

Jungle warfare

Fighting in the jungle resembles night fighting...

The attacker, who is manoeuvring, often cannot find his way and becomes lost. His sub-units cannot see each other so cannot easily coordinate fire and movement. The defender, who is in his fighting pit, cannot direct his fire on targets hidden by thick foliage. His weapons, which in other circumstances can fire accurately for hundreds of metres, are much less useful when he can only see 20 metres. If the jungle is also mountainous with frequent mist and heavy rain, as it was on the Kokoda track, these problems are compounded as all movement is greatly slowed and visibility further restricted.

The Japanese, it is said, were trained jungle fighters. This is not so, rather their advantage was that their doctrine and training stressed the importance of night fighting while the Australians in 1942 did not train to fight at night. Both sides were strangers to the jungle but the Japanese, owing to their night fighting training, found their feet first.

[AWM 026819](#)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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The graves of two unknown Australian soldiers on the Kokoda Track between Ioribaiwa and Nauro in October 1942. AWM 026819

Teaching and learning activities for the classroom

Research project

The dangers of jungle warfare were not restricted to those caused by the enemy. In New Guinea both the Australians and the Japanese lost more men to sickness than to battle. The two main

problems were malaria and dysentery but soldiers also suffered from dengue fever and scrub typhus. Choose one of these for your research topic. Using the web or your school library write a report entitled '(name of the disease) on the Kokoda track'.

Divide your report into eight parts. The questions below are a guide to show you what to write about in each part. You don't need to include the questions in the report but each part should have a heading.

1. Introduction. What is your report going to be about?
2. What exactly is the disease?
3. How is the disease transmitted to humans?
4. What are the symptoms of the disease?
5. What drugs can prevent or minimise the disease? Were they available in 1942?
6. How did the disease affect the soldiers on the Kokoda track?
7. Is the disease still a problem in New Guinea today?
8. Conclusion. What is the most important thing you have learned from this report?

Include a heading and a chart or diagram that illustrates an aspect of your research project.