

NAVY AWARDS TO ABORIGINE HEROES OF WARTIME COAST-WATCH PATROLS

Aborigines who served with the Royal Australian Navy during World War II received recognition at a ceremony at H.M.A.S. *Melville*, in Northern Territory recently.

The aborigines, all from Snake Bay, were presented with Campaign Awards. During the 1939-45 war these aborigines formed a coast-watching patrol under the command of an R.A.N.R. officer.

All but five (who have since died) of the original unit of 35 attended the ceremony, according to *Navy News*. The widows of the five deceased aborigines, Paddy One, Billy Two, Ginger Two, Manfong and Strangler McKenzie, were presented with the medals awarded to their dead husbands.

All the aborigines earned the War Medal and Australian Service Medal and about half of them received the Defence Medal. The recipients were flown from Snake Bay settlement by RAAF Dakota.

Captain Keatinge, R.A.N., of Darwin, gave a short address outlining the exploits of the aboriginal unit and congratulated the natives before presenting the awards. Following the presentation, the visitors witnessed a march past of H.M.A.S. *Melville* ship's company.

The history of the natives' service goes back to April, 1942, when a coast-watching station was formed at Snake Bay. Lookout stations, manned by the aborigines, were established around Bathurst and Melville Islands, and these were regularly visited by launch, horse and on foot.

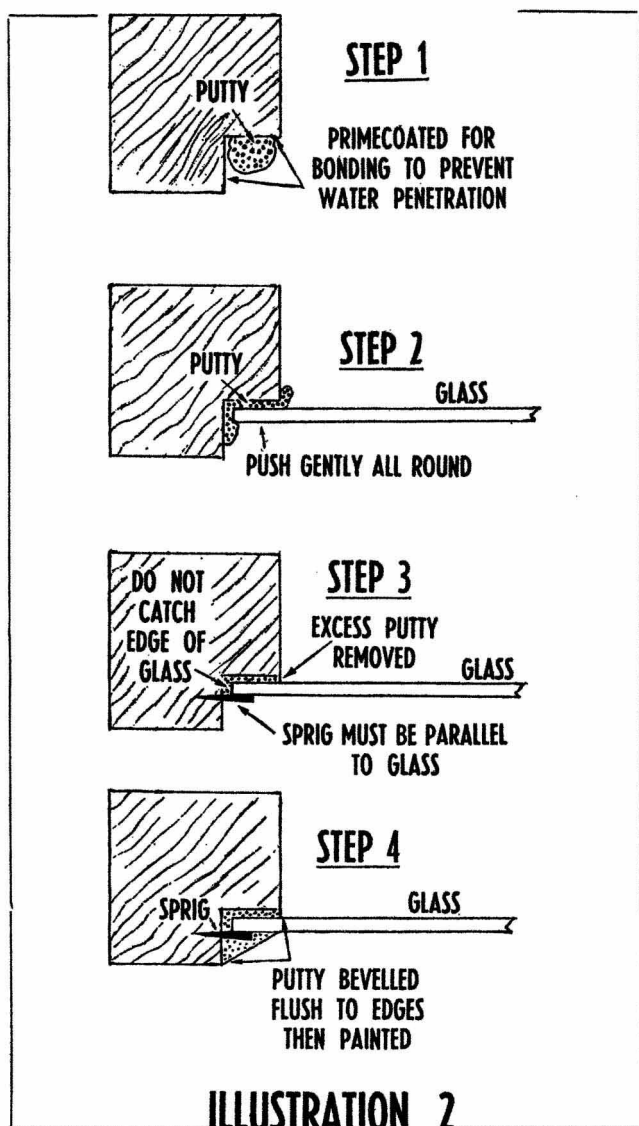
During the war, native patrols covered approximately 6,000 miles looking for crashed aircraft and surviving airmen.

They also kept watch on likely landing beaches, reported suspicious shipping and mines. An official report in 1944 stated that "the loyalty of the patrol boys is undoubted". The report goes on to say "... they have always enthusiastically assisted crashed Allied Airmen and captured Japanese."

The recipients of the medals were all smartly turned out and particularly noteworthy was the seamanlike salutes which each gave—including the aboriginal widows.

Later the Naval Officer-in-Charge visited Darwin Hospital to present awards to Old Johnny Barangbadala, who is recovering from two broken legs received in a motor accident.

After the presentation ceremony, all the recipients were entertained to morning tea on the lawn of Naval Headquarters. The whole ceremony was impressive and the aborigines enjoyed themselves.



You must keep the sprigs parallel with the outside face of the glass and you must never allow them to bear on the edge of the glass.

If you do, no matter how slightly, you are risking another cracked pane. Two or three sprigs along each side is sufficient.

To hit them home into the wood, very little force is needed. Use a light tackhammer and keep the hammer-head pressed at all times against the glass as you tap.

If you do this, you don't risk hitting the glass instead of the sprig.

Final step (No. 4) is to flush up the outside face as shown. Most people make the mistake here of using too much putty.

Use a proper putty knife and if the putty tends to stick to the blade, clean it with a dry cloth, then dip it in a cup of water.

Do not paint the new putty under 48 hours.