

Gun returns to grace WWII battleground

PREPARATIONS are under way to mark the 60th anniversary of WW11 Kokoda and Buna campaigns this year.

Australia and Japan who were engaged in the bloody war in 1942 are preparing memorial celebrations to remember the fallen.

A 60-year-old 25 pound field gun arrived in Port Moresby on Saturday from Australia.

The war relic, the last of similar guns used during the war, will complete the memorial at Owers' Corner, Sogeri.

A spokesman for Kokoda Holdings said Australia based Kokoda Memorial Foundation, organised transportation of the gun to Port Moresby.

The KMF is a non-profit organisation from Sydney, Australia dedicated to preserving the memory of the fallen of the WW11 Kokoda Trail campaign as well as helping the Koiari communities along the trail.

The Koiari Development Authority and the Koiari Holdings have been working together with the KMF for the past three years developing the memorial site at Owers' Corner, at the start of the Kokoda Trail.

The KMF organised the gun's return with the help of ADI Ltd at Lithgow, where it stood for 50 years.

It is the same model, a MK2, that was involved in the Kokoda campaign.

It is 4m long, 2.5m wide, 1.8m high and weighs 1.8 tonnes.

It would be housed under cover on a concrete slab that was constructed on the last visit in October last year by members of KMF.

There are plans to dedicate the memorial later this year, according to the spokesman.

The team that transported the relic consisted of 18 volunteers, 15 men and three women, some returned servicemen and some active servicemen with various skills to assist in the mounting of the gun and the completion of the memorial, in addition to completion of projects already underway in Vesulogo and surrounding villages.

The director of KMF, Eric Winn, led the visiting team.

The KMF team also brought with them school furniture and equipment donated by St Patrick's College, Strathfield, NSW to be distributed by Koiari Holdings to schools in the area.

The spokesman said the KMF has been helping the Koiari people because without their help in 1942, many Australians would have lost their lives.