

# Kokoda Trek Report - 13 Nov 13 - Al Grasby

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## "Clown Doctor – No Roads To Health Trek"

This trek was a little bit different to my other No Roads 8 day treks. Firstly - we completed the first 4 days. Kokoda – Kagi and then spent Day 5 assisting the No Roads To Health (NR2H) group (Sooty and 8 female nurses) conducting their 2nd medical clinic at Naduri. We had a diverse group: Peter Aged 62, Al Aged 53, Dean Aged 45, Hamish Aged 36, and Will Aged 19. 5 people spanning 5 decades.



Peter Jess was representing the Clown Doctor Charity to cross promote the Clown Doctors and NR2H organisations. We met at Brisbane airport and travelled together to Port Moresby. Our Holiday Inn experience, Domestic flight to Popengetta and 4x4 transfers to Kokoda went seamlessly thanks to Terrance and Mary.

Peter was suited up in his Clown Doctor coat when we walked into the No Roads compound at Kokoda on a 'mild' 32 degree afternoon with 90% humidity. The look of disbelief and then laughter emanating from 'Sir Walter' the Local Guide, and the rest of the No Roads porters was something to behold. At this point in time I realised that the villagers would respond positively to 'The Clown' and that we would be able to entice more children and hopefully their mothers, to come to the NR2H clinics.

We passed 2 cannibals on the way up to the Kokoda museum. They both stared at Peter the 'Clown'. I heard the cannibals talking to each other. One said "Do you think we should eat him?" The other replied 'No, I think he will taste funny!' hahaha

Peter disrobed and we started our trek to Deniki. Near Hoi we stepped off the track to allow a wheelbarrow which contained a local man with an almost severed foot being rushed to the Kokoda Hospital. A brutal reminder of the remoteness and harshness of the jungle we had just entered.

The first 4 days of the Trek were great with the usual highlights including the Isurava Memorial and the beautiful local people we met along the track. Afternoon thunder storms and a wet track made Day 3 and 4 challenging.

We arrived in Kagi on Sunday, refreshed and caught up with Sooty, Jo and Lisa from NR2H who briefed us on the Naduri clinic. We were sadly informed that Mr Ovora Indiki (The last living Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel) had passed away 48 hours earlier.



During the night Dean began suffering from a stomach upset. It was decided for Dean to stay at Kagi and recover. The rest of us joined the NR2H team after breakfast and walked up to Naduri Village. Sooty and I offered our condolences and paid our respects on behalf of all No Roads staff to Mr Indiki's family.

The NR2H clinic was set up by Sooty and the team whilst Peter and I acted like clowns and got the attention and curiosity of the villagers. The sound of the village women and in particular the children laughing made the effort to carry the clown attire very much worthwhile.

The clinic was a great success with many men, women and children being assessed and treated for a variety of health issues. The administrative tasks that were assigned to Hamish and Will were both beneficial and personally rewarding.



We returned to Kagi in the afternoon to find that Dean's condition had deteriorated and medical intervention was required. 2 Porters, Nick and Greg, were dispatched from Kagi to Naduri with a description of Dean's symptoms and recent treatment. The boys returned with medication and instructions to assist Dean until a medical evacuation the next morning. The darkness and heavy rain made it too dangerous for a nurse to walk from Naduri to Kagi to assist in person, however the additional medicine and instructions were invaluable. A fantastic effort by Nick and Greg: Kagi to Naduri in 24 minutes and returned to Kagi in 21 minutes- Incredible.

Peter, Hamish and Will headed off in the morning with Lexn and the porter team. Walter and I stayed with Dean whose condition had stabilised whilst we waited for a helicopter. Around midday we heard the 'Angel like' sound of the chopper approaching. Walter and I were dropped off at Menari and Dean continued to Port Moresby where he was accompanied by Terrance to the hospital for treatment. Fi and Terrance (No Roads Operations) were superb- Thank You.

Walter and I walked back towards Brigade Hill and met the team in the middle of another afternoon tropical downpour. At Menari campsite we regrouped and focused on the adventure ahead.

There were more tremendous days of trekking over the hills and through the swamp. Swimming under pristine waterfalls, walking along and through the creeks and interacting with the fantastic local villagers were highlights. Walking through the arches at Owens corner to conclude the trek still produces a surge of adrenaline and a stream of tears. Paying our respects at Bomama War Cemetery is a sobering and emotional experience.- Lest We Forget.

**Laughter, tears, pleasure, pain, exhilaration, exhaustion, appreciation, understanding, inspiration and mateship - Kokoda Track - Bloody Awesome.**

'Al' Grasby

Expedition Guide

No Roads Expeditions

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