

Pawunapi

Pawunapi, awungaji yartipurraji murrakupuni ngini pupuni wartiyangila yinkiti. Awuta Jikilarruwala nginya-ngirrimpi wuta murrakupuni kapi south west of Bathurst Island. Yita yartiripurraji murrakupuni Tangiyowu awungarruwu purrumamula Fourcroy api awungaji Tongiyowu tingata.

Karri waya yimiga jipingarti karri 19 February 1942, nginya-amini Louis Munkara amintiya ngarra-ngirrimpi purrumuwu awungaji kapi Powunapi tingata karri purrupkuluwunyi awunyirra marratinga Don Isidro kapi awungaji north. Yita arrukunani yikwani amintiya kumurrupunila kangki marratinga Don Isidro.

Kwarrungana, pili pirripangitaya awunyirra marratinga awuta kurrujakayiyuwula karri pirrikiripini Jiliyarti (Darwin). Arramuka awunyirra nyoni ngirramini ngini wutiyati. Karri waya japinamini yimi, wuta purrumati yikwani kapi tingata pili awuta ngamanta kangki awunyirra marratinga ngini wiwi wurrukakuluwunyi ngini waya yinkitayi murrakupuni. Awuta yingwapa arrikutumunuwi kangki marratinga purrupapirti kapi tingata. Karri waya japinamini nginya-amini yipamangi awuta mwanarruwi yinkitayi kapi jupunyini.

Karranguwana, yita tayikwapi pirramarrarami awungaji kapi tingata kiwi pirrikija pirrimi awuta mwanarruwi yinkiyayi kapi jupunyini. Waya juwa yuwurrara mamunukuwi yipanguwi pirripapurti kapi tingata. Arramuka nyoni ngirramini ngini pilikama mamunukuwi awungaji kangki awunyirra marratinga pili wayajuwa wawurruwi wuta wupamurruwi awungaji kangki marratinga.

Ngarra nginya-amini yimi ngini awuta yuwurrara arrikutumunuwi yita wuta mamunukuwi kapi tingata. Pili ngini nyoni ngirramini apangarra ngini wuta karluwu mamunukuwi, wuta anuka awungaji kanginaki ngirramini ngini wupamurruwi kangki naki combat role ngini payiti wurruwi kapi naki WWII.

Arramuka ngini wut nimirra ngini pilikama mamunukuwi awungaji kangki awunyirra marratinga? Karluwu pirripangirra ngini kangki jurra kapi official reports.

Wuta purruwajali awuta Defence Forces ngini karluwu wutumarti naki ngirramini. Natinga arrawurunga pirripakulunyi awunyirra marratinga api waya jipingarti. Naki jurra awarra official reports pirripangirra ngini awunyirra marratinga jipingarti yiloti Jartirrima miles kangki tingata. Arramuka yinkitayi-narra kapi tingata pili awarra mast ampjijingirriti turrunguni karri apapirraya jaluwuni. Karri yinkitayi ajurruwa awuta HMAS Warrnambool purruwunga awuta crew members.

Nginya-amini ngarra kwapini, yinimarruwurri ngarra-ngirrimpi kiwi purruwurri kapi awungaji kapi awunyirra marratinga kiwi purruwunga yingarti yinkiti amintiya mirripaka. Waya nyirra marrating jipingarti kangki winga api ngarra nginya-amini wutiyati ngarra-ngirrimpi mwaliki pirrimi yilarruwu kangki awunyirra marratinga karri waya jipingarti. Kiwi yuwunga yingarti wunijaka kapi ngarralamiya kiwi yipingarti yularruwu kangki awunyirra marratinga. Api yintayi wuta kukunari pirrimi ngini purruwunga yinkiti amintiya mirripaka.

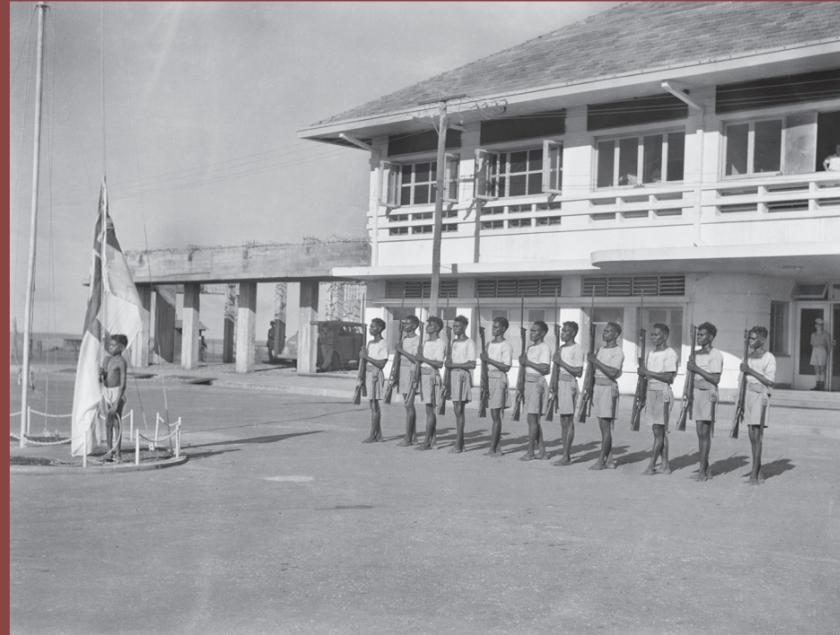
Awarra naki war yipapayakarri 1945. Naki 34 years karri Don Isidro ngirramini. Kiwi ngawa nyoni ngirramini kapi Powunapi karri nginya-yuwuni Louis Munkara kirrijini arrami 12-13 years old wuta ngarra-mwayini Collin Kerinaia amintiya yingwapa kakirrijuwi pwakayini pirrimi kapi jupunyini karri purrukakuluwunyi awunyirra bomb, yita arrukulanga meter api awuta kakirrijuwi takamina pirrimi alipurrunga kiwi pirrimarruwuri awunyirra bomb kapi wuta ngirrimpi wuta karluwu kukunari pirrimi pili jiyirti ngirramini.

Karri ngunuwurri awungarruwu Pawunapi kiwi karri ngipajirra kapi winga ngini-nginaji awarra yimaka ampajakipawuli kangki nginya minyawunga kiwi naki yimaka ngini awunirra marratinga Don Isidro api ngini karluwu awungarra jipingarti kapi ngini-naki ngirramini.

Karikamini ngirramini purrukurrimi ngini wuta kwapi purrumu amintiya kapi waya pirwanyimi kapi ngawa pupuni tingata ngini wiwi ngarrakurruwala awuta kwapi purrumuwu awungaji pili wuta karluwu awungaji waya kapi naki jiyirti ngirramini pili wuta papurrajuwi aminitya pupuwi, Api kiwi nginya kukunari ngirrimi pili nginya-ngirrimpi, yita yingarti ngirramini kangki ngilawa miyanawunga ngini nginya-amini.

Ngimpajangiliparra pili Louis aminitya awuta ngawa-ngirrimpi kwapi wuta tayamgangi pirrimi awuta kapi yimpanguwi awuta survivors kapi awunyirra marrating Don Isidro, yita karluwu puoni pirrimatakirrayi pirrimi naki karri wurrukurrimi naki ngawa ngirramini naki history jurra, api waya juwa awurruwu kangki ngawa minyawunga ngawa nginajingawula.

Marie Munkara



William Donald Martin
Tiwi coastwatchers on parade as Cyprian raises the white ensign at HMAS Melville, Darwin, 1943
Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial

COVER IMAGES

William Donald Martin
Tiwi coastwatchers on parade, 1943
Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial

Susan Wanji Wanji
Bombing of Darwin, 2016, (detail), ochre on linen.
Courtesy of the artist, Munupi Arts and Crafts and the Australian War Memorial.

Tiwi Heroes: World War Two Encounters

Library & Archives NT
19 February – 15 May 2022

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Designed and Printed by: UniPrint, CDU

LANT acknowledges the generous assistance of Patakijiyali Museum, Muluwurri Museum, Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Tiwi Land Council, Marie Munkara, Mavis Kerinaia, Jemma Puruntatameri, Pirra Wayingi, Ancilla Kurrupuwu, Susan Wanji Wanji, Munupi Arts and Crafts, Wayne Keeping, Australian War Memorial, Point Cook RAAF Museum, State Library of Victoria, Darwin Aviation Museum and Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory.

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Tiwi Heroes

World War Two Encounters

Library & Archives NT

The Tiwi contribution to Australia’s War effort: needed and disallowed

Photographs of Tiwi men on military parade and doing rifle drill during the Second World War are striking. They bear witness to the extent of Tiwi involvement in the war which is not well known beyond the two islands of Bathurst and Melville, collectively known as the Tiwi Islands, situated approximately 85 kilometres north of Darwin.

With their lands, waters and customs infringed on by a colonial power, the Tiwi could well have declined to help defend Australia from invasion during the Second World War. Instead, they set about defending their country from a different peril with remarkable zeal and commitment.

While Australia’s military leadership refused to enlist them and initially doubted their loyalty, many Tiwi men and women gave their all defending Australia. Two Malay-speaking Tiwi men, Charlie One Tipakalippa and Strangler Pungautji Mackenzie, landed stores behind enemy lines in Indonesia on classified submarine operations. Others piloted naval boats in the reef-strewn waters around Melville and Bathurst Islands. Overall the Tiwi Native Patrol covered more than 15,000 kilometres on country and 20,000 kilometres by sea searching for plane and ship wreck survivors. The heroic feats and sustained contribution of Tiwi men and women were remarkable. They themselves have commemorated and celebrated their involvement in the war through dance, story, painting and song.

Yet why did the Tiwi assist Australia and its allies? In the 1940s, most Aboriginal people in Australia were not entitled to vote, and were not officially regarded as citizens. The affairs of Tiwi people were managed by the Catholic Church and an *Aboriginals Ordinance* designed to undermine their potential self-determination.

Most First Nations Territorians could not enlist in the military. The national Defence Committee found that enlisting ‘aliens and persons of non-European descent’ into the army and navy was undesirable. The Acting Chief of General Staff thought that ‘normal’ servicemen would not tolerate serving with non-European soldiers.¹ While some men of mixed descent were enlisted in Darwin early in the war, the Australian Army later adopted the following guidelines:

‘...[n]o person is to be enlisted voluntarily unless he is substantially of European origin or descent and reaches the standards of medical fitness, age, height, chest measurement, eyesight and teeth authorised by the Military Board.’² (Emphasis added.)

A bizarre situation prevailed. The Australian Army and Navy could not enlist Aboriginal people, but relied on them extensively, overseeing the creation of Aboriginal Patrol Units and supplying them with food, clothing and uniforms. Thousands of Aboriginal people who might have served in the army were instead employed to support it, including hundreds of Tiwi who worked in the Top End as far south as Mataranka.



Unknown photographer
Louis Munkara in Honorary Flight Sergeant’s uniform, 1942.
Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Argus Newspaper
Collection of Photographs

While the Tiwi people proved their commitment to country and resistance to Japanese invasion, they did not roll over for the Australian and allied military. The Tiwi refused Australian and allied servicemen unfettered access to their sacred lands and waters, and also enjoyed beating them at football.

Eventually the injustice of the Tiwi’s treatment during the Second World War was officially recognised and many were given an ‘Act of Grace’ payment in 1962 and awarded service medals at a ceremony in Darwin. The ingenuity, dedication and heroism of the Tiwi at that time still inspires today. Eighty years on, Library & Archives NT is proud to join Tiwi people in remembering and honouring the efforts of their elders.

Charlie Ward and Don Christophersen

Endnotes

- Robert A. Hall, *The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1997, p.15.
- Ibid.

Tiwi kapi pirripamurrumi kapi Australia’s War

Yimanka ngini kapinaki jajingarawi kapi military parade, karri Second World War pirliyawantiyarri. Naki yimanka ngini wuta tiwi pirikirimi kapi war karluwunara yingwampa arikutumurnuwi waya juwa tiwi wurumajawu ngini awarra naki.

Ngingingawula murrakupuni, winga, ngingingawula ngawa-ampi putuwurupura ngarra awarra purrupumari by Federal Government amintiya mijiniriyi, ngawa tiwi ngarimajurligi ngini ngamatawani Australia ngampi Japanese karri Second World War. Wuta pirrimajurligi nginiwutawa murrakupuni ngini wuta pirripamurrumi.

Australia’s military Leadership karluwu purruwurtimarti ngawa tiwi ngini

warntirrana wutiyaati army amintiya pipiripungintayi ngini tiwi pimatawani awuta Japanese, tayikuwapi jajingarawi amintiya mamirnikuwi pirripakirayi nginiwutawa energy ngini pirripamangi Australia. Yuwurrara tiwi kapi wupangiraga malayamani Charlie One Tipakalippa amintiya Strangler Pungautji MacKenzie yintagi purruwuriyi kapi kwampi line kapi Indonesia kangsi secret submarine operations.

Yingwampa jajingarawi pipiriparri kapala kapi wingama kurlamari piriimi kapi naki yuwurrara ratuwati. Naki tiwi Native Patrol kularlaga piriimi ngingingaji 15,000 kilometres kapi murrakupuni amintiya 20,000 kilometres kapi winga kularlaga wurimi arrapilayini amintiya kapala angi pirripingarti arikutumurnuwi kapinaki tiwi warntirrana purrukuruwani ngingingaji ngatawa pakitiringa karri war. Ngawa tiwi ngaripungintayi amintiya ngarikiringirri ngini yoyi arimi ngawurtiyarra ngirramini ngini parlingarri, jilamara amintiya ngini ngarikuruwala.

Pilikama tiwi purukuruwani Australia amintiya Allies? Karri 1940s tunuwuwi kapi Australia karluwu purruwutimarti vote piriimi amintiya karluwu pirimamula citizens, Naki Catholic Church wutiyaati tiwi amintiya kapimani nginiwutawa law pirimamula naki *Aboriginals Ordinance* wuta pirimajurligi ngawa tiwi.

Yingwampa tunuwuwi kapi Northern Territory wuta karluwu join piriimi military kapi National Defence Committee pipiripangiraga ngini letting aliens amintiya persons of Non-European descents’ kapi army amintiya navy ngarra jirti idea.Naki Acting Chief ngini General Staff yipangiraga ngini normal soldiers wuta karluwu wupamurrumi wutiyaati kapinaki non-European soldiers. Yingwampa jajingarawi kapi kutamaka pinirimi wuta join piriimi army kapi Jiliyarti karri war, pili wuta army pirikirimi awarra naki rule.

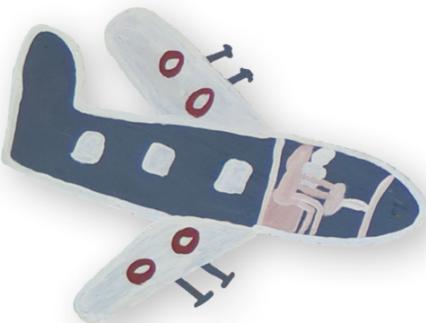
‘Tiwi kapi karluwu yintanga purrupamukuriyi wuta awuta karluwu ngingingaji murruntawi ngini wuwunga medical fitness, age, height, pipwa, measurement, pijara amintiya yinkana wuta piriimi awuta Military Board.’

Kutakamini awarra naki, wuta Australian Army amintiya navy karluwu pirritimarti tunuwuwi join, api wuta warntirrana purruwutimarti awuta, Wuta military puruwani tunuwuwi Patrol Units ngini wuta pirripakirayi yinkiti, kuluji, amintiya uniforms. Tayikuwapi tunuwuwi wuta pirripamurrumi kapi army ngini pimatawani, kiyi tayikuwapi tiwi kapi pirripamurrumi kapi Top End, kiyi kapi south ngingingaji Mataranka. Naki tiwi wuta warntirrana pirikirimi ngini wuta awungaji pimatawani naki murrukupuni amintiya purruwarri Japanese invasion.

Wuta warnta purukurturumi wutiriyi Australian amintiya Allies military. Wuta tiwi karluwu kuwa piriimi Australian amintiya allied servicemen ngini turrunguni pipiripakirayi kapi nginiwutawa tuwutiya murrakupuni amintiya winga kiyi wuta pirikumwari awuta karri pwakayini piriimi yiloga. Kiyi wuta kapimani pirrimajawu ngini pipiripungintayi ngawa tiwi ngini karluwu pirripakiyamama karri Second World War. Tiwi wuta punguntamuwi ngini warntirrana purrupamurrumi amintiya purukurturumi karri war ngini naniwanga puranji wurumuwu ngawa ningani.

Punyipunyinga pakitiringa, Library amintiya Archives NT wuta kukunari piriimi ngini ngawutiyaati ngawa tiwi ngini ngaripingintayi amintiya ngini warntirrana puranji ngarimuwajibri ngini ngawa pupuni ngawuni ngini ngawuntakirayi awuta paparluiwi.

Charlie Ward amintiya Don Christophersen



Pawunapi

Pawunapi has always been a favourite fishing and hunting spot for the Tikalaula, my family group from the southwest of Bathurst Island. A pristine piece of wilderness, this beach belongs to part of the coastline known to us as Tangiyaw and more commonly known to outsiders as Fourcroy.

In the late afternoon of the 19 February 1942, my aminay (grandfather) Louis Munkara and family were camping at Pawunapi when they were surprised by the appearance of a large vessel from the north trailing plumes of smoke, the *Don Isidro*. Having been damaged by Japanese aircraft in the bombing raid on Darwin, the vessel was obviously in trouble, so as night descended fires were built on the beach as beacons for survivors to know the direction of land. Many crew members made it to shore during the night and were made comfortable by my family, but unfortunately a number of bodies washed up as well and were buried in the sand dunes. My aminay recalled that two of the people who made it to shore were women, but as women weren’t recruited in combat roles during World War Two one can only speculate as to why they were on board the ship. The fact that they didn’t rate a mention in the official reports probably indicates that the defence forces wanted to keep their presence quiet.

By the next day, the deck was under water. Official reports have the vessel sinking three miles offshore, but it must have been much closer because the mast can still be seen from the beach on a very low tide. After the crew members had been rescued by the HMAS *Warrnambool* around mid-morning, my opportunistic aminay and a few others returned to the wreck and retrieved a large amount of food and alcohol. With the deck underwater they would have been holding their breath and free diving down into the hold and I really don’t know whether to think this was brave or foolhardy. I’ve been told that my family partied on these salvaged goods for weeks.

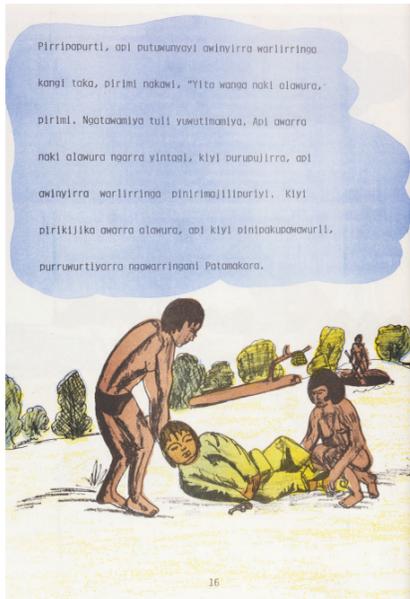
The war ended in 1945, but 34 years after the sinking of the *Don Isidro* we had another surprise at Pawunapi. My brother Louis Munkara was aged about twelve or thirteen at the time and he and our cousin Colin Kerinauia and a few others were playing in the sand dunes when they chanced upon an unexploded bomb a metre or more in length. Excited by their find, they tied a rope around it and towed it back to the campsite to show the others. The response was far from what they expected as everyone leapt to their feet and fled the scene while stridently urging the boys to abandon the bomb and do the same. The army was notified, and the bomb was de-fused and taken away.

On my last visit to Pawunapi, as I stood on the beach and looked out at the sea, it was as if the Bombing of Darwin and the scenes that played out with the *Don Isidro* had never happened. There are no reminders or monuments on our beautiful beach to glorify or justify a war that was not of our doing or choosing, and one that we inadvertently got caught up in. But despite this, I consider my family lucky. We have the memories of my brave aminay Louis Munkara and the others, whose rescue of the survivors of the *Don Isidro* has never been acknowledged in our history books but will always be remembered by us.

Marie Munkara



Brother John Pye, *Tiwi women and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Sister at Wreckage of DC3, c. 1942*
Library & Archives NT



Beatrice Kerinauia, Magdelan Kerinauia, Ancilla Munkara
Ngirramini ngini karri, Ngiyarrangani Kapani, yimamani parlingarri (purraputimali): Memories of my father Louie Munkara (detail).
Nguui Ngingingawila Literature Production Centre, 1986. Library & Archives NT