

Adventures in the Rotor Wind: From the Office to the Jungle

Elke Kummer

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Kummer's memoir is an entertaining account of missionary life.

Elke Kummer's memoir *Adventures in the Rotor Wind* is an informative account of the first three years she and her husband, Hans, spent in Indonesia, working to support Christian missionaries who traveled into the jungle-covered mountain ranges of New Guinea.

In 2000, Elke and Hans left their quiet life in Germany for Wamena, in Papua-Indonesia, where they worked for Helimission, an organization that uses helicopters to support missionaries in remote jungle areas and for humanitarian and medical aid.

In Wamena, Hans spent long days doing maintenance and repairs on those helicopters, while Elke did office work and bookkeeping, along with housework and grocery and supply buying, which sometimes involved traveling to other towns by air.

Elke's detailed writing vividly describes the natural beauty of the landscape and the dangers of flying and landing helicopters in narrow mountain valleys. She relates the difficulties of living in Wamena, including trouble learning the language, frequent intestinal problems, keeping rats and burglars out of the house, and needing to be on constant watch for those who wanted to eat the guard dog:

Our life in Wamena felt like a boat trip on a river ... most days we were traveling in rapid, white water, constantly trying to avoid hitting huge boulders. Some days we were paddling along on a calm sunny stretch (those days were few and far between).

Even when describing events like indigenous people coming to Wamena wielding machetes and axes, Kummer's tone remains optimistic, driven by a conviction that God will provide.

Chapters are organized chronologically, and information is clearly presented in a way that allows for ease of understanding. Each chapter tells a story with a flawless and enjoyable mix of narrative and dialogue, giving a clear sense of settings and events, whether stories take place in the jungle, the helicopter hangar, in someone's home, or traveling a precarious road to a nearby village.

When Kummer discusses the history of the island, maps are included to aid in the understanding of the area's political development. The book effectively conveys the sometimes grueling experiences of the Helimission staff, as well as those of the indigenous people around them.

The text includes a helpful glossary of aviation and other frequently used or slang terms, including the abbreviations used around various aircraft.

Little is shared regarding the perspectives of other staff members, though, which robs the book of some depth.

Repetition regarding daily chores slows down the story, as does too much technical detail regarding the operation of helicopters.

Adventures in the Rotor Wind is a firsthand account of missionary work that is both enlightening and entertaining.

LORRAINE RAVIS (August 14, 2017)

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