

Kokoda Trek Report - July 13 - Andrew Johnson

19/07/2013

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This was my 13th trip. Unlucky for some? Read on and find out.....



Always interesting meeting trekkers for the first time as the majority were from interstate. There was the Griffith mob, Ian, Michelle and their daughter Louise, Louise's partner John, his brother Simon and the 'crazy' uncle Ian (Michelle's brother). Ian of course was to meet his match with Tobias. Then Ruby, our recovering heptathlonaete (you know what I mean) who would teach the men how to really throw a spear and Lucky Phil, direct from the flattest part of WA who would soon see that the mountains are a tad steeper than they appear in the video!

Things went fairly smoothly for us all as we headed into the trek. Isurava again, very moving as we spoke about connections very near and dear to us. Louise so overcome she took a dive, that Kokoda sun can be a harsh one but no issues for this tough trooper through the rest of the trek! At one trekkers suggestion though, might get audio of National Anthem to sing along too, as my man-flu (soon to become tropical strength man-flu) did not assist at all. Ah well, the sentiment was there.

End of Day 3 and Lucky Phil goes over at the top of the last descent into Templeton's 1. Snap, crack and pop, it later is confirmed as two fractures of ankle. The men then kicked into action constructing a stretcher, carrying him down into camp (including wading river) and caring for him over the next 40 hours as we await the weather to clear for a chopper evac. To watch these guys in action brought home the very nature of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel, especially local guide Karsman, Personal Porter, Lehomi and Tobias as they all took a lead!

Trip 13, unlucky for some?..... sorry Phil but I know you are milking the story for as many beers as possible right now and you'll be back with mates in 2014 to conquer the 'track, that bloody track!' Videos of this evacuation can be seen [here](#).



Still it earned him the 'pink hat' to be followed up by yours truly choppering into Menari while Karsman & Co did the two day catch up in 7 hours – bloody amazing men! Notable in the pink hat awards was Tobias (who got it for being Tobias) and promptly 'lost it' on the bus back into Moresby! That's why we love the man!!

We had a little rain, a fair bit of sun (& right where you don't want it) but overall a really moving and enjoyable time as we all faced the challenges of Kokoda and worked our way through them. It was great to have Phil join us for the final dinner as he'd been stuck in the 'private hospital' since evac and more than ready to fly home the next day. The home team of Terrence, Jack & Fiona were brilliant in looking after him!

Then some off to Loloata Island the next day for some sun & sand, others into 'Divine Beauty' at the Holiday Inn for a massage and others onto to planes and away back home with some more incredible memories, experiences and photo's!

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Phil Morris →

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Truly inspirational, to walk where some of the nations heros fought was really moving. Not so lucky as AJ said my trek was cut short at the end of day. I cannot say enough about all the people involved in getting me back to Australia from No Roads. I am 11 weeks post op and have started physio and I am getting around now without the assistance of crutches or a walking stick. I still have a long way go but I'm on the come back trail for 2014 to finish what I started with AJ and the boys, many thanks Luckyphil

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