

# Kokoda Trek Report - 16 May 13 - George Buchhorn

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Our journey started at 3.30 am on Thursday 16 May 2013. The early start was followed by a 4.30am breakfast before getting on the brand new Holiday Inn courtesy bus to the airport for the 7am flight to Popondetta. We wanted to get there early to avoid any crowds but the airport was actually quiet for a change.

We landed on schedule at 7.35am and climbed aboard the Popondetta Chiropractic Express to Kokoda. After a short stop at the supermarket and the pharmacy in town we were on our way. We arrived at Kokoda at about 11.25am. The museum was open so everyone got to read the various stories and see the various artefacts. It was hot in Kokoda and the walk to Deniki was energy sapping. One trekker felt it particularly badly so I walked with her and set small goals along the way. She got to Deniki quite spent but still determined.

There have been a number of land slips between Deniki and Alola, mainly where the streams flow. Isurava was a very touching time and the poem read by one of the trekkers was a highlight for some. The locals have blocked off access to Cons Rock and want you to pay K10 to visit it. We kept going.

The mountain Gun site at Eora Creek costs K5 but is worth the money and the extra climb. There is a 'lost battlefield' a couple of hours further into the jungle at this point but it is under a cloud of controversy as there are still human remains there and the government are deciding what to do. Maybe in the future we could visit.

This was my fourth crossing and the first time I got to see the bomber crash site just near Myola lakes. I was surprised it is only 15-20 metres off the track. There are two bombs that have been diffused by the Americans and part of the propeller next to the crater. Everyone enjoyed the welcome at Kagi and the night concert. We had bright moonlight and clear skies.

The ceremony at Brigade Hill was quite emotional and the Australian and PNG flags were flying. This was my personal highlight. Getting to Owers Corner was a tremendous achievement. One of our team was slower than most so the group waited under a tree at the arches and when she arrived we all lined up and crossed the line together. We started together and we finished together.

As always Bomana cemetery is a very beautiful and tranquil end to our journey. **Lest we Forget.**

George Buchhorn

Expedition Guide

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