



Indigenous Australians at War

from the Boer War
to the Present

Web Pilot Edition - October 2011



SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE
MELBOURNE



PROTECTING COUNTRY

The information contained in this Resource has been developed by the Shrine of Remembrance, Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne. This resource has been developed for teachers as part of the Shrine of Remembrance Temporary Exhibition Indigenous Australians at War from the Boer War to the Present. This Resource is the "Web Pilot Edition – October 2011" and will be expanded and developed further for a full launch during 2012.

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Front cover image: ANMM_HOB.2.629

Inside banner images:



1. *Raymond Cobban* c 1951, photographer, *Phillip Oliver Hobson*, *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). Reproduced courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. ANMM_HOB.2.629
2. *Allied Lovett*, wife Sarah and his two sons, 1918, photographer unknown. Reproduced courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. ANMM_P01651.001
3. *Sapper L. 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.
4. *Isabel Blair* c 1943, photographer unknown. One of the first Aboriginal observers to become an enrolled member of the Corps, is shown with binoculars. Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria #952.003.010
5. *Frederick Beale* c 1945, *Naoetsu* prisoner of war camp, Japan, photographer unknown. Reproduced courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. ANMM_P01649.005
6. *Oodgeroo Noonuccal* c 1942, Brisbane, Queensland, photographer unknown. *Lance Corporal Kathleen Walker* and her siblings grew up on Stradbroke Island, Queensland. Reproduced courtesy of the State Library of Victoria. ANMM_P01688.001
7. *Wedding portrait of Signalmen Claude McDonald and Aircraft Woman Alice Lovett* 1944, photographer unknown. Reproduced courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. ANMM_P05049.004
8. *Thomas Green* c 1942-45, Germany, photographer unknown. *Private Thomas Green*, 21st Battalion, pictured here while he was a prisoner of war at Stalag XIIIc at Hammelburg, Germany. *Private Green* was from Collarenebri, New South Wales. Reproduced courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. ANMM_P04379.003

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PROTECTING COUNTRY

SERVICE

Indigenous servicemen and servicewomen enlisted to serve Australia as not only a duty to serve but also as part of the cultural responsibility of protecting country. They enlisted for the same reasons as their non-Indigenous fellow servicemen and servicewomen, but for many men, it was and continues to be an honourable way to re-enact traditional roles of leadership, protection and service to community.

Indigenous servicemen and servicewomen were and continue to be involved in almost every war and peacekeeping effort of Australia. At the time of the First World War, few Aboriginal people could vote, were not counted in the Federal census and most lived in poverty. Wartime service in the armed forces provided many Indigenous

Australians with a level of racial equality they had not previously known.

Whilst many found equality in service, once back home, they experienced racism and inequality by not receiving the same entitlements as other diggers.

Despite this, many became outstanding leaders like Reg Saunders. Some were valued for their exceptional skills, such as Douglas Grant. Len Waters was to become Australia's first and only Aboriginal fighter pilot in the Second World War (1939-45) and others went on to become inspirational leaders in art and education like Oodgeroo Noonuccal, (Kath Walker) and Graham Atkinson. The legacy of the Lovett Family is renowned throughout the British Commonwealth, with 21 serving family members.

ANZAC
Digger
Citizen and Citizenship
Service
Equality

Informal group portrait of members of the 2/18th Australian Field Workshop. Identified, left to right, back row: DX962 Private (Pte) Alick James McDonald, of Artunga, NT, who enlisted on 15 June 1943 in Katherine, NT and was discharged on 18 September 1944; Bob Cook (non-Indigenous); S77421 Pte Michael (Mick) Loughton, of Arltunga, NT, who enlisted on 26 June 1942 in Alice Springs, and was discharged on 27 November 1945; DX960 Pte Harry Braly, of Alice Springs, who enlisted on 25 June 1943, September 1944; DX997 Pte Alec Turner, of Alice Springs, NT, who enlisted on 26 May 1944 in Darwin, NT, and was discharged on 8 February 1946. Front row: D634 Private (Pte) Alec Kruger, of Katherine, NT, who enlisted on 3 June 1943 in Alice Springs and was discharged on 18 September 1944; VX71917 Pte Alick Jackomos, of Carlton, Vic, who enlisted on 13 January 1942 in Caulfield, Vic, and was discharged on 22 July 1946 (Non-Indigenous Greek Australian); James Smith (unable to further identify).
AWM P00898.001



Indigenous Australians at War from the Boer War to the Present

First World War
Colour Bar
Regulations
Digger

An Unmistakeable Figure

DOUGLAS GRANT

Douglas Grant was adopted by a Scottish family at the age of two in 1881. He enlisted in 1916 to serve in the First World War (1914-18) but was discharged before his unit was about to leave for overseas service as Australian Government regulations prevented Aboriginal people leaving the country without Government approval.

Showing great tenacity, Grant enlisted again and in August 1916 travelled to France with the 13th Battalion. During the first battle of Bullecourt he was wounded and captured and held prisoner of war at a camp at Wittenburg and later at Wunsdorf, Zossen near Berlin. He enjoyed unusual freedom in the camps as German anthropologists were more interested in studying him than in imprisoning him. He was a talented artist, having worked for ten years as a draftsman before the war, and with impressive knowledge of Shakespeare and poetry. He had excellent communication skills and a Scottish accent and impressed his captors with his intellect. A German scientist described Grant as "an unmistakable figure", recalling how prisoners appointed him to take charge of relief parcels because of "his honesty, his quick mind, and because he was so aggressively Australian".

Sadly though, like many Indigenous soldiers, on returning to Australia, Douglas Grant could not find work to match his skills. He was active in returned servicemen's affairs in this period and conducted a 'Diggers session' on the local radio station and worked in a mental health facility. He died in 1951, depressed and frustrated, unable to fit easily into either white or black society.



Douglas Grant c 1916-17. Photographer unknown. Private Douglas Grant, 13th Battalion, far left, and private Harry Avery, 45th Battalion with unidentified British soldier. AWM P01692.001

Between 500 to 600 Indigenous Australians are known to have enlisted in the First World War (1914-18) from a population of around 80,000. This is despite barriers to the service of many Indigenous people in the military forces. Accurate numbers are difficult to establish as the Army did not record the ethnic origins of enlistees. In many cases some Aboriginal 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.

Indigenous Australians at War from the Boer War to the Present

ACTIVITIES: Primary

Read aloud the text *An Unmistakable Figure* to students. Students answer.

In which war did Douglas Grant serve?

Where did Douglas travel to and which country was he wounded in?

Why do you think Douglas Grant wanted to serve Australia?

Douglas Grant was wounded and captured and was made a Prisoner of War. What clues in "an Unmistakable Figure" describe Douglas' life as a Prisoner of War – did he work, what were his skills and what was his role?

Douglas Grants' main job as a Prisoner of War was being in charge of distributing relief parcels. The Red Cross was an organisation that sent relief parcels to prisoners of war and contained such items as socks and tinned meat. What other items do you think a Prisoner of War would need or want? In groups discuss, make lists and share.

Research Activity

Discover more about the Red Cross providing care to Prisoners of War.

<http://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2009/03/16/red-cross-records-from-the-first-world-war/>

ACTIVITIES: Secondary

Students to read *An Unmistakable Figure* in groups, discuss and answer the following questions.

During the First World War many Aboriginal people were unable to enlist due to government regulations. How many times did Douglas Grant attempt to enlist?

Douglas Grant was discharged because of his Aboriginality. Why do you think the Government would require Aboriginal people to gain approval to travel overseas?

Did you know that in the First World War Aboriginal people were not considered Australian citizens, and did not have full citizenship rights? Douglas Grant enlisted, was wounded and captured serving Australia. In groups discuss and list possible reasons why Douglas Grant enlisted and fought for a country that did not consider him a citizen.

Further Research

Learn more about government regulations regarding Aboriginal people and service in the First World War.

<http://www.awm.gov.au>

[http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corporate/Search for Australian Government legislation on Aboriginal rights from 1916 onwards:](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corporate/Search%20for%20Australian%20Government%20legislation%20on%20Aboriginal%20rights%20from%201916%20onwards)

http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/info_sheet.html

Activity

Imagine you live during the First World War - in Australia writing a 'letter to the editor' about Aboriginal people enlisting in the armed forces. What are your main arguments for permitting or not permitting indigenous people to enlist?

Black Magic Fighter Pilot Leonard Waters (1924-93)

Flight Sergeant Leonard (Len) Waters was a distinguished Australian Aboriginal fighter pilot in the Second World War (1939-45). Born in 1924 at Euraba Mission, New South Wales, Len 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.



Flight Sergeant Leonard Waters, No. 78 Squadron, Royal Australian Airforce, sits in the cockpit of his P-40N Kittyhawk, named 'Black Magic' by the previous pilot. Date 1944-45. Photographer unknown. ANMM/PT01659.001

Second World War Service Excellence Discrimination

Len left school at thirteen and worked as a manual laborer 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 Len joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Len 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.

Len 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, Len 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 95 operational sorties from Noemfoor (West Irian, Indonesia), Morotai (Indonesia) and Tarakan (Borneo, Indonesia). Promoted to Flight Sergeant in January 1945, Len commanded many missions with commissioned officers who were technically his superior.

Despite experiencing equality in the armed services, civilian life for Len had changed little from the inequality he had left before his service. In one incident, while on leave, Len was arrested and jailed for not carrying his Aboriginal 'identity card'. After the war Len 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. His family generously donated several artifacts of Leonard's to the Australian War Memorial including his flying helmet, several photographs and his flying log.

ACTIVITIES: Primary

Read aloud to students the text *Black Magic Fighter Pilot*. Students to work in groups to discuss and answer the following questions.

Where did Len Waters serve and in which war?

What people and stories inspired Len Waters to become a fighter pilot?

What did Len Waters do to make sure he gained entry into the Pilot training program in 1943?

What did Len Waters do as a civilian before and after the war?

The First Army Officer

Reg Saunders



Troops of the 27th Infantry Battalion on leave from New Guinea waiting for the south-bound train to start. Reg Saunders is standing 4th from left. 12 October, 1943, photographer James Tait, ANMM 057894

"At the outbreak of the Second World War, Reg Saunders joined the army. This was part of his warrior heritage as a Gundljinmara 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 Aboriginies at War, from the Somme to Vietnam' 1993

Reg Saunders was the first Aboriginal Australian 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 27th 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 27th 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 Indigenous 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 Kapong - 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 11 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. Reg had ten children, was a highly respected soldier and leader, and died on 2nd March 1990.

"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."

"There were a lot of complaints after they came back from the war, especially in the Western Districts. The Soldier Settlement Scheme, for instance, wasn't available to them. Dad never got soldiers' land. He was a tram conductor, he swept railway stations, he worked in iron foundries, timber mills. Then he got a job with Aboriginal Affairs. He was one of the first Koorries to be employed there."

Saunders's son Chris, from 'Forgotten Heroes Aboriginies at War, from the Somme to Vietnam' 1993

ACTIVITIES: Primary

Read aloud to students *The First Army Officer*.

Students to work in groups and answer the following questions.

Reg Saunders was the first Aboriginal commissioned Officer. In which wars did he serve?

Reg Saunders' family had a proud tradition of serving Australia. Which of his family members served and in which wars?

Reg's son, Chris, remembers Reg attending dawn services. Why does it appear Reg cried at these services?

Why do you think Reg returned to serve a second time?

ACTIVITIES: Secondary

Read and reflect on *The First Army Officer*.

Reg Saunders was the first Aboriginal Commissioned Officer. In which war did he first serve?

After serving in the Second World War, Reg returned to serve in which war?

Which battle was considered the most memorable action of this latter war?

Reg was a Commissioned Officer and was greatly respected during his service. How was he respected through his service – did this differ in civilian life? If so, how did this differ?

**"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 Indigenous *Australians*."
What effect do you think this would have had on Reg Saunders?**

WARRIOR HERITAGE

Reflect on Glenda's description of her father Reg.

How do you think Reg's "warrior heritage as a Gunditjmarra man" influenced his service?

Further Research Activity (teachers):

The short film "Harry's War" was produced by John Foss and Richard J Frankland and directed by Frankland. The film tells the story of Richard's Uncle, Harry Saunders (Reg Saunders' brother) who fought for Australia in the South Pacific campaign during the Second World War

"Harry's War"

<http://www.goldenseahorse.com.au/harrys-war>

- Screen the film and have students discuss its depiction of war from both an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perspective.
- Discuss and have students discuss civics and citizenship, equality, race and racism and service.
- Write a review of "Harry's War" describing Harry's service and sacrifice and reflect on the legacy of his sacrifice for his family including Richard J Frankland as his nephew.

Second World War

Discrimination
Education
Opportunity

A Chance to Learn Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker)

"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."

Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Oodgeroo Noonuccal was born Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska, (1920-93) on Minjerribah (the Stradbroke Islands). Oodgeroo Noonuccal means "Oodgeroo of the tribe". She grew up on Stradbroke Island, Queensland. As a thirteen year old, with limited education, Walker obtained work on the mainland as a domestic servant for minimal pay. Walker's two brothers joined the army just in time to be sent to Singapore where they were imprisoned. 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."

Oodgeroo Noonuccal

In 1942, 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 impacted greatly on Kathleen Walker.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) c. 1942, Brisbane Queensland, Photographer Unknown.
ANIM P01688.001





ACTIVITIES: Primary

Read aloud to students *A Chance to Learn* and answer the following questions.

What was Oodgeroo's job in the army?

Give two reasons why Oodgeroo joined the army?

Why do you think Oodgeroo thought education was so important?

What tensions and experiences in army life affected Oodgeroo?

Further Activity

Read aloud this statement. Students are then to discuss and reflect on the importance of names and belonging.

"My name is Oodgeroo from the tribe of the Noonuccal, custodian of the land that the white man calls Stradbroke Island and that the Aboriginal people call Minjerribaa."

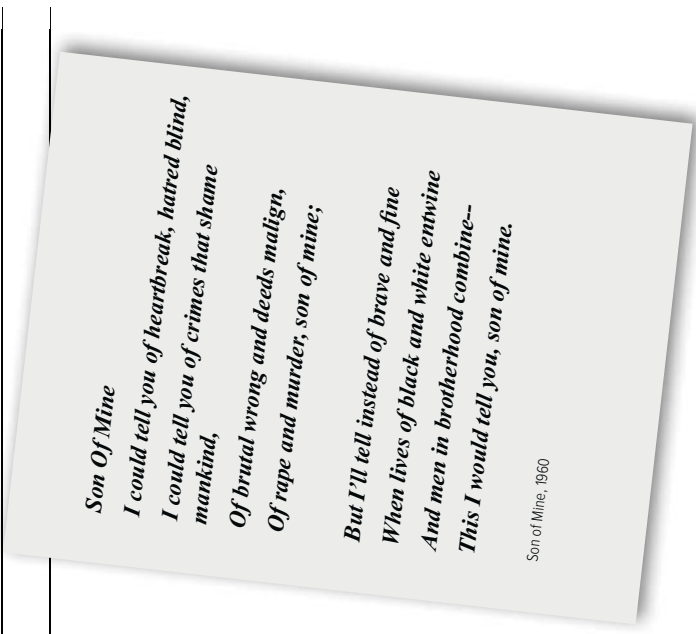
Why do you think Oodgeroo 'resumed' her traditional Aboriginal name?



ACTIVITIES: Secondary

From seeking an education through an opportunity in the army, Oodgeroo went on to create a legacy in her activism and poetry. Her poem 'Son of Mine' is an ode to her son, Denis Walker, himself an activist. Read aloud and analyse. Identify links within the poem to Oodgeroo's experiences with war and with Aboriginal struggles for land and equality.

Explain in your own words the meaning of the second verse.



Son Of Mine

*I could tell you of heartbreak, hatred blind,
I could tell you of crimes that shame
mankind,*

*Of brutal wrong and deeds malign,
Of rape and murder, son of mine;*

*But I'll tell instead of brave and fine
When lives of black and white entwine
And men in brotherhood combine--
This I would tell you, son of mine.*

Son of Mine, 1960

A Sense of Dignity

Graham Atkinson

"It was Vietnam which forced me to become more aware of the social and political issues facing Aboriginal people."

Graham Atkinson 'Forgotten Heroes, Aborigines at War from the Somme To Vietnam' 1993

"I was called up at only 20. A young Aboriginal man plonked into an alien world. This was 1968, one year after the historical referendum granting Indigenous people full Australian citizenship. This decision would galvanize my thinking around black and white, Indigenous and non Indigenous relations."

Indigenous Veterans ACMI DVD Graham Atkinson interview, 2010



"That's the old Centurion, a British tank. It went over an anti-tank mine which put a big buckle in the armour plating underneath, just as though it were made of plasticine. We travelled up into the combat areas in the tanks. That's me with the moustache."

'Forgotten Heroes, Aborigines at War From the Somme to Vietnam' 1993

The Vietnam War caused great social and political unrest in Australia, the most since the conscription referenda of the First World War (1914-18).

Referendum
Indigenous issues
& politics

Conscription
National Pride
Vietnam War

Jail time and fines were given to draft resisters, conscientious objectors (those who objected to war on moral grounds) and people protesting against the war, and on returning home, soldiers were received with hostility. <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/vietnam.asp>

"When I got back I found that no one wanted to talk about Vietnam. If you went into the pub people would say "oh, you're back," and that'd be it. No one wanted to know about it. In the World War II people patted the returned servicemen on the back and took them into their homes."

Graham Atkinson 'Forgotten Heroes, Aborigines at War From the Somme to Vietnam' 1993

Craftsman Graham Atkinson, of the Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung people, was called up for National Service (the Draft) in 1968 to serve in the Vietnam War (1962-1975). He served as a gun fitter, maintaining the cannons on tanks, in the Light Aid Detachment, Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and The Royal Australian Regiment.

Graham found Vietnam a transformative experience. Witnessing racism and mistreatment of the Vietnamese people during the war by the Australian and American soldiers, he saw correlations between this and the treatment of his people in Australia. His experiences "politicized" his identity: "Vietnam had taught me strength, respect and a sense of dignity for all."

Graham emerged from the trauma of the Vietnam War with a renewed social justice passion and became one the first Aboriginal persons in Victoria and perhaps Australia to complete an MBA (Masters of Business Administration) and became active as an Indigenous consultant and cultural advocate.

"War is surreal and coming to terms with it is challenging. It taught me to challenge all forms of violence, particularly in my own Indigenous community."

Indigenous Veterans ACMI DVD Graham Atkinson interview, 2010

ACTIVITIES: Primary

Read aloud to students the story A Sense of Dignity.

In what war did Graham Atkinson serve Australia?

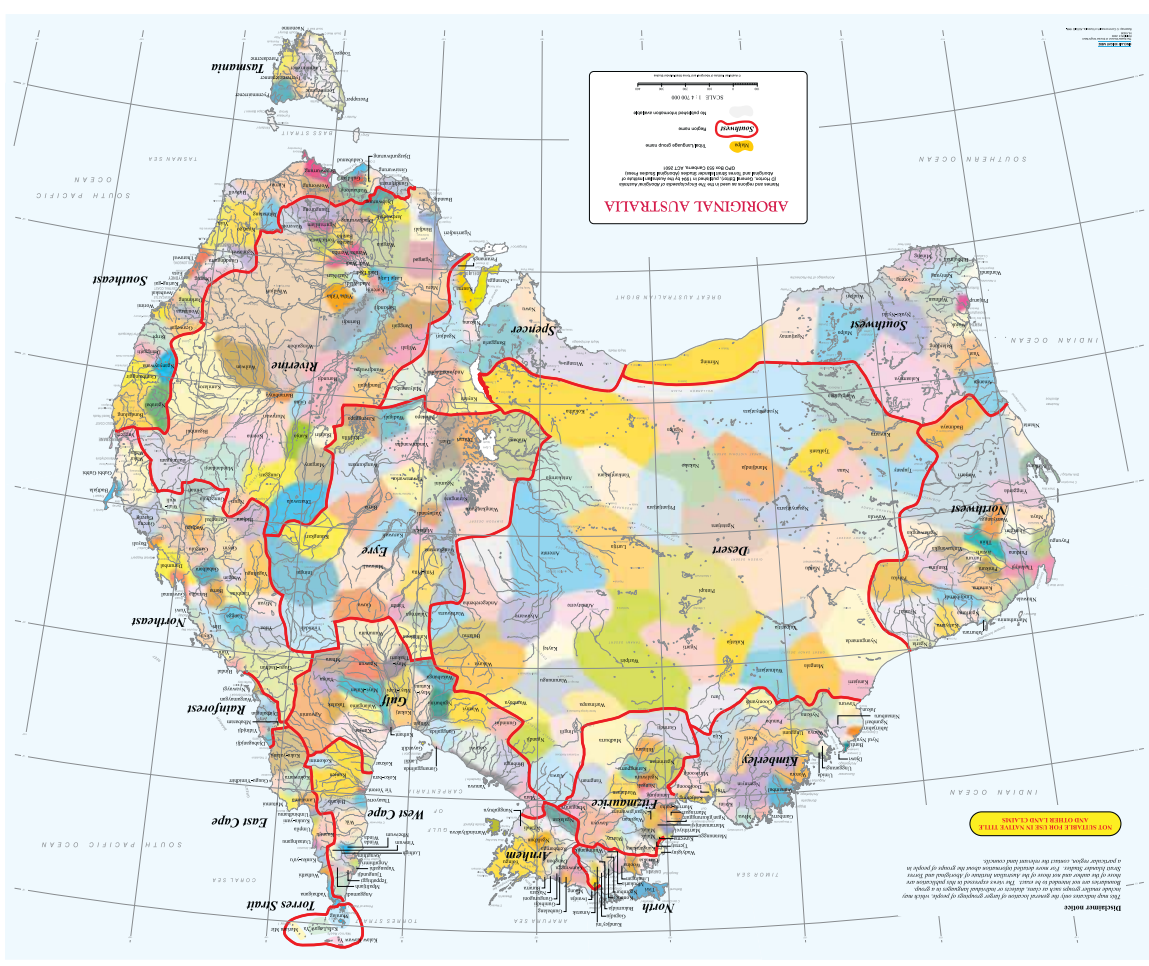
What was his job in that war?

What is the name of Graham Atkinson's people? Can you find these peoples on the Aboriginal Language map and find two other aboriginal language groups in the same area.

Study the photograph of Graham Atkinson in the tank.

What clues in the photograph tell us about Vietnam and the nature of war in which Graham fought?

Vertical lines for student response.



The Fighting Gunditjmarra

The Lovett Family



Leonard Lovett, 26th Battalion, c 1914-1918, photographer unknown. AWM DA13883

**Family Service
Fighting Traditions
Soldier Settlement
WWI, WWII, Korea,
Vietnam, East Timor,
Afghanistan**

The Lovetts service extended from the First World War (1914-18) to the conflict in Afghanistan from 2002 to the present.

Private Leonard Lovett and his brother Private Alfred Lovett were two of five Lovett brothers from the Gunditjmarra peoples of Hamilton, western Victoria who served in the First World War. Brothers Edward, Fredrick and Herbert would serve in both the First and Second World Wars. Another grandson, Murray Lovett, was a member of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force which occupied Japan (1946-52), and three more grandsons served in the Korean War (1950-53), and three generations have served Australia.

“The Lovett family come from the Fighting Gunditjmarra people of the south-west of Victoria, so called because of their spirited defence of their lands against early white settlers.”



Alfred Lovett, wife Sarah and his two sons, 1918, photographer unknown, Reproduced courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. AWM P01651.001

The family matriarch Granny Hannah Lovett (1855-1946) and her husband James, “raised a family of fighters.” During the Second World War, the Defence Department gave stars (the female relative badge) to selected women in recognition of the sacrifices made by women in wartime. One star was issued for each male relative in the armed forces. Granny Hannah Lovett wore her star with pride, and with her sacrifice “could have worn a crown of stars.”

Forgotten Heroes, Aborigines at War From the Somme to Vietnam



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

Dear Sir

*‘Dear Sir
I am writing to you to see if you could give me any information regarding the cutting up of Lake Condah Mission Station into blocks for Aboriginal servicemen of this war.*

If same was being done I would like to make application for a block.

Awaiting your early reply

I remain yours truly

Y 5180 Pte HS Lovett

2nd Sub Dept

*1st B & D. Tocumwal.
N.S.W.’*

Private Samuel Lovett, 2/5th Australian Infantry Battalion, is pictured with niece, Aircraftwoman Alice Lovett, Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) 1942, photographer unknown. AWM P01651.003

On 25th September 1945 Herbert Staley Lovett, a veteran of the First and Second World Wars writes to the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board and pleads his case for a Soldier Settlement (an initiative which set aside land for veterans to farm) on his tribe’s Gunditjmarra Country, at Lake Condah Mission. In an insult to the Lovetts’ ownership of this land and their service to Australia, his case was denied; instead other soldiers received land through the Soldier Settlement Commission for Second World War soldiers.

ACTIVITIES: Secondary

Read the *Fighting Gundijimara* and discuss and answer the following questions.

In which wars did the Lovett family serve Australia?

Visit www.naa.gov.au, look up the service records of a Lovett family member from the First World War. What are the significant things that happened to that family member?

"The Lovett family come from the Fighting Gundijimara people of the south-west of Victoria, so called because of their spirited defence of their lands against early white settlers."

How do you think the Fighting Gundijimara spirit influenced the Lovett family? How do you think they demonstrated this spirit? Why do you think this is important to Gundijimara people?

Identify any similarities between the ANZAC spirit and the Fighting Gundijimara spirit.

Further Research Activity: 'Back to Being Black'

Go to 'Back to Being Black' a digital story by John Lovett about his father Herbert Stanley Lovett who served in The First World War in the 15th Machine Gun Battalion in 1917 and his bitter experience of not being honoured upon his return to Australia.

<http://generator.acmi.net.au/education/themes/snapshots/australian-history/segregation>

Screen the film for students and discuss the ideas of honour, service and segregation.

Extension Activities: Primary and Secondary Further Research:

Search for Indigenous servicemen and women at:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/search/?q=indigenous#909>

Search for Australian Government legislation on Aboriginal rights from 1916 onwards:

http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/info_sheet.html

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corporate/>

Have students select a serviceman or servicewoman and select and discuss their significant moments while outside and inside Australia while on active service.