

# Kokoda

The journey of guiding archaeological excavations to help recover and identify unrecovered war dead from World War II at Etoa Battlefield.

## CLIENT

**PNG National Museum and Art Gallery and Kokoda Initiative**

## LOCATION

**Alola (Etoa Battlefield site)  
Central Province, PNG**

## CURIO SERVICE

**Archaeological Assessments  
Archaeological Management Plans  
Archaeological Research Designs  
Artefact Analysis**

## CURIO SERVICE

**Archaeological Interpretation Strategy  
Archaeological Excavation and Monitoring  
Archaeological Reporting**

## Project Summary

Guiding a multinational archaeological team through difficult terrain in remote Papua New Guinea to undertake highly sensitive archaeological excavations of human remains, personal artefacts and unexploded explosive ordnances to help recover and identify unrecovered war dead from World War II.

## Curio's Approach

Dr Matthew Kelly of Curio Projects has been managing the project for more than 10 years and brought it to Curio with him. From initial archaeological surveys and assessments, through to the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Archaeological Management Plan, Interpretation Strategy and now excavations on site, Mathew has also been immortalised in the film *Etoa: A Kododa Track Story*. Curio continues to provide expert archaeological guidance and advice related to a remote battlefield site in PNG. This role utilises primary source material from the Australian War Memorial and partnering with the local indigenous community at Alola. The continued seasons of recovery excavations also involve observers from Japanese Association for Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties (JARRWC), management of a local team of excavators on site and ongoing advice to the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery.

## Legacy We Leave Behind

Dr Kelly and the team have recovered the remains of 5 Japanese soldiers (out of 58 missing Japanese), which is both poignant and significant for the families who were left behind. In addition, the archaeological team have discovered significant evidence related to the conduct of the battle and the people involved. Dr Kelly has also provided invaluable training and experience for local archaeologists in historic excavations.

