



# STORIES OF INDIGENOUS SERVICE



### **About our Artwork**

The artwork in this book is by Ngarrindjeri Artist Jordan Lovegrove. It represents all the First Nations veterans who have served Australia, especially during the First and Second World Wars. Despite the discrimination they experienced at home, they volunteered. The three central meeting places represent the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), Australian Army, and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) working together. The pathway going through the centre of the artwork represents the journey of First Nations service personnel, walking together with each other and other Australian veterans. The smaller meeting places scattered around the artwork represent the veterans that came from different communities and language groups from all around Australia.



**Australian Government**

**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

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Soldier from Regional Surveillance Unit North West Mobile Force (NORFORCE). AWM 11437.001

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) acknowledges Australia's Traditional Owners and their continuing connection to country, sea and community. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and to their elders past, present and emerging. DVA also acknowledges the service and sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans who have served Australia.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following stories contain the names and images of people who have died.**

## Teaching Sensitivities

Teachers should note that some of the situations recounted in this resource from different times may use terminology or describe experiences and perspectives that are confronting or considered inappropriate today. This includes the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and descriptions of wars and conflicts. Teachers are advised to be sensitive to the perspectives and emotions of students while using this resource.

## Using this resource

This book can be used as a standalone resource to help teachers incorporate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curricula priority into their lessons. The stories align with the History and Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum areas but can also be used in English lessons. It can also be used as a companion to DVA's Indigenous Service Primary and Secondary resource kits. With the kits, these additional stories expand on the investigation themes and activities. All books are available for free download from [anzacportal.dva.gov.au](http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au).

# INTRODUCTION

In January 1900, Jack Alick, also known as Jack Alick Bond, left Australia bound for Cape Town, South Africa. Jack, a Yuin man, grew up near Braidwood in New South Wales. Together with other men from the area he volunteered to serve the British Empire in the Boer War. A skilled police tracker and horseman, Jack was a member of the second contingent of the 1st Australian Horse. Little is known of Jack's service, although as a member of the 1st Australian Horse he is likely to have taken part in various actions including Poplar Grove, Zand River and Diamond Hill.

While serving in South Africa Jack became ill. During his recovery at a **convalescent camp** Jack sent a letter home saying 'I have seen quite enough fighting and have had some narrow squeaks'. Jack's letter was published in the *Braidwood Dispatch and Mining Journal* in September 1900. His experiences in South Africa did not deter him from signing up again in January 1902. This time it was for a shorter period, as the war ended with the signing of the 'Treaty of Vereening' on 31 May that year. For his service, Jack was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal.

Australia's First Nations people have a long and proud history of military service. Even before **Federation** of Australia in 1901 a small number of Aboriginal men like Jack served in the colonial military and naval forces. During the world wars, thousands of Indigenous Australians **enlisted** for service despite not being recognised as British subjects.

It is unknown exactly how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have served in Australia's armed forces over the years. The numbers are unclear as many were forced to deny their heritage and culture in order to enlist. The *Defence Act 1903* excluded anyone from service who was not substantially of European origin or descent. This impacted Indigenous Australians wishing to enlist in the First World War and later wars and conflicts. Through ongoing research historians are discovering the identities of more and more Indigenous service men and women.

So why volunteer? For some, it was an opportunity for employment with steady pay including food and accommodation. For others, it was the possibility of adventure and overseas travel, a sense of duty to follow in the footsteps of relatives or a chance to defend their country.

Like so many people who have served, the experiences of individual Indigenous Australians in the armed forces have varied. This book shares just a few of the many stories of Indigenous service, from the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War.



AWM REL00377.003

# CORPORAL HARRY THORPE MM

Harry Thorpe was a Brabuwoolooong man from near Lakes Entrance in Victoria. He was born at the Lake Tyers Mission Station but grew up on his father's farm, where he learned to grow food and hunt kangaroos. Like any farmer, Harry was also a labourer and at times stripped wattle bark which he sold to tanneries.



In February 1916 at the age of 29, Harry enlisted in the **Australian Imperial Force** and by July had joined the 7th Battalion in France. He soon became well known for his courage.

Not long after arriving in France, Harry was seriously wounded at the Battle of Pozières. After spending a couple of months recovering, Harry rejoined his unit and was promoted to Lance Corporal. In April 1917 he was again wounded in an attack, on the Hindenberg Line near the village of Bullecourt. This time his injuries were not as severe and he was back with his battalion a month later.

In October 1917 Harry successfully led his section during operations at Broodseinde Ridge, part of the Third Battle of Ypres in Belgium. While clearing enemy dugouts and **pillboxes** Harry valiantly showed a disregard for his own personal safety. He was promoted to Corporal and was awarded the Military Medal for 'bravery in the field'.

*Harry and the 7th Battalion went on to fight in the Flanders region until mid-1918. They returned to the Somme region and took part the Battle of Lihons on 9 August that year. During the fighting Harry was found by stretcher-bearers with a severe wound to his stomach. He was taken to a dressing station but died shortly afterwards. He is buried at the Heath Cemetery near Harbonnières, not far from where he fought his last battle.*

## THIS TIME IN HISTORY

The *Defence Act 1903* excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as 'not substantially of European origin or descent'. They were not allowed to vote, enlist or receive a pension. To get around this, some men lied about their heritage, even going so far as to claim that they were Maori or Indian. As the First World War continued and reinforcements were needed, restrictions relaxed regarding age and height, and the backgrounds of those enlisting were sometimes overlooked by recruiters. By the end of that war it is estimated that more than 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men had served.

Studio portrait of  
Corporal Harry Thorpe MM.  
AWM 1695.002

Military medal.  
AWM RELAWM06315.006

*'They laid our hero down  
to rest, in the flag with a  
southern cross, and we  
mourn for him as one of  
the best; For his death was  
Australia's loss.'*

Family notice in *The Argus*  
10 September 1918<sup>1</sup>



# CORPORAL GORDON CHARLES NALEY

Gordon Charles Naley was born in 1884 on a remote Western Australian station, little more than 100 kilometres from the South Australian border. Gordon's mother, whose name is not known, was an Aboriginal woman and his father was William McGill, a Scotsman who established the station with William and Thomas Kennedy. Gordon was raised by his Aboriginal family before Ellen, William's second wife, became his unofficial adoptive mother. By his early twenties Gordon had moved to South Australia, where he worked as a **drover**, shearer and farm labourer.



In September 1914, 27-year-old Gordon enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. After initial training near Melbourne, he joined the 16th Battalion and headed for Egypt just before Christmas. On 25th April 1915 the 16th Battalion landed on the shores of Gallipoli and made their way to a feature called Pope's Hill. The battalion was involved in fierce fighting and sustained hundreds of **casualties**. When the fighting died down, illness became a major problem for the Australians. Gordon was **evacuated** to a military hospital in Malta in late May after contracting typhoid fever. Telegrams to his adopted mother Ellen on Mundrabilla Station reported that Gordon was dangerously ill. The family did not know if he was sick or wounded until they received a telegram in late July with news of the fever. In September, Gordon was considered 'out of danger' and transferred to a Military Hospital in England.

By July 1916, Gordon had recovered enough to rejoin his battalion on the Western Front in France. The 16th Battalion took part in the first attack on the Hindenburg Line near the village of Bullecourt on 11 April 1917. The attack was a disaster, with thousands killed or wounded. More than 1,000 Australian soldiers were taken prisoner and Gordon, wounded by shrapnel, was among them. He recovered from his wound and spent almost two years as a German prisoner.

Following the Armistice Gordon was **repatriated** to England. Two weeks later he married Cecilia Karsh, whom he had met while recovering in England.

The couple travelled back to Australia on SS *Bremen*, arriving in Adelaide in late July 1919. Gordon and Cecilia received a warm welcome when they returned to his home and Gordon was discharged from the AIF four days later. He received the 1914–15 Star, the British War Medal 1914–20 and the Victory Medal for his service.

Gordon and Cecilia settled in Winkie, in the Berri district, where they went on to raise their six children. Gordon established a fruit farm and broke-in and sold horses to the local community. He was also one of eleven soldiers to receive two payments from the Waikerie North Soldiers' Fund. Gordon was an active member of his local church and enjoyed playing cricket for Winkie.

***Gordon passed away at the veterans' hospital at Myrtle Bank on 28 August 1928.  
He was 44 years old.***



The telegram Gordon's family received when he was taken prisoner of war. NAA: B2455, Telegram to Ellen McGill 20 July 1917



## THIS TIME IN HISTORY

During the First World War, question number 3 on the enlistment forms asked: 'Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalised British Subject? (N.B. If the latter, papers to be shown)'. This distinguished if a person was born in Australia or not. It did not provide a space for people born in Australia to recognise their heritage.



Formal portrait of Gordon Naley. Virtual War Memorial of Australia

Before the internet, mobile phones and television, Australians relied on wireless radio, newspapers, telegrams and letters. Communication during the First World War was at times slow and very different to today. Consider how Gordon's family may have felt waiting for news of his illness. Compare the ways in which communication today is different to the early 1900s and the impacts on everyday life.



# TROOPER WILLIE ALLEN



Larrakia man, Willie Allen was born in Darwin in early 1884. At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Willie was working as a labourer. Unable to join the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) for medical reasons, Willie volunteered with the Northern Territory Cable Guard. The Cable Guard were responsible for defending the overland telegraph line that connected Adelaide to Darwin. They also protected the other key communications cable that ran under the ocean to Java and then on to London. These cables were a vital link between Australia and the rest of the world. The Government, concerned that the cables may potentially be targeted by the Germans, established the Cable Guards to safeguard them.



In December 1917 Willie was able to enlist in the AIF and join the 11th Light Horse Regiment. In June 1918 Willie and his regiment departed Sydney for the training camp at Moascar, Egypt. Although part of the Light Horse mounted infantry, the troops were also trained in cavalry tactics. Before long Willie and the regiment were involved in actions against German and Turkish troops at Semakh in Palestine. Initially the **offensive** at Semakh involved troops using swords on horseback. It was soon decided that checking the town on foot with rifles and bayonets would be more effective, utilising their earlier training.

The Ottoman Empire, the **Allies'** main enemy in the Middle East, surrendered on 30 October 1918. Before Willie's regiment could return to Australia they were called back to duty in Egypt to control an uprising that erupted in March 1919. Order was restored and by late July the regiment and Willie Allen were on their way home.

*Willie married Madeline Ferguson shortly after his return and settled in Brisbane to raise his family. Following his discharge from the AIF, Willie was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1914/15 Star for his service.*



1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal.  
AWM REL33751.001

## THIS TIME IN HISTORY

During the First World War Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people served in all branches and units of the AIF. They also supported the war effort and the defence of Australia on the home front.



## ABORIGINAL RECRUITS.

We have received from Barambah Settlement a letter written on behalf of 16 discharged coloured soldiers who want to know why they were discharged from the A.I.F. on June 13. They resent being made to appear as 'slackers,' through no fault of their own. And they allege that when they were discharged from the military camp they were told that they would be met at the Central Station by the Chief Protector of Aborigines, who would hand over to them their pay and discharge papers. Instead they were at the station handed over to a police escort, and were brought back to their settlement 'like a lot of prisoners.' The letter concludes: 'We will ask the public of Brisbane and Murgon if us coloured members of the Empire who risked our lives and volunteered for the freedom and liberty of the British Empire got a fair do or not. Also we never got our pay or discharge papers.'

The military authorities explain that headquarters at Melbourne only gave approval for coloured men to be enlisted on conditions that one of the parents was of European origin. That condition was later on qualified to the effect that a coloured man must have been associated with white people for some time prior to enlistment. The men rejected were stated by the military authorities to be full-blooded aborigines. When they arrived at the camp they were specially examined by a medical officer and were subsequently removed from the camp as unfit for military duties. They were not half-castes, and the military authorities state that full-blooded aborigines are not wanted, as they will not make soldiers. The instructions

issued to headquarters at Brisbane state that half-castes can be enlisted at the discretion of the commandant. It was pointed out that white men



ABORIGINAL RECRUITS. (1917, June 21)  
Darling Downs Gazette (Qld. : 1881 - 1922), p. 6.  
Retrieved July 13, 2021, from  
[www.nla.gov.au/nla.news-article187509378](http://www.nla.gov.au/nla.news-article187509378)

Studio portrait of Trooper William Allen  
with his children insert. AWM P00889.021

What are some of the other roles people in Australia performed in the First World War which supported enlisted service personnel?



# SISTER MARION LEANE SMITH

Born in Liverpool, NSW, in 1891, Marion Leane Smith is believed to be the only Australian Aboriginal woman to serve in the First World War. Her grandmother, Lucy Leane, was a proud Darug woman who built a thriving farm with her husband William and their 13 children. Lucy was well respected in the Liverpool area and in 1893 she petitioned the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board for a boat to sell her farm produce along the river. Lucy's daughter Elizabeth married her English cousin George and a year later welcomed their daughter Marion.



When Marion was two years old the family moved to Canada. It is unclear why they left Australia, but increasing unrest regarding the government's taking of 'half-caste' (children of mixed Indigenous/European parentage) children from their families at the time may have played a part. Marion grew up in Canada and then moved to Massachusetts, USA, to study nursing. After graduation in 1913, Marion returned to Montreal, where she joined the Victorian Order of Nurses.

In early March 1917 Marion joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS). By the end of the month she was on her way to France, where she joined the No. 41 Ambulance Train. These were

trains specifically converted to transport soldiers from the casualty clearing stations at the front line to the base hospitals. They were equipped with medical supplies, pharmacies and, in some cases, operating theatres. Nurses worked in cramped conditions, treating the men in triple bunks on either side of a narrow aisle. The movement of the train, the dim lighting and the sheer number of seriously wounded men made the work extremely challenging.

Reports in Marion's service record give an insight to her as a nurse and a person.

*'A very good surgical nurse, most attentive to patients.'*<sup>2</sup>

*'Staff Nurse Smith has given complete satisfaction in the carrying out of her duties whilst on the train. Her work is both quickly and efficiently done. She is most capable in every way. Power of administration satisfactory as also tact and ability to train others.'*<sup>3</sup>



Formal portrait of Rev. Victor B. Walls and Mrs Walls.  
United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto, 76.001P/6954.  
Rev. Victor B. Walls and Mrs. Walls, Trinidad, B.W.I., [193-].

Nurses in the QAIMNS were employed by contract and Marion's contract ended in September 1918. She applied for an extension and was posted to the University War Hospital in Southampton, UK. Marion remained here until she sailed for her home in New Brunswick, Canada in early May 1919.

Marion married Victor Benjamin Walls in 1924 at her family home. Not long after their wedding the couple moved to Trinidad to work at Naparima College. For almost 30 years Marion and Victor lived in Trinidad, raised their son, and devoted their time to the school. Victor became Principal of the school and Marion even wrote the school hymn which is still sung today.

Marion's devotion to helping others and providing medical support remained. She and Victor formed the Naparima College First Aid Corps in 1928, which later became the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross. Marion served as the commandant of the Trinidad Red Cross during the Second World War and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. After Victor's retirement, the family moved back to Canada. Marion died four years later on 24 January 1957 at 66 years of age. Marion is remembered as a nurse, a veteran, a wife, a mother, a community leader and the only Australian Aboriginal woman known to have served in the First World War.



AWM REL25568.001

## THIS TIME IN HISTORY

Early federal legislation in Australia gave the government and 'Aboriginal Protection Boards' rights over Indigenous people. Each state had their own laws and they were used to control and discriminate against Indigenous people. This included the forced removal of thousands of children from their homes, later known as the Stolen Generations.



At the beginning of the war in 1914 Canada, like Australia, was part of the British Empire. When Britain declared war on Germany that declaration included all of Britain's Colonies and Dominions.

Had Marion and her family stayed in Australia how might her life have been different? Would she have been able to train as a nurse and serve in the First World War if she had remained?



# PRIVATE ROLAND WINZEL CARTER

Roland Carter was a proud Ngarrindjeri man born in 1892 at Goolwa, South Australia. Growing up on the Point McLeay Mission, Roland was educated at the local school until the age of 14, when he began work as a labourer. In 1915, at the age of 22, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. Before Roland departed he was presented with a silver mounted razor strop and razor, a fountain pen from the football club and a bible. Roland was the first Ngarrindjeri man to enlist and by the end of the war, sixteen Aboriginal men from the Point McLeay Mission had served overseas. Four never returned.

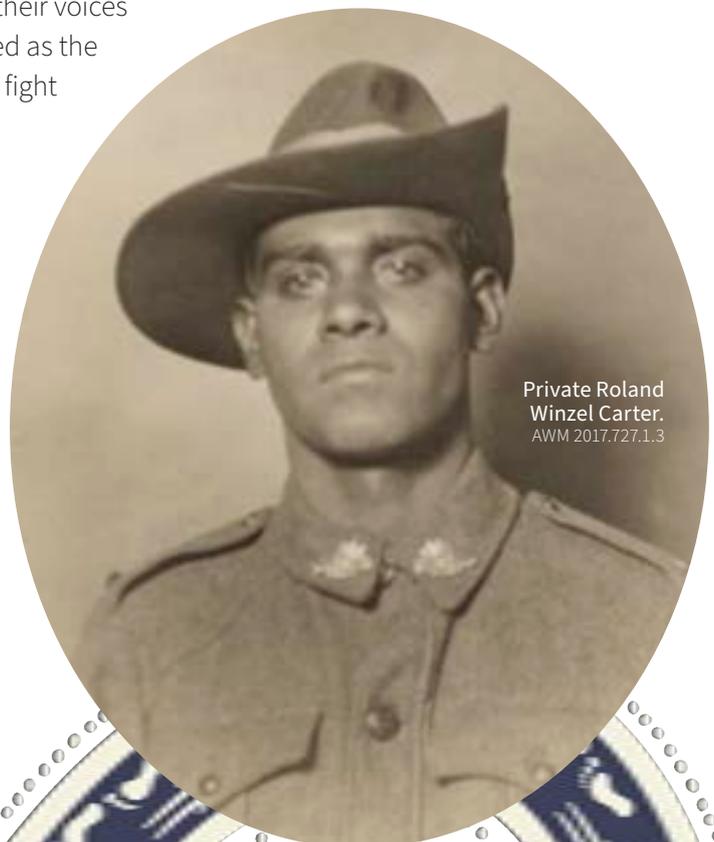


Two months after he enlisted Roland sailed to Egypt with the 10th Battalion. After training he was transferred to the 50th Battalion and sent to France, where he was wounded at Mouquet Farm during the Battle of the Somme. Roland recovered from his injuries and on 2 April 1917 took part in action at Noreuil, a French village occupied by the Germans. During the attack he received a gunshot wound to his left shoulder and was taken prisoner along with 80 other men.

Roland was initially listed as missing in action, but later that month was recorded as being at the Prisoner of War (POW) camp in Zerbst, Germany. He was then transferred to the Halbmondlager POW camp – near Wuensdorff, south of Berlin. At the camp the Germans took the opportunity to study the prisoners from different cultures. Roland and Douglas Grant, a Ngadjon-Jii man from Far North Queensland, were of particular interest. The prisoners were studied by scientists and anthropologists, and had their photos taken and their voices recorded. The prisoners were generally well treated as the Germans had hoped to convince the detainees to fight for them.

After the Armistice was declared in 1918 Roland was sent to England before being repatriated to Australia in June 1919. Officially discharged upon his return, Roland returned to the Point McLeay Mission, where he married Vera Rigney. Together they raised their eight children and were active members of the community. In 1925 Roland and other ex-servicemen raised money for a memorial to honour the four local Indigenous men who lost their lives serving in the First World War.

***After the war Roland resumed his work as a labourer but his injured shoulder continued to be a problem. He passed away in July 1960 and is buried at his beloved Point McLeay Mission.***



Private Roland Winzel Carter.  
AWM 2017.727.1.3



Soldiers returning to Australia on HMAT *Medic* from overseas service. Many men in the photo including Pte Douglas Grant were prisoners of war.  
AWM P11644.002

Roland and Douglas were prisoners of war in Germany during the Second World War. Many Australians are more familiar with the prisoner of war experiences in the Pacific and South East Asia. Research some of the different experiences of Australian prisoners of war.



# DRIVER CHARLES 'CHARLIE' BURNS

Charlie Burns was born in 1896 on a remote cattle station near Wyndham in the Kimberley region of Western Australia (WA). At the age of six, Charlie, an orphan, travelled more than 3000 kilometres south to live with his new guardians, Frederick and Grace Drake-Brockman. Frederick was a surveyor and explorer who had spent time in the Wyndham area for work. Charlie was enrolled with Grace and Frederick's children at the Guildford Grammar School in 1909, becoming the first Aboriginal student to attend the school.



When Charlie left school he worked in a number of different jobs, including as a survey hand with Frederick and as a blacksmith's striker. Charlie enlisted shortly before his nineteenth birthday in late 1915 and was soon on his way to Egypt with the 10th Light Horse Regiment. After a period of training, he was transferred to the Australian Army Service Corps as a driver. He spent the majority of the next 18 months serving in Egypt, Sinai and Palestine.

Charlie's athleticism and bravery was put to the test in September 1917 while he was serving in Palestine. In a particularly dangerous area of the coast a New Zealand soldier, Trooper George Moffat, was being dragged out to sea by a rip. Hearing the cries for help Charlie, who was a strong swimmer, set out to take a lifeline to George. Even though the lifeline broke Charlie still managed to rescue George and bring him back to shore. Another man who attempted to help had to be assisted back to safer waters. The Corps Commander directed that a record be made of Charlie's gallant conduct.

Charlie returned to Australia in 1919, settling in Karri Country as a stockman on some of the Drake-Brockman properties. He helped revegetate large areas of sand dunes by planting Marram grass and installed kilometres of fencing in the Pemberton area. Charlie also enjoyed sports and was a valuable member of the Pemberton Warriors Australian Rules Football team.



Charlie Burns during Second World War.  
Pemberton RSL



Formal portrait of Charlie Burns  
First World War. Pemberton RSL



Charlie Burns and Jack Wetherell May 1942.  
Pemberton RSL

At the outbreak of the Second World War Charlie was working as a slaughterman in Pemberton when he enlisted with the Second AIF. At 45 years of age he was considered 'old' for service and most likely underwent a physical exam before joining the 3rd Railway Construction Company. Charlie's service in the Second World War took him to many of the same places where he had served 20 years earlier. In February 1943 he returned to Australia, where he served in Western Australia and Victoria until his discharge in January 1945.

***Charlie lived and worked in the lower south-west area of WA until his death in 1990 at the age of 94. He was well known and respected in the Pemberton community. A room at the local hotel is named in Charlie's honour. A bust of Charlie made by a local artist, Mandy Drake, is on display at the Pemberton Hotel. Charlie is remembered fondly by members of the Pemberton RSL and the local community. He was known for his horsemanship, cooking and hunting skills, knowledge of the land, willingness to teach others and for being an all-round 'great bloke'.***

Charlie relaxing at home. Pemberton RSL



## THIS TIME IN HISTORY

According to the Australian War Memorial, more than 20 Indigenous soldiers are known to have served in both the First and Second World Wars.



In November 1876 SS *Georgette* became wrecked at Cargardup Bay off the coast of Western Australia. Grace and an Aboriginal stockman, Sam Isaacs, went to help the crew and passengers of the boat. Battling the strong surf on horseback they swam to the wreck, where men, women and children were desperately clinging to the remaining ship. With as many people as possible holding on, they returned to shore. Over four hours Grace and Sam rode their horses into the sea bringing people ashore. Grace was awarded the Royal Humane Society's silver medal and a gold watch. Sam received a bronze medal and 100 acres of land.

# PRIVATE MAITLAND MADGE MM

Maitland Madge was born in March 1894 in the coastal town of Cooktown on the Cape York Peninsula. His mother was an Aboriginal woman named Ella and his father, Richard, originally from England, worked on Breeza Plains Station. When Maitland was 10 years old his father successfully applied for an exemption from the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*. Under the Act, Aboriginal children could be removed from their families and taken to a government mission. With the exemption Richard was able to officially register Maitland's birth and enrol him at Kelvin Grove Boys School.



In August 1915, not long after the first troops landed at Gallipoli, Maitland enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. In October of that year he departed Australia as part of the 15th Battalion, 4th Brigade. Their first major action was at Pozières, France.

In August 1916 Maitland had a very important job in the battalion. During combat, heavy artillery fire repeatedly damaged the telephone wires between the battlefields and battalion headquarters. The only effective way to communicate between the two locations was by foot messengers or runners. These men carried important information, orders, maps and plans. This was extremely dangerous work and Maitland and a fellow runner, Private Sydney May, were awarded the Military Medal for their work. As runners 'they showed an utter disregard of their own safety and an admirable contempt for danger, and it was entirely owing to their self-sacrifice that the operations were so well supported by our own artillery, and that Battalion and Brigade Headquarters were so closely in touch with progress of operations'.<sup>4</sup> Maitland is believed to be the first Indigenous soldier to receive the Military Medal.

Maitland was wounded during the battle at Pozières and spent four months recovering in hospital. For the remainder of the war he continued to serve with the 15th Battalion, arriving back in Australia in 1919.

When England declared war on Germany in 1939, Maitland was working as a security guard in Townsville. Even though he was 45 years of age at the time, he was able to enlist in the Militia by changing the year of his birth on his recruitment papers. In June 1940 Maitland volunteered in the Second Imperial Force, serving in the 2/26th Battalion. The Battalion arrived in Singapore in August 1941 and joined forces with 8th Battalion on the Malayan peninsula.

Fierce fighting followed Japan's invasion of Malaya.

By February 1942, Allied forces had been pushed back to Singapore and the island fell to the Japanese on 15 February. Maitland, along with thousands of Australian and British troops, became a prisoner of the Japanese. Over the next two years Maitland was **interned** at the Changi prisoner of war camp and spent time in and out of hospital, suffering dysentery and other illnesses. He died on 7 June 1944 and is buried at the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore.





This painting commemorates Indigenous military service through the story of 'Kulata Tjuta' [many spears]. It is a tribute to the Anangu men who have fought to protect their country. Aligning a history of Indigenous military service with warrior culture.

Kunmanara (Ray) Ken, Kulata Tjuta, 2015 (AK19989)  
Synthetic polymer paint on linen, 122 x 198 cm  
© The Artist, Tjala Arts and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne.  
AWM 2016.167.1

Below: Maitland Madge's enlistment photos.  
NAA: B2455, Maitland Madge



The role of runners or foot messengers during the First World War was important but also very dangerous.



What qualities would a person need to survive as a runner?

How has communication technology changed since that time?

# HAVE YOU HEARD OF THESE SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN?

## Warrant Officer Leonard Victor Waters

Leonard (Len) Waters, a Kamilaroi (Gamilaraay) man, was born in 1924 on the Euraba Aboriginal Mission in northern New South Wales. He left school at the age of 13 to become a shearer but his true passion was flying. In August 1942 Len followed his dream and joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as an aircraft mechanic. The rules for Indigenous Australians wishing to enlist were more relaxed in the RAAF than in the army or navy, to help achieve the recruitment quota for the rapidly growing force. Len was posted to No. 2 Operational Training Unit at Mildura. Here he worked on a range of aircraft, including Kittyhawks, Boomerangs and Spitfires. In 1943 Len applied for the pilot's course. After training he became Australia's first and only Aboriginal fighter pilot of the Second World War. Len flew during campaigns over Noemfoor and Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies and Tarakan in Borneo before his discharge from the RAAF in 1946. After Len left the Air Force he married his fiancée and returned to shearing, never to fly again.



Leonard Waters sitting in the cockpit of a Kittyhawk. AWM P01659.001

## Lance Corporal Kath Walker / Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Oodgeroo Noonuccal was born Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska on 3 November 1920. She grew up on Minjerribah, also known as North Stradbroke Island. Her father Edward taught his children how to hunt and fish to feed the family. At school Kath, as she was known to her friends, had a gift for writing. In 1933 during the great depression she left school to take up domestic work. Kath's brothers Eric and Eddie enlisted in the army at the beginning of the Second World War. They were serving on Singapore when the Japanese invaded in February 1942 and became prisoners of war. Later that year Kath joined the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS).



Studio portrait of Lance Corporal Kathleen Walker. AWM P01688.001

She trained as a signaller before taking on administrative duties. In April 1943 she was promoted to Lance Corporal and worked in the district accounts office until her discharge in January 1944. After the war Kath returned to domestic work to support her family.

Throughout her life she was a well-known campaigner for Aboriginal rights and Aboriginal culture. As an avid writer Kath became a renowned poet and children's author. In 1970 she was appointed a Member of the British Empire for her services to Aboriginal People. She later returned this award in protest at the planned bicentenary celebrations in 1988 marking the first convict fleet's arrival in New South Wales. In 1988 she changed her name to Oodgeroo, which means 'paperbark', and Noonuccal, the traditional owners of Minjerribah. Recognition of her literary and political achievements continued. Oodgeroo died at her home on Minjerribah in September 1993.



## Melville Island

During the Second World War men from Melville Island, in the Tiwi Islands, were armed and equipped by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). They provided important surveillance as the islands lay on the route that Japanese bombers based in the Netherlands East Indies (present day Indonesia) would take to raid Darwin. The men were also responsible for locating downed airmen and Japanese mines in coastal waters. In 1942 a Japanese fighter pilot flying escort on the first Darwin raid crashed on Melville Island. Tiwi Islander Matthius Ulungura tracked him through the bush and surprised him. Matthius had taken the first prisoner of war captured on Australian soil. The Japanese pilot was later sent to the Cowra prisoner of war camp, where he became one of the leaders of the 1944 Cowra breakout.

***Melville Islanders were not formally enlisted in the RAN or paid at the time, however in 1992 they were finally awarded medals and remuneration.***



Indigenous service men and women had many and varied roles during the Second World War.



This included defending Australia both in the military and on the home front. Special branches were formed, such as the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit and the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion. Research the contribution these Indigenous service men and women made during the Second World War.

# PRIVATE WILLIAM REGINALD RAWLINGS MM

William Reginald Rawlings was born at the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve near Purnim in Western Victoria. His birthdate is unknown but his service records indicate that he was born either at the end of 1890 or early 1891. A Gunditjmara man, he grew up with his parents William and Elizabeth (Bessie) Rawlings and six siblings.



The Rawlings were a well-known and respected family in the community but life wasn't easy. The Victorian Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, which was established in 1869, had the power to decide where Aboriginal people could live, their jobs and how much they could earn. Bessie repeatedly wrote to the Board to allow her daughters to return to the family home from their jobs in the city. When the Board tried to remove the family from Framlingham, Bessie again wrote about what she believed were her lawful rights. Although the family was forced to move to Lake Condah they returned to Framlingham two years later.

William enlisted with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in March 1916. At the start of the First World War Aboriginal men were prohibited from enlisting in the army. William's enlistment paperwork shows that he was identified as a 'half-caste aboriginal', indicating that he was of Aboriginal and European descent. Despite the legislation of the time, William was accepted,



AWM REL/10343

eventually joining the 29th Battalion in November 1916. Arriving in France during the winter months made the challenges of trench warfare even more difficult. William suffered from ill health and the condition known as trench foot. In February 1917 he was evacuated to a hospital in England for treatment and re-joined his unit later that year.

## THIS TIME IN HISTORY

In 1917 the Australian Government faced a problem. The AIF had suffered heavy casualties at Gallipoli, in the Middle East and on the Western Front. As the years went on, fewer people were enlisting, so recruiters needed a plan. Campaigns in 1915 and 1916 to encourage volunteers had some success. After visiting the front lines in 1916 Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes decided that conscription would be the best way to rebuild numbers. The idea of compulsory military service was heavily debated by politicians so a referendum was called. This allowed the Australian public to vote and the results showed that they were against conscription.





*Aaaaa-tention*, Ellen Jose, 1992, watercolour with gold enamel over pencil on paper on linen, 33 x 101.5 cm. AWM ART29762

In July 1918 the 29th Battalion took part in advances along Morlancourt Ridge. Using grenades, William and his team successfully attacked an enemy communication trench. He was awarded the Military Medal for his leadership and courage. On 9 August the Battalion joined the battle to capture of the town of Vauvillers in Northern France. As the Battalion left the trenches and started the advance William was hit by a shell and killed. He is buried at Heath Cemetery, Harbonnières, France, near his friend and fellow Aboriginal soldier Harry Thorpe.

***‘... my darling son who gave his dear life for his King and country, my only darling son he was all the world to me and he is gone forever. He told me if he should fall to always think of him in a soldier’s grave, oh my darling brave son.’<sup>5</sup>***

Extract from a letter from William’s mother, Bessie, to the Officer in Charge of the Victoria Barracks in Melbourne. Bessie wrote to request that William’s belongings be returned to her after his death.

Studio portrait of Private William Reginald Rawlings MM.  
AWM P01695.001



Trench warfare was an important tactic during the First World War. Why was it used and what were some of the challenges the troops faced? What other strategies were used?



# DRIVER WALTER CHRISTOPHER GEORGE SAUNDERS

Walter Christopher Saunders, known as Chris, was born in 1895 in Warrnambool, Victoria. A Gunditjmara man, he was the son of Henry and Eliza Saunders. Chris was a talented sportsman, captaining his local cricket and football teams. After school he joined the North Melbourne Football club in the Victorian Football Association (VFA).



In February 1916 Chris enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Milltown near Lake Condah. He joined the 10th Machine Gun Company and was sent to Larkhill training camp in England. Towards the end of 1916 his unit was sent to northern France, near the border with Belgium. The 10th Machine Gun Company was equipped with the Vickers medium machine gun. This powerful weapon was mounted on a tripod and required a team of three men to operate it. Although not easy to move, the Vickers was known for being reliable and sustaining fast rates of fire over long periods.

Chris' company was attached to the 10th Brigade and spent the majority of the war in northern France and Belgium. In July 1917 he became ill and spent a couple of weeks at a rest camp. When he re-joined his unit he was appointed as a driver and continued his regular duties with the Brigade until the end of the war.

In March 1919 Elizabeth Crough, Chris' sister, wrote to the Department of Defence in Melbourne. Their mother Eliza had passed away a couple of months earlier, leaving Elizabeth as Chris' only living female family member. In her letter she asked if the Female Relative Badge issued by the Department could be sent to her. These badges were given to the nearest female relative of soldiers who actively served overseas during the First World War. If someone had more than one relative serving they were given a bar to hang below the badge for each family member. Elizabeth's request was granted and she was sent the badge in honour of Chris' service but was denied the bars for the service of her two sons, Joseph and Kenneth.



AWM REL/11143

***In 1919 Chris returned to Australia and was discharged from the AIF. He married Mabel Arden and they lived at the Framlingham Aboriginal Mission near Purnim, Victoria.***

***Their sons Reginald and Harry were born soon after.***

***Reginald is named after his uncle William Reginald Rawlings, from the previous story, who was awarded the Military Medal during the First World War. In 1924 Mabel passed away and Chris moved with his two sons back to the Lake Condah Mission to be with family. Chris found work in the sawmills as a timber cutter. In 1935 he married Phillis Foster and together they raised nine children. Chris remained in south-west Victoria until his death in the late 1970s.***



AWM REL/11369



Private Walter  
Christopher  
George Saunders.  
AWM P00889.012

## THIS TIME IN HISTORY

When the referendum didn't get the result that the government wanted they began to ease some of the enlistment requirements. Prior limits relating to the age and height of a volunteer were changed to include a wider group of people. In May 1917 a Military Order (No.200) was issued to allow previously excluded Indigenous Australians to enlist. The order stated that 'half castes may be enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force provided the examining Medical Officers are satisfied that one of the parents is of European origin'<sup>6</sup>. This did not include anyone considered a 'full-blood Aboriginal'. In December 1917 the government attempted a second referendum on conscription, which was also defeated.

The Female Relatives Badges were issued during the First and Second World Wars to the closest female relative of men serving overseas. Why would it have been important for the mothers, sisters and wives to receive this badge?



# ELIZA SAUNDERS

In 1917 Eliza Saunders was a widow living at the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission in Victoria. At the time her son Chris Saunders and grandsons Joseph and Kenneth Crough were all serving in France and Egypt. Like so many men serving overseas, Chris had been sending his mother a portion of his military pay.



Eliza had been carefully saving the money to buy a house for herself and Chris when he returned from the war. She found a two-roomed cottage for £50 with enough land to grow her own vegetables. Eliza suffered from rheumatoid arthritis which was particularly bad during the winter months. She wrote to the Board for the Protection of Aborigines to request extra **rations** so that a girl from the community could come and live with her to help until Chris came home.

The Board refused Eliza's request and someone else bought the house. The Board questioned her health and how a woman living on Government funds could afford to save that much money. Eliza's first letter to the Board had expressed her pride in saving the money that her son sent her. Sadly this information was used as a reason to deny her request. The Board was unhappy that Eliza and other Aboriginal women were receiving money from servicemen as well as mission rations. In January 1918 the Board cancelled her rations because she was receiving Chris' military pay. Over the following months she continued to write to the Board with her wish to buy a house at Lake Condah.

*At the time it was not public knowledge that the land in that area was scheduled to be divided for non-Aboriginal servicemen after war. Eliza died in December 1918 without her dream of a home being realised, and before her son returned from the war. Eliza's story is like that of many Indigenous families who faced similar challenges.*



A bank cash bag that was embroidered by Corporal Edward Gordon Patrick 'Pat' Sullivan while he was a prisoner of war in Changi prison. Pat, a descendant of Aboriginal woman 'Black Mary' took up needle craft to keep his mind busy while he was being held prisoner. Hiding his needle and work from the Japanese guards, Pat decorated a bag, a cushion cover and a tablecloth.

AWM REL/03670



*To celebrate NAIDOC week in 2013 Sergeant John Angel-Hands and Lance Corporal Natalie Whyte (pictured) raised the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at Al Minhad Air Base in the United Arab Emirates. This was the first time on record that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags had been flown on operational service outside Australia.*



Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women had positive experiences during their time in the armed forces, but found they returned home to unchanged discrimination and poor living conditions. What were some of the positive and challenging aspects of returning home from service for Indigenous veterans?



# CAPTAIN REGINALD SAUNDERS MBE

Reginald Walter Saunders, known as Reg, was born on 7 August 1920 at the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve, Victoria. His parents, Chris and Mabel, named him after his uncle William Reginald Rawlings, who served in the First World War. When Reg and his younger brother Harry were small, their mother died. Their father moved the family to the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission, where their maternal grandmother helped to raise them. Growing up, Reg was a keen footballer, boxer and cricket player. He often heard stories of the First World War from his father, uncles and members of the community.



In September 1939 Germany invaded Poland, which led to the start of the Second World War. On 24 April 1940 Reg enlisted in the AIF and was sent to Puckapunyal near Melbourne for training. His first experience of war was as a reinforcement for the 2/7th Battalion in Libya, North Africa. In April 1941 Reg's battalion, along with other Allied forces, attempted to defend Greece against a German invasion. The Allies were overwhelmed and the battalion was forced to retreat to Crete. Here the battalion was again involved in heavy fighting, including the Battle of 42nd Street. In the hasty evacuation off the island of Crete, Reg was among about 3000 soldiers left behind. Refusing to surrender, he spent eleven months hiding from the Germans with help from the locals. He eventually escaped on board a **trawler**, which took him to Libya before he returned to Australia.

In April 1943 Reg rejoined the 2/7th Battalion in New Guinea as a sergeant and took part in the Salamaua campaign. Recognising his leadership skills and athleticism, Reg's commanding officer nominated him for officer training. He graduated as a lieutenant in November 1944 and returned to New Guinea as the first Aboriginal commissioned officer in the Australian army. Reg commanded the No. 10 Platoon until the end of the war. After his return to Australia, he left the Army and worked in various jobs, including as a builder and a shipping clerk.

When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Reg said goodbye to his wife and children and went to serve as a captain in the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. His battalion was involved in combat against the Chinese and North Koreans, including the Battle of Kapyong in 1951. In 1954 Reg again left the army, this time permanently.

*After the war Reg moved to Sydney and worked for the Austral Bronze Company. As a proud Gunditjmara man he was a leader and role model as he advocated for Aboriginal rights. In 1967 he joined the Office of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra as a liaison and public relations officer. Reg's work with Aboriginal communities, schools and the government was recognised in 1971 when he was awarded a Member of the British Empire (MBE). He remained in Canberra, where in 1985 he joined the council of the Australian War Memorial. Reg died on 2 March 1990 and his ashes are scattered at Lake Condah.*



Reg Saunders' service medals and Member of the Order of the British Empire. AWM REL/18641.001



Left: Captain Reg Saunders, Captain Jack Gerke and Lieutenant Harold Mulry in Korea.  
AWM P01813.696



Cigarette case with engravings of where Reg Saunders served in the Second World War. AWM REL/18642



Captain Reg Saunders, *The Argus* newspaper, 1944. Fairfax Media

Reg's military career spanned North Africa, Greece, Crete, New Guinea and Korea. How might his experiences in the army have influenced his working life outside the military?



# PRIVATE HENRY (HARRY) SAUNDERS

Henry Saunders, known as Harry, was born on 13 May 1922 in Allansford, Victoria. When he was only two years old his mother Mabel died. Needing the support of family, his father Chris moved Harry and his older brother Reg to the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission. Mabel's mother and extended family lived at the mission and could look after the boys while their father was away for work. After his years at school Harry worked in the timber mills with his father and brother.



In September 1939 Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced over the radio that Britain had declared war on Germany and as a result Australia was also at war. Thousands of men volunteered to enlist, including Harry and his brother Reg. In 1940 Harry was only 18 years old, technically too young to enlist as men were required to be between 20 and 35 years of age. These limits did change as the war progressed and more men were needed. Harry altered his date of birth on his enlistment form to say that he was 21.

Harry joined the 2/14th Battalion and underwent training at Puckapunyal. The battalion left Australia in October 1940, arriving in the Middle East a month later. After initial training the battalion was involved in operations in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. In July 1941 Harry was wounded in his left chest, arm and face



Harry Saunders in the front row with 9 Platoon, A Company, 2/14th Infantry Battalion on the Kokoda Trail. AWM 089220

and evacuated from the front lines to the military hospital. He spent two months recovering from his injuries before returning to his battalion. They spent the rest of the year as part of the garrison in Syria and Lebanon until they returned to Australia in March 1942.

By August 1942 Harry and the battalion were again setting sail for overseas – this time its destination was New Guinea. Three days after their arrival the battalion started their advance along the Kokoda Track. Fierce fighting against the Japanese took place at Isurava, and after holding their position for a few days

the Allies were forced to retreat. During this time Harry was separated from his unit and reported as 'missing in action'. Little is known of his experiences during this time but seven weeks later Harry found his way back to Allied troops, exhausted and suffering from malaria. After a period of rest and training he returned to the 2/14th Battalion. On 26 November they joined the Battle at Gona on the northern side of New Guinea. Harry was killed a few days later in combat.

During the war Harry wrote letters home to his girlfriend, Dorothy Banfield, who was serving in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF). He shared information about his brother Reg and responded to Dorothy's stories from home. Harry openly professed his love for Dorothy and his wish that they marry when the war was over. With the letters he also sent her gifts and photos of himself and she did the same. In his last letter home Harry reassured Dorothy that he hadn't forgotten her but had been missing in action.

*During this time he had lost his pack with her treasured photos and asked if she could send some more with her next letter. After Harry's death, Dorothy wrote to his brother Reg about the loss of the person they both loved. Reg, who was also serving in New Guinea, replied noting that when he was back in Melbourne he would come and see her. Reg and Dorothy fell in love and were married in April 1944.*

Enlistment photo of Harry Saunders.  
NAA: B883, Harry Saunders



AWM REL35065

During times of war people were often separated from their loved ones, family and friends. Communication and news from home was important to the morale of those serving. Postage services were unreliable and it could be weeks between letters or telegrams. Explore more stories of wartime relationships in **Forever Yours** on [anzacportal.dva.gov.au](http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au) and consider how those relationships were impacted by distance and time.



# DAVE ARDEN

Dave Arden is a Kokatha, Gunditjmara singer and songwriter. Throughout his more than 30-year career he has performed with fellow artists including Archie Roach, Ruby Hunter and Paul Kelly. Through his music Dave tells stories of culture, of country, of community and family.

For the song 'Freedom Called' Dave collaborated with Paul Kelly to commemorate Indigenous soldiers including his relatives who fought in both world wars.



*'For our Country' is a memorial at the Australian War Memorial which recognises the military service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is a space in which to commemorate their service in all conflicts in which Australia's military has been deployed. It is also a place to contemplate the sacrifices that Indigenous Australians have made and continue to make in defence of Country. Consider the many different ways to commemorate, including through music, art, dance, public events, and quiet contemplation.*

Photography Credit: Ben Hosking  
Design Credit: Daniel Boyd and Edition Office

## **Freedom Called**

*My great uncles were ordinary men  
They fought in the First World War  
Left a wife and children  
When the army came to call*

*They were sectioned at Gallipoli  
Stood on the Turkish shore  
All around so many young faces  
Some didn't come back at all*

*When freedom called  
Those wounded men and women stood tall  
When freedom called  
Oh God!  
Is there nothing left at all?  
When freedom called ...*

*Andy Arden came from Framlingham  
He fought in the Second World War  
A full-grown man, but not a citizen  
He couldn't vote under the law*

*They sectioned him in Gunditjmara country  
On the western district shore  
Drafted as an M.P.  
To uphold the army's law*

*When freedom called  
Those Gunditj men and women stood tall  
When freedom called  
Oh God!  
Is there nothing left at all?  
When freedom called ...*

*Sometimes those men would sit there quiet  
Go driftin' in their mind  
It seemed to me they could see the spirits  
Of the ones they left behind  
They fought for more than just their homeland  
They fought for respect  
To walk down a road like any other man  
Lest We Forget ...*

*When freedom called  
Those Mara men and women stood tall  
When freedom called  
Oh God!  
Is there nothing left at all?*

*When freedom called ...  
Those Gunditj men and women stood tall  
When freedom called*

An Australian Army soldier from 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment, performs a traditional Sarpeye Dance following a parade celebrating the formation of Regional Force Surveillance Group, in Darwin.

Department of Defence Image 20180904adf8561311\_329



# GLOSSARY

<b>Allies</b>	in the First World War, the powers of the Triple Entente (France, Russia and the United Kingdom) together with the nations that joined them.
<b>Australian Imperial Force (AIF)</b>	formed in 1914 following the outbreak of the First World War.
<b>casualties</b>	people who are injured or killed in a war.
<b>conscription</b>	when citizens are made to join their country's military force, such as the army
<b>convalescent camp</b>	a place to rest and recover following an injury or illness.
<b>drover</b>	someone who moves livestock like sheep and cattle over long distances.
<b>enlisted</b>	joined a country's military force, such as the army – enlist in, enlisting in; also enlistment (noun)
<b>evacuated</b>	to be taken from a dangerous place to a safer place.
<b>Federation</b>	on 1 January 1901 the six separate British colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia united to form the Commonwealth of Australia.
<b>interned</b>	being held in a prison or camp for political or military reasons.
<b>offensive</b>	a carefully planned attack made by a large formation or group of soldiers.
<b>pillboxes</b>	concrete shelters with thick walls that were built on the front lines to protect the troops inside. They had small openings from which to fire weapons.
<b>rations</b>	a limited amount of certain goods such as food, clothing and petrol. During times of war these restrictions are placed when there is little of these things available.
<b>referendum</b>	a national vote for people to decide whether or not they agree with a policy
<b>repatriated</b>	returning a veteran home after they have been injured, become sick or been killed in another country; also refers to returning a military force when conflict has ceased.
<b>trawler</b>	A fishing vessel that uses large nets to catch fish.

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Indigenous Histories

Discovering Anzacs

State Library of Queensland

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

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[awm.gov.au](http://awm.gov.au)

[naa.gov.au](http://naa.gov.au)

[trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au)

[indigenoushistories.com](http://indigenoushistories.com)

[discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au](http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au)

[slq.qld.gov.au](http://slq.qld.gov.au)

[aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au)

## Further Resources

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has a wide range of resources which are available for free download at [anzacportal.dva.gov.au](http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au). A hardcopy of these resources are available by emailing the Education team at: [education@dva.gov.au](mailto:education@dva.gov.au).

*Indigenous Service: A Resource for Primary Schools* (book)

*Indigenous Service: A Resource for Secondary Schools* (book)

*Stories of Service: Reg Saunders* (video)

*Stories of Service: Bill Coolburra* (video)

*Veterans Stories: Roy Mundine* (video)

*Century of Service: Ancestry*

*Century of Service: Candour*

*Century of Service: Endurance*

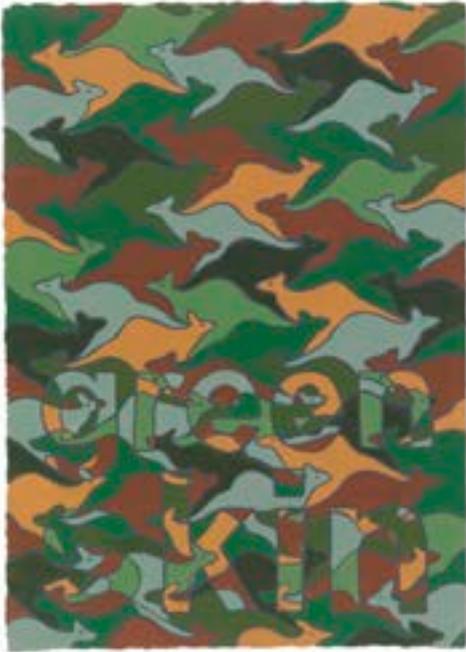
*Century of Service: Patriotism*



AWM REL33317

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1

1:  
NORFORCE is a surveillance unit, and camouflage is an important part of its operations, assisting soldiers to move invisibly within the landscape. For this art work Tony Albert created his own gangurru (Girramay word for grey kangaroo) camouflage in the same camouflage colours used by NORFORCE.

*Green Skin (Gangurru Camouflage)*, Tony Albert, 2013, acrylic on paper, 30.6 x 21.8 cm. AWM ART94999

2:  
Reach out and touch - distance and time by Ellen Jose commemorates the Kokoda campaign and the experiences of Ellen's father who fought in New Guinea and the Pacific. She uses personal symbols and the river or road to represent time and memory.

*Reach out and touch - distance and time*, Ellen Jose, 1992, watercolour with gold enamel over pencil on paper on linen, 38 x 76.5 cm. AWM ART90724

3:  
This comic strip style painting looks at the lack of recognition felt by many Indigenous service men and women after the Second World War.

*Coloured Diggers*, Tony Albert, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 178 cm. AWM ART96531

2



3



This artwork represents many different elements relating to the experiences and law of NORFORCE. The symbols used represent the journey from induction to walking together as one family after the patrol man course. Norcom headquarters and the instructors also feature.

*NORFORCE*, Gabriel Nodea, 2016, natural ochre and pigments on canvas, Framed: 96.3 cm x 125.5 cm x 7.8 cm; Unframed: 90.7 cm x 120 cm. AWM 2016.546.1



‘My craft carries the storyline of my ancestors where I weave fish nets and use bird feathers in a craft that was handed down from my maternal great-grandmother Christina... I am honoured to be able to use my family traditions to remember and honour all of the people who went to war and all those who were left behind.’ Aunty Glenda Nicholls, 2016

*Sunrise*, Glenda Nicholls, 2016, Metal; Jute; Emu feather; Plastic, Overall - Conservation: 1050 mm x 1050 mm x 100 mm

