

NATION

Tourists begin Kokoda trek

Trail boss
Lynn gets
birthday
surprise

PORT MORESBY: Kokoda Trail trekker Charlie Lynn had a surprise as he prepared to lead a team of 27 Australian tourists up the trail.

A special package labelled "handle with care" travelled with the team from Port Moresby to Owens Corner.

The package was a birthday cake for Mr Lynn.

Local tour operators and chief organiser of the trek, South Pacific Tours, Koiairi landowners, team members and the guides and porters collaborated to spring the surprise on their hardened leader who is expert on the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels and the Second World War in Papua New Guinea.

The team of 27 which began the trek this week is the first large party of Kokoda Trail trekkers



Mr Lynn with a young Koiari girl and right, the leader cuts his birthday cake.



this year.

The team is being escorted by 12 local guides and porters and will attempt to make the crossing in 10 days.

Mr Lynn said: "It's going to be a pleasurable stroll for me but it's going to be sheer hell for them."

"Seriously though, it's

a great experience and its one they'll never forget - it's the start of an epic adventure, probably the toughest thing any of them have ever done before, yet it will be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences."

Some members of the group are following in the

footsteps of their fathers and grandfathers who fought here in World War II.

They stopped for a while at the Bomana War Cemetery enroute to Owens Corner to pay homage to the soldiers who fought here.

Rod Simpson's grand-

father served in the Australian army during World War II and in full military kit, arms crossed in front, Simpson struck a solemn figure as he stood to attention for 10 silent minutes before the headstone of a young Aussie soldier at the Bomana War Cemetery.

Accompanied by her young sister, Sydney Sydney Sedgewick is tackling one of the world's toughest physical and mental challenges to experience the conditions and difficulties her father faced while serving in the Australian Armed forces in

the 2/27th Battalion. The team includes two photographers and writers and it is hoped that their work can carry on the momentum initiated throughout Australia by Angry Anderson's Kokoda Challenge documentary team of celebrities that visited last year.