



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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\$40,000 TO PROTECT TRIBUTE TO SANDAKAN-RANAU DEATH MARCH POWS

The Australian Government is investing \$40,000 to protect a new memorial and the site of the prisoners' last camp on the infamous Sandakan Death Marches, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin announced today.

The grant has been provided under the *Overseas Privately-Constructed Memorial Restoration Program* to help install fencing around the site of the 'last camp' where the remaining survivors of the Sandakan-Ranau Death Marches were murdered by their Japanese captors in 1945.

Mr Griffin said the funding would help pay for fencing that would protect the largely untouched site from wandering livestock, unauthorised entry and ensure it was preserved into the future.

"Historian Lynette Silver has put a lot of effort into establishing the Last Camp Memorial Park in conjunction with the landowner Dr Othman Minudin, to ensure this important part of our wartime history is preserved and protected for many years to come," Mr Griffin said.

The Last Camp Memorial Park is located at the area believed to have been the last camp site of the remaining survivors of the Sandakan-Ranau Death Marches. The memorial was dedicated on 27 August 2009 – the anniversary of when the last 15 surviving POWs were murdered, twelve days after the Second World War ended.

"The courage and determination these men displayed in the face of the most severe adversity and certain death is inspirational, and we should ensure their service and sacrifice is never forgotten" Mr Griffin said.

"Protecting the grounds of the Last Camp Memorial Park will ensure this important site, part of one of the darkest chapters of our wartime history, will be preserved. It will also permit systematic investigation for historical artefacts and their conservation."

More than 2400 Australian and British soldiers died at the Sandakan prisoner of war camp and on the 'death marches' from Sandakan to Ranau in 1945. Only six Australians escaped and survived Sandakan – two managing to escape in the early stages of the second march with the help of villagers, and four more successfully escaped from Ranau into the jungle, where they were cared for by local people.

For more information on the *Overseas Privately-Constructed Memorial Restoration Program* visit www.dva.gov.au/grants. For more information on the Last Camp Memorial Park and Lynette Silver visit www.sandakan-deathmarch.com

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