“Australia is my country and I'd merely followed in the footsteps of hundreds of other Aboriginals in World War One.”

Taken from an interview with Reg Saunders, son of a First World War Veteran and commissioned as an Australian Army Officer in 1944.

Source: Interview with Reg Saunders AWM S00520
Indigenous Service

Investigating the wartime experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the First World War to the present
Main front cover image: Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, 1942 Informal group portrait of members of the 2/18th Australian Field Workshop. AWM P00898.001

Top banner images:

All images contained in this resource with the prefix AWM, have been provided courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. (AWM)

1. Lance Corporal Raymond Cobban from Redfern, New South Wales, served with the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, during the Korean War (1950–53). Cobban had previously enlisted, age 17, in the Second World War (1939–45). AWM HOBJ2629; photographer Phillip Oliver Hobson.

2. Private Alfred Lovett, wife Sarah and his two sons, 1918. AWM P01651.001

3. Sapper Louis Lopata playing the piano accordion and an Aboriginal worker playing mouth organ for an impromptu sing-along. State Library of Victoria, H99.201/3120

4. Isabel Blair, one of the first Aboriginal observers to become an enrolled member of the Corps. c. 1943. State Library of Victoria H99.201/3010

5. Frederick Beale Naoetsu, prisoner of war camp, Japan, c. 1945. AWM P01649.005

6. Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Brisbane, Queensland, c. 1942. Lance Corporal Kathleen Walker and her siblings grew up on Stradbroke Island, Queensland. AWM P01688.001

7. Wedding portrait of Signalman Claude McDonald and Aircraft Woman Alice Lovett, 1944. AWM P05049.004

8. Private Thomas Green, 2/1st Battalion, pictured while he was a prisoner of war at Stalag XIIc at Hammelburg, Germany. Private Green was from Collarenebri, New South Wales. AWM P04379.003
Cultural warning
This publication contains images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including servicemen and women and community members, who are now deceased. Viewing these images may cause distress to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, including students and staff.

Taylor year old Indigenous Army Cadet, Nicholas Nilco from the remote indigenous community of Wadeye, stands proudly on parade in both traditional dress and army camouflage pants, September 2009.

Department of Defence 20090902adf8243523_058

Teaching sensitivities
This resource offers an extensive collection of primary and secondary source material. Teachers should note that many of the sources contain language and perspectives that are considered inappropriate today, particularly in regards to the ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are identified and described. Terms such as ‘full-blood’ and ‘half-caste’ reflect government policies and societal attitudes at the time which were discriminatory and based on ideas of assimilation. Teachers should be sensitive regarding the use of these sources, contextualising and discussing the content with students.

This publication comprises sensitive and sometimes difficult material in relation to war and conflict including loss, sadness, injury and death. The lives of many students in Australian classrooms, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have been directly affected by these experiences. Teachers are advised to be sensitive to the perspectives and emotions of students while working with this resource.
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We acknowledge and pay respects to all Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country and the waterways across Australia. We also pay respect to past and present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have served, to those who served in an auxiliary capacity for the Australian Defence Forces, and to those who gave their lives.

This resource was produced by the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, with funding support and advice from the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. The content is based on the Shrine exhibition *Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present*, which was developed with assistance from several groups and individuals from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community across Australia. Curriculum content review was provided by state and territory Indigenous Education curriculum experts, the Australian War Memorial and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

The Shrine of Remembrance also gratefully acknowledges Paola Balla, of the Wemba-Wemba and Gunditjmara Peoples, as an advisor and contributing researcher throughout the development of this resource and Mat Jakobi of the Gunditjmara People, who was of invaluable assistance for the initial research phase of the project.

There are many additional stories of service that we acknowledge, but which were not possible to include in this publication. We hope that through these six investigations, communities and schools will take the opportunity to use the inquiry method to investigate their own stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service.

*Private Jida Gulpilil (left) from Ramingining in Arnhem Land discusses tracking techniques with Private Grant Gambley from the Gove Peninsula during an operation in the Northern Territory bush, October 2008.*

Department of Defence 20081029adf8243523_123
Introduction

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have served Australia in war and peacekeeping from the Boer War to the present. The investigations in this resource focus on the period of service from the First World War onwards. The readiness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enlist beside other Australians to fight abroad for their country and for the British Empire is all the more noteworthy when viewed against their lack of citizenship rights and the erratic administration of policies that discouraged their enlistment. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people did not gain the privileges of full citizenship until 1967.

Service, across time and conflicts, gave many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the experience of liberation from racial stereotypes for the first time. Oral histories reveal that while racism might have emerged behind the lines, when fighting on the front line the concerns of service personnel to survive and respect one another engendered greater equality.

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the greater opportunities and respect experienced in the defence forces made returning from service a particularly challenging process – one that politicised many individuals.

As well as enlisting in the defence forces, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made significant contributions on the home front during wartime, particularly in northern Australia during the Second World War. These contributions, along with those of enlisted servicemen and women, not only helped the war effort but also contributed to changes in the way many Australians perceived themselves.

About this resource

This resource explores the stories of some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have served Australia or contributed on the home front during wartime. It is drawn from the exhibition Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present, which was developed by the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne in 2009. Aligned to the Australian Curriculum: History, the resource encourages students to develop the skills of historical inquiry. It makes extensive use of the rich historical sources gathered for the exhibition, as well as a number of other resources.

Structure and components

This resource, which is available in hardcopy and online, contains six investigations. Each investigation provides the following:

Background information for teachers

This section provides historical information and expands on the themes that are explored in each investigation to assist with the teaching of student learning activities.

Learning activities

This section provides:

- Curriculum links to the Australian Curriculum: History – Years 9 and 10
- A rich selection of primary and secondary sources to assist students with each activity within the investigations
- A learning sequence with suggested activities and strategies for engaging students with the sources for each investigation
- Student activity sheets which can be reproduced for students to complete

All the sources are available electronically, including the digital stories which are supported by film. The transcript of these stories is provided in the resource but the entire resource, including the films, can be viewed by visiting the Shrine website at www.shrine.org.au/aatsipw
The Australian Curriculum

This resource is aligned to the Australian Curriculum: History, and specific links to the Years 9 and 10 documents are indicated within each investigation. The investigations reference the pertinent key inquiry questions, historical knowledge and understanding, and historical skills.

While history is the main focus of the learning activities, these investigations also have relevance to the general capabilities of literacy, critical and creative thinking, and intercultural understanding. They also reflect the cross-curriculum priority, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Furthermore, some activities have relevance to other curriculum areas, particularly English, the Arts, and Civics and Citizenship.

Learning approach

This resource adopts an inquiry approach. The aim is not to provide historical information and conclusions to students, but to engage them in a learning journey to construct their own understanding about the contributions and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women. Each investigation focuses students on a question and provides a range of source material for them to explore and analyse. Students are encouraged to reflect on the inquiries and draw their own conclusions.

The resource offers a rich selection of primary and secondary sources, mostly drawn from the Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present exhibition. The sources include photographs, artworks, oral histories, letters, poems, media articles, official documents and exhibition text. These sources are organised around themes and activities and encourage students to explore a variety of perspectives.

The activities within each investigation are also varied, catering for differing learning styles and developing a range of learning objectives. They aim to enhance students’ knowledge and skills, and also to develop their empathy.

While learning sequences are provided for each activity, teachers may choose to adapt the activities to meet the needs of their students and their own learning objectives. The resource is flexible, allowing teachers to share sources and student activity sheets with students by printing them, providing online access or using a smartboard or data projector.

Disclaimer

The Shrine of Remembrance and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs cannot be assumed to agree with or endorse any content or opinions expressed in websites or publications quoted or referred to in this resource.

Share your Story

The Shrine of Remembrance provides the public with the opportunity to share their stories of remembrance. Teachers can utilise this resource to submit stories developed by students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women.

www.shrine.org.au/ShareYourStory
Investigation 1

Why have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enlisted at different times?

In this investigation students explore the changing legal status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia since Federation. Once not able to enlist in the defence forces because they were not recognised as citizens, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are now actively encouraged to serve. Despite their lack of citizenship rights for many years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have served in the Australian defence forces in all armed conflicts including and since the Boer War. Using a variety of primary and secondary sources, students explore both the changing policies relating to enlistment and why individuals chose to enlist.

Private Steve Dodd from Oodnadatta, South Australia, served in the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment during the Korean War (1950-53).

AWM P00969.049
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joined the defence forces for many of the same reasons as non-Indigenous Australians. They sought adventure alongside their friends and in the process made new ones. The opportunity to serve earned many of them money, independence and education. In addition, enlistment provided many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with an escape from the restraints of mission life and the opportunity to prove themselves equal to non-Indigenous Australians.

Despite formal legislative barriers to the service of non-Europeans, more than 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are known to have enlisted in the First World War (1914–18), from a population of around 80,000. Accurate numbers are difficult to establish as the Army did not record the ethnic origins of enlistees. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people claimed to be Pacific Islander, Indian or Maori when they enlisted, to ensure their earnings were not controlled or reduced by the State Protectors of Aborigines. Initially, many men who tried to enlist were rejected on the grounds of race, specifically, that they were not ‘... substantially of European descent’. Nonetheless, they continued to come forward, and many succeeded in circumventing the restrictions.

Eventually restrictions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Army were eased. In October 1917 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.*

Just one day after Australia’s entry into the Second World War (1939–45), the Army accepted the enlistment of fifty Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. At this time, the Army did not have a clear policy on admittance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For the first few months of the war, voluntary enlistment was not restricted in any way. Regulations were later introduced to bar the service of persons ‘... not substantially of European origin or descent’ and many were turned away when trying to enlist.

In early 1940 the Defence Committee recommended that for the Navy and Army the admission of Australians of non-European origin was ‘... neither necessary nor desirable ...’ unless demand for manpower became intense. These unclear regulations were administered inconsistently and led to a situation where some men were turned away from recruiting stations due to their Aboriginality while others were able to enlist. In some cases, First World War veterans were barred from enlisting in the Second World War.

Once the intense demands of the Second World War had diminished, the defence forces re-instituted restrictions on the enlistment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 1949, however, barriers were lifted and they were free to enlist in the defence forces. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have served in all conflicts in which Australia has participated since that time.

‘Protecting Country’ is now the official slogan of the Indigenous recruitment campaign in the Australian Defence Force.

The information provided in this section has been adapted from the Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present exhibition, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009.
Learning activities: Why have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enlisted at different times?

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

YEAR 9
What was the origin, development, significance and long-term impact of imperialism in this period?
What was the significance of World War I?

YEAR 10
What were the consequences of World War II?
How did these consequences shape the modern world?
How was Australian society affected by other significant global events and changes in this period?

Knowledge and Understanding

YEAR 9
- Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century (that is 1900)
- Key events and ideas in the development of Australian self-government and democracy, including women’s voting rights
- An overview of the causes of World War I and the reasons why men enlisted to fight in the war

YEAR 10
- The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front, including the changing roles of women and use of wartime government controls (conscription, manpower controls, rationing and censorship)
- The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: 1962 right to vote federally; 1967 Referendum; Reconciliation; Mabo decision; Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology

Historical Skills

- Use chronological sequencing to demonstrate the relationship between events and developments in different periods and places
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past
- Select and use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies
Learning sequence

**Activity 1: Times of change**

In this activity students explore the changing legal and political situation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since Federation. This will provide students with a context from which to explore the reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have (or have not) enlisted for service over time.

1. Provide students with access to sources A–G on pages 11–13. Clarify the meaning and discuss the implications of some of the language and perspectives used in these primary sources. Terms such as ‘full-blood’ and ‘half-caste’ reflect government policies and societal attitudes at the time, which were discriminatory and based on ideas of assimilation.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 1: Times of change. Ask students to use sources A–G to identify the changing legal and political situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia since Federation. For each source students should consider:
   - The nature of the source (e.g. legislation, newspaper article)
   - The implications it had for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

   They should use this information to create a context-setting timeline.

3. Discuss with students how these changes may have influenced the decision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enlist (or not) in the defence forces.

**Activity 2: Many reasons**

In Activity 2 students explore the many and changing reasons for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people choosing to enlist.

1. Using the information in the Background information for teachers, provide students with an overview of the changing policies relating to enlistment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence forces.

2. Provide students with access to sources H–O on pages 15–17. Each of these depicts one or more reasons for enlistment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These sources include language and perspectives that are considered inappropriate and discriminatory today and need to be contextualised for students.

3. Distribute Activity sheet 2: Many reasons. It asks students to identify the reason/s for enlistment revealed in each source. Students also reflect on the information in the sources and complete a ‘push-pull’ activity.

4. As a class, discuss if and why any of the reasons for enlistment are particular to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

5. Ask students to design a contemporary poster to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to join the Australian Defence Force. Encourage them to think about images, symbols, words and design features that will connect with and have significance for the intended audience.
Investigation 1

Activity 3: Fair treatment?

In this activity students consider a case study relating to the exclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from Australia’s defence forces. Students explore four primary sources relating to an incident in 1942.

1. Provide students with sources P–S on pages 19–20 which are reproductions of a newspaper article and three letters. Once again, these sources contain language and perspectives that need to be contextualised.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 3: Fair treatment? Students are asked to identify and record the objective information (facts and events) from the sources and the subjective information (thoughts and feelings) conveyed in the sources. Students are also asked to take the role of a Sunday Sun reader in 1942 and write a letter to the editor expressing their opinion about the article ‘Aborigine Sent Home By Army’.

3. As a class, identify the values and attitudes revealed in the sources that were prevalent in 1942 and that exist today. Discuss the similarities and differences and record students’ responses in a Venn diagram: Which values and attitudes were distinctive to 1942? Which are distinctive to today? Which are common to both eras?
Investigation 1

Sources A-G

These sources explore the changing legal and political situation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia since Federation.

SOURCE A

In 1901 Australia became a federation and adopted a new Constitution. Sections 51 and 127 made particular mention of Aboriginal people.

51. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:

...(xxvi) The people of any race, other than the aboriginal people in any State, for whom it is necessary to make special laws.

127. In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives should not be counted.

SOURCE B

Excerpt from the NSW Aborigines Protection Act, 1909

7. It shall be the duty of the board—

(a) to, with the consent of the Minister, apportion, distribute, and apply as may seem most fitting, any moneys voted by Parliament, and any other funds in its possession or control, for the relief of aborigines;

(b) to distribute blankets, clothing, and relief to aborigines at the discretion of the board;

(c) to provide for the custody, maintenance, and education of the children of aborigines;

(d) to manage and regulate the use of reserves;

(e) to exercise a general supervision and care over all matters affecting the interests and welfare of aborigines, and to protect them against injustice, imposition, and fraud.

SOURCE C

Article from The Advocate (Burnie, Tasmania), 22 October 1932, page 7

HALF-CASTE CHILDREN. Taken from Aboriginal Mothers. FEDERAL POLICY DEFENDED

This, it is said, is done to give the children a chance in life, as if they were left in the compounds they would be brought up as aboriginals, and at the same time would not be recognised by full-blooded members of the tribe.

In Darwin they are treated as whites. The girls are taught domestic economy, and the boys trained for station work, for which they show special aptitude.

The department claims that the system has proved completely successful.
**Investigation 1**

**“OUTCAST IN OUR OWN LAND”: Status of Aborigines**

“The skeleton in the cupboard of Australia’s national life is its treatment of the aborigines,” said Mr Doug Nicholls, the aborigine footballer, in an address at the Wesley Pleasant Sunday Afternoon service yesterday.

“We aborigines have not had a fair deal” he declared “It was bad enough for us to lose our country, but it is one of the saddest stories of modern times that we should have become an outcast in our own land, with not even the rights and privileges that are extended to many aliens.”

“We appeal for the right of education, for at least some of the rights of citizenship, for the chance to become useful citizens in the land that was ours by birth.”

---

**SOURCE D**

Article from *The Argus*, 27 November 1939

---

**SOURCE E**

Excerpt from the “Yes” case, 1967 referendum

**The Case for YES**

The purposes of these amendments to the Commonwealth Constitution are to remove any ground for the belief that, as at present worded, the Constitution discriminates in some ways against people of the Aboriginal race, and, at the same time, to make it possible for the Commonwealth Parliament to make special laws for the people of the Aboriginal race, wherever they may live, if the Commonwealth Parliament considers this desirable or necessary.

To achieve this purpose, we propose that two provisions of the Constitution be altered which make explicit references to people of the Aboriginal race.

The first proposed alteration is to remove the words “other than the Aboriginal race in any State” from paragraph (xxvi.) of Section 51. …

The proposed alteration of this section will do two things. First, it will remove words from our Constitution that many people think are discriminatory against the Aboriginal people.

Second, it will make it possible for the Commonwealth Parliament to make special laws for the people of the Aboriginal race, wherever they may live, if the Parliament considers it necessary...

---

**SOURCE F**

Excerpt from the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975

(1) It is unlawful for a person to do any act involving a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of any human right or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.
I move:

That today we honour the indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were stolen generations – this blemished chapter in our nation’s history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia’s history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.
**Activity sheet 1: Times of change**

Explore sources A-G to identify the changing legal and political situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia since Federation.

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</table>
Sources H–O

These sources explore some of the reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people decided to enlist in the defence forces.

**SOURCE H**

Prior to the Second World War, Oodgeroo Noonuccal was known as Kath Walker. In 1942, Walker joined the Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS) and was trained as a wireless operator.

> So one of the reasons I joined the army was it was the only way I could learn ... I would be allowed to learn and I thought after the war if I am still alive I'll be able to take extra studies with the ‘dimwits’ course and it was the only way that the Aboriginals could learn extra education at that time.

Walker’s two brothers joined the army just in time to be sent to Singapore where they were imprisoned (in 1942). Although they survived the war in captivity, their time as prisoners-of-war had a profound effect on their lives.

> It wasn’t an easy period of time, and they died still fighting the war. They never ever left or got away from that war.


**SOURCE I**

Reg Saunders was born in western Victoria on 7 August 1920 and brought up by his grandmother. Saunders was the son of a First World War veteran, and was the first identified Aboriginal serviceman to be commissioned as an officer in the Australian army.

> At the outbreak of the Second World War, Reg Saunders joined the army. This was part of his warrior heritage as a Gunditjmara man, his people had fought many battles with white settlers to retain their land, his father had fought in France in the First World War, and his Uncle Reg Rawlings MM, after whom he was named, was killed in Flanders ...

Glenda Humes, Saunders’ daughter, from *Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War, from the Somme to Vietnam* 1993, page 38.

After demobilisation, his return to civilian life was not easy. Accustomed to being an admired and respected officer, once out of uniform he faced the discrimination experienced by other Indigenous Australians. He re-enlisted at the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–53).

Investigation 1

**SOURCE J**
Mayor Stephen served with the Royal Australian Navy as an Able Seaman, Marine Engineer, from 1971 to 1974. Since 1994, he has served five consecutive terms as Mayor of Torres Shire.

I grew up on the Department of Native Affairs reserve at Tamwoy, on Thursday Island . . . I saw few opportunities . . . I had great role models in my dad and uncles who were in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion in World War Two and growing up and loving the sea I joined the Navy. The Navy gave me the opportunity for education and gave me exposure to other cultures and a deeper appreciation of others. The skills I learnt in the Navy have helped form my character as a leader through teaching self discipline, a high work ethic, and persistence to finish tasks.

Reproduced courtesy of the Torres Strait Heritage Museum


**SOURCE K**

I joined the RAAF as I thought it provided a better life and future and was the best choice for a female, offering the best opportunities. I learnt skills and self-discipline, things I might not have learnt as a civilian. I really enjoyed making new friends and the travel.

Reproduced courtesy of the Torres Strait Heritage Museum

SOURCE L
Excerpt from ‘Armed service was free of racism, says NSW Governor’, National Indigenous Times, 9 June 2011, page 11

... Many Indigenous Australians were free from racism for the first time when they fought in World War I, but it was another 50 years before they got the respect they deserved, NSW Governor Marie Bashir said at a commemorative service in Sydney for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women.

The NSW Governor paid tribute to those who fought in the two world wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and in Afghanistan.

At least 400 Indigenous Australians fought in World War I and five are known to have died at Gallipoli.

Many had experienced inadequate living conditions, low wages and limited rights back home, Professor Bashir told the hundreds of people gathered for the ceremony at Sydney’s Anzac Memorial.

‘But as members of the AIF, most were treated as equal and forged strong links of friendship with their army mates,’ she said ...

SOURCE M
Excerpt from letter from A.P.A. Burdeu, President, Australian Aborigines’ League to the Prime Minister, 7 July 1940

As you have been informed of before, the aboriginal population is intensely loyal to the Empire and the volunteering of the native men is for this reason. They are capable, with good initiative, and I am informed by those training them that they will be excellent soldiers ...

Of course we always discriminate between natives who are primitive or semi-civilised as apart from those who are civilised. For the latter we have always sought full citizenship, which now includes the right to fight for King and Empire.

(Item 275/750/1310 MP508 NAA)

SOURCE N
Excerpt from ‘Norforce: a spirit of brotherhood’, Canberra Times, 15 March 2012, Times2 page 4

Some of Norforce’s soldiers are descendants of the indigenous guides [from 1945]. For them, the job is a source of pride, not least because it involves protecting “country” — meaning not just Australia but also their ancestral lands.

SOURCE O
Indigenous Service promotional banners for NORFORCE.
**Activity sheet 2: Many reasons**

Locate and read sources H–O. Use the sources to create a list of reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enlisted in Australia’s defence forces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE H</th>
<th>Reasons for enlistment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE I</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SOURCE J</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOURCE K</td>
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<td>SOURCE L</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOURCE M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflect on the list you have created and analyse whether each reason is a ‘push’ factor (the people were pushed from their existing situation) or a ‘pull’ factor (the people were pulled towards something in the defence forces). Record where you believe each source fits on the push-pull continuum below.
Investigation 1

Sources P-S

These sources all relate to an event that occurred in NSW in 1942. Read the sources and uncover the story.

**SOURCE P**
Letter to the President of the Australian Aborigines’ League from the Prime Minister’s Department, 29 August 1940.

**SOURCE Q**
Article in Sunday Sun, 4 January 1942.
Investigation 1

SOURCE R
Letter from Mildred Copland to Prime Minister Curtin, 6 January 1942.

SOURCE S
Letter from the Prime Minister’s Department to Mildred Copland, 12 January 1942.
### Activity sheet 3: Fair treatment?

Analyse sources P–S. What happened? In the first column record the facts and events referred to in each source. In the second column list the thoughts and feelings conveyed in each source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts and events</th>
<th>Thoughts and feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Q</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take the role of a *Sunday Sun* reader in 1942. Write a letter to the editor expressing your opinion about the article ‘Aborigine Sent Home By Army’.
How has service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people shaped the way Australians see themselves?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people define their identity through their experiences, practices and inheritance. Therefore, identity for most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is shaped by both the broad Australian culture and their own Indigenous connections and practices. The history of interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has also influenced Australian notions of identity. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, enlisting in the defence forces provided the opportunity to experience positive relationships with, and treatment comparable to, non-Indigenous Australians for the first time. This investigation challenges students to explore the influence that service has had on the ways that Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians perceived themselves and each other.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have served in the First World War (1914–18), Second World War (1939–45), Korean War (1950–53), Vietnam War (1962–73), and in post-1945 conflicts and peacekeeping. These conflict situations had a unique influence on how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people saw themselves and also on how they were perceived by non-Indigenous service personnel.

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, service in the defence forces has been an experience for which they were well suited. They have combined modern military and uniquely indigenous skills in the service of their country. Many have been able to draw on knowledge and understandings of their ‘Country’ to fulfil their role of defending and protecting Australia as members of the defence forces. For others, the long history of colonial conflict was influential, with some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identifying with a ‘warrior’ heritage, adding to their desire to serve and protect Country.

Between the First and Second World Wars there was increasing recognition of the role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could play in the defence of Australia. Their intimate knowledge of the land, the coastline and the waters of northern Australia was strategically advantageous to national security. During the Second World War, when Australia came under direct threat from Japan, recognition of these cultural skills and knowledge resulted in the formation of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion and the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit.

The influx of soldiers to the Northern Territory gave many of these soldiers their first contact with Indigenous Australians, and gave Aboriginal people their first opportunity to mix with non-Indigenous Australians who were relatively free of racist attitudes. From 1942 until the war ended, the Army became the dominant social force in the Territory and was instrumental in shaping race relations, breaking away from the entrenched view that Aboriginal people were only useful for menial jobs and could be employed under low wages and conditions.

Discrimination was also experienced by some members of the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit, which was formed to utilise the traditional skills of Aboriginal people living in the north of Australia. The Yolngu members of the unit received three sticks of tobacco a week, with no monetary pay. Back pay and service medals were finally awarded in 1993.

However, the creation of these units contributed to the growing number of non-Indigenous Australians who were able to develop a greater appreciation and understanding of Indigenous Australians. Service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women in all areas of the defence forces has contributed to incremental changes in attitudes within the Australian community.

The information provided in this section has been adapted from the Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present exhibition, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009.
Investigation 2

Learning activities: How has service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people shaped the way Australians see themselves?

Australian Curriculum: History

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

YEAR 9
What was the origin, development, significance and long-term impact of imperialism in this period?
What was the significance of World War I?

YEAR 10
What were the consequences of World War II? How did these consequences shape the modern world?
How was Australian society affected by other significant global events and changes in this period?

Knowledge and Understanding

YEAR 9
• Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century (that is 1900)

YEAR 10
• The experiences of Australians during World War II (such as Prisoners of War (POWs), the Battle of Britain, Kokoda, the Fall of Singapore)
• The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: 1962 right to vote federally; 1967 Referendum; Reconciliation; Mabo decision; Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology

Learning sequence

Activity 1: Identity and country
Students explore a range of sources and consider some of the factors that influence the contribution and identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence forces.

1. Ask your students:
   What is identity? What contributes to and shapes a person’s identity?
2. Provide students with access to sources A–H on pages 26–29. Source A can be found on page 90 at the back of this publication.

3. Distribute Activity sheet 1: Identity and country. Students consider the relationship between the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their service in the defence forces.

4. After students have completed the student activity sheet, conduct a class discussion focusing on how the experience of service influenced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service people’s sense of self. Ask students:
   - What are some of the factors that contribute to the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
   - In what ways might the experience of service have influenced the ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people see themselves? Has this changed across different eras?

**Activity 2: Getting to know each other**

This activity focuses on the influences that service has had on changing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Students analyse six images and reflect on the relationships formed during service.

1. Provide students with sources I–N on pages 32–34, all of which are images.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 2: Getting to know each other. Students reflect on how the experience of service may have influenced the way that Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the defence forces saw each other. Encourage students to look at the titles and to consider both when and where each image was taken before they complete the activity sheet.

3. As a class, discuss how the close working relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the defence forces may have contributed to changes in societal attitudes in Australia. Ask students:
   - How has the legal status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people changed over the last century? To what extent has this change been reflected in relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?
   - What are the qualities that members of the defence forces need to display to each other during times of conflict? Do you think that relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the defence forces have changed over time?
   - Do you think that service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has the potential to change the way that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people see each other in the wider Australian community?

**Activity 3: An unknown soldier**

In this activity students consider the experience of service from the perspective of an unknown Aboriginal serviceman and complete an empathy task.

1. Provide students with access to source O on page 37.

2. Encourage students to interrogate the source by asking them:
   - What do the words ‘unknown soldier’ and ‘unidentified’ mean?
   - When was the image taken?
   - Where was the image taken?
   - What might serving in the defence forces during the First World War have meant for this soldier?
   - At the time this image was taken, how might his life have been different to the one he had in Australia before enlisting?
   - How might he have felt about fighting in a war so far from home?

3. Ask students to complete an empathy writing task where they take on the role of the soldier in the image and write a letter home.
Investigation 2

Sources A-H

These sources relate to the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence forces.

**SOURCE A**
Map of Indigenous groups on the last page: Page 90

**SOURCE B**
*Australia’s northern defenders 1942*
Photographer: D F Thomson

Members of the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit are seen here at Caledon Bay, North-east Arnhem Land, Northern Territory.

Reproduced courtesy of the Thomson family and Museum Victoria TPH 2732

**SOURCE C**

*Reconnaissance, Northern Territory c. 2000*
Photographer: Ben Bohane

Regional Force Surveillance Units draw on the knowledge of Indigenous people to monitor and defend Australia’s northern borders.

This soldier, a member of Norforce, is engaged in reconnaissance. Sitting perfectly still for up to an hour, the soldier observes an area before moving on to another location.

AWM POS157.001: Reproduced courtesy of Ben Bohane.
Investigation 2

**SOURCE D**

During an exercise near Kalumburu, an Aboriginal community 900 kilometres north-east of the coastal Kimberley town of Broome, soldiers described how joining the army had changed their lives. Private Schandley, a member of the Gooniyandi language group, used to be unemployed, and a heavy drinker. Now, when not away on Norforce duties, he works as a ranger with Kimberley Land Council, which looks after Indigenous-owned land.

The reservists learn skills which can help them find civilian jobs. In turn, they pass on their traditional knowledge, which includes an intimate acquaintance with the landscape. ‘If something is out of place — a bush, a rock — they’ll pick that up,’ says Bob Terms, Kimberley Squadron’s sergeant-major. ‘They can see if something has been through, and not necessarily from tracks, maybe just a broken twig or a thread on a tree.’

**SOURCE E**
List of names of members of the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit (Fifty-one Yolngu from Arnhem Land, four non-indigenous, and six Pacific and Torres Strait Islanders). The unit operated from 1941–1943.

*From exhibition text: Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yolngu members of the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raiwalla (No. 1 Section Leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gitpapoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandalissall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuruwul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natjialma (No. 3 Section Leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nglu-mar-mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lia-dari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mau</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dainganngan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tiurr-pum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ngarkaiya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ngunbaralli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bin-yin-nyi-woi</td>
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<td>Mauwunboi</td>
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<td>Wawi</td>
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<td>Wut-ianar-woi</td>
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<td>Djerliwoi</td>
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<td>Billin-yarra</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Investigation 2

**SOURCE F**
Len Waters, RAAF, Second World War

I was terribly keen to prove myself in the elite ... which it is. There is no doubt about that, the flying part of the Air Force was the elite. Well, I was the coloured boy in it and ... I might add that there were 375 on that course that started and 48 of us finished up as pilots ... there were only three blokes in front of me on my average ... from my humble beginning I was pretty proud.

From exhibition text: *Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present*, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009

**SOURCE G**

*Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion 1945*
*Thursday Island, Torres Strait*
*Photographer unknown*

*The Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion brought a sense of unity and determination to Torres Strait Islanders as they prepared to defend their homes against the Japanese.*

Reproduced courtesy of the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland 17218a
In 1942, Kathleen Walker joined the Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS) and was trained as a wireless operator. Based in Brisbane, Lance Corporal Kathleen Walker experienced first-hand the tension between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Within the Australian Army the colour-bar had largely disappeared, but within American ranks segregation was still practiced; black service personnel were confined to south of the Brisbane River and only allowed to frequent ‘black’ clubs. These experiences greatly affected Kathleen Walker.

After the war she trained in secretarial work and went on to become one of Australia’s most well-known poets; and she was also an artist and a campaigner for Aboriginal rights. Walker later resumed her traditional name, Oodgeroo Noonuccal. She went on to create a legacy in her activism (including campaigning for the 1967 referendum) and poetry; ‘Son of Mine’ is an ode to her son.

Activity sheet 1: Identity and country

In what ways has the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people influenced their contribution to the defence forces? Explore this relationship by analysing sources A-H.

**SOURCE A**

Use source A to find which Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander group are the Traditional Owners to the area in which your school is located. What is the significance of ‘Country’ to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

**SOURCES B, C, D AND E**

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a close connection to Country. Explore sources B, C, D and E and identify how this relationship to, and knowledge of, Country has shaped the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence forces.

**SOURCES F AND G**

Analyse sources F and G. How might service in the defence forces have influenced the way that Len Waters and members of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion saw themselves? Explain your response with reference to the sources.
In what ways do you think that experiences during war may have stimulated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to consider their place within Australian society?
**Investigation 2**

**Sources I-N**

These sources depict working relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

**SOURCE I**

*Unknown Army camp, England, August 1940*  
*Photographer unknown*

*Private Blanco demonstrates traditional dancing to his camp mates.*  
AWM 002931

**SOURCE J**

*Wangaratta 1942*  
*A young girl asks an Aboriginal guide if she can enter the showground. The guard is part of a special platoon at Wangaratta consisting of Aboriginal soldiers, all volunteers.*  
AWM P02140.001
SOURCE L
Christmas Day concert, Vietnam
25 December 1965
Photographer unknown
Sapper Bill Cooliburra of Palm Island, Queensland, takes the stage to sing, accompanied by Ian Turpie on the guitar, during a concert at an airbase north of Saigon.
AWM KEL/65/0050/VN

SOURCE K
Richard Hill, Korea, 7 December 1953
38th Parallel
Photographer: Phillip Oliver Hobson
Private Richard Hill cuts the hair of a fellow member of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, at a camp during the Korean War.
AWM HOBJ4732
SOURCE M
Reg Saunders on leave, 12 October 1943
Innisfail, Queensland
Photographer: James Tait
Troops of the 2/7th Australian Infantry Battalion are shown on leave from New Guinea, waiting for the south-bound train to start.
AWM 057894

SOURCE N
Bien Hoa Province, Vietnam, May 1968
Photographer: William Errington
Bombardier John Burns (left) and Gunner Bruce Morris, 102 Battery, in support of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, are shown during Operation Toan Thang.
AWM ERR/68/0474/VN
Activity sheet 2: Getting to know each other

Look carefully at sources I-N and analyse the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in each image. What do you think that person A was thinking and feeling at the time the image was taken? Repeat for person B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source I</th>
<th>What might person A be thinking and feeling?</th>
<th>What might person B be thinking and feeling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="source1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="source1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source J</th>
<th>What might person A be thinking and feeling?</th>
<th>What might person B be thinking and feeling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="source2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="source2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="source2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source K</th>
<th>What might person A be thinking and feeling?</th>
<th>What might person B be thinking and feeling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="source3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="source3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="source3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What might person A be thinking and feeling? | What might person B be thinking and feeling?
--- | ---
Source L

Source M

Source N
Activity sheet 3: An unknown soldier

SOURCE O
Unknown soldier, England c. 1918
Photographer: E H Hazell
This young, unidentified Aboriginal soldier is thought to have served with the 20th Australian Infantry Battalion on the Western Front during the First World War.

AWM P00703.001
Investigation 3

What have been the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia’s defence forces?

In this investigation students consider some of the dimensions of service. They focus on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals who have served at different times in the defence forces. Many of the experiences are common to all people who serve; some are particular to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Students analyse a variety of primary and secondary sources in this investigation.

Main Image: Three members of the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), confer with a North Korean interpreter (left). The Australian soldiers are (left to right): Warrant Officer W.J. (‘Bill’) Harrison, Lieutenant Reginald Walter Saunders, Private W.H. (‘Alby’) Alberts of the Sniper Section.

AWM P01813866.
More than 800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now proudly serve in the Australian Defence Force.

At the time of the First World War (1914–18), few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could vote, none were counted in the federal census and most lived in poverty. Yet despite formal legislative barriers to the service of non-Europeans, more than 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are known to have enlisted in the First World War from a population of around 80,000 Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen fought in integrated units alongside non-Indigenous Australian soldiers, and received the same pay. They endured the same hardships and terrors of the battlefield, supporting and supported by their non-Indigenous comrades. Their casualty rate of one in three mirrored the rate of the First Australian Imperial Force as a whole.

In the early months of the Second World War (1939–45), the Defence Committee recommended that for the Navy and Army the admission of Australians of non-European origin was ‘... neither necessary nor desirable ...’ unless demand for manpower became intense. With the direct threat to Australia following the entry of Japan into the war in 1941, the demand for recruits led to the largest period of enlistment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and a relaxation of Army attitudes. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), of the services, was the most open to the enlistment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, partly due to the pressing need to find air and ground crew.

In 1941, after Japan entered the Second World War, Darwin became a port of high defence significance and the Torres Strait provided an important shipping route. In May 1941 an Indigenous garrison unit was formed and by May 1943 this became the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion. The Battalion assisted the 17th Australian Field Company, the 2nd Australian Water Transport Unit, the 22nd Australian Line Section and the 4th Australian Marine Food Supply Platoon. Their knowledge of the Torres Strait was invaluable to the war effort and, in proportion to population, no community in Australia contributed more in the Second World War than the Islanders. In 2005, the 1939–45 Star was issued to former members of the Torres Strait Units.

The Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit (an irregular army unit consisting of fifty-one Yolngu men from Arnhem Land, six Pacific and Torres Strait Islanders, and four non-Indigenous men) was also formed at this time in appreciation of the traditional skills of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The members of the unit used their traditional bushcraft and fighting skills to patrol the coast of Arnhem Land, established a coast-watch and were prepared to repel raids by fighting a guerrilla war against any Japanese who landed. Living off the bush and using traditional weapons, they were mobile and had no supply line to protect. The unit was operating along the Arnhem Land coast by February 1942 and provided surveillance over the east flank of Darwin at a time when the possibility of a Japanese invasion was high. The unit was eventually disbanded in 1943, when the fear of a Japanese landing had disappeared. A list of the members is provided in Source E on page 27.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have served in all conflicts in which Australia has participated since the Second World War, including the Korean War (1950–53), Vietnam War (1962–73), Afghanistan War (2002–present) and Iraq War (2003–2009).

Today, the highest numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers in the Australian Army are found in the northern Regions Force Surveillance Units. NORTFORCE is based in the Northern Territory and the Pilbara Regiment is situated in north Western Australia. The 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment, maintains the bonds formed with Torres Strait Islander communities during the Second World War.

The information provided in this section has been adapted from the Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present exhibition, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009.
Learning activities: What have been the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia’s defence forces?

**Australian Curriculum: History**

**KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS**

**YEAR 9**
What was the significance of World War I?

**YEAR 10**
What were the consequences of World War II? How did these consequences shape the modern world?

**Knowledge and Understanding**

**YEAR 9**
- The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I, including the Gallipoli campaign
- The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend

**YEAR 10**
- The experiences of Australians during World War II (such as Prisoners of War (POWs), the Battle of Britain, Kokoda, the Fall of Singapore)

**Historical Skills**
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources
- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own)
Learning sequence

Activity 1: The meaning of service

In this activity students analyse what it means to serve by focusing on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

1. Provide students with access to sources A–F on pages 42–43. These sources explore a variety of experiences related to service.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 1: The meaning of service. Ask students to explore sources A–F to identify the aspects of service that each conveys. Students identify and list some of those aspects.

   Students then analyse each source for its reliability and usefulness. You may like to prepare for this task by discussing the following questions with them.
   - Who created the source? What personal situation, perspective, and skills did the creator bring to the material?
   - When was it created? Was the creator a witness to the events? Was the source created at the time of the event or later?
   - For what purpose was it created? Who was the intended audience? Was it for personal or public use? What did the creator hope to achieve?

   You may also like to ask students to consider whether the stress of conflict situations may influence the reliability of historical sources.

Activity 2: Serving with distinction

In Activity 2 students explore the personal stories of three Aboriginal servicemen. They identify the values displayed by the three men during their service.

1. Brainstorm with students a list of values that are commonly associated with Australian service personnel, including those associated with the Anzac story.

2. Provide students with access to sources H-I on pages 48–49. Each of these explores a personal story. Some students may find the incidents being described distressing.

3. Distribute Activity sheet 2: Serving with distinction. Students must identify aspects from each story which exemplify values associated with Australians who have served.

4. As a class, discuss how the experiences of service for Indigenous Australians were different to or the same as those of non-Indigenous Australians. Consider if this has been the same for all conflicts in which Australia has been engaged.

Illuminated portrait of Aboriginal serviceman Private Frederick Beale, 2/20th Battalion. He was captured, along with his brother, Pte George Henry Beale, after the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 and spent time in Changi POW camp before being sent to Naoetsu Camp in Japan.

AWM P01649.013.
Sources A-F

These sources highlight some of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have served.

**SOURCE A**

Eric Peters, extract from digital story, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2010

Dad and my brother Harry, both joined up in 1940. Dad was 39 and Harry was 16. Like so many others, he put his age up to get in. To me, Dad was too old at 39 to be joining up. It was at the end of his service when he was coming home that his troop ship was diverted to Java and they were picked up by the Japanese. He was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Dad sent letters home from the prisoner of war camp but we never knew what he was really going through. After Japanese censors got to him all that was left were empty phrases like ‘my health is good. I am well’. I can guess but I’ll never know what he saw or went through.

**SOURCE B**

*Operation Enoggera, Vietnam 25 June 1966*

Corporal Henry Lee moves cautiously into a Viet Cong village with his Owen gun at the ready during the first mission by the 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

AWM CUN/66/0507/VN

**SOURCE C**

Citation for Distinguished Conduct Medal awarded to Private William Allen Irwin referring to operations on the Western Front in August 1918:

Single-handed and in face of extremely heavy fire, Private Irwin rushed three separate machine gun posts and captured the three guns and crews. It was while rushing a fourth machine gun that he was severely wounded.

On his irresistible dash and magnificent gallantry this man materially assisted our advance through this strongly held and defended wood, and by his daring actions he greatly inspired the whole of his Company.

**SOURCE D**

Private L Fuller waiting for jeep ambulance transport to the advanced dressing station.

AWM 092484
Investigation 3

**SOURCE E**

*Inspection 24 January 1944*

*Mossman, Queensland.*

*Photographer: James Tait*

*Lieutenant A Morgan inspects Torres Strait Islander members of the 17th Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps (left to right) Private D Pitt, Private P Jose, Private W Wong.*

AWM 063700

**SOURCE F**

*Bruce Fletcher, Landing at Xuyen Moc, Operation Paddington, 1967, oil on canvas on hardboard, 102x133.3 cm, AWM ART 40578 ‘Darky’ Butler is third from the left.*
**Activity sheet 1: The meaning of service**

Locate and read sources A-F. Use them to identify some experiences associated with service in the defence forces. Create a list below.

Take on the role of an historian and assess the reliability and usefulness of each source. Analyse each source by reflecting on the following questions:

- Who created the source?
- When was it created?
- For what purpose was it created?
- What factors may influence its reliability?
- What factors may influence its usefulness?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE A</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>Source Analysis</th>
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<th>Experiences</th>
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### Investigation 3

#### Source Analysis

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<td>SOURCE E</td>
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<td>SOURCE F</td>
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</table>
Sources G-I
Sources G, H and I explore three personal stories of Aboriginal service in the defence forces.

SOURCE G
Reg Saunders

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Reg Saunders joined the army. This was part of his warrior heritage as a Gunditjmara man, his people had fought many battles with white settlers to retain their land, his father had fought in France in the First World War, and his Uncle Reg Rawlings MM, after whom he was named, was killed in Flanders.

Glenda Humes, Saunders’ daughter from Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War, from the Somme to Vietnam 1993.
Reg Saunders was the first identified Aboriginal serviceman to be commissioned as an officer in the Australian Army. The son of a First World War veteran, Saunders was born in western Victoria on 7 August 1920 and brought up by his grandmother. Having attended school only sporadically, he found work as a saw miller but imagined himself going to fight in South America for the poor and oppressed, with whom he felt a kinship.

Very conscious of the service of Aboriginal men during the First World War, Saunders enlisted on 24 April 1940 and, after his initial training, was sent to the Middle East as a reinforcement for the 2/7th battalion. Having survived several encounters with German aircraft in North Africa, Saunders embarked on the ill-fated Greek campaign which he, along with many others, considered a mistake. After Greece his unit fought on Crete, where Saunders experienced his first close combat and was forced to remain hidden by locals on the island for twelve months during the German occupation.

After escaping Crete in May 1942, Saunders returned to Australia before rejoining his battalion in New Guinea – now as a sergeant.

He fought through the Salamaua campaign, remaining in action with the 2/7th until mid-1944, when his commanding officer nominated him for officer training. After a 16-week course, Saunders was commissioned in November 1944 and returned to New Guinea.

For the remaining months of the war, Saunders fought as a platoon commander in New Guinea. He was in the Wewak area when the war ended and was repatriated to Australia to a welcome tinged with sadness for his younger brother, Harry, who had been killed in action.

After demobilisation, his return to civilian life was not easy. Accustomed to being an admired and respected officer, once out of uniform he faced the same discrimination experienced by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. He re-enlisted at the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–53), serving as company commander in the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, leaving his wife and three daughters behind.

He was promoted to Captain and took part in the Battle of Kapyong – one of Australia’s most memorable actions of the war.

On returning from Korea, he was posted to National Service Training but, dissatisfied with the training regimen, he left the army in 1954 and found work as a logging contractor in Gippsland. He then moved to Sydney and, for the next eleven years, worked with the Austral Bronze Company. In 1969 Reg Saunders became one of the first Aboriginal Liaison Officers with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and in 1971 he was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire. Saunders had ten children, was a highly respected soldier and leader, and died on 2 March 1990.

Investigation 3

SOURCE H

Leonard Waters

Flight Sergeant Leonard (Len) Waters was a distinguished Aboriginal fighter pilot in the Second World War (1939–45). Born in 1924 at Euraba Mission, New South Wales, Waters spent most of his childhood at Nindigully in Queensland. Tales of the fictional hero ‘Biggles’ and famous aviators such as Charles Kingsford-Smith, Amy Johnson and Bert Hinkler fostered his boyhood love of aviation.

Waters left school at thirteen and worked as a manual labourer and shearer. Aboriginal people were officially barred from military service, so his hopes of becoming a pilot were slim. In 1942, however, restrictions on non-European enlistment in the military were relaxed and at eighteen years of age Waters joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Waters initially trained as an aircraft mechanic before applying for pilot training in 1943. His determination and study efforts at night school and in the technical college library were rewarded by him being one of the few applicants chosen.

Waters trained at No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School in Narrandera, where he graduated as a Sergeant Pilot from No. 5 Service Flying Training School, one of the top five in his class. In November 1944, Waters was posted to No. 78 Squadron and, coincidentally, allocated a P-40 Kittyhawk fighter bomber named ‘Black Magic’. This aircraft had been named by a previous pilot and was not a reference to his Aboriginality.

Len Waters flew more than ninety-five operational sorties from Noemfoor (West Irian, Indonesia), Morotai (Indonesia) and Tarakan (Borneo, Indonesia). Promoted to Flight Sergeant in January 1945, Waters commanded many missions as the commander of a flight.

Despite experiencing equality in the armed services, civilian life for Waters had changed little from the inequality he had left before his service. In one incident, while on leave, Waters was arrested and jailed for not carrying his Aboriginal ‘identity card’. After the war Waters returned to Australia, and wrote in his diary that he has now ‘returned to being a blackfellow’.

Despite his application to establish a regional airline in south-west Queensland, he received no reply from the government and returned to shearing sheep. He spent a lot of time volunteering, including working with unemployed young Aboriginal people and died in an accident on 25 August 1993.

From exhibition text: Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009.

Flight Sergeant Leonard Waters, No. 78 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, sits in the cockpit of his P-40N Kittyhawk, named ‘Black Magic’ by the previous pilot. Date 1944–45, photographer unknown.
AWM P01659.001

Aircraftman Len Waters in full winter flying kit, Narrandera, NSW, 1943.
AWM P01757.007
I never thought hanging clothes out on the line would result in me ducking for cover. An everyday domestic chore coupled with a crack of lightning and a clap of thunder would take me back to Afghanistan.

I’m the 21st member of the Lovett family to see active service for Australia. A proud family of the fighting Gunditjmara people of the western district in Victoria. My military service has seen me serve in East Timor and again in Afghanistan.

The modern battlefield is still a battlefield and there is no shortage of ways in which a soldier can be killed or injured. The battlelands surround you, the enemy, well they blended in. They struck on their terms and their attacks were indiscriminate. A rocket launched from five kilometres away on a dodgy homemade launcher could kill and wound unsuspecting soldiers going about their business in the relative safety of a big military base, far from the front line. A roadside bomb was also a weapon of choice. Dug into the earth waiting to be triggered. The weight of the vehicle or even a soldier would unleash hell.

It was the waiting that was devastating. A mate killed or maybe wounded. A long journey of grief for an unsuspecting family back home in Australia begins. We were in communication lockdown. They could not contact me and I could not tell them I was safe. I remember a memorial of a fallen digger was set up in a taskforce chapel. I didn’t know him well but I felt compelled to pay my respects. It was 3 am in the morning and I sat there in silence. I sat thinking about his family and thinking about mine. My wife, sons, our extended family. I’m a father of three grown boys of the same age of some of the men I serve with. Parents worried for their children’s safety, my children worried for mine. And a loving wife was always there to reassure family that her husband would be fine.

The war was my adventure but my family’s hell. In some quiet time with my wife she said quietly, ‘Our hell’s over now but yours has just begun. I was wound real tight, now I’m slowly unwinding.’

Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Digital storytelling, 2010.

Ricky Morris 2008
Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan
Sergeant Morris served in
the Army with the Royal
Australian Engineers from
1995 to 2004. He went to
East Timor in 1999 as part
of INTERFET and served in
Afghanistan in 2008–09.
Reproduced courtesy of
Ricky Morris
Activity sheet 2: Serving with distinction

Explore the personal stories in sources G, H and I. Identify and list any aspects from the stories that you think exemplify one of the following values associated with Australians who have served.

Add some more values to the list that you identify in the stories of the three servicemen.

Courage

Persistence
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<th>Other Values</th>
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Investigation 4

How have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributed to the war effort on the Australian home front during times of war?

This investigation focuses on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Australian home front during times of war, particularly during the Second World War. This conflict directly affected the lives of Australians on the home front. In addition to coping with family members serving overseas, rising prices and rationing, Australia itself was vulnerable to attack after Japan entered the war. All Australians were urged to support the war effort. In this investigation students have the opportunity to analyse a range of sources that depict contributions to the war effort by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They also explore some of the challenging aspects of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia during times of war, and the impact that commitment of troops to the Second World War had on employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in parts of Australia.

Main image: Louie Piraptemeli from Bathurst Island was recognised as a hero after capturing five Japanese airmen and seaman.
Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria H99.201/281

Inset: Army camp workers c. 1943, photographer unknown Alec, Sydney and Gilbert cut wood on a saw bench, at one of the many Army camp settlements in the Northern Territory.
Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria H99.201/2276
Investigation 4

Background information for teachers

Those at home feel the impact of war, as well as the men and women serving in the defence forces, when Australia commits troops during a conflict. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, along with other Australians, have had to deal with separation from loved ones, as well as injury, loss and grief. They have also experienced consequences of war such as rationing, evacuation and the increased need for labour. This was particularly the case during the Second World War (1939–1945).

During the Second World War Australia came under direct attack from Japan when Darwin was bombed by the Japanese in February 1942 and again when Japanese midget submarines penetrated Sydney Harbour in May 1942. All Australians were affected by the war, but those who lived in Australia’s north experienced the impact of war most directly.

With the influx of more than 100,000 servicemen to the Northern Territory during the Second World War, and the resultant manpower shortages, the Army became heavily dependent on Aboriginal labour. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were employed in widely ranging occupations: at Army butcheries, as truck and car mechanics, on construction and farm work, as drivers, stevedores and many other occupations. They also worked on small Army ships out of Darwin.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who contributed to the war effort in this way were not treated equally. For many, especially those from mission settlements, this was the first time they earned a cash wage. The rates of pay for Aboriginal workers in the Army were set by the Northern Territory Aboriginals Ordinance at five shillings per week, far less than comparable non-Indigenous wages. Australia’s land, air and sea defence forces employed Aboriginal people in de facto units to provide surveillance over the Northern Territory coastline. Most of these workers did not receive their entitled pay. Food, housing and welfare services provided by the Army were, however, superior to conditions they had experienced working for civilians.

Aboriginal units assisted in locating Japanese, Dutch, Australian and United States aircraft crash sites (160 aircraft were shot down over Australia) and to track any survivors who may have wandered away from the crash site. Although not formally enlisted, Melville Islanders were issued with Navy uniforms, rations and weapons and assisted the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) with survey operations, intelligence gathering, coast watching and logistical support. Similar units were also formed on Bathurst Island. They patrolled a large area of coast and islands and assisted with communications between the RAN and various islanders. The first Japanese combatant captured in Australia was taken by an Aboriginal man from the Melville Island mission.

At the Delissaville Aboriginal settlement on Cox Peninsula in the Northern Territory, the ‘Black Watch’, as the Delissaville patrol became known, provided search and rescue missions for crashed pilots. The Royal Australian Air Force constructed airstrips at remote Aboriginal missions surrounding Darwin and by mid-1942 they began to deploy radar stations there. Proximity to a mission ensured availability of water, food and, most importantly, knowledgeable locals who could provide a ready source of labour and perform military support roles.

In the Torres Strait, up to 200 Islander servicemen performed patrols and other military duties without formal enlistment or recognition. In 1944, a shortage of specialists in the Army led to Islanders receiving training as signallers, carpenters and in other skills – a factor that enabled Torres Strait Islanders to re-build their communities and economies after the war.

The information provided in this section has been adapted from the Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present exhibition, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009.
**Learning activities:** How have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributed to the war effort on the Australian home front during times of war?

**Australian Curriculum: History**

### KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

**YEAR 10**

How was Australian society affected by other significant global events and changes in this period?

#### Knowledge and Understanding

**YEAR 10**

- The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front, including the changing roles of women and use of wartime government controls (conscription, manpower controls, rationing and censorship)

#### Historical Skills

- Use historical terms and concepts
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own)

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*Private Leonard Lamilami from Croker Island covers the movement of fellow Patrolmen Private Peter Round from Darwin Squadron (centre) and Private Lloyd Braybon from Tiwi Islands during a training activity in the community of Oenpelli in the Northern Territory, August 2008.*

Department of Defence 20080825adf8243523_280
Learning sequence

Activity 1: Helping the war effort

Students explore a range of images depicting some of the ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributed to the war effort from the home front. They reflect on the advantages and challenges of using images as historical sources.

1. Provide students with access to sources A–H on pages 58–59.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 1: Helping the war effort. Students analyse the images at both the literal and inferential levels to identify ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributed to the war effort from the home front.

Only the titles of the images have been displayed with the sources, to encourage students to look at the images closely. The captions for the images are:

Source A: Air rescue party c. 1943
Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory were skilled at finding lost aircraft and men.
Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria H99.201/278

Source B: Observer c. 1943
Isabel Blair, one of the first Aboriginal observers to become an enrolled member of the Volunteer Air Observers Corps, is shown with binoculars.
Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria H99.201/3010

Source C: Bushcraft skills 18 November 1942, Northern Territory
Australian troops learned many useful bushcraft skills from Aboriginal people. Here they are learning the Indigenous technique of laying ti-tree bark for waterproofing of hut roofs.
AWM 013578

Source D: Supplementing Navy rations October 1943, Melville Island
A shooting party of officers and sailors from HMAS Moresby, with Aboriginal guides from the Snake Bay Aboriginal Settlement, display some of the ducks and geese shot during an expedition to a swamp near the settlement.
AWM P02305.019
Investigation 4

**Source E: Knitting circle 1941**
Photographer: Beatrice Austin
Aboriginal women and girls display the socks, jumpers and balaclavas they have knitted for the war effort at Cumeroogunga Government Mission on the Murray River.


AWM P01562.001

**Source F: Japanese prisoners c. 1943**
Aboriginal men hold onto the arms of two Japanese prisoners in the Northern Territory.

AWM P00296.052

**Source G: Sky-watching, probably Gulf of Carpentaria, Qld, August 1943 – April 1944**
Aboriginal children showing their knowledge of sky-watching to Flight Lieutenant Evans and Flying Officer Ray of a RAAF Catalina aircraft Squadron (possibly No. 43 Squadron RAAF, at Karumba Flying boat base).

AWM NEA0128A

**Source H: World War Two supply ships, Darwin 1991**
Gela Nga-Mirraitja Fordham (Paddy Fordham Wainburraga)
This bark painting depicts supply ships at Darwin being unloaded by Aboriginal labourers during the Second World War (1939–45).

AWM ART29718

3. After students have completed the activity sheet, conduct a class discussion about using images as historical sources.
Ask the students:

- What are the advantages of using images as historical sources?
- Is there a difference between what the images actually show and what you can infer about what is happening in each image? Explain.
- Do the images suggest anything about changes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia during the Second World War?
- What are the limitations of these images for a historian studying the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia during the Second World War?
Activity 2: Living in a time of war

In this activity students reflect on five sources relating to the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the home front during a time of war. They create written responses to the sources.

1. Provide students with sources I–M on pages 62–63.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 2: Living in a time of war. Students are challenged to consider the emotional impact of evacuation, the bombing of Darwin, rationing and casualties of war. Some students may find the incidents depicted in these sources distressing.

3. As a class, discuss how the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civilians were the same as, and different to, those of non-Indigenous Australians.

Activity 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workforce

The commitment of Australian troops to the Second World War had a significant impact on the supply of labour available on the home front. In this activity, students analyse four sources relating to the employment of Aboriginal people on the home front during the Second World War.

1. Provide students with sources N–Q on pages 66–67. Clarify the meaning and discuss the implications of some of the language and perspectives used in these primary sources. Some of the terms reflect government policies and societal attitudes at the time, which were based on ideas of assimilation, and were discriminatory.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workforce, where students explore the sources for evidence about attitudes towards Aboriginal people during the Second World War.

3. As a class, discuss the impact of greater workforce participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the home front. Ask students:
   • Was the call for increased participation in the workforce an opportunity or an imposition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? Explain.
   • What factors may have influenced relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the workplace on the home front?
   • Do you think that it would be possible to change the attitudes of government officials such as the Deputy Director of Man Power? Explain.
   • In what ways are the attitudes suggested by the sources from 1942 and 1943 similar to those prevalent in Australian society today? In what ways are they different?

Wedding portrait of Signalman Claude McDonald and Aircraftwoman Alice Lovett 1944, photographer Unknown.
AWM P05049.004
Investigation 4

Sources A-H

These sources depict contributions to the war effort by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the home front during the Second World War.

SOURCE A
Air rescue party c. 1943
Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria H99.201/278

SOURCE B
Observer c. 1943
Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria H99.201/3010

SOURCE C
Bushcraft skills 18 November 1942
Northern Territory
Photographer: John Earl McNeil
AWM 013578

SOURCE D
Supplementing Navy rations, October 1943
Melville Island
Photographer: John Betty
AWM P02305.019
SOURCE E
Knitting circle, 1941
Photographer: Beatrice Austin
AWM P01562.001

SOURCE F
Japanese prisoners with an Aboriginal man c. 1943
AWM P00296.052

SOURCE G
Sky-watching, probably Gulf of Carpentaria, Qld. August 1943 – April 1944
AWM NEA0128A

SOURCE H
World War Two supply ships, Darwin
Gela Nga-Mirraitja Fordham (Paddy Fordham Wainburranga) 1991. Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark, reproduction
AWM ART29718
### Activity sheet 1: Helping the war effort

Use the images in sources A-H to explore how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people helped on the home front during the Second World War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE A</th>
<th>What I see: describe exactly what you can see in the image.</th>
<th>What I think: ‘read between the lines’ and think about what else this image might tell you.</th>
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</thead>
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<td>SOURCE D</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOURCE</td>
<td><strong>What I see: describe exactly what you can see in the image.</strong></td>
<td><strong>What I think: ‘read between the lines’ and think about what else this image might tell you.</strong></td>
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<td>SOURCE E</td>
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<td>SOURCE G</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOURCE H</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Regulation of rationed goods was based upon quantity and supply. The following table outlines how goods were initially allocated and the dates that the restrictions were imposed and removed:

**Date of gazetted for coupon rationing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date gazetted</th>
<th>Date abolished</th>
<th>Quantity per adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>12 June 1942</td>
<td>24 June 1948</td>
<td>112 coupons per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>6 July 1942</td>
<td>July 1950</td>
<td>1/2 lb per 5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>29 August 1942</td>
<td>3 July 1947</td>
<td>2 lb per fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>7 June 1943</td>
<td>June 1950</td>
<td>1 lb per fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>14 January 1944</td>
<td>24 June 1948</td>
<td>2 1/4 lbs per week</td>
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</table>

This table reflects initial quantities. Many items were adjusted and rations reduced at a later date. Items for sale had a coupon value e.g. a pair of socks cost four coupons.

Sourced from the Australian War Memorial: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/homefront/rationing.asp
**SOURCE L**
An Aboriginal Elder’s Story: Bombing and Strafing at Milingimbi

They were shooting down at us ... Everyone scattered. They ran away. Nobody was there. Still everyone was alive except for one man. He was a young fella ... He was torn apart by the bomb. A young fella, Djowa’s nephew. The plane was shooting down at us. Nyooowww tat-tat-tat-tat. He went ‘round again and came back swooping down at us.

Nyoo tat-tat-tat-tat. Some people ducked down under the water to hide and some people hid behind the rocks. The rocks were smashed by the bullets.

Some people were hiding behind the trees in the jungle and some people hid in the mangroves. The bomb scared them. Some people ran to the river, some people ran to the creek. From that bomb, now. Afterwards, some of us men went to check up and while we were on our way we suddenly saw the plane coming back down. We said to each other ‘Hey! That plane, he’s going to shoot us, shoot us!’ Then we ran flat out and threw ourselves into the river. We stayed under water for a short while.

When we came up our bodies were dripping with mud. Everywhere mud. We were covered in mud. We looked at each other and laughed and laughed.


**SOURCE M**
Colonel O.M. (Max) Carroll (RL), excerpt of oral account from Aboriginal History, 16:1, 1992

Corporal NJ (Norman) Womal ... was one of my NCOs in the Anti-Tank Platoon. He was smart, well turned out, always immaculate in presentation, and a good instructor.

... He was most effective in the field and I had cause to see his work at close quarters when he was in my company. On 17 October 1966 at a place called Nui Thi Vai, which was a mountain complex in South Vietnam, in Phuoc Tuy Province, the Viet Cong (VC) were located in caves and were hard to locate. We were ambushed as we were sweeping up a ridge line and the signals officer was shot in the chest. The Anti-Tank Platoon, which had been allowed to pass through the VC ambush before it was sprung, I summoned the Anti-Tank Platoon to back down to try and take out the enemy position from above and it was during this action that Womal was hit. He was shot in the throat and, although mortally wounded, he literally held his throat together with one hand whilst he was lying in an exposed position and continued to direct the fire of his machine gunner, relaying information to both his platoon commander and myself. It was because of this extremely courageous action that we did not suffer further casualties ... It was a privilege to serve with such a fine soldier.
Activity sheet 2: Living in a time of war

Look carefully at sources I-M. You will focus on some of the challenges of life on the home front.

SOURCE I
Examine this image and caption carefully. Imagine that you are one of the evacuees. What might you be thinking at this stage of your journey? You have the chance to send a short message home on a postcard. What will you say?

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SOURCE J-K
Look carefully at sources J and K. Rationing was a way of reducing the amount of food and other goods that people used so that more resources were available for the war effort.

Imagine if rationing was introduced to Australia now. What things would you be most upset to have limited access to? List five food items and five non-food items.

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SOURCE L
Read this account by an Aboriginal Elder of an incident at Milingimbi, in the Northern Territory, in 1942. Create a poem about the experience of the people at Milingimbi at the time.

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SOURCE M
Read the account by Colonel Carroll about the death of Corporal NJ (Norman) Womal in action in Vietnam. Imagine that you are part of Corporal Womal’s immediate family and you have just heard about Norman’s death. Write a journal entry expressing how you feel.

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_________________________________________________________
Investigation 4

Sources N-Q
These sources relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workforce during the Second World War.

SOURCE N
Letter to Chairman, Aborigines Welfare Board, 4 July 1942 from Director General of Man Power

SOURCE O
Letter to Director General of Man Power, 25 August 1942, from Deputy Director General of Man Power (NSW)
SOURCE P

Army camp workers, c. 1943
Photographer unknown

Alec, Sydney and Gilbert cut wood on a saw bench at one of the many Army camp settlements in the Northern Territory.

Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria H99.201/2276

SOURCE Q

Payday for Army workers, 25 September 1943, Katherine, Northern Territory.
Photographer: William Martin

An Aboriginal worker signs for his Army pay with a fingerprint.

AWM 057361
Activity sheet 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workforce

Note: Some of the language and views expressed in sources N and O reflect the policies and attitudes of the period in which they were written and are considered inappropriate and discriminatory today.

1. Read source N:
   (a) What is the purpose of this letter?

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

   (b) How does the Director General of Manpower describe his authority in the letter?

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

   (c) What was the situation in Australia in July 1942 that led to the Director General of Manpower seeking more people to join the workforce?

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

2. Read source O:
   (a) Describe what the Deputy Director General of Manpower is saying in the letter.

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

   (b) What attitude to Aboriginal people does the Deputy Director General convey in this letter?

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
(c) Explain why the views expressed in the third paragraph of the letter would be considered inappropriate in Australia today.

3. Look at sources P and Q and carefully analyse what they show:

(a) What messages do the images suggest to you about the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to contribute to the workforce?

(b) How do these messages compare to the attitudes conveyed in sources N and O?

4. Do you think that the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during the Second World War might have influenced attitudes about them in the community? Refer to sources N-Q in your response.
What have been the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people returning from active service?

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, service in Australia’s defence force brought a freedom and respect they had not previously known. For these people, returning from service was often a difficult process. Many of their experiences were similar to those of non-Indigenous personnel. Often, however, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women had additional challenges to deal with. In this investigation students explore personal stories and consider why returning from service politicised many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Sapper Louis Lopata playing the piano accordion and an Aboriginal worker playing mouth organ for an impromptu sing-along. Reproduced courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, H99.201/3120
Despite the positive experiences of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women in the two world wars, many of these veterans returned home to the same discrimination and poor living conditions that they had experienced before enlisting. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans were often denied the honour and rights given to other veterans. It was not until 1967 that they were granted full Australian citizenship, giving them the privileges and responsibilities that this carried.

William Cooper, Secretary of the Australian Aborigines’ League (founded in 1936 to progress justice and equal rights for Aboriginal people), argued that living conditions for Aboriginal people needed to improve before they joined the defence forces. Cooper had lost his son in the First World War and was frustrated that despite such sacrifice by Aboriginal people there had been no improvement in their rights and conditions. One forum for these views was the May Day procession; as this day traditionally celebrated improvements in conditions of the working class. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen became more aware of the inequalities suffered by their communities (which led to them becoming politically active) as a result of their wartime experience.

In the Australian community, the idealised image of the Anzac was of a ‘white’ Australian. Attitudes in the wider community have been slow to change despite the positive relationships forged in the defence forces between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. After experiencing relative equality within their fighting units, it was particularly hard for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women to return to an Australia that would discriminate against them in their search for work and could bar them from joining Returned Servicemen’s clubs. In many cases, they were even excluded from having a drink with their mates in a pub on Anzac Day.

The Soldier Settlement Scheme (an initiative that provided veterans with land for farming) reclaimed land that had been set aside for Aboriginal reserves. At the same time, Aboriginal ex-servicemen were effectively barred from participating in the scheme. Only a handful of Aboriginal men ever received land under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. Until 1967 the lives of most Aboriginal people were regulated by Aborigines Protection Boards in each state.

Many Australians hoped that the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the defence forces would advance the movement for citizenship rights. In 1949, after pressure from Aboriginal groups and the RSL, the government amended the Commonwealth Electoral Act to give the vote to any Aboriginal person who had served in the defence forces. The 1949 Commonwealth Electoral Act gave the vote to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were in or who had been members of the defence forces, although many were not enrolled (sourced from www.vec.vic.gov.au/education/education-programs-aboriginal-history.html). In other examples of delayed recognition, during the 1980s retrospective payments were made and medals issued to those Torres Strait Islander servicemen who had been underpaid during their service in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion during the Second World War. In 1994 similar payments were made and service medals awarded to Aboriginal soldiers of the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit.

There are up to 7000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans and war widows in the Australian community today.

The information provided in this section has been adapted from the Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present exhibition, Shrine of Remembrance, 2009.
Learning activities: What have been the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people returning from active service?

Australian Curriculum: History

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

YEAR 9

What was the significance of World War I?

YEAR 10

What were the consequences of World War II? How did these consequences shape the modern world?

Knowledge and Understanding

YEAR 9

• The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend

YEAR 10

• The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: 1962 right to vote federally; 1967 Referendum; Reconciliation; Mabo decision; Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology

Historical Skills

• Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources
• Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
• Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past
• Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own)
Investigation 5

Learning sequence

Activity 1: Coming home

In this activity students analyse source material focusing on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people returning from service in the Australian defence forces.

1. Provide students with access to sources A–E on page 74. These sources explore a variety of experiences related to returning from service.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 1: Coming home. Ask them to explore sources A–E to identify both the positive and challenging aspects of returning from service. Students must also indicate on the activity sheet which experiences were unique to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women.

3. Discuss with students whether the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women returning from service appears to have changed or stayed the same across conflicts and time.

Activity 2: A Sad Return

In this activity students explore the story of Daniel Hodgekiss who served in the First World War.

1. Provide students with access to sources F–K on pages 76–77. These sources relate to the enlistment, service experiences and death of Daniel Hodgekiss. Some students may find the content of this story distressing.

2. Distribute Activity sheet 2: A Sad Return. Ask your students to reflect on Sources F–K and complete the activity sheet by writing two journal entries as Daniel Hodgekiss. Students should use the sources to identify the circumstances that Hodgekiss might have been in at two different times: on April 28, 1918 (just after his act of bravery when he was serving at Villers-Bretonneux) and in 1923 (just prior to his death when he was living an isolated life in Mildura). Students then write diary entries for these days.

3. The student activity sheet also asks students to respond to the following: Some Aboriginal soldiers used the term ‘back to being black’ to describe the experience of coming home after the war. What do you think they meant by this?

Activity 3: Momentum for change

In this activity students explore the momentum for change within Australian society that was advanced by the return of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women after the Second World War.

1. Provide students with access to sources L–N on pages 79–81, which explore the politicisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on return from service during the Second World War. Some language used in these sources is considered inappropriate and discriminatory today and should be contextualised for students.

2. Use the following questions to explore each source with your students:

   **Source L:** What was the purpose of the annual May Day procession? What can be learnt about the momentum for change in regards to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people after the Second World War from each of the signs carried by people on the float?

   **Source M:** What is the argument being presented in this letter? In what way does it relate to a momentum for change that followed the Second World War?

   **Source N:** How significant is it that this poem was written by a non-Indigenous soldier? What might this tell you about the desire for change following the Second World War?

3. Using sources L–N as stimulus, ask students to take on the role of a reporter at the May Day procession. Students should write a news report that will be printed with the source L image. They should report on the procession, then explain what changes some people in Australia are seeking.
Sources A-E

These sources describe different experiences associated with returning from active service.

**SOURCE A**

Alice Lovett, quoted in ‘Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War, from the Somme to Vietnam’ 1993, page 38

> I was at Rosebud for about a month. My father wrote and said he would be waiting for me on my first leave. He was a guard at a prisoner-of-war camp at Murchison, near Shepparton. This was his first leave as well.

> I got to Flinders Street Station and I stood there under the clocks and I looked for him. He was across Flinders Street, standing just down from Young and Jacksons. So I ran down the steps and the policeman on duty was stopping traffic. He gave us the go ahead to cross and I ran across that road that fast into Dad’s arms. Dad’s crying and I’m crying. And I said. ‘Come on, let’s go and have a cup of coffee.” I didn’t care where I was going. We were both in uniform. He was that emotional. And we had our cup of coffee and sat for a while longer and then we walked all the way up to Fitzroy together.

**SOURCE B**

Dot Peters, excerpt from digital story, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2010

> On the battlefield, everyone was equal. Aboriginal and white Australians fought side by side. But any equality was stripped upon the return home. Attitudes are not changed. Aboriginal people were still subject to discrimination. They couldn’t go into a bar to have a beer with mates. Their kids and they couldn’t go into swimming pools etc. Aboriginal people could die for their country but it would be more than 20 years after the war before they could even vote.

**SOURCE C**

Graham Atkinson, excerpt from digital story, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2010

> After Vietnam, we returned to a wall of silence. To the wider society we were invisible, or worse, loathed for fighting a war that many didn’t agree with. As the only Indigenous soldier in my company, mine was an even quieter reception. After the theatre of war, sharing my experience with mostly white brothers, placed me backstage, in the shadows. My family were glad to see me return but I’m not sure about the rest of the community. Ironically, Vietnam had taught me strength, respect and a sense of dignity for all. But Vietnam also left me with decades of unresolved memories. Vivid flashbacks to traumatic times.

**SOURCE D**

Reg Saunders’ son Chris, from ‘Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War, from the Somme to Vietnam’, 1993, page 21

> I remember from when I was a kid, Dad used to take me to Dawn Service. Every year I’d see him cry. I used to think at one time that he was just crying for Uncle Harry because he had a lot of regrets that his brother died. They were close as kids, they grew up together, they worked together but they didn’t get to spend their lives together. But I realised later he was also crying for all the mates he had lost.

**SOURCE E**

Ricky Morris, excerpt from digital story, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2010

> The war was my adventure but my family’s hell. In some quiet time with my wife, she said quietly, ‘Our hell’s over now but yours has just begun.’ I was wound real tight, now I’m slowly unwinding.
**Activity sheet 1: Coming home**

Read sources A-E. Identify in each source the experiences related to returning from service, recording whether the experiences were positive or challenging. Indicate whether each experience was relevant to all returning service people or unique to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Positive aspects of returning</th>
<th>Challenging aspects of returning</th>
<th>Are these relevant to all returning service personnel?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources F–K

These sources relate to the service and homecoming of Private Daniel Hodgekiss.

**SOURCE F**

Daniel Hodgekiss

AWM E03810

**SOURCE G**

Attestation form for Daniel Hodgekiss, 1916

**SOURCE H**

Excerpt from C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918 - Volume 5, Chapter XVII, Page 604, describing an event that occurred in France on 24 April 1918.

The most serious resistance came from in front of the right immediately after this trench [the main German trench] was passed. Here a machine-gun was firing from beside a haystack, while some member of the post threw flares to keep the Victorians illuminated. A number of men were killed, and that part of the line was forced to ground until a daring soldier, Private Hodgekiss, ran around the stack and killed the gunner.
Investigation 5

SOURCE I
Letter to Mr. M Wilson, 25 July 1918

SOURCE J
Excerpt from ‘Honour at last’, Sunraysia Daily, 17 April 2012

SOURCE K

One of those who fought so bravely here at Villers-Bretonneux was Private Daniel Hodgekiss of the 59th Battalion. Dan was an Aboriginal man, originally from Port Woolunga in South Australia.

Charles Bean wrote of his courage in battle:

Describing how he stormed and silenced a German machine gun post single-handedly.

Beyond the telling in the Official History, his gallantry went unrecognised.

A month later, Dan was severely wounded, and returned home in 1919, permanently disabled.

Sadly, like many returned men, he lived an isolated life suffering from the scars of war.

He died of his war wounds in 1924, aged 38, and was buried in an unmarked grave in Mildura.

His grave was found by a local researcher a couple of years ago, who set in train a long overdue official commemoration.
Activity sheet 2: A Sad Return

Read Sources F–K carefully. Imagine how Daniel Hodgekiss might have felt at two different times in his life and complete two pages of his journal. Use the sources to consider what Hodgekiss might have been doing and feeling on the dates indicated below.

28 APRIL 1918
Villers-Bretonneux, France
Dear Diary

13 JUNE 1923
Mildura, Victoria
Dear Diary

Some Aboriginal soldiers used the term ‘back to being black’ to describe the experience of coming home after the war. What do you think they meant by this?
Investigation 5

Activity 3: Momentum for change

Sources L-N

Sources L-N focus on the momentum for change in Australia after the Second World War, which was partly advanced by the return of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women.

SOURCE L

May Day protest, 1 May 1947
Sydney, New South Wales
Photographer unknown

The Australian Aboriginal League float is depicted in the 1947 May Day procession. The League was formed in Melbourne in 1932 by William Cooper from Cummeragunga. Unlike some other Aboriginal groups, the League did not support Aboriginal people fighting for a country that did not recognise them as full citizens.

Left to right: Leila Lord, Tasman Dohti (holding sign ‘Burn our welfare board’), Alice Groves (holding sign ‘United war divided peace’), Delys Cross, Herbert Groves (wearing his Second World War uniform in protest and holding sign ‘Free to fight but not to drink’), and Athol Lester (holding sign ‘Our famous 1947 Australian All Blacks’).

AWM P01248.001
Investigation 5

SOURCE M
Excerpt from letter to Prime Minister Menzies from the Aborigines’ Uplift Society, 30 June 1940

Aborigines’ Uplift Society
21 Amelia Avenue,
Essendon, W.5.
30.6.40.

The Rt. Hon. The Prime Minister,
Canberra, ACT

At the last meeting of our council … concern was expressed that these men, so many as are full blood or more than 50% aboriginal, must revert to the status of aboriginal on their return as was the case after the last war, notwithstanding that the blood of the aboriginals was blended with white men who gave their life all too when the soil of Flanders and Palestine was sanctified by the blood of Australia’s best.

It was resolved that the matter be brought to your notice with a request that, whatever may be the decision of the Government in respect of our advocacy of the full citizenship with its privileges for civilised aborigines, immediate and full citizenship should be conferred on all aborigines accepted for service in the A.I.F. and that they retain the citizenship on their return to Australia…

Yours sincerely,
A.P.A. BURDEU
Hon. Secretary.

Baidoa, Somalia. April 1993
Photographer: Gittoes, George.

Private Graeme M. (Brownie) Brown, an Aboriginal member of 2 Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), surrounded by children, on foot patrol in a street of the town.

AWM P01735.400
**The Coloured Digger**

He came and joined the colours,  
When the War God’s anvil rang,  
He took up modern weapons  
To replace his boomerang,  
He waited for no call-up,  
He didn’t need a push,  
He came in from the stations  
And the townships of the bush.

He helped when help was wanting,  
Just because he wasn’t deaf;  
He is right amongst the columns  
Of the fighting A.I.F.  
He is always there when wanted,  
With his Owen gun or Bren,  
He is in the forward area,  
The place where men are men.

He proved he’s still a warrior,  
In action not afraid,  
He faced the blasting red-hot fire  
From mortar and grenade;  
He didn’t mind when food was low,  
And we were getting thin,  
He didn’t growl or worry then,  
He’d cheer us with his grin.  
He’d heard us talk democracy —  
They preach it to his face —  
Yet knows that in our Federal House  
There’s no one of his race.  
He feels we push his kinsmen out,  
Where cities do not reach,  
And Parliament has yet to hear  
The abo’s maiden speech.

One day he’ll leave the Army,  
Then join the League he shall,  
And he hope’s we’ll give a better deal  
To the aboriginal.

Written at Donadabu Rest Camp (near Moresby)  
by Sapper H. E. ‘Bert’ Beros, NX6925, RAE, AIF,  
c. 1942.
In what ways can the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be commemorated?

Between 2014 and 2018 Australia will commemorate the Anzac Centenary, marking 100 years since Australia’s involvement in the First World War. This will be a time when Australians will remember not only the Australians who served at Gallipoli and the Western Front, but all Australian servicemen and women. In this investigation students will consider how the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been commemorated in the past and how it could be commemorated in the future. Students will explore the challenges of curating an exhibition to commemorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in times of war, and design a memorial for the Anzac Centenary.
The contribution of Australian servicemen and women plays a significant role in the formation of an Australian psyche. Australians who have served are commemorated at war memorials across the country. They are acknowledged in numerous history texts, literary novels, works of art, films, poems and exhibitions. Anzac Day and Remembrance Day are important annual events involving most Australians to some degree. And the numerous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who served are included in these commemorations.

Yet, the commemoration of the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been a complex, and at times politically sensitive, issue. Some servicemen and women felt their service was not adequately recognised and commemorated, particularly as many were not offered the same compensation as their non-Indigenous counterparts, such as soldier settlement blocks or spousal pensions. Others felt that the common conceptions of the Anzac story, for example, did not reflect their contribution. This has fuelled a desire for memorials and commemorations that specifically recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service.

There are a number of memorials in Australia which specifically focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These include one near the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, the RSL Aboriginal Memorial in Perth, a memorial at Yirrkala in the Northern Territory, and a memorial on the Gold Coast, which is included as a source in this investigation. There have also been a number of exhibitions, texts and ceremonies to specifically recognise and explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service, including the annual commemoration ceremony held at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne.

In 2014 to 2018 Australia will be commemorating the Anzac Centenary, marking 100 years since Australia’s involvement in the First World War. The program will recognise not just the contribution of those who served in the First World War, but the efforts of all servicemen and women in all conflicts and peacekeeping initiatives. It is an appropriate time to also consider the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and how they can be included in the Anzac story and recognised for their significant and ongoing contribution to protecting and serving their country.
Learning activities: In what ways can the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be commemorated?

Australian Curriculum: History

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

YEAR 9

What was the origin, development, significance and long-term impact of imperialism in this period?
What was the significance of World War I?

YEAR 10

What were the consequences of World War II? How did these consequences shape the modern world?
How was Australian society affected by other significant global events and changes in this period?

Knowledge and Understanding

YEAR 9

• The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend

YEAR 10

• The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front, including the changing roles of women and use of wartime government controls (conscription, manpower controls, rationing and censorship)
• The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: 1962 right to vote federally; 1967 Referendum; Reconciliation; Mabo decision; Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology
• The continuing nature of efforts to secure civil rights and freedoms in Australia and throughout the world, such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

Historical Skills

• Use chronological sequencing to demonstrate the relationship between events and developments in different periods and places
• Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources
• Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
• Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past
• Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own)
• Select and use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies
Learning sequence

Activity 1: Gallery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service

In this activity students take on the role of curator for a gallery commemorating service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

1. Explain to the class that most of the sources in this education resource are from a large exhibition at the Shrine of Remembrance called Indigenous Australians at war from the Boer War to the present. Discuss the role of curators in the development of exhibitions; they are the people who make decisions about the themes to be explored and select the sources to be displayed. Curators also create captions and interpretive panels that help visitors to engage with what they see.

2. Tell students that they will take on the role of the curator for a small exhibition incorporating six sources in a Gallery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service. Ask your students to consider:
   • Reflecting on all the material you have looked at in this resource, what are the important themes that you think capture the role played by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in times of war? How many and what themes will you explore in your exhibition?
   • How will you decide on what sources to include in your exhibition? (Students can select from all of the sources in this education resource or they may like to find some of their own)
   • What headings and information will you put in interpretive panels or captions?

3. Provide students with access to all of the visual and written sources in this education resource. Sources are located throughout the six investigations and they are also available on the DVA website at www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/commemorations/education/Pages/education%20resources.aspx or the Shrine website at www.shrine.org.au/aatsipw. Assure students that they are free to make their own selections of themes and six sources for the exhibition. The text they create to support the sources should reflect their own interpretations of the material they have chosen.

4. Students should decide on how they will present their gallery; it could be an online exhibition, perhaps using powerpoint, or a visual display using poster board.

5. When the galleries are complete, display them for a broader audience, perhaps to commemorate Anzac Day.
Investigation 6

Activity 2: An inclusive centenary

Students take on the challenge of designing a memorial for their community to be part of the commemoration of the Anzac Centenary.

1. Tell the class that between 2014 and 2018 Australia will commemorate the Anzac Centenary, marking 100 years since Australia’s involvement in the First World War. This will be a time to remember not only the Anzacs who served at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, but all Australian servicemen and women. Ask your students:
   • What is the significance of Anzac Day?
   • Is the Anzac story still relevant to Australians?
   • Why do so many Australians participate in Anzac ceremonies?
   • Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people included in the Anzac story?

2. Provide students with access to sources A–D on pages 87–89.
   Ask your students:
   • Who or what is commemorated in each of these sources? Who is not commemorated?
   • Do you know of other commemorations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service?
   • In your opinion, is there a place for separate commemoration of service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? Or is it preferable to incorporate commemoration of service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into wider Australian Anzac commemorations? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?

3. With reference to this discussion, ask students to design a memorial for their local community to commemorate the Anzac Centenary. Encourage students to consider where the memorial will be located, and the design, materials, words and symbols that will best convey their message.

Lieutenant Nick Cormadias and Private Richard Kopp on patrol, Nackeroo style on horse back, in the rugged Northern Territory, June 2006.
Department of Defence  20060620adf8271007_025
Sources A-D
These sources all depict commemorations of service by Australian members of the defence forces.

SOURCE A

Black ANZAC

They have forgotten him, need him no more
He who fought for his land in nearly every war
Tribal fights before his country was taken by Captain Cook
Then went overseas to fight at Gallipoli and Tobruk

World War One two black Anzacs were there
France, Europe’s desert, New Guinea’s jungles, did his share
Korea, Malaya, Vietnam again black soldier enlisted
Fight for democracy was his duty he insisted

Back home went his own way not looking for praise
Like when he was a warrior in the forgotten days
Down on the Gold Coast a monument in the Bora Ring
Recognition at last his praises they are starting to sing

This black soldier who never marches on ANZAC Day
Living in his Gunya doesn’t have much to say
Thinks of his friends who fought some returned some died
If only one day they could march together side by side

His medals he keeps hidden away from prying eyes
No one knows, no one sees the tears in his old black eyes
He’s been outcast just left by himself to die
Recognition at last black ANZAC hold your head high

Every year at Gold Coast’s Yegumbah Bora Ring site
Black ANZAC in uniform and medals a magnificent sight
The rock with Aboriginal tribal totems paintings inset
The Kombumerri people’s inscription of LEST WE FORGET

Cecil Fisher

Cecil Fisher, an Australian Indigenous serviceman, served in 2RAR during the Korean War.
Aboriginal War Memorial, Burleigh Heads 2010
Photographer: Cal MacKinnon

The Komburri Aboriginal Corporation for Culture erected this war memorial with support and assistance from the Gold Coast City Council on 21 April 1991. The rock sits in a sacred Aboriginal bora ring area.

The inscription reads:
This rock is placed here to honour Yugambeh men and women who served in defence of this country ... We honour those who served in the armed forces and those who made the supreme sacrifice. The symbolism of this rock serves to highlight the role played by Indigenous Australians in defence of this country.

Photographed courtesy of Komburri Aboriginal Corporation for Culture, Shrine of Remembrance archive
Investigation 6

Sour

War Memorial at Herberton, Queensland
Images Courtesy of Mathew Smith, Queensland Government.

The word ‘Aboriginal’ is inscribed next to the name ‘Perrott, W’ at the bottom of the memorial.

SOURCE C

Indigenous commemorative ceremony 2006, Shrine of Remembrance
Photographer: Lena Condos

A commemorative service for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women who have served in war and peacekeeping has become an annual event. Similar commemorations now occur in most states in Australia.

SOURCE D

War Memorial at Herberton, Queensland
Images Courtesy of Mathew Smith, Queensland Government.
Further resources

Books:

Australian War Memorial, Memorial Box 03, Too dark for the light horse: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence forces Resource Book, also at www.awm.gov.au/education/resources/box/3/


South Australian Education Pack, Forgotten heroes: Honouring the Service and Sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, SA, 2012.

Thomson, Donald F. Dona, NTSRU 1941–1943: Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit, Yirrkala Literature Production Centre, Yirrkala, NT, 1992.

Thursday Island State School, Torres Strait at war: A recollection of wartime experiences, Thursday Island State School, Qld, 1988.

Films

Indigenous Veterans – In Our Words: Stories from Victorian Veterans, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2010 (visit www.shrine.org.au/aatsipw to watch these videos).

Websites

Australian War Memorial: www.awm.gov.au

Australia’s War 1939–1945: www.ww2australia.gov.au

Connecting Spirits, connectingspirits.com.au

Reconciliation Australia, Remembering the forgotten Anzacs: reconciliationaustralia.com/mails3.com/t/ViewEmail/r/A39800D7C94B5827/4C31F99CFE8B9A98F990754F028F0E8F

Further resources

Books:
- Australian War Memorial, Memorial Box 03, Too dark for the light horse: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence forces Resource Book, also at www.awm.gov.au/education/resources/home/.
- South Australian Education Pack, Forgotten heroes: Honouring the Service and Sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, SA, 2012.
- Thomson, Donald R. Done, YTS03/043-5642. Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit, Yirrkala Literature Production Centre, Yirrkala, NT, 1993.
- Thursday Island State School, Torres Strait at war: A recollection of wartime experiences, Thursday Island State School, Qld, 1986.

Films

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- Australia's War 1939–1945: www.ww2australia.gov.au
- Connecting Spirits: connectingspirits.com.au
- Reconciliation Australia, Remembering the forgotten Anzacs: reconnect.reconciliationaustralia.com/contact/

This map indicates the general location of larger groupings of communities, which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. For more information about the peoples of a particular region contact the relevant Land Councils. David R Horton, creator, Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS.