



# Let's talk...



## Remembering the forgotten Anzacs

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a long and proud, but often little known history of contributing to Australia's military efforts. This Anzac Day take some time to learn about and remember the forgotten Anzacs.

### Did you know?

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have fought for Australia in every war since Federation in 1901.
2. In 1944 nearly every Torres Strait Islander man was a member of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion—in proportion to population, no community in Australia contributed more to Australia's effort in World War II than the people of the Torres Strait Islands.
3. The first Japanese Prisoner of War in Australia was captured by Aboriginal people after his plane crashed on Melville Island, north of Darwin in February 1942.
4. NORFORCE, which relies heavily on the knowledge and talents of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the north of Australia today, monitors the largest area of operations of any military unit in the world.

### Some quick statistics...

1. Despite rules against their enrolment, over 3000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women are known to have enlisted in World War II—a further 400 are known to have served in World War I.
2. Only one Aboriginal man ever received land under the soldier settlement scheme—returned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women were often denied the honour and rights given to other returned servicemen and women.
3. There are up to 7000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans and war widows in the Australian community today.
4. More than 800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians now serve with distinction in the Australian Defence Forces.

### Take action

1. Take time this Anzac Day to remember the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women.
2. If you're in Canberra, attend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commemorative Ceremony after the Anzac Day Dawn Service at the Australian War Memorial.
3. If you know stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have served for Australia let the Australian War Memorial know – Gary Oakley at the Memorial is always interested in hearing people stories.
4. Visit the Australian War Memorial in Canberra or their website [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)
5. Talk to your local RSL about what they know about the contribution of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women.

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