

ReconciliationNews

ISSUE NO 32 // April 2015

A century on,
**the fight for
recognition**

What it means to be a
**First Australian
sailor, soldier
or airman today**

Remembering
the whole story



Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA

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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders both past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

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As the national organisation building relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and to the elders both past and present. Reconciliation Australia is an independent, not-for-profit, non-government organisation. Your active contribution and financial support helps us develop innovative programs and resources. This magazine is compiled by Reconciliation Australia to share reconciliation stories, issues and opinions. Feedback and story ideas are always welcome along with names and addresses of people who would like to receive the newsletter. Please email us at: enquiries@reconciliation.org.au

Cover image: Image courtesy Queensland Theatre Company.



CEO's message

I am grateful, in the lead up to Anzac Day, for this opportunity to reflect and pay my respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have served their country.

At Reconciliation Australia, we take great pride in the contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make throughout all aspects of Australian society, including our armed services. The Centenary of Anzac provides us with the chance to deepen our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contribution to both our past and present military efforts.

This issue of *Reconciliation News* celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contribution to our nation's military efforts—by bringing together a collection of stories spanning 100 years.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston reflects on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers who have exemplified the Anzac spirit throughout their service. In the spirit of reconciliation, he also shares his belief that recognition of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service people is a vitally important part of the Anzac Centenary. ABC journalist Nance Haxton similarly shares her pride in fighting for due recognition of previously forgotten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anzacs.

The work of Gary Oakley and his team at the Australian War Memorial is building an ever-increasing knowledge library of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have served. Through such work as this, we hope that one day we will be able to properly recognise these amazing contributions, made often at a time when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were legally banned from participating in military service.

I was also honoured to read the stories of three currently serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women, who describe their professions as being steeped in tradition and respect. The sense of belonging that is gained from the Australian armed services cannot be denied, and motivates them to achieve every day.

I'm excited about the upcoming National Reconciliation Week (NRW), now always a highpoint on our calendar. NRW, from 27 May to 3 June, reminds us to show perseverance and to celebrate our successes. This year's theme *It's time to change it up* invites everyone to spark a change in their school, workplace or community—no matter how big or small.

While there are likely to be hundreds of soldiers whose stories have not yet been told, I hope this Anzac Day you will be inspired to collectively commemorate the memories of those who have passed, and those who continue to serve today. Together, we can continue to pay our respects to all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have served in the defence of our nation, and work towards the day when we achieve a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

Justin Mohamed,
CEO Reconciliation Australia



Justin Mohamed. Image by Emma Hedditch.



Troops of the 2/7th Infantry Battalion in the carriages and on the station platform waiting for the south-bound leave train to start in October 1943. Image courtesy Australian War Memorial.

Service and sacrifice

By Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AFC (Ret'd)

Indigenous Australians have served in every conflict involving Australia and her servicemen and women. They were prominent participants in World War I and the Anzac Centenary gives us the opportunity to highlight their service and sacrifice.

In 1915 on the home front Indigenous Australians were not regarded as citizens of our country but many volunteered to serve in the Australian Imperial Forces. They were respected and valued as part of the team and exemplified the Anzac tradition.

One of the most remarkable stories of Indigenous service is the story of the Lovett brothers who came from Western Victoria. Alfred, Leonard, Fredrick, Edward and Herbert all volunteered and served overseas. Against the odds they all returned to Australia and with the exception of Alfred, who was too old, the other four Lovett brothers served our nation in uniform in Australia in the Second World War.

Interestingly, 21 men and women of the Lovett family have served in the Armed Services through a Century of Service. I

would submit that very few families would have such a fine and extensive record of service over so many years.

In her book, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the AIF – The Indigenous Response to World War I', Philippa Scarlet records that Indigenous soldiers served in all parts of the Army. Indeed, they served in all light horse regiments and all but two of the sixty infantry battalions. About one third of those who served became casualties. In terms of distinguished service the Australian War Memorial is aware of three Distinguished Conduct Medals and about a dozen Military Medals awarded to Indigenous soldiers.

On return to Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers returned to the life they had left behind receiving no privileges or gratitude from the Government for their war service.

Fortunately times have changed. During 2014 I was honoured to attend the dedication in Adelaide of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Memorial. This memorial honours

the bravery and service of our Aborigines and Torres Strait peoples during wartime.

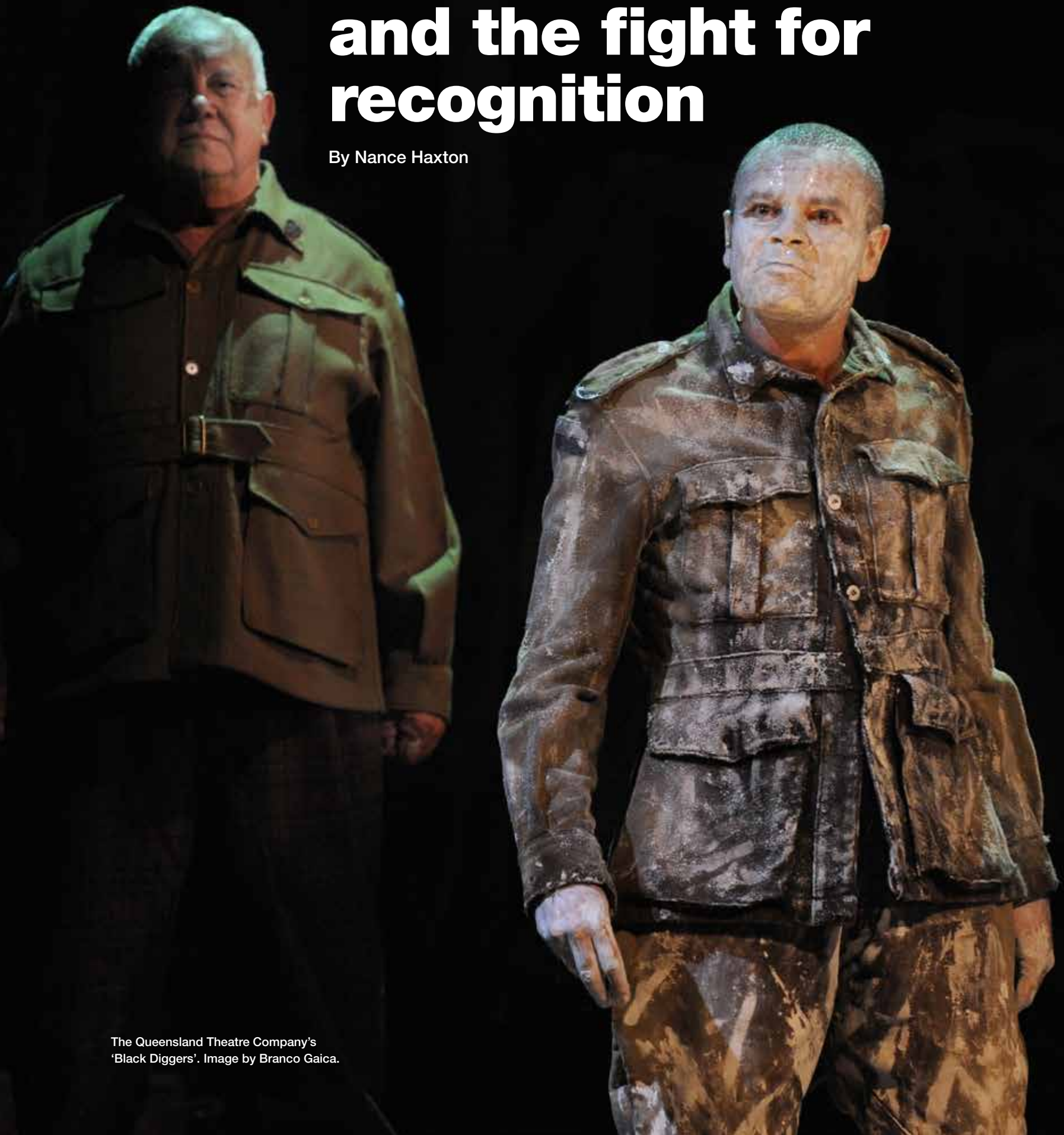
Similarly, through the leadership of Lieven Bertels, and the creativity of Wesley Enoch, the play 'Black Diggers' highlights the contribution and commitment to Australia of Indigenous service people. Based on extensive historical research, Black Diggers tells stories about young Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, like Douglas Grant, who served in World War I. It describes the mutual respect engendered with all their brothers-in-arms, as well as the difficulties returning to a society that not only didn't understand the physical and psychological impacts of war, but marginalised their contribution to the war effort.

Recognition of the contribution of our Indigenous service people in the First World War has been a long time coming and is a vitally important part of the Anzac Centenary.

In the spirit of reconciliation and unity we must remember and recognise the service and sacrifice of our dedicated and loyal Indigenous servicemen and women. This is important to all Australians.

Untold Australian stories of war and the fight for recognition

By Nance Haxton



The Queensland Theatre Company's
'Black Diggers'. Image by Branco Gaica.

At the time of the First World War, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were legally excluded from serving in the armed forces, but that didn't stop hundreds from lying about their identity, so they could fight for their nation. They were equals on the battlefield, but when they returned, they were not given the recognition or entitlements they rightly deserved. And to this day, many of their stories remain a mystery. Nance Haxton, a radio current affairs correspondent for the ABC's AM, PM and The World Today, shares her perspective on helping to tell the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women.

As the centenary anniversary of the Anzac landings at Gallipoli approaches, the fight for recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who fought for their country is increasing. It's a fight I feel privileged to have played a small part in, by telling the stories of some Queensland Indigenous veterans who weren't properly recognised for their deeds.

There are hundreds of soldiers whose stories are largely still untold, who had to hide their true identity to fight for Australia in battle. Some of those soldiers' names are still not honoured in the Australian War Memorial, despite their active service. I was stunned to find while I was researching my ABC Radio 25 minute documentary on this topic that this was still an issue in our time.

Some of the details still amaze me, that Aboriginal people were legally excluded from serving in the armed forces. But that did not stop hundreds of Aboriginal people from lying about their heritage, so they could fight for their nation. While they were equals on the battlefield, when they returned, they were not given the respect or entitlements they deserved. The true extent of their service is only now being realised.

Hundreds of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men went to fight in World War I—despite the Commonwealth Defence Act prohibiting any person not of 'substantially European' origin from serving. For many it was their first taste of freedom away from their lives on reserves and missions—where there were restrictions on movement, residence, employment and citizenship.

It's a story that Di Andrews knows all too well, from her grandfather Jack Lander. Her family has fought for decades since his death in the 1960's, for his service in the Third Lighthorse Brigade in World War I to be properly honoured.

'He was a horsebreaker so when the First Lighthorse went in World War I, he trained all the horses and a lot of the lighthorse soldiers to ride a horse and he trained the horses to go,' Ms Andrews said. 'He wasn't eligible as an Aboriginal man to go, so he stayed behind continuing to prepare the horses. After so many people were killed they said to grandfather "well we need you—we'll just turn a blind eye to the fact that you're Aboriginal". He went off on the third Lighthorse...he saw what was happening on the warfront not only to the horses but to the men and it had an enormous impact on him.'

'While they were equals on the battlefield, when they returned, they were not given the respect or entitlements they deserved.'

Di Andrews says on his return, her grandfather received none of the entitlements his fellow soldiers did, because he was Aboriginal. 'He went and served his country and then he didn't get any of the entitlements when he returned and he was then shunned from society,' she said. 'He signed up in 1917 and in 1945 he was then issued with a black passport which treated him as a complete outsider in his own country. He died in the late 60s but we all know the story and it continues to live on. His name is still not on the official war memorial and that is something I will make sure before I die is done.'

Di Andrews' quest for better recognition for her grandfather and others like him, led to her organising a special commemorative service for the Redlands City Council. As part of that service, and for the first time in its history, the council south-east of Brisbane created an honour role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who fought for their country. Hundreds of people made their way to the Cleveland town square—when the council put on a special ceremony during NAIDOC week last July.

More than 60 names were read out—their service stretching from World War I to more recent conflicts.

It was incredibly moving to listen to each name being read out, and watch as each family rose in acknowledgement as the deeds of their relatives were finally put on the public record. Ninety-one-year-old Arthur Day was one of three brothers who signed up to fight for their country. He has since passed away, but I feel incredibly privileged to have interviewed him and seen the joy on his face at that service.

His son-in-law Denis Kerr is a Vietnam veteran, and says he was relieved and proud to see Arthur's deeds properly recognised on the honour roll.

'The way the Indigenous people were equal when they were in the Services, fighting for their country, but as soon as they left the Services, they were no longer equal—I think that, what us Vietnam vets suffered was nothing compared to the Indigenous people,' Mr Kerr said.

'They weren't even able to go into an RSL. That's how silly it was. It's little pieces at a time. It's never going to be completely righted. Probably not in my lifetime, probably not in your lifetime. But I think it's important that we keep chipping away. We keep doing everything we can to show the respect and honour that our Indigenous people deserve.'

Redland City Council Mayor Karen Williams says when they put out the call to the community for information about their loved ones, the response was extraordinary.

'To in fact have these people who haven't been recognised officially now being on that notional honour roll, is really important,' Ms Williams said.

'It will be an ongoing project and no doubt something that other cities and parts of Australia would like to take on board.'

'When he returned, despite his decorations and service, Len Waters could not get work worthy of his experience.'

Her voice has been joined by others calling for better recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans.

The RSL put on a special commemoration service at Brisbane's Anzac Square to honour Indigenous veterans as part of National Reconciliation Week 2014, last May.

Dianne Russell is the daughter of Len Waters—the first Aboriginal fighter pilot and a man who served his nation in Borneo and New Guinea in World War II. She says the treatment he received when he returned home fell far short of what he deserved.

'He was the only Aboriginal fighter pilot in the Second World War. The only one to date,' Mrs Russell said. 'He didn't have a huge education. He educated himself and he achieved something that no one else has ever been able to do.'

When he returned, despite his decorations and service, Len Waters could not get work worthy of his experience.

Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Dr Tom Calma is a member of the National Reserves Support Council. He says that Len Waters was one of many Aboriginal people who suffered after coming back from war.

'I think he flew something like 97 or so sorties and was very active during World War II. And the irony is that when he returned to Australia he couldn't get a job as a pilot had a lot of difficulty getting a job full stop, and so he ended up reverting to his previous experience as a shearer,' Dr Calma said.

'They weren't given the due recognition, they weren't able to participate in activities associated with the RSL which is the main body that represents returning soliders.'

The well-known social justice campaigner says proper recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service is a crucial step in the journey towards reconciliation.

'...proper recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service is a crucial step in the journey towards reconciliation.'

'Leading up to the centenary of the First World War and Gallipoli landing we're really trying to raise awareness for the whole of Australia to recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have fought in every war that Australia has had off shore and that's not counting the guerrilla resistance and other activity that happened on shore. From the Boer War onwards we've had Indigenous veterans fighting in those wars.'

Most returned Indigenous servicemen were denied their small allotment of land under the Returned Servicemen's Settlement



Redland City Council NAIDOC Week ceremony. Images courtesy of Redland City Council.



Redland City Council NAIDOC Week ceremony. Images courtesy of Redland City Council.

Scheme, and many were moved on from reserve land where they lived, when it was resumed for white settlers. The RSL is now trying to make some headway on past injustices by now recognising the deeds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women. RSL Queensland Branch Operations Manager Peter Coster says special ceremonies such as these hopefully go some way to recognising the sacrifice of Indigenous soldiers.

'RSL Queensland aims to support Indigenous veterans and recognise their service to our country from not only recent times but also recognising that Indigenous Australians have been serving our country so well since before we even formed as a nation,' Mr Coster said.

'Their service dates back to the Boer War and they've been very important members of recent conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq and East Timor and continue to serve our nation very well.'

The lives of Indigenous soldiers who served in World War I and their experiences when their service was not recognised on their return home, were woven into the production of the play *Black Diggers*. The Queensland Theatre Company brought it to the stage as part of the Brisbane Festival, and it was such a success it is now touring Australia this year. Director Wesley Enoch said the play goes on a journey with Aboriginal veterans of World War I, as they recount their stories.

'Many people might know about Indigenous soldiers going to World War II or to Vietnam or other theatres of war but I think somehow the story of World War I and Indigenous participation has stepped out of our living memory. We don't know about it so much,' Mr Enoch said.

'A lot of people on the honour roll are deceased but they live on in our hearts and in our stories and memories and to have them acknowledged was very important to people.'

'There's sometimes a forgetting, a very convenient forgetting of what Indigenous Australians have done and I think World War I is one of those things when we have this commemoration to say, in fact this nation has been a very diverse nation for a very long time. I know we look back

and we think of our mythology as a very white Anglo-Saxon mythology but in fact it's always diverse and we've been conveniently forgetting that.'

Cast member Guy Simon went on his own personal journey through *Black Diggers*, discovering that one of his ancestors served in World War I.

'It makes the story even more weighted,' Mr Simon said. 'Every time I go on stage, it's not just a play, it's so much more. These stories, you feel an obligation to tell them right.'

For Di Andrews, the increasing reach of shows such as *Black Diggers* brings her hope that proper recognition is coming for her Aboriginal grandfather and others like him who served their country without acknowledgement of their sacrifice.

'It took us a 20 year battle with the RSL to have the proper acknowledgements on his tombstone so my next challenge is to have his name officially in the war records,' she said.

'This is still happening. People don't really believe it and they don't believe it as it doesn't happen to white fellas, unless people peak out and share the stories and people understand the history that's going on you're not aware of it.'

'A lot of people on the honour roll are deceased but they live on in our hearts and in our stories and memories and to have them acknowledged was very important to people.'

Lest we forget:

Remembering the Aboriginal heroes of War World I



Informal portrait of two Aboriginal servicemen, NX43504 Private (Pte) George Leonard and NX43500 Pte Harold West, 14th Reinforcements to the 2/1st Battalion, embarking at Sydney. Australian War Memorial: 010375

It is no easy task researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who served in some capacity, either full service or an auxiliary role. Names of people were changed, family histories were scattered, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would sometimes lie about their heritage and nationality, in order to be granted service. A dedicated group of people at the Australian War Memorial, led by Gary Oakley, are working to improve the recognition granted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who served their country. The recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women will improve equality for all those who have served in defence of Australia.

A Gundungurra man from Katoomba NSW, Gary Oakley is the first Indigenous Liaison Officer ever appointed at the Australian War Memorial. He is also the National President of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans and Services Association of Australia (ATSIVSAA). After joining the Royal Australian Navy as a junior recruit at age 15 in search of a job and adventure, Gary served on ships and submarines such as the HMAS Perth, Sydney and Stewart, before taking up a curatorial position at the Australian War Memorial in 1991 upon leaving the Navy. Serving as a RAAF Squadron Leader and Indigenous Reservist today, Gary and his colleagues at the Australian War Memorial are building an ever-increasing knowledge library of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women. The team are working to improve the documentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women who served in the Australian Defence Force from World War I. To commemorate the Centenary of the first Anzacs, Gary shares a selection of his favourite service stories with us.

Private George Robert Aitken

George Aitken, serial number 2367, was the son of Richard Aitken, a non-Indigenous man, and Princess, an Aboriginal woman. He was raised by Thomas and Mary Hampson, and grew up with their daughter Lily and her three brothers Newton, Thomas, and Dennis (Dan) and an elder half-sister to the family. As family members often did, George and Dan joined up together in 1916 and proceeded overseas on HMAS Seang Choon, disembarking together at Plymouth in the UK. George was 22 years old and Dan 27.

It was at this point that George and Dan were separated. Dan was sent into combat with the 47th Battalion, was wounded, recovered in the UK, and was sent back to the 47th, only to be taken prisoner. Meanwhile, in the UK George was arrested by the military police and court martialled for disobeying a lawful command and striking a military police officer. It is likely that the MP had been a civilian policeman in Australia, and carried with him the prejudice many police officers had at that time towards Aboriginal communities. George was ultimately sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labour, and

forfeited 377 days pays. After serving only a few months, George's sentence was commuted and he joined his battalion in France, only to be killed in action four months later in Belgium.

In his dictated will, George continued to show his love for his mate and brother: 'Just a little story of our friendship, well Dan I can safely say that we are the only true mates there are in the world, that's a big word to say. Well Dan if I gets knocked you can have anything you find on me that is any used to you, and my allotted money to be left to Mrs T. Hampson. Show this to one of the heads, don't forget.

'Just a little story of our friendship, well Dan I can safely say that we are the only true mates there are in the world, that's a big word to say.'

'Good bye old man and good luck to you, wishing all sort of luck to pull through this war. We have been the very best of mates, and only thing I wish, that we meet over other side of the world if there's any such place, is that I don't think I will ever forget you Dan, I will think of you when I am dead. Never need to say much to you when we used to nocked [sic] about together. I was very funny like that, anybody I liked, never say much to. Good bye, and old man good luck.'

Unfortunately, George's medals were never claimed as a blood relative could not be found. After conversation with Honours and Awards in 2012 they were confirmed as still being held and that a distant relative had tried to claim them but was rejected. The Australian War Memorial is in the process of seeing if they can be taken on loan.

Private William Allen Irwin DCM

William Irwin, service number 792, a shearer by trade was born in Coonabarabran and joined the A.I.F on the 6th of January 1916 at the age of 37 being posted to the 33rd Battalion. He was wounded 3 times fighting in Belgium and France.

On 31 August the battalion was attacking German positions at Road Wood near

Bouchavesnes in France. German machine gunners had pinned the battalion down and stopped the advance. Private George Cartwright stood up and fired at the gunner and walking forward shot those who took his place he then exploded a bomb short of the enemy trench and rushed the gun capturing it and nine Germans. Irwin attacked in a similar manner as Cartwright but was mortally wounded. Cartwright received the Victoria Cross for his exploits and Irwin a posthumous Distinguished Conduct Medal. Irwin is the only Indigenous Australian mentioned by CEW Bean in the Australian Official History of the First World War.

The Locke family

It was not uncommon for multiple family members from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to join the Australian Defence Forces. The comparative equality provided within the defence force, and the associated honour, were attractive incentives. The Locke family demonstrates how multiple family members were attracted to the same calling.

‘Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have been known to fabricate their age in order to join.’

Private Jerome Locke

Jerome Locke service number 117A (85938), 53rd Battalion/36th Battalion had a chequered career in that he was a member of the New South Wales Infantry before Federation and the St Marys Rifle Club prior to his joining the Australian Imperial Force on 6 January 1916 (same month as his son Olga Locke) having understated his age and any previous military service. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have been known to fabricate their age in order to join. He was to serve overseas until 12 May 1917 when he was sent back to

Australia and discharged on 11th June 1917 due to being over age. He had spent in the vicinity of 17 months in the A.I.F. most of which was overseas. He reenlisted, understating his age again on 11 June 1919, (sn85938) as an escort for the repatriation of German deportees in the Special Service Unit AIF.

Private Olga Locke & Private Leslie Locke

Olga Cecil Locke serial number 120 joined the Australian Imperial Force on the 22nd of January 1916 having had prior military experience in the 41st Infantry. Father and son sailed together in May 1916 on the Beltana and both serving in the 36th battalion. Olga saw service in the Somme valley and was hospitalised for exhaustion and appendicitis. He then took part in the Flanders offensive from the middle of 1917 and was wounded in the right hand on 25 September in the lead up to Polygon Wood. He was wounded again in the right arm in March 1918 near Villers Bretonnaux. This wound was to see him returned to Australia and discharged medically on 12 May 1919.

Leslie John Locke, serial number 65778 another son of Jerome enlisted on 27 May 1918. He left Australia as one of the 18th Reinforcements for the 3rd Battalion on the 4th of September arriving in England on 14 November three days after the Armistice.

Private Richard Martin

Richard Martin, service number 1359 joined the AIF on 17 December 1914 and declared on his attestation papers that he was born in Dunedin, New Zealand, claiming that he had five years prior service in the Light Horse. He would not be the only Aboriginal person to lie about his heritage in order to join the armed forces in Australia. Richard in fact was born on Stradbroke Island in Queensland. He was taken on the strength of the 15th Battalion on 9 May 1915 on Gallipoli. After service on the peninsula he went on to serve in France and was wounded in action (shell shock) on 9 August 1916. He again was wounded in action on 7 June 1917 in Belgium and a third time on 13 October 1917 with a gunshot wound to the



Private William Allen Irwin DCM.
Australian War Memorial: ID Number
PO1694.001



Studio portrait of 1359 Private (Pte) Richard Martin, an Aboriginal serviceman who served in the 47th Battalion.
Australian war Memorial: ID Number P00889.017

right hand. He re-joined his battalion on 27 February 1918 and was killed in action on 28 March 1918. It is stated in his documents that he was buried in the Military Cemetery Dernancourt Railway Line, but a later document states his grave could not be found.

2nd Lieutenant Alfred John Hearps

Alfred John Hearps, of the 12th Battalion, service number 409, was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant, thus becoming the first Aboriginal person to be commissioned in the Australian Army. He was ultimately reported missing then killed in action in France, 1916.

An Indigenous man on his father's side, he enlisted in 1914 aged 19 years. Instead of being recognised as Indigenous, he was described as having dark complexion, brown eyes and black hair. He served on Gallipoli as a sergeant then on arriving in France was promoted to CQMS on 1 March 1916 and then 2nd Lieutenant on 5 August 1916.

‘Instead of being recognised as Indigenous, he was described as having dark complexion, brown eyes and black hair.’

On 19 August 1916, as the 12th Battalion ‘went over the top’ at Mouquet Farm, France, Lieutenant Hearps was hit in the back of the neck by a piece of shell paralysing him. His batman stayed with him for half an hour then returned to get help, but was told that Mouquet Farm was now in the hands of the Germans and it was impossible to send others to find him.

Private William Joseph Punch, 1st Battalion

Born in New South Wales he was adopted as a youngster by Mr W. Siggs of Woodhouselee, between Goulburn and

Crookwell. He was well educated and employed as a stockman and station hand until he enlisted. It was said that he was also an accomplished musician.

William Joseph Punch (service number 5435) embarked for overseas on 14 April 1916.

Punch managed to join the AIF in Goulburn, New South Wales at a time when recruiters were instructed not to accept ‘Aboriginals, half-casts, or men with Asiatic blood’.

Studio portrait of 5435 Private (Pte) William Joseph Punch, 1st Battalion. Australian War Memorial ID number P01625.003

He was twice wounded in action before dying of disease (age 37) after being evacuated to England. Highlighting the low discrimination that was prevalent in the armed forces at the time, Bill Punch of Goulburn, was admired by all his comrades, and was regarded by them as a ‘Dinkum Digger’.





Pride and respect: what it means to be a First Australian sailor, soldier or airman today

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make significant contributions to all parts of the Australian Defence Force. From the pride of wearing the uniform every day, to walking in the footsteps of giants—it's a profession steeped in tradition and respect—and it's more than a job. It's about respect and belonging. So what does it mean to be a First Australian sailor, soldier or airman today? We've asked three serving defence personnel to explain just that.

Chief Petty Officer Ray Rosendale, CSM

My name is Ray Rosendale I am a Kuku Yalanji man of the Western Sunset Clan, whose traditional lands are situated north-west of Cairns in Far North Queensland. I joined the Navy in 1991 and have served in a variety of ships and shore establishments around the country participating in operational, peacekeeping and peacetime Navy roles.

In 2009 I was posted to Defence Indigenous Affairs as the Indigenous Community Engagement Officer for Northern Australia as well as an advisor and mentor for the Defence Indigenous Development Program which continues to assist disadvantaged youth from Indigenous communities prepare for a career in the Australian Defence Force. In January 2013 the Chief of Navy appointed me to the position of Navy Strategic Advisor on Indigenous Cultural Affairs. This appointment is the first opportunity for an Indigenous serving member to hold a permanent position directly related to Indigenous affairs within the Australian Defence Force and working directly for a service chief.

When I first joined the Navy it was an organisation that had a strong but understated history of positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and cultures. This did not, however always reflect the experience of the many Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island men and women who served. Often the egalitarian values of the military were adversely affected by the perceptions and rules that were in place in the broader Australian community meaning that advancement within and acceptance outside of the service was difficult and not the same as that experienced by non Indigenous Australians. The willingness of the ADF to accept each person for their abilities is embodied in the stories of individuals such as Reg Saunders or Len Waters. It is important to remember that the Navy has always had Indigenous Australians in service, and these unsung heroes served their country even when their country did not accept them as citizens. The



changes that are evident in Defence today are a direct result of their efforts.

There has been great cultural change in both the Navy and the broader Australian Defence Forces during my service, particularly in diversity and inclusion. These changes have positively impacted Defence's relationship with Indigenous Australia and the way in which Indigenous members are seen by the broader community. Navy were an early adopter of Indigenous cultural iconography using the boomerang, axe and nulla-nulla on ships' crests and naming ships and shore establishments using traditional language names. Until the early nineties, only one Royal Australian Navy ship had been named after an individual and he was an aboriginal man. The Second World War Auxiliary

Chief Petty Officer Ray Rosendale, CSM.
Image courtesy of the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence.

Minelayer HMAS Bungaree was named after the prominent early colonial leader who was also the first Australian born circumnavigator of the country, 'King' Bungaree from NSW.

This acceptance resonates with our national reconciliation efforts and is a result of the strong leadership, ability to accept the past and willingness to change as we move forward. I believe that the Australian Defence Force has benefited from this tradition of service and today many young Indigenous men and women recognise the Australian Defence Force as an employer of choice that is well placed in our efforts to close the gap.

Army – Sergeant Anne Dufficy

Sergeant Anne Dufficy (nee Schwartz) is a Tamwoy descendant from the Kodal (crocodile) Thupmul (Stingray) clan which comes from Badu Island in the Torres Strait.

I was born in Townsville, in North Queensland, where I lived with my five sisters, brother and our father. At age 16, I left home and moved in with Liz McAvoy, an inspiring woman, who took me in and encouraged me through high school.

I soon joined the Army Cadets and that gave me something to do on weekends while spending time with friends. This is where my desire to join the Australian Army began. I knew it would be a great career option for me and I started to research the different jobs that I found interesting.

I was 18 when I joined the Australian Army, back in September 2003. I completed my basic training at the Army Recruit Training Centre, Kapooka and then my initial employment training as an Operator Administrator. My first posting was in Townsville at the 3rd Combat Signals Regiment as a Squadron Clerk. Since then I have been posted to the 51st Battalion, the Far North Queensland Regiment in Cairns, the 5th Aviation Regiment, and the Combat Training Centre in Brisbane where I have worked in numerous jobs including as a Movements Clerk, Registry Clerk, Operations Clerk, and Orderly Room Corporal. I have been deployed on operations to the Middle East and on Border Security Operations at Christmas Island.

One of the highlights of my career so far was at the 51st Battalion, the Far North Queensland Regiment in Cairns, which gave me the opportunity to get in touch with my Torres Strait Islander heritage.

One of the best things about being in the Army has been the support it provides for my family. As a mother, they allow me time to drop my son off at school and pick him up. If he is ever sick, I am encouraged to take carer's leave to look after him. The Army has also encouraged and supported me to undertake university studies to support my professional development.



I have represented the Army and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in rugby union, playing the sport at a national and international level against the New Zealand Defence Force and British Army Team.

My family drives me to succeed in the ADF—and in life. They are so proud every time they see me in uniform, and acknowledge that I really have done something good for myself and my community. My family tradition of serving stems back to my grandfather (Athe) Timothy Tamwoy who served in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion during the Second World War, and my father, who was an Infantryman in the 2nd/4th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. It is very important to me to promote and continue the tradition of Indigenous Australians serving in the ADF, especially considering my family's heritage from the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area. I am so proud to be an Australian Soldier, and serve in a recruiting role at Defence Force Recruiting in Brisbane. I believe

Warrant Officer Class One Ken Nelliman and Sergeant Anne Dufficy of head the Indigenous Recruiting Team, at the Australian Defence Force Career Expo, Townsville. Image courtesy of the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence.

that after serving 10 years in the Army I can use my experience to encourage other Indigenous people to apply for a career that is challenging and rewarding. There are many benefits of serving in Defence including travel, pay, and career opportunities. The biggest benefit for me is the pride I get wearing the uniform every day, and performing ceremonial duties in a uniform that contains so much tradition and respect. You are walking in the footsteps of giants, and most importantly you belong to a family. The biggest value for Indigenous people is belonging to their mob. In Defence, no matter what job you do, there is teamwork and esprit de corps, which means having a sense of belonging. When you choose a mob to belong to (Navy, Army, or Air Force) then the job opportunities will come after that.

Air Force – Flying Officer Sarah Conway-James

Flying Officer Sarah Conway-James is a descendant of the Kamilaroi people in Gunnedah, Australia.

I was born in Grafton, NSW and lived there with my family until I was 19. I moved to Sydney to undertake a Certificate IV in Music and Leadership at college, as well as to undertake a Journalism degree through Southern Cross University which I completed at the age of 21.

Not long after that I became engaged to my now husband, Jake, who was in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), I noticed how well he was being looked after in his job. This was in stark contrast to my job at the time, and I was desperate to have the same fulfilment in my own workplace.

I joined the Air Force in March 2013. I completed my initial training at Officers' Training School in Sale, Victoria, followed by my specialist training as an Administration Officer (now known as Personnel Capability Officer) at RAAF School of Administration & Logistics Training in Wagga Wagga, NSW. My first posting has been to 11 Squadron, in Adelaide, as the Unit Administration Officer.

I have been deployed on Exercise to Hawaii where we worked alongside the US Navy. It was a remarkable experience where I had the privilege of seeing air capability in action first hand.

One of the best things about being in the Air Force has been the support it provides for me and my family. As a new mum, I have been given a generous amount of maternity leave to look after my son so I can enjoy motherhood without the worry of having to return to work early. I love the fact that I have a secure job to return to, my career is not affected by my choice to have a child, I am given the opportunity to pursue flexible work arrangements and I have the option to breastfeed in the work place if I choose to, once I return from leave.

My family are still slightly new to the idea of me being in Defence. I guess you could say this girl from the country shocked her whole hometown when she joined. My music/creative arts and journalism background definitely didn't hint towards joining the Air Force. But I found that I do belong and, because of my



experience, when speaking to teenagers thinking of joining the Air Force, I tell them, 'If I can do it—so can you. People don't think you can do it? Sweet! How 'bout you prove 'em wrong. Surprise them.' I definitely did.

My family's journey since Mum discovered her Aboriginal identity has been—although painful at times—big and beautiful. She was taken away from her family during the Stolen Generation era and, since a young girl, I have had the privilege of being a big sister to dozens of Aboriginal foster brothers and sisters.

I am so proud to serve in the Air Force and I am passionate about Indigenous Affairs and raising strong, young people to be influential men and women. I hope to use my previous involvement with Indigenous communities as a youth worker, together with my journalism

Flying Officer Sarah Conway-James. Image courtesy of the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence.

background, to contribute in a strategic communications capacity to the Air Force Headquarters Directorate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The foundation of 'family' has always been such a big part of my life. Out of family comes a sense of belonging, the foundations for mentoring, the creation of relationships and the ability to place value on others. When I joined the Air Force, I felt like I found family. Connecting and surrounding myself with other people desiring positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women, was like someone saying to me, 'Welcome Home'.



Remembering. Recovery. Reconciliation.

by Tim Muirhead

Tim Muirhead delivering an address at the 'Commemorating Indigenous War Veterans' Ceremony WA State War Memorial; Kings Park, Perth during National Reconciliation Week 2014. Image by Tom Rovis-Hermann.

'At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.'

Beautiful words, repeated each year with heads bowed, eyes often closed, when light is just starting to glimmer on the horizon. No chest thumping; no jingoism or even nationalism. Human hearts swell not in pride but in simple empathy—even grief—for the suffering of those afflicted by war.

Beautiful words. And wise, I think, because they guide us—even instruct us—on one of the keys to recovery after traumatic events. Not forgetting. Remembering. A slightly stern warning is even added at the end: 'Lest we

forget!' And we respond, with open hearts: 'We will remember them.'

This year, in particular, we remember Gallipoli, in all its horror, and its countless stories of human fragility and dignity. I hope we remember it well. I hope we don't reduce it to one-dimensional ideas of heroism, but genuinely honour the humble, loving men and women who survived it, or died. Even as we take pride in the courage and determination of the veterans who fought under our flag, I hope we remember, too, the fear, the horror, the trauma, the confusion. I hope we remember, too, the simple love of comrades that held people together in such horrendous circumstances.

Remembering and reconciliation

Of course despite the efforts of the government to prevent Indigenous people from fighting in that war, many were there, shoulder to shoulder with their white comrades. Too few were honoured on their return, let alone today. People like John Schnaars in Western Australia have worked tirelessly to honour those veterans, through awareness, ceremonies, headstones, memorials. Slowly, through the work of John and a few others, the rest of us have begun to notice. These Veterans have given us another powerful symbol of reconciliation. But more than this, the very subject matter of war has offered some important lessons...

Reconciliation—whether at the personal, national or international level, grows from a central question: how do we heal and build trust after wrong doing, conflict, abuse? And Anzac day offers us, each year, at least part of the answer, uttered in the quiet sunrise: ‘we will remember them’.

‘You need others,
too, to remember.
You need to know that
others understand.’

Remembering together

But the lessons of Anzac Day go deeper: remembering is crucial, but remembering alone is not enough. In fact, remembering alone can isolate you, alienate and separate you from those around you. You need others, too, to remember. You need to know that others understand. Remembering alone is dangerous and divisive. Remembering together is healing and uniting.

I once heard three deeply thoughtful theologians—Muslims, Jewish, Christian—discuss forgiveness (by forgiveness, they were speaking about that state of mind whereby we are no longer poisoned by wrongs done to us in the past). Interestingly, all the examples they used were from their personal experiences in war, but the lessons applied to all work of forgiveness. They all agreed: you cannot forgive through forgetting—only remembering. But two other key points struck me as deeply relevant in our work of reconciliation. One: without a complete confidence that the wrong-doing has stopped, forgiveness is not possible. Second: (in the words of the Jewish theologian) ‘To forgive when the wrongdoing is denied—that is a God-like act; far beyond the capacity of most of us.’ The remembering and acknowledgement that serve forgiveness must be done by all of us.

Yet I fear that we have, too often, wanted to do the work of reconciliation without remembering. We worry that remembering the injustices of the past will fan bad feeling. We

worry that it will promote guilt or blame. We worry that it will diminish us as a nation. All three of these worries are exactly wrong—the opposite of the truth. Shared remembering of injustice allows us to join together in moving beyond it, it allows us to share responsibility (rather than guilt or blame) in addressing it, and elevates us as a mature and confident nation. (Does anyone really think that modern Germany is diminished by its legislated insistence on remembering the holocaust?) To remember is not to live in the past; it is simply an essential step in easing its emotional grip on us, individually and collectively.

Remembering the whole story

But when we remember, we should not just remember the darkness of injustice, and conflict, but also the human dignity and determination and love that shines through that darkness. So, to bring this back to our work of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians: as we remember, with empathy and pride, those—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—who were at Gallipoli, and the various battles before and since, perhaps we can also remember, with empathy and pride, the other ‘battles’ that have been fought...

Let’s remember those who fought and often died to defend their people and their land as the wave of white settlement washed carelessly through their country.

Let’s remember those who strived with courage and dignity to create lives for their families and their people, despite the relentlessly disempowering policies and

practices of our states and nation. Let’s remember those who fought against the children taken, the wages stolen, the ownership denied; the language and culture forbidden; the exclusion from our economy, our democracy, our education and our legal system.

Let’s remember those who argued their case for equality before the law, and recognise their success, even if they died too early to witness it. Hope has grown because of them.

Let’s remember those who tried, for their families, to accommodate to the imposed culture, and those who, for their families, tried to resist it.

And as we remember those that fought and died shoulder to shoulder with their mates, saving their lives as their lives were saved by them, let’s also remember their efforts, often supported by their white comrades, to be recognised as citizens on their return.

Most importantly, let’s remember their sacrifice and their dignity by creating a better nation in their honour. Let’s stand proud, individually and collectively, knowing that we can and will do the work that is required to repair the damage. Let’s work together towards a nation where the custodians of 50,000 years are recognised and honoured, and where all people can live rich and full lives, regardless of their past experiences, or those of their ancestors.

***At the going down of
the sun, and in the morning,
we will remember them.***

Lest we forget.



School students laying a wreath during the Perth National Reconciliation Week ceremony. Image by Tom Rovis-Hermann.



Australian Army soldier Sergeant Tommy Munyarryun (right) indicates areas of historical significance to Major Tim Robinson (left), from the North-West Mobile Force (NORFORCE), Yirrkala rangers Raelene Mununggurr and Charlie Munungirritj and local girl Nyesha at Caledon Bay, Northern Territory, during a study tour in September 2014. Image courtesy of the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence.

Protecting the north

By Captain James Hook, Norforce

Four years ago, a journalist was embedded with an army patrol in northern Australia. She was surprised by what she saw: the empowerment of Indigenous Australians. The journalist was Kathy Marks and the unit was the North West Mobile Force, better known as Norforce.

According to Ms Marks the regiment is one of the few organisations in Australia dominated by Indigenous people, working alongside and on equal terms with their white counterparts.

Norforce is a Regional Force Surveillance Unit of the Australian Army, raised in 1981 to protect national sovereignty in the remote regions of northern Australia.

The unit's mission is to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance patrols across the Northern Territory and Kimberley region of Western Australia. Of its 500 members around half are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women from remote communities. These soldiers are the key to Norforce's success, bringing to the Australian Army their traditional skills, knowledge and networks.

In her article Kathy Marks writes 'rather than viewing the communities that dot the Top End through the usual prism of social

dysfunction, Norforce mines them for young men and women whose local knowledge and survival skills it prizes. In doing so, it quietly improves those individuals' lives and, in turn, strengthens their communities.'

Sergeant Norman Daymirringu is one of those individuals.

He is a Yolngu man from the Glyde River region of the Northern Territory.

He is a Norforce Patrol Commander, having served with the unit's Nhulunbuy-based Arnhem Squadron for 16 years, and is recognised throughout Arnhem Land.

'The Yolngu people take pride in seeing Yolngu soldiers, especially when we are wearing rank,' the softly spoken Sgt Daymirringu said.

'When the children see me, they ask me how they can join the army.

'The old people tell me the stories of the army in the Second World War when the Japanese bombed and killed Yolngu people.'

According to Ms Marks, 'in northern Australia's Indigenous communities, where Norforce has painstakingly built and nurtured relationships over three decades, the army is almost revered.'

'Deeply rooted in the communities, it has the ear of elders and traditional owners; for those who enlist, the job is a source of pride and prestige,' she says.

Last year, Sgt Daymirringu was selected to read the Ode to the Fallen at a ceremony in Yirrkala attended by Prime Minister Tony Abbott to honour the 51 Yolngu warriors who served in the Second World War.

They included Sgt Daymirringu's grandfather, a member of the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit led by anthropologist Squadron Leader Donald Thomson.

'It was manyamak (good) that Yolngu and balanda (white people) came together to remember these men,' Sgt Daymirringu said.

As the Prime Minister and other dignitaries laid wreaths at the Yirrkala memorial, Sgt Daymirringu played the Norforce yidaki.

The soldiers of Norforce are focused on their mission; conducting surveillance and reconnaissance; building and maintaining networks; patrolling and protecting country.

As Kathy Marks poignantly concludes in her article: 'Norforce offers a rare glimpse of the way things could be if minds were opened, gaps were closed and prejudices were set aside'.

The Long Walk

The Long Walk Trust is an established charity inspired by former AFL and Essendon great, Michael Long. In 2004, Michael walked to Canberra to ask the Prime Minister to put the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people back on the national agenda.

The charity aims to improve and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, wellbeing and life opportunities by raising awareness through fundraising activities including The Long Walk Women's Luncheon, educational programs such as Walk the Talk and their annual event, The Long Walk Community event and Wellbeing Concert, coinciding with the AFL's Indigenous Round and National Reconciliation Week.

This year's Long Walk event will take place on Saturday 30 May at Federation Square, Melbourne from 12 noon. The theme is 'together'. Come together for free family activities, workshops, food and crafts at the community stalls. The free wellbeing concert commences at 2pm and features Indigenous artists including Archie Roach, Johnny Lovett, Kinja, Philly, Illana Atkinson and Jayden Lillyst, with MC Sean Choolburra.

Then at 6pm walk together with Michael Long to the traditional Dreamtime at the 'G AFL match between Essendon and Richmond.

Together we can make a difference.

Visit www.thelongwalk.com.au for more details.



Narragunnawali

The *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in schools and early learning* program fosters school and early learning environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions are celebrated and respected. It aims to develop a sense of shared pride for all Australians in schools and early learning services, with a flow-on effect to the wider community.

Narragunnawali supports schools and early learning services on their reconciliation journey by providing dynamic and engaging curriculum resources (from a series of short films to entire units of work), professional learning opportunities for staff and assistance to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Through the program, schools are empowered to find meaningful ways to increase respect, reduce prejudice, and strengthen relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Students and children are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of Australia's long history prior to colonisation and build stronger two-way relationships with increased trust and reduced prejudice.

Every school or early learning service across Australia is encouraged to engage with *Narragunnawali*—this is not a program only for schools or early learning services with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments. From a one teacher remote government school to a 2000-student independent school in the middle of the city, and everything in between, *Narragunnawali* allows for a tailored approach, in recognition that there is great diversity among Australian school and early learning service communities. Why not join up this National Reconciliation Week.

For more information visit:
www.reconciliation.org.au/schools

Sing Loud! for reconciliation

Sing Loud! is a song competition that brings people together to make music about reconciliation during National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Musicians, choirs, singers, school groups and workmates are encouraged to enter the competition in one of three categories—best cover song, best original song and best school entry. Entering is easy, simply perform and record one of the previously unpublished songs about reconciliation in the playlist available on the *Sing Loud!* webpage, or write and perform an original song about reconciliation including this year's NRW theme, *It's time to change it up*.

There are great prizes on offer with the winner in each category taking home \$1000 and each runner up receiving \$500. You can enter as many times as you like but remember to enter each song individually.

This year the competition winners will be decided by great Australian musicians Shellie Morris, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu and The Veronicas.

Entries close Sunday 7 June 2015 so start working on your entry now and don't forget to register your *Sing Loud!* performance as an NRW event.

For more information visit
www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw



National Reconciliation Week 2015

27 May to 3 June

it's time to change it up!

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) celebrates and builds on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Channel [V]'s Carissa Walford and Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) CEO Jack Manning Bancroft are 'changing it up' for NRW 2015. How will you change it up?

www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw



Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA