

Forgotten heroes: Honouring the Service and Sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

- We remember the men and women who joined the Australian Armed Services and served our nation in overseas wars and conflicts. We especially remember those who gave their lives, were wounded or suffered as prisoners of war. What special days, ceremonies, symbols and memorials help us remember?
- Who are the individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women that joined the Australian Armed Services and the war effort to serve the nation during times of war? How can we ensure they gain recognition and remembrance today and in the future?
- What were the civilian rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in South Australia and Australia at the time when many were seeking to serve the nation at war?
- War service records, memorials and stories are important for maintaining and sharing Australia's war history. Contribute to Reconciliation by finding stories and records of local Aboriginal servicemen and women. Consider how these will be shared?

We remember the men and women who joined the Australian Armed Services and served our nation in overseas wars and conflicts. We especially remember those who gave their lives, were wounded or suffered as prisoners of war. What special days, ceremonies, symbols and memorials help us remember?

Commemorate means "to keep alive, or to honour, the memory of some person, group or event by a ceremony" (Their Spirit, Our History (2007), Australian War Memorial)

Students research acts of commemoration and remembrance in Australia and record their findings in the template. Refer to the Appendix 1 and the Primary and General Resource lists for information.

Read *Harry and the Anzac poppy* (see Primary Year Resources) and share the illustrations with students. In the story, the epitaph on the war memorial reads, "These men gave their lives so that others might live in freedom. Let those that come after see to it that their names be not forgotten."

The youngest member of the family asks "The memorial in the park... is his name on it?" Discuss with students the significance of the epitaph and ask them to propose reasons why the child in the story considers it important that his ancestor's name is on the memorial.

From websites www.tributesofhonour.info or www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/australia_memorials.asp students select, download and print pictures of war memorials and honour boards.

Create a class collage within an enlarged map of South Australia and hand write copies of epitaphs from a selection of the war memorials to add to the collage. Students can make poppies - a symbol of remembrance originating from the First World War when soldiers recognised they were the first living things to re-grow on the battlefields of France and Belgium - to decorate the perimeter of the collage. Instructions can be found on the War Memorial website, *Education Activities for Students, Make your own poppy*, www.awm.gov.au/education/activities.

Who are the individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women that joined the Australian Armed Services and the war effort to serve the nation during times of war? How can we ensure they gain recognition and remembrance today and in the future?

Find out about war memorials across South Australia and in your local area by visiting The Returned and Services League website www.rslsa.org.au, the Australian War Memorial website www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/australia_memorials.asp or refer to Inglis, K.S. (2008). *Sacred places: war memorials in the Australian landscape*, Melbourne University Press.



Visit a local war memorial and record the names of servicemen and women inscribed on it. Students research a name(s) recorded on the memorial. Find out if any are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander servicemen or women by researching the South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nominal roll found on the Returned and Services League website.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial is proposed for South Australia. Find out about the design of the proposed memorial and its location in South Australia. Make a sketch of the memorial including the design features. Consider how your school can become involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial. For example individuals, classes or schools may buy personalised bricks available to pave the surrounds. Discuss and organise a plan to make this happen. Visit the Reconciliation South Australia website for details about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial and ways of becoming involved, www.reconciliationsa.org.au.

Read *What was the war like Grandma?: Emmy remembers WWII* aloud (see Primary Resources List). While listening to the story, students record key words and phrases which describe the roles and ways in which civilians contributed to the war effort during WW II using the graphic organiser provided (Appendix 4). Students read the article *Indispensable in the war effort* (Appendix 1) and add further roles to their previous list, highlighting the contributions to the war effort made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the north of Australia.

What were their civilian rights in South Australia and Australia at the time when many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples sought to serve the nation at war?

Students complete the timeline of overseas wars and conflict (Appendix 3), adding a brief summary of South Australian and Australian legislation and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at corresponding points in time. Refer to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/download/history/bth_trackhistory_1r.pdf

For more comprehensive details and specific state legislation visit www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/teaching_materials/t_laws_comparison.html.

Discuss with students the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Australian colonies or states at each juncture on the timeline.

Students read Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander war memoirs and biographies including *Enlistment in World War II* - Leon Kent (Appendix 1) and locate information which enables them to infer the reasons why many of them enlisted in Australia's Armed Services. Develop a web diagram to record key words and phrases.

Students write an acrostic poem using the letters:

F-O-R-G-O-T-T-E-N H-E-R-O-E-S

Capture the character, motivation and bravery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women. Use the information from the memoirs and biographies which has been recorded on the web diagram.

War service records, memorials and stories are important for maintaining and sharing Australia's war history. Contribute to Reconciliation by finding stories and records of local Aboriginal servicemen and women. Consider how these will be shared.

View the DVD, *The Forgotten* (2003), 40 minutes. Written, produced and directed by Glen Stasiuk, Black Russian Productions, www.tapeservices.sa.edu.au.

Students each research a different Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander serviceman or woman who served in and overseas war or conflict. Use the framework - **who, when, where, what, why and how** to focus when reading and viewing to assist with recording. Students access primary and secondary resources such as War Service records, Defence Force Unit diaries, diaries, letters and personal accounts or historical records. (See resource list)

Students write a short biography of the selected serviceman or woman outlining their life and their experiences in the Australian Armed Services.

Make a Commemoration Board to display the class research, or create a media presentation which can be shared and archived within the school or community. Consider how these can be preserved and shared in the future.



PRIMARY YEARS

Curriculum Links

South Australia Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA)

- Society and Environment & English
- Equity Cross Curriculum Perspectives – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives
- Essential Learnings – Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking, Communication

Australian Curriculum: History

Australian Curriculum: English

- General Capabilities
- Cross Curriculum Perspectives – Indigenous perspectives

Primary Years Resources

Fiction/Picture books

Hoy, C. & Johnson, B. (2008). *My grandad marches on Anzac Day*, Lothian Children's Books.

Inglis, K.S. (2008). *Sacred places: war memorials in the Australian landscape*, Melbourne University Press.

Jorgensen, N. & Harrison-Lever, B. (2004). *In Flanders fields*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

Krok, L. (1992). *The Anzacs*, Jacaranda Press – Jacaranda young inquirers, Milton, Qld.

Lockyer, J. (1997). *Harry and the Anzac poppy*, Reed for Kids, Dingley, Vic.

Wilson, M. (2010). *My Mother's Eyes – The Story of a Boy Soldier*, Hachette Children's Books, www.mymotherseyes.com.au.

Tonkin, R. (1995). *What was the war like Grandma?: Emmy remembers WWII*, William Heinemann Australia, Port Melbourne.

Australian history timelines

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission:

Track the history

www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/download/history/bth_trackhistory_1r.pdf

Bringing them home education module

www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/teaching_materials/t_laws_comparison.html

The laws: South Australia

www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/download/laws/bth_lawsSA_5r.pdf

Share our Pride

www.shareourpride.org.au/pages/topics/our-shared-history/timeline.php

War Memorials and Commemoration

ANZAC Day

www.anzacday.org.au

The Returned and Services League of Australia (South Australian Branch)

www.rlsa.org.au

www.tributesofhonour.info

Australian War Memorial

www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/australia_memorials.asp

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Servicemen and Women

Aboriginal Diggers

www.diggerhistory.info/pages-aboriginal/aboriginal1.htm

'All in' – Indigenous service

www.w2australia.gov.au/allin/indigenous.html

Case study: Reginald Saunders

www.awm.gov.au/education/box/casestudy/03.pdf

Connecting Spirits 2008 group

www.connectingspirits.com.au/pages/soldiers/2008-soldiers.php

Enlistment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women

www.w2australia.gov.au/allin/images/pdf/enlistment.pdf

SA Memory, Experiences at War: Aboriginals and War

www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=834

Scoutle: Nellie Gibson - L2386 Nellie Gibson: life during wartime