

# Following the Kokoda footsteps

A march along the Kokoda Trail will bring together a group of people so diverse that their paths would otherwise probably never have crossed.

Fifteen men and five women — including a gymnastics champion, a nurse, a barrister, a plumber, a company secretary, a tax consultant, a sawmillier and a life insurance agent — fly out of Sydney this morning for New Guinea to retrace the steps of Australians 50 years ago when the Japanese forces were thwarted in their drive to take Port Moresby.

The group, led by former Army Major Charlie Lynne, will leave Kokoda tomorrow morning to walk about 150 kilometres

across the Owen Stanley Ranges to the Bomana War Cemetery, Port Moresby, for the Anzac Day dawn service, which will also be attended by Mr Keating.

The trekkers will be accompanied by guides from a Port Moresby travel agency, Traditional Travel, and 12 carriers who are descendants of the Fuzzy Wuzzy angels of the WWII campaign.

Less than a month ago, Major Lynne's appeal to the patriotism and sense of adventure of 1,500 Australian corporations and 88 councils to send a representative brought only one positive response — from Mr Ian Webster, of Universal Press Pty Ltd.

Since then, the interest has

surged. The CRA company donated \$5,000, financing the NSW State gymnastic champion, Andrew Blinman, 16, an HSC student at Ingleburn High School, and a Melbourne university student, Anthony Klarica.

Others include a Melbourne barrister, Mr Brian Keon-Cohen, a Sydney solicitor, Mr David Frecker, of Blake Dawson Waldron, a journalist on *The Bulletin*, Ms Helen Pitt, and a Sydney nurse, Ms Dallas Fellows.

Major Lynne saw nothing wrong in someone of 16 going.

"The average age of the 39th Battalion, which fought on the trail, was only 18½," he said.

□ MALCOLM BROWN