

THE FURPHY

ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

September 2026 Edition



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General Meetings:

Second Sunday of each month at 1100hrs

Annual General Meeting:

Second Sunday of September

Committee Positions

Armada Sub-Branch Committee	
President	Mr Mike Fairweather
Vice President	Mr Bob Giles
Secretary	Ms Carol King
Treasurer	Mrs Cheryl Cowie
Warden	Mr Graeme Cowie
Warden	Mr Keith Northcott
Membership Officer	Ms Carol King
Committee	Mr Geoff Scott
Advocate / Welfare Officer	Mr Brent Errington
Bar Manager	Mr Mike Fairweather

ADVOCATE / WELFARE

Brent Errington “Erro” is available as follows:

At the Armadale RSL Sub-Branch:

Monday: by appointment only
Thursday: between 0900 - 1400hrs

Weekday Contact Details:

Mobile: 0407 449 150
e-mail: welfare2@armadalersl.com.au

Diary Dates for September

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday	6 th	Social Committee Meeting	1130
Tuesday	8 th	Management Committee Meeting	1100
Sunday	13 th	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	1100



The stem of HMS Viscount, buckled in after ramming a U-boat

Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

VFF Grant implementation is in full swing and will be ongoing for some time. The electrical work is now complete, and all other activities will be phased in over the next couple of months.

There are a number of vacancies for Committee positions available. Please consider nominating at the AGM. The Sub-Branch welcomes both Service and Affiliates on the Committee.

Voting will occur at the AGM on Sunday 13th September.

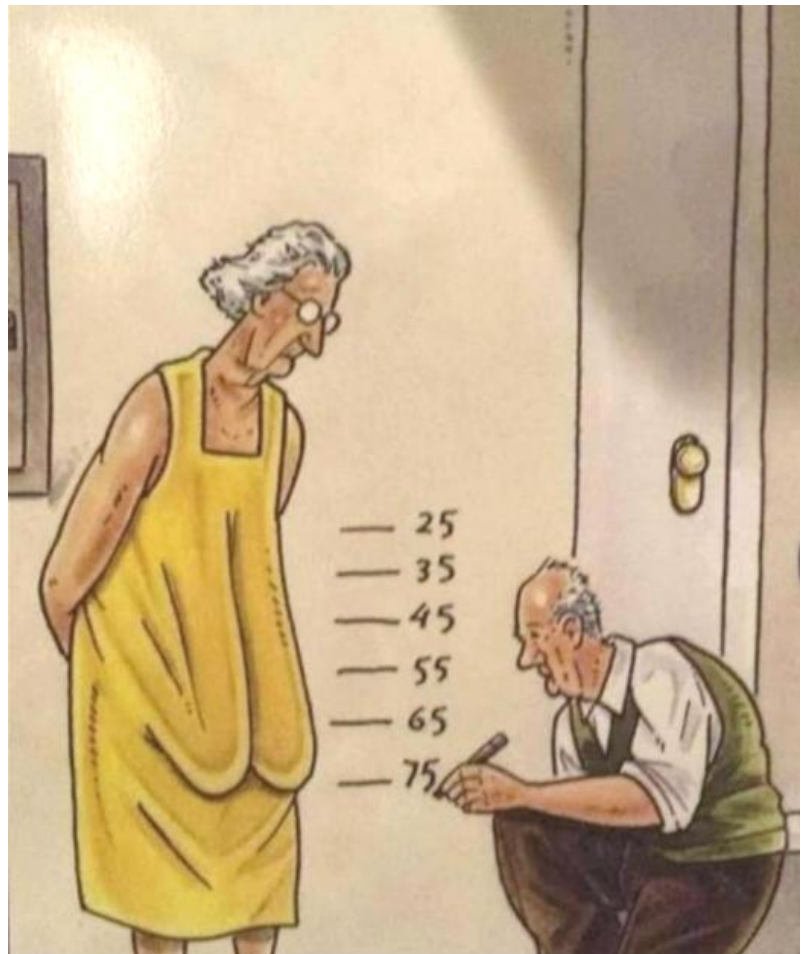
We are now taking names for the Poppy Appeal stalls which will be held on 5th, 7th and 9th November. This is an extremely important initiative in raising much needed funds to keep the Sub-Branch open. If you can spare a couple of hours to help, it would be very much appreciated, the Roster is now on the board.

Best regards as always,

Carol King

Sub-Branch Secretary

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Members,

Execution of the Veterans Facility Grant has started. It's been a nightmare trying to plan this work with so many trades being involved and I must extend my thanks to the Secretary who is managing the scheduling and critical path planning.

There will be some inconvenience to members in September as replacing the office carpets starts early this month. This will involve moving all the furniture and fittings from the offices from 30th August and we hope everything is complete by 11th September.

Some items will need to be moved on Sundays to allow the carpet contractor access during week days, so we ask for your patience in this regard.

It may be that the Wilson Room and the Northern end toilets won't be able to be accessed because of how much stuff (cabinets, desks, computers and the like that will need to be stored in that area for a few days.

Please be kind enough to just accept this as a 1 in 30 year happening.

I will be approaching some of our members individually to ask for their assistance moving furniture etc. Unfortunately, it's a bit like making a cake – the more people involved doesn't necessarily speed up the process. There are quite a few people who would very much like to help us out, however due to health restrictions, their bodies just won't be able to match what they'd like to assist with. Thanks for the offers though, it's so very much appreciated.

I'll keep you informed of the progress as we move forward.

Thanks for all your support and I hope to see you at the AGM if not before.

That's about all from me for now,

Mike Fairweather

President

Returned Services League Armadale Sub-Branch

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Membership Update

As at 31st August 2026:

Service Members:	117
Affiliate Members:	40
Social Members:	<u>79</u>
Total:	<u>236</u>

There have been no new Members apply this month.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Mr Brent Robson who had been a member of this Sub-Branch since 2001.

My relationship with RSLWA regarding Membership inconsistencies has not improved significantly but I'm hoping it will. One day.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Carol King

Tel: 9497 1972

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au





September Service Members:

Dempster	Mr	John	24/09	Ewers	Mr	Richard	14/09
Horvath	Mr	David	11/09	Jackson	Mr	Lyndon	03/09
Jeffries	Mr	Lucan	13/09	Johnson	Mr	Richard	11/09
Maskiell	Mr	Joseph	16/09	Messenger	Mr	Rodney	11/09
Pearce	Mrs	Vickie	08/09	Reynolds	Mr	Linton	09/09
Treasure	Mr	Colin	26/09	Van De Velde	Mr	Johannes	23/09

September Affiliate Members:

Karsten	Mrs	Janeen	24/09	Matthews	Mrs	Shirley	28/09
Paul	Mr	David	22/09	Reeves	Mr	Anthony	30/09

September Social Members:

Chow	Mr	Thomson	03/09	Colley	Mr	Charles	11/09
Pember	Mr	Michael	20/09	Pember	Mrs	Raema	30/09

If there are any errors or anyone has been missed off the list, please advise

The Secretary (Membership Officer)

These members may collect a free drink of their choice during the month

We hope you have a very special Birthday

Bar Manager's Report

G'day All,

I hope everybody has accepted the recent price rises and understand that I've kept the increases to a minimum.

It took most of a day for two of us to update the till database and we apologise for the couple of mistakes that were made but these were rectified very quickly. Thanks for your understanding.

Cheers for now,

Stormy



APPRECIATION LUNCHEON AND PRESENTATION

On Saturday 15th August we hosted a lunch for the Armadale Scouts and the Armadale Police Rangers as our way of extending our appreciation for all the work they do with the Overnight Vigil prior to our and during ANZAC Day Dawn Service.

There were approximately 60 people in attendance. The President officiated, and presented both organisations with a Certificate of Appreciation.



Thanks Lois and Carol for cooking and serving the food and to Keith, Geoff and Graeme for helping out significantly on the day.

My neighbours complained about me
groaning too loud having sex in the
morning ... if they only knew I'm just
trying to put my socks on ...



**I'm going to a gender
reveal party but I've
been told I still have
to wear pants.**

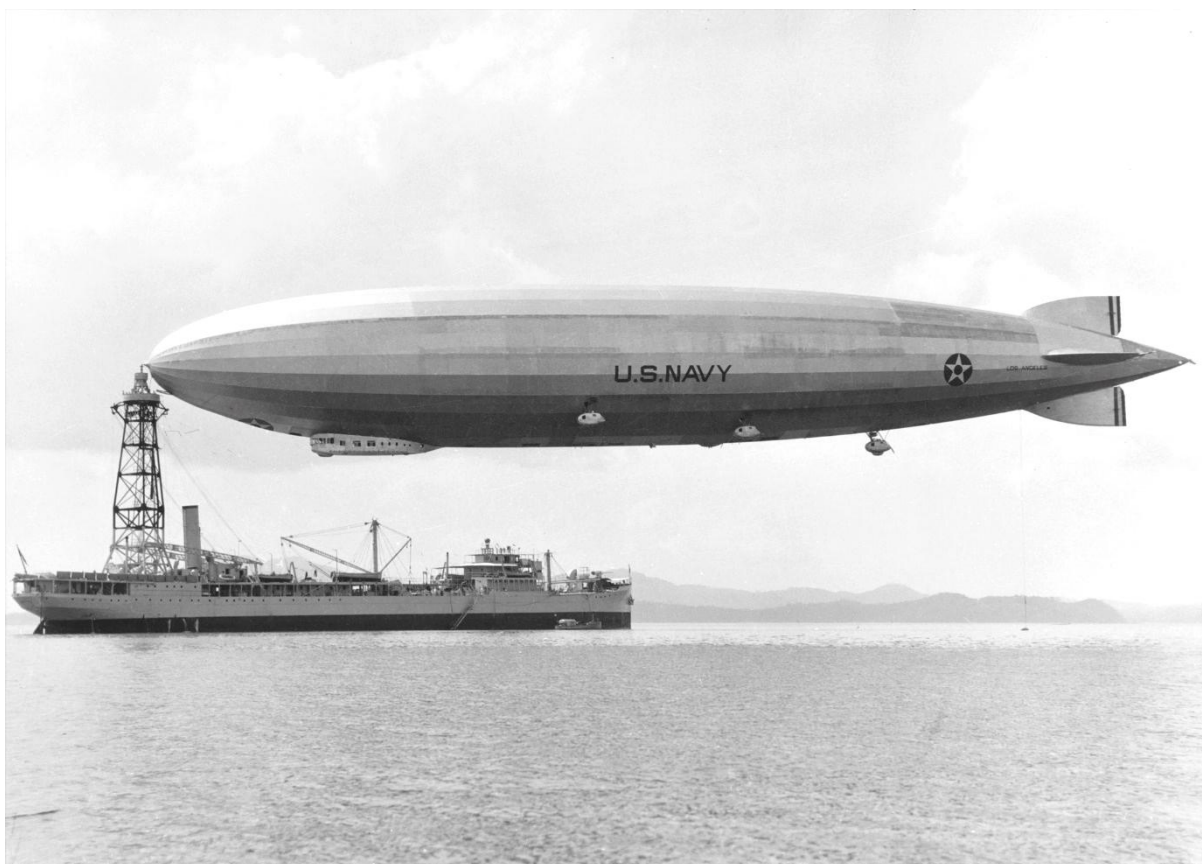
***Nominations for the
September AGM have closed
and vacant positions are now
on the Notice Board***

I have a sad post to share.





An Australian Despatch Rider, photographed near Australian Corps Headquarters at Ham-sur-Heure. 10th February, 1919



USS Los Angeles (ZR-3) moored to USS Patoka (AO-9), off Panama during Fleet Problem XII, circa February 1931



**Dating service:
Your application
has been rejected
due to answer #6-
What do u want in
a man? A bullet is
not an acceptable
answer.**



Apparent exit holes in the glacis of a knocked out Sherman – 1945



The logistics of such missions are mind blowing. 17 B-17 Fortresses from the 533rd Bomb Squadron line up for a mission at Ridgewell, Essex, England, 1945



1916, the German submarine U-57 sank 19 British trawlers in the North Sea, almost eliminating the entire fishing fleet from the town of Scarborough. No lives were lost because the sub's captain allowed the fishermen to abandon their trawlers before the boats were sunk by gunfire. The Germans then transferred the fishermen to a neutral Norwegian steamer



Military motorcycles for sale in 1946. When World War II ended in 1945





Acoustic locator, 1920s–30s — an early aircraft detection system that relied on sound before radar transformed air defense.



West African Sapper recruits learning to speak English at the Engineer Training Centre, Bukuru Northern Nigeria, 1943



A recent survey indicated that the smartphone is now the number one hand held device... the pen!s has slipped to second place.



Members of the 3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment 'boiling the billy' on the desert sand after a hard day's ride.

The Sergeant kneeling is Sergeant Clarence Garland Plenty, and standing third from left, is Trooper Arthur Herbert Davies.

This great photograph was taken by the well-known war photographer Captain Frank Hurley, on the 8th of January 1918, during WW1.

James Francis 'Frank' Hurley OBE (15 October 1885 – 16 January 1962) was an Australian photographer, cinematographer of documentary films, and director of drama feature films.

He participated in a number of expeditions to Antarctica and served as an official war photographer with Australian forces during both world wars.

He was the official photographer for the Australasian Antarctic Expedition (1911–14) led by Douglas Mawson, the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914–16 led by Ernest Shackleton, and BANZARE (1929–31), again led by Mawson.

**I've asked so many
people what LGBTQ
stands for.
So far no one has
given me a straight
answer.**





The badly damaged Jean Bart 1942



Field modifications on this bomber added the twin .50 caliber "cheek guns," complete with extra armour plating to shield the fuselage from the intense muzzle blast of the heavy Brownings

These modifications were often improvised in-theatre by ground crews, giving bombers extra forward firepower to counter head-on attacks by German fighters.

The rarely witnessed birth of a
truck driver



**I tried to sue
the airport for
misplacing my
luggage.**

I lost my case.

Indigenous Defence Service



Black Soldier depicts Lesley Murray's grandfather. Based on a photograph taken during the Second World War, this is a private work of commemoration. It is also intended to serve as a tribute to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers who served in the Second World War but who may not have received recognition.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have served in every conflict and commitment involving Australian defence contingents since Federation, including both world wars and the intervals of peace since the Second World War.

Researching Indigenous service

Little was known publicly about the presence of Indigenous men and women in Australia's armed forces prior to the 1970s. Subsequent research has established a record of Indigenous service dating back to the start of the Commonwealth era in 1901, and even a small number of individual enlistments in the colonial defence forces before that.

It is impossible to determine the exact number of Indigenous individuals who participated in each conflict, and this research is ongoing. New names are constantly emerging, while some have been removed after research identified them as non-Indigenous.

Before 1980, individuals enlisting in the defence forces were not asked whether or not they were of an Indigenous background. While service records sometimes contain information which may suggest Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, many servicemen have been identified as Indigenous by their descendants.

First World War

Over 1000 Indigenous Australians fought in the First World War. They came from a section of society with few rights, low wages, and poor living conditions.

Most Indigenous Australians could not vote and none were counted in the census. But once in the AIF, they were treated as equals. They were paid the same as other soldiers and generally accepted without prejudice.

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

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

Why did they fight?

Loyalty and patriotism may have encouraged Indigenous Australians to enlist. Some saw it as a chance to prove themselves the equal of Europeans or to push for better treatment after the war.

For many Australians in 1914 the offer of 6 shillings a day for a trip overseas was simply too good to miss.

the war, in areas such as education, employment, and civil liberties, Aboriginal ex-servicemen and women found that discrimination remained or, indeed, had worsened during the war period.

The post First World War Period

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

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

Second World War

Hundreds of Indigenous Australians served in the 2nd AIF and the militia. Many were killed fighting and at least a dozen died as prisoners of war. As in the First World War, Indigenous Australians served under the same conditions as whites and, in most cases, with the promise of full citizenship rights after the war.

Generally, there seems to have been little racism between soldiers. In 1939 Indigenous Australians were divided over the issue of military service. Some Aboriginal organisations believed war service would help the push for full citizenship rights and proposed the formation of special Aboriginal battalions to maximise public visibility.

Others, such as William Cooper, the Secretary of the Australian Aborigines' League, argued that Indigenous Australians should not fight for white Australia.

Cooper had lost his son in the First World War and was bitter that Aboriginal sacrifice had not brought any improvement in rights and conditions. He likened conditions in white-administered Aboriginal settlements to those suffered by Jews under Hitler. Cooper demanded improvements at home before taking up "the privilege of defending the land which was taken from him by the White race without compensation or even kindness".

Enlistment Second World War

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

In the front line

With the Japanese advance in 1942, Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders in the north found themselves in the front line against the attackers.

There were fears that Aboriginal contact with Japanese pearlers before the war might lead to their giving assistance to the enemy. Like the peoples of South-East Asia under colonial regimes, Indigenous Australians might easily have seen the Japanese as liberators from white rule. Many did express bitterness at their treatment, but, overwhelmingly, Indigenous Australians supported the country's defence.

The post Second World War period - Returned soldiers

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

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

Enlistment after the war

Once the intense demands of the war were gone, the army re-imposed its restrictions on enlistment. But attitudes had changed and restrictions based on race were abandoned in 1949. Since then Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders have served in all conflicts in which Australia has participated.

Other services

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

RAAF

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

Leonard Waters

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

Waters named his Kittyhawk "Black Magic" and flew 95 operational sorties. After the war he hoped to find a career in civilian flying but bureaucratic delays and lack of financial backing forced him to go back to shearing. Like many others, he found civilian life did not allow him to use the skills that he had gained during the war.

RAN

As well as an unknown number of formally enlisted Indigenous Australians and Islanders, the RAN also employed some informal units. For example, John Gribble, a coastwatcher on Melville Island, formed a unit of 36 Indigenous Australians which patrolled a large area of coast and islands. The men were never formally enlisted and remained unpaid throughout the war, despite the promise of otherwise.

Kamuel Abednego

The United States Army recruited about 20 Torres Strait Islanders as crewmen on its small ships operating in the Torres Strait and around Papua New Guinea.

Kamuel Abednego was given the rank of lieutenant, at a time when no Indigenous Australian or Islander had served as a commissioned officer with the Australian forces.

Life on the home front

The war brought greater contact than ever before between the whites of southern Australia and the Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders of the north. For the whites it was a chance to learn about Aboriginal culture and see the poor conditions imposed on Indigenous Australians. For the Indigenous Australians the war accelerated the process of cultural change and, in the long term, ensured a position of greater equality in Australian society.

Labour units

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

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

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

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

Women

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

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker)

Oodgeroo Noonuccal joined the Australian Women's Army Service in 1942, after her two brothers were captured by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore. Serving as a signaller in Brisbane she met many black American soldiers, as well as European Australians. These contacts helped to lay the foundations for her later advocacy of Aboriginal rights.

Torres Strait Islander units

Since early in the early twentieth century proposals were made to train the Indigenous Australians of northern Australia as a defence force. In the Second World War these ideas were tried out.

In 1941 the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion was formed to defend the strategically-important Torres Strait area. Other Islander units were also created, especially for water transport and as coastal artillery. The battalion never had the chance to engage the enemy but some were sent on patrol into Japanese-controlled Dutch New Guinea.

By 1944 almost every able-bodied male Torres Strait Islander had enlisted. However, they never received the same rates of pay or conditions as white soldiers. At first their pay was one-third that of regular soldiers. After a two-day "mutiny" in December 1943 this was raised to two-thirds.

In proportion to population, no community in Australia contributed more to the war effort in the Second World War than the Torres Strait Islanders.

Donald Thomson and the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit

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

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

The Indigenous Australians in the unit received no monetary pay until back pay and medals were finally awarded in 1992.

Kapiu Masai Gagai

Kapiu Gagai was a Torres Strait Islander from Badu Island. He was a skilled boatman and carpenter and was working on pearling luggers when he joined Donald Thomson in Arnhem Land during the 1930s. In 1941 he again joined Thomson, this time in the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit. As bosun of Thomson's vessel, the *Aroetta*, he patrolled the coast to prevent Japanese infiltration. Later he accompanied Thomson on patrol into Japanese-held Dutch New Guinea, where he was badly wounded. Gagai never received equivalent pay to white soldiers, which was also difficult for his family during and after the war.

Indigenous personnel are known to have served in later conflicts and operations (including in Somalia, East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq, and on peacekeeping operations) but no numbers are available.



In the 1980s the Department of Defence began collecting information about Indigenous heritage, and these figures show that the number of Indigenous men and women serving in the Australian Defence Force has been increasing since the 1990s. The department claimed that in early 2014 there were 1,054 Indigenous service personnel (on both permanent and active reserve) in the Australian Defence Force, representing about 1.4 per cent of the ADF's uniformed workforce.





RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH

Your RSL