

# Winkle, Frederick John (Lieutenant, b.1920 - d.1976)

Diary of QX16065 Lieutenant (Lt) Frederick J Winkle, 2/6 Independent Company, written between 1 July 1942 and February 1943. Winkle writes regular, brief entries beginning from his departure from Townsville on the SS Tasman, 2 August 1942 and subsequent experiences in New Guinea, including patrolling Yule Island from 7 September 1942 and in the Kokoda region from 13 September 1942. An entry on 9 November notes that Winkle was interviewed by the press and officially recognised as the first man into Kokoda following the re-capture of Kokoda on 3 November. Overall the entries highlight the difficult terrain, the assistance provided by the locals and, often, a lack of supplies.

## Kokoda recaptured, 2 November 1942

*The first Australians to re-enter Kokoda were the men of a patrol led by Lt Frederick Winkle of 2/6 Independent Company...*

In the morning fog on 25 October 1942, while the two armies fought at [Eora-Templeton's](#) 25 kilometres to the south, Winkle, having come from an Australian patrol base in the Yodda valley, crossed the Kokoda airstrip and entered Kokoda government station. There he saw a few Japanese gathered around a fire. Unobserved, Winkle and his men investigated further. Eventually they were fired on and withdrew.

It is however 2 November 1942, when the Australians returned permanently, which is the official date of the recapture of Kokoda. On that day a patrol from 2/31st Battalion, the vanguard of Maroubra Force, entered Kokoda Government Station to find the Japanese had left two days before. By the afternoon the whole battalion had arrived and secured the area, capturing also Kokoda village, two kilometres away to the east on the track leading to the north coast.

Retaking Kokoda – at Kokoda Plateau, four monuments, one of them Japanese, line the plateau edge.

[**Text:** *Retaking Kokoda.*

Aerial footage sweeps over a tree-covered plain, across a river and follows a road winding toward a village.

**Text:** *Kokoda Village.*

Near the village steep slopes rise to a wide grassy plateau that's dotted with trees and buildings. On one edge of the plateau four white monuments flank three white flagpoles. A verdant lawn stretches before them. The triangular monuments are of a similar shape and height but are not identical.

**Text:** *Kokoda Plateau.*]

**VOICEOVER:** At dawn on 2 November 1942, an Australian patrol crept into Kokoda to find that the Japanese had gone. The next day, now known as Kokoda Day, the Australians commemorated the event with a flag-raising ceremony held there, where the flagpoles now stand. On either side are memorials to those who died. The furthest to the right remembers the Japanese who never returned home from Papua. Within a week of retaking Kokoda, the Australians pressed on down the road to the north coast. They caught up with and destroyed the Japanese army at Oivi-Gorari.

[**Text:** *The Kokoda Track.*

*Exploring the site of the battle fought by Australians in World War II.*

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The recapture of Kokoda signifies an important step in ejecting the Japanese from Papua. Its practical importance was in the recapture of the airstrip, the only one between Port Moresby and the north coast. The strip had not been used by the Japanese and the grass was almost a metre high. Cutting this and removing the obstacles the Japanese had placed took time, but by 4 November aircraft from Port Moresby were landing regularly. Now Maroubra Force could rely on a [steady stream of supplies](#) and reinforcements coming in while the wounded and sick could be flown out.

On 3 November the Maroubra Force commander, General George Vasey, marked the occasion with a flag-raising ceremony witnessed by 25th Brigade. The flag used at Kokoda was later raised to mark Australian [victories at Buna-Gona](#), Sattleberg and Wareo.