

HERBERT CLEM HILL, ABORIGINAL EX-SERVICEMAN

Statement by Member for Collie

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie) [12.22 pm]: I rise to praise and acknowledge an Aboriginal ex-serviceman from my electorate. Last week I attended a commemorative service in Collie that was part of “Honour the Memory” - an initiative of the Western Australian Veterans Support Group and Local Indigenous Networking Community Services to recognise all indigenous veterans. The service honoured Mr Herbert Clem Hill, who served in both the Royal Australian Navy and the Australian Army during World War II, although at the time his service to Australia was not recognised. Family and community members spoke about Mr Hill’s life and the late recognition of his service. This man had served for Australia, yet on his return, because he was Aboriginal, he was not allowed to march with the other Australian war heroes. I was honoured to be in attendance at Mr Hill’s ceremony, where family members spoke of fond memories of their father “being a rock” for their family and being a perfect ambassador for reconciliation. His daughters laid flowers on the sacred stone for Aboriginal servicemen in Soldiers Park to mark the respect for their father. I commend Hon Derrick Tomlinson, MLC, Mr Fred Chaney, the WA Veterans’ Support Group and LINCOS for their contribution in making the ceremony possible and travelling to Collie on that special day. The ceremony was a significant time not only for Mr Hill’s family but also for all Aboriginal ex-servicemen who represented Australia at war - a country in which, at the time, they could not vote yet for which they fought. We are now saying thank you to those people.