

# Aboriginals in the First AIF, a secret history.

**“The A.I.F. judged a man not by his colour, but by his worth.”**



## **The Defence Act of 1903**

The Defence Act of 1903 stated that all males aged from 12 to 25 would receive military training and that those over 25 would form the reserve, Section 61 (h) stated that:

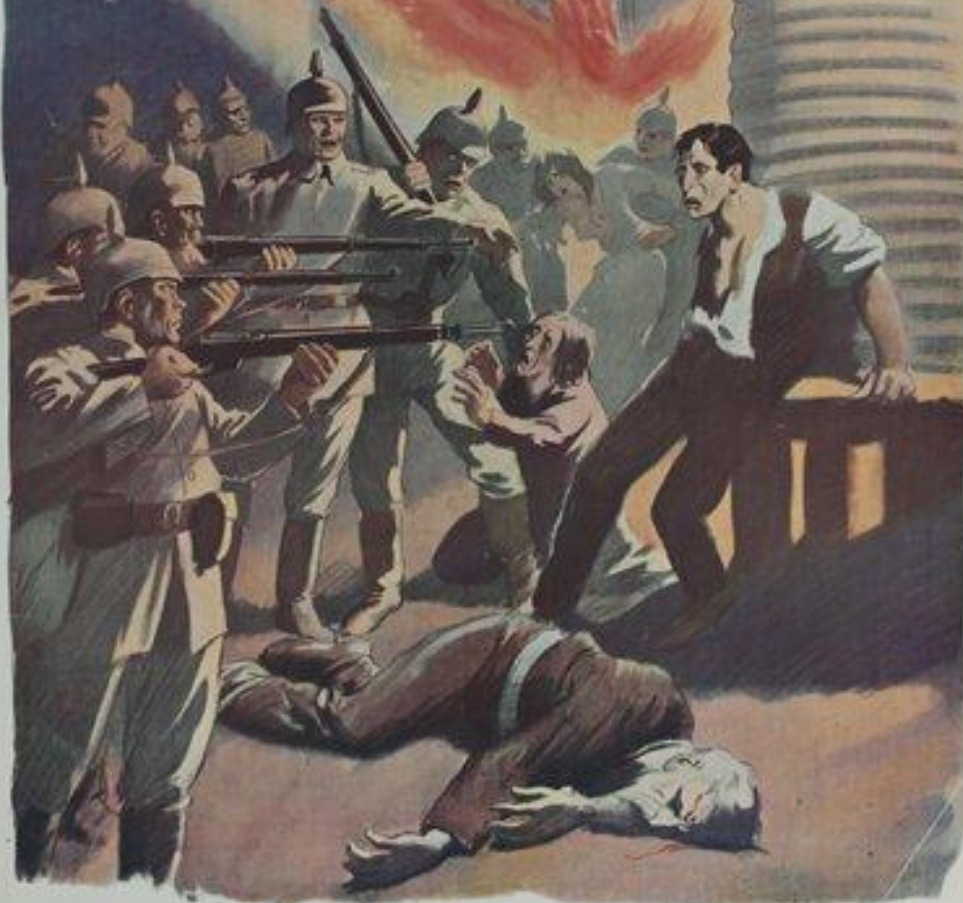
“The following shall be exempt from service in time of war, so long as the employment conditions, or status on which the exemption is based continues:-

(h) Persons who are not substantially of European origin or descent of which the medical authorities appointed under the Regulations shall be the judges.

Provided that as regards to the persons described in paragraph (h) and (i) of this section, the exemption shall not extend to duties of the non-combat nature.”

Section (i) was for conscientious objectors.

Will you fight now  
or wait for **This**



# Private Richard Martin



# Private Charles T Blackman



In 1916 instructions for the “guidance of enlisting officers at approved military recruiting depots” states “Aboriginals, half-casts, or men with Asiatic blood are not to be enlisted – This applies to all coloured men”.

# Private William Joseph Punch



# Private George Combo





## Instructions for Enlisting and Recruiting Officers: December 1916.

“Half-casts may be enlisted when, in the opinion of the District Commandant, they are suitable. Half-castes are usually of two classes – those who have mixed all their lives with white people and copied their ways, and those who have lived with their full-blood brothers; the former class might be suitable for enlistment, but the latter is not eligible, and is not to be enlisted.

As a guide in this matter it is to be borne in mind that these men will be required to live with white men and share their accommodation, and their selection is to be judged from this standpoint and whether their inclusion will cause irritation to the men with whom they will serve. The final decision as to the acceptance of these men is to be left to the discretion of the District Commandant.”

# Private Alfred Coombs



Australian Imperial Force, Military Order 200 of 1917.

(2) Enlistment of Half Casts.

Half-casts may be enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force provided that the examining Medical officers are satisfied that one of the parents is of European origin.

Note,-All previous instructions on this subject are cancelled.

# Private Douglas Grant



# Private Reginald Francis Hawkins



# Private Jerome Locke



# The Anzac Legend



# Private Arthur Thomas Walker





# 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Alfred John Hearps



# Lance Corporal Richard Kirby DCM



# Corporal Harry Thorpe MM

## Private William Reginald Rawlings MM



# The 11<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment

