

# Babana News

February 21009



Babana News is the official Newsletter of the Babana Aboriginal Men's Group Inc., and is produced in the main as an e-letter. A copy will also be produced in the Babana Myspace site and a limited number will be available at our General Meetings.

Opinions and conclusions contained in the 'Your Word' section are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, policies, aims or objectives of Babana Aboriginal Men's Group.

Volume 1 Issue 6

## Aboriginal war veterans no longer forgotten

IN JULY, Murdoch's Nexus Theatre hosted the launch of *The Forgotten*, a 40-minute documentary telling the story of the Aboriginal soldiers who fought and died for Australia.

The film examines the prejudice faced by these soldiers in the armed forces and the honour they felt representing their nation.

The Hon Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Culture and the Arts and Professor Kateryna Longley, Executive Dean of SSHE, presented the documentary to a crowd including WA Aboriginal war veterans and influential members of the Aboriginal community.

The President of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Veterans &

Services Association (WA) Phil Prosser spoke about the contribution of Aboriginal Veterans to the defence of the country.

Writer, producer and director of *The Forgotten*, Glen Stasiuk, was inspired by his family's history and the respect he felt for the ANZAC "black diggers".

"I had members of my family fight and die in both World Wars, and my great uncle was one of the first Aboriginal soldiers to receive a war medal," Mr Stasiuk said.

"This film is for them and all the other Aboriginal people who have fought for our country and not gotten the recognition that they deserved.

"Not a lot of people know about the contribution made by Aboriginal people,

particularly during the earlier wars. I hope *The Forgotten* can help get these stories across."

*The Forgotten* features war veterans and family member's personal experiences and thoughts from both World Wars, as well as veterans who served in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and East Timor.

The film took two years to make and included extensive research throughout Western Australia and in Canberra.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) kindly provided funds and research support.

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## From the Chair



Mark Spinks Chair of Babana

Few Australians are aware that Aborigines have fought in every war that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War'

ANZAC Day is as Australian as Holdens & meat pies. It is the quintessential honouring of those who fought in wars so Australia could have its peace.

There are those who would say that it was a peace only for mainstream Australia. That Aboriginal people got no peace from those overseas conflicts. And there is a lot to agree with in those sentiments.

For too long the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the war efforts has not been recognised. There is very little to show Indigenous recognition at the Australian War Museum, unless you take a walk up a rather lonely path. The War Museum does not recognise the 'Aboriginal Wars', stating that they only celebrate wars outside of Australia; flying in the face of legal advice that they can recognise our forebears' contribution.

David Huggonsen, a Canberra historian says; ' Few Australians are aware that Aborigines have fought in every war that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War'.

And Aboriginal Australia was never given the opportunity to learn of those brave men and women either.

They are the 'Forgotten Heroes' of Australia.

So, the Coloured Digger Project came about. It was formed by a

small group of men and women who believe that 'Our' history should also be told. That 'Our' men and women should also be recognised and honoured.

Both government and private history sites state that many Aboriginal Australians who served in the wars, once they came back to Australia, were herded back onto the missions. Some had their children taken away; some who served were even part of the Stolen Generations themselves. And there are still those who remember being told to march at the back of the march and not with their units in country towns. It reminds me of the 'Picture Show', where Aboriginal people were forced to sit in special places and not with the 'good white community'.

So on Saturday we will honour Indigenous fallen. We will honour those indigenes who came back. We will honour those who have fell by the wayside after they came back. We will honour them all. And 'we will remember them'.

Lest we Forget.

We intend to publish an extra edition of the newsletter soon after ANZAC Day with plenty of photos and stories on the day.

Come along if you can. This event is open to all people—regardless of race—who want to join us in showing our respect.

For those who have not yet seen the flyers, the march will begin at the Block at 1:00 p.m. and march along Redfern Street to Redfern Park.

## Short bits

Some 'short bits on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service to the country.

### Boer War

It is not well recognised that Aboriginal men were utilised in the Boer War in South Africa as scouts.

#### First World War

Over 400 Indigenous Australians fought in the First World War. They came from a section of society with few rights, low wages, and poor living conditions. Most Aborigines could not vote and none were counted in the census. But once in the AIF, they were treated as equals. They were paid the same as other soldiers and generally accepted without prejudice.

### Enlistment and Service First World War

When war broke out in 1914, many Aborigines who tried to enlist were rejected on the grounds of race; others slipped through the net. By October 1917, when recruits were harder to find and one conscription referendum had already been lost, restrictions were cautiously eased. A new Military Order stated: "Half-castes may be enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force provided that the examining Medical Officers are satisfied that one of the parents is of European origin."

This was as far as Australia – officially – would go.

### Too dark

Aborigines in the First World War served on equal terms but after the war, in areas such as education, employment, and civil liberties,

Aboriginal ex-servicemen and women found that discrimination remained or, indeed, had worsened during the war period.

### The Post First World War Period

Only one Aborigine is known to have received land under a "soldier settlement" scheme, despite the fact that much of the best farming land in Aboriginal reserves was confiscated for soldier settlement blocks.

The repression of Aborigines increased between the wars, as protection acts gave government officials greater control over Indigenous Australians. As late as 1928 Aborigines were being massacred in reprisal raids. A considerable Aboriginal political movement in the 1930s achieved little improvement in civil rights.

### Enlistment and Service Second World War

#### To serve or not to serve

In 1939 Aborigines were divided over the issue of military service. Some Aboriginal organisations believed war service would help the push for full citizenship rights and proposed the formation of special Aboriginal battalions to maximise public visibility.

Others, such as William Cooper, the Secretary of the Australian Aborigines' League, argued that Aborigines should not fight for White Australia. Cooper had lost his son in the First World War and was bitter that Aboriginal sacrifice had not brought any improvement in rights and conditions. He likened conditions in White-administered

Aboriginal settlements to those suffered by Jews under Hitler. Cooper demanded improvements at home before taking up "the privilege of defending the land which was taken from him by the White race without compensation or even kindness'.

### Enlistment Second World War

At the start of the Second World War Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders were allowed to enlist and many did so. But in 1940 the Defence Committee decided the enlistment of Indigenous Australians was "neither necessary nor desirable", partly because White Australians would object to serving with them. However, when Japan entered the war increased need for manpower forced the loosening of restrictions. Torres Strait Islanders were recruited in large numbers and Aborigines increasingly enlisted as soldiers and were recruited or conscripted into labour corps.

### In the front line

With the Japanese advance in 1942, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the north found themselves in the front line against the attackers. There were fears that Aboriginal contact with Japanese pearlers before the war might lead to their giving assistance to the enemy. Like the peoples of South-East Asia under colonial regimes, Aborigines might easily have seen the Japanese as liberators from White rule. Many did express bitterness at their treatment, but, overwhelmingly, Indigenous Australians supported the country's

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Aboriginals' significant role in WWI revealed

Eniar.org  
13 April 2004  
Danny Rose

The names of more than 400 Aboriginal soldiers who served in World War I have been uncovered – and many were from Tasmania's Bass Strait islands.

Canberra-based historian David Huggonson, who has spent 20 years researching the Aboriginal contribution to Australia's military campaigns, announced his findings yesterday.

Mr Huggonson said he had uncovered the names of 428 Aboriginal soldiers who served in WWI.

Flinders and Cape Barren islands provided the highest number of early Aboriginal enlistments.

They were also mostly from the Maynard or Mansell families who, Mr Huggonson said, had gone on to produce some of Tasmania's most outspoken Aboriginal activists.

"Few Australians are aware that Aborigines have served in every war that Australia has fought in since the Boer War," Mr Huggonson said yesterday.

"There are 428 names so far just for World War I, from every state of Australia.

"But I was surprised to see quite a few Tasmanians from Cape Barren Island and Flinders Island."

He said the figure of 428 Aboriginal soldiers who fought in WWI was significant, as Australia's Aboriginal population at the time was estimated to be about 80,000.

Mr Huggonson said army regulations at the time had banned anyone not of European origin from enlisting.

"It was only in May 1917 that an army order allowed the enlistment of 'half-castes' due to the shortage of volunteers and the carnage on the Western Front," he said.

Mr Huggonson said the Tasmanian Aborigines who served were most likely the children of European sealers and Aboriginal women.

He said it was important that the role played by Australia's Aboriginal soldiers was recognised.

"Federation occurred in 1901 but Gallipoli solidified Australia's nationhood, rather than being separate states," Mr Huggonson said.

"It is important to note that Aboriginal soldiers played a role in that."

Mr Huggonson's research continues and he specifically wants to identify a soldier from Cape Barren Island contained in an old photograph.

Anyone with any information on Tasmania's Aboriginal soldiers can contact Mr Huggonson by mail at: 12 Shore Place, Weston, ACT, 2611.

related links :

[The Forgotten](#) - To celebrate ANZAC day and pay tribute to the Indigenous men & women that have proudly served this nation ABC's Message Stick presented a twenty six minute documentary: The FORGOTTEN.

[Islander soldiers no longer our forgotten heroes](#)

25 April 2003 - They were not citizens of Australia, nor did they have the right to vote. But in 1942, when enemy forces were on Australia's doorstep and the

government looked to the Torres Strait for help, the islanders answered in their hundreds, leaving families and jobs to protect the country's vulnerable northern gateway.

[Displaying the British Empire for Posterity](#)

4 January 2003 - New York Times - As Britain's baby boomers came of age in the mid-1960's, the sun was setting on the British Empire. Instead of young Britons heading off to run the colonies as soldiers and administrators, Jamaicans, Indians, Pakistanis and other former colonial subjects began migrating in droves to Britain. It was now the turn of the ex-colonies to change the mother country. In a sense, the British Empire had come home to roost.

"It was only in May 1917 that an army order allowed the enlistment of 'half-castes' due to the shortage of volunteers and the carnage on the Western Front"



# 'All In'—Indigenous Service

Australia's War—1939—1945  
Department of Veteran Affairs web site :

<http://www.ww2australia.gov.au/index.html>

How were the Indigenous peoples of Australia drawn into World War II?

Some material in official records suggest that some European Australians were nervous about the possible loyalty of Aborigines in the northern parts of the country. For example, on 1 April 1942, A Mr S McClintock from Perth wrote to the Prime Minister, the Honourable Mr John Curtin, with a suggestion:

As the Australian aborigines up North are wonderful bushmen- and unbeatable at finding water etc. – and as they will help anyone for a plug of tobacco and gaudy clothes, it seems to me that they should all be removed far inland from any likely enemy landing places – Darwin, Wyndham, Broome, Carnarvon etc. – as if taken by the Japanese they might prove very useful to them as guides, and in securing water etc.

Aboriginal stockmen were employed to drive cattle towards the Army slaughter yards from widely dispersed areas in northern Australia. Katherine, Northern Territory, 1 February 1943.



Aboriginal stockmen were employed to drive cattle towards the Army slaughter yards from widely dispersed areas in northern Australia. Katherine, Northern Territory, 1 February 1943.

The Prime Minister acknowledged his letter and forwarded it to the Minister for the Army, the Honourable

Frank Forde. On 18 May 1942, Mr Forde replied to Mr McClintock saying:  
Your interest in putting forward this



Flight Sergeant Leonard Waters, Australia's first and only Aboriginal fighter pilot during World War II, seen here in his Kittyhawk 'Black Magic'.

suggestion is much appreciated and, while the idea is basically sound, it is not considered practicable with the means or time at our disposal.

But it was not only Mr McClintock who didn't want the Australian Aborigines anywhere near the enemy. Neither did the Australian Army nor the Royal Australian Navy, both of which excluded persons 'not substantially of European origin or descent' until the threat of Japanese invasion necessitated the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was more lenient, accepting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders early on because of a critical shortage of manpower due to the demands of the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Despite the early ban on their enlistment, a number of Aboriginal volunteers either claimed another nationality or just renounced their Aboriginality. Some recruiting officers either through indifference or confusion allowed Indigenous Australians to slip through. Outstanding soldiers such as Reg Saunders and Charles Mene slipped through and demonstrated that

fears of disharmony between black and white personnel were unfounded. In some other instances, however, there were various repercussions when some of those who were keen to enlist were sent home.PDF

In mid-1941, changes in attitude towards Indigenous Australians enabled numerous Aborigines to enlist in some of the smaller units of the services where they were able to integrate and sometimes to become NCOs, commanding white soldiers. In these smaller units the Indigenous Australians were able to leave the prejudices of their civilian world behind them and be accepted as Australian servicemen. The Torres Strait Light Infantry battalion was one example of the Indigenous contribution.

Lieutenant L Reg Saunders, the first Aboriginal commissioned in the Australian Army being congratulated by Lieutenant Tom Derrick VC DCM after their successful graduation from the Officers Cadet Training Unit at Seymour, Victoria, 25 November 1944.

Much thought was given to the use of Indigenous manpower for the war effort. In Northern Australia, the Special Reconnaissance Unit raised in 1941 by anthropologist Flight Lieutenant Donald Thomson was formed almost exclusively of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Similar units were formed at Bathurst and Melville Island, at Groote Eylant and on the Cox Peninsula. The Aborigines who served in those units were not formally enlisted and nor were they paid. In



(Continued on page 8)

## Small Bits (continued)

*(Continued from page 3)*

defence.

### Service in the army

Hundreds of Aborigines served in the 2nd AIF and the militia. Many were killed fighting and at least a dozen died as prisoners of war. As in the First World War, Aborigines served under the same conditions as Whites and, in most cases, with the promise of full citizenship rights after the war. Generally, there seems to have been little racism between soldiers.

### Returned soldiers

Wartime service gave many Indigenous Australians pride and confidence in demanding their rights. Moreover, the army in northern Australia had been a benevolent employer compared to pre-war pastoralists and helped to change attitudes to Aborigines as employees.

Nevertheless, Aborigines who fought for their country came back to much the same discrimination as before. For example, many were barred from Returned and Services League clubs, except on ANZAC Day. Many of them were not given the right to vote for another 17 years.

### Enlistment after the war

Once the intense demands of the war were gone, the army re-imposed its restrictions on enlistment. But attitudes had

changed and restrictions based on race were abandoned in 1949. Since then Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have served in all conflicts in which Australia has participated.

### Other services

Little is known about how many Aborigines have served in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). The numbers are likely lower than for the army but future research may tell a different story.

### RAAF

Throughout the Second World War the RAAF, with its huge need for manpower, was less restrictive in its recruiting than the army. However, little is known about Aboriginal aircrew. Aborigines were employed for surveillance in northern Australia and to rescue downed pilots.

### Leonard Waters

Leonard Waters, a childhood admirer of Charles Kingsford-Smith and Amy Johnson, joined the RAAF in 1942. After lengthy and highly competitive training he was selected as a pilot and assigned to 78 Squadron, stationed in Dutch New Guinea and later in Borneo. The squadron flew Kittyhawk fighters like the one on display in the Memorial's Aircraft Hall.

Waters named his Kittyhawk "Black Magic" and flew ninety-five operational sorties. After the war he

hoped to find a career in civilian flying but bureaucratic delays and lack of financial backing forced him to go back to shearing. Like many others, he found civilian life did not allow him to use the skills that he had gained during the war.

### RAN

As well as an unknown number of formally enlisted Aborigines and Islanders, the RAN also employed some informal units. For example, John Gribble, a coastwatcher on Melville Island, formed a unit of thirty-six Aborigines which patrolled a large area of coast and islands. The men were never formally enlisted and remained unpaid throughout the war, despite the promise of otherwise.

### Kamuel Abednego

The United States Navy recruited about twenty Torres Strait Islanders as crewmen on its small ships operating in the Torres Strait and around Papua New Guinea. Kamuel Abednego was given the rank of lieutenant, at a time when no Aborigine or Islander had served as a commissioned officer with the Australian forces.

### Life on the home front

The war brought greater contact than ever before between the Whites of southern Australia and the Aborigines and Islanders of the north. For the Whites it was a chance to learn about Aboriginal

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Continued from page 6)*

culture and see the poor conditions imposed on Aborigines. For the Aborigines the war accelerated the process of cultural change and, in the long term, ensured a position of greater equality in Australian society.

### **Labour units**

During the Second World War the army and RAAF depended heavily on Aboriginal labour in northern Australia. Aborigines worked on construction sites, in army butcheries, and on army farms. They also drove trucks, handled cargo, and provided general labour around camps. The RAAF sited airfields and radar stations near missions that could provide Aboriginal labour. At a time when Australia was drawing on all its reserves of men and women to support the war effort, the Aboriginal contribution was vital.

The army began to employ Aborigines in the Northern Territory in 1933, on conditions similar to those endured by Aboriginal workers on pastoral stations: long hours, poor housing and diet, and low pay. But as the army took over control of settlements from the Native Affairs Branch during the war conditions improved greatly. For the first time Aborigines were given adequate housing and sanitation, fixed working hours,

proper rations, and access to medical treatment in army hospitals.

Pay rates remained low. The army tried to increase pay above the standard 5 shillings a week and at one stage the RAAF was paying Aborigines 5 shillings a day. But pressure from the civilian administration and pastoralists forced pay back to the standard rate.

In some areas the war caused great hardship. In the islands of Torres Strait, the pearling luggers that provided most of the local income were confiscated in case they fell into Japanese hands. The Islanders enlisted in units such as the Torres Strait Light Infantry, in which their pay was much lower than Whites and often not enough to send home to feed their families.

### **Women**

Aboriginal women also played an important role. Many enlisted in the women's services or worked in war industries. In northern Australia Aboriginal and Islander women worked hard to support isolated RAAF outposts and even helped to salvage crashed aircraft.

### **Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker)**

Oodgeroo Noonuccal joined the Australian Women's Army Service in 1942, after her two brothers were captured by the Japanese at

the fall of Singapore. Serving as a signaller in Brisbane she met many black American soldiers, as well as European Australians. These contacts helped to lay the foundations for her later advocacy of Aboriginal rights.

### **Donald Thomson and the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit**

Donald Thomson was an anthropologist from Melbourne who had lived with the East Arnhem Land Aborigines for two years in the 1930s. In 1941 he set up and led the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit, an irregular army unit consisting of 51 Aborigines, five Whites, and a number of Pacific and Torres Strait Islanders. Three of the men had been to gaol for killing the crews of two Japanese pearling luggers in 1932. Now they were told that it was their duty to kill Japanese.

The members of the unit were to use their traditional bushcraft and fighting skills to patrol the coastal area, establish coastwatchers, and fight a guerrilla war against any Japanese who landed. Living off the country and using traditional weapons, they were mobile and had no supply line to protect. Thomson shared the group's hardships and used his knowledge of Aboriginal custom to help deal with traditional rivalries. The unit was eventually disbanded, once the fear of a Japanese landing had

1992 they were finally awarded medals and remuneration.

On 2 April 1942, Professor Adolphus Elkin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney wrote to the Prime Minister about the military authorities' refusal to accept a number of mixed blood Aboriginal men for military service. He felt that the government should 'take every opportunity' to give the Aborigines a chance of helping their country 'either in the fighting services or in auxiliaries to these services or in factories.'

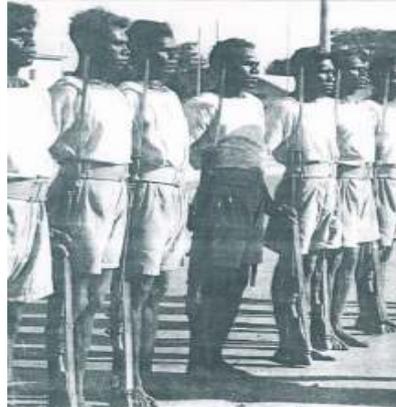
Another anthropologist, William Stanner, personal assistant to Frank Forde, Minister for the Army, had suggested a mobile unit based on the Boer commandos during the Boer War as well as on Australia's own Lighthorse



Lieutenant L Reg Saunders, the first Aboriginal commissioned in the Australian Army being congratulated by Lieutenant Tom Derrick VC DCM after their successful graduation from the Officers Cadet Training Unit at Seymour, Victoria, 25 November 1944

tradition and he was tasked with raising and organising the mobile unit colloquially known as the 'Nackeroos' [North Australia Observer Unit].

It is estimated that approximately 3000 Indigenous Australians served in the regular armed forces and possibly up to 150 in irregular units. Even now it is impossible to estimate how many Indigenous men and women enlisted to serve in World War II. Australian Defence Force enlistment forms did not allow for Aboriginals to declare their heritage until 1980 and so we can only



Indigenous servicemen in Darwin during Second World War

and clearing gearboxes. The Army eventually employed 20 percent of the Territory's Aboriginal population. Aboriginal women were employed in domestic duties or as hospital orderlies at the 121/101 Australian General Hospital at Katherine. In Port Hedland in Western Australia, many local Aborigines who were man-powered [in occupations which were essential for the production of equipment or supplies for the war effort] on stations and in the pastoral industry, were also members of the Voluntary Defence Corps (VDC) operating coastal defences, searchlights and anti-aircraft batteries in emergencies.

One resident, Mr Teddy Allen, was a VDC member on De Grey Station. He, and a couple of the other Aboriginal station workers, received some military training and were responsible for ensuring that the Aboriginal station workers and their families complied with black-out provisions. They also moved them to safety in air raid shelters on the banks of the nearby river whenever a military plane flew overhead.

Although they were not classed or treated as Australian citizens, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

guess how many thousands volunteered for both home and overseas service. Some 3000 others were employed as labourers performing vital tasks for the military. They salvaged crashed aircraft, located unexploded bombs, built roads and airfields and assisted in the delivery of civilian and military supplies.

In Katherine in the Northern Territory, Aboriginal compounds were located near the Army units



Aborigines employed by 1st Australian Farm Company, Australian Army Service Company, mixing concrete for floors and the pipeline at NO 2 farm section, Adelaide River, Northern Territory, 11 November 1942.

and most of the men worked as labourers. They were employed in ammunition stacking, timber cutting and cement works, maintaining gardens, slaughtering cattle, and assembling





*Douglas Grant in Sydney circa 1930  
(Courtesy of Mitchell Library, Sydney).*

## Talented Aborigine: 13th Bn.

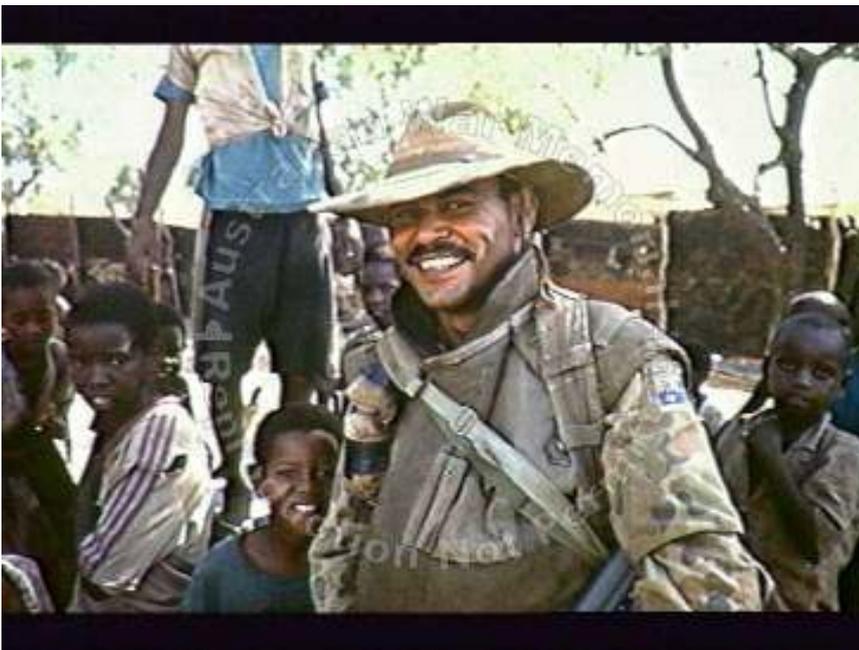
Perhaps no Aborigine who served in the A.I.F. was more widely known than 6020 Douglas Grant, 13th Bn. Poppin Jerri, to give Grant his natural name, was born in North Queensland about 1885.



When 12 months old he was taken by Messrs. R. Grant, and E. J. Cairn during a fight between a punitive expedition from Cairns and the blacks in North East Q'land., and his mother and father were killed in the fight.

A native trooper was about to kill Poppin Jerri, but Mr. Grant dashed in and rescued the baby, and had him brought to Lithgow to the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry S. Grant. Poppin Jerri was adopted by the Grants, given a good education, and trained as a draughtsman. He became a clever penman and sketch artist, and in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Exhibition in 1897, he won first prize for a coloured drawing of the bust of Queen Victoria.

Permission to serve with the A.I.F. was at first denied him by the Aborigines Protection Board, but his perseverance won, and he was posted to the 13th Bn., and was taken prisoner at the first Bullecourt. Owing to his high educational qualifications, the Germans placed him in charge of the captured coloured troops. Mr. Grant's home is now in Sydney.



Private Graeme "Brownie" Brown, of 2 Platoon, A Company 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) surrounded by children while on a foot patrol around Baidoa, Somalia on the 22nd of March 1993. He was serving with the Australian contingent of the Unified Task Force in Somalia (UNITAF). Photo by George Gittoes, part of a series featuring "Brownie". AWM image: P1735.400

# Captured

## WORLD WAR ONE

### Douglas Grant

Douglas was captured at the first battle of Bullecourt in 1917, while serving with the 13th Battalion. He is mentioned in the 13th Battalion history.

### Archibald Johnson

Captured at Villers-Bretonneux whilst in action with the 35th Battalion.

### William Williams

Captured at Albert, France.

## WORLD WAR TWO

### Bill Carlyon

While serving with the 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion, he was put onto the infamous Burma-Thailand railway after being held at Changi.

"During his imprisonment, a white mate of Bill's developed a duodenal ulcer which burst. His mates had heard that there was an Australian Army surgeon at another camp, 2 kilometres away through the jungle and an operation was likely to be the only thing to save his life. They persuaded the Japanese to let them take him to the surgeon and with their agreement, Bill Carlyon and his friends made a stretcher and took their mate through the jungle at night. Both men survived their captivity and became firm friends".

### Cyril Brockman

Died while prisoner at Changi Prisoner of War camp.

### Leonard Brown - QX 11084

Captured in Malaya

**George Edward Cubby - QX 11113**

Captured in Malaya. George was from Toomelah Mission, Boggabilla N.S.W.

### John Knox - QX 11089

Captured in Malaya

### Bill Lawson

Captured with the rest of the 2/26th Battalion he died of illness at Changi Prisoner of War Camp.

### Charles Livermore - NX 45029

Captured with his unit, the 2/18th Battalion in Malaya. According to the book "Against all the Odds" (by James Burfitt on the 2/18th Bn), a Japanese guard would not believe that he was Koori and beat him up. Charles then 'pointed the bone' and the guard died, along with the next two guards that took his place.

### Vivian Maynard

Captured at Singapore with the 2/40th Battalion, he died of illness at Changi Prisoner of War Camp on the 24th of June 1944.

### Claude McDermott

Claude enlisted in the 2nd AIF in Queensland and was captured along with his entire unit (2/24th Bn) in the defence of Singapore in February 1942. He spent two and a half years in mainland Japan. One story he recounted was one where he challenged the 'best' Japanese guard to a fight, which Claude won. His prize, a whole can of bully beef.

He returned to the Tweed Heads area of N.S.W. after the war, where he passed away in 1975. His grandson is currently in the Australian Regular Army and is in East Timor as part of Operation Stabilise.

### Joseph Mye - QX 13541

Captured in Malaya

### Edward Mussing - QX 9776

Captured in Malaya

### Howard John Percy Siddeley - QX 11091

Captured in Malaya

[Ed note: this is not believed to be a comprehensive list by most historians.

Until recent times there was no box on forms for an Indigenous person to indicate their claim. So, many people who served in all the Armed Forces would not have been recorded as Indigenous.

Research is now being carried out to find more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who served in the various wars with which Australia has been involved.

The writer knows of Aboriginal involvement in WW I, WW II, Korea, Borneo, the Malaysian insurrection, Cyprus and Vietnam. There are others.]

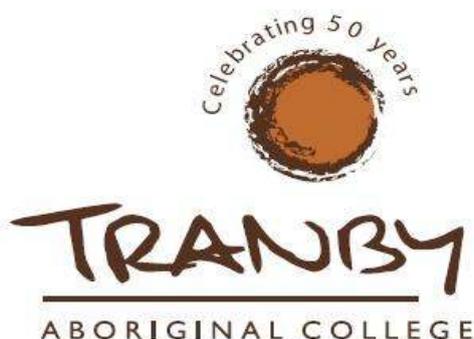
*The guns were silent, and the silent hills/had bowed their grasses to a gentle breeze*

*I gazed upon the vales and on the rills/And whispered, "What of these?" and "What of these?"*

*These long forgotten dead with sunken graves,/ Some crossless, with unwritten memories*

*Their only mourners are the moaning waves,/ Their only minstrels are the singing trees  
And thus I mused and sorrowed wistfully.*

[So ends the first verse of *The Last to Leave*, written by 23-year-old Australian soldier-poet Leon Gellert, a combatant at Gallipoli, to mark the evacuation of the peninsula in 1915]



## TRANBY FUNDRAISING TRIVIA NIGHT

Please join us on Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> May for a night of trivia upstairs at the Toxteth Hotel, 345 Glebe Point Road.

\$10.00 covers entry, snacks and the opportunity to win some great prizes!

Please come along and support this worthy cause. Bookings can be made for individuals or groups of ten.

The fun starts at 6:30pm *sharp* and winds up around 8:00, and there is a buy one, get one free deal available from the Toxteth Restaurant afterwards.

RSVP for Trivia and dinner bookings to Annaliese Monaro on 9660 3444 or at [a.monaro@tranby.edu.au](mailto:a.monaro@tranby.edu.au)

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<http://www.myspace.com/babanaboriginal>

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1715072238&ref=profile>

## Quote of the week

The end of World War II marked a time of celebration and relief for most Australians. For Aboriginal Australians in many parts of the nation the celebration was short-lived

Adam Shoemaker



Babana members, guests and friends

## Babana Aboriginal Men's Group Inc. General Meeting

Please Note: There will be no general meeting this month. We will, instead join the Coloured Digger March.

Redfern Community Centre (Basement level)  
29—53 Hugo Street  
Redfern NSW 2016

Light lunch provided