

EMINENT INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN WARRIORS



Resistance by Aboriginal Australians to the European invasion, led by Cook, was first signalled on 19 April 1770 when a youngster threw a stone. This resistance has never ended.

Although the commission given to Captain Arthur Phillip, in 1787, included instructions to: "...open an intercourse with the natives and to conciliate their affections enjoining all our subjects to live in amity and kindness to them", Phillip "...tried to trap the Eora people like wild animals and when all he caught was Bennelong he went into a fury and ordered a punitive expedition to capture two or more and kill them, cut off their heads and bring them back to him."².

"Most white people seem to imagine that the native inhabitants of Australia melted away magically before the tide of European settlement like fairy floss, but the hard reality is that we *killed* them."⁴ According to Rowley, "the last punitive expeditions .. seem to have occurred as late as the early 1940s"⁵

Rowley may have been conservative for, as late as 1967, Europeans were threatened with imprisonment for visiting Aboriginal Australians at the "reserve" in Roebourne, Western Australia - a compound surrounded by a high fence topped with barbed wire, and the Aboriginal people were likewise threatened for not observing the "curfew".

Between 1788 and 1884 the death toll in action alone is estimated to be 20,000 black Australians.¹

Major battles were fought at Parramatta, Bathurst, The Hawkesbury, Pinjarra, Battle Hill and in many other places. Colonial forces massacred Aboriginal people from The Kimberley, through the centre of Australia all the way to the outmost islands of Tasmania.

The names of some of the great Aboriginal resistance fighters ought to be known to our children at least as well as the names of the colonial invaders. White Australians know of and admire military leaders from all over the world and yet are unaware of some of the most outstanding resistance fighters the world has ever seen.

Pemulway - who fought for 12 years before being assassinated by bounty hunters, **Windradyne**, of Bathurst fame,

Calyute, Yagan and

Weep who were allies against the colonial forces in Western Australia. **Dundalli**, in the Brisbane area and **Jundamurra** in the West Kimberley who was killed by mercenaries.

Some resistance leaders are now known only by nicknames given by their enemies, but even here we can see the respect in such names as **Brian Boru, Boney (Bonaparte), Blucher, Pompey** and **Musquito**.

Musquito, who was probably from the Dharruk people on the Hawkesbury River was a war leader in the Hawkesbury and Broken Bay areas. Later he led the Laremairremener people of Tasmania against the invaders. It is a testimonial to his skills that he could command in two vastly different parts of Australia with such different Black Nations.

But the names of many of the other great resistance fighters have been lost to us. How shallow is our history when we cannot say the name of the great Kalkadoon leader who defended his people in the battle of Battle Mountain? Here in September 1884 was one of the last pitched battles of the Hundred Year War. Some 200 Kalkadoons were killed - culminating 6 years of warfare in which some 900 Kalkadoons died. In comparison 691 Australians died in Korea and Vietnam.

The Aboriginal peoples of Australia fought the colonial invasion with honour, and **they have never surrendered**. There is no treaty signifying the cessation of hostilities. From an indigenous viewpoint the current government of Australia can be seen as the director of an occupational force.

"Let it not be said that the fair and equitable recognition of Aborigines' rights to land is discrimination.

To call for the acknowledgement of the land rights of the people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination.

Certainly what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off until tomorrow."

Pope John Paul II, Alice Springs, 29 November 1986.



Kerry, Charles - photographer. "JINNAGORRAY" ABORIGINAL WARRIOR, GRAFTON N.S.W.



Kerry, Charles - photographer. Aboriginal warrior picture.