

<b>Member</b>	Cindy McLeish	<b>Electorate</b>	Eildon
<b>Period</b>	1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024		

<b>Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance</b>	
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance	\$12,850.08
Total amount paid to member for expense allowance	\$2,964.00

<b>Regulation 7 - Motor vehicle allowance</b>	
Total amount paid to member for motor vehicle allowance	\$0.00
Member did not receive the motor vehicle allowance in the previous quarter and member has elected to receive the motor vehicle allowance for this quarter	No

<b>Regulation 9 - Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance</b>	
Total amount paid to member for parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	\$6,339.84
Suburb in which the member's parliamentary accommodation is located	Southbank

<b>Regulation 10 - Travel allowance claims</b>					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Town or city in which accommodation was located	Value of the accommodation
02-Jul-24	03-Jul-24	Join Kokoda trek expedition which is ex-Brisbane - electorate business	\$124.50	Brisbane	\$124.50
Total number of nights for travel allowance claims			1		
Total amount paid to member for travel allowance			\$124.50		

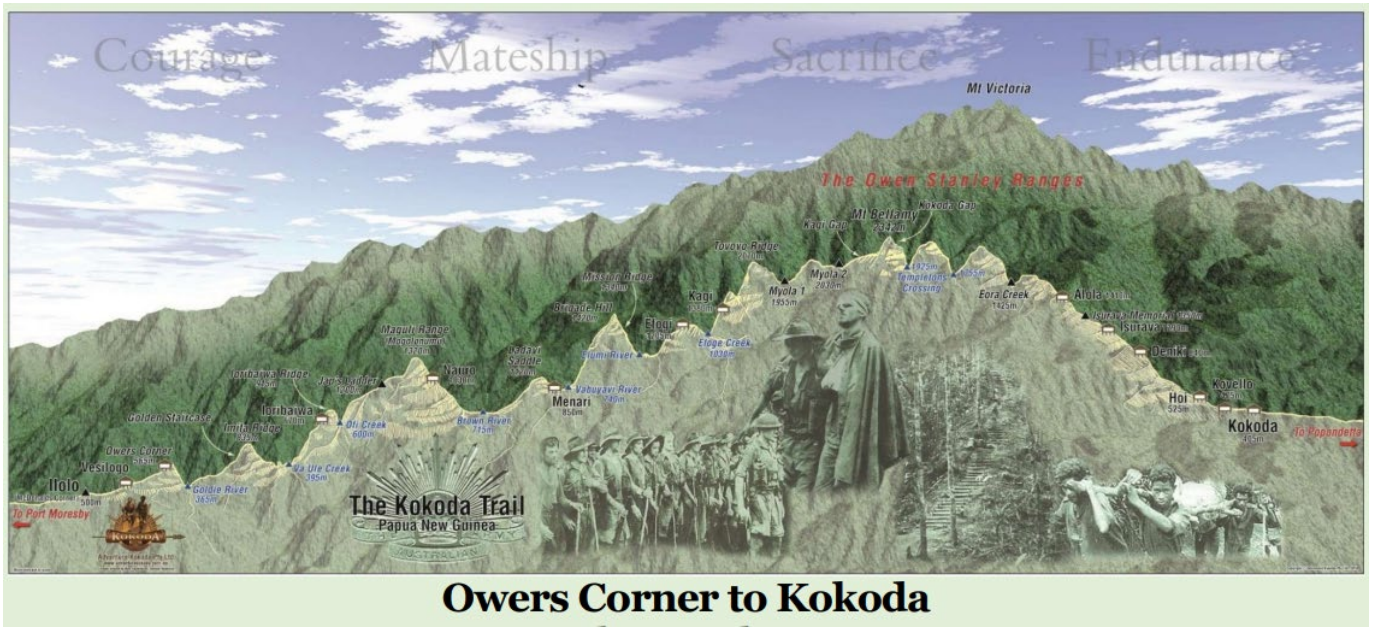
<b>Regulation 11 - Commercial transport allowance claims</b>					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Mode of transport	Value of transport
02-Jul-24	13-Jul-24	Melbourne to Brisbane Return to Join Kokoda trek expedition which is ex-Brisbane - electorate business	\$532.56	Flights	\$532.56
Total number of nights for commercial transport allowance claims			11		
Total amount paid to member for commercial transport allowance			\$532.56		

<b>Regulation 12 - International travel allowance claims</b>			
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid
02-Jul-24	13-Jul-24	Kokoda Adventure: 9 day trek ex Brisbane including flights, PNG visa and travel insurance - for electorate business	\$6,436.76
Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims			11
Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance			\$6,436.76
See attached travel report for further details			

# Kokoda July 3-13, 2024

## Lucinda McLeish – TRAVEL REPORT

Travelling with John Pesutto, Wayne Farnham, Tim Bull and Martin Cameron



I travelled to New Guinea in July 2024 with my colleagues, John Pesutto, Wayne Farnham, Tim Bull and Martin Cameron for electorate business. Specifically, this included work to undertake research and represent the views and interests of the constituents of the Eildon electorate.

## Introduction

I have a very strong war history in my family – on both sides. The McLeish's from Yea, where I grew up and live, fought in the Boer War as well as in WW1 & WW2. My mother's family had losses on the Western front and my mother's older brother served in Darwin in WW2.

My father Campbell and his older brother Don were both deployed to battles in the Pacific. Campbell (VX123720), not being honest about his age, went first to Borneo and then on to New Britain.

Don (VX64234) was in New Guinea arriving in August 1943 after the battles on the Kokoda were fought. As a signaller he was required to identify and then repair breaks in the signals which he did until April 1944.

**PART D**—Compiled by Ech. & Rec.:

5. Details for Certificate of Discharge No. 559277

Unit (for discharge purposes) 1st Aust Mtn Div

Served on continuous Full Time War Service in the C.M.F. from 22/2/43 to 03/43

A.I.F. from 1/3/43 to 30 SE 1940

for a Total Effective Period\* of 172 days, which included

Active Service in Australia† 753 days and

Active Service O/S Australia† 419 days

Decorations and Awards‡ during that Service:

1167  
748  
419

*\*Excerpt from war records Campbell McLeish*

Regional Victoria was well represented by young men, from larger regional cities to smaller towns and farms.

Each year on ANZAC Day I have well over 20 local services across my electorate—some conducted by the local RSL and others by community groups. I am often asked to speak and the opportunity to walk Kokoda has provided a greater depth of understanding for any talks or speeches I may give.

As a daughter of a war veteran who fought in the Pacific I was humbled and moved by insights I gained through the Kokoda experience.

As I battled the challenges of the Kokoda track I constantly had the thoughts of our diggers front of mind. I had a porter to assist me – they did not. I had enough food and treated water – they did not. I only camped out for 8 night – they spent months camping in variable and difficult tropical conditions.

Many Eildon electorate locals served on the Kokoda Trail as members of the 39th including:

- V48285 Pte Fred Radford, of Alexandra, C Company
- VX113493 L/Cpl Gordon Sanders, of Alexandra, A Company
- VX136494 Pte James Stillman, of Alexandra, HQ Company
- VX141862 Pte Thomas Warne, of Alexandra, B Company (later ANGAU)
- VX105415 L/Cpl Kevin Whelan, of Healesville, C Company
- V127007 Pte James McCrohan, of Healesville, C Company
- VX147619 Pte Andrew McIntosh, of Mansfield, C Company
- V147014 Pte James Murphy, of Mansfield, C Company
- V48269 Pte Thomas O'Brien, of Mansfield, C Company

All survived, which is rather remarkable as most were in C Company and they had a rotten time at Deniki, a village where we stayed, where quite a few were killed in the attempt to re-take Kokoda. Many of these families still live in the area.

### **About the Walk**

- From Owers Corner to Kokoda: 3 July – 13 July 2024
- Total Distance: 138 kilometres
- Total Climb: 6658 metres
- Total Descent: 6683 metres

Five MPs embarked on the journey, along with 25 students who were scholarship recipients. Some were accompanied by parents. Due to the size of the group, it was split into 2 with each group starting at opposite ends and meeting for lunch (at 10.30am) at the half way point at Naduri.

Gary Blackwood, former Member for Narracan, completed his 13<sup>th</sup> and final trek and was my group leader. Along with Gary was one of his sons and grandsons. A prostate cancer survivor, Gary managed to talk his oncologist and urologist into trekking. They in turn recruited one of their mates. It was exceptionally handy have 3 doctors along for the trek!

The students were extraordinary – not only did they romp it in (their energy was not infectious!), but they learned so much and visibly grew so much in character over the journey. The 5:00 wake up and be hiking by 6:30 am did not dampen spirits!

### **Conditions and terrain**

- The weather was hot and humid with 2 freezing nights
- Steep narrow paths through the mountainous jungle
- Water crossings – wading through thigh high water, walking along creeks and crossings rivers and streams over logs and rickety bridges.
- The forest floor was muddy, slippery and full of gnarled tree roots
- Open areas had long grass and dry dusty paths – still steep! (one deadly snake was spotted by the lead guide)
- The scenery was spectacular – enormous banana and bird of paradise plants, colourful fungi & butterflies and many broad leafed tropic plants in amazing steep gullies
- It is also a battle site where many remnants can still be observed with weapons pits, weapons and fox holes all still prevalent today.

### **Significant towns and villages**

#### Owers corner

Whilst our troops walked from Port Moresby to this point, we took a bus to the commencement point of the walk.

Owers' Corner was named after Lieutenant Noel Owers, who was given the task of surveying a vehicle route to Nauro. – it had no hope due to the terrain and of course is still not built now.

Owers' Corner was the place where our Australian troops on Imita Ridge first received the morale boosting artillery support. Three 25pound guns fired 800 rounds over three days into Ioribaiwa Ridge. They got this artillery as far as Uberi. It took 25 seconds for the projectiles to cover the 15miles.

A flying fox was established from Owers to the Goldie River mainly for supplies. The track then like today is a zig zag track that was largely cut for animals (Light Horse) and pack mules.

This is the furthest the officer in charge of Australian forces got – Thomas Blamey who never really knew the terrain of the Trail.



*\*Ready to begin at Owers Corner*

### Imita Ridge

It certainly wasn't easy to get to Imita Ridge which was the last line of defence for our troops. The line was drawn in the sand here and there was to be no further withdrawal. (We saw Australian trenches around this escarpment).

On 17 September, Brigadier Eather was able to consolidate his position on Imita Ridge.

The 2/33rd Battalion, which was drawn from all Australian states and was formed in England from surplus troops - had been tasked to delay any further Japanese advance. A number of ambushes were set with mixed results.

The Australian position resolved the difficulty of supply and the force was soon to be bolstered by the arrival of the 16th Brigade, back from Europe.

When the Japanese were at Ioribaiwa and the Australians at Imita, the area between was somewhat of a no man's land with both sides patrolling in between.

When the Aussies heard the artillery shells passing overhead it gave them a significant morale life as it was the first time they'd had Australian artillery. It was here the Australians were anticipating the fight of their lives with the Japanese.

From Ioribaiwa the Japanese could see the lights to Port Moresby, their objective and this gave them much delight – but it was a battle that would never eventuate with the Japanese soon advised to "advance to the rear".

Eather patrolled toward Ioribaiwa, both to harass the Japanese and to gather intelligence. He then issued orders for an "all-out" assault, but the attack found that Ioribaiwa had been abandoned.

Patrols followed up immediately, with the 2/25th Battalion finding that by 30 September, Nauro was also unoccupied. The tide had turned. The Japanese were now retreating.

### Ioribaiwa

This was as far as the Japanese made it. Upon reaching Ioribaiwa, the Japanese celebrated as from their vantage point on the hills around Ioribaiwa the soldiers could see the lights of Port

Moresby and the Coral Sea beyond. But they were to make no attempt to advance on the Australian position at Imita Ridge.

This is due to, in late September, they received the order to "advance to the rear" (as retreat was not in their vocabulary). The decision was made as reinforcements were needed at Guadalcanal where the Americans had defeated the Japanese. Major General Horii was reportedly devastated with the order.

The great question is would they have made it to Port Moresby if they had not received this order?

Reality is they were starving, engaging in cannibalism and racked with disease. Their supply lines were stretched. The Australians had fresh reinforcements, artillery and short supply lines – no they would not have.

However, it was the site of a battle on the Japanese advance. The Australians had pulled back to Ioribaiwa after their routing at Brigade Hill and the Battle of Ioribaiwa took place from 13 to 16 September before withdrawing to Imita Ridge.

One of the reasons for this was concern on the western flank being guarded by the 10th militia and that the Japanese would encircle them. With this concern it assisted their rationale to withdraw to Imita.

Brigadier Eather was criticised for giving this up too easily, but felt Imita Ridge was a better defensive location. He did not know he significantly outnumbered the Japanese and they were almost a beaten force.

The Australians lost 49 killed and 121 wounded, many of which had been inflicted by the Japanese artillery which had landed on the 2/14 – 2/16th's positions. Against this, the Japanese lost 40 dead and 120 wounded.

In this area we could see both Australian and Japanese defensive positions as both occupied this site. The Japanese on the front facing Imita, the Australians on the other side. A total of 55 killed here, including 11 Victorians.

From here it was a short trek down to the village and then down to Ua-Ule Creek area (Pronounced Fa-Lay). Then we head uphill again to Imita, another testing little stretch.

#### Ofi Creek

Aussies knew the Japanese were starving and they would leave cans of meat and when starving Japanese soldiers came they would mow them down. Another measure was to puncture the tins of meat and leave them and the starving Japanese would find and eat them and be sick soon after as it was spoiled.

We crossed the river in the exact position the soldiers did.

#### Nauro

This is where the commanders wanted a road built to – it was an impossible request from an out of touch command who did not know the terrain. There is no road there today!

This is where the Australians regrouped after the major loss at Brigade Hill and were rejoined by some of the separated soldier groups before retreating back to Ioribaiwa,

The Village saw no major conflicts, only small skirmishes - but it was another area where biscuit bombers dropped supplies to the Australians.

#### Menari

Another area that saw no major battles, but skirmishes. Menari is the site of one of the most famous speeches made regarding the Kokoda Track campaign by LT COL Ralph Honner. It was his inspirational thank you address to the heroic men of the 39th battalion that earned them the nickname of "those ragged bloody heroes". His speech was this:

*"Now I don't know a lot of you by name, but I know you.*

*We met at Isurava. We fought there together and every step of the way here.*

*Now we are relieved and we will leave the battle.*

*And every day the enemy supply line stretches further. He suffers now as you have suffered.*

*The battle we fought for the track may have just saved your nation. At Imita we will stop him.*

*Brigadier wants you to know...your gallantry, your courage, your fortitude are an inspiration.*

*And I want you to know that you are some of the finest soldiers that I have ever seen.*

*You have seen things in this place that no man should witness.*

*Some of these things you must forget. But history will remember you, and in the years to come others will wish that they had your conviction.*

*And remember...remember the glory is not the exhortation of war, but the exhortation of man.*

*Man's nobility, made transcendent in the fiery crucible of war.*

*Faithfulness and fortitude. Gentleness and compassion.*

*I am honored to be your brother." — Lt Col Ralph Honner DSO MC*

### Brigade Hill / Mission Ridge

The climb to Brigade Hill is tough, especially when coming from the south. This is where the Australians were to take a major stand to significantly delay the Japanese, their biggest stand since Isurava and it was to be a disaster.

It is also where Kim Wells MP, along with his father, brother and former Liberal MPs Garry Spry & Tony Plowman built and erected a memorial in 1996 "in honour of Capt Claude Nye and the brave men of 2/14, 2/16, 2/27 Battalion and 21 Brig HQ AIF". At Kim's request I made, then laid a wreath.



\*Brigade Hill memorial

The battle at Brigade Hill – Mission Ridge was a "stunning victory" for the Japanese and a "catastrophe" for the Australians.

A total of 101 Australian Soldiers lost their lives with 77 wounded. The Japanese force lost 60 killed and 165 wounded. The fact we had more deaths than wounded indicates the suicide.

### Bomber's Camp

The campsite was developed by one of our former Adventure Kokoda trek leaders, Martin Rama, after the discovery of an American bomber aircraft in the mid-90s.

The bodies of the crew were repatriated to the United States for a military burial at Arlington War Cemetery.

A 500lb unexploded bomb was detonated creating a crater which is now filled with water. Parts of the aircraft can be seen near the crater.

Bomber camp is the gateway to the Myola Lakes, where was where a number of supplies were dropped. The lakes are old volcanic craters where there is little vegetation and it provided the best area supplies could be dumped for the troops.

### Isurava

A beautiful memorial has been established at Isurava. We participated in a dawn service with another trekking group. Our students spoke and the PNG guides sang in hauntingly beautiful voices. It was an opportunity for us all to stop and reflect. For the male students, the realisation that our soldiers were only a couple of years older than them set in.

It was here the 39th made a stand against the Japanese soldiers and hopelessly outnumbered stood firm awaiting the support of the 2/14th who arrived in the nick of time before they were over run. The battle raged between Aug 26-31.

Colonel Honner chose this site due to the front and back Creeks and it was a natural defensive location due to its geography.

Perhaps the best understanding of this battle is from Colonel Ralph Honner, who said:

'Through the widening breach poured another flood of the attackers . . . met with Bren gun and Tommy gun, with bayonet and grenade, but still they came, to close with the buffet of fist and boot and rifle-butt, the steel of crashing helmets and of straining, strangling fingers. In this vicious fighting, man-to-man and hand-to-hand the men were in imminent peril of annihilation.'

Another made the following comments: Our young warriors did not yield against the odds they faced during the hour of their peril. As the battle raged there were so many acts of courage and self-sacrifice that it is impossible to acknowledge them all. Even so the battle was to yield more Allied decorations than in any other single battle in the Pacific. These were not blind heroics; they were calculated initiatives by Australian privates, corporals and platoon commanders determined to hold off the enemy.

Private Wakefield, a Sydney wool worker, held up a Japanese charge as his section fell back; he won the Military Medal.

Captain Maurice Treacy, a shop assistant, 'parried every thrust levelled at him'. He got a Military Cross.

Though wounded in the hand and foot, Corporal 'Teddy' Bear, a die-cast operator from Moonee Ponds, killed a reported 15 Japanese with his Bren gun at point blank range'; he was later awarded the Military Medal and the DCM.



Lieutenant Mason, a draughtsman, led his platoon in four counterattacks in one hell raising afternoon; as did Lieutenant Butch Bissett, a jackeroo, whose platoon fought off fourteen Japanese charges.

What made Isurava unique in the annals of war was the devastating closeness of combat. The armies were fighting within earshot and, unlike their medieval forebears, with guns and grenades. It was often hand to hand.

It was also at this site that 30 wounded members of the 39th had been sent back for urgent medical care, but 27 of the 30 turned around and returned to battle knowing their brothers were in trouble.

From here the delaying tactics that proved to be so successful commenced.

It was a balancing act. To retreat too quickly would have given the Japanese too great an opportunity for a quick pathway over the Trail and to retreat too slowly would entail running the risk of being outflanked.

We visited Surgeons Rock, an area is known for three things – operations and amputations took place here, it was the location where Stan Bissett nursed his brother Butch who was died in his arms and it is where the cut off troops in Buckler's party started their long walk through jungle to safety for the survivors. We had a surgeon on the trek with us and we talked about the difficulties doing surgery in such times and circumstances. Those operated on were sent a few km's down the road back to battle and those who needed greater time to recuperate headed south back to the hospital site. That trip is very difficult, climbing up windy and slippery mountain tracks while injured. So difficult to fathom.



*\*surgeons rock*

Here is a precis of the story of Buckler's party:

Many Australian soldiers found themselves trapped behind enemy lines following the Battle of Isurava. Corporal John Arthur Metson, shot through the ankle and unable to walk, was one.

Metson was fortunate to be found by Captain Buckler who was leading a party of Australian soldiers through the jungle to safety.

Buckler arranged a stretcher party of eight to carry Metson, but Metson knew the difficulties that lay ahead and insisted on crawling, to spare his comrades the burden of carrying him. He asked only for his hands and knees be bandaged for protection.

The Japanese held the main track at Alola and Buckler's party was forced to turn off the track. They wandered through the jungle for three weeks, searching for an alternative route.

Metson spent this entire period crawling in agony. His cheerful attitude while facing death inspired the other men in the party.

Eventually, Captain Buckler had to make a tough call and decided that the seriously wounded cases would have to be left in the care of the villagers of Sangai.

This would allow the able-bodied to carry on more quickly to find help. A stretcher-bearer, Corporal Tom Fletcher, volunteered to stay at Sangai to care for Metson and the other wounded.

They eventually made it back but it was six weeks before the Australians could reach Sangai. When they arrived they found the bodies of John Metson, Tom Fletcher and the other sick and wounded. They had been discovered by the Japanese and executed, tied to trees and bayoneted alive for "practice"



*\*memorial at Isurava – at dawn and in daylight*

## Deniki

After the first battle of Kokoda, fought over July 28–29, the outnumbered Australians of B Company of the 39th who survived, withdrew to here.

With commanding officer, Colonel Owen killed, it was here the remaining companies arrived and joined up with B Company.

Major Allan Cameron was in command and planned to retake Kokoda. He planned an attack for 8 August, with three companies advancing on different lines. Two of the companies were held up and forced to retire.

C Company, headed down the main Deniki-Kokoda Track and was soon under fire from the main Japanese force that had been undetected by Cameron's reconnaissance the day earlier. They were forced back to Deniki by 8 pm that night.

A Company, tasked to take Kokoda, surprisingly experienced no resistance and took Kokoda easily, setting off their flare gun to let those in Deniki know that they had taken the village, but the flare was not seen from Deniki.

D Company was sent for an ambush but found themselves pinned down near Pirivi and this is where Dwyer (Bdale) and Robinson (Orbost) were killed.

B Company was having a well earned rest.

The separated companies didn't know what was happening to each other. By 10 August, Kokoda was abandoned by A Company and all units returned to Deniki. It was on this withdrawal Cpl Donald Howlett was killed. He is the youngest person buried at Bomana aged 17.

They were soon under attack at Deniki and with the threat of envelopment, the battalion commenced to withdraw towards Isurava on the morning of 14 August.

When the Japanese soldiers had the high ground many of the troops had to get through an open field of fire in their effort to get to Isurava.

A total of 16 killed in this area which included the effort to re-take Kokoda.



*\* hot and bothered at the end of the day at Deniki with the end in sight*

### Kokoda

Although this was the end of our trek and we were ready to head back to port Moresby, it wasn't so for our soldiers. The 39th departed Owers Corner on July 8 and arrived here on July 14. The Japanese landed at the northern beaches on July 21, about 100 kilometres from here. There were skirmishes to the north of here in places like Oivi and Gorari.

But it was here in the first battle of Kokoda that a small band of troops of around 100 from B Company first encountered the 2000 strong advancing Yokoyama Advance Guard. They were forced back into the jungle on the 29th July 1942.

They were not well trained and had inferior weapons, but Japanese accounts later stated they felt they were fighting a force of over 1,000. To make matters worse, commanding officer, Colonel Owen – one of the few with any experience, was killed.

### **Costs**

Total cost of Trek including accommodation, transfers, airfares, porter, food & beverage is  
**\$5270.00**



*\* the finishing arch at Kokoda*