

Kokoda Trek Report - 10 July 13 - Tom Allwright

24/07/2013

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Wednesday 10th July saw 13 very keen trekkers arrive comprising of largely two main friendship groups plus one. Nervous, anxious and excitement are all words used to describe trekker's thoughts when sitting at the hotel pre trek, questioning the unknowns for what they have signed up for. Within the space of our week together, these different friendship groups bonded to create one large family, looking out for each other, caring and helping those we did not know days before.



Something which once seemed so far away dawned upon the group as we awoke at 4am on Thursday morning to get ready to fly to Popondetta & aboard to infamous truck ride to Kokoda Station. Most had been training for the best part of 12 months, with personal trainers, gym memberships & long walks all part of preparing for Kokoda.

Starting at the Kokoda Station end, we endured cold, wet and torrential rains for the first three days up to the treks highest points, Mount Bellamy at 2,190m, where the weather seemed to change for the opposite effects bearing heat, humidity and sun. A great way to experience the diggers notorious conditions without the dysentery, malaria and infections they had to cope with.

Papua New Guinea is famous for the World War II battle between Australian military and Japanese forces from 1942. In 2013, landmarks are encapsulated on the way showcasing the true Australian spirit, displaying sacrifice, courage, endurance and mateship, which can be felt walking through each battle site.

Brigade Hill is an amazing place to visit at the best of times, during this trip we experienced one of the most moving personal reflections any of us had been part of, delivered by Mark Furrugia compressing the typical Australian values shown through battles inherited by its future generations.

I am a firm believer that preparation and consistency are vital ingredients to anyone's success. Without the hard work put in by all trekkers, I have no doubt we a) would have found it very difficult to finish in style we did and more importantly b) have found it difficult to enjoy the experience as much as we did. Our group lived by the quote "the only place you find success before work is in the dictionary". These characters oozed out of every individual above all others.

As always it is impossible to summarize Kokoda in to such a small space, a trek that provides challenges and success, high's and low's as well as emotions too hard to explain. Bonds friendships & has the force to tear them a part, a true character building journey. We parted ways on the 19th July. It has been three days & already planning catch-ups to reminisce. There is only one place in the world, which creates bonds like these, **Kokoda**.

Tom Allwright

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