



# KOKODATRACK

FEBRUARY 2024

MEMORIAL WALKWAY NEWS



KOKODA DAY 2023 - CHARLIE LYNN

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD RECOGNISE KOKODA DAY

The Federal Government should follow the example of New South Wales and declare 3 November each year as Kokoda Day, KTMW Chair Jennifer Collins AM told the hundreds of people gathered for the annual commemorative service.



KOKODA DAY 2023 - JENNIFER COLLINS

"A formal national gazettement of this day as Kokoda Day would pay tribute not only to the Australians who served and

died during the World War Two campaign but also to the local people, especially the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, who devoted themselves to carrying supplies over the Kokoda Track and bringing wounded soldiers to safety," said Ms Collins.

"The third of November should be known throughout Australia as Kokoda Day."

Three veterans of the campaign were able to attend the service on the 81st anniversary of the raising of the Australian flag over Kokoda village. Bruce Robertson, Reg Chard and David Trist were saluted and applauded as they laid wreaths at the front of the stage.

The Governor-General, General David Hurley, was unable to attend in person as he was required to attend a State Funeral, but recorded a video message which was played as



KOKODA DAY - VETERANS LAYING WREATHS

part of the service. General Hurley commended the ongoing campaign to educate young Australians about the Kokoda Campaign, which has been a central role of the Memorial Walkway. A video message from NSW Premier Chris Minns was also played.

Board member Major Charlie Lynn delivered the prologue, outlining the significance of Kokoda Day, and also making special mention of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels.







## STRONGER TIES WITH PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway has further strengthened links with Papua New Guinea, by signing an agreement with PNG Government representatives which will see a traditional cultural group take part in our Kokoda Day service on 3 November each year.

The PNG Minister for Tourism, Arts & Culture, the Hon. Isi Lenard, and the Governor of the National Capital District Commission, the Hon. Powes Parkop, visited the Walkway on 11 December.

They viewed the virtual reality program in the Ralph Honner Educational Centre, toured the length of the Walkway and viewed the memorial stations, and at the Memorial Centrepiece laid wreaths. They were accompanied by KTMW Chair Jennifer Collins AM and board member Major Charlie Lynn OAM.

The PNG delegation signed a memorandum of understanding in which they committed to support the KTMW Kokoda Day commemoration, and entered into a sister-city arrangement with the City of Canada Bay.

"We hope the signing of these historic agreements will lead to



CHARLIE LYNN AND PNG GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES



a plan to replicate the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Owers Corner at the start of the Kokoda Track alongside a traditional Koiari tree-house village," said Charlie Lynn.



'Such a facility would quickly become PNG's most popular tourist attraction due to its road access from the capital, Port Moresby.'



### WELCOME DONATION

Many thanks to the Five Dock RSL sub-Branch for a generous donation of \$30,000 to assist with the maintenance of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway and the running of our commemorative services. KTMW chair Jennifer Collins AM told sub-Branch President Robert Ridge that every cent of the money will be spent wisely, especially in our educational programs which reach thousands of school pupils each year. Thank you Five Dock!



# NAVY VETERAN OF AFGHANISTAN CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS ANZAC SERVICE

The guest speaker at our ANZAC service, on Saturday 20 April, will be Captain Richard Brickacek, CSC, DSM, RAN. Currently based at Garden Island he is the Commander Mine Warfare, Clearance Diving, Hydrographic, Meteorological, Oceanographic and Patrol Force.

Captain Brickacek joined the RAN as a Seaman Officer in 2004, serving on HMA Ships Tobruk, Brunei and Warramunga. After deployment to Iraq as part of Operation CATALYST, he trained as a Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Officer. This led to an attachment to the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment, then to the 6th Battalion RAR in Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. His duties included rendering safe IEDs and participating in combat operations with Australian, Dutch and US troops as well as mentoring Afghan forces.

The then Lieutenant Brickacek was awarded a DSM for his service in Afghanistan, particularly for gallantry displayed in August 2010, while leading an explosive ordnance team in Kipto and Shah Zafar. Two members of his team were



killed and others wounded by an IED which detonated a few metres from the party. The citation noted his "exemplary courage and composure, selflessness and leadership in perilous circumstances. On two occasions following fatalities and injuries, he ensured timely and effective first aid and evacuations and protected others from some of the worst experiences of battlefield action by personally sanitising the incident scene and recovering the fallen comrades." On return to Australia, he was the lead planner for an operation in Rabaul, where 21 tonnes of

WWII explosives were disposed of. Promoted Lieutenant Commander in 2013, he joined HMAS Yarra as Executive Officer and participated in border security operations, and a search for the wreck of the submarine AE1.

In 2014, he was appointed as the Officer in Charge of the RAN Diving School. In 2016, Lieutenant Commander Brickacek assumed command of HMAS Gascoyne and led that ship and HMAS Huon to South Korea and Japan to take part in a multi-national exercise.

In 2018 he completed a Master's Degree in Project Management at the University of New South Wales and in 2019 attended and completed the Australian Command and Staff Course in Canberra. Richard was then promoted to Commander and took up his second command as Commander of the Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Squadron.

In December 2023 he was promoted to Captain and assumed his current post.

The ANZAC service will commence at 10.30 am on Saturday 20 April.

## "BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD" TALKS IN 2024

The "Beyond the Battlefield" series of discussions will resume at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway on Saturday 10 February. Renowned historian and author, Dr Tom Lewis OAM will speak on the 1942 attack in Sydney Harbour by the Japanese midget submarine crews, pointing to failures by senior Allied commanders before and during the attack.

For our valued Friends of Kokoda admission is free, while for others a small charge of \$5.00 is levied.

### Future talks will be held on:

**13 April:** John Tannock: 'The installation of a monument to commemorate the Battle of Oivi/Gorari' and;

**15 June:** Dr Jan McLeod: 'War Crime or Legitimate Act of War? The 1942 Japanese bombing of Allied medical establishments at Soputa in Papua'.

Talks for the latter half of the year are being organised.





## SUPPORT FROM CHINESE COMMUNITY



More than 40 members of the local Chinese community spent a day at the Walkway planting 2500 red silk poppies to line the pathway to the Memorial Centrepiece in preparation for the Kokoda Day commemoration. They were assisted by 10 staff from the Teachers Mutual Bank on their volunteering day, and Canada Bay Council workers who used garden forks to loosen the surface soil.

The poppies remained in place until the Remembrance Day wreath laying ceremony on 11 November.

The involvement of the local Chinese community was the result of a visit they had made when the significance of the Kokoda Track campaign was explained. As the Chinese community grows in numbers it is important that we involve them in our activities and ensure that our educational facilities are extended to them.



## DONATION TO KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

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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, Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, PO Box 127, Concord NSW 2137 or emailed to [Alice.kang@kokodawalkway.com.au](mailto:Alice.kang@kokodawalkway.com.au)

NAME ON CARD:

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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.