



KOKODATRACK

MARCH 2020

MEMORIAL WALKWAY NEWS



ANZAC DAY SERVICE CANCELLED

We regret that our annual ANZAC Day service will not be held in 2020 due to the coronavirus emergency. The Board has taken that decision with regret but the health and safety of our veterans, their families and their friends, is of paramount importance.

VIRTUAL REALITY PROJECT UNDER WAY

The board of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway has embarked on an ambitious and exciting project to create a virtual reality program which will give visitors the sense of actually being on the Track and sharing the wartime experiences of our Diggers. The virtual reality and augmented reality experience will take 18 months to complete, beginning with initial filming and interviews at the Walkway, later moving to location shoots on the Track itself, before edited material

is incorporated into software for use in the Ralph Honner Education Centre and at the stations along the pathway. After inviting submissions last year, the board accepted a proposal from Marrickville creative director Sean Bacon, one of Australia's leading practitioners working with video technology in live performance over the past decade. "My distinguished career in the arts has enabled me to have a comprehensive understanding of audio-visual equipment and the use of multimedia across

a wide variety of platforms, including film, installation, public art, stage and web-based applications," Mr Bacon told the board. "I have strong connections with the theatre and film-making community in Sydney and nationally. I will be able to engage high-calibre actors and cinematographers to contribute to the film, ensuring it is of excellent quality. My past and most recent work has also involved community engagement and I excel in this creative space."

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STANDING OVATION FOR REG CHARD



The Kokoda Day ceremony on 3 November was remarkable for the standing ovation given to 96-year-old Reg Chard, who as guest speaker represented the dwindling number of WWII veterans.

After outlining his service in New Guinea during the war, and enthraling his audience with his observations on the campaign, Reg revealed that his involvement with the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway had quite literally saved his life.

He explained that after the death of his wife he had questioned whether life was worth living, before volunteering to be a guide at the walkway and discovering a new purpose and a fresh passion, throwing himself into teaching visiting schoolchildren about the sacrifices made by Australian troops on the Kokoda Track.

Students from Rosebank College at Five Dock, who had trekked over the Owen Stanley Range just weeks earlier, also spoke during the service.

The ceremony marked the 77th anniversary of the raising of the Australian flag over the village of Kokoda, an event which heralded the defeat of the Japanese in New Guinea.

VIRTUAL REALITY PROJECT UNDER WAY (continued)

Funded through the Department of Veterans' Affairs Saluting Their Service grant program, the aim is to provide visitors with a "completely immersive" virtual reality experience, lasting up to eight minutes, using Kokoda veterans and Walkway guides Lloyd Birdsall, Ray Gentles, Reg Chard and Charlie Jennings as the backbone. The physical hardships of the jungle environment will be prominent, along with the relentless threat of a battle-hardened enemy.

Filmed interviews will be interspersed with archival and location footage, with the addition of actors' dialogue and binaural sound to create the feeling of being on the Kokoda Track during WWII. Binaural recording is a method of recording sound that uses two microphones, arranged to create a 3-D stereo sound sensation for the listener of actually being in the room or environment. An interactive element will allow the viewer to select different items

FOR YOUR DIARY in 2020:

ANZAC Day Service

~~Friday 24 Apr, 10:30am~~ CANCELLED

VP Day Service

Saturday 15 Aug, 2:00pm

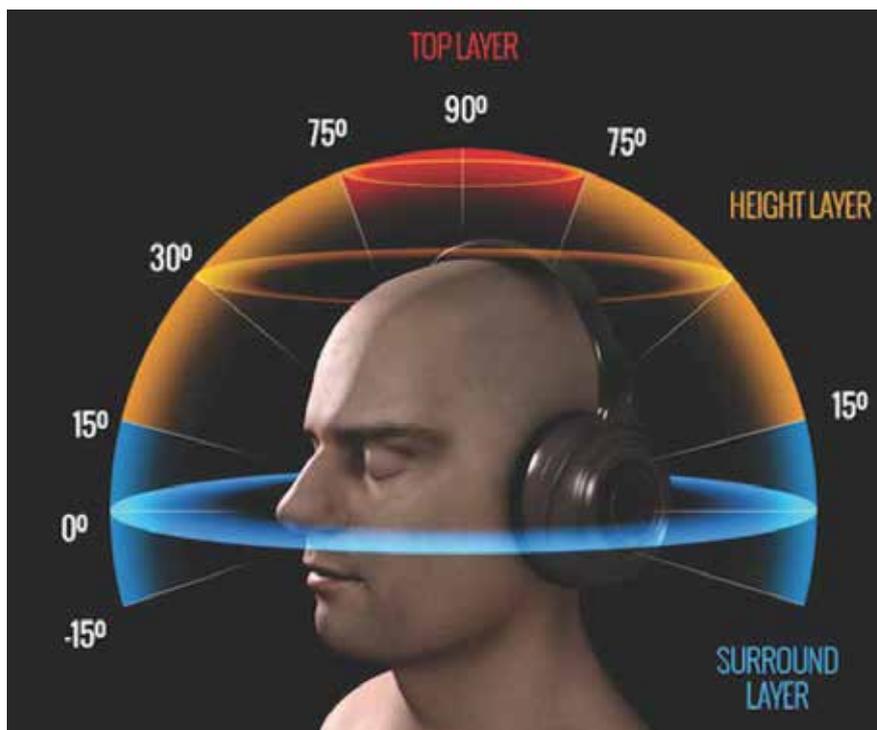
Kokoda Day Service

Tuesday 3 Nov, 10:30am

at a particular point, to focus for example on maps, equipment or a short newsreel excerpt.

The project will also provide a downloadable app for android or iPhone devices, with the option for as many as 15 tablets to be mounted on a charging rack inside the education centre. An augmented reality segment will be produced for each station on the walkway, providing interviews with veterans and KTMW volunteers, along with archival imagery and oral histories from the existing archive.

KTMW chair Jennifer Collins said the board was impressed by Mr Bacon's vision, and that the virtual reality and augmented reality experiences will be a fundamental part in telling future generations about a significant time in our history using the most up-to-date techniques.





RACHAEL SAUKA SAGELI

REMEMBRANCE OF WAR

- THE PAPUA NEW GUINEAN EXPERIENCE

◀ By Rachael Sauka Sageli

Most Australians are familiar with the contribution made by the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels during WWII. The years between 1942 and 1945 were a dark time not only for soldiers and carriers toiling their way through such places as the Kokoda Track, Ramu and Markham Valleys, the Gazelle Peninsula, Milne Bay and Mubo, to name but a few, but also for the civilian population of PNG.

My grandfathers often spoke to me about their fathers' and great uncles' involvement in the war. In 1942, my great grandfathers and other villagers, along with their uncles and brothers, volunteered to become helpers and carriers for the Australian Army. My great grandfathers' names were Morafeae Uviva (grandfather's side) and Meta Lakou (grandmother's side). Both men were from Moveave Village which is made up of two large settlements - Heatoare and Heamora in the Malalua District of Gulf Province.

When the war arrived in New Guinea, they heard the aircraft flying overhead. The whole village was so scared they thought this is it, the end of their lives, that they will be bombed. Stories from other villages came filtering through of big aircraft dropping bombs on their land. Many villagers fled to the bush. Whenever they heard aircraft flying past the villagers, every single day during the war, "wherever they were or whatever they were doing", they gathered around and prayed for the safety of their husbands, sons and uncles fighting in the war.

My grandfathers recalled that they were too scared to leave

homes for the garden or go out hunting and fishing. I was also told that aircraft remains were found up at the Lakekamu River in my village. It was a military aircraft, shot down by the Japanese. They said the aircraft crashed into a huge jungle tree. It broke in half and the head of the aircraft fell onto the ground and exploded but the tail was hanging in the tree. Some years later the great grandchildren and some Australian soldiers went and found the remains of the pilot and the aircraft.

My great grandfathers volunteered to help Australian soldiers fight the Japanese, as carriers to help the wounded. One helped an Australian soldier escape the Japanese by floating down the Bena River to Buma beach and was saved by his comrades. They camouflaged themselves by cutting tree branches with leaves, pushed a dry log into the river and, covered by the tree branches, floated down the river without the Japanese soldiers noticing them.

That great grandfather reached another milestone, helping the Australians pull the Japanese flag down. His actions were unnoticed by the Japanese, as, without fear, he reached the top of the hill, pulled the Japanese flag down and allowed the Australians to raise their flag in victory. The Japanese soldiers were astonished by his actions and couldn't bother to do anything or shoot him. The Japanese knew they had lost the war to the Australians because of a native Papuan.

These stories are remembered in our hearts by our generation

as we commemorate their heroic actions and bravery on our National Remembrance Day each year (23 July).

After WWII my grandfathers, Sageli Morafeae and Meraveka Morafeae, became the first teachers amongst the colonial administrators. They served and visited every part of Papua New Guinea and became Senior Inspectors in the education system. Each married the loves of their lives. My grandfather died aged 89 on 26 August 2017 and my grandmother died before him.

The stories told by them and many others about the war will always be remembered. And today, I am 31 years old and here I am sharing what I remember from my childhood years, stories shared by my grandparents.

My grandfather wrote a song about the war and Kokoda after his retirement from teaching which in part reads:

*White man, Brown man, one and all
Forget the barrier and Unite
Forget the Peace and learn to fight
Buna beach to Milne Bay
They drove the enemies far away
From Moresby to Kokoda Trail
We are free because they did not fail.*

Life has taught me to be strong and be who I am. I am filled with so much gratitude that I spent time around my grandparents and the elders in the family. I was able to sit and listen to these stories. For that, I will forever be grateful. They will always be my heroes.

Rachael Sauka Sageli is a front office agent at Grand Papua Hotel in Port Moresby and wrote this article after following the KTMW Facebook page.



WELCOME CRAIG LAUNDY



Joining the board is the Hon. Craig Laundy, MP for Reid for six years from 2013. During his time in Federal Parliament Craig served as Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Assistant Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, and Minister for Small and Family Business, the Workplace and Deregulation. We look forward to Craig contributing his wide experience to the Walkway.

THANK YOU JOHN MURRAY



The Hon. John Murray, 27th Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly and MP for Drummoyne from 1982 until 2003, has stepped down from the board of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. John joined the board after his retirement from politics and has given 16 years of outstanding service to the Walkway.

DONATION TO KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

TITLE	FIRST NAME	INITIAL	LAST NAME		
COMPANY		POSITION IF APPLICABLE			
ADDRESS		STATE	POSTCODE	COUNTRY	
PHONE	EMAIL				
DONATION AMOUNT					
\$,	.			
All donations are tax deductible.					
PAYMENT DETAILS					
Please attach a cheque made out to "Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway" or complete the credit card details below. The form and cheque should be mailed to: Alice Kang, Co-ordinator Veterans Services, Concord Hospital, Hospital Road, CONCORD NSW 2139					
NAME ON CARD:					
CARD NUMBER:			CARD NUMBER EXPIRY (MM/YY)		
CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE:					
			CVC (CARD VERIFICATION CODE)		
					

Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway is grateful for your donation and undertakes NOT to disclose your contact details to any other organisation.