scales are removed after a few minutes and they are buried in hot sand with coals placed on top until cooked. PHOTO: SUE DAVENPORT, 1987

### Long's journal

☪ An air sweep was made on Sunday just prior to us going in by land. Fires had been seen to the north-east of Lake Percival and what appeared to be a large circular ring of bulrushes [Yimiri]. Because of the absence of any signs of life elsewhere in the 100 x 90 mile dump area [the area in which the rocket was intended to land] it was decided to search this sector on the ground.

To carry out a really competent search of the target area would take 6 months, and would require 2 vehicles, plus a supply unit to ensure petrol and water was always available to searchers.

I left for Swindells Field, accompanied by Trainee District Officer Webster and Mr. Gordon McKay, a native interpreter. After a trip, over fair roads of 400 miles [643 kilometres], we rendezvoused with Mr. MacDougall of the WRE and the RAAF Dakota aircraft, Lima Mike Foxtrot.

### MacDougall's journal

☪ The RAAF reported having seen two fire systems actually burning, one within the prescribed area and the other just outside [to the north].

Whilst waiting for Mr. Long I went flying to discover the best way to approach Lake Percival. From this lake I could make an attempt to contact the group living at a soak on its northern shore.

Whilst flying I discovered that WAPET had established a road from Swindells Field to a stony outcrop. This outcrop is within 8 miles [13 kilometres] of the southern shore of the lake. I decided to make my approach from there.

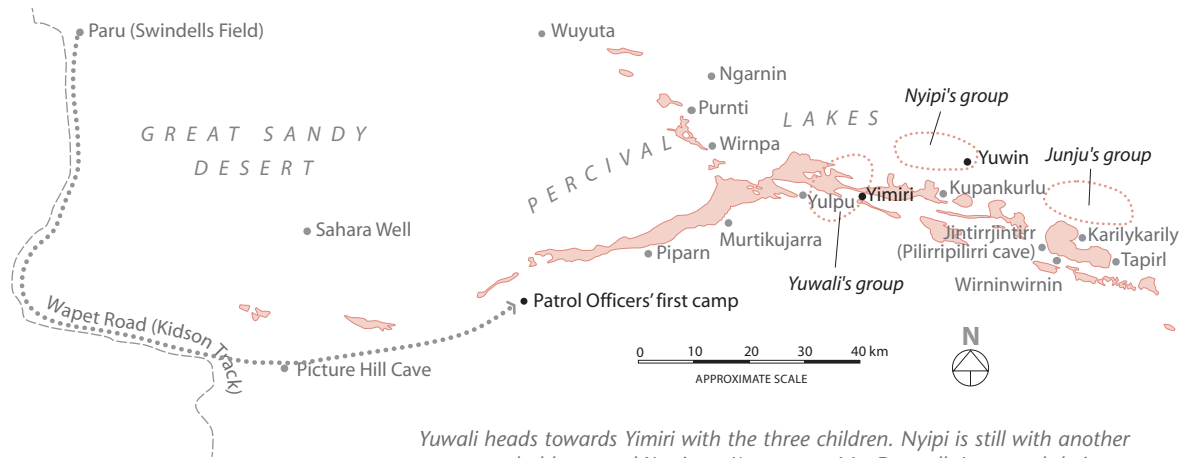


The Martu use fire extensively when hunting, to communicate with each other and to ensure regeneration of growth that attracts game. Looking for fire was a standard method of locating groups of people in the desert. PHOTO: ROBERT MACAULAY, 1964

Air sweeps were made in a Douglas DC-3 to try to spot any signs of life on the lake. Both MacDougall and Long did separate sweeps, spotting Yimiri and the general direction of fires. Swindells Field was an airfield and fuel dump created by West Australian Petroleum and used by the patrol for collecting fuel and other supplies that needed to be flown in. The Martu names for this place include Paru and Papija. PHOTO: ROBERT MACAULAY, 1964



# Monday 18 May 1964



*Yuwali heads towards Yimiri with the three children. Nyipi is still with another group, probably around Yuwin or Kurtararra. MacDougall, Long and their group approach the lake area in various vehicles.*

## Yuwali

☾ In the afternoon we went west to collect bush tucker from the *mantawaruwaru* tree. We were collecting *lunki* (witchetty grubs) and *mankutingu* (thorny devil). We cooked them.

We climbed up the sandhill, we girls. We cooked some meat. We were playing. We went back along the sandhill to the east.



**Lunki** is the Martu name for witchetty grubs, an important source of protein. They are found in the roots of certain acacia bushes and eucalypts. Their presence is indicated by a sawdust-like heap of excreta on the ground at the base of the tree. The women then dig up the roots with crowbars or digging sticks and crack the roots open if a swelling indicates the presence of the grub or if the root sounds hollow when tapped. Several grubs may be found in the one root. They can be eaten raw (tasting like raw eggs) or toasted in hot ashes, giving them a rich egg and nut flavour. PHOTO ABOVE LEFT: SUE DAVENPORT, 2001



**Mankutingu**, or thorny devil (*Moloch horridus*) is a type of lizard which lives in shallow burrows close to the desert surface. They are extremely spiny and can look fierce, but are placid and are often played with as temporary pets. Their thorns are removed before they are cooked. PHOTOS: ABOVE: SUE DAVENPORT, 2000; RIGHT: FIONA WALSH, 1987.



### Long's journal

MacDougall and his mechanic Alec Oliver in the International and Gordon McKay in the Land Rover left Swindells Field at 8.00 am for Lake Percival.

There was a rough track put down by WAPET to an area we knew as Picture Hill, where there was a cave with paintings in them, which was 80 miles [130 kilometres] south of Swindells Field.

Picture Hill was reached at 1.00 pm. From here a rough track meandered towards Lake Percival, then cut out some 12 miles [19 kilometres] from the lake.

We left the Beadell Road at 4.00 pm heading north east and camped in sandhills at 5.30 pm, 8 miles [13 kilometres] south of Lake Percival. Broad valleys run north-east by south-west and end just short of the lake in a jumbled wall of sandhills running in every direction.

There were a lot of dingoes about. They were in a starving condition. You dare not leave your shoes or your boots outside your swag else they'd have been taken too. You had to keep everything under your pillows — there were a lot of dingoes there.



**The International** is a make of truck that MacDougall, Oliver, Meakins and Surman drove. It was very heavy and had a cabin and tray back. Len Beadell, referred to in Long's journal, was the chief surveyor of WRE. From 1951–63 Beadell surveyed and constructed a network of roads spanning over 6000 kilometres in length. These access roads were constructed to enable placement of instrumentation and special surveys for satellite tracking stations, impact areas and target areas. PHOTO: TERRY LONG, 1964



**Picture Hill** is located to the south-west of Lake Percival. It has a cave that has extensive drawings of a snake. PHOTO: BOB VERBURGT, 1960S



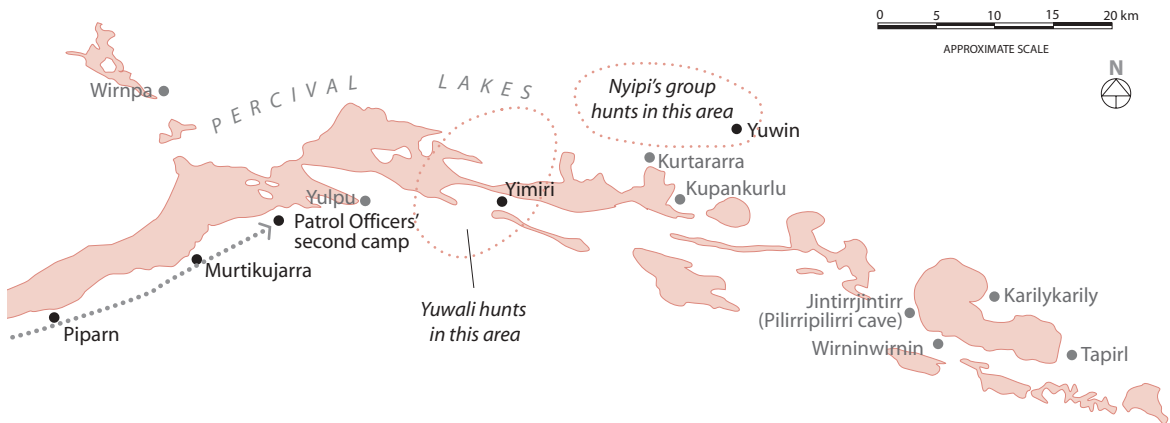
**Dingoes** are significant to the Martu. People slept close to them to keep themselves warm on cold winter nights and protect them from evil spirits. Dingoes can also sense the presence of strangers, 'featherfeet' and revenge expeditions. During the second patrol to the Percival Lakes in September and October 1964, MacDougall's boots were stolen by a dingo. PHOTO: BOB VERBURGT, 1960S

### MacDougall's journal

In discussion, it appeared that Mr Long's instructions were not so much to assist in the search, but to act as an observer, and to ensure that WRE Patrol Officers did in fact remove all natives found in the dump area — an impossible task without proper organisation and time.

I found Mr Long an ideal companion for the type of work in hand. He was quick to learn the special techniques necessary in such difficult terrain, and was at all times ready to do his share of the work involved in the subsequent trials and tribulations imposed by inclement weather, difficult country and confusion.

# Tuesday 19 May 1964



## MacDougall's journal

☪ We arrived without much difficulty on the southern shore of Lake Percival. I found it impossible to cross the lake so drove along its shore to the east.



Macdougall's heavy International quickly became bogged on the salt lake.

PHOTO: TERRY LONG, 1964

## Long's journal

☪ Carried out an attempt to get around the lake from the south shore to the other side.

It was decided to risk the surface of the lake. After an anxious half hour or so, we came out on a length of hard brown salt, which proved to be most stable where a brown and white mosaic pattern existed.

Both vehicles were soon travelling at an exhilarating 40-mph [65 kilometres per hour] and our confidence in this mode of travel began to rise.

Becoming unwisely venturesome, the two cars raced across the wide mouth of an extensive bay, and I was dismayed to see the International subside into a black morass of clay. We spent the next 3 hours assisting MacDougall to extricate the vehicle.

Despite every future care, conditions on the lake defied safe classification, and we were to spend many hours towing, digging, jacking and extricating both vehicles in the two weeks that followed.

After that we had to be very careful about where we went.

It was heartening to see spinifex fires burning ahead of us to the

north-east. We camped that night, confident that we were in reach of a hitherto uncontacted group of Aborigines.



Fires in the distance, seen from the NPOs' camp at Yulpu.

PHOTO: WALTER MACDOUGALL FILM STILL, ARA IRITITJA, 1964