



# *YALUU (SEE YOU AGAIN)*

*A DESCENDANT OF AN ABORIGINAL WWI SOLDIER TRAVELS TO FRANCE TO BRING HIS ANCESTOR'S SPIRIT HOME*

1 X 27-MINUTE DOCUMENTARY  
DIRECTED BY DYLAN NICHOLLS

# LOGLINE



*Yaluu (See You Again)* follows a descendant of Gomeri WWI soldier, Pte. William Allen Irwin DCM on an emotional journey to France, where he seeks to honour his ancestor and return his spirit home to Gomeri country.

# SYNOPSIS

*Yaluu (See You Again)* is a 27-minute documentary about an Aboriginal WWI soldier's descendants who strive to honour their ancestor's legacy and bring his spirit home. Through interviews and archive, the documentary tells the backstory about Pte. William Allen Irwin DCM, a Gomeri man who enlisted in the Great War at a time when it was illegal for Indigenous soldiers to serve. Tragically, just before the war ended, William made the ultimate sacrifice while taking out four German machine gun nests. Unfortunately, his bravery went unrecognised for 100 years.

A century later, William's great nephew Peter Milliken travels to France on behalf of his family to honour his ancestor's legacy. Through observational footage and interviews, we see Peter on a journey to piece together the memory of his ancestor. With the help of a French schoolteacher and the generosity of locals, Peter visits reconstructed trenches, cemeteries and museums, searching for traces of William. Peter visits the battle site where William was wounded and discovers where he is buried. In Gomeri culture, the spirit cannot be at rest until it returns home to country. In a moving ceremony, Peter honours William playing clapsticks for each year that he was alive, before soil is collected from the grave and returned to Gomeri country - uniting William with his brothers and family for the first time in more than a century.

Through interviews with William's descendants, the French community and an expert on the service of Aboriginal WWI soldiers, the film uncovers the little-known story of Aboriginal soldiers who fought in WWI as well as the dilemma many Aboriginal families face with their ancestor's soldiers buried far away from their traditional lands.

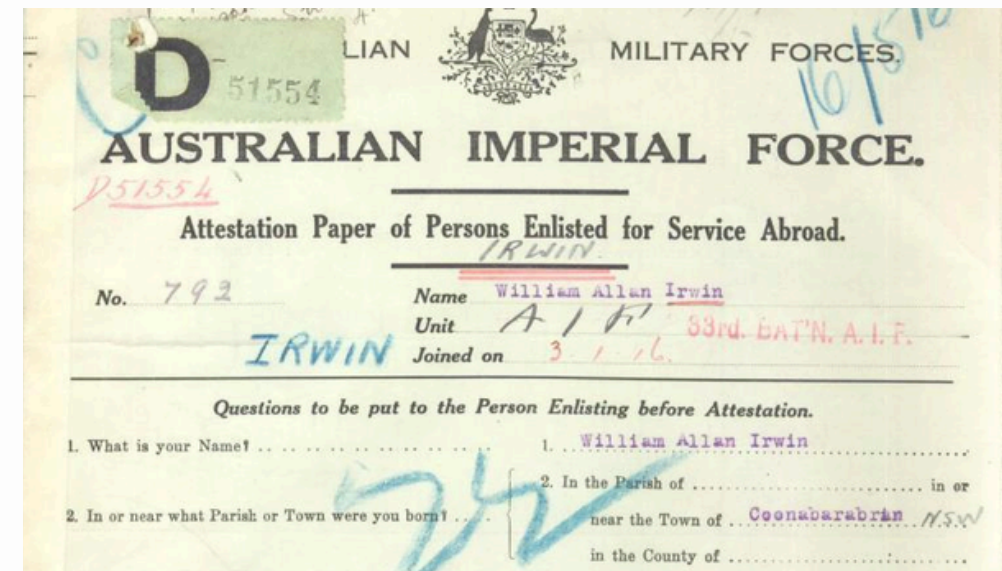
# STYLE



INTERVIEWS



ACTUALITY



ARCHIVE

# INTERVIEWEES

## PETER MILLIKEN

The great nephew of William, Peter is a proud Gomeri man who has spent the last decade trying to get his Great Uncle recognised for his sacrifice in WWI. Peter feels it is cultural obligation to heal a century old wound and bring his Great Uncle's spirit home to his family. In his interview, expresses what started him on his journey to reconnect his Great Uncle with his family. He speaks about the importance of honouring his ancestor's legacy so that his family and community does not forget him.



## UNCLE MERVYN ALLEN

A Gomeri Elder and closest living relative of William, Uncle Merv sees it as his obligation to protect the legacy of his Uncle Bill. As the last of his generation, he knows the stories of William passed down to him by his father Henry (William's brother). Uncle Merv keeps a photo of William hanging in his living room, the only photo the family has of him. In his interview, he speaks of his memory of William and the importance of honouring his legacy.





## JOE FLICK

Joe has spent the last decade visiting the graves of Aboriginal soldiers buried overseas. His goal? To visit on behalf of the families, who may never get the chance to visit. On his trip to France in 2024, Peter joined him to help locate his Uncle Bill's resting place. In his interview, Joe speaks to his passion for bringing the soldier's spirits home back to their families and the relationships he has built with the French community.



## MARIE-PAULE BONTE

Marie-Paule is a French schoolteacher and translator, who helps Peter connect with the locals to find out more about William – where he fought and died. In her interview, she speaks to the importance of recognising the Indigenous soldiers and seeing the common humanity in people regardless of their background.

# GEORGES MEUNIER

Georges is an elderly French historian from a proud military family. He runs a military museum in the Somme and has a special connection with the Aboriginal soldiers who served in WWI. Each year, he visits the local cemeteries to place Aboriginal flags at the graves of the Aboriginal soldiers buried in the Somme. In his interview, he speaks to the importance of honouring the Indigenous soldiers who helped protect the Somme and encourages Pete's plight to bring William home.



# PETER'S COUSIN

The great niece of William, Peter's cousin will speak to the significance of the wound that the family experienced when William never returned home. She will also speak to the significance of William's spirit coming home to country as a moment of intergenerational healing for the family.

# STORY OUTLINE

# THE JOURNEY



Peter's earliest memory was sitting at his nanna's place and seeing a photo of William up on the wall. He would hear yarns from his Uncle Merv about William. About how he sheared with his two brothers and signed up for the war after experiencing jilted love. And about how William's brother Henry (Peter's grandfather) rode on horseback for five days to try and stop him from leaving, but didn't make it in time.

A proud Gomeri man, Peter has spent the last decade trying to get his Uncle Bill recognised for his acts of bravery. They didn't speak about Indigenous ANZACs when he was a boy at school. With his Uncles and Aunties getting towards the end of their lives, Peter makes it his cultural obligation to travel to France to visit his Great Uncle and bring his spirit home. The family have very little left of William - only one photo remains.

Having never left the country, Peter enlists the help of Joe Flick, an Aboriginal researcher who has documented the Indigenous soldiers buried overseas. Together, they travel to France to try and search for William's spirit.

# MEETING THE FRENCH

When they arrive in France, Joe introduces Peter to the French community, as they express their condolences for Peter's loss and vow to help him retrace the steps of his Great Uncle.

Peter meets a French schoolteacher and translator, Marie-Paule, who helps him communicate with the French. Active as a local historian herself, she then takes him to the trenches where William would've fought. Peter reflects on the experience of how he feels closer and closer to the spirit of his ancestor, but still doesn't know where William was fatally wounded.

Throughout the trip, Peter and Joe reflect on their experiences, with Peter expressing his surprise by how much the French honour the Indigenous soldiers and how far Australia still has left to go. Joe speaks about his friendship with Georges, a local French military museum curator who visits the graves of Aboriginal soldiers in the Somme, placing Aboriginal flags at their headstone each year.



# SEARCHING FOR WILLIAM



Joe introduces Peter to Georges, who vows to help Peter locate photographs of William in his museum. When Peter is unable to locate the photos, he learns that there is footage at the Sir John Monash Centre in Villers Bretonneux.

Peter is told that the footage was captured on the day that William was fatally wounded. Peter watches the footage but is unable to place his Great Uncle.

Back home in Australia, Peter's cousin reflects on the significance of the loss of William and how it impacted the family. Peter's Uncle Merv speaks to how his father Henry rarely spoke about his brother William after his death.

Uncle Merv explains how William's medals were stolen in the 1930s, and how if it wasn't for the family, William's legacy would've been forgotten.

# FIRST IN THE FAMILY



Peter links with a British expat battlefield tour guide who takes him to the battlefield of Road Wood where his Great Uncle made the ultimate sacrifice on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918. Peter would be the first in the family to visit this site.

Peter experiences the site where William took out three enemy machine gun nests before being fatally wounded while capturing a fourth.

After Jon tells this story, he tells Peter that William should have been awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions. To date, no Indigenous soldier has received this medal. Upon hearing this, Peter questions why his ancestor hasn't been recognised more in Australia. He asks, "how long will it take for William and other Indigenous soldiers to receive the recognition that they deserve?"

Joe recounts the lack of recognition Indigenous soldiers received after the Great War, and how his Grandfather Mick Flick was one of them.

# A SPECIAL CEREMONY



When Peter and Joe discover the cemetery where William was buried, they organise a special cultural ceremony to start the process of bringing William's spirit home.

After Joe drapes an Aboriginal flag over William's headstone, Peter speaks in Gomeroi language and does a smoking ceremony for his Uncle. The first time anyone would've spoken in William's mother tongue in over a century.

To Peter's surprise, the French community also show up to pay their respects at the cemetery, as the Last Post is played and the Ode is recited in English and French.

Peter plays the clapsticks 40 times, with each hit for each year that William was alive. The clapsticks echo throughout the cemetery.

# SPIRIT RETURNS



Peter retrieves some soil from William's grave though expresses his concern that he might not be able to get it back into Australia with the strict biosecurity laws.

Somehow he finds a way and returns the soil home to Walhallow on Gomeri country where many of William's descendants have travelled far and wide to pay their respects.

Peter's relatives speak to the significance of this moment - "an intergenerational healing through the bloodline".

Peter asks his Uncle Merv to spread the soil between William's two brothers. For the first time in 107 years, William is connected back with his family, country, and community.

# AUDIENCE

- **Age Range**

- 50+ audience who are interested in history, faith, spirituality, ethics, cultural heritage, Indigenous issues and social justice.

- **Australia-wide story**

- A story with national appeal. Depictions of a soldier from country NSW would resonate more with those from regional and rural areas, while the contemporary international component of the documentary (traveling to France) will interest metropolitan viewers as well.

- **First Nations people**

- A story that speaks to and validates their experiences of spirituality, remembrance and commemoration.

- **Educational and Cultural Engagement**

- An opportunity for audiences young and old to learn more about a neglected aspect of Australia's history.

# IMPACT SO FAR

- Before *Yaluu*, there was [\*Bringing His Spirit Home\*](#) - a 14-min short about Peter's journey to France that was made at the Australian Film Television & Radio School and premiered at Sydney Film Festival (2025)



# IMPACT SO FAR

- Following Peter's visit to France in 2024, his Great Uncle Pte. William Allen Irwin DCM was made an honorary citizen of the Somme in 2025.
  - *Guardian Australia* article [click here](#)



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



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