

Kokoda Trek Report - 16 Apr 13 - Ruth Rampling

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It was certainly fabulous to go back to Kokoda after 3 years. This trip allowed me to remember how beautiful PNG is and how friendly the people are. Our trekkers were a fantastic bunch of people, who were all connected with someone within the group. They came from Melbourne and Brisbane and all had fantastic life stories to tell. One of our trekkers, Walter is about to complete a 4500km off road bike race from Canada to Mexico!

We had an eventful trip from Popenetta to Kokda and even though we had the bus with cushions on the seats, I'm sure my back was need of a visit to the chiropractor. With most of the bridges washed away in recent rains, we had a few interesting river crossings in the truck and managed to get bogged half way up a hill.

In typical PNG form, only half of our gear arrived with us on the plane from Port Moresby. By the time we had got to Kokoda, half of our missing gear had come into Kokoda on a plane and the rest was coming on a bus from Popenetta. In order to have some lunch we had to borrow food and bowls from one of the other No Roads groups. We managed to get to Hoi the first night and all of our gear got to us by about 9pm that night.

The track itself was pretty muddy and slippery in most sections but the rain was kind to us by only coming in during the late afternoon.

One of my favourite places on the track is Isuarva and the memorial there always takes my breath away. I was extremely privileged to conduct the Memorial service at Isurava for our trekkers. We were also treated to some dancing and singing from a group of local villagers at Isuarva.

Kagi was fantastic and the trekkers were delighted to listen to the Kagi children sing, meet their Porter's families and receive flowers from all of the Kagi children.

Due to the rain over the previous weeks, we were greeted by high, fast flowing rivers along the track. The highlight would have to be the crossing of Brown River, which was chest deep and very fast flowing. To watch the Porters organise the rope, get all the bags across, then come to assist the trekkers, was amazing. It was fun to watch Adrian ensure that Andrew Johnson was wet by swimming down the river and taking his feet out from under him.

It was fabulous to have 4 No Roads groups on the track at the same time. All the trekkers got to know each other with plenty of friendly rivalry and a common bond of "No Roads" trekkers.

To ensure our trek was memorable, we were treated to a marriage proposal once we arrived at Ower's Corner. Trent, one of our trekkers, had carried a magnificent diamond engagement ring along the track. How he managed not to lose it is anyone's guess! We were all very excited when Cecilie accepted his proposal. A fabulous way to end a brilliant week.

Ruth Rampling

Expedition Guide

No Roads Expeditions

ruth@noroads.com.au