

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

'Courage under fire Kokoda trek' – remembering our lost fires

10 March 2012

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons has praised the commitment of three young members of the Service who are preparing to undertake a gruelling nine day trek along the Kokoda track, in memory of fallen firefighters.

The group of trekkers gathered in Sydney today to officially launch the inaugural 'Courage under Fire RFS Kokoda Trek', where Commissioner Fitzsimmons noted that the challenge was not for the faint hearted.

"The level of endurance required to attempt the Kokoda trek is well documented, and you can't help but be impressed by these young people.

"I have enormous admiration for their enthusiasm, hard work and dedication," said Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

The trio, who are all under 22 and are being accompanied on the hike by other NSW RFS representatives, have each had their lives impacted by the sudden and tragic death of a serving firefighter.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said that the 'Courage under Fire RFS Kokoda Trek' is a new initiative that was born out of the Service wanting to honour Australian firefighters who have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty.

"Like the soldiers who endured the horrors of Kokoda, our volunteers are ordinary Australians who are committed to protecting their communities. Unfortunately, like the ANZACS, some of our firefighters have also paid the ultimate sacrifice.

"Courage under Fire is about taking young relatives of fallen firefighters on a life-changing journey where they will experience first-hand the camaraderie and mateship that is the very core of the NSW RFS.

"Ben 17, Ivan 19 and Kristian 22, were selected as ideal candidates for the trek, due to their strong positive attitude, determination and desire to see their loved ones' honoured. Their families, communities and the Service should be rightly proud of their motivation," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

The NSW RFS has a total of 12 representatives setting off on the trek on 8 April 2012.

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