



30 January 2015

Guy Barnett, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier

## Indigenous Australians at War exhibition

I am today proud to officially open the nationally significant Indigenous Australians At War exhibition at the Burnie Regional Art Gallery.

This exhibition features images that tell the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers and illustrates the experiences they shared with other soldiers as they fought together, often in countries far from home.

The exhibition was launched in October 2011 by the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne and is now travelling throughout Australia. Burnie is the first port of call in Tasmania as part of the Centenary of ANZAC celebrations in 2015.

The Indigenous Australians At War exhibition examines the work of Aboriginal soldiers and defence personnel.

Australian Aboriginals have participated in our nation's response to international war and conflict since the Boer War in 1899.

Over 1000 Australian Aboriginal fought in World War One, although in many cases they were not lawfully able to vote, marry a non-Aboriginal person, drink alcohol, own property freely, receive award wages or move freely around the country.

There is no definitive number or reliable identification of Tasmanian Aboriginal people who served in the armed forces. The actual numbers remain unknown.

During World War One approximately 21 Cape Barren Islanders served in the Australian Imperial Force and six were killed.

Private John William Miller, grandson of Fanny Cochrane Smith, served with the 12th Battalion. Private Miller was killed at the landing of Gallipoli. Another local Aboriginal man, Francis (Frank) Maynard also served 14 months with the Australian Imperial Force with the 26th Battalion (Infantry). Mr Maynard was killed in action at Sunken Road, France in 1916. Marcus Blake

Brown, a Tasmanian Aboriginal from Cape Barren Island fought in the 40th Battalion, and died in France in 1917.

In World War Two, approximately 23 Tasmanian Aboriginal men fought overseas and another 10 served in the Vietnam War.

We know that while many experienced racism and discrimination in their civilian life, this often disappeared when they became soldiers and fought side-by-side with non-Aboriginal soldiers.

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