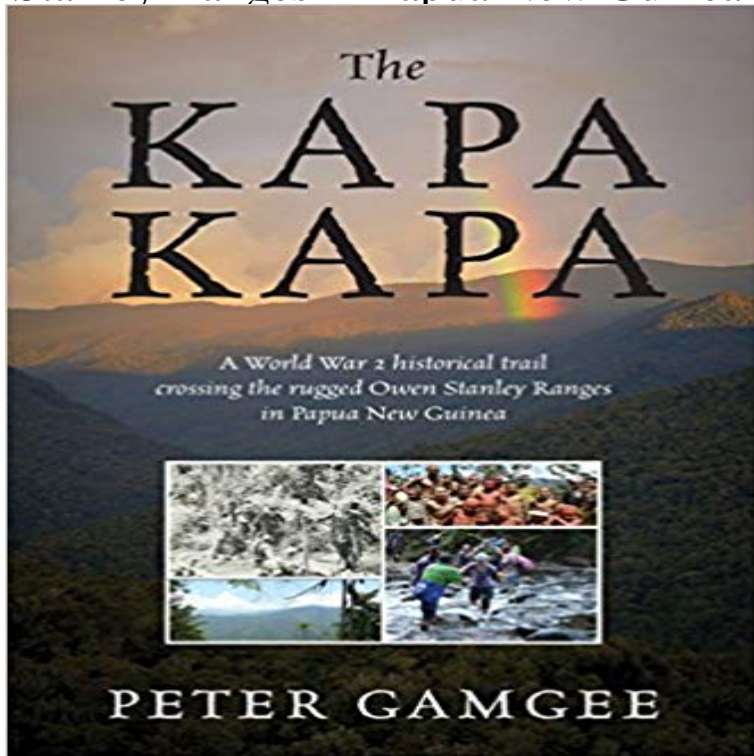


# The Kapa Kapa: A World War 2 historical trail crossing the rugged Owen Stanley Ranges in Papua New Guinea



The Kapa Kapa - A tough walk in paradise. Kapa Kapa Trail - means nothing to most people, even experienced walkers. Google it and you will not be much wiser. Hence the allure for the hardy trekkers. In 1942 under General MacArthurs orders an ill equipped 2nd Battalion of the US 126th Infantry Division of the 32nd Red Arrows battled their way on an ill-defined jungle track across Papua New Guinea. The trail they took, The Kapa Kapa, crosses the Owen Stanley Range to the east of the famous Kokoda Track, in a country rarely walked by other than the local village people. During the Second World War the Trail was both the saviour for a small group of the 2/14th Australian troops who were cut off behind enemy lines - and green hell for the thousand from the 126th Regiment who were forced to march over it from the south to the north coast. So afflicted were those troops with exhaustion and illness through malaria, typhoid, dysentery, infection and other tropical diseases that only about 25% were fit to fight after reaching the northern staging post at a village called Jaure. The author, Peter Gamgee, first walked the Trail in 2009 and was so taken by the local people and their culture and needs, the stunning countryside, the trekking challenges, and the mostly undocumented history that he returned with his son Jake in 2011, spending a month on the Trail gathering the material to write this book. It is a month Jake and I will remember for the rest of our lives. We took our time and talked to the local people along the way, stopping at most of the villages, including a two hut village where the staple food was boiled green bananas! The people made us most welcome and we sat and ate their food in their cooking huts listening to the stories of what they recalled about the war and about their village and culture. When we werent in the villages talking to the community we were walking in some of

the most rugged but pristine environments.  
In the higher reaches the vegeta

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