



VP DAY TRIBUTES FOR SURVIVING VETERANS

Eighty years after Japan agreed to surrender, bringing an end to the war in the Pacific, there are few still alive who can say proudly that they fought for Australia. Three of those veterans were guests of honour at our VP Day service on 15 August.

Reg Chard OAM, Bruce Robertson and Allan Whicelo were escorted to their places on the stage by three ADF personnel and two nurses dressed in WWII uniforms. During the commemorative service, Jane Ede, principal soprano with Opera Australia, delivered a magnificent performance of "You Raise Me Up" as a musical tribute to the centenarians and to all men and women who served Australia. The VP Day Address was delivered by Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, who recalled



the words of then Prime Minister Ben Chifley on 15 August 1945: "Fellow citizens, the war is over." "Impromptu celebrations followed immediately," said the Governor, noting that her mother had been among those in the crowd at Martin Place. Her father spent VP Day in hospital at Moss Vale, suffering from tropical dermatitis, and was later a patient at Concord Hospital. The diplomatic corps was well



represented with wreaths being laid by officials from the USA, UK, New Zealand, Timor-Leste and Turkey. Schools to take part were Burwood Girls' HS, Holsworthy HS, St Mel's Catholic Primary School, Murray Farm PS and West Ryde PS. The service at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway is now well established as the most significant and best attended in Sydney on VP Day, with more than 400 people attending.



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THE GOVERNOR OF NSW, THE HON. MARGARET BEAZLEY, WITH MR DENNIS WILSON, KTMW CHAIR JENNIFER COLLINS AND CANADA BAY MAYOR MICHAEL MEGNA AT THE MEMORIAL CENTREPIECE



PUPILS FROM SEVERAL SCHOOLS LAID WREATHS



NSW STATE MPS STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (DRUMMOYNE) AND JASON YAT-SEN LI (STRATHFIELD)



THE VP DAY SERVICE IS ALWAYS VERY WELL ATTENDED



CHILDREN FROM THE CONCORD WEST RHODES PRESCHOOL DELIVER THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

ARMY HELPS OUT

In early August we welcomed Army personnel from the Sydney Regiment Unit and the 5th Combat Services Support Battalion to undertake a clean-up of the Walkway in preparation for VP Day. Supported by Botany RSL sub-Branch and Penshurst RSL sub-Branch the team cleaned gardens, worked on the creek bed and cleaned all stations along the Walkway. They also assisted in the installation of the field of poppies that symbolized the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII.



VOLUNTEERS AWARDED

Earlier this year the KTMW board nominated our volunteers for the 2025 Volunteer Team of the Year, run by the Centre for Volunteering NSW. We wanted to publicly recognise all that the volunteers do here at the Walkway and show them how grateful we are for their continued support!

In September Steve Preece, Jennifer Newman and John Hall attended the mid-western Sydney regional ceremony in Burwood and while they did not win, the team should be very proud of their nomination.

Federal MP for Reid, Sally Sitou, presented a certificate to Steve, Jennifer and John.



KOKODA DAY SERVICE

Our annual Kokoda Day commemorative service will be held on Monday 3 November, commencing at 10.30 am.

The guest speaker will be Capt. The Honourable Dennis Cowdroy AO KC Ran (Retd). Mr Cowdroy has been a Justice of the Federal Court of Australia and the Land and Environment Court of NSW. He has also acted as a Judge Advocate for the Australian Defence Force and a member of the ADF Discipline Appeal Tribunal.

STATIONS REFURBISHED

A major project this year has been the replacement of the glass panels on all 22 stations along the Walkway.

The first station, commemorating the battle at Eora Creek, was dedicated on VP Day 1997. Although there have been upgrades over the years, aimed particularly at preventing damage by vandals, the stations were starting to show wear and tear and the information was fading due to the sun.

All the glass panels have now been replaced and new covers have been installed. Each station now displays a QR code providing visitors with instant information on each.

The photo is of the Menari station, for which the founding sponsors were the Burwood Lions Club, the Concord Hospital Volunteer Service Auxiliary, Paynter Dixon, and Deirdre and Lloyd Birdsall.

The refurbishment project was made possible by the RSL NSW Branch Veteran Support Fund, which supports organisations aligned with the League's charitable purpose.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

The remarkable education program at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway would not be as successful as it is without the valuable contribution of our volunteers. In the first of a series we throw the spotlight on **Jennifer Newman**, who has been volunteering here for almost three years.

What inspired you to start volunteering at the Walkway? Was there a person, moment or idea that sparked your interest?

I visited with a group. I heard Reg Chard talk about his experience and other guides discuss the various battles fought and became interested.

Do you have a connection to the Kokoda Campaign, World War II, or PNG/Kokoda itself?

My father fought in New Guinea with the 8th Division 2/14th AIF and was President of the 8th Division Association. When he and other committee members stood down, I took on the

position of Vice President until the Association was disbanded in 2017. I have an interest in military history.



What is your current role at the Walkway, and what does it involve?

I am a guide, educating school students and community groups about how and why Australia became involved in WWII and the difficulties faced by those soldiers who fought on the Kokoda Track.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering here?

I am continually learning. It is encouraging when a student or visitor shares their knowledge of the Kokoda campaign or the experience of a family member.

What advice would you give to someone considering volunteering at the Walkway? Why should they give it a go?

Give something back to the community. Help teach the students who visit something of Australia's history and growth as a nation.

What do you enjoy outside of volunteering?

Reading, music, theatre, the arts in general.

Are you Interested in volunteering here at the KTMW and joining Jennifer on our team? Visit www.kokodawalkway.com.au/support-us/donate-your-time-as-a-volunteer/ to find out how you can join us.

BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD TALKS



QR CODE: Scan for more details on the talk series and payment options



Saturday 11 Oct 10.30am start

Dr Tom Lewis OAM: Australia's coastal war

In WWII there were almost 2000 enemy attacks in Australian coastal waters. Scores of submarine and ship actions, and hundreds of air attacks, saw scores of ships sunk and thousands of lives lost. Yet many Australians know little of these events.

Dr Tom Lewis is the author of 22 books, a retired naval officer and former director of the Darwin Military Museum. His latest book, Australia's Coastal War, has been published recently.



Saturday 29 Nov 10.30am start

Colin Burgess: Sisters in captivity - Australian Army nurses in Sumatra 1942-45.

The story of the Australian nurses held captive in Sumatra for 3½ years after the SS Vyner Brooke was sunk while evacuating them from Singapore is a powerful account of the women's resilience amidst the brutality of war.

Colin Burgess has published more than 40 books including several on military history. He flew as cabin crew with Qantas for 30 years before retiring to focus on writing and research.

