REMEMBERING DODGER KODJALWL

March 22nd, 2012

Today’s Bombing of Katherine 70th anniversary commemoration has extra significance for the family of the sole victim of the attack.

Member for Katherine and co-organiser of the commemoration, Willem Westra van Holthe, said the full identity of the victim has finally been traced after years of uncertainty and painstaking research.

Mr Westra van Holthe said it’s believed 84 60kg bombs were dropped on Katherine on March 22nd, 1942, many of those falling in the vicinity of the old aerodrome opposite the present day hospital.

The one victim has always been known as ‘Dodger’, ‘Roger Brum by’ or ‘Roger Taylor’ but his Aboriginal name has never been identified.

It is believed Dodger died of shrapnel wounds suffered near the aerodrome while he hid from the bombs behind a rock.

“His Aboriginal identity has been an enduring mystery and one that myself and others in the town have been determined to solve,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“By going through the records at the Kalano Community Association we were able to find Dodger’s daughter’s birth certificate and have identified his Aboriginal name as Dodger Kodjalwal.

“We now know that he was born in 1900 and was about 42 when he died and he has a large extended family still living around the town.

“There is still a little bit of mystery surrounding Dodger, however, with Aboriginal population records carrying his name as recently as 1965 – although we believe that is a statistical anomaly and not fact.

“Dodger’s memory will be very much at the forefront of today’s commemoration, with members of his family in attendance, including a baby great great grand daughter, Shakira Ashley, who is a recent addition to the
Katherine community.

“After the commemorative service I will unveil a plaque in Dodger’s memory on shrapnel scarred rock near the old aerodrome that may have been the site where Dodger lost his life.”

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430