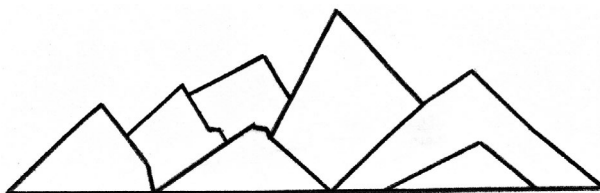


PART 2. CATASTROPHIC ERUPTION

At 10.40 hours on Sunday, 21st January, the volcano produced an explosion of great magnitude. A large mass of ash was projected rapidly into the stratosphere to form a huge expanding mushroom-shaped cloud. The base of the column began to expand laterally as clouds of incandescent ash swept down the slopes of the mountain and laid waste more than 90 square miles of country.

This tremendous release of energy was awe-inspiring and terrifying to the people living on the slopes of the volcano, and almost immediately large numbers began to flee. Such was the velocity of the enveloping cloud, however, that only those on the extreme edge of the subsequently devastated area were able to escape.

— G.A.M Taylor (1958, 24–25)



This text is taken from *Roars from the Mountain: Colonial Management of the 1951 Volcanic Disaster at Mount Lamington*, by R. Wally Johnson, published 2020 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.