



THE HON. ALAN GRIFFIN MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

THE HON. BOB McMULLAN MP
Parliamentary Secretary for International Development
Assistance

	Friday 9 July 2010
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FUZZY WUZZY ANGELS REMEMBERED 65 YEARS ON

The Australian Government has today honoured the invaluable assistance provided by the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels to Australian soldiers who served in the Kokoda Campaign during the Second World War.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Defence Personnel Alan Griffin said Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan presented seven commemorative medals to Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels and their relatives at a special ceremony in Port Moresby today.

"The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels played an invaluable role in assisting the Australians throughout the Second World War in Papua and New Guinea including the tough fighting experienced on the Kokoda Track. Today we are continuing to honour their contribution," Mr Griffin said. More than 600 Australians were killed and more than 1000 were wounded during the Kokoda campaign.

Affectionately known as Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, an estimated 50,000 Papuan and New Guinean civilians supported Australia in the Second World War by carrying supplies, building bases, airfields and other wartime infrastructure, and evacuating the sick and the wounded from fighting zones.

Mr McMullan said the strength, ingenuity and compassion displayed by the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels during the Second World War is legendary and Australia is forever grateful for their assistance.

"Many Australians who became sick or wounded during the campaigns, in what is now Papua New Guinea, owe their lives to the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels. I am honoured to be here today to present these commemorative medallions to a deserving group of people," Mr McMullan said.

First awarded in 2009, the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel Commemorative Medallion features the image of a blinded and barefoot Private George Whittington being helped along by Raphael Oimbari, photographed on Christmas Day 1942 near Buna on the PNG north coast.

The Australian Government is seeking to ensure all surviving Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels are honoured with a Commemorative Medallion. Medallions are available to surviving Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels and the widows of Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels. For information on nominations for medallions contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs on 02 6289 6136 or the Australian High Commission in PNG on 325 9333.

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