



FROM LEFT, REG CHARD, BRUCE ROBERTSON, LES THOMSON, DAVID TRIST WITH THEIR WREATH

VETERANS TAKE CENTRE STAGE ON KOKODA DAY

More than 600 people attended the Kokoda Day service on 3 November, commemorating 80 years since the decisive campaign in New Guinea. Among the guests were politicians, diplomats and ADF representatives, but the undoubted star performers were four men, each with his own story to tell of the war against Japan.

Bruce Robertson, aged 102, Reg Chard who days earlier turned 99, Les Thomson (98) and David Trist (98) were the proud representatives of the WWII generation from which almost 600,000 Australian men and women served overseas. Another two veterans, Ernie Walker (105) and Cecil Creswick (102) had planned to attend but were absent through ill health.

The four men were led to their seats with the official party, led by the Burwood RSL sub-Branch Pipes & Drums and children from the neighbouring Concord West pre-school dressed in Kokoda Day T-shirts.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA CONSUL GENERAL HELPED TO RELEASE THE DOVES

At the start of the wreath-laying ceremony the veterans came forward to place a special wreath at the front of the stage, and later, accompanied by school students, took part in the release of doves.

Bruce Robertson, who had flown Beaufighters in New Guinea with RAAF 30 Squadron, also recited the Ode before the Last Post was played and a minute's silence was observed. He and the other three veterans remained the centre of attention well after the service concluded as television news teams interviewed them at length.



NEW GARDEN HONOURS BRUCE KINGSBURY VC

The stretch of grass between the Ralph Honner education centre and the carpark has gone, replaced by a garden which, as it becomes established, will transform the major access point for visitors to the Memorial Walkway.

The garden has been named in honour of Bruce Kingsbury, who was awarded a Victoria Cross posthumously for his actions during the battle of Isurava in August 1942. Private Kingsbury was the only soldier to receive the VC during the Kokoda campaign itself.

The garden was created with the assistance of Canada Bay Council and supported by generous donations from the Bankstown, Newtown, Enfield Croydon Park and Five Dock RSL sub-Branches.

Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Matt Thistlethwaite MP, unveiled a plaque on Kokoda Day, naming this area the Bruce Kingsbury VC Garden.



In his commemorative address during the service that followed, Mr Thistlethwaite confirmed Federal Government funding for the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway of \$186,000 a year over four years.

"In 2022 we recognise the 80th anniversary of one of the hardest fought and most critical actions of the Second World War - the Kokoda campaign," said Mr Thistlethwaite.

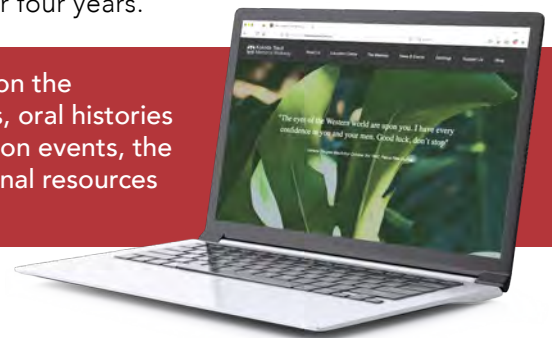
"The four-month battle turned back the Japanese land advance on Port Moresby, helping to turn the tide of the war. The government is committed to upholding the legacy of this vital campaign."

The funding included in the 2022-23 October Budget will contribute to the ongoing operations and maintenance costs, including staffing, gardening, repairs and general maintenance at the Walkway for four years.

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE

www.kokodawalkway.com.au

As well as containing information on the Walkway and its memorial stations, oral histories recorded by veterans and reports on events, the website now offers more educational resources and opportunities to book visits.



KOKODA DAY NOW OFFICIAL

After lobbying by the KTMW Board, supported by Charlie Lynn, the NSW Government has decided 3 November will be known officially as Kokoda Day to acknowledge the bravery and efforts of the veterans of the New Guinea campaign.

David Elliott, Minister for Transport and Veterans, made the announcement at the Ralph Honner education centre as he launched a digital honour roll containing the names and service details of 621 Australians killed in action on the Kokoda Track itself during the New Guinea campaign.

"On the 80th anniversary of this occasion, we remember the strength and resilience of all those who served along the Kokoda Track and it is wonderful now to have this day recognised in our NSW calendar," said Mr Elliott.

"With the number of Australians who served in the Second World War sadly dwindling, it is important that the residents of NSW have memorials that can continue to educate the younger generation on significant events in Australia's history, like the Kokoda Track campaign," Mr Elliott added.

The honour roll will be a permanent part of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, visible on the glass at the front of the education centre whenever the building is open. A viewing platform and seating have been constructed for visitors.

Premier Dominic Perrottet in a statement confirmed 3 November will be designated as Kokoda Day.

"Having walked the track myself, it is important we, and future generations, mark the bravery and sacrifices of those who served there" Mr Perrottet said.

The Board has made formal submissions to the Federal Government to have the Commonwealth proclaim Kokoda Day nationally.





SCHOOLS WELL REPRESENTED

Schools have taken an increasingly large role in services at the Memorial Walkway. On Kokoda Day students were enlisted to assist our WWII veterans, and laid wreaths on behalf of their school communities.

Schools involved were Concord HS, Rosebank College, MacKillop College, Strathfield South HS, Bethany College, Holsworthy HS and Chifley College. The choir was provided by Strathfield North Public School, and children from

the Concord West Pre School accompanied the official party.



SALUTING JOHN AND CHARLIE

Two of our stalwart supporters – John Haines AM and Charlie Lynn OAM – have been recognised and rewarded for their efforts by being named the Walkway’s inaugural ambassadors.

Assistant Veterans’ Affairs Minister Matt Thistlethwaite MP presented each with a gold badge at the conclusion of the Kokoda Day service. John Haines has been associated with the KTMW since its inception, initially representing the RSLs Western Metropolitan District Council and then as a Vice-President and later President of the RSL State Branch. He served as chairman of our Board from 2012 until 2018.

Major Charlie Lynn, a former Member of the Legislative Council, spent several years as a Board member, contributing valuable political advice. He has been a strong advocate for the KTMW securing NSW Government funding and for the proclamation



MATT THISTLETHWAITE PRESENTS JOHN HAINES WITH HIS AMBASSADOR'S BADGE AS CHARLIE LYNN LOOKS ON

of Kokoda Day. Charlie has led 100 groups on treks across the Owen Stanley Range, giving them firsthand experience of the rigorous Kokoda Track. Congratulations and thanks John and Charlie!

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Although no formal ceremony is held at the Memorial Walkway on Remembrance Day, Board members do lay a wreath at



the Centrepiece and welcome individuals, families and join them in placing wreaths or



poppies there. It was particularly pleasing this year to see children participating, emphasising the significant role the Walkway plays in growing the awareness of military history and sacrifice among younger generations.



VP DAY 2022

The guest speaker at this year's VP Day service, marking 77 years since the end of WWII, was Major-General Dave Chalmers AO, CSC. Rosebank College captains Lola Arnold and Jonas Capranis gave the Bible reading; Concord High School captain Taliesin Law read a commemorative poem; and Strathfield North PS provided the choir.



MAJOR-GENERAL DAVE CHALMERS AT THE VP DAY SERVICE



ROSEBANK COLLEGE'S CAPTAINS GAVE THE BIBLE READING



FR GRAEME MALONE DELIVERS THE BENEDICTION WITH THE NORTH STRATHFIELD SCHOOL CHOIR BEHIND HIM

DONATION TO KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

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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, Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, PO Box 127, Concord NSW 2137 or emailed to Alice.kang@kokodawalkway.com.au

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