

Travel Tales

**The Real Life Story of
Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**

by

Lew Toulmin

If you watched the impressive funeral of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, you may have picked up some of the following accepted facts. He was born in 1921 on a dining table in a mansion on Corfu, as a member of the House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glückburg and a Prince of Greece and Denmark. When his life was threatened at the age of one by the Greco-Turkish war, he was evacuated aboard HMS *Calypso* in a cradle made from a fruit box. He became a naturalized British citizen, gave up his princely titles, and served in the Royal Navy in World War II. He saved his ship HMS *Wallace* during the invasion of Sicily by devising a plan to launch a raft with smoke grenades and flares, thus distracting a vicious night bomber attack. He was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Greek War Cross of Valor. After the war he courted Princess Elizabeth (whom he had met before the war), they fell in love, and eventually married.

But all of this is wrong – at least according to the South Pacific tribe that worships Philip as a god.

According to Chief Linlin Jack Naiua, head of the Prince Philip Tribe in Yaohnanen village on the island of Tanna in the South Pacific country of Vanuatu, Prince Philip's past is actually quite different. I interviewed the Chief at length in his village several years ago, while I was working in the Vanuatu Prime Minister's Office. Here are the true facts, as believed by the Chief and his 1600+ followers.

The Tribe believes that Prince Philip was actually born on the west side of Tanna, and was raised in a dangerous society of cannibalism, colonialism, and the destruction of "kastom" (customary tribal) practices. Philip only wanted to live in peace, but he realized he could not do so on Tanna. In 1943 he heard that Princess Elizabeth was an eligible young woman. So he got into a canoe, and, using his mystical powers, paddled all the way to England -- about 16,000 nautical miles. There, according to the Chief, Philip was jailed as an illegal immigrant but used his powers to escape and marry Elizabeth.

After marriage Philip lived the life that we have always heard about – being made Duke of Edinburgh and later re-receiving the title of Prince, becoming the hardworking patron of over 800 charities, and fathering Prince Charles and three other children.

Back in the South Pacific, the Prince Philip Tribe was observing this all from afar. In 1980, when the New Hebrides gained its independence and became the Republic of Vanuatu, Chief Naiua’s grandfather sent Prince Philip a pig-killing club. The Prince then posed with this club in a photo, and sent a large copy to the Tribe. The Chief stated that this was proof that the Prince really was from Tanna, and understood the significance of the club, which is used in the chief’s pig-killing cult that dominates Vanuatu.

In 2000 Prince Philip sent another picture of himself to the village, along with a British flag, said that his birthday was June 10, and suggested that the villagers could celebrate that date. Said the Chief, “All 1669 adult members of our church feel that Philip is like Jesus – he is a god, and so every year on June 10 we have a big festival, with kava drinking, island food, and a pig-killing ceremony.” The Chief invited the world to visit the village on that date, raise the British flag, and join in celebrating their God.

Next week we will find out about Prince Philip’s surprising after-life.

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1. Author Lew Toulmin (right), with Chief Linlin Jack Naiua (center), head of the Prince Philip Tribe on the island of Tanna in the South Pacific country of Vanuatu. The Chief and his brother are holding photos and a flag sent to them by Prince Philip.
2. Map of Vanuatu, showing (in the dark blue inset) that Vanuatu is east of Australia and west of Fiji, and (in the main map) that Tanna island is in the far south of the country. Vanuatu has nine active volcanos, all the islands were formed by volcanic action, there are no atolls, and the highest mountain is 6165 feet high. The population is about 255,000, scattered across 55 inhabited islands which stretch 500 miles from north to

south. Most Americans have never heard of it!

3. Chief Linlin Jack Naiua, 27 years old, of Yaohnanen village on the island of Tanna in the South Pacific country of Vanuatu. He is holding a signed photo of Prince Philip with a pig-killing club/Toka dance stick from Tanna. Note the Chief's demure penis sheath.
4. Mt. Yasur explodes every few minutes -- a very active and spectacular volcano on the eastern side of Tanna. Some Prince Philip worshippers believe that Philip is an incarnation of the volcano's spirit.
5. The dining table on which Prince Philip (originally Philippos) was born in Greece, now the boardroom table at the headquarters of Howe Robinson ship brokers in London. The delivering doctor insisted that Philip's mother use the hard table instead of an upstairs bed. Philip's mother was Princess Alice of Battenberg, great-grand-daughter of Queen Victoria, intermittent schizophrenic, named as "Righteous Among the Nations" for saving Jews in WWII, and was the founder of an order of Greek Orthodox nuns.
6. The young Philp, no longer a prince of Greece and Denmark, and not yet a prince of Britain – just a lowly but handsome midshipman in the Royal Navy in World War II.

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