

Disrupting Assimilation: Soldiers, Missionaries and Aboriginal People in Arnhem Land During World War II

Noah Riseman

World War II accelerated the arrival of non-indigenous persons to Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia. The new military presence led to the (unequal) employment of Yolngu labour throughout the region. But the hitherto principal non-Indigenous residents of Arnhem Land – missionaries – begrudged the military's company because it diminished their influence over Yolngu. As such, missionaries attempted to limit and regulate interracial contact for fear it would disrupt their assimilationist goals. This chapter scrutinises missionary aims in Arnhem Land from their arrival in the early twentieth century through the Second World War. The analysis focuses primarily on missionaries' reactions to soldiers because their attitudes highlight assimilation(ism)'s primary agenda – to shape Yolngu into a subclass beholden principally to missionaries, rather than equal citizens of white Australia.

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DISRUPTING ASSIMILATION: SOLDIERS, MISSIONARIES AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN ARNHEM LAND DURING WORLD WAR II¹

Noah Riseman

World War II marked a drastic shift for northern Australia. In December 1941, what had previously been a sparsely settled wilderness suddenly became the frontline in the nation's defence against Japan. From February 1942, when Japan initiated the first of many raids on Darwin, the Northern Territory was on high alert. In recent decades the Japanese attacks on Darwin have received increasing interest but still remain on the periphery of mainstream World War II history.² What earns even less attention, however, is the history of the districts flanking Darwin, and how the residents of those regions coped with the war. Comprehensive texts such as Alan Powell's *The Shadow's Edge: Australia's Northern War* gloss over regions without significant non-Indigenous settlement.³ Regions such as Arnhem Land – where non-Indigenous settlement consisted of a few missionaries, a police station and a cattle station – have not yet received adequate attention.

This chapter scrutinises how World War II affected missionaries who remained in Arnhem Land. It focuses primarily on how the influx of soldiers and the concomitant demand for Yolngu labour impacted upon the assimilationist task of missions.⁴ Texts about World War II are not the only secondary sources that have overlooked this topic. General missionary histories have mostly neglected the Second World War and essentially move swiftly from the 1930s to the post-war period.⁵ The only historians who have addressed missionaries during the war to some degree are Robert Hall and John Harris. Hall discusses missionaries' attempts to limit Aboriginal contact with soldiers, primarily in regions other than Arnhem Land. He argues that the interactions with soldiers created new opportunities for Aboriginal people in contrast to the limitations imposed by missionaries.⁶ John Harris goes into more depth about the wartime experience of Aboriginal people on missions. He discusses military employment, alliances with missionaries, and the consequences of the soldiers' departure. Harris also suggests that the principal motive behind missionaries' disapproval of soldiers was the missionaries' concern to prevent the exploitation of Aboriginal women.⁷ While the protection of women probably influenced missionaries' concerns about the soldiers' presence, this chapter argues that the primary opposition stemmed from concerns about the soldiers' interference with assimilation.

Noah Riseman recently completed his PhD in History at the University of Melbourne and currently lectures at Australian Catholic University. His thesis examines the impact of the military experiences of the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land during World War II, in a comparative context with Native American Navajo and Pacific Islander auxiliary units. Noah's historical interests include Australian Indigenous, Pacific Islander, Native American, Australian, and United States history. This article was previously published in *Melbourne Historical Journal* in 2007.

The chapter details how Arnhem Land missionaries functioned during World War II, particularly in relation to the Aboriginal community. First, it outlines the origins of missionaries' presence in Arnhem Land with specific attention paid to their assimilationist aims. It will also outline missionaries' attitudes towards the supposed inferiority of Yolngu people and their culture. The chapter then shifts to World War II and describes the influx of soldiers and their labour relationship with Yolngu, analysing how missionaries responded to the soldiers' presence and how their interests conflicted over the question of Yolngu labour. Missionaries were for the most part not concerned with the war, I argue, but were content to assist the military in coastwatching and search and rescue. They did not, however, support the interactions between Aboriginal residents and non-Aboriginal soldiers because they saw it as a challenge to their assimilationist aims. Their disapproval demonstrates that assimilation(ism) actually equated with the formation of a class of Aboriginal workers under missionary control rather than integrated (Christian) equals.

Missionaries in Arnhem Land: from foundations to World War II

A new type of white settler began arriving in Arnhem Land in the early twentieth century. A group of Adelaide Anglicans founded the Kapalgo Mission on the South Alligator River in 1899, but by 1903 they had disbanded. The Anglican Church Missionary Society of Victoria established the Roper Mission on the Roper River in 1908, and this became the first permanent mission in Arnhem Land. The Church Missionary Society subsequently founded another site on Groote Eylandt in 1921 and Oenpelli Mission in west Arnhem Land in 1925.⁸ Other denominations also entered Arnhem Land: Methodists founded a settlement at Goulburn Island in 1916 and in 1923 established a second community at Milingimbi.⁹ Finally, Wilbur S. Chaseling founded Yirrkala mission in November 1934.¹⁰ The spread of missionaries in Arnhem Land proceeded with consultation among the different denominations and with the Department of the Interior. In 1914 the government actually carved Arnhem Land into different spheres of influence for the various church denominations in order to prevent overlap.¹¹ The missionaries' self-perception was one of humanitarianism and being a refuge from the violent clashes between Yolngu and settlers.¹² For instance, the Reverend Thomas Webb in 1934 remarked:

The settler, in his concern to secure a material return from his enterprise, has elbowed these people out of his way, has forced them into a state of confusion, with many of the age-old foundations of their life destroyed, and has left to them the impossible task of finding their unaided way amid the mazes of this profoundly changed order of things.¹³

The self-view of benevolence among missionaries was a skewed standpoint but one with some merit. Because missionaries' aims were to proselytise and to assimilate Yolngu, they did not embark on the campaigns of violence and massacre that had characterised earlier white incursions into Arnhem Land.¹⁴

The relations between local populations and the founding missionaries varied from mutual respect to outright antagonism. Although missionaries did not force Aboriginal locals to relocate to missions, they encouraged settlement at the stations to expedite the process of evangelism.¹⁵ Historian Gwenda Baker notes that missionaries often underwent a 'process of assessment' by the local Aboriginal populations to ensure their kindly intentions. The negotiations frequently engaged Indigenous people as active agents who permitted missionaries to establish settlements in the region. As Baker writes, 'This gave the missionary the legitimacy and the clan support he needed to operate in the area'.¹⁶ The fact that Yolngu oral tradition portrays many missionaries favourably attests to the benevolent nature of many missionaries.¹⁷ Other Aboriginal testimonies present disapproving accounts of early missionaries. Bob Randall, a stolen generations survivor who resided at Croker Island mission between 1941 and 1942, and again after the war, remarks:

I hated the way the Iwaidja people were treated by the missionaries, who had burned down their windbreaks and wet season houses and chased them away from where they had lived for many generations, so the mission could be built. They did everything they could to destroy the Iwaidja people's traditional life-style.¹⁸

Mick Makani and Willi Walilepa of Galiwin'ku express similar disapproval of a Milingimbi missionary named Robertson who abused the local Aboriginal population. Makani remarks:

Ah, very bad man, *Balanda*, Robertson, and we killem him. We no dog, we no anything bad, anything, or work, anything. We man. We bin do. We bin do. We bin killem, we bin killem. Because you *Balanda* no good. You silly had you. Bad man you. After we, and we killem you. Like that. You understand it?¹⁹

The murder of Robertson is an extreme example of the Aboriginal population of Arnhem Land rejecting the presence of abusive missionaries. To reconcile the slaying of Robertson with Baker's comments about negotiated space, it seems clear that goodwill and benign treatment marked the difference between Aboriginal hostility and cooperation towards missionaries.

Missionary aims were not only to protect and convert Indigenous people but also to assimilate them.²⁰ Assimilation(ism) has multiple definitions and connotations. Catherine McConaghy defined assimilationism as an ideology pursuing 'a partial transformation, a mimicry, rather than an exact likeness. Assimilationism desires a colonial subject who is *almost the same, but not quite*'.²¹ By the end of the 1920s new government and anthropological ideas began to shift Indigenous policy from the aims of protection to assimilation.²² Assimilation as an official strategy did not come into play until the end of the 1930s, but in terms of actual practice missionaries began to discharge assimilationist aims in the 1920s and 1930s. Harold Thornell of Yirrkala Mission commented:

The whole purpose of teaching the Aborigines agriculture and other white man's skills was to prepare them for their transition from their ancient and traditional way of life into the European style of living. The missions recognized that, if the Aborigines were to survive as a people, they must make that transition, no matter how difficult it would be. The time had come when they could no longer simply follow the old ways.²³

The paternalistic attitude of the missionaries implies a genuine wish to help Indigenous people through assimilation as a means to survival. Close scrutiny of both assimilationist tactics and reactions among other Indigenous people controverts the alleged munificence of the policy. For instance, missionaries sometimes inflicted severe punishments against mission residents who attempted to maintain established customs that missionaries considered undesirable. An extreme example is Bobby Randall's recollection from Croker Island mission:

They just kept on flogging you. I don't know why. It seemed as though they had a joy to beat the living daylights out of you, to almost kill you. When you're nearly half dead then they'd stop beating you. I don't think the punishment and the crime that was committed was – we were only playing dodge the spear. We played it many, many times we'd played that game.²⁴

Historians Ted Egan and John Harris describe abuse of casual labour on Groote Eylandt and poor food supplies in the missions.²⁵ Punishments included deprivation of privileges, whippings, plainer food, scolding, and sometimes expulsion.²⁶

Callous castigation was one source of resentment between Yolngu and missionaries, but even more contentious was the tactic of child removal. Clancy Warrawilya of Groote Eylandt reminisces:

First time, like you know, old people, old people didn't know the Europeans see. And then they used to be frightened about like you know, seeing the Europeans. Well same with us. But, like, one day then few went out and look for the people, hunt around for the people. Not really hunt for the grown up, but he hunt for the kids, to bring the kids to school. And he went all around, foot walk, until he find, like you know, the man with a family. Then he ask to get the boys or girls.²⁷

Child removal was a widespread government device to implement assimilation throughout Australia,²⁸ but in Arnhem Land it was limited predominantly to coerced (rather than blatantly forced) custody of multi-racial children on Groote Eylandt in the east and Croker Island in the west.²⁹ Nevertheless, Warrawilya's testimony clearly shows Aboriginal contempt for missionaries even trying to take children from their families.

Scrutiny of the entire situation of missionary-Yolngu relations in Arnhem Land prior to World War II reveals a series of paradoxes and contradictions. Missionaries

proclaimed kindly motives and adhered to their objectives in the sense that they did not embark on campaigns of massacre and destruction. Many missionaries did indeed cultivate positive relationships with Yolngu that resulted in their being welcomed into the community.³⁰ Yet other incidents of brutal treatment suggest that many other Yolngu distrusted missionaries. Various accounts express resentment for assimilation policies not only because of the tactics, but also because of the objective: to sever them from Indigenous customs. Although missionaries clearly did not engage in acts of mass violence and physical genocide, the assimilationist objectives point to the continuing denigration of Yolngu culture.³¹ The missionary mindset continued the trend of colonial disregard for Indigenous ways of life that characterised the relationship between the two societies since first contact.

By the onset of World War II the various missionary denominations were well and truly embedded in Arnhem Land. Each religious denomination and individual missionary took a different approach to the manner and extent to which assimilation would be promoted. For instance, Gordon Sweeney remarked that 'Our policy [at Goulburn Island], given out by the chairman, was to interfere as little as possible with Aboriginal culture, but learn as much as we could of it and work with it'.³² A document entitled 'Report on Goulburn Island Mission. 1933' similarly stated, 'Tribal Organization. This apparently survives more or less completely amongst the natives who come in contact with the Mission. The Mission policy aims at avoiding interference in this matter'.³³ Photographs taken at Goulburn Island and Milingimbi serve as evidence of the guidelines through their depiction of mission life in the 1930s. While photos show Aboriginal residents engaged in assimilationist activities such as agriculture, the same photos also show elements of traditional Aboriginal society, such as the women's torsos/breasts still exposed, and the men carrying woomeras and spears.³⁴ The Church Missionary Society policy espoused a similar blend of the two cultures to 'advance' Yolngu civilisation. Its 1944 'Constitution and Policy' declared:

that the natives shall not be cut off from their own tribal life, but rather that the Mission shall aim at the far more difficult task of helping those natives to build up the Kingdom of God on the basis of their old tribal organisation and customs, where those are not opposed to Christianity.³⁵

On Groote Eylandt the proposed aims represented concrete assimilation more than they did the blending of two cultures. Donald Fowler observed:

The ultimate objective in this aboriginal work [on Groote Eylandt] is to have all the aborigines housed in small huts made by themselves and for all the aborigines to be able to work in the Mission gardens and not only be paid for this work but to receive a portion of the production.³⁶

Other missionaries such as the Methodist Reverend Thomas Webb sought 'a modification of the character and habits of the Aborigines'.³⁷ Webb would accept the preservation of Yolngu customs not deemed intrinsically oppositional to the missionary way

of life. A Church Missionary Society report even went so far as to determine at one point, 'The Groote aboriginal is myall, the Roper detribalised, the Oenpelli people for the most part an intermediate stage'.³⁸ Despite the differing approaches and various 'levels' of assimilation, Webb summarised all missionaries' aims succinctly thus: 'we believe that by the time white settlement reaches this district, as no doubt ultimately will do, these aborigines will in a measure at least be prepared for its impact, and will be able to take some worth-while place in it'.³⁹

Soldiers employing Yolngu

World War II did not usher permanent settlers into Arnhem Land, but it certainly hastened the presence of non-Indigenous visitors foreseen by Webb in 1932. The rising number of military personnel in Arnhem Land as the war progressed paralleled a mounting demand for Aboriginal assistance as labourers and trackers. Groote Eylandt was one such locale. As early as June 1940 the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) had provided the mission with the Navy Code, officially making it a coastwatcher station.⁴⁰ At the request of the RAAF, the Reverend Len Harris and Indigenous labourers cleared two runways and built huts to serve as emergency landing strips on Groote Eylandt.⁴¹ The Reverend G.R. (Dick) Harris noted that by May 1942 the majority of persons travelling to Arnhem Land were RAAF soldiers. He wrote:

At this time – May, June, July 1942 – the R.A.A.F. personnel, and many others, were on 'tender hooks' [sic] fully expecting a Japanese invasion of the Eylandt, reckoning the strategy of the Japs would be to take over the Eylandt and then to cut off the top of Australia by invading the country through the Roper River Valley westwards.⁴²

By August 1942, the permanent presence of the RAAF on Groote Eylandt had solicited labour from the majority of men from the mission station.⁴³ At the RAAF base the Aboriginal men worked in the gardens, guarded the aerodrome, and prepared to ambush potential Japanese invaders.⁴⁴ Some men performed tasks with the boats and Catalinas, such as painting, and the RAAF men occasionally rewarded them with a glass of beer.⁴⁵ By July 1945 Groote Eylandters were working to clear a new airstrip on the north side of the island.⁴⁶

The essential role that Aboriginal people provided for the maintenance of the RAAF base at Groote Eylandt demonstrates the necessity for Indigenous support, labour, and skills for managing the frontline of north Australia. Mission records, government papers, and oral testimony provide similar examples of the critical war work Aboriginal people performed across Arnhem Land. In western Arnhem Land, an RAAF unit constructed a 4,500 yard airstrip and aerodrome only two miles from the Milingimbi mission.⁴⁷ The aerodrome became necessary after the Japanese bombed Milingimbi twice during the war, destroying the church and killing at least one Aboriginal person.⁴⁸ Some of the most significant dealings between Yolngu and RAAF soldiers occurred near Yirrkala. In 1940 the RAAF squadron No. 13 began construction of an air base at Mel-

ville Bay – present-day Gove – only seven kilometres from Yirrkala.⁴⁹ The army set up a radar station there in January 1944, as well as anti-aircraft batteries in the bush.⁵⁰ The massive task of constructing the Gove airbase required significant Aboriginal labour. Air Force soldiers recall positive relations between the two cultures. Kevin Graham states:

they [Yolngu] were happy to see it [Gove airstrip] I think. Happy to see the bulk of the RAAF people. They had a good time there. They had a good time with us too because later on when the liberty ships came in we got a jeep to run around and whenever you moved you were crowded with piccaninnies, they were all over you.⁵¹

The increasing interactions between Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous soldiers on Groote Eylandt and at Gove – similarly to the effects across the north – provided some tangible benefits for the Indigenous residents. Aboriginal people at Groote Eylandt had access to both the RAAF doctor and dentist, who even visited Groote Eylandt Mission in March 1943.⁵² When an American Intelligence officer visited in June–July 1943, he brought flour as a gift for the Aboriginal residents.⁵³ Government inspector H.C. Evans reported that the work at Gove advanced Yolngu skills in industry, construction, and English for those Yolngu in the Yirrkala area. There were also benefits of earned wages, which would lead to discontent with the return to mission life post-war.⁵⁴ Some Aboriginal women learned new skills through their work in wireless telegraphy stations.⁵⁵ Overall the interracial relationships brought a sense of appreciation for their services to the non-Indigenous soldiers stationed in Arnhem Land. In 1944 Gough Whitlam (later Prime Minister) was one member of the RAAF stationed at Gove in 1944. He summarised in 1997: ‘The inhabitants [of Arnhem Land] and the intruders went their own ways but their contacts were friendly and healthy. We intruders observed how best to catch fish to supplement our rations’.⁵⁶ A 1943 article in Melbourne newspaper the *Argus* expressed appreciation thus: ‘In the acid test of war they have proved themselves steadfast, resourceful, and possessed of a high degree of intelligence. They have played a magnificent, though unspectacular, part in holding this country against enemy attack’.⁵⁷

While the war work brought new skills to Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land, the work did little in terms of providing social or economic opportunities because of the continuing colonial restrictions imposed on Indigenous labour. One example is the ongoing matter of wages and compensation. Dick Harris wrote:

Most of the able bodied men were now “pressed” into service with the R.A.A.F. [Groote]. They were employed in making bomb dumps, clearing roads, off loading supplies from ships, to accompany guards on duty, and in the kitchen. Initially these men worked for their keep, that is food and tobacco.⁵⁸

Often Indigenous people still suffered food and clothing shortages for months without complaint.⁵⁹ Those Aboriginal people who helped in the creation of the airfields at Milingimbi only received tobacco as payment.⁶⁰ For those lucky enough to receive wages, there was difficulty in terms of accessing the money because of the manner in which the military administered the funds. The RAAF billed the majority of Indigenous labour on Groote Eylandt simply as handling drums of fuel, which did not account for the wide array of work noted above. The RAAF paid wages to the Church Missionary Society, which in turn placed the money into trust rather than dispensing the funds to Aboriginal labourers.⁶¹ Even though the Aboriginal workers did not see the wages directly, missionaries still complained about the inadequate level of compensation. Len Harris wrote, 'Some 12 single natives have been employed by the R.A.A.F. of late but I trust even less natives will be required soon. I do not consider the sum of 5/- per week plus food as adequate payment for their work'.⁶²

Thus overall the interactions between white soldiers and Indigenous labourers proved to be one of 'appreciative colonialism'. The white soldiers recognised the Aboriginal assistance, and they were more than happy to acknowledge it in reports. The valiant Aboriginal assistance also shows how adept the Indigenous inhabitants of Arnhem Land were at negotiating survival in different cultural spheres – Indigenous, mission, and military. Nonetheless, military officials never saw the Yolngu as equals and – intentionally or inadvertently – perpetuated the colonial mindset characteristic of white Australia. The lack of adequate compensation for Indigenous labourers continued to highlight their inequitable situation despite performing vital tasks necessary both for the military's defence of Arnhem Land, and for the survival of non-Indigenous troops in the region.

Missionaries' reaction to soldiers

The presence of soldiers and the new relationships between the military and Indigenous people also had an impact on the extant relationships between Aboriginal people and missionaries because the war interrupted missionaries' assimilationist work. The missionaries throughout Arnhem Land were more than happy to work as coastwatchers for Naval Intelligence since the late 1920s to 1940.⁶³ Often, the Aboriginal residents at the missions assisted in coastwatching duties in the missions' surrounding areas.⁶⁴ The defensive needs of the region became more pronounced when the Japanese bombed Milingimbi and Goulburn Island missions in early 1943.⁶⁵ After that the Goulburn Island mission maintained a motor-launch ferry service to the RAAF radar post on North Goulburn Island.⁶⁶ While missionaries recognised that war matters necessitated the employment of Yolngu, they were not pleased with soldiers' 'interference' with the missionary assimilationist work.

One reason missionaries resented the heightened demand for Indigenous labour was that, prior to the Japanese bombings in early 1943, missionaries did not express sentiments of fear or danger. The missions that housed Aboriginal children at Croker Island and Groote Eylandt were the exceptions to this rule: from these missions, the children and female staff were evacuated.⁶⁷ Margaret Somerville, who lived at Croker Island, ex-

pressed in a letter: 'Except for our isolation, we're as safe here as anywhere – we're off the route to Darwin! We're not worrying at all – we know everything that can be done is being done from man's side + whether we go or stay we leave entirely in Higher Hands than ours'.⁶⁸ Her attitude suggests that the residents were not expecting impending assault; rather, they prepared for such an event only because of external orders.

Many mission logbooks have gaps during the war, but others maintain records with a very business-as-usual approach. The gaps account for periods when – either due to evacuation of mission staff or delays in transport – there was no one keeping records at the respective mission. In the records that still exist from the war period, entries such as 'It is good to be back in the regular routine again; The Dry Season is indeed with us now' suggest intentional avoidance of the war and/or genuine comfort with the situation.⁶⁹ The Roper River Mission monthly reports do have gaps, but the entries during the war only refer to daily mission happenings such as school and treating illness.⁷⁰ The few references to the war were haphazard, either as descriptions of recent Aboriginal coastwatching patrols or records of planes spotted.⁷¹ Only incidents such as the bombing of Milingimbi or the discovery of a washed-up Japanese mine 'made us realise how very close we were to the war zone'.⁷² Even the end of the war only received a passing reference in Groote Eylandt records, with the community diary stating 'Rejoice that War over. Rejoice in the Lord'.⁷³ The Roper River log did not even mention the war's end.⁷⁴

The main reason that missionaries expressed disapproval with the war was because the military disturbed their assimilationist work. Missionary publications from the 1930s-40s consistently described the need for absolute segregation of the Arnhem Land Reserve to preclude interracial contact.⁷⁵ Although segregation suggests a protectionist agenda, the practice was also a fundamental characteristic of assimilation(ism). As Cathryn McConaghy argues, segregation as a strategy was not oppositional to assimilation(ism) because assimilationists 'actually promoted segregation for the implementation of policy aims and social re-engineering projects'.⁷⁶ The military employing Aboriginal labourers clearly disrupted these aims. Subtle disapproval emerged in statements such as the Groote Eylandt report: 'All native men available working for R.A.A.F. Three only on Mission work'.⁷⁷ Taken in isolation one might read this entry as a neutral statement of fact, but other log entries imply a pattern of displeasure. For instance, another record from June 1943 states: 'Chapel services begin sunrise in order to get attendance from increased number of natives working for R.A.A.F.'.⁷⁸ The pattern emerging through such records suggests that missionaries perceived Indigenous work with the RAAF as an inconvenience for the mission. One might think that the work with white soldiers would be compatible with the missionaries' ultimate aim of assimilation. Working with non-Indigenous soldiers would expose Aboriginal people to the work ethic of white society, while concurrently providing skills and 'detrabalising' them. Missionaries considered that Yolngu were not ready for contact with white persons, however. Len Harris of Groote Eylandt worried 'that their contact with white people is not in their best interests'.⁷⁹ John Harris highlights that missionaries believed that exposure to white military personnel would corrupt and demoralise Indigenous people.⁸⁰

To limit contact with soldiers, Rupert Kentish of Yirrkala required Yolngu labourers to return to camps at night that were prohibited to soldiers.⁸¹ Kentish still found it

difficult to enforce this regulation. One incident validates, to an extent, the missionary desires to inhibit interracial contact. Reverend Canon G.R. Harris wrote:

Rupert [Kentish] told us of the difficulty he experienced in keeping the [Yirrkala] Mission area free of Army personnel: of one instance of a soldier who came into the grounds shooting with a .303 rifle – of how he knocked the fellow down, threw him into the back of a utility, drove him to Army Headquarters and said to the C.O., ‘Keep your men at home.’ Thereafter he had much less bother in keeping the Army off the Mission!⁸²

Clearly in this situation the intervention of the missionary protected the Yolngu residents from potential violence. The soldier’s behaviour and the missionary’s reaction are reminiscent of the protectionist motivations that originally drove missionaries into Arnhem Land. This is the only violent episode mentioned in documents from Arnhem Land during the war; as such it is unclear whether or not it was an isolated incident. Certainly if the military acted aggressively then the missionary mediation was in the best interests of Yolngu. As mentioned earlier, however, documents and oral testimonies suggest that generally the relations among Yolngu and the armed forces were constructive. While in this case missionary intervention seems justified, in other cases interference may have been unwarranted or excessive.⁸³

Missionaries also worried that after the war Yolngu would be unwilling to return to their mission jobs and conditions. Even before the war, missionaries such as Thomas Webb worried that Yolngu who could find work would leave Arnhem Land for Darwin. This would lead to a ‘brain drain’ as the most skilled and intelligent Yolngu left behind a deteriorating populace.⁸⁴ Leonard Kentish similarly wrote in 1937, ‘One wonders what chances tribal groups will have of surviving for long when some of their best youths are allowed to detribalise in the town and lose all vital contact with their own people’.⁸⁵ The fears of Yolngu displeasure eventually did come to fruition at Yirrkala. In 1951 H.C. Evans wrote that Yolngu who returned to the mission after working with the RAAF at Gove were disgruntled because they could not use the skills they had learned nor earn wages for mission work.⁸⁶ The missionary attitude suggests that concern for Yolngu welfare was a secondary consideration to their assimilationist work. As Robert Hall argues, missionaries worried that increasing interactions among Aboriginal people and soldiers would undermine the authority and influence of missionaries.⁸⁷ Rather than support Yolngu enterprise and opportunities to advance themselves through work with white soldiers, missionaries preferred that Aboriginal people stay at the missions. One might think that missionaries would support Yolngu working for white employers such as the RAAF, but it was not the case. Rather, the assimilation(ism) advocated by missionaries entailed their vision of Indigenous Christians working for the missionaries.

Although missionaries disapproved of direct Aboriginal employment with the armed forces, they were proud of Indigenous people who contributed to mission coastwatching. Missionaries considered coastwatching tiresome because it interrupted other activities, but as J.S. Harris summarised, ‘one begrudges the time but still it has to be done’.⁸⁸ Coastwatching in remote regions provided Yolngu with productive work that

concomitantly precluded unwarranted interracial contact with the military. Some coastwatching tasks successfully detected Japanese raids on Darwin that approached over Arnhem Land.⁸⁹ While most patrols were routine, sometimes the military requested special reconnaissance to investigate rumoured Japanese presence in Arnhem Land.⁹⁰ Some Yolngu patrols led to the rescue of crashed American and Australian airmen.⁹¹ The fact that missionaries appreciated Yolngu coastwatchers while concurrently criticising the military demonstrates the missionary determination to maintain authority. Assimilation(ism) was acceptable and encouraged, but only as long as it functioned within a framework of mission power relations. Military employment disturbed missionaries' dominance, and as such they opposed soldiers' interference in Arnhem Land.

Conclusion

Overall the war did not change the attitudes of missionaries towards Yolngu. As this chapter has shown, missionaries had a long history of promoting assimilation(ism) in Arnhem Land by the onset of World War II. This is not to say that all relations between Aboriginal people and missionaries were hostile; merely, the missionaries' (sometimes welcomed) presence had assimilationist motives. Although some missions such as Croker Island evacuated during the war, the majority continued to operate, albeit with a shortage of supplies and staff. Missionaries continued their assimilationist efforts even when confronted with the possibility of Japanese invasion. Missionaries allowed the military to use their Indigenous residents as labour, but they were not happy because they considered it interfered with their delicate assimilationist work. The hard war work of Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land – both as coastwatchers and as military employees – did not change missionaries' determination or colonial relationship.

The end of the war marked not only a continuation of the status quo, but also a hastened approach to assimilation(ism). The 1950s and 1960s entailed the Commonwealth government's endorsement and implementation of assimilation policies. John Harris argues that this was a consequence of Indigenous service 'proving' to the military that they were 'ready' to assimilate as citizens.⁹² In Arnhem Land this translated to government encouraging Indigenous settlement in townships such as Maningrida and Galiwin'ku. Assimilation in Arnhem Land led to overcrowding, unemployment, and substance abuse.⁹³ Missionaries continued to be proprietors of assimilation(ism) through the 1950s, but their attitudes began to shift by the 1960s. The influx of miners to Arnhem Land led missionaries to champion self-determination and land rights.⁹⁴ Calls for self-determination seem a reversal of policy, but in actuality they continued to align with consistent mission objectives. Missionaries deemed the adverse social effects of hastened assimilation to be consequences of unmitigated exposure to the allegedly corrupting vices of white society. Assimilation happened but, as in the wartime, it was not under the terms laid out by missionaries. As such missionaries changed tack; the task to assimilate Yolngu under mission patronage entered a new phase that reformulated missionaries as allies against the settler regime – not a stark departure from their wartime position.

Endnotes

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2 Sources about the Darwin bombings include Douglas Lockwood, *Australia's Pearl Harbour: Darwin, 1942* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1966; 2nd ed. (Bayswater, VIC: Ian Drakeford Publishing, 1988); Timothy Hall, *Darwin 1942: Australia's Darkest Hour* (Sydney: Methuen Australia, 1980); and *Darwin, 1942: Australia's Greatest Shame*, directed by Paul Drane, produced by Margaret Drane, Paul Drane Productions, 1988, videocassette.

3 Alan Powell, *The Shadow's Edge: Australia's Northern War* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1988). Powell devotes one chapter to Aboriginal participation in the war, but he focuses primarily on those attached to military units.

4 The term 'Yolngu' is the contemporary word referring to the Aboriginal inhabitants of northeast Arnhem Land. The term was not used in the time period discussed in this article. The term also does not apply to Aboriginal people who reside in western Arnhem Land, such as the Arrapi and Iwaidja.

5 Books such as Keith Cole's *From Mission to Church: The CMS Mission to the Aborigines of Arnhem Land 1908-1985* and Ronald and Catherine Berndt's *Arnhem Land: Its History and Its People* only make desultory references to the Second World War as an interruption to mission work. While it is true that the war disrupted the status quo, the writings do not adequately address how missions functioned during the war years. See Ronald and Catherine Berndt, *Arnhem Land: Its History and its People* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1954), 193-97; Keith Cole, *From Mission to Church: The CMS Mission to the Aborigines of Arnhem Land 1908-1985* (Bendigo, VIC: Keith Cole Publications, 1985), 32; 77-79; 94-96; 127-28. The only published primary source that addresses missionary life during the war is Harold Thornell, *A Bridge Over Time: Living in Arnhemland with the Aborigines 1938-1944*. Thornell details Yolngu coastwatching work at the Yirrkala mission and the climate of fear from 1942-43. His narrative does not address the critical topic at hand in this paper—missionary attitudes towards military presence. See Harold Thornell, as told to Estelle Thompson, *A Bridge Over Time: Living in Arnhemland with the Aborigines 1938-1944* (Melbourne: J.M. Dent Pty Limited, 1986), 105-160.

6 Robert A. Hall, *The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War*, 2nd ed. (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1997), 187.

7 John Harris, *One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope* (Sutherland, NSW: Albatross Books Pty Ltd, 1990), 772-73. The author of this article has been unable to find any missionary records indicating concerns about exploitation of Aboriginal women in Arnhem Land.

8 Cole, *From Mission to Church*, 39-40; 63; 71; 122. Information about the early endeavours of the CMS in Arnhem Land is also available from Reverend H.M. Arrowsmith, *These Australians*, issued by The Church Missionary Society of Australia and Tasmania, NSW Branch, c1948.

9 Andrew McMillan, *An Intruder's Guide to East Arnhem Land* (Sydney: Duffy and Snellgrove, 2001), 89-90; Reverend A.F. Ellemor, *Warrawi Jubilee 1916-1966: An Account of the Establishment and Development of the Methodist Missions in Arnhem Land, Especially GOULBURN ISLAND* (North

Australia District of Overseas Missions, 1966), 12-14; 24. The Milingimbi settlement was originally at Elcho Island in 1922, but moved because of oil drilling explorations. See Gwenda Baker, 'Crossing Boundaries: Negotiated Space and the Construction of Narratives of Missionary Incur-sion', *Journal of Northern Territory History* 16 (2005): 18; Claude Hedrick, 'Arnhem Land Methodist Church Aborigines Mission: Policy Development and Culture Contact 1911-1938', (Hons Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1973), 15-16.

10 Wilbur S. Chaseling, *Yulengor: Nomads of Arnhem Land* (London: The Epworth Press, 1957), 14; Ellemor, *Warrawi Jubilee*, 24. See also National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA) Darwin, series F1, item 1949/459: Methodist Overseas Mission, Yirrkala Mission.

11 Reverend Thomas Webb to J.A. Perkins, Minister for the Interior, 16 November 1933, in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1949/459. These maps are very reminiscent of the way Europeans carved Africa into colonial territories under the control of the various European nations.

12 Cole, *From Mission to Church*, 57-58.

13 Reverend Thomas Webb, 'The Aborigines of East Arnhem Land, North Australia', Ninth Methodist Laymen's Memorial Lecture, 26 March 1934 (Melbourne: Methodist Laymen's Mis-sionary Movement, Spectator Publishing Co. Printers, 1934), 30.

14 See Richard Trudgen, *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die: Towards an Understanding of why the Abo-ri-ginal People of Arnhem Land Face the Greatest Crisis in Health and Education since European Contact* (Darwin: Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc., 2000), 19-27 for more information about settler-Yolngu violence in Arnhem Land. John Harris suggests that the Roper River Mis-sion established in 1908 also had the purpose of training Aboriginal people to develop the north so that Asians could not do so. See *One Blood*, 700-01.

15 Hedrick, 'Arnhem Land Methodist Church Aborigines Mission', 55.

16 Baker, 'Crossing Bounaries', 21.

17 Many Yolngu today look very positively on the 'mission time' not only because of the peace-ful relations between the cultures, but also because missionaries' teachings helped curb inter-clan violence. See interviews with Noah Riseman, recorded at Mata Mata, Northern Territory, tapes and transcripts available from author or from the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). See Northern Territory Archives Service (hereafter cited NTAS), Harris, Len, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 64, Interviewer: Alan Powell, 15 Sep-tember 1983, pages 14-15 for another story of Yolngu friendship with missionaries. See also Baker, 'Crossing Boundaries', 26.

18 Bob Randall, *Songman: The Story of an Aboriginal Elder of Uluru* (Sydney: ABC Books, 2003), 56-57.

19 Mick Makani, Djinang, Galiwin'ku, in *Long Time, Olden Time: Aboriginal Accounts of Northern Territory History*, eds. Peter and Jay Read (Alice Springs: Institute for Aboriginal Development Publications, 1991), 68-69.

20 Anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt highlight that the assimilationist practices of missionaries often happened 'Without being overtly aware of what they were doing'. Ronald M. and Catherine H. Berndt, 'Body and Soul: More than an Episode!' in *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, ed. Tony Swain and Deborah Bird Rose (Adelaide: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1988), 57.

21 Author's emphasis. Cathryn McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education: Culturalism, Colo-nialism and the Politics of Knowing* (Flaxton, QLD: Post Pressed, 2000), 156. McConaghy distin-guishes between 'assimilation' as official policy and 'assimilationism' as the ideology underpinning the policy. Tim Rowse's edited collection *Contesting Assimilation* is a valuable source because the various contributing scholars demonstrate how assimilation(ism) has numer-

ous potential manifestations. See Tim Rowse, ed. *Contesting Assimilation*, (Perth: API Network, 2005).

22 See Andrew Markus, *Governing Savages* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990) for more information about government Indigenous policy such as protection and assimilation.

23 Thornell, *A Bridge over Time*, 55.

24 Northern Territory Archives Service (hereafter cited NTAS), Randall, Bobby, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 779, Interviewer: Tony Austin, Adelaide, December 1993. Tape 2, p.3. Randall's autobiography also includes a chapter discussing his time at Croker Island and the physical abuse he suffered. See Randall, *Songman: The Story of an Aboriginal Elder of Uluru*, 56-75. A testimony of missionary Robertson physically abusing Aboriginal people at Milingimbi mission in 1927 is Willi Walilepa, Galiwin'ku, in *Long Time, Olden Time*, 68.

25 Ted Egan, *Justice All Their Own: The Caledon Bay and Woodah Island Killings 1932-1933* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 77.

26 John Harris, *One Blood*, 714. Michelle Dewar describes punishments involving aluminium chains 'wound around the girl's leg and then wired with galvanised wire that tight and padlocked so they wouldn't move'. Michelle Dewar, 'Strange Bedfellows: Europeans and Aborigines in Arnhem Land before World War II' (MA Thesis, University of New England, 1989), 116. Ultimately in the 1930s Reverend Thomas Webb discouraged the use of corporal punishment on Methodist missions. See Hedrick, 'Arnhem Land Methodist Church Aborigines Mission', 72. Andrew Markus briefly discusses physical punishments at Milingimbi and Oenpelli in *Governing Savages*, 75.

27 Clancy Warrawilya, Wanindilyakwa, Umbakumba (Groote Eylandt), in *Long Time, Olden Time*, 78.

28 See National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, *Bringing them home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997) for more information about child removal throughout Australia.

29 See NTAS, Blitner, Gerry, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 160, Interviewer: Shaun Williams, 23 June 1981. p. 1-2; NTAS, Harris, Len, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 64, Interviewer: Alan Powell, 15 September 1983, p. 4; John Harris, *One Blood*, 725 for more information about Groote Eylandt and multiracial children. Croker Island also housed forcibly removed children from across the Northern Territory. See NTAS, Beazley, Russell, NTRS 2265, Black and white copyprints from black and white photographs relating to mission life in Darwin, Croker Island, Goulburn Island, Milingimbi, Elcho Island, and Elcho Island outstations, Contents date range 1938-1968; NTAS, Somerville, Margaret, NTRS 1430, Correspondence from Croker Island via Darwin, Contents date range 1941-1965. Church Missionary Society Missions such as Goulburn Island and Milingimbi maintained separate dormitories for children until policy changes in 1932 encouraged family settlements in cottages. See Hedrick, 'Arnhem Land Methodist Church Aborigines Mission', 19, 90; Ellemor, *Warrawi Jubilee*, 18.

30 See Baker, 'Crossing Boundaries', 20-22. Baker gives multiple examples of missionaries being welcomed as a result of their friendliness and hospitality. Most of these examples come from the 1930s or later.

31 Ronald and Catherine Berndt even remark, 'They [missionaries] assumed almost total control over Aborigines within their spheres of contact, providing themselves with a mantle of authority that should have had no place in their activities. Protectionalism went too far in the majority of cases; consultation with Aborigines was at a minimum'. See 'Body and Soul: More than an Episode!', 57.

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- 32 NTAS, Sweeney, Gordon, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 337, Interviewer: Don Dickson, 1980.
- 33 'Report on Goulburn Island Mission. 1933', in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1949/456: Methodist Overseas Mission Goulburn Island. Contents date range 1932-1952.
- 34 NTAS, Beazley, Russell, NTRS 2265, Photos Goulburn Island #21, Goulburn Island #23, and Milingimbi #4, for example. The assimilationist labour missionaries dispensed also conformed to typical non-Indigenous gender roles. Women's work included goat herding, washing, weeding, sewing, gardening, mat and basket weaving; men's work consisted of ploughing, grass-cutting, thatching, making drains for sanitation, and refuse destruction. See Hedrick, 'Arnhem Land Methodist Church Aborigines Mission', 18.
- 35 'Missions to Australian Aborigines: Constitution and Policy', May 1944, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 868, General records of the Angurugu Community. Contents Date Range 1921-85. Correspondence 1933-44. The Constitution also appears as an appendix in Arrowsmith, 116-118.
- 36 Donald H. Fowler B.E.M., *Guns or God: The Story of the Caledon Bay Peace Expedition 1933* 34 (Brighton, VIC: Donald Fowler, 1985), 79.
- 37 Reverend Thomas Webb, to the Administrator of the Northern Territory, 11 October 1933, in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1949/459. See Reverend Thomas Webb, *From Spears to Spades* (Melbourne: The Book Depot, 1944) for more information about Webb's approach to assimilation. A biography of Webb is Arch Grant, *Aliens in Arnhem Land* (Dee Why, NSW: Frontier Publishing Inc, 1995). Reverend A.F. Ellemor describes Webb's approach as 'seeking to convince rather than coerce'. See Ellemor, *Warrawi Jubilee*, 18.
- 38 Reverend R.C.H. Long, General Secretary of the Victorian Branch, 'Report on a recent visit to the Mission Stations at Groote Eylandt, Roper River, and Oenpelli', no date listed, but possibly 1938, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 873/P1, General mission and administration records, Darwin. Contents Date Range 1937-89.
- 39 Reverend T.T. Webb, 'Milingimbi Mission Station. Report for Year Ending December 31st 1932', in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1953/266: Methodist Overseas Mission - Milingimbi Mission. Contents date range 1932-53.
- 40 Reverend Canon G.R. Harris, unpublished manuscript of autobiography, page 149, in NTAS, Cole, Keith, NTRS 694/P1, Records, photographs and research material about mission life in Northern Australia. Contents date range 1915-85. Reverend Len Harris would eventually spot and report Japanese reconnaissance planes to Darwin. See NTAS, Harris, Len, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 64, pages 8-9.
- 41 NTAS, Harris, Len, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 64, page 7.
- 42 Reverend Canon G.R. Harris, unpublished manuscript of autobiography, page 182, in NTAS, Cole, Keith, NTRS 694/P1.
- 43 NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1098, Mission reports and station council minutes of the Angurugu Community, Contents Date Range 1939-1979. August 1942.
- 44 NTAS, Harris, Len, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 64, pages 14-15.
- 45 Nana Bara, in Andrew McMillan, *Catalina Dreaming* (Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove, 2002), 54.
- 46 NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1098. July 1945.
- 47 An Aboriginal account of the arduous construction of the Milingimbi airstrip is Gerry Blitner, in *No Bugles, No Drums*, produced by Debra Beattie-Burnett, directed by John Burnett, 49 min, Seven Emus Productions in association with Australian Television Network, 1990, videocassette.

- 48 F.H. May, Director of Native Affairs, 'Review Report. Milingimbi Institution. North Australia District. Methodist Overseas Missions. From Establishment to 31st December, 1949', in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1953/266. Yolngu accounts of the bombing include George Djalming, in *No Bugles, No Drums*; Eva Number One, Djambarrpuynu, in *Long Time, Olden Time*, 131-32.
- 49 Note by Jenny Smith, in Wandjuk Marika, as told to Jennifer Isaacs, *Wandjuk Marika: Life Story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1995), 70. According to the Wandjuk Marika's testimony it was he who showed the site to RAAF soldiers. See *Wandjuk Marika*, 71-72.
- 50 McMillan, *Catalina Dreaming*, 136-37.
- 51 NTAS, Graham, Kevin, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 221, Interviewer: H. Giese, Buderim, QLD, 2 August 1981. Tape 2, page 18.
- 52 NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1098. March 1943.
- 53 *Ibid.*, June - July 1943.
- 54 H.C. Evans, Acting District Superintendent, 'Review Report. Yirrkala Mission. For Period Ended 30th December 1951', in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1949/459.
- 55 Don Watson, former pilot, in McMillan, *Catalina Dreaming*, 54.
- 56 Gough Whitlam, 'Dragging the Chain 1897-1997', *The Second Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture*, Northern Territory University, 29 August 1997, available online from <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/disp.pl/au/other/IndigLRes/car/1997/2908.html> accessed 29 January 2007.
- 57 'A Word for the Aborigines', *Argus*, 25 March 1943, in NAA Canberra, Series A431, item 1946/915: Employment of Natives on Work for Army (N.T.). Contents date range 1942-46.
- 58 G.R. Harris, unpublished manuscript of autobiography, page 179, in NTAS, Cole, Keith, NTRS 694/P1.
- 59 'A Word for the Aborigines'. Constable Mahoney actually credited the lack of adequate food and supervision as the cause for a theft at Groote Eylandt. See Constable J. Mahoney, Roper River Police Station, 2 July 1943, to Superintendent of Police, Alice Springs, in NTAS, Commissioner of Police, NTRS F 77, Correspondence files, annual single number series. Contents date range 1935-59. Item 5/43: Roper River.
- 60 *No Bugles, No Drums*.
- 61 H.M. Arrowsmith, letter to The Area Finance Officer, Central Area RAAF, 30 May 1944, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 868. Correspondence 1933-1944. See also Robert A. Hall, *The Black Diggers*, 174-75.
- 62 L.J. Harris, 'A Statement for the Guidance of Mr. G.R. Harris in taking over the position of C.M.S. Mission, Groote Eylandt, November 1943', in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 868. Correspondence 1933-44.
- 63 See, for instance, NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1939/59: Coast watching Organisation in Northern Territory. Contents date range 1927-1938; NTAS, Harris, Len, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 64, 9. John Harris points out that some missionaries did not realize that they earned the status of servicemen until years after the war. See John Harris, *One Blood*, 772.
- 64 Thornell, *A Bridge over Time*, 118.
- 65 See Maisie McKenzie, *Mission to Arnhem Land* (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1976), 141-42 for information about the Goulburn Island bombing.
- 66 Ellemor, *Warrawi Jubilee*, 19.
- 67 Len Harris notes the evacuation of Groote Eylandt in NTAS, Harris, Len, NTRS 226, Oral History Interview, TS 64, page 6. Information about the evacuation of thirty-three women staff and children from Goulburn Island, Milingimbi, Elcho Island, Oenpelli, Yirrkala, and Roper River is

in Thornell, 105-16. Information about the evacuation of Croker Island in March – May 1942, is available from Margaret Somerville, *They Crossed a Continent* (Darwin: Colemans Printing Pty. Ltd., 1991); Max Cartwright, *Missionaries, Aborigines and Welfare Settlement Days in the Northern Territory* (Bedford Park, SA: Flinders Press, 1995). Indigenous accounts of the evacuation of Croker Island's evacuation are Clare Henty-Gilbert, 'Crossing the Continent—My Memories', *Northern Perspective* 18, no. 2 (1995), 19-24; Randall, *Songman*, 43-48.

68 Margaret Somerville, letter dated 1 March 1942, in NTAS, Somerville, Margaret, NTRS 1430/P1.

69 J.S. Harris, May 1942, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1099.

70 NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1102, Mission reports and station council minutes of the Roper River (Ngukurr) Community, Contents Date Range 1942-1984. Mission reports cease after September 1942, then resume briefly in November 1942, then skip to January 1944. There is no mention of the war in any of the periods recorded, including November 1942.

71 See, for example, 2 March 1942, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 704, Journals and diaries of the Angurugu Community. Contents Date Range 1942-1987.

72 J.S. Harris, April 1942, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1099.

73 15 August 1945, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 704.

74 NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1102.

75 See, for instance, Webb, *From Spears to Spades*, 77. See also 'Constitution and Policy' of The Church Missionary Society, section 2, paragraph g: 'That during this period of development, it is essential that they should be, as far as possible, segregated and protected from undesirable influences and contacts'. In Arrowsmith, 117.

76 McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education*, 155. McConaghy describes the paradoxical nature of assimilationism that 'incorporates complex strategies to simultaneously include and exclude Indigenous people in the social life and institutions of the colonial state'.

77 NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1098. August 1942.

78 *Ibid.*, June 1943.

79 L.J. Harris, 'A Statement for the Guidance of Mr. G.R. Harris in taking over the position of C.M.S. Mission, Groote Eylandt, November 1943', in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 868. Correspondence 1933-1944.

80 Harris, *One Blood*, 775.

81 W.H. Harney, Patrol Officer, Native Affairs Branch, to Director of Native Affairs, 22 May 1944, in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1949/459.

82 G.R. Harris, unpublished manuscript of autobiography, page 246, in NTAS, Cole, Keith, NTRS 694/P1.

83 Robert Hall describes situations when missions across northern Australia took steps as extreme as chaining Aboriginal people to prevent interracial contact during the war. There is no record of such behaviour happening in Arnhem Land, but Hall's comments indicate that it was feasible for missionaries to engage in aggressive tactics to prevent 'unnecessary' cross-cultural relations. Hall, *The Black Diggers*, 171.

84 Reverend Thomas Webb, 'Milingimbi Mission Station. Report for Year ending 31st December, 1936', in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1953/266.

85 Leonard M. Kentish, to Administrator C.L.A. Abbott, 14 September 1937, in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1938/716: Employment of Mission Aboriginals in Darwin. Contents date range 1937-1937.

86 H.C. Evans, Acting District Superintendent, 'Review Report. Yirrkala Mission. For Period Ended 30th December 1951', in NAA Darwin, series F1, item 1949/459. John Harris incorporates similar excerpts about Yolngu unwillingness to return to mission life in *One Blood*, 776-77.

87 Hall, *The Black Diggers*, 171.

88 J.S. Harris, NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1099. January 1942.

89 Thornell, *A Bridge over Time*, 123.

90 For example, in December 1941 the Navy requested a patrol to investigate a rumoured Japanese petrol dump on the King or Liverpool Rivers. J.S. Harris wrote, 'we sent two Native runners & they reported having seen only two empty drums'. J.S. Harris, in NTAS, Church Missionary Society of Australia, North Australia Committee, NTRS 1099, December 1941.

91 See Thornell, *A Bridge over Time*, 129-33; see also *No Bugles, No Drums*. George Booth's narrative describes how Yolngu rescued him and his crashed men and assisted their transport to Milingimbi. See George Booth, *33 Days* (Elwood, VIC: Greenhouse Publications, 1988). Another Yolngu tale of rescuing crashed airmen and transporting them to missions is available in Wandjuk Marika, 64-67.

92 Harris, *One Blood*, 778.

93 See *The Dreamers of Arnhem Land*, Directed by Christopher Walker, 50 min, ARTE France and Quark Productions, 2005, videocassette. See also Trudgen, *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die* and Harris, *One Blood*, 778-79. See Marcus, *Governing Savages* for more information about assimilation policy throughout Australia.

94 See Nancy Williams, *The Yolngu and Their Land: A System of Land Tenure and the Fight for its Recognition* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1986). See also Trudgen, *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*; Harris, *One Blood*; Robert Bos, 'The Dreaming and Social Change in Arnhem Land' in *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, 422-37. Gwenda Baker argues that missionaries supported the outstation movement to limit the overcrowding of mission stations. See Baker, 'Crossing Boundaries', 24.