

Anzac Day



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Anzac Portal
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2023 Anzac Day Dawn Service - Taras Head

On 25 April 1915, members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed at Gallipoli.
On the anniversary of this day each year, we come together to honour the service and sacrifice of all our veterans.

Lest we forget



COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE

9:00am

PIETÀ MILITARY CEMETERY

'Malta and Australia are two islands separated by continents and seas but now firmly linked by ties of family and history. It was the First World War which began the close relationship between our two countries. During that terrible conflict Maltese and Australians lived, fought and died together.'

Over 10 per cent of Malta's 222,000 people volunteered for war-related duties, with almost 1,100 members of the Malta Labour Corps working with Australians at Gallipoli, Lemnos and Mudros. The Maltese served gallantly with Australian regiments, six of them receiving decorations for their service in the 7th Brigade.

In addition, many thousands of Australians owed their survival to the tremendous and selfless efforts of the Maltese who tended and nursed the wounded back to health. Malta, which history remembers as the 'nurse of the Mediterranean', became a focus of heartfelt gratitude for the soldiers who convalesced there. To this day the memory of the ANZACs is kept alive in Malta, just as it is in Australia, through annual commemorations.'

R.J.L. Hawke, Former Prime Minister of Australia

Foreword to *'Gallipoli: The Malta Connection'* by John A. Mizzi. December 1990.



Wounded Australian and British soldiers outside one of the small wards at Bighi Hospital, Malta. © Imperial War Museum (HU 129304)



Anzac Day: History and significance

The Anzac legend was born on 25 April 1915, when some 16,000 soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed under fire on the shores of Gallipoli, Türkiye.

Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the Allied navies. These landings were the first occasion where soldiers of the two fledgling nations fought together.

After meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders, what had been planned as a bold stroke quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months.

At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated from the peninsula, with both sides having suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. Over 56,000 Allied soldiers were killed in the campaign, including more than 11,000 Australian and New Zealand troops.

Although the Gallipoli campaign failed in its military objectives, the actions of Australian and New Zealand forces during the campaign left a powerful legacy. What became known as the 'Anzac legend' became an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping the ways in which they viewed both their past and their future.

Once used to refer to those who fought in the First World War, as time has passed, the meaning of 'Anzac' has changed. The term 'Anzac' expresses characteristics such as courage, equality, endurance and mateship, and today it also honours those who have served through more recent conflicts and on peacekeeping missions.

Anzac Day: early commemorations in Australia and New Zealand and the United Kingdom

The landing on Gallipoli was already etched into the minds of many people while the Gallipoli Campaign was still being fought. It became a defining moment in the histories of Australia and New Zealand.

In 1916, the Acting Australian Prime Minister, George Pearce, officially named 25 April as 'Anzac Day'. The first anniversary of the landing was observed in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Malta.



By 1927, Anzac Day was a public holiday in every state of Australia.

Today, Anzac Day also honours those who have served through recent conflicts and on peacekeeping missions. The day reflects the diversity of modern military operations as young veterans join with veterans of earlier wars, connected by the experience of service. Now a tradition over 100 years old, Anzac Day has become Australia's most important secular occasion.

Anzac Day in Malta

In both world wars, Malta's position in the Mediterranean made it an important strategic location. During World War One, it was well positioned to receive casualties from the ill-fated invasion of Gallipoli in 1915.

In total, 28 hospitals and convalescence camps were operational in Malta during the war, including Malta's three pre-existing hospitals and Mtarfa Military Barracks, which was given over to medical use. Between them, these sites held more than 26,000 beds, and treated more than 135,000 sick and wounded throughout the duration of the war, earning Malta the nickname 'the nurse of the Mediterranean'.

Malta became the last resting place of 204 Australian and 72 New Zealand soldiers. We remain grateful for Malta's care for so many of our wounded soldiers.

Anzac Day has been commemorated in Malta since 1916. Originally, two services were held due to the practice of burying servicemen according to religion: one service was held in Pietà and another at the Addolorata cemetery for Catholics.

After the unveiling of the War Memorial in Floriana by HM The Queen in 1954, services were combined up until 1979 when the service returned to Pietà Military Cemetery, as it contains the highest number of ANZAC war graves (231) in Malta.



On arrival at Malta, we were taken to Valletta Hospital in cars and garries, where we received our first decent bath for weeks and put to bed. The effect of those clean pyjamas and white sheets was almost too much for me, and I had to put my hand out to make sure that I wasn't dreaming. Such luxuries! Who wouldn't be a wounded soldier!

Taking it all round, my sojourn in Malta was an enjoyable one. After the rigorous training during our stay in Egypt, the exciting events and nerve-wracking experiences of the landing, the respite was rather welcome. We were nearly killed with kindness by the good people there. Chocolates, cigarettes and flowers for the ward were there in abundance. Troops of boys, equivalent to our Boy Scouts, were always at our beck and call, if any messages were to be run. Everybody did everything to try to make us happy, and it was no time before the Doctors and Nurses had my shoulder as comfortable as possible, under the circumstances.

Two surgeons traversed the ward each day, and amused the boys each time that they entered the ward. They were a real "Mutt and Jeff" pair. Capt. FitzWilliam, the Englishman, was 6 ft. 2", whilst the other, a Maltese surgeon, was no more than 5 ft. tall, but both knew the art of surgery from A to Z, and many a soldier had them to thank for limbs saved from amputation.

Typescript memoir of Robert Richards, 1914-1918. Available via www.awm.gov.au/collection/C2127718

The Second World War

Malta's pivotal role in the Second World War requires little introduction. A valuable, strategic outpost hosting several airfields and as the only safe allied harbour between Gibraltar and Alexandria, Malta was critical to air and maritime operations in the Mediterranean theatre.

Ships of the Royal Australian Navy took part in the protection of merchant shipping and the supply of aircraft and stores (*Operations EXCESS, SUBSTANCE, HALBERD, HARPOON and PEDESTAL*). Aircraft and crew from both the Royal Australian and Royal New Zealand Air Forces operated in the defence of Malta under the Air Headquarters, an overseas command of the Royal Air Force that was established in December 1941.

The Malta Memorial in Floriana commemorates 205 Australian and 85 New Zealand service personnel who were killed in action during the Second World War with no known grave; the majority of these were air crew. A further thirty-one Australian and New Zealand air crew are buried in Kalkara Naval Cemetery and one Australian in Pembroke military cemetery.





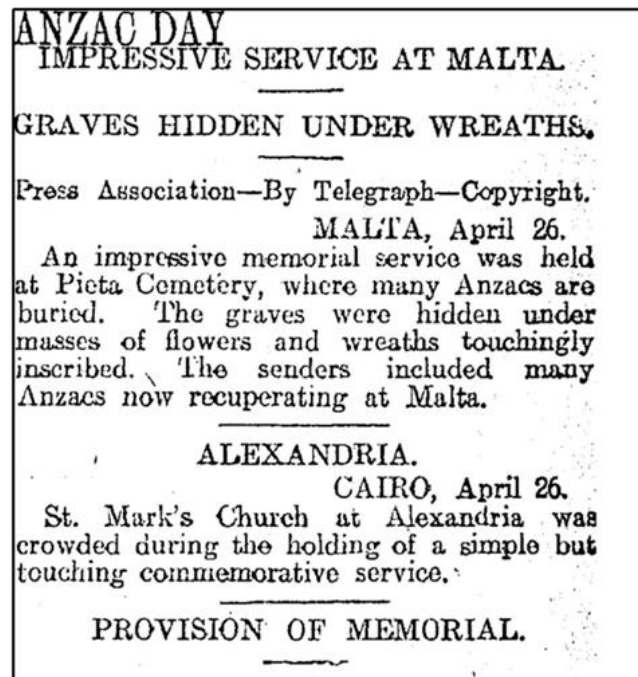
Kiwi Concert Party on board troop transport, Malta. New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs.
War History Branch: Photographs relating to World War 1914-1918, World War 1939-1945, occupation of Japan,
Korean War, and Malayan Emergency. Ref: DA-02115-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.
/records/23140284

Pietà Military Cemetery

More than 1,300 Commonwealth casualties buried at Pietà Military Cemetery date from World War One. 882 of the burials here, nearly 60 per cent of the total number of casualties, died in 1915 having been wounded or contracted sickness at Gallipoli and evacuated to Malta. As well as a large number of British war dead, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for a large ANZAC contingent at Pietà, with more than 230 burials of New Zealand and Australian casualties. There are also 28 Indian casualties commemorated here, and two Canadians.

Across Malta's military cemeteries, 308 Australian and New Zealanders are buried from both world wars.





Period of Silence

On the first anniversary of the First World War armistice, two minutes' silence was instituted to honour the sacrifice of those who had died during the war as part of the main commemorative ceremony in London. Australian journalist and First World War veteran Edward George Honey appealed for a five-minute silence in 1919 by writing a letter to the London Evening News. In recent times, one minute of silence has been observed at Australian commemorative events, such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies.

The Last Post

The Last Post is one of a number of bugle calls in military tradition that mark the phases of the day.

In military tradition, the Last Post is the bugle call that signifies the end of the day's activities. It is also sounded at military funerals to indicate that the soldier has gone to his final rest, and at commemorative services such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

Wreaths

'Anzac wreaths' are often laid at war memorials as a way to remember those who have lost their lives in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

In ancient times, the Romans used a wreath of laurel leaves to symbolise bravery, strength and triumph. Its meaning can be traced back to Greek mythology.



Wearing rosemary has become a traditional symbol of remembrance and commemoration in Australia.

Rosemary grows wild on the Gallipoli peninsula in Türkiye, where many Australians served in World War I. In the 1980s, cuttings of plants from Gallipoli were planted in nurseries throughout Australia to support 'Avenues of Honour'.¹

On special days of commemoration, such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, Australians often wear a small sprig of rosemary. Usually, it's pinned onto a coat lapel, near to the heart, or held in place by medals.

¹ Avenues of Honour project is a national initiative to document, preserve, promote and reinstate the original Avenues of Honour and to establish new commemorative trees, commemorating Australia's war service encompassing plantings from Boer War, WW1, WW2 and all subsequent conflicts.





Order of Service

08:45 Guests to be seated

09:00 Service commences

Welcome

Mrs. Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes, Master of Ceremonies



Hymn

(All Stand)

O Valiant Hearts

O valiant hearts who to your glory came
Through dust of conflict and through battle flame;
Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved,
Your memory hallowed in the land you loved.

Proudly you gathered, rank on rank, to war
As who had heard God's message from afar;
All you had hoped for, all you had, you gave,
To save mankind - yourselves you scorned to save.

Splendid you passed, the great surrender made;
Into the light that nevermore shall fade;
Deep your contentment in that blest abode,
Who wait the last clear trumpet call of God.



Prayer

Father Meli, Chaplain, Armed Forces of Malta

O Lord, lover of souls, who through the mouth of your prophet of old declared that all souls are yours, we thank you for the brave and faithful dead, who willingly laid down their lives on the battlefields of war and succumbed to the perils of the deep or of the air. We bless you for the dauntless courage of these defenders of our country who have fallen in the cause of truth and righteousness. In your hand, O Father, we leave their departed spirits. Grant us to follow their good example in faithfulness and endurance, even unto death, that we may with them be found worthy of the crown of everlasting life.

(Audience Responds)

Amen

(Please Sit)



Commemorative Addresses

H.E. Mr Matt Skelly, High Commissioner of Australia

and

Mr Kevin Bonnici, Honorary Consul of New Zealand,
on behalf of the New Zealand Embassy to Spain



Reading

H.E. Mr Erdeniz Şen, Ambassador for the Republic of Türkiye

Reading of the Tribute to Anzacs Who Died at Gallipoli
attributed to Turkish President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk,
First President of the Republic of Türkiye

'Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives. You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours... You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well.'

*'Uzak memleketin toprakları üstünde kanlarını döken
kahramanlar:
burada dost bir vatanın toprağında
Huzur ve sükun içinde uyuyunuz.
Sizler Mehmetçiklerle yan yana, koyun koyunasınız.
Uzak diyarlardan evlatlarını harbe gönderen analar;
gözyaşlarınızı dindiriniz, evlatlarınız bizim bağrımızdadır.
Huzur içindedirler ve huzur içinde rahat rahat uyuyacaklardır.
Bu toprakta canlarını verdikten sonra artık bizim evlatlarımız
olmuşlardır.'*



Reading of *'In Flanders Fields'*

Dr Elizabeth Coombs, Affil. Assoc. Professor
Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences, University of Malta

Reading of *'In Flanders Fields'* by Lt. Col. John McCrae, 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



Wreath Laying

Mrs. Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes, Master of Ceremonies

Wreaths layers will be invited to lay their wreaths in accordance with the separate order of wreath laying sheet and will be announced by the Master of Ceremonies.



(All Stand)

The Ode of Remembrance

Lieutenant Clishe Ghirxi, Armed Forces Malta

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.

(Audience Responds)

We will remember them.



The Last Post

(All Stand)

One Minute's Silence

Lest We Forget

(Audience Responds)

Lest We Forget

The Rouse

Flags Raised



Hymn

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast
And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure
Sufficient is thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

A thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone:
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.
O God, our help in ages past
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.



National Anthems of Australia, New Zealand and Malta

Mrs. Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes, Master of Ceremonies

Please remain standing for the national anthems of Australia, New Zealand and Malta.



Advance Australia Fair

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are one and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts;
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia fair
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia fair

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross,
We'll toil with hearts and hands,
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands,
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share,
With courage let us all combine
To advance Australia fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia fair.



God Defend New Zealand

E Ihowā Atua,
O ngā iwi mātou rā,
Āta whakarangona;
Me aroha noa
Kia hua ko te pai;
Kia tau tō atawhai;
Manaakitia mai
Aotearoa

God of Nations at Thy feet,
In the bonds of love we meet,
Hear our voices, we entreat,
God defend our free land.
Guard Pacific's triple star
From the shafts of strife and war,
Make her praises heard afar,
God defend New Zealand

L-Innu Malti

Lil din l-art ħelwa, l-Omm li tatna isimha,
Ħares Mulej, kif dejjem Int ħarist:
Ftakar li lilha bil-oħla dawl libbist.

Agħti, kbir Alla, id-dehen lil min jaħkimha,
Rodd il-ħniena lis-sid, saħħa 'l-ħaddiem:
Seddaq il-għaqda fil-Maltin u s-sliem.



Ceremony Concludes

Mrs. Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes, Master of Ceremonies

Thank you for attending today's service to commemorate Anzac Day.





Elevated view of the 1954 Anzac Day service in Malta, showing members of 78 Fighter Wing RAAF and 14 Squadron RNZAF on parade at the Malta War Memorial. The Wing was in Malta for garrison duty.



Acknowledgements

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The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)
Mr Mark Fitzgerald - Malta's CWGC Supervisor and staff
Pietà Local Council

Father Joe Meli - Chaplain, Armed Forces of Malta
Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Grech - Commanding Officer, Air Wing, Armed Forces of Malta

Lieutenant Clishe Ghirxi - Armed Forces of Malta
Captain Jonathan Borg and all members of the AFM Band
Malta Police Force

TS St Paul Sea & Royal Marine Cadets Corps (SCC Malta)
St Aloysius College Scout Association
Mrs Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes

Dr Elizabeth Coombs, University of Malta
Coro Bel Canto Choir
St. John's Ambulance & Rescue Malta

Standard Bearers

Mr Liam Barlow	George Cross Island Association (Malta G.C. Branch)
Mr Edward Barkway	George Cross Island Association (UK Branch)
Mr John Falzon	Royal British Legion (Malta G.C. Branch)
Mr Arist Cordina	Royal Naval Association (Malta G.C. Branch)
Mr Terry Hughes	Royal Marines Association (Malta G.C. Branch)
Mr Stephen McCarthy	Royal Air Forces Association (Malta G.C. Branch)



Sources

Anzac Portal: <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au>

Commonwealth War Graves Commission: <https://www.cwgc.org/>

Australian War Memorial: <https://www.awm.gov.au/>

Department of Veterans Affairs, Australia: <https://www.dva.gov.au/>

Australian Army: <https://www.army.gov.au/>

National Library of New Zealand: <https://natlib.govt.nz/>

The ANZAC Experience in Malta, Tours 1 – 4 by Terence Mirabelli (Island Publications Ltd. 2015): <https://malta.embassy.gov.au/>

Gallipoli: The Malta Connection by John A. Mizzi, (Tecnografica Publications 1991)



An Anzac Day Ceremony at Valletta. Lord Methuen, the Governor of Malta 1915 - 1919, is marked by a cross in the left foreground and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Malta is in the background marked with a cross.



Pietà Military Cemetery

There are many people and stories contained within the cemetery walls. Below is a small collection of Anzacs whose final resting place is Pietà.



Major Alfred Edward Cook VD, 9th Australian Light Horse, who died of wounds on 4 July 1915. He was buried in Pietà Military Cemetery in location **XXV. 3**.



Lance Corporal (L Cpl) Percy Thompson Fricker, 22nd Battalion. A butcher from Ballarat prior to enlistment, L Cpl Fricker embarked the rank of Private with the Battalion's headquarters staff from Melbourne on HMAT *Ulysses* on 10 May 1915. After being wounded in action at Gallipoli, he was evacuated to Malta where, on 16 November 1915, he died of pneumonia, aged 19 and was buried in the Pietà Military Cemetery in location **D. VI. 3**.





Private (Pte) Stanley Stevenson Thurlow, 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment from Scone, New South Wales. A 20-year-old painter prior to enlisting on 22 August 1914, he embarked for overseas with A Squadron from Sydney on 20 October 1914 aboard HMAT *Star of Victoria*. While serving at Gallipoli, he was wounded in action in an attack on the Turkish positions on 7 August 1915. Evacuated to Malta for treatment, he died on 21 August 1915 and is buried in the Pietà Military Cemetery, location **A VIII. 2**.



Private (Pte) Robert Edward Riley, 26th Battalion from Latrobe, Tasmania. A 21-year-old butcher prior to enlisting on 18 February 1915, he embarked for overseas with C Company from Brisbane on 29 June 1915 aboard HMAT *Aeneas*. The 26th Battalion landed at Gallipoli on 12 September 1915 and in November Pte Riley was evacuated to Malta for medical treatment. He died of pneumonia at St Ignatius Hospital, Malta on 22 December 1915 and is buried in the Pietà Cemetery, location **A III. 6**.





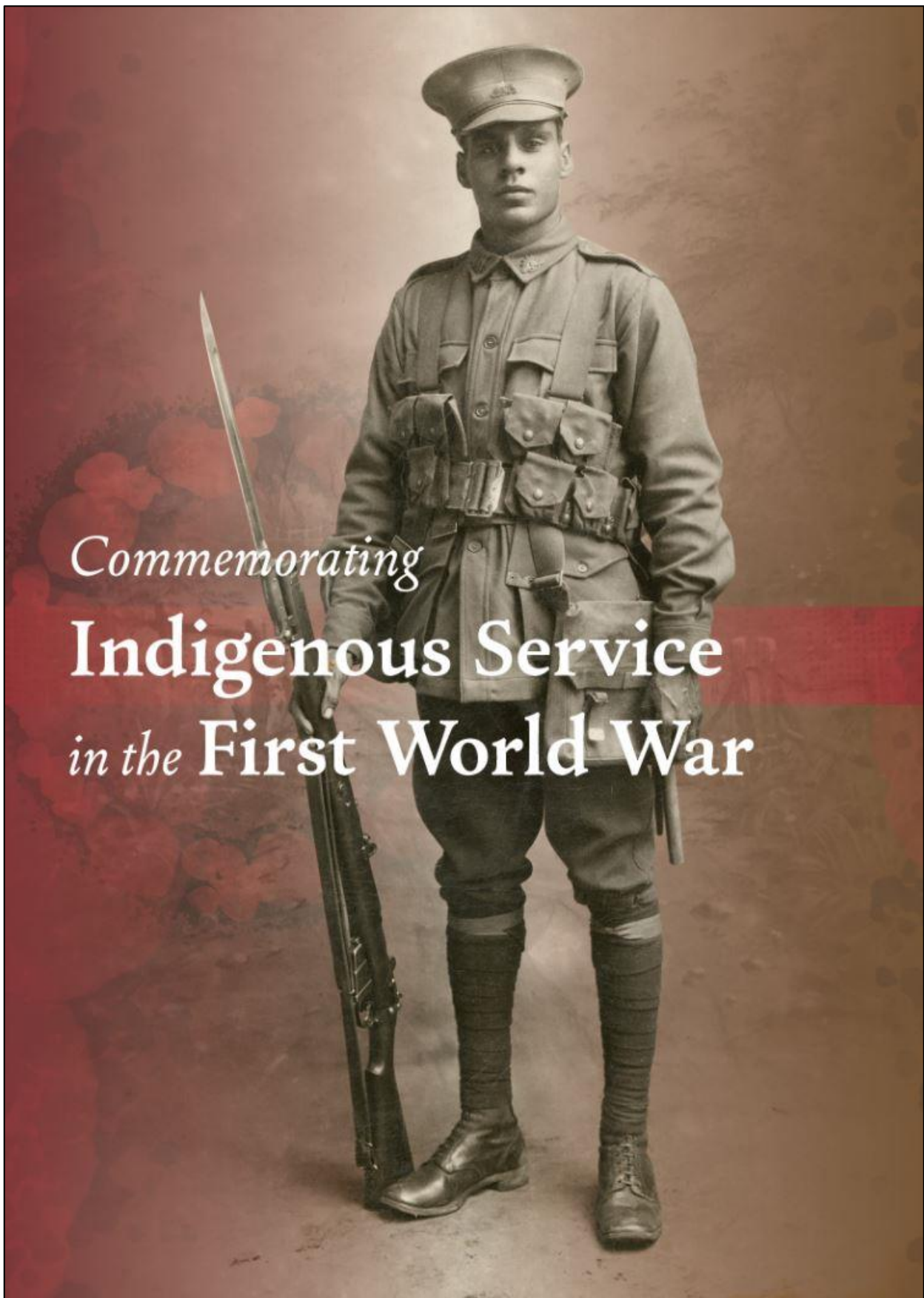
Private Thomas Verran Hammond, 2nd Battalion of Clyde, New South Wales. A riveter prior to enlisting, he embarked from Sydney aboard HMAT *Suffolk* on 18 October 1914. He was wounded in action at Gallipoli on 11 June 1915 and transferred to hospital in Malta where he died on 24 July 1915, aged 22. He is buried in the Pietà Military Cemetery, location **A III. 2**.



Trooper Samuel O'Dell, 6th Light Horse Regiment. A carpenter from Bingara, New South Wales, Trooper O'Dell enlisted on 5 November 1914. He died of wounds received at Gallipoli on 19 August 1915 and was buried in Pietà Military Cemetery, location **A. IX. 4**.

Cemetery map is available from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Website





Commemorating
Indigenous Service
in the **First World War**

Private Frederick Prentice of the 12th Australian Infantry Battalion and 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion. Frederick enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in May 1915 and was awarded the Military Medal for his actions on 19 July 1916 at Pozières, France.

