

Aussie soldiers build memorial

AUSTRALIAN soldiers are camping at the "gateway" to the Kokoda Trail in order to complete a major wartime memorial.

They flew in with special cargo, a World War II field gun weighing nearly two tonnes, on Saturday.

The soldiers, past and current, volunteered to fly to Papua New Guinea and spend their own time and efforts to complete the Owers Corner wartime memorial.

They are camping for four nights on the site, bolting the field gun into a concrete foundation built last year, and completing work on housing to protect the memorial.

The field gun plus a consignment of school books and furniture donated by Australian children were flown in on a Royal Australian Air Force Hercules plane.

The gun was loaded onto one of two trucks loaned for the purpose by Ela Motors and taken up the winding wartime Sogeri road to Owers Corner.

The volunteers, including three women, began camping at the memorial location on Saturday night.

The 25-pound field gun is the last piece to



MONUMENT: Australian Army soldiers and airport workers struggle to get a World War II field gun out of a RAAF Hercules and on to a waiting truck.

Picture by NOEL PASCOE.

complete the memorial. This is the 60th anniversary of the Kokoda Trail campaign of World War II.

The Kokoda Memorial Foundation, a non-profit group from Sydney, Australia, organised the return of the gun with the help of Australian Defence Industries (ADI) at Lithgow, New South Wales. It had stood there for 50 years. It is the same type that was

involved in the Kokoda campaign.

The gun was "restored by the Royal Australian Navy, transported by the Royal Australian Army and flown to PNG by the Royal Australian Air Force".

The foundation is dedicated to preserving the memory of those who died during the Kokoda Trail campaign as well as providing help to the Koiari communities

along the trail. The Koiari Development Authority and Koiari Holdings have been working with the foundation for the past three years to develop the memorial.

The three groups have been working together to help the Koiari people, who helped save the lives of many Australians caught up in the ferocious fighting on the trail during the war.