



Sally Macmillan
joins a group to
tackle the 110km of
the Kokoda Track, in
the footsteps of the
young Diggers who
fought along it
in 1942



SHE'S sprawled face-down in mire on the spiny slit that is Imita Gap. Sobs rack her body. The hateful backpack has been hurled away in rage.

The rest of the mob are zombie-like, recalling the horror of the 4000 "steps" that make up the infamous Golden Staircase. It is a devil's ladder to hell.

Everyone's too stuffed even to speak. The misery index is on par with the soaring mercury.

Just 12 hours into what has been dubbed "the toughest track in the world", Papua New Guinea's Kokoda well and truly has our attention.

Those in whose famed footsteps we tread will earn our utmost respect. It was on this track in 1942 that Australian troops - young, just trained and poorly equipped - drove back Japanese forces trying to capture Papua's capital of Port Moresby.

Today the track and our leader Charlie Lynn are both despised. Lynn, a politician from NSW, may be "The Honourable" in the corridors of political power, but words that come to mind now to describe the former army major and ultra-athlete competitor are far from honourable.

A journey for heroes



"At the moment there's no commitment with this team," he says.

Heaven is bucketing down on our hell. Chas does kick in, moving at pace for the first time, despite the tangled labyrinth of tree root tentacles underfoot.

On Lynn's map - the one the team used to sheet that drives

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