

# WILD *Spirit*

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## LARK FORCE WILDERNESS TRACK

This track near Rabaul, PNG is a reminder of the little-known yet significant experiences of an Australian military unit in WW2 known as the Lark Force. The Lark Force totalling 1200 men, the majority of who was the 2/22nd Battalion, were sent to defend Rabaul against a Japanese invasion.

Lark Force not only was routed from Rabaul by a superior Japanese force on 23rd January, 1942, but it was informed by Australian authorities that there was to be no reinforcement, no further support and no evacuation. Literally and realistically it became "Every man for himself" for Lark Force personnel retreating from Rabaul.

Totally unfamiliar with the local environment and in the context of thorough mayhem, these Australians fled from the invaders along the contemporary Lark Force Track. Faced with diseases, starvation, disorientation and climatic rigours approximately 250 returned to Australia. More than 160 personnel were massacred by Japanese at Tol, after responding to Japanese reassurances of support.

Another 850 personnel who were captured by Japanese were embarked on the "Montevideo Maru" which was sunk with total loss of life.

Today's Lark Force Track is over 60km, traversing an extremely pristine jungle environment incorporating a few small villages. The current beauty and ruggedness of this track belies the horrors, struggles and bravery of those who fled on this track in WW2. Nevertheless there are significant challenges and experiences for today's trekker on this Track.

The Lark Force Track presents an adventure into unsurpassed environmental beauty, diverse cultural experiences, history and personal challenges.



## LARK FORCE WILDERNESS TRACK

### TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1: Travel to Rabaul and overnight in hotel in Kokopo; Meeting with SSH-LFWT team and historian for tour briefing
- Day 2: Morning – Prepare for trekking expedition; Lunchtime – Travel by 4x4 to Vunga village; enjoy a relaxing afternoon with local villagers from Vunga and meet porter team in POM.
- Day 3: Vunga to Baram village
- Day 4: Baram village to Adenam campsite; Passing through the village of Renagi enroute to Adenam campsite
- Day 5: Adenam campsite to Mondrabet village (Bainings fire dance to be performed at Vunga, Renagi or Mondrabet village)
- Day 6: Travel by 4x4 from Mondrabet to Mevelo River launching pad; Board banana boat vessel and travel downstream with local Mengen and Sulka villagers; Fish for black bass, spot crocodiles and sharks and bird watching; Arrive at Karlai Guest Haus and overnight
- Day 7: Visit Tol plantation and memorial plaque for Lark Force; Return to Karlai for a tour of the coconut palm plantation; Enjoy the day relaxing by the coastal village
- Day 8: Travel by boat to Rabaul and having a chance to catch some big game fish along the way. Overnight in hotel in Kokopo
- Day 9: Land Tour of Rabaul – Military history (WWI, WWII and Japanese occupation), Local culture in Rabaul, Ruins of the old town and a live volcano tour.
- Day 10: Tour Ends

### PRICE

- 1 - 6 Trekkers:..... RRP \$4,002.00
- 7-10 Trekkers:..... RRP \$3,876.00
- 11+ Trekkers:..... RRP \$3,852.00

### TREK DATES

**Anzac Day Trek 19th - 28th April 2010**

**3rd July - 12th July 2010**

**Rabaul surrender 29th Aug - 7th Sep 2010**

### THIS INCLUDES

- 3 Nights accommodation in Kokopo (Twin Share) – Meals not included and Surcharge apply for single accommodation
- Historical land tour – WWI and WWII relics and sites, cultural sites, old town (ruins) and volcano tour; SSH-LFWT Historian included in tour program

### LFWT TREK CONTENT

- Personal porter
- Free dinner, 2 lunch and 2 breakfast meals in Kokopo
- 1 day river expedition – fishing for black bass
- 2 nights at Karlai plantation guest house – Tour of Tol plantation and of coconut palm plantation
- SSH- LFWT Tour Guide
- All meals on track and in Karlai
- Bainings fire dance performance
- Boat transfer from Karlai to Rabaul
- Trek Permit & village fees
- Certificate of completion
- Airport transfers
- 4x4 transfers



## Tour Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrive Rabaul

- International Flight: Sydney or Brisbane to Port Moresby // Transit – Port Moresby to Rabaul (ETA 1630 hrs).
- Representatives will meet and greet all tour members at the airport and assist with organizing transfers to Kokopo Resort.

### Day 2: Travel to Vunga

- This morning you will meet at the Lark Force Wilderness Track Kokopo War Museum at 11:00 AM. Here you will meet your Tour leader and be given a thorough brief on the tour expedition.
- **12:00-12:30 PM:** You will depart Kokopo bound for Vunga village for our first night on the Lark Force Wilderness Track.
- Vunga involves a 2 1/2 hour 4 WD car ride from Kokopo. The last ¼ of trip is off-road four wheels driving, passing through lush tropical rainforest in the Baining's hinterlands.
- **Accommodation & Meals:** At Vunga you will overnight in the village, camping in tents provided to you. The local village will host you to some cultural performances throughout the night and provide a Mumu dinner for the evening.



- **Day 3: Trek 1: Vunga to Renagi**
- **Breakfast (06:00 AM):** Is provided.
- We will then commence trekking down to the Kerevat River crossing (5 river crossings in total) and then we commence our ascent to Baram village.
- Lunch will be served at Baram village. Baram is a small village that is currently inhabited by one Baining's family and is perfectly perched up on top of a mountain peak. Baram has a fast flowing creek, offering another perfect opportunity to refresh your sore and weary bodies before setting off for Renagi village.
- Renagi village is a 2 1/2 hr trek from Baram village and involves a steady but not too steep climb to the mountain top village. Here at Renagi trekkers will be accommodated in the local guest haus that once was the medical aid post. This is now a community building and will be rehabilitated to house tourists and rebuild into a suitable aid post for the village and nearby villages such as Baram.

### Day 4: Renagi to Adenam River

- This morning we set off from Renagi (581 m above sea-level) and commence a 2 hour descent to Sren River.
- Renagi Village is a much more densely populated village with an approximate population of 40 villagers.
- After a quick break at Sren River we continue our walk by trekking up to the top of Mount Qaduit. This will take approximately 1 hour to complete.
- Lunch will be served at the nearby Eboga River which a 1 hour is walking mainly descending from the top of Mount Qaduit. The Eboga River is a fast flowing river that is a great place to enjoy a lunchtime swim.
- After lunch we continue our trek to Adenam, a 2 hour trek from the Eboga River. At Adenam the campsite is situated

on a large river bank with two campsites built on either side of the river. One side is for the porters and guide and the other for trekkers. After the hard days trekking it is the perfect place to relax and have an icy cold river bath.

#### **Day 5: Adenam River to Mondrabet**

- Our final day poses to be a challenging trek as we trudge through low wetlands, following the meandering bends of the Toriu River and Qilot River. This morning commences with a 2 hour trek from Adenam campsite to the Qilot River (Final river crossing).
- From the final river crossing at the Qilot River we commence a 1 hour climb up to the top of Mount Imeng. This is a tough climb but very satisfying when reaching the summit.
- After short break at Mt Imeng we follow a two hour trek to the Imare River. Upon arrival to the Imare, lunch will be served. This trek takes approximately 2 hours to complete from Mt Imeng.
- At the conclusion of lunch we continue our trek to Unam which involves another steep descent followed by an equally steep climb and then a final descent to our last river crossing at Breng River. The Breng River is located at the base of Mondrabet village. So after washing off the day's sweat, we continue up the steep and final hill to Mondrabet village. The walk the Bren River from the Imare River is approximately 1 ½ hrs and the final climb up to Mondrabet takes approximately 30 minutes.
- **Evening:** Trekkers will be warmly received by Mondrabet village. Later in the night (after dinner) trekkers will be entertained by the world renowned Bainnings fire dance performance.

#### **Day 6: Mevelo River Expedition & Karlai**

- This morning our journey takes us to the South Coast of New Britain Island to a region known as East Pomio or Wide Bay. We will make our way down to Wide Bay by means of first 4 Wheel Driving along a logging road to the main bridge crossing of the Mevelo River. Here we will be board onto Banana boat vessels and raft down the mighty Mevelo River to the mouth of the river at Henry Reid Bay. To the east of the mouth lies Tol Plantation and to the west we will follow the coastline along to Karlai Plantation. Along the river we will see crocodiles and vast amounts of birdlife – Doves, Horn Bills, Cuckoos, Cockatoos, Parrots and many other species. If the right opportunity arises we shall also try our luck with some estuary fishing in search of the famous black bass.

**05:00 AM** – Wake up and Breakfast

**06:00 AM** – Depart Mondrabet to Mevelo River Crossing (Travel by 4 Wheel Drive)

**08:00 AM** – Board banana boat vessels at Mevelo River and commence rafting trip to Mouth of the river. (Approx 6-8 Hours)

**Lunch** – Will be served at camp site where a downed American fighter plane can be viewed.

**Afternoon** – Crew and trekking team will arrive at mouth of the Mevelo River and continue across to –

- **Tol** – If time permits the boat will transfer across to Tol to visit the memorial Plaque and plantation.
- **Karlai** – The vessels will take the trekking team across to Karlai Plantation guest house where they can check themselves in for the remainder of the afternoon and treat themselves to some R&R.

#### **Note: At Karlai...**

- Guest Haus is equipped with sleeping quarters (Twins and Triple Share), bed and mattresses; Flush toilet; Kitchen area.
- There are no showers but only fresh water creeks to wash in.
- Lobster, fish, wild pig and fresh garden chicken will be served for meals by the local Karlai community.
- Karlai Plantation has a trade store available and this will sell soft drinks, beer and light snacks.

### **Day 7: Tol Memorial Service & Free Day (Karlai)**

- Early morning rise and travel by Banana boat to Tol Plantation for a dawn service at Tol Memorial Plaque.
- After the dawn service, we shall return to Karlai for breakfast the guest house. Today shall involve a free day at Karlai where you will be able to enjoy a relaxing day on the beach, a tour of the Coconut plantation, fishing with the locals or just catch up on some much needed relaxation time.

### **Day 8: Travel to Rabaul**

- After an early morning breakfast you will depart Karlai to Rabaul by speed boat. This journey will take approximately 4 ½ hours to complete but along the way you will be given a chance to try your luck in some game fishing.
- You will be dropped off in Kokopo and transferred to the nearby resort. The remainder of today is a free day and a good chance to refresh yourself, wash dirty clothes and later in the afternoon, you will be able to meet up with your porter team for afternoon refreshments.

### **Day 9: Land Tour (Rabaul/Kokopo)**

- Full Day Land Tour around Rabaul/Kokopo. Lunch and refreshments are provided on the tour. Fees for local sites are not included (Allow for K 30 per person)
- Tour will cover – War History (WWI and WWII), Volcano and seismic history of Rabaul, Local indigenous culture and other local elements in the town.
- Final night in Rabaul.

### **Day 10: Tour ends**

- Today your tour comes to an end in Rabaul.

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