

**Peace Works!**

**Moving Beyond  
1915**

**Remembrance**

First Published in Australia in 2017 by Peace Works! ACT Region

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email: [info@peaceworks.org.au](mailto:info@peaceworks.org.au)

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**Front cover illustration features a ceiling detail from the Palace of Versailles, sculpted in limestone.**

First built in 1623 by Louis XIII, the palace was expanded in two later stages (1661-1678 and 1678-1715) by Louis XIV. The latter phase of expansion included the Hall of Mirrors, where on 18 January 1871, Prussian King Wilhelm I was proclaimed German Emperor. Again on 18 January in 1919 after WWI this hall was the site of the opening of the six months long Paris Peace Conference. The hall was also the site for signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919, which many have since considered a “failed peace” that sowed the seeds of further global conflict in WWII. Now 8-10 million people visit the palace and walk in the gardens every year.

Photo by Jennifer Reilly and David Maywald 2012.

**Peace Works!**  
**Moving Beyond**  
**1915**  
**Remembrance**

Foreword by Professor Emerita

Joan Beaumont

Including works from: AJ Thomas Bennett; Rachel Berry;  
Dr Mike Bower; Sylvia Bowring; Michelle Brock;  
Christine Burt; Alison Charlton; Dr Glenda Cloughley;  
Dr John Collard; Helen Curry; Karen Dahlitz; Lee Davy;  
Annie Didcott; Lesley East; Ella Edwards; Lisa Forward;  
June Foster; Bonnie Goodfellow; Hazel Hall; Lois Holland &  
Dorothy Walker; Ann Howard; Marilyn Humbert;  
Adrienne Johns; Colin Keith; Judith Kelly; Keitha Keyes;  
Geoff McCubbin; Helen McLaughlin; Robyn McPherson;  
Natalie Maras; Peter Maywald; Margaret Naylor;  
Moya Pacey; *PeaceKnits*; Suzanne Prest; Queanbeyan  
Multicultural Centre; Sandra Renew; Glen Riley;  
Manfred Schulmeister; Robert Shiells; Talitha Thompson;  
Garry Tongs; Wayside Chapel and *Words for Peace*.

## The Peace Works! Project

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Readers may not be familiar with Peace Works! which grew from discussions among a diverse range of people in Canberra/Queanbeyan and surrounding regions in 2013, spurred on by the approach of commemorative events in 2015 to mark the centenary of the Gallipoli landings.

Those who established Peace Works! come from a range of backgrounds and experiences in community arts, writing, handcrafts, drama and music. They have various involvements in a range of causes related to the promotion of global peace such as the Chorus of Women, Words for Peace, Writers for Peace, Uniting Justice, Anzac Eve Peace Vigils and many others. All share a passion for promoting peaceful resolution of conflict, for solemn remembrance of the personal, family, and national costs of war and for moving beyond remembrance to more positive initiatives to promote peace and international reconciliation.

Peace Works! was deliberately chosen as the name of the project, with its slightly ambiguous exclamation mark, to imply that peace works better than war, while at the same time indicating that a primary task in life is to work toward peace and encourage others in efforts to promote peace.

Peace Works! launched a website in early 2015 at [www.peaceworks.org.au](http://www.peaceworks.org.au). Then in April 2015, the formal call for submissions was launched at Albert Hall in Canberra, seeking submissions that “address the theme of 'Yearning for Peace' (arising in particular from World War 1). It (was) hoped to collect diverse perspectives on this theme and, in so doing, support current national and international efforts towards peace.”

Peace Works! committed to assess submissions and produce two identical versions for publication – a hardcopy book plus an e-book, the latter to support public digital access for use as a resource in schools and community. We decided very early on that the publications would not replicate the plethora of academic or military war histories nor would they be literary anthologies. We deliberately set out to seek creative responses to 1915-2015 remembrance from individuals and groups across the broad community and to encourage a range of genres or forms of expression.

The results of the call for submissions were both gratifying and in some ways surprising. More than 130 community submissions were received from a wide cross-section of individuals and community organisations. Some were from established writers and artists, while others were from people making a submission to a publication for the first time in their lives. The submissions varied greatly in style, sophistication and content and most readily met the criterion of being "creative". Submissions were so diverse that it has been a creative challenge in itself to fit them into logical categories by genre, subject, historical sequence, or presentation style.

However, a number of concepts and themes emerged, and within the time constraints, Peace Works! editorial working group has organised them in this publication (without intrusive editorial comment or interference) to display on their own merits the responses to 1915 and Yearning for Peace that were sought. Taken together, the items published here constitute a comprehensive narrative of Australians seeking to support peace before, during, and since World War 1.

In this publication, you will find some consideration of the longer context in precursors to World War 1 – indigenous perspectives, frontier wars and the nation's involvement in earlier conflicts. You will also discover some of the forgotten voices of war – children, ravaged families and communities, and victims whose war wounds and trauma destroyed their quality of living and relationships way beyond the end of hostilities.

Some submissions brought to light long-hidden family objects and personal remembrance, which help enlighten later generations about the actions and attitudes of those who came before us, and many experiences of suffering and loss suppressed in memories too painful to reveal.

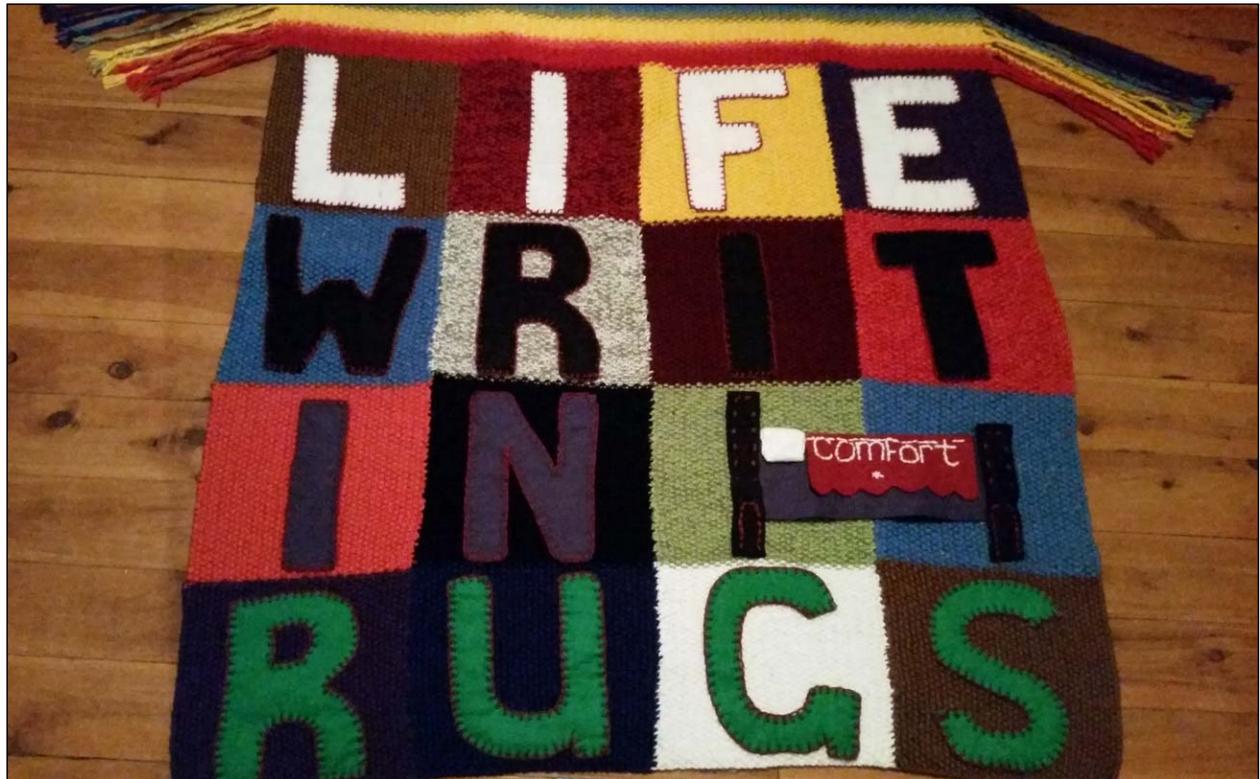
Other submissions illustrate the grim realities of war on the front lines from those who were there, with many going on to make firm conclusions about the futility of war and plead with those to come, not to repeat the mistakes of the past. While many submissions look back, others look forward with determined optimism to convert a yearning for peace into positive actions and find better ways to

resolve conflict. Voices from the community identify that the “war to end all wars” culminated in a crippled peace, which laid the foundations for even more global conflict.

We hope that readers will find value in considering all the material in this publication, or dipping into areas of personal interest. We have tried to group like materials together, but given the diversity of responses to our call for submissions, plus limited publication and design choices, this has not always

been possible. We welcome any feedback from readers on what you have found worthwhile or what we may have done differently.

A century of warfare and yearning for peace has not yet delivered its full dividend of a more peaceful, cooperative and reconciled planet. We hope that this publication of community perspectives supported through the Peace Works! project will help us all to move toward those goals.



### Life Writ in Comfort Rugs

This “patchwork” of bright hand knit squares was designed and stitched to be the event banner for Peace Works! Open Cottage Garden held on 3 April 2016 in Queanbeyan, to focus on handwork and written life-stories that helped give comfort in conflict.

Seed stitch (or single moss stitch) was used for each square, to give a seamless, reversible back and front for the banner which was hung in the open air: to be seen, accessed, touched and understood from all sides.

One comment made was that the brightness of the knitting was like the knitting done by an ageing aunt – the older and blinder she got, the brighter and more lairy the wool she used for the things she made. This comment was accepted as a compliment, and an unwitting insight, as blindness (in all forms, that is, colour blindness; lack of ability to see, clearly or at all; as well as lack of ability to see things from other “sides” or points of viewing; and most pertinent, blindness incurred from chemical/warfare injuries) has been an ongoing theme in our project handwork and writing. So, no apology for the brightness of this banner!

## Introduction

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This publication grew out of recent community-based efforts to understand better the place of 1915 in our past 100 years of war and peace.

We listened to stories that had never before been told or published; we found objects that had never been “catalogued”, or properly valued for what they can tell us of intergenerational impacts of conflict.

1915 as an “Anzac” pinnacle was quickly put into perspective by receiving hitherto untapped and deeper yearnings – for peace, and for acknowledgement of loss.

More than one side of 1915 was played out before our eyes at Albert Hall performances of *A Passion for Peace*: and more complex stories of efforts for peace that have been sustained globally over the same 100 years.

In community workshops we supported discussions from both sides of the coin, on war and peace, while we also acknowledged that there are always more than one or two sides to any event or story, and that a fuller understanding of past and present is gained from considering more than one perspective. The deeper reality gained from comprehending different points of view is given palpable form in this publication through the use of triptychs, or multiple creative responses on an issue, and through multiple writers and group handwork providing a range of inputs in the shaping of a creative response.

The range of perspectives and much broader horizons that we discovered and which were offered for publication signalled clearly to us that “Australia” as a nation was not born at Gallipoli. Events before and after 1915 shaped our growing national identity. A much longer timeline is needed to comprehend the different ways we have sought to hoe an independent row, rather than just toe a colonial line. By opening and closing the collection of responses with Indigenous perspectives, we acknowledge that the task of mature reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians is still far from complete.

Grant funds enabled us to provide opportunities for those who have not previously considered publishing their experiences and perspectives; and

to help them develop and then share their original and creative responses to the challenges of “1915” and subsequent century of efforts towards peace.

Unexpected gems or highlights humbled us in quietness and awe: the mittens from WW1 trenches; the unpublished memoir of a foot soldier; poems that expressed family loss and yearning for peace, that never find a place in official war history.

The creative responses to 1915 and our past century of war and peace included in this publication cover a range of perspectives and genres. We have tried to maintain the original “voice” of contributors from the community and not place a heavy editorial hand on scripts. The aim was to allow their tone and perspective to speak for themselves right through from those relatively unversed, to more philosophical voices offered for publication. Approximately 130 individual contributions were received – a few were later withdrawn and a handful were not considered on theme, so have not been included.

The Peace Works! publication process has been managed over four years by a stalwart and diverse working group of six members. Throughout the process we have held each other up (in both ways, pun intended) while working towards the final publications. This has been done with the broader community, through regular open meetings, with face-to-face as well as online collaborations. An example of such collaboration and support is offered in the following Email Exchange:

From B to A on 01/03/2017 at 11:37pm

*You're obviously online. I wanted to let you know that I am currently reading *The Memory Artist* by Katherine Brabon. It is about Russia and recovering lost memories of those persecuted [with physical & psychiatric torture] by their own government. Reminds me a little of what we are trying to do – we all know that so many were killed or impacted by 20th century wars. But the numbers are so huge that our memory glazes over the loss. It seems we can only comprehend the true impact when names and faces are given in story.*

From A to B on 02/03/2017 at 3:12am

*Yes, I think the facts and implications are only realised when one has some form of personal experience of the situation. Until then it is only like a newspaper story about a fatal accident where one's response is more intellectual than emotional.*

While attending to our own project workshops emphasising recovery of personal stories, we were challenged to understand more fully 1915 and the wider context of conflict through careful research and much-awarded writing such as that of Joan

Beaumont and Paul Ham. Our national and state libraries have supported launches and seminars by writers of such merit – so that we can all hear their view of our past without having to pay for the privilege. May our public institutions remain adequately funded to support such sturdy and open public debate.

There will, we hope, be something in this publication to surprise and challenge readers to develop a deeper understanding of the significance of our century of war and continuing efforts towards sustainable peace.



**From *Words for Peace* by Jonah, 9 years old**

## Foreword

---

Thirty-two countries fought World War I but probably none has invested more funds and energy in commemorating its centenary than Australia. Why does this war still play such a central role in the Australian political culture? Why is the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 now widely thought to be the moment when the Australian nation was 'born'? And why is the Anzac legend commonly accepted as 'to what it means to be Australian'?

The more cynical among us might answer that it is because successive Australian governments have told us so. They have poured many millions of dollars into the commemoration of war since 1990, when the first officially sponsored pilgrimage to Gallipoli was organised. Yet, the explosion in war memory is clearly more than a 'top down' manipulation of the Australian public. The official memory of World War I has resonated with many Australians of different ages and backgrounds. Countless individuals have visited battlefields and war cemeteries across the globe; many families have used databases to research their ancestors' war histories; and across Australia, communities have refurbished war memorials located in their town or suburb. It is this powerful interaction between local and national memory that has made the centenary of World War I so significant.

Peace Works! is an outstanding—and intriguingly different—example of this community engagement with the memory of World War I. Funded by an Anzac Centenary Local Grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, it broke out of the traditional mould of commemoration. Through the community workshops it organised, Peace Works! provided the

space in which more than 130 creative voices could be heard: not just in multiple written forms – the letters, memoirs and diaries on which historians so often rely – but in drama, music and material culture, including quilts, knee rugs, even a pot holder.

Peace Works! Is also exceptional in the national centenary commemorations because, as its title indicates, it infuses the remembrance of the personal and national costs of war – which in Australia's case were the highest pro rata of almost any country in World War I – with a commitment to peace and international reconciliation. Too many commemorative activities, while honouring and lamenting the death and injury of more than 212,000 young Australians, have the effect of sanitising, even trivialising, World War I. This conflict, they imply, might have been a tragedy for the men who fought it and for the families left to mourn, but for the young nation of 1914–18 it was necessary to demand these terrible losses if Australian democracy was to survive. It is only a short step to claiming that young Australians still need to give their lives in the nation's defence today.

In contrast, Peace Works! combines solemn remembrance and recognition of the pain of wartime loss with a passionate commitment to making war anachronistic. Like the German artist, Kathe Kollwitz who lost a beloved son, Peter in the first months of World War I, and her grandson in World War II, this book reminds us that the enduring message of World War I should be, 'Never Again War'.

Joan Beaumont

Professor Emerita  
Australian National University

*It was certainly an odd monster that one made up  
by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards.*

**Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929)**

***Veteran's Burden***

I cannot sleep and I cry

But cannot say why

***Colin Keith***

*So many deaths in so many "Empire Wars":  
strive against triumphal "normal wastage" rulers -  
while dust we are  
and unto dust shall we return.*

**BoniM after King James' *dust to dust***

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# A Longer Context

A longer view, before and after 1915



## Since 1915 – Looking Back

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*Main Source: Australian War Memorial*

- 40,000,000** Estimated global deaths from 1918-19 Spanish Flu epidemic
- 20,000,000** Global WW1 casualties
- 16,000,000** Global WW1 deaths
- 8,000,000** Estimated hours of WW1 Australian knitting
- 7,000,000** Immigrants who came to Australia between 1945 and 2015
- 3,000,000** Hand knit items sent to WW1 from NSW Aboriginal stations
- 1,000,000** Pairs of hand knit Australian socks sent to WW1
- 700,000** Refugees welcomed to Australia between 1945 and 2015
- 62,000** Australian deaths in WW1
- 62,000** Australian war-related deaths after the war
- 45,000** Australian deaths on the Western Front
- 8,141** Australian deaths in the Gallipoli campaign

# This Old Land

---

*Helen McLaughlin*

This land is old  
Old ivory parchment  
Crinkled, stained brown  
Curled, touched green at the edges  
So old, enfolded in a dreaming  
Of legends of spiritual truths  
The faith of an ancient people  
Hid in the mists of these mountains  
And lost in the dusts of these plains

This land is old  
Unused to the soft caress  
Of waters restrained and arranged  
Soils forced to flourish  
A manicured land so changed  
There is more to this land  
Than the wealth of its fields  
Precious secrets deep under the earth  
Where gold and gems lie concealed

Stained glass deserts shimmer and glow  
In hot ochre tones  
Flowing like golden silk  
Around folded rocks, old bones  
Of a world once young  
Patterns of time locked in the stones

The old broken bones  
Of this old, old land  
Lie exposed by decaying sands  
And the worn out stones  
The endless patterns of broken rock

Lie crumbled and tumbled  
Uplifted and folded  
Ironstone ranges and gorges so deep  
And vast are the seas of its plains  
The endless patterns in swirling sands  
Are visions of silver seas a dreamtime away  
And the whispers of ghostly waves  
Upon ancient shores of long lost oceans  
Now lakes of salt  
Swept by hot breath of dry sighing winds

This land sprawls through aeons of time  
It is savage and peaceful and old  
Soft luminous silver in moonlight  
In the heat of the sun  
It shimmers hard gold

This land is old  
Ageless and silent and bold  
Born of the souls of the stars  
When the earth was young  
It watches and waits  
For a time beyond man...  
It watches and waits in the sun

# Australia's Baptism of Blood?

John Collard



**George Lambert's portrait of  
CEW Bean, 1935**

The official Australian War Historian CEW Bean is credited with mythologising the experiences and ignominious withdrawal of Anzac troops from the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915 as a “baptism of blood”, the new nation’s transition from colonial adolescence to international maturity. He accompanied the Australian Military Forces to both Gallipoli and the Western Front from May 1915. Upon his return to Australia, he was based at Tuggeranong Homestead near Canberra from 1919 to 1925. He wrote six volumes of the twelve volume Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918 (Bean, 1946), and was instrumental in the establishment of the Australian War Memorial and the creation and popularisation of the Anzac Legend.

Bean drew heavily on movements of literary nationalism in the two decades that preceded Federation in 1901. The heroic mateship celebrated by Banjo Patterson was a strong influence upon his portrayal of Australians at war. However, he overlooked the fact that the period 1914–1918 was not actually the initiation of Australians into war. That had accompanied the displacement of the indigenous inhabitants in frontier wars across the

continent. Contemporary historians consider the period of “frontier wars” to extend from 1788–1934. Some would argue that issues such as “black deaths in custody” are a manifestation of this warfare to the current day.

The sudden arrival and occupation of British settlers in Australia led to competition for resources with Aboriginal inhabitants. However, conflict was usually between groups of settlers and individual tribes rather than systematic warfare. There were occasions when British soldiers became involved, and mounted police units recruited Aborigines to pursue tribes who resisted white settlement. The violence tended to be localised, because the structure of Aboriginal tribes prevented them from organising confederations capable of sustained resistance. (Haw & Munro, 2010)

*The result was not a single war, but a series of violent engagements and massacres across the continent. Among the most famous were the Black Wars in Tasmania between 1828 and 1832, which sought to drive most of the island's native inhabitants onto a number of isolated peninsulas, the Battle of Pinjarra (Western Australia, 1834) and the Myall Creek Massacre (New South Wales, 1838).*

In Victoria and southern parts of South Australia, the majority of the violence occurred during the



**Mounted police attacking Aborigines during  
the Slaughterhouse Creek Massacre, 1838**

1830s and 1840s as settlement expanded. It is estimated that over 20,000 Aborigines perished in “frontier violence” between 1788 and 1930. However, the impact of diseases introduced by white settlement was more devastating.

Much of southern and central Victoria was occupied by the Kulin People, in five distinct but strongly related communities. The two tribes in the Bendigo region in central Victoria were the Dja Dja Warrung in the Loddon Catchment to the north and west, and the Duang Warrung (also referred to as the Taungurung in many accounts) in the Campaspe Catchment. The people were organised into clans of about 100 each. It is estimated the combined tribes numbered between 2,000 and 3,000 when white settlement began in the region in the 1830s (Haw & Munro, 2010). The Dja Dja Warrung were called the Loddon River Tribe by white settlers. They were initially viewed as a “strong, physically well-developed people” (Cusack, 2002). They had complex trading networks.

There is evidence that smallpox epidemics that spread from Sydney in 1788 swept through the region in 1789 and 1825, and decimated the indigenous population at the time. Major Mitchell commented on the scars on surviving adults in the Swan Hill area in 1836, and it is estimated that half to two thirds of the local tribes were eliminated by smallpox. From the late 1830s European contact introduced consumption, venereal disease, the common cold, bronchitis, influenza, chicken pox, measles and scarlet fever. Venereal diseases (syphilis and gonorrhoea) reached epidemic proportions and 90% of Dja Dja Warrung women were thought to be suffering from syphilis by late 1841. This also had the effect of rendering them infertile and caused a plummeting birth rate (Haw & Munro, 2010). Those most dramatically affected were the groups who had most contact with European settlers.

White settlement followed promptly in the years up to 1842. Captain Hutton, who had been a lieutenant in The Bengal Army, established The Campaspe Plains Station in 1838 in the area now known as Axedale. Such developments severely disrupted traditional sources of food and medicines, introduced diseases and caused violent conflict with the white settlers (Cusack, 2002). In 1885 Kimberly cited the observations of JJ Pascoe, an earlier observer of the settlement process:

*“One day the black man was monarch of all the wilderness. A few days later his domain was invaded by the white man...The invaders took possession of the land because it was goodly and the black savages melted away before their very presence and were dispossessed in every direction” (Kimberly, 1895)*

Hutton squatted on 114,000 acres in 1838, and the following year two of his shepherds were killed after conflict with the Dja Dja Warrung, who had speared a sheep. The next day he organised a vigilante squad of white settlers to pursue the offenders. Nineteen of the Dja Dja Warrung were shot as they fled, and the following day another six met the same fate. Hutton sold his land to other settlers in 1840 for £10,000 (Cusack, 2002). Crippling droughts and depression in succeeding years saw portions of this property sold to others.

This frontier history is of particular interest to my own extended family. In the 1850s, the land was further divided and sold to Irish immigrants. My great grandfather was one of these purchasers and we still own considerable acreage there to this day. In this respect, my family, like many others in Australia, became beneficiaries of the frontier wars, for we continue to own farmland where Captain Hutton initiated a massacre of local Aborigines.

By December 1852 the population of Dja Dja Warrung was estimated at 142 people, whereas they had numbered between one and two thousand just 15 years previously. In 1864 when they were resettled to Coranderk near Healesville there were only 31 adults and seven children left (Haw & Munro, 2010). In the past two years two elders from the tribe have returned to the area. However, in the intervening decades tales about shadowy dark figures appearing around the local cemetery on misty nights have become entrenched in local folklore. The Campaspe Creek Massacre therefore provides a clear illustration of how the frontier wars continue to feature in Australian history.

Other initiations into war occurred in the second half of the Nineteenth Century as colonial regiments were raised to support Britain in imperial disputes. In 1861, the Victorian ship HMCSS Victoria was dispatched to help the New Zealand colonial government in its war against Māori in Taranaki. In 1863 further troops were lured to assist in the invasion of the Waikato Province by the offer of free

land settlements. In 1885 the New South Wales government sent an infantry battalion and an artillery battery to support British efforts to repel rebellion in Sudan. Conflict between Britain and Afrikaners in South Africa in the 1890s led to the Second Boer War in 1899. Each of the six Australian colonial governments sent separate contingents to serve with British formations. My family became involved in this when a cousin from Sydney, Gus Slattery, joined the NSW Lancers.

We have a number of letters that Gus sent home to his family and local newspapers while he was away. These clearly indicate that his preparation for and subsequent "baptism of blood" was completed well before World War 1. The volunteers went to England at their own expense, in the hope that they would be accepted for service in the war. They were welcomed by huge crowds as they travelled through the streets of London and were feted by some of the country's most senior political figures. The former Prime Minister, Lord Roseberry, gave a banquet for the 70 Lancers at his Buckinghamshire palace. Gus wrote:

*"I cannot explain it; the grandeur and magnificence of it would blind you ... I never*

*saw such a table in my life. The dinner service was of gold too. First of all we had soup, then followed in quick succession fish, oysters, roast beef, ham and chicken, ducks and ox tongue. For dessert there were jellies and ices of all descriptions, and the drinkables were numerous, including champagne, champagne cup, claret cup, claret, port, sherry, ginger beer, lemonade and soda water, so you can see for yourself what a grand time we had. The fruit was beautiful, especially the hot-house grapes... The next performance was cigars and cigarettes, brought round by the flunkies, and they even struck the matches and held them up." (The Sydney Stock and Station Journal, 13 October 1899)*

He also mentioned that they were to be entertained the next week by Lord Carrington, a former governor of New South Wales. Their farewell from London was another parade through the crowded streets, an address by the Lord Mayor and then a farewell at the station by Lord Carrington and Lord Hampden, another former governor of New South Wales.



**New South Wales Lancers in South Africa.**

Life in South Africa was rather different: long marches, battles, tight rations, temperatures of 105° F and the ravages of war, but at all times Gus exhibited a sense of pride in what he was doing for the “mother country.” On 30/1/1900 the Evening News in Sydney published a letter from a comrade of Gus Slattery which provided details of their living conditions. Walter Ellis reported that:

*“Our bill of fare is simplicity itself. Breakfast, a pint of coffee. Dinner, half a pound of meat. Tea, a pint of tea and half a loaf of bread. When no bread is attainable, three dozen biscuits a man.”*

Gus’ first post refers to “*giving the Boers a jolly good hiding*” in typical British military rhetoric. On other occasions it was more realistic. In his account of the Relief of Kimberley and the capture of Afrikaner troops he wrote:

*“We had heavy rains at the camp and having no tents we were soaked through nightly. The wonder is that we did not all fall victims to colds ... on half rations too, having, of course, to share with our guests.” (The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, 5 May 1900).*

He was also obviously moved by much of the suffering and devastation that he saw. Amidst his rejoicing in the capture of Kimberley he lamented the terrible state of “*the poor starved looking creatures, especially the women and children, who were forced to live in holes in the ground* (The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, 5 May 1900). He also observed that:

*“It was a sickening sight. In the trenches were dead and wounded Boers, and horses, cattle and mules lying dead all over the place, the stench of which was something awful” (Hawkesbury Advocate, 27 April, 1900)*

However, by the end he was satisfied that “*... the NSW Lancers will go home covered in glory.*” (Hawkesbury Advocate, 27/4/1900). The horrors of war he witnessed were short lived in his memory for he was among the first to volunteer when World War 1 was declared in 1914.

After the defeat of the Afrikaner republics, the Boers formed commando units and conducted a form of guerrilla warfare to disrupt British troop movements and lines of supply. This new phase led

to further recruiting in the Australian colonies and the raising of the Bushmen’s Contingents, with these soldiers usually being volunteers with horse-riding and shooting skills but little military experience. After Federation in 1901, eight Australian Commonwealth Horse battalions of the newly created Australian Army were also sent to South Africa, although they saw little fighting before the war ended. Such units included the Bushveldt Carbineers, who gained notoriety as the unit in which Harry “Breaker” Morant and Peter Handcock served before their British Court Martial and execution for war crimes.

A total of 16,175 Australians served in South Africa: 251 were killed in action; 267 died of disease; and 43 went missing in action. A further 735 were wounded. Six Australians were awarded the Victoria Cross.

The dawning of the next century was accompanied by the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900. This was to engage Australians in their first international, as opposed to imperial, conflict. A number of western nations, including many European powers, the United States and Japan, sent forces as part of the China Field Force to protect their interests. In June, the British government sought permission from the Australian colonies to dispatch ships from the Australian Squadron to China. The colonies also offered to assist further, but as most of their troops were still engaged in South Africa, they had to rely on naval forces for manpower. The force dispatched was a modest one, with Britain accepting 200 men from Victoria, 260 from New South Wales and the South Australian ship HMCS Protector. The contingents from New South Wales and Victoria sailed for China on 8 August 1900. They left China in March 1901, having played only a minor role in a few offensives and punitive expeditions and in the restoration of civil order. Six Australians died from sickness and injury, but none were killed as a result of enemy action.

The foregoing account indicates that treating Australia’s involvement in World War 1 as “a baptism of blood” was both inaccurate and a radical overstatement. It is more accurate to regard it as a continuation of responses to British imperial interests. The frontier wars were a feature of white occupation of the continent and the indigenous inhabitants were the major victims. The Campaspe Creek Massacre indicates that there were also white

casualties in such conflicts. The baptisms in overseas conflicts were a response to imperial demands and sentiments. Bean's representation of our nation's involvement in World War 1 is inaccurate and our Anzac tradition is based on faulty historical thinking.

#### References

The preceding account draws upon research undertaken for an extended family history *County*

*Clare Axedale & Beyond; An Irish Clan Downunder* (Collard & O'Grady, 2015). It draws upon the following references: *The Anzac Book* (Bean, 1916), *The Official History of Australia in the War 1914-1918* (Bean, 1946), *Bendigo A History* (Cusack, 2002), *Footsteps Across The Loddon Plains: A Short History* (Haw & Munro, 2010) and *Bendigo and vicinity* (Kimberly, 1895).



**Anzac Eve Vigil 2013**

## We Remember Them

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*Judith Kelly*

We will remember the first brutal contact that Our Ancestors had with the invaders of another country – a country that couldn't look after their own people.

A people that brutally and savagely took this Sacred Land away from us.

A land that we cared and nurtured just as ourselves.

“Yes we remember them!”

Our Ancestors were murdered – massacred in family groups – raped, tortured and dispersed from our families, culture and Sacred Lands.

“Yes we remember them!”

Our Ancestors were moved from Sacred Lands to far, far away places and onto others' Ancestral Sacred Land, never to see their families again – let alone practise their Spiritual Beliefs, Practices and continue our culture and responsibility to Keep The Land Sweet.

“Yes we remember them!”

Our Ancestors could not defend their family, loved ones and communities against the thrust of guns they'd never seen before. So many perished!

“Yes we remember them!”

Our Ancestral menfolk were taken hundreds of miles away from families to go and build the new experiment the British were engineering – Gaols and Genocide.

“Yes we remember them!”

Our Ancestors have passed on now but have handed on the “message stick” that our Nation still has responsibility to land. Responsibilities of the landscape on top of the ground. The responsibility to acknowledge that We Don't Own The Land but The Land Owns Us and if we don't look after her, She will not look after us. We and our Ancestors all around the world all have this responsibility to care and nurture the Sacred Earth of which there is only the One that we can live on.

“Yes we remember them!”

Read at Anzac Eve Peace Vigil, 2013.

## “Honest History”

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Peter Maywald

While Australia’s mass media continue to promulgate unsubstantiated myths about the nation’s military past and its supposedly glorious heritage, in the background there are increasingly fervent debates about the very core of our values and the factual (or otherwise) basis of some of the beliefs we hold dear. Two of those currently causing ripples surround the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and the influence of militarism on our national psyche.

In part, these arise from a deliberate attempt to portray the War Memorial as the “soul of the nation”, in the words of its current director. The institution paints itself as the definitive museum and interpretive centre of the nation at war, including the crucible of wartime activities which indelibly shaped our collective values and culture. But is that a reasonable or accurate description? Some recent work by eminent historians suggests that it is not.

For a start, the AWM has almost no displays or historical records relating to the nation’s longest war – the century-long frontier battle between white colonists and the continent’s Indigenous peoples.

A recent book by historian Henry Reynolds (Reynolds, 2013) explores the dark history of Australia’s Frontier Wars and finds that Australian history is in denial. In reviewing that book, James Rose (Rose, 2013) reflected on a fishing trip to Lake Wyeba, close to a sign reading “Murdering Creek Road.” Rose recounts that “...local lore has it that the name refers to an ambush and massacre in the 1860s of a fatally curious indigenous fishing party by eight white settlers, who shot the group in premeditated cold blood. No-one seems to know what happened after that, but what is clear is that

the name is an anomaly, an example of how common culture occasionally supplants the national agenda.”

Henry Reynolds makes clear in *Forgotten Wars* that the accepted version of colonial history is not about to throw a spotlight on the Murdering Creeks of this world. Rose continues: “the Frontier Wars, the conflict between white settlers and indigenous fighters that occurred mainly pre-Federation, are not part of the national psyche. If they’re memorialised at all, it’s in the sort of bizarrely insensitive names given to the symbols of the banal vanity of the victorious; another road name, a lookout, a tourist attraction, a hill on a farm.”

The importance of Reynolds’ history is the fact that it seeks to rewrite our very foundations as a nation. The visions of Arcadia in the antipodes, inhabited by noble savages keen to yield to the better brains and brawn of the invaders from across the sea, has held this country in its thrall for 200 years or more. Previous attempts to examine it more closely – such as the “culture wars” of the 1990s – have drawn dismissive responses from political leaders, epitomised by former Prime Minister John Howard’s spin on it, as a “black armband view of history”.<sup>1</sup>

As election winners, Howard and his ilk were allowed the gift of writing a form of history they liked. Stability and intellectual dullness discourage diversions from the mainstream approach to history and so the extraordinary story of black versus white warfare, upon which, Reynolds argues, Australia has been founded, has remained, largely, “...a fish that’s never caught on the fishing lines of conventional history”. (Reynolds, 2013)

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Howard used this term frequently. One early source is in his Sir Robert Menzies Lecture of 18 November 1996 (Howard, 1996): *This 'black armband' view of our past reflects a belief that most Australian history since 1788 has been little more than a disgraceful story of imperialism, exploitation, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.*

The Reynolds book details some dark days in the history of Australia, involving warfare, murder, genocide and terrorism. These are at stark odds with the John Howard version or the traditional school history book account of our nation's foundations. The facts are mostly agreed between serious scholars, but their interpretation causes much debate. Reynolds is clear about his position: "If there was no war, then thousands of Aborigines were murdered in a century-long, continent-wide crime wave tolerated by government. There seems to be no other option. It must be one or the other." (Reynolds, 2013)

In the frontier wars, at least 30,000 Aborigines were killed, along with several thousand white settlers. Reynolds says that this was about the economic possession of the country, through unlocking the land for settlers, pastoralists and investors. The Aborigines were simply an obstacle that had to be removed, and if they couldn't or wouldn't allow themselves to be shifted, then they had to be eliminated.

Rose says that: "Reynolds uses the facts of the 'forgotten war' to launch into a critique of the modern obsession with war. He notes there are up to 5,000 memorials around Australia to remember combatants who did not return from conflicts overseas. But there are just a handful to recall the Frontier Wars." (Rose, 2013)

The AWM does not regard the Frontier Wars as "wars involving the nation" and so has no exhibits or resource materials relating to Australia's longest war, which was also very costly in human terms. Reynolds says that this approach skews our thinking even today and allows various falsehoods and untruths to permeate our national historic culture.

Reynolds is one of a group of eminent historians who also questions the myth that Gallipoli saw the birth of our nation.

In 2013, academics Paul Daley, Clare Wright, Marilyn Lake, Mark McKenna and David Stephens established a website and email newsletter entitled *Honest History* (Daley, et al., n.d.), in an attempt to set the record straight. They were particularly galvanised by the approach of the centenary years

of the World War 1 of 1914-19. President Professor Peter Stanley explains in the newsletter that *Honest History* is "a recently formed loose coalition of diverse views, including historians and others, all concerned that the Anzac centenary is getting out of hand (even before it's begun). We worry that over the period 2014-19 Australians will be exposed to bellicose claptrap – to history that is essentially dishonest." (Daley, et al., 2013)

Stanley wonders why Gallipoli seems to obsess us: "Some might contend that it is important because the Australian nation was 'born' on Gallipoli. I frankly don't think that is true. I cannot see how that actually occurred; it's too mystical an explanation. If it was believed by the generation that fought the war, then I think we need to regard it as an artefact of that period, along with the idea of a White Australia or the idea that Australia was part of the British Empire. That Australia, the Australia of 1915, believed all three ideas. Our Australia has shrugged off two of them, but one of those beliefs persists." (Daley, et al., 2013)

It remains a puzzle that we treat a comprehensive military defeat, in a battle against an enemy with which we had no quarrel, as the critical event in the formation of our national values. Australia lurched into a doomed campaign between the British and Ottoman Empires as pawns of our colonial masters, suffering the ultimate humiliation of utter defeat and unconditional withdrawal.

Can this series of events really explain our national character? Or has Anzac Day become symbolic of militaristic nationalist jingoism, egged on by conservative political leaders with reactionary agendas and timid Labor politicians who have lost sight of the internationalist goals of the labour movement?

Those behind *Honest History* have no doubt that as a nation we have been sold a dud version of the nation's heritage for base political reasons. It will be interesting to see whether their voices will be heard during the barrage of military events, flowery rhetoric and exhortations to uphold the questionable "values of the Anzacs" in the 2015 celebrations of past, failed, genocidal wars.

## They simply were not interested!

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Annie Didcott

Having recently retired from paid employment, I decided that now was the time to apply myself to the much more important task of bringing peace to the world. Looking around, it wasn't immediately obvious which way to turn so I opted to join the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, not fully realising that they had already been working hard to promote peace for virtually 100 years.

Undaunted, I decided to get active. Mother's Day was approaching, not that this appealed to me in itself as I had always maintained that it was a totally commercialised piece of nonsense and that I did appreciate and honour my own mother on most of the days of the year. But being confronted by endless advertising as to how to give Mother some wonderful (expensive) gift – French perfume, a boxed arrangement of gorgeous exotic flowers, a visit to a Massage Parlour, a new dishwasher, a brand new car, la, la, la. I decided that women

needed to be reminded of the origin of Mother's Day.

The printer produced 100 copies of Julia Ward Howe's Mother's Day Proclamation<sup>1</sup> and I set out with the intention of offering copies to all the Mothers who would be flocking to enjoy the goings-on in Glebe Park. The plan had been to give them some simple information about the capacity of women to contribute to achieving peace in the world and wake up to the real evils of war.

Funnily enough, no-one seemed very interested and after less than 20 minutes in the Park, I was approached by a stern, female, Security Person in uniform, who marched me over to the Park Entrance and sent me packing: *"this is no place to be handing out leaflets, so kindly go on your way!"* So with about 95 leaflets in hand I went on my way and the Glebe Park Mothers were none-the-wiser. But I was!

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Ward Howe, born 1819 in New York City, penned the Mother's Day Proclamation in 1870; in 1872 the Mothers' Peace Day Observance was first held and the meetings continued for several years. Her idea was widely accepted but it never proved possible to get the day recognised as an official holiday.

## Mother's Day Proclamation<sup>1</sup>

*Arise then...women of this day!  
Arise, all women who have hearts!  
Whether your baptism be of water or of tears!  
Say firmly:  
"We will not have questions answered by irrelevant agencies,  
Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage,  
For caresses and applause.  
Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn  
All that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.  
We, the women of one country,  
Will be too tender of those of another country  
To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."*

*From the bosom of a devastated Earth a voice goes up with  
Our own. It says: "Disarm! Disarm!  
The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."  
Blood does not wipe out dishonor,  
Nor violence indicate possession.  
As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil  
At the summons of war,  
Let women now leave all that may be left of home  
For a great and earnest day of counsel.  
Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.  
Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means  
Whereby the great human family can live in peace...  
Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar,  
But of God -  
In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask  
That a general congress of women without limit of nationality,  
May be appointed and held at someplace deemed most convenient  
And the earliest period consistent with its objects,  
To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,  
The amicable settlement of international questions,  
The great and general interests of peace.*

Julia Ward Howe, 1870

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<sup>1</sup> Originally named by Howe *Appeal to womanhood throughout the world* now known as *Mother's Day Proclamation*. (Howe, 1870)

## On reading *Victoria*<sup>1</sup>

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*Bonnie Goodfellow*

If only  
all children -  
grand and not so -  
with feet on this earth  
could read

and all people -  
partnered and not -  
on this mortal coil  
could relate  
without hate  
and retell

this story:  
written to  
"hack through myths,  
not to hew them."

Of a reign  
with power and might -  
though not all ways -  
"victorious"  
that spawned her  
kaiser grandson's hates  
and her empire's double foes.

Would that we all  
could learn to tell  
and live out different  
tales – to more simply  
live in peace.

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<sup>1</sup> *Victoria* was researched and written by Julia Baird from 2008 to 2016

## Lest We Forget (*Papaver rhoeas*)

Natalie Maras



*Sculpture 56cmH x 30cmW x 30cmD*

There is a rich botanical legacy that exists alongside the human story. This sculpture presents two realistic poppy buds, (one of which has fallen to ground on the verge of flowering) and a fake remembrance flower positioned as if facing its ancestors. The message is that not only humans suffer during periods of conflict – hundreds of successive generations of mute plants may be wiped out on the road to 'peace'. Through its accidental association with human conflict, this

common agricultural weed, a native of Europe, has done quite well for itself having been launched from the soil to international human attention in a way that ensures it will unlikely be forgotten. However whilst the *theme* of poppies proliferates in the strangest of sterile environments (malls, supermarkets, schools, houses of parliament) they are mostly impoverished mimics of their splendid botanical ancestors.

## Gallipoli

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Margaret Naylor

No ceremony here, no tolling bells,  
no solemn beauty of a ritual,  
no eulogy in hush of church or mosque.  
Just silent rows awaiting burial.

All day the mortar shells scream back and forth,  
a canopy above the whistling lead.  
A sound so furious it numbs the brain  
while smoke and flying mud obscure the dead.  
The pristine cove is littered with debris.  
A young man's hair is ruffled by the tide  
and further out to sea a *danse macabre*  
of corpses swaying gently, side by side.

The violent purple evening brings a pause.  
By darkness blinded, now the gunners cease.  
Survivors huddle under makeshift roofs.  
The dead are counted, tagged in transient peace.  
There is no rest for those who go to war.  
These sounds will be forever in their ears.  
These sights will be forever in their eyes  
and comrades lost walk with them down the years.

They came on this adventure, young and strong,  
this grand excursion to a distant land.  
Their childhood faces yet to be erased,  
to make the great transition, boy to man.  
How is it that the filth and hate of war  
transforms to something noble, something pure?  
How could death and destruction forge this bond,  
this brotherhood and love that will endure?

Yet it is so, for legend came from loss  
and brought a nation to maturity.  
They live forever, those whose blood was shed  
and we will not forget Gallipoli.  
The bells toll every year on ANZAC Day.  
Dawn ceremony, solemn ritual,  
the Ode recited: "They shall not grow old"  
and silence to remember those who fell.

# In Moonlight

An excerpt from the libretto of A Passion for Peace



## 3. In Moonlight

28 APRIL 1915

$\text{♩} = 100$

1 *This music plays while the moon comes up* FEMALE OWL

Soprano S'teller

MALE OWL Who who

Man Who who Who who Who who Who who

Fl. *tr* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*

A. Fl. *mp* *mf* *rit.*

6

Soprano S'teller Who who

Man MALE OWL *mp* Who who Who who

Fl. *tr*

A. Fl.

Vln.

10  $\text{♩} = 100$

Soprano S'teller Twen - ty eighth of Ap-ril nine-teen fif-teen, The round Earth is wrapt in the spell of a huge moon.

Mezzo S'teller Twen - ty eighth of Ap-ril nine-teen fif-teen, The round Earth is wrapt in the spell of a huge moon.

Alto S'teller Twen - ty eighth of Ap-ril nine-teen fif-teen, The round Earth is wrapt in the spell of a huge moon.

Fl. *tr* *f* Owl

A. Fl.

Vln.

*A Passion for Peace. Part II*

## In Moonlight – 28 April 1915

Glenda Cloughley

### About *A Passion for Peace*

In April 2015, Glenda Cloughley's new choral drama *A Passion for Peace* gave a big Canberra citizens' voice to the same love of harmony that drew 1300 women together from 12 warring and neutral nations for the only international peace conference of the First World War. Forgotten by military historians but influential and prescient of all the 20th century's great advances in international human rights law, the 1915 International Congress of Women took place in The Hague during the same week as the Anzac forces' Gallipoli landings.

The 90-minute work is a passion in the same sense as Christians' traditional Easter passions -- showing how human love, imagination and wisdom can be strong enough to bring renewal, even from the midst of appalling destruction and suffering.

Canberra's A Chorus of Women presented the world premiere season of *A Passion for Peace* in Albert Hall for the Congress centenary. With musical direction by Johanna McBride, the Passion cast and production team included some of Canberra's finest soloists and instrumentalists, a 50-strong Chorus of Women, Arawang Primary School Choir in the role of Children's Chorus, and the voice and rap beats of Canberra-grown producer-singer-songwriter Danny Pratt.

The Passion season was the centrepiece of a five-day Festival for Peace, also organised by A Chorus of Women. The production was supported financially by: the ACT Arts Fund; the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture; the New Zealand High Commission; the embassies of Belgium, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, The Netherlands and Sweden; and numerous generous citizens of Canberra.

### About 'In Moonlight – 28 April 1915'

This excerpt from the Passion libretto is set on 28 April 1915, the first night of the Congress. Beginning in moonlit country surrounding the two-



*The Children's Chorus move at full tilt to Danny Pratt's Morse beat in The Telegram Rap, A Passion for Peace, April 2015*

year-old city of Canberra – a habitat of the Powerful Owl – the poetry opens into a worldwide view as the full moon flies around the Earth. Gallipoli, France, Belgium, the south coast of England and the Dutch capital are all illuminated on the way to the Chorus of Women's dramatic voicing of the first Congress resolution.

The excerpt includes the names of 24 soldiers who enlisted from the Canberra region, and quotations from the Gallipoli diary of George Cloughley, Glenda's grandfather from the beautiful town of Riverton on the south coast of New Zealand's South Island.

### Note on Text and Layout

Unvoiced words in the text are singers' roles and stage directions (shown in italic script), and place and song names (bold text).

In Moonlight – 28 April 1915

*Storytellers Trio*

28th of April  
1915

The round earth is wrapt  
in the spell of a huge moon ...

*Powerful Owl calls*

## CANBERRA

Where Molonglo River  
crosses the plain  
People round Canberra  
hear Powerful Owl call

Canberra Ngambri  
Ngunnawal country

Here, where an ideal city is planned  
Traumatime stories engraved in the land  
Here, where an ideal city could rise  
New names enlist on Traumatime's roll

*Individual chorus women call each Canberra soldier's name as though from a dream*

Edwin Oldfield... Charlie Lee... Frank Cotter... Billy Clark... Wilf Monk... Stan O'Grady... Len Brownsmith...  
Henry Buckpitt... Michael McMahon... Michael Scannell... Ernie and George McLaughlin... Charlie and  
Ernie Mayo... Charles Campbell... Bill Carney... Mack Southwell... Tom Maxwell... Ernie Murray...  
Jack Cregan... The Chaplain Frederick Ward... Andy Cunningham... Walter Moore... Jack Webb

*Storytellers*

The frosted ground sparkles  
dusted in silver  
Two-year-old city  
with men gone to war  
Trees breathing quiet  
Round hills silent  
Only Owl's call

*Powerful Owl calls, continuing*

in the soft nest of night  
Oracle bird  
singing of change  
Dark song piercing  
stone and bone

*Owl falls silent*

*Storytellers and Women's Chorus*

28th of April

1915

High in the sky

The full moon's gone sailing

**GALLIPOLI**

*Storytellers*

At Gallipoli moon floats in the night  
spreads silver shrouds over beaches and hills  
where three thousand bodies of young men lie still

*Women's Chorus*

These are the three thousand three-day-old dead  
Young Turks and Anzacs gone to war  
Sons, brothers, husbands who will come home no more

*Storytellers*

After his first day up Shrapnel Gully  
caught among corpses of men and mules  
a lad from Service Corps our 20-year-old Grandad  
on a hill above the lines lifts his gaze to the sky

There in the moonlight  
this dreamer and singer  
confines in his journal confides to his grandkids  
the noises he'll hear the rest of his years

Already in his ears that Traumatime music!  
Trying to pour out of his head ...

*The Young Grandfather*

Vibrating shocks! Shrieking shells!  
Shouts and cries! Pounding dread!  
Down in that gully sharp snipers' crack  
Whistling bullets criss-cross the dead

Where shrapnel rips water  
there at the Cove blood on the beach...

*falling into reverie*

... The beach is bathed in light  
like the sea at home ...  
so far away yet almost here

## EUROPE

### *Storytellers*

And now westward and north  
the quiet moon flies  
covers battle-worn Belgium  
in silver and black

fills mirrors of water all over France  
lakes and rivers ponds and streams  
with tranquil illusion of beauty and peace

And over the Channel bright sleeve of sea  
women are waiting one hundred and eighty  
Passports cancelled because it's said



**Performing 'In Moonlight: 28 April 1915' in *A Passion for Peace***

*Robin Dalton, The Young Grandfather at Gallipoli, with Storytellers (from left)*

*Glenda Cloughley, Maartje Sevenster and Judith Clingan*

*(Photo by Peter Hislop used with permission)*

*The very official English voice of Lieutenant-Colonel Walker, Chief Permit Officer*

'There's much inconvenience  
in holding large meetings of political character  
so close to the seat of war.'

*Storytellers*

They're still listening for news of permits to travel  
Listening for news of a Netherlands ferry ...

*Women's Chorus*

... Now, we women ...

*The opening bars of Resolution One sing softly at a distance*

*Storytellers*

Can they hear the women singing?  
Can they hear the women bringing  
their longing their grief  
to the moonlit Hague?

*Music swelling mightily in full Congress session*

## **Resolution One**

*Chorus of Women led by Jane Addams*

Now, we women  
in international congress assembled  
protest against the madness and horror of war  
involving as it does  
the reckless sacrifice of human life  
and the destruction of so much -- so much  
that humanity has labored through centuries  
to build up

## **Recordings**

1. An April 2015 premiere season live performance recording of Resolution One can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/dA0iE1OLU8>
2. *A Passion for Peace* was live webcast and an entire performance, including 'In Moonlight', can be viewed via [www.chorusofwomen.org](http://www.chorusofwomen.org)
3. Glenda's Centennial Fanfare 'We Women are a WILPF', recorded by A Chorus of Women, can be viewed as broadcast into the 2015 Centennial Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in The Hague at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ab7jC8gNTFk&feature=youtu.be>

# 1915 Peace Women's Photo Quilt [2015]

*Queanbeyan Quilters*



**This quilt was displayed at the Albert Hall performances of *A Passion for Peace* in April 2015.**

This photo quilt was designed and made at a one day PeaceKnits workshop with Queanbeyan Quilters in December 2014. Robyn McPherson led the group work, did much of the cutting and stitching, and provided technical support for printed images used on the quilt. Logan's Patchwork Fabrics of Leichhardt provided the 48 Australian indigenous, flora and fauna fabric squares used on the back of the photo quilt. Photos on the front of the quilt were sourced from the Australia History Project that helped to mark in April 2015 the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The top three group photos feature early twentieth century WILPF activities in support of peace and disarmament. The bottom five photos feature individual founders of peace women's league branches in Australia, placed in chronological order (from left to right) on the quilt:

Eleanor Moore (1875-1949)

Doris Amelia Blackburn (1889-1970)

Irene Greenwood (1898-1992)

Margaret Holmes (1909-2009)

Stella Cornelius (1919-2010)

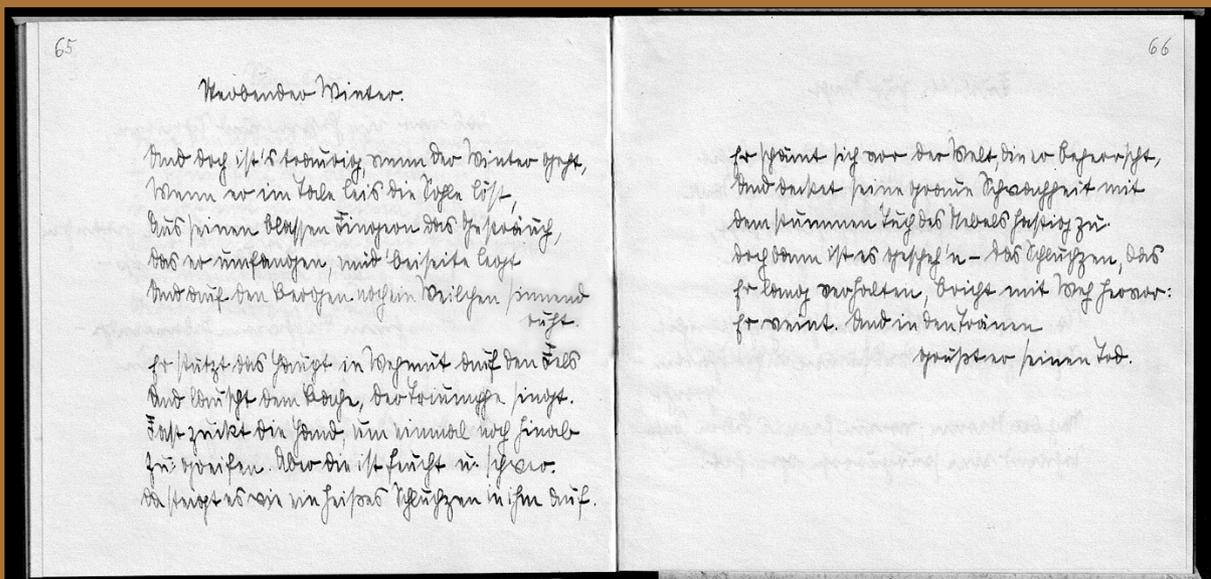


**Australian Indigenous Designs are used on the back of the Photo Quilt**

# Families

## forget me not

Families are the carriers of stories





## Fractured

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*Helen Curry*

This Peace Works art was inspired by Lee Kernaghan's "Spirit of the Anzacs." He speaks of sons and daughters "born beneath the Southern Cross." They are one with us. I researched men and women who were soldiers and nurses. The images are based on Australians who gave up their peace, and often their life, to secure peace for our country and the world.

**Top:** Indigenous Soldier Private Miller Mack (1894-3 September 1919) from Point McLeay, South Australia. He served with the 50<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion in France.

**Centre left:** Captain Gordon Curlewis (19 March 1885-9 May 1915) served in the 16<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion and was killed in action at Gallipoli on 2 May 1915.

**Centre:** Sister Sarah Melanie De Mestre (1877-1961) from Greenwell Point, NSW, was one of the first nurses to care for casualties of Gallipoli. She served on hospital ships in Rabaul and Suva, and on Lemnos, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian General Hospital, which had 1040 beds for Gallipoli casualties. She continued her work at close of the offensive when the hospital moved to Egypt, and later to England. The final 2 years she served in France at the No.2 General Australian Hospital, at Abbeville, where she was second in charge. On 4 June 1918 she was awarded the 2nd Class Royal Red Cross, which was presented to her by His Majesty King George V at Buckingham Palace.

**Centre right:** Private Leslie John Langdon of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion embarked on 22 December 1914 on HMAT Themistocles A32. He was killed in action at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 aged 29.

**Bottom:** Private James (Jim) Charles Martin was born on 3 January 1901 and died at Gallipoli on 25 October 1915, and is thought to be the youngest Australian to have died during service at Gallipoli. He served with the 21st Australian Infantry Battalion. He enlisted at age 14 years and 3 months, after his mother reluctantly gave the required written permission, since he had threatened to run away and never write to her again. After training, he departed aboard HMAT Berrima, sailing to Egypt, from where he was deployed to Gallipoli. The transport ship he was aboard was torpedoed by a German submarine, and he and others spent hours in the water before being rescued. On 7 September he was stationed at Wire Gully. Conditions were harsh, and on 15 October he was evacuated to a hospital, suffering from typhoid fever. He had lost half his body weight. Three months short of his 15<sup>th</sup> birthday he died of heart failure.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/people>

<http://www.southcoastregister.com.au/story>

## At the Beaumont Hamel Memorial France

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*Moya Pacey*

*It was a magnificent display of trained and disciplined valour, and its assault only failed of success because dead men can advance no further.<sup>1</sup>*

The boy's letter hangs straight on the pale wall,  
'Don't cry Mary, this way we won't starve  
I promise I'll be home for Christmas.'  
His penmanship is upright and precise.  
Steady hands that Somme morning pulling  
On bright blue puttees; fingering  
His caribou insignia and pleased  
That he does not stink of fish.

He wants to be gone over the top  
With the other eight-hundred Newfies-  
Farmers and fishermen-  
Dead men who stepped out  
Heads bent; chins tucked in  
Against the fierce snow of battle.

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<sup>1</sup> Said of the actions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Newfoundland Regiment by the Commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> British Division. at the Battle of the Somme

## Finding Peace

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*Lois Holland*

“The war to end all wars” ...what disillusion in his voice. Perhaps he believed it when he went off to do his bit for the “mother country”, yet he rarely spoke of the war, was a cheery person and a fun Dad.

He enlisted in 1916 and was wounded in April 1918 at Villers Bretonneux where he had lost many comrades. He spent many months in hospital in England with shoulder and hand injuries. He had also contracted tuberculosis. Although he was told he would never use his hand again, he exercised to improve it. Years later he would sometimes amuse us kids by writing with both hands at once. I didn't understand about the long convalescence which had led to this ambidextrous trick. I only knew he had a missing finger and big gash scars in his shoulder and hand.

He often took us to, but never marched in, the Anzac march. He and his small group of surviving friends kept in touch down the years. Dad was not a drinking man. He spent the weekends with the family or in the garden. Also, we had a wind-up gramophone and sometimes he played the old war songs, skits and the loved music of the times. Occasionally, he amused us by dancing round like a dainty elephant. On wet days he would march us round and round the verandah for exercise. We thought it great fun. After Sunday School, he would collect us on sunny days and take us on long walks, telling us rambling stories, often about gremlins.

He was very caring of those returned soldiers in our town who had been gassed and of their widows and families. Many of those men didn't survive long. We three children had piano lessons from one widow

and another helped my mother on washdays. Dad met many people as he worked round the town. He also became a Mason and helped with their charity programme.

We had nearly a dozen fruit trees; several varieties of apple, two plum, two cherries and one pear; also a chook yard and a splendid vegetable garden. We didn't need to buy eggs or vegies. Pumpkins dried on the laundry roof. Onions hung in the garage above sacks of potatoes, wheat, shell grit and bran. During the depression years and by WWII, Dad had already established a “victory” garden in our long backyard. The fowls provided plenty of manure. The trees were properly pruned and the garden tended with care.

He was very sad there had to be another war. I don't believe any serviceman would have wanted war after what they had seen and experienced. He joined the VDC (Volunteer Defence Corps) as did my under-aged brother. My cousins came from the city to farewell him as they went off to war. He listened intently to the news bulletins and we children never made a sound. WWII was a sad time.

Nevertheless, he created a happy life with my Mum for we three children and he enjoyed life in our town. As well as walks in the bush he often took us for picnics and drives in the countryside. We lived simply but contentedly during and after WWII.

Sometimes he said he was going up the backyard to see Parson Greenfield. There he communed with his own little peaceful world.

# The Myrtleford Lads

John Collard



**Myrtleford War Memorial**

June 1969

It's bitter here on winter nights. The chill invades my bones beneath the sullen hills. The windows are beginning to frost. By morning ice chandeliers will adorn the rusted spouts.

I throw extra logs on the grate. That silvertail Menzies is sending Australian conscripts to Vietnam. He's warbling on about communist threats and the American Alliance. Another lot of lads condemned to a foreign war. It takes me back to World War 1 and what it did to our family. Three of my brothers heeded the call "to defend The Empire" and left the rest of us and their fiancées to worry and fret.

Charlie and Fred went to Gallipoli. We took comfort that they were together, hoped they could look out for each other. But they failed. We got the letter saying Charlie was missing in action in August 1915. He was never found. I've got all the letters he

wrote and the messages of condolence here in the old ammo box. Addie tied them into bundles before she died. Fred was redeployed to France.

Jim followed his brothers. He too ended up in the putrid trenches, the rotting corpses and carnivorous rats of The Western Front. He was still there when the Armistice was declared in November 1918.

That war did more to destroy our family than any other blow which has beset us. Dad died before then but Mum struggled on with Charlie and Addie as backstops. The younger girls helped too. Despite bad seasons and rabbit plagues, home was always a happy place. Mum was always poised like a sentinel on the sagging verandah. Addie always knew the local gossip.

Many of the other local lads did not return. There were a lot of spinsters including Addie, Nell and Emily around Myrtleford for the next few decades. Mum died in the Twenties and the running of the farm was left to Addie and Jim. I gave up my job at the railways to help.

Tonight I can almost hear their voices on the wind creeping under the door. I sit beside the fire and the flames cast their images before me. Memory plays tricks on an old man like me. I'll open the trunk where Addie filed their letters. They will speak to me again.

1915

Charlie left for Broadmeadows training camp early in the year. He was buoyed up by the cheering and flags as the local lads boarded the train at Wangaratta. They all believed it was a duty they could not shirk. He was sent to Egypt a few months later. He was quite chirpy before he and Fred left for Gallipoli:

*1.6.1915*

*In concluding I would ask you not to worry about Fred or I as every man who gets wounded is looked after tip top...And Dear Old Mother, if we*

*should go under feel proud of the fact that you reared two sons who will do their job and who are not afraid to die for their country...,*

*Well Goodnight, Love from Charlie*

What the hell did he mean telling us “not to worry”? We loved him. He was our leader after Dad died. He was leaving Egypt for the trenches, not a Mediterranean holiday! Had the propaganda convinced him, that he was off on an adventure which would be over by Christmas?

The next one tried to put the best face on a grim situation. I know their letters were censored but the happy tone belied the contents:

*11/6/1915*

*Dear Mother*

*To let you know that Fred and I are just tip top. We are now behind the firing line having a spell after a fortnight in the trenches. We don't do much but eat and sleep, also have a swim daily. Fred has a fairly safe job here, he is on the phone most of the time. I have lost three of my fellows. All the Myrtleford lads were wonderfully lucky considering what they have gone through—only three wounded...*

*From your Affect. son Charlie.*

I remember Emily and Babs sobbing as this letter was read. Even the stalwart Abbie had pursed her lips. Men were getting wounded and Charlie was treating it as a lucky escapade!

His next letter gave us a glimpse of the truth:

*20/7/1915*

*Well Add I am sitting in our Mess just after having tea, Bully beef biscuits and cocoa. Its rather hot in the daytime but the nights are fine – it don' require any blankets. We never take off our boots or equipment. Always ready you see. It tells on some of the fellows' nerves, am pleased to say my nerves are all right and was never in better health in my life.*

The next letter was his last:

*27/7/1915*

*Well Mother the winter will be over by the time you get this. I hope you have a good Spring.*

Three weeks later we received notice he was “missing in action.” Friends tried to reassure us that this probably meant “wounded or taken prisoner” and praised Mum as a “Spartan Mother” “who gave” her son “freely to her country.”

The following week The Myrtleford Mail reported his death:

*Widespread regret was felt throughout Myrtleford District when it was learned that Lieut. Charles Carthew was missing. On Monday notification was received that Lieut. Carthew was dead. The Rev. Morrison and Mr. Jack Carthew drove at once to Happy Valley and broke the sad news to the deceased officer's mother and sisters, who needless to say, were prostrated by the heavy stroke.*

June 1969

Yes, it was my job to announce his death to my family. I was trembling like a willow the whole time. Mother was standing on the verandah and I knew immediately she feared the worst. I told her quietly. She just nodded and sat down silently on the red-gum bench. Addie came out and guessed what we had to bear. Always the practical stoic she asked how I would tell the younger girls. We gathered them around the kitchen table. Emily sat solid in disbelief. Babs burst into hysterical tears and railed against the foolishness of war. The Reverend, who had accompanied me, suggested we join hands and pray for Charlie's soul.

I will never forget that moment. It's seared into my mind like scalded steel. The following days were shadowed by funereal silence. We held a memorial service at the church and the whole district came to support us. Mrs. Mulder, whose husband had shared a dugout with Charlie, sent a consoling letter to Mother:

*11/9/1915*

*I just received a letter from my husband. He and your son were great chums. He had the greatest respect and admiration for your son and told me to a man everyone in his Troop just adored him. Your boy often sent kind messages to me. I feel so for you, but how very proud of such a son you must be. I can see his grand, strong face now and he just had to have a hero's death and weep for you in your loss.*

I too can see his grand, strong face and I still weep as I place this letter back into the bundle which Addie tied with black ribbon. I still feel the loss like a gallows rope around my neck. My beloved brother, I miss you tonight as I have across the years. War took you from us and I needed your comfort through the barren years.

May 1970

It's been a beautiful Autumn. The leaves are tinged with red and gold. A crisp breeze begins to accompany the early frosts but the air is like champagne. It's getting time to light the fire again in the evenings. I may even look at some of those old war letters again tonight.

Old Bill down at the Historical Museum has asked me if I will bequeath them. I can't see any reason not to. Perhaps the next generation will learn about the horrors of war before they rush into another one. I hear there is to be a moratorium throughout Australia this month to mobilise protest against the Vietnam War.

I'll have a look at what James, my youngest brother had to say. He settled in Perth with his fiancée after the war but Addie got the letters back over here before she died. He must have been a romantic soul for a letter he wrote to Nellie Brown before his departure sounds like the lyrics of an American pop song. They're tied with a lavender ribbon if I recall rightly:

17/11/1915

*Tonight darling you are the one and only thing that my thoughts are on. My one hope is that you will be the same girl you are now when I return and you know to be that you must be good and not to fret because I am away.*

He had a hard time over there on The Somme. In August 1916 he "was buried in a shell hole" and was exposed to the nerve gas which destroyed the health and later lives of so many soldiers in the trenches. From time to time he was evacuated to hospitals to recover but returned to the front again without protest. He was awarded a Military Medal for heroism. In one letter to our mother he was rather frank and worried that the "censors" might intercept his post:

23/10/1917

*My Dear Mother.*

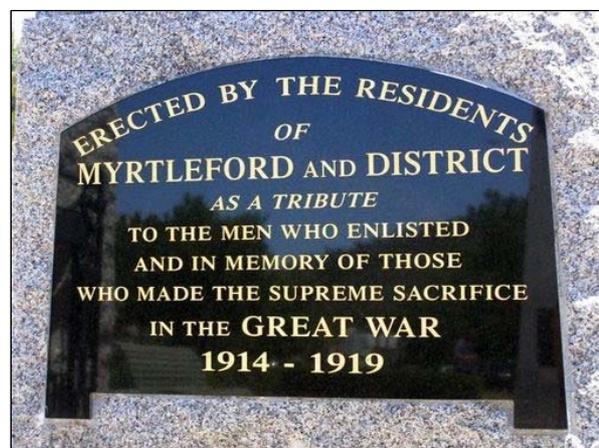
*Just a line to say that I am practically well with the exception of being almost without a voice owing to the effects of gas which the Huns issue at intervals for our benefit, some of our chaps are almost blind as a result.*

*I would sooner have lived in the pigsties we used to have at home than in a hole like this. I was only wondering the other day what sort of men we will be in a few years even if we are lucky enough to come through.*

Jim did come through but like so many of his war mates he became a silent man who never spoke about his experiences at the front. He was also to suffer a lifetime of bronchitis and pneumonia as a result of the damage the gas had done to his lungs. Poor Nellie became his lifelong nurse. Despite this, he was a gentle soul, one could almost say a man of peace. His family remember him fondly.

We still don't know where Charlie is buried on Gallipoli and his fiancée Ethel remained a spinster. The war blighted her life too.

They're all gone now. I'm the last survivor here at Happy Valley. The local lads are all recorded on the memorial in town and on Fridays I always take off my hat in respect before I walk on to the cemetery where my sisters lie in solitary graves in the shadow of the pines. However, I won't be doing that next week. I'm going down to Melbourne to march in that moratorium. It's my quiet way of protesting against the futility of war.



## In Memoriam Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970

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*John Collard*

You didn't recover from barbed snares and mustard gas  
till 1929, a decade after "the war to end all wars."

By then Berlin cabarets  
were rehearsing "The Jewish Menace."

Your comrades were pale school boys  
led astray by teachers  
mouthing patriotic prose  
sending you to the draft of 1916.

Before then days had been carnivals,  
blue skies, transparent butterflies  
shimmering meadows studded with fiery poppies,  
the ecstasy of warm summer winds.

Kemmerich was the first to fall,  
wax hands protruding from trench dirt,  
hair cork-screwed on shrinking skull.  
Muller inherited his boots!

You writhed before martyred horses  
dragging entrails in anguished circles,  
mouths steaming blood.  
Dettering ended their agonies with a shotgun.

The earth convulsed in graveyards;  
dead fingers pinioned your shoulders,  
a coffin imprisoned you  
to an audience of gaping masks.

Survivors yearned for peace,  
lines of poplars, truant streams,  
Beethoven spilling from apartments  
apparitions from the past.

Fantasies were roused by a circus poster,  
a girl in a light summer dress,  
red leather belt,  
white buckled shoes,  
sensuous silk stockings.  
She inhales mist besides a smiling lake,  
red lips moistened  
by a glass of autumn wine.

You were the sole survivor of Second Company  
the others perished under green skies,  
a month before the Armistice.  
It became "All Quiet On The Western Front."

# Sergeant Thomas Richard Knight

*Adrienne Johns*

## *17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces*

On 19<sup>th</sup> August 1916, 23 year old shop assistant Thomas Richard Knight lifted his right hand and took the oath.

On his service record Thomas is described as 5 feet and 7¼ inches tall, with a chest measurement of 34 inches. His complexion was dark with brown hair and eyes, and his religion was given as Methodist.

Thomas had actually enlisted a few days' earlier on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August at Victoria Barracks after a rudimentary, but thorough medical examination.

On enlistment Thomas was allotted to the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements to the New South Wales based 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion, raised a few months earlier in Liverpool on the outskirts of Sydney. After initial recruit and basic infantry training in and around the military encampment at Liverpool, on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1915 he embarked on His Majesty's Australian Transport (HMAT) ship the A14 *Euripides*. On board were 2500 troops bound for England.

It is not clear whether Thomas joined the battalion at Gallipoli or remained in Egypt awaiting their return. By the time he had reached the Middle East a decision had already been made to withdraw all Australian and New Zealand forces from that blood soaked battleground, and preparations had already begun by the time he disembarked from the *Euripides*. Over the nights of 18 and 19 December 1915 the battalion, at the time at Quinn's Post, successfully withdrew all troops without one single casualty and within days they were all safely disembarked at Mudros.

Thomas' service record states that he was 'taken on strength' of 17 Battalion on 8 February 1916 and in March that year sailed with the battalion for France on the HMT *Arcadian*, arriving Marseilles on 23 March 1916. Immediately on disembarking the men boarded trains and sped north to Thiennes in the Armentieres section of the line, arriving at 0930hrs on 26 March.

The first major battle Thomas took part in was Pozieres, commencing on 25 July and continuing throughout the notorious August Offensives on the Somme. The day after the offensive began, however, he suffered his first wound which laid him up in the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian General Hospital at Etaples for a month. On release from hospital he returned to his unit just in time for it to be withdrawn from the trenches to act as Divisional reserve in a quiet sector of Belgium around Reninghelst, south west of Ypres where they relieved other Australian and British troops on the front line.

For most of the remainder of September and October the battalion moved by train or by foot from sector to sector as action in the north of the allied line intensified.

In November Thomas was promoted Lance Corporal and on 30 January 1917 was promoted Corporal to fill a vacancy left by an NCO who had fallen sick. Two days later the battalion was back in the line relieving the 6<sup>th</sup> Gordon Highlanders in an area near Bapaume Road. Almost immediately they were attacked by Germans using gas and machine guns to try and drive the Australians out, but they held firm.



**HMAT *Euripides* departing Melbourne  
11 September 1916**

By now the weather was so bad that the soldiers had to be relieved every 2-3 days. Every morning they woke to a deep frost, and the biting winds meant that any exposed skin was soon blue with cold. It was under such conditions that, on one of the many trips out of and, a few days later, back into the trenches, Thomas was recommended for gallantry.

At dawn on 27 February as his platoon was being led back into the trenches, Germans suddenly opened fire criss-crossing the ground with intense machine gun fire. Thomas's officer, Lieutenant Dickens, was hit and badly wounded. Without thought to his own safety, Thomas rushed forward and dragged the officer to safety. In doing so he received a bad gunshot wound to the thigh and was immediately evacuated. With little that they could do in France the medical authorities ordered him evacuated to England where he could receive more intensive treatment. On 5 March 1917 he was carried on board the Hospital Ship *St Andrew* at Bologne and transported to England and a hospital near Birmingham where he remained for over four months. Unfortunately, his recommendation was not approved at higher headquarters. It is possible that for some reason the recommendation never made it through to the next level in the chain of command.

On 1 August 1917 Thomas, now once more wearing the rank of Lance Corporal to which he reverted on evacuation, returned to France and his battalion. Within two weeks he not only regained his lost Corporal's stripe but was promoted even further to the rank of Sergeant.

Having been taken out of the line to rest and refit, the battalion undertook a number of training exercises to introduce new reinforcements to the realities of life in the trenches and further hone the skills of officers and men for the journey ahead. Unfortunately, for the remainder of that month, and a few days into the next, the weather continued to be miserable, with rain interfering with most days' activities. But by 12 September the men were ready to resume the fight.

Returning to Belgium the battalion found itself almost immediately on the offensive, this time in the area of Menin Road. On 20 September they put in an attack against German positions opposite their trench line, and once more Thomas showed his

courage and leadership. The citation for his Military Medal reads:

*During the operations near WESTHOEK on 20th September 1917 this N.C.O. proved himself a leader of men by his cheery and encouraging example, his absolute disregard for personal safety, and his determination. On the Officer in charge of his platoon becoming a casualty he assumed command and led it through to the third and final objective where he immediately saw to the consolidation of his position and made preparations for the counter-attack. Despite hostile bombardment he held on until the Battalion was relieved. On several previous occasions this N.C.O. has shown great courage but during this operation he excelled his previous high standard, not only by his devotion to duty and courage, but also by his determination and ability to handle men and win their confidence at a time when the situation absolutely demanded this.*

His award for gallantry was published in the London Gazette on 12 December 1917.

This citation does not reflect the difficulty experienced by the officers and men of the battalion in achieving their objectives. The German position was not one long trench but a series of defended positions, each covered by concrete pillboxes from which heavy machine guns covered the ground between the Australians and their own men. Both enemy counter-attack and bombing from German aeroplanes were expected, as was a determined defence by the German troops.

The orders given to the men included the statement that *'The words RETIRE and WITHDRAW are ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN.'* They were to take and hold every piece of ground they covered.

Three minutes before the attack commenced, the Germans, by coincidence or through genuine intelligence, began shelling the Australian positions. Even before the men left their trenches their officers were becoming casualties, and after enduring the bombardment for almost two hours the order to advance was given.

The first to advance was 18 Battalion, followed an hour and twenty minutes later by 17 Battalion whose orders included 'leap frogging' over 18

Battalion should it get bogged down in the fight. At first the going was relatively quiet with few casualties from direct enemy fire. But at 10.30 the German shelling increased, falling mainly on the men moving forward. This was not helped by the allied artillery, behind which the troops were advancing. This was reported as 'erratic' and at times falling on their own men.

The objectives were three lines of German trenches, each given to one of the three Australian battalions to capture. The first two were quickly taken by the Australians, but the third and furthest line, 17 Battalion's objective, was still in enemy hands. After a brief fight the trench line was soon taken, now the task of holding onto the gains began.

For two days the men fought off attacks by the enemy determined to regain their lost ground. Aircraft continually strafed the men on the ground and German artillery pounded them, but still they held on. A history of 17 Battalion written by one of its former commanding officers tells us that Thomas was one among many who gave 'an inspiring display of leadership which was in keeping with the traditions of the wearers of the coveted three stripes.' He took command of the platoon when his officer was hit before the third objective had been achieved, and led the men throughout the consolidation and holding of that position until relieved two days later.

This became known as the Third Battle of Ypres, or simply Menin Road. Because the men were not issued their actual medal while still on active service in the field, on 21 October General Birdwood, the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> ANZAC Corps, personally handed a ribbon to the MM for Thomas to wear in recognition of his courage and leadership during the battle.

In May 1918 Thomas was again wounded, this time while out of the line in a village called Lahoussoye north east of Amiens. The battalion had been ordered there for a rest, however German artillery had targeted the village so the troops were ordered out of the comfortable billets and into the trenches some six hundred metres away. Even this safety measure wasn't enough and Thomas received slight wounds during a bombardment. He was back with his unit, bandaged and bruised, two days later.

Life in the trenches continued as before for Thomas and his men. Until, that is, the allied offensive

against the Germans at Mont St Quentin in late August. Here, once again, Thomas was to show great leadership when all of the officers in his company became casualties and, without hesitation, he took command and led the men on to their final objective.

His citation reads:

*During the attack on MONT ST. QUENTIN, near PERONNE, on 31st August 1918, and when all four Company Officers had become casualties, this N.C.O. immediately took charge of the remnants of the Company and, with great skill and tenacity, held on to his position, where 5 counter attacks were repelled. It was entirely due to his fine example and courage that his Company was reorganised and steadied up after a heavy enemy barrage had been put down on their sector.*

During this battle 17 Battalion was put straight at the village of Mont St Quentin, and with pluck and determination took this objective against extremely heavy defensive fire. General Rawlinson's Chief of Staff, Major General Montgomery, said that it was 'one of the most notable examples of pluck and enterprise during the war.' High praise indeed.

For his actions Thomas was awarded the Bar to the Military Medal, recorded in the London Gazette on 11 February 1919.

The war was to end for Thomas on 4 October 1918 during what would be the last major action of 17 Battalion. A week earlier he had returned from 14 days leave in London and arrived just in time to be warned out for the coming attack on the German lines at Beaufort above the village of Wiancourt.

The attack, well planned and valiantly pressed, was a disaster for the battalion. As they crossed the low ground before the village the men found it filled with mustard gas. Only a few were able to make it all the way to their starting line without suffering some effects from the gas, but later as they pushed home their attack against well sighted and determined enemy, the poison began to take its toll.

The battalion took its objective, but at a muster the day after the attack only five officers and sixty other ranks responded when their names were called. The remainder had either been killed (18 other ranks), wounded (5 officers and 85 other ranks) or

gassed (113 all ranks). On 6 October, the day after the remaining members of the battalion had been given notice that they were to be withdrawn from the line (for what turned out to be the last time), Thomas was placed on a hospital ship and taken once more to England. After spending nearly two months in an Auxiliary Hospital at Portsmouth he was transferred to No 2 Command Depot in Weymouth on 11 December 1918 and returned to Australia on 18 January 1919. He was discharged from the AIF on 23 May 1919. Tom was temporarily blinded and had bad lung problems and poor eyesight for the rest of his life.

Fond memories of Tom, a gentle, kind, teller of tall tales, who went into bat to get us children out of trouble, which was often in our unhappy home.

I remember him in 1940; I was three and he forty seven. He always seemed old, tired, struggling for breath, and problems with his eyesight still

plaguing him from the dreaded gas attacks throughout the war.

He didn't complain, he didn't tell  
Anyone, that his life was hell.  
It got to a point when twilight came  
That the world disappeared, he was no longer  
game.  
Wouldn't step out and try, he gave up the ghost.  
Couldn't see from pillar to post.

Tom left his sister Myrtle's home for the last time in the late 1950's, walked three or four streets away, and then cut his throat. He didn't want her to find him as they lived alone.

Tom was definitely a fatality from the 1914-1918 war, just delayed in time and place.

He was a war hero, but he was our own hero. Valé brave friend.

## Hooroo Cobber

---

*Adrienne Johns*

[A boy born in the country at Nyngan, Thomas Richard Knight; gentle, shy, known to his confreres as Tommy. Thin but wiry. Used to hard work. A born joker but never mean.

Tommy was swept up in the call to arms from the country districts of NSW to the city where he joined up at Warwick Farm, and became a private, a foot soldier.

He was wounded four times and then gassed badly in 1918.]

*Tommy, by geez the bloody Huns have done for us this time after all we've been through.*

*I can't see anything Tom. I can hear you groaning and spluttering. Don't give up mate we'll get over this. I know how they made this fucking stuff but it tastes so foul and ghastly; my eyes are burnin'; my head's exploding. I wish you would speak to me Tommy. Please try so I can get help for both of us, for both of us.*

*Everyone around sounds the same – choking, panting, vomiting, screaming; the pain Tommy, the pain. My eyes are on fire and the vomit tastes like all my insides are coming out.*

*Jesus Tommy. Hold on mate. I've got you cobber. You are my own dear cobber please don't give up now.*

*Aaargh, Jesus Christ, Aaargh, heheheheh*

*Flaming hell I'...*

*Can't, can't, heheheheh aargh*

*Shit, aaargh I'll die.*

Tommy we've come to help you.

*We're aaaaaaargh so aargh fucked.*

I'll just cover your...

*Aargh don't touch me. Me and me mates are all the aaaaaaargh out of luck.*

Piss on this cotton mate and cover your eyes.

*Can't see or feel mate, hear their cries.*

Try to keep breathin'; hold onto his coat.

*I've lost my grasp, but I hear you gasp you scroat.*

That's the way Shortie, hold onto Tommy's shirt.

*Jesus Christ, heheheheheh I'm down in the dirt.*

I'll help you mate, hang on, not far to go.

*Can't take another breath, dead dead slow.*

They bathed Tom's eyes with milk in France.

But his lungs never more fit for the dance.

His breaths came in gasps, and his sight never far enough, an horizon of so many scars.

[He was injured by gas, his lungs and eyes took months to heal, that's no surprise. Took years to heal save they never did. He returned home, his eyes never rid of pain and watering.]

Tommy at last came home, sat in the dark.

Cut off from his mates; just his dog's bark to keep him company, to keep his spark alive; a country life in bush so stark.

His lungs were shot his eyes were dim but the bush and the family, did they rescue him?

I often thought of Uncle Tom when we sang that old song,

'My eyes are dim I cannot see

I have not brought my specs with me.

I have not brought my specs with me.'

Looking back, Tom was my hero. He was a hero to my Grandma as well, and to my brother Peter, who was three years older. Tom saw, in my brother Peter, the son he never had. He admired, loved and nurtured him with his own beautiful soul. This was precious as my father was a violent alcoholic.

Tom was the kindest influence in my life. He would make up mad stories to try and protect me from the harsh gaze of my mother. 'Bloody Marvellous Jo' he would say to my mother. 'Fancy coming second last in her exams. That takes some doing. I think she's bloody clever. Well done Ade'. Sweeties, crackers or

comics – Tom would always try to give us exactly what was missing.

I can't remember when I first met him but he seemed to have always been there in my childhood. He was gentle, kind, tolerant, thoughtful; a far cry from my abusive father. He had never married as such, but stayed close to my Grandma's side. He called Grandma either Molly, or Fanny, after Fanny Durack because of her great love of swimming.

He divided his time between Grandma's one room flat and his sister Myrtle's home at Guildford. I think Auntie Myrtle thought Grandma was a bad influence on Tom. Her mouth and eyes were always turned down at the corners, and she often seemed more than a bit sad but especially sour when she saw my Grandma. I felt sorry for Auntie Myrtle.

In the second World War Uncle Tom worked at a munitions factory; working for the war effort once more. I don't think it helped his health or his state of mind. They worked until 10pm at night.

He was not whole.

His breathing was so laboured.

Then in the early 1940s I remember him working in the Manchester Department at McDowell's in George Street, Sydney. I was four or five. As a special treat from Tom we would go to the cafeteria on the third floor. Tom would always beg off and go and get some rum or whiskey to top himself up and keep his spirit going. I know there was a dreaded floor walker who made my brave Tom miserable.

In the forties he continued to be Grandma's dearest friend. Even as a young child I was aware of his declining health. His puff puff aah breaths. Every week he caught the train and tram from the city to Concord where we lived and after the evening meal he would fall asleep straight away after dinner. If he was too tired to walk to the tram he would stay the night. Breathing had become more of a struggle. In the 1950s once more darkness gradually consumed his vision, like a thief in the night.

He didn't complain, he didn't tell anyone, that his life was hell.

It got to a point when twilight came that the world disappeared, he was no longer game.

Wouldn't step out and try; he gave up the ghost.

Couldn't see from pillar to post.

He cut his throat, but made sure he did roam three streets away from his sister's home.

His sister saw his trial enough; but she thought only of Tommy's infantry.

No longer a story of gallantry.

Just backs to the trap no mystery.

Flies, dirt and trenches, and dysentery;

and the rotten gas, no eyes to see;

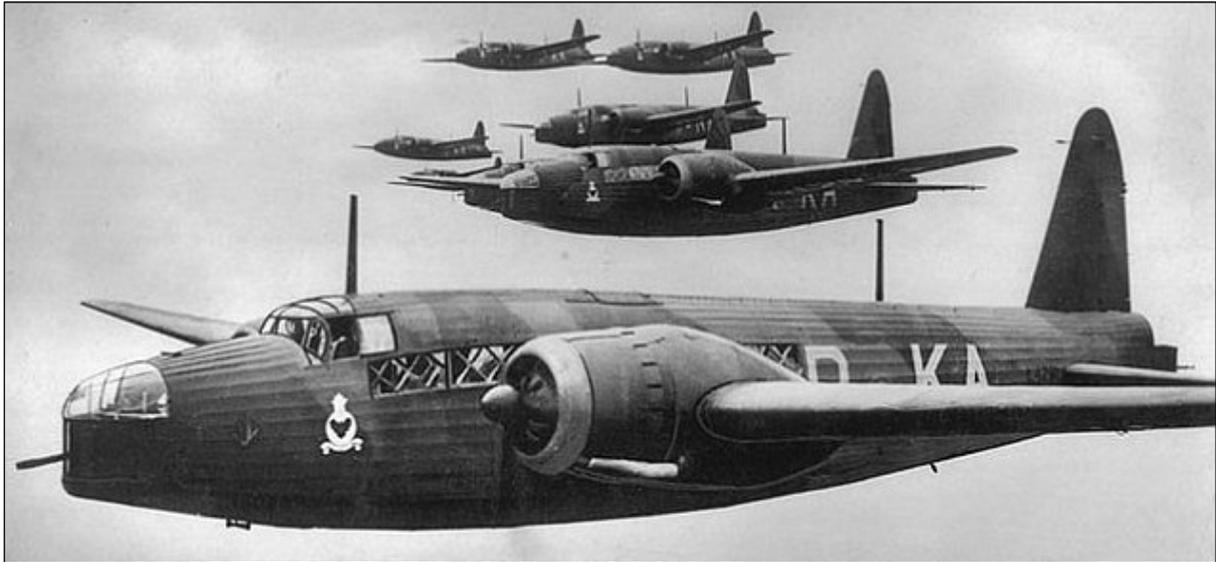
and no breath left, just invisibility.

Her poor brother, so brave was he.

Tom was mentioned in dispatches for conspicuous bravery. He was awarded the Military Medal on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1917, and bar to the Military Medal on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1919.

## Plane to Sea

*Adrienne Johns*



### **Wellingtons**

My cousin Jack aged four, flew  
'round the backyard,  
arms extended gathering speed.  
'Not high enough,' said he  
and jumped from the chook pen  
roof; crashlanded; both  
wings damaged.  
He flew again next day;  
it was 1921.

He joined in '39.  
Left wife and babies three  
to stand in line with pride  
to fly once more.  
A Wellington;  
to put a spanner in the works of the Axis fleet.  
Gunned down, his life hosed into the Mediterranean Sea.

Flight Sergeant John Arthur Buckman – Air Gunner

Memorial details: Australian War Memorial Commemorative Area location 119, Malta Memorial, Malta

# The Boys from Blackboy Hill



Anzac Cove 1915

## The Boys from Blackboy Hill

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*Glen Riley*

Private Charles Frederick Litton (Sandberg), SERN (Serial Number) 83, 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Bn), AIF was a Blackboy Hill boy, one of 32,231. The place name was derived from the endemic vegetation at the newly developed military depot in the hills east of Perth. There, on the gravelly soils, the grass tree *xanthorrhoea pressie* thrives. Its spectacular flower spike is a single 'spear' growing to two metres or so – the perfect symbol for an army training camp.

In the early twentieth century, the newly-federated Commonwealth noted growing international political problems and began setting up military camps that could supply trained combat troops in the event of conflict. Blackboy Hill Camp had good rail connections to Perth/Fremantle and to Kalgoorlie and the east coast via the burgeoning Transcontinental Railway.

The camp was commissioned on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1914, just eleven days after Britain declared war on Germany. The first enlistees were all volunteers for overseas service. In the early days, the army bureaucracy focussed on forming the First Battalion of the AIF and bringing the camp to operational order. The men erected their accommodation tents in neat rows, set up a Post Office and built a separate cookhouse/mess under canvas. Facilities might have been poor, but nevertheless, morale was high.

A camp ditty of that time (later recorded in the *Western Mail*) went:

*"I'd love to live in Blackboy for a week or two,  
And work all day, and get no pay,  
And live on Irish stew."*

Fred enlisted at Fremantle on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1914, aged 22. He must have been keen because the Service No. issued was less than 100! He stated that he was a boat builder and claimed a prior service record based on four years in the Fremantle Senior Cadets. Ever resourceful, Fred enlisted using "Litton" as his surname rather than his birth name of "Sandberg" – perhaps he thought

this sounded too 'Germanic'. The tag "Litton" was, in fact, the name of the family that cared for him after his Mother's untimely death in 1901.

Enlistees from Perth/Fremantle travelled to Helena Vale by train and then were marched to the camp. Fred Litton entered Blackboy Hill Camp on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1914 and had his medical exam the same day. On 16<sup>th</sup> October, Fred's oath was taken and attestation certified at Helena Vale by Lieutenant Colonel Howard Pope, the Company Commanding Officer (CO). Fred was not to know that an obscure but important hill at Gallipoli was to be named after his CO. He was duly assigned to "C" Company (Coy) on the 16<sup>th</sup> October. Camp life involved nonstop days of marching, drilling, weapons handling and night training, beside more menial kitchen duty.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Bn was formed in two distinct segments – five companies came from Blackboy Hill and three companies were raised in South Australia. Planned transport to the European war zone called for ships, which were to sail in convoy from Albany to Alexandria. The South Australian contingent left the Morphettville station for Melbourne at 3.30pm, Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1914. The boys from Blackboy Hill were to proceed to Melbourne by coastal steamer and integrate into a full-strength Unit before their final embarkation.

In November 1914, sections of the 16<sup>th</sup> Bn at Blackboy Hill were railed to Fremantle in appropriate groupings to meet embarkation and shipping plans. "E" Coy sailed in the *SS Dimboola* on 18<sup>th</sup> November, carrying 130 souls of all ranks. A few days later, on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November, "A", "B" and "C" Coys and most of the Headquarters (HQ) unit, embarked on the *SS Indarra*, 350 souls of all ranks. Finally, the *SS Katoomba* departed on 27<sup>th</sup> November with "D" Coy, a machine gun section and the rest of the HQ unit.

Without a doubt, Fred's nineteen year old sister, Ruby May, knew that her big brother was about to be shipped out and not surprisingly, she (and many others) were quayside on that day. The narrative

buried in our family history has Ruby on the wharf, and Fred leaning over the side of the ship, tossing a coin to her on the dock. I can just imagine the scene: the coin spinning and glistening in the sunlight, Ruby bobbing hither and thither trying to locate the memento, Fred wildly waving his slouch hat to encourage her.

It was indeed a miracle that the coin did not fall between the planks of the dock or otherwise finish up in the drink. Someone, however, ensured that the coin reached its target and Ruby soon had it in her hand – a silver florin of exquisite design. The coin, a Queen Victoria “Golden Jubilee” florin, was carved as a brooch, the remaining metal embossed with the letters **R M S** – initials for Ruby May Sandberg. What did Ruby do? I dare say she promptly burst into tears. It was the last time they were to see each other.



When the three ships reached Melbourne, the WA contingent merged with the South Australians to form the full 16<sup>th</sup> Bn for the first time. The men settled into camp at Broadmeadows and drilled, trained, manoeuvred and marched until they were pleading for shipment to Europe. Eventually, on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December, the 16<sup>th</sup> Bn. put on a show-march through Melbourne and boarded *HMAT Ceramic A40* on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914. At the time, the *Ceramic* was the biggest liner on the Britain-Australia run and she was also fast – 15 knots at least. She slipped into King George Sound at 6am on the 28<sup>th</sup> December to join a large convoy. There was no shore leave. The flotilla sailed for Egypt on 31<sup>st</sup> December, the *Ceramic* weighing anchor at 8am.

At 8.30am on 1st February 1915, the *Ceramic* reached Alexandria and anchored off-shore until the morning of February 3rd when she berthed at 11am. The men disembarked and felt solid ground for the first time in six weeks. The 16<sup>th</sup> Bn. was railed to Cairo and after the seven -hour train journey, the troops were marched two miles to Heliopolis where their training camp was located. There followed several weeks of marching, drilling, weapon handling, bayonet practice and trenching. By early-mid April, the men knew that action was imminent.

On 11<sup>th</sup> April 1915, the battalion left Heliopolis by train for Alexandria. Fred’s “C” Coy boarded the transport *HMAT Seang Bee* and eventually reached the Greek isle of Lemnos. In mid-April, the character of their daytime training sessions changed; on the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> of April they practised beach landings. On 24<sup>th</sup> April, ‘last letters’ was called and they were ominously issued their final piece of field equipment – one pick or shovel per man. The 16<sup>th</sup> Bn landed at Anzac Cove beach about 6pm on 25th April 1915. There was fierce fighting at the beachhead on the 26<sup>th</sup> and on the 27<sup>th</sup> “C” Coy fought to Quinn’s Post/Pope’s Hill ridge. It was here that his mates saw Fred for the last time.

In the 127 days between 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914 (the date that the *Ceramic* left Melbourne) and 27<sup>th</sup> April 1915, Fred was employed and paid by the AIF. The pay rate was 5/- *per diem* with a deferred pay of 1/- *per diem*. His total earnings from the army was £38/2/-, which translates to about \$76.20 in today’s decimal currency. Of all the medals, plaques, citations and scrolls that arose from this melancholy episode, none could be more valuable than the hand-made two-bob brooch that Fred flicked to his sister at Fremantle dock in November 1914.

Although he was my uncle, I never met Fred just as he never met his youngest sister, my mother. But that’s a tale for another time and another place; this is the story of Private Frederick Litton, SERN 83, 16<sup>th</sup> Bn, AIF. It finishes with the details of his service record – SERN and his name at the top of the page, followed by a complete blank except for a single entry at the bottom:

KILLED IN ACTION (ink-pad stamp) – Gallipoli  
27.4.15 (copperplate writing).

**VALE**



**Pte. Charles Frederick Litton**

# Families hand me down

Families keep and pass on objects that show us our past

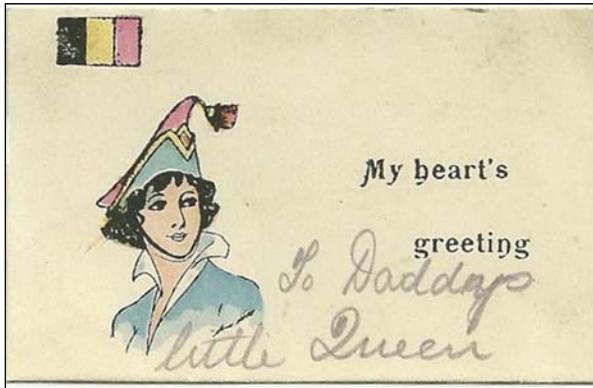




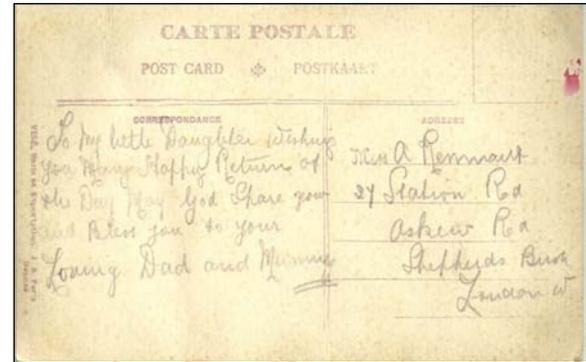
Card 1 - front, embroidered



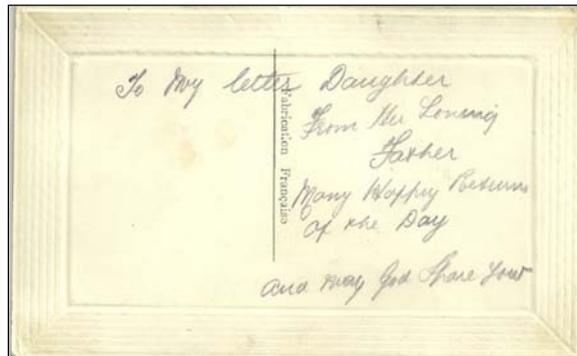
Card 2 - front, embroidered



Card 1 - back



Card 2 - message



Card 1 - message inside

## Postcards from the Front

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*Mike Bower*

My Mum was born in west London on 2 June 1915, so these cards were probably sent to her each June between the years 1916 and 1918, by her father Henry Remnant. Mum was the middle child of eleven children. She had five elder brothers, aged from three to ten years when she was born. Henry was in his mid thirties when these cards were sent. The pictures of embroidered silk on the cards were made by French and Belgian women. Thousands of these cards were sent from the European battlefields to loved ones at home. All mail was censored, so the messages were usually short, sweet and personal. The messages on these cards suggest a proud father happy to have a daughter after five sons.

Conscription for single men in the UK was introduced at the start of 1916, and the Act was

amended to include married men in June of that year. I do not know if Henry volunteered or was conscripted, and I have no record of his military service, his regiment or rank. The 1901 Census record for his family shows him as a 'worker' along with his father and siblings. I think he might have been a bricklayer, or something in the building trade. With this background, I suspect he was a PBI (poor bloody infantryman) private. Mum said he used to talk about Wipers (Ypres) in Belgium, and the flag on the back of card 1 (above) shows the Belgian flag. Henry died in 1938 aged 56. I wonder if the privations of trench warfare and the likelihood of his being in a gas attack may have caused his death at a relatively early age. Mum treasured her cards all of her life and they are now kept in the Bower family history repository in Kent, UK.

## The Brown Paper Parcel

*Lesley East*



*Photo by Christine Buurman*

Clariss Collins was a young mother of two small girls, Eileen and Kathleen, when her husband Martin answered the call to defend his country in World War I. Martin's father had fought in and survived the Boer War and now Martin felt it his duty to fight for his country.

He embarked from Western Australia (WA) as Bombardier Martin Henry Collins 7985 AFA (Australian Field Artillery) Brigade, and was killed in action on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1917 at the age of 27. He was one of thousands of young men killed in the many battles around Ypres in Belgium. So many of these young men had left young wives with children and many were too young to have even started their own families.

Cemeteries in Belgium and France hold the bodies of many, while many more are remembered on

cenotaphs such as the Menin Gate, for they have no marked graves.

This was the story that my mother Eileen used to tell me when she showed me "the parcel" when I was growing up.

Wrapped in brown paper and tied with string "the parcel" contained a body belt made from a flour bag, divided into pockets to hold a soldier's personal necessities:

- A small Bible
- A notebook and pencil
- A cigarette case
- Some cigarette cards

And a pair of hand knitted mittens – had they come from home? Were they in a Red Cross parcel? Had Martin stitched his own initials?

Clariss was to sell the Cordial factory that Martin had established in WA and then boarded a ship to Sydney with her two small girls to start a new life, as I imagine so many young women had to do.

She met and married Bert, who was to be the only grandfather I ever knew. Eileen and Kathleen became big sisters to 6 more children.

Eileen married and raised 4 children, my 3 brothers and myself, while Kathleen had 3 children.

Eileen, my mother, treasured "the Parcel" as her only concrete memory of her father and used it to remind my brothers and myself of the futility of war and the need for peace in our world. She told me that her greatest wish had always been to visit Martin's grave in Ypres. As a teenager I understood that it was highly unlikely, due to her health, that her wish would ever be realised (and it wasn't). I assured her that if she didn't go I would make it my mission to go for her.

And so it was, that in 1980, my husband and I set off on a journey that would take us to Belgium to fulfil my promise to my mother.

As we left the train at Ypres it was strangely quiet. We were met by the stationmaster who asked if we were looking for a war grave. He directed us to the office of the British War Graves Commission nearby and we were made most welcome. They directed us to a neighbouring florist and upon our return were waiting with an official car.

As we were driven out of the township it became clear to me that, without these folk, my search would have been extremely difficult.

On either side of the road were endless rows of white headstones interrupted only by gates and entrances. Suddenly the driver turned confidently into an entrance, navigated his way to the middle of a huge section, and our guide indicated a row. The guide took us directly to Martin's grave but I thought he had made a mistake, for on the grave lay a small bunch of flowers. They were freshly picked wild flowers or flowers plucked from a cottage garden and as I looked along the rows of graves there were similar posies scattered.

Our guide had returned to the car telling my husband that they would wait for as long as we needed to take.

When we returned to the car I asked the guide about the flowers on my grandfather's grave. (I even wondered if he had been able to send someone ahead to make this thoughtful gesture.) He told us that the children from the local schools were encouraged to help maintain the countless graves and that some children selected specific graves to tend. I pondered that this young father who died here, never to see his little daughters again, was being remembered and honoured by a new generation of children longing for peace.

Back at the British War Graves Commission Office we were invited to stay for the daily commemorative service at the Menin Gate. As the sun set the street became silent, as shop doors were shut and townspeople moved onto the footpaths and the traffic stopped. A solitary bugle sounded and a very simple but profound tribute was made to all who had made the supreme sacrifice,

particularly to the 6160 Australians who have no marked graves but whose names are engraved on the ramparts of the Menin Gate. These people were paying their respects to strangers whose goal it had been to bring their country peace.

The return train journey to Brussels gave much time for reflection. Contemplation and attempts to unravel the tangled emotions of sadness at the futility of war, and gratitude at fulfilling my mother's wishes, overwhelmed me.

As I now recall memories of the past my thoughts turn to dreams of the future. As well as being a mother in these centenary years I am a grandmother and a great grandmother. My hope is that my legacy to all these generations in an ever evolving world is of our need to strive for peace.

For peace to live in our world it must first live in our hearts. While we must never forget those who fought for peace we must also remember that, as we now strive and yearn for peace, we must find other ways to achieve it.

Note from PeaceKnits: Martin Collins and his Mittens

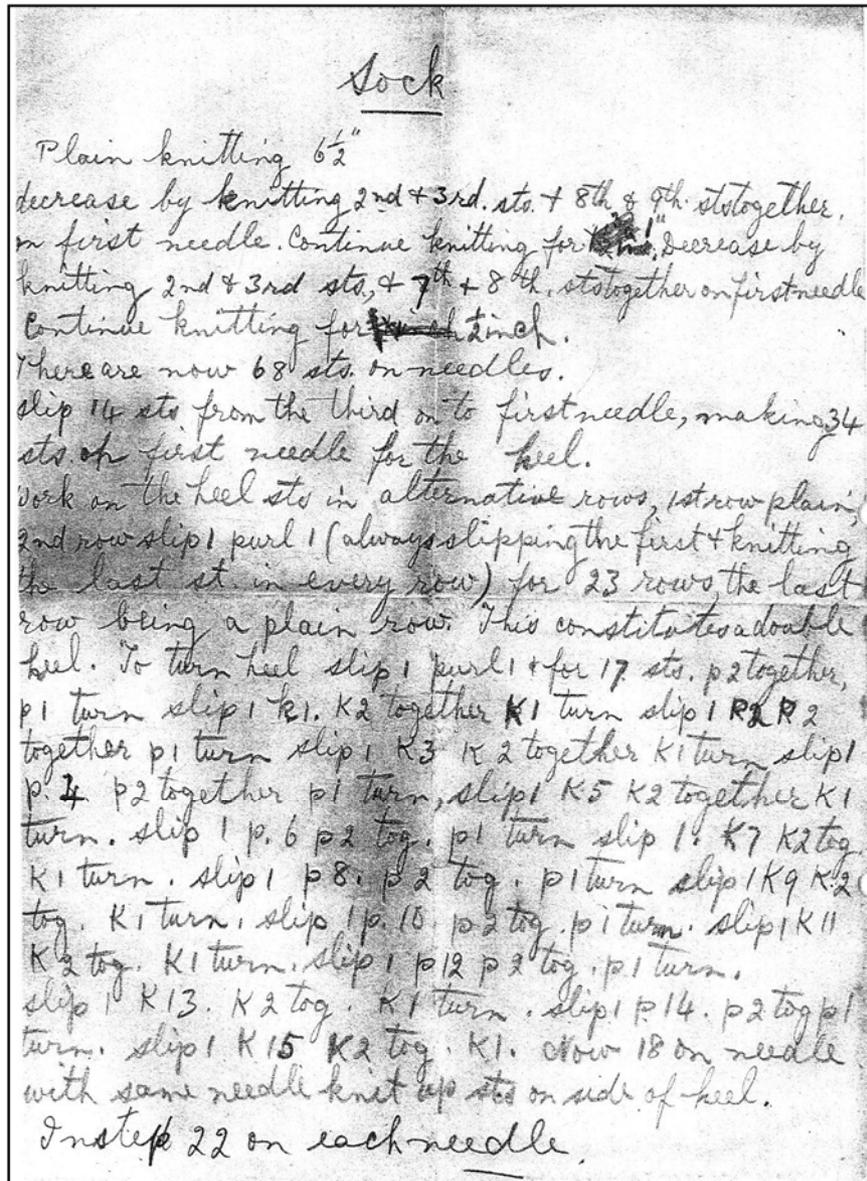
Bmdr Martin Henry Collins 7985 AFA Brigade (Australian Field Artillery) was killed in action on 21st September 1917 at the age of 27. In this phase of the Ypres Salient, the "Battle of the Menin Road", there were heavy losses from Australian Divisions. Many of these young men were buried in one of the numerous cemeteries which now surround Ypres while 6160 Australians are remembered on the Menin Gate as those who have no marked graves.

Martin had left his wife Clariss and their two small daughters, Eileen and Kathleen, to fight alongside the many gallant young men. When Martin's belongings were returned to Clariss the flour bag parcel contained these mittens. I like to think that he received them in a parcel from a kind knitter and that he somehow managed to find the cotton to "embroider" his initials on them.

# Sock Knitting Triptych: Dymphna, Grace and May

Bonnie Goodfellow

## 1. Sock "Recipe"



Hand-written by **Dymphna** Clark (wife of Manning Clark) circa 1977

"... her firm desire..."

Our first project meeting here  
@ Manning Clark House -  
left in her will, "her firm desire",  
by Dymphna – as a place  
to discuss public issues.  
She was so much more than  
known, as Manning's wife -  
or ever given credit for.  
Born Hilma Dymphna Lodewyckx to  
Flemish father, Afrikaans Dutch mother  
- we owe her many thanks: *Vielen Dank*.  
Much more than fitting, then, to  
respond to 100 years' war and peace  
with Dymphna's "Sock Recipe" —

*Plain knitting 6 ½", decrease by knitting 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> sts. & 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> sts together, on first needle. Continue knitting for 1". Decrease by knitting 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> sts, & 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> sts together on first needle. Continue knitting for ½ inch.*

*There are now 68 sts. on needles.*

*Slip 14 sts from the third on to the first needle, making 34 sts. on first needle for the heel.*

*Work on the heel sts in alternate rows, 1<sup>st</sup> row plain, 2<sup>nd</sup> row slip 1 purl 1 (always slipping the first & knitting the last st. in every row) for 23 rows, the last row being a plain row. This constitutes a double heel.*

*To turn heel slip 1 purl 1 for 17 sts, P2 together, P1 turn slip 1, K1, K2 together K1 turn slip 1 P2, P2 together, P1 turn slip 1 K3 K2 together K1 turn slip 1 P4, P2 together P1 turn, slip 1 K5 K2 together K1 turn, slip 1 P6 P2 tog. P1 turn slip 1 K7 K2 tog K1 turn, slip 1 P6 P2 tog. P1 turn slip 1 K7 K2 tog K1 turn, slip 1 P8, P2 tog, P1 turn slip 1 K9 K2 tog. K1 turn, slip 1 P10 P2 tog. P1 turn, slip 1 K11, K2 tog, K1 turn, slip 1 P12 P2 tog, P1 turn.*

*Slip 1 K13, K2 tog, K1 turn, slip 1 P14, P2 tog P1 turn, slip 1 K15 K2 tog, K1. Now 18 on needle with same needle knit up sts on side of heel.*

*Instep 22 on each needle.*

Original hand-written document provided for PeaceKnits by Judy Middlebrook in Dec 2014. Unstated: start with 72 sts and 4 ply sock wool.

## 2. The Sock Knitter

Painted by **Grace** Cossington Smith in 1915. This was the first ever exhibited Australian modernist painting.

The artist painted her sister, knitting socks for soldiers, in the garden room of their Sydney family home.

Full size framed reproduction copy, provided for PeaceKnits Pop-Up event, held in April 2015 in Queanbeyan, through the Art Gallery of NSW.

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/OA18.1960/>

## 3. Queanbeyan's Own Sock Knitter

**May** Hallaran was born at Bodangara near Orange in country NSW. Her father had been a Cornish miner, but after WW2 he moved to Queanbeyan to open this town's first delicatessen.

In 1915, May learned to knit socks along with many other school children – for those sent to fight in Europe in WW1.

Having a clean pair of socks to put on feet infected by the damp conditions, was the only way they had to stop the spread of “trench foot.”

PeaceKnits exhibited a pair of socks knitted by May for Rosemary McCubbin, who was a longtime resident of Queanbeyan. May continued to knit socks all her life.



## This Ammo Box...

*PeaceKnits*



*...was given new life by being converted into a First Aid Kit for use after war on NSW mining sites.*

This ammo box is on loan to PeaceKnits 2015 Pop-Up and Peace Works! publication projects from Narelle Bower of Moss Vale (NSW) whose family was involved in mining and engineering in the state over many decades. This old ammunition box has been used at many community events over the project preparation periods of 2013-2017 to give palpable possibilities of war to peace transformation (akin to turning swords into ploughshares).

Hand-knit bandages now stored in the box were made and displayed as part of PeaceKnits Pop-Up in April 2015. 100 of these bandages were gifted to a

Belgian-run leprosarium in Niger (northern Africa) after the pop-up event.

The bandages are made from washable 4 ply cotton and are used as comfort bandages over medicated leprosy sores to protect from bumps and further injury. Many of the bandages were made by women who came to Australia from Belgium and Holland as part of post-war migration and recovery from conflict.

The hand knit rug on which the Ammo Box is pictured, was made using Marianne Campbell's *Knitted Counterpane Pattern Duntroon 1884* (the original counterpane is held at Lanyon Homestead, ACT).

## the anxieties of millions...

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*Colin Keith*

Doting Mother  
Stalwart Father  
Insistent Son  
  
Permission given  
to end the life  
of one so young  
  
Anguished hearts  
and anxious minds  
are traumas of home  
  
Fickle fate,  
is it too late?  
We yearn for peace

This poem was written as a response to a letter from my Great Grandfather to his son, giving him permission to enlist, which was required because he was under 21 years of age.

*Manly  
24th June 1918*

*My Dear Douglas,*

*Mother and I are now willing that as you are still in the mind to enlist you should do so and are proud that you feel impelled to take this step although we much regret the necessity of your doing so.*

*Believe me that we feel very much in the matter that it is very difficult to express in a letter but we cannot ask you to hold back when you see your duty to be to take your share in upholding the honour of your country in the battlefield and we must share the anxieties of millions of other parents whose children have been gone for years.*

*Let us know as soon as possible what arrangements you make.*

*I remain  
Your loving father  
F.V. Keith*

The letter was found on the [National Archives of Australia – Discovering Anzacs](#) website. It was part of the military record of [KEITH Douglas Francis: Service Number – 58357 \(Keith, 1918\)](#)

## War in a patchwork quilt: begun in war, finished in peace

Lisa Forward

This quilt was made during the Malay Emergency. This was a continuation of civil unrest after WW2 and also during the Indonesian Uprising when Australia defended Malaya against an Indonesian landing.

My mother Rosemary sewed her quilt alongside army wives from New Zealand, England, Scotland and Nepal. They would sew, smock or knit while the kids happily ran wild. This was at the beach club, a paradise for these expats, with its jungle backdrop of beach and pools in Terandak British army camp, near Melaka (Malacca) in Malaya in 1964-65.

These army wives and children would come down every afternoon after school. The men were generally not there so, to distract themselves during the weeks and months of separation, the women would seek each other's company and do something practical.

When the men did come down it was often a relief for them to dive into the water, according to my mother, because they were also managing to control the civil war of the Malaysian Races Liberation Army. This was made up largely of ethnic

Chinese Communists who opposed the creation of the Federation of Malaya as they believed it did not directly lead to the creation of a Communist State, and who of course hated the English.

The husbands had to learn guerrilla-type warfare. Sometimes we weren't allowed to leave the camp because of unrest or disease outbreaks like cholera. It was quite normal for dad to be missing at breakfast, having gone off in the night. Into the jungle with the big leeches. Sometimes to Borneo for months. Even to Vietnam.

The quilt was made for me, (it has blue corners, my sister was always given 'pink'). Apart from the memories of pyjamas and dresses in the patches, there is also a number of local batik pieces, friends' evening dresses and fabrics from Africa and Japan. Patches with rockets commemorate *Explorer*, *Atlas* and other NASA voyages – and it was my birth year, 1958.

The backing cards (cardboard that hold the fabric in place) are also of interest historically. Hexagon reshaped Christmas cards, and a printed invitation, to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion NZ Infantry Christmas party.



Tradition has kept the quilt together. A dinner invitation from my parents' friends – black tie and that was to his birthday party! And the ladies would regularly send gilt edged cards to their friends with 'at home'.

There used to be night parades in camp. I was enraptured by the glowing eyes of the Scots Guard big bass drummer's leopard skin apron as he passed. (I learnt Scottish dancing at classes after school.)

I suppose memory is the media of the mind. The happiness and suffering that dissolve into it. How you interpret what you see, hear and feel is true for you. If I'd had a camera, I would have photographed the baby catfish I'd captured while playing where a forest stream met the sea, or, the now rare, prehistoric horse shoe crabs with their long tail like venomous spines and, of course, the pirates' grave site. On Sundays when families would go to the Officers' mess, I was yet again able to roam freely. A little gang of us bravely scouted a trail to a strange largish, rectangular building. It had only three medium height walls, a doorway with no door. A tiled roof supported by upright beams from the walls meant it was open to the elements. A dirt floor with nothing more than 2 small holes in it led to a sheer vertical drop and a magnificent view of the Melaka Strait. This was a pirate grave, for the two unnamed pirates and the holes for them to come out and eat the food the Malays would leave for them on newspaper on the walls. What a great site for these men's spirits! It showed their importance because here they would eternally watch. It was an important lesson to a young person about death and the afterlife.

I returned to Terandak and Melaka when I was 19 as a backpacker. I took a stroll in the cemetery of earlier Batavian colonists. I have a photo of a headstone, "to the memory of Captain John Kidd." I assumed that his body had been removed to be reburied, just as they had done to St Francis Xavier from up the hill. (His uncorrupted body was moved from Melaka to Goa nine months after its temporary burial in St. Paul's Church in 1553.) Mr Google now tells me that John Kidd was father of the infamous pirate William Kidd who was born in 1701 in Scotland. His family had been left in poverty as John Kidd had been 'lost at sea'. Well someone remembered the older pirate and had made a large

gravestone, and William continued the family tradition. As do the current Melakan pirates.

The story continues to Perth and Queenscliff in Victoria. By this stage mum was doing the last patches. There is one card with a very poignant story.

On an invitation to go on board *the Angelina* at the passenger terminal in Fremantle, 17<sup>th</sup> April 1966, the names of the invited guests Brigadier G Hunt and Mrs Hunt have been crossed out and Major and Mrs Brien Forward has been written by hand underneath. Not etiquette. Upon asking my mother, she replied that it must have been when the Brigadier became sick, and that frequently people would go in his place to functions. Even stranger. Dad had been warned that his new boss, Brigadier Hunt, was difficult and uncommunicative. He had been a POW in Malaya in WW2. So dad thought he'd just work hard and do his job. Dad generally went along with Hunt's demands but would occasionally help him modify his orders. Hunt was victim of the imbecilic understanding that a stiff upper lip would solve your war damage. My father had experienced loss first hand when his best friend was killed in Korea. Dad had replaced him as reconnaissance pilot over North Korea. He had known good men who had become POWs. He was familiar with the effects that intense suffering could have on people and he had left Korea with a marked eye twitch which resolved itself with time. He had enlisted at 15 and would have been there when he was 23.

Brigadier Hunt in Singapore had experienced a loss of faith in his superiors. As camaraderie is one of the quintessential facts in warfare, the controversial abandonment of the soldiers in Singapore by their Commander General Alan Bennett, left a deep scar on many. In 1970 my father also had a similar thing happen when the then Minister for Defence, Killen, denounced NZ troops in Parliament. Attached to 4 Field Regiment their Australian officer in charge had ordered them to practise with live ammunition rather than blanks in a supposedly unpatrolled area in Vietnam, resulting in the deaths of many US soldiers. As the Regiment's Commanding Officer dad wrote to the Governor General, the PM and opposition PM, the Minister of Defence and the major newspapers stating the truth, that it wasn't the Kiwis' fault. An emergency meeting was held in Canberra, to decide if he would be court martialled. He wasn't. This all happened on the day I had won

tickets to Luna Park. Mum, having to take my sister and me, was rather distracted reading about dad all over the front page of the Australian. At 12 and 10 we weren't very interested. The amount of public support he received was staggering. I know this because I heard mum argue with him, a few years later, when he threw away all these letters. He had started to suffer from the same disease as the man whose name, and his wife's, had been crossed out on a gilt edged dinner invitation.

The military is a sort of life I learnt to love as a child, it was safe and exciting. Very difficult with schooling but that 'toughened you up'. As an adult you see through the parades and 'gongs' on their chests, the ads for battleships at Canberra Airport by lucrative armament companies, and the fired up language of attack that has crept into our daily vocabulary. The Law of Armed Combat is now perhaps a game of words that justifies how a government didn't really go beyond what was humane or civilized.

My family was scarred when my father died at 46 but I continued to believe that our un-uniformed politicians made ethical and honest decisions to benefit us and our allies. Now I know why my father detested 'gunrunners' munitions sellers who never joined the fighting or paid reparations. He fought to save lives and people, and families in Vietnam. He became disillusioned when he realised that they had been placed in another country's civil war. The politicians knew in 1963 that the South Vietnamese as allies had few strengths to be able work alongside skilled professional armies. And the Officer who informed them, was court martialled. Only to be employed as an expert contractor later.

I love yet I hate what an armed force can do. In fact, I know that continual Peace Making is the ultimate solution.

The camaraderie of my father's Duntroon class of '48 lingers on. At a recent wake of one, I could hear the whisper "that's Brien Forward's daughter" as I passed. I joined them. They respect me because they respected or loved him. Ken Hill, one of these diggers who loaned me books and discussed events with me as I was writing this, recalled a telling story. His brother, an Airforce officer, had worked excessive hours alongside my father at Russell HQ in 1975 in Canberra. "Giving our life blood," dad would mutter at home, to over-demanding generals

and politicians. Air commodore Vin Hill AFC DFC and bar, on learning that Dad's stress provoked a fatal heart attack, decided to resign. And did so immediately. Another sort of camaraderie.

Back to the quilt... George Hunt was artillery, a gunner, like dad. He would talk at length with dad, when he hadn't been able to talk to anyone else. He had become remote and a stickler for formality, 'a lost soul' according to mum. People would talk to him but he wouldn't reply. Not really acceptable for a Brigadier and not really good at parties. It got to the point where it took time away from dad's work by his becoming Hunt's confidante. Hunt needed to talk. He'd needed to do so for the last twenty years. Dad applied to do his superior's official history but the reply was 'put to one side'. Hunt was discharged in November 1966 while we were getting ready for dad's next posting to Staff College in Queenscliff. He was 54. He'd enlisted in 1940 at age 28.

There's another interesting backing card. An emblem of an owl with a crown standing on two swords and the motto "Tam Marte Quam Minerva - As much by the pen as the sword." The Roman goddess of wisdom Minerva carried an owl and the swords were of Ares, the Greek god of war. As Pakistan, from where this card came, has the Appian Way run through it and has Roman and Greek culture in its history, it's not a surprising combination of Rome and Greece. This had been the motto of the Pakistani British Commonwealth Staff College but it was changed in 1950, to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Persian poet Saadi saying, "Pir Sho Beyamoz, - Grow Old Learning." In 1956 Pakistan became a Republic and the crown was removed. But somehow an old insignia travelled to the Queenscliff Staff College in 1968 with students from Quetta Pakistan, and made it into the quilt!

A posting to Townsville and 2 house moves in the one year didn't leave any time for mum to sew. The focus was on preparing 4 Field Regiment for Vietnam and I think mum was very worried. She had every right, as dad returned a changed man - the facial tick also returned.

The quilt is hand stitched with very small stitches. It has been finished thanks to the kindness of another group of women who came to a working bee at the Boab cottage in Queanbeyan NSW. Some had war stories but they all had peace stories and we laughed.



**60 years later – the quilt finished in a peaceful workshop in Queanbeyan**



**Captain Kidd's grave**



**My Mum with the nearly-finished quilt**



# Corporal Norman Boyden's Gallipoli Diary



From "Karoo"  
to "Sarnia".



# Corporal Norman Boyden's Gallipoli Diary

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Lisa Forward

*Transcribed and compiled by Rosemary Boyden and presented by Lisa Forward*

*A few years ago my mother, Rosemary, transcribed her father-in-law's diary. She then put it into the context of the 2/4 (London City) Battalion's official diary, adding further historic comments. This is an abridged version of both the diary (**bold**) and my mother's work (in printing). I have added summaries, notes and comments (in italics) from reading, listening and research. Some place names may have alternative spellings, but these have not been changed from those used in Corporal Boyden's diary.*

During the First World War my late father-in-law Norman Boyden kept a Diary from 16 November 1914 to 18 October 1916 in which he recorded the day to day events of his service in the British Army during that period.

The Diary is a small but well used notebook. As the entries were often made in extremely adverse conditions they are sometimes difficult to read. Matching the diary entries to people and events took a little detective work and quite a bit of research on my part. I hope the reader will derive as much interest from this transcription as I did from the original.

Churchill on 31 August 1914 discussed an idea of an attack against Turkey as a diversion. It was rejected because it was geographically a nightmare.

At that time the country which is known today as Turkey was the Anatolian region of the much larger Ottoman Empire which reached from Constantinople to Basra and from the borders of Egypt to those of Russia and Iran. British and German influence over the Turkish Armed Forces was closely balanced. Then the British Government refused to recognise the Turkish ownership of two battleships undergoing repairs in England. This seems to have been a political act to force Turkey to

go to war which it did two months later on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1914. By the end of November 1914 the newly constituted British War Council discussed the best way to protect the Suez Canal and the British presence in Egypt from a Turkish attack across Sinai, and consequently the impossibly difficult peninsula consciously became a bloody reality.

Norman from December 1914 was stationed in Malta; training hard, practising trench digging and enduring strenuous overnight marches (of 23 miles!) in full uniform, as part of the combined Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. This force included ANZAC, Maori, Indian, British and French troops.

In Malta in late January 1915, Norman managed to take interesting photos of the *Emden* prisoners at Vadala, whom they had been sent to guard. [*Note-After the battle with HMAS Sydney on 9th November 1914 in the Indian Ocean, some of the survivors from the SMS Emden and the SS Buresk were transferred to three vessels in the first ANZAC convoy to Egypt and Malta, and some to Mittagong, NSW.*]

*From the 5<sup>th</sup> May, after the Anzac invasion at Gallipoli, wounded troops were sent to Malta to the point that there was no room for many of the British troops. So the 2/4 Battalion sailed to Egypt for four months of training. After this they sailed to Mudros in Greece for one night before being transferred to the Gallipoli Front. Here we begin Norman's diary.*

**14 October 1915 - Iron rations<sup>1</sup> drawn. Orders state Battn. will probably leave boat tomorrow - concert.**

*On 15<sup>th</sup> October the Battalion disembarked off Cape Helles. They marched in single file along a pier made*

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<sup>1</sup> Iron rations are emergency rations to be kept until nothing else is available. A symbol of going to the front. A concert, it seems, is tradition, to cheer up spirits before dire battle.

*of sunken ships to "W" Beach: here the first sound of firing and explosions reached their ears.*

**20 October** – Marched off 8am to Eski lines carrying field pack, 22rds, respirator, smoke helmet, sulphur-bag, rifle, blanket, ground-sheet & spade. Under shrapnel most of the way up especially at gap where we had to come up to ground level. Captain Morris and 3 men wounded. Flies abound in thousands. Cook our own food. Fetched water (about 20 minutes each way).

**23 October** – Stopped raining but awful mud everywhere still digging at 7.30 – no proper breakfast but plenty of rice, currants & tea at dinner time. Syd and self on guard at end of line next to Lancs Fusiliers – very cold job. Alarm at about 9pm – Turks massing in gully – guards all along the line all night – “stand at arms” at 5.30am.

**Friday 29 October** – Washing clothes etc mornng. Digging Party on Mile trench from 1.30 to 5.30. Rice & Geoff’s guava jelly for tea. Dark by 6 so turned in early as usual & talked of home. Had the pip rather as there seems no sign of the end in sight. Only chance of getting home seems to be getting wounded.

**1 November** – Digging on dug-outs 8-12 – head still bad – Bearman on sick list – cigarettes and tobacco served out – Good mail in – turned in early & read by candle light.

**2 November** – Went sick – diarrhoea & headache – more letters – Reported at 6 p.m. fit to go to trenches but had very bad night so saw Doctor first thing on.

**3 November** – was left behind – Barman and O’Hanlon also stopped behind – went to Hospital 9 pm & was put on Arrowroot and Bovril diet – felt better by teatime – Bearman no better – Syd in our dugout.

**6 November** – Hospital 9 a.m. Same diet & tonic – had general cleanup in morning – cloudless weather continues – made biscuit porridge & café in evening. Thomas gave us tin of syrup!

**7 November** – Same diet and tonic – Beach canteen for chocolate & milk only – letter writing all afternoon – Biscuit porridge a great success – made lamp out of tobacco tin & paraffin from QM.

**8 November** – Tonic and full diet – Canteen (RND) for Cigarettes & Milk – Found out Bearman gone to Mudros – Tobacco ration – had bath in trench – letter writing – cleaned Dixies for cookhouse in afternoon – Nestlé’s biscuit porridge – New Punch to read in evening – Div up Bearman’s things.

**27 November** – On fatigue at BHQ 7 a.m. – latrines, chopping wood etc. until about 10 a.m. – came back & spent some hours on clearing out dug-out – put roof on differently – drew winter clothing in afternoon – came on to rain just as dug-out finished – spent evening in dark as we had no candle – said to be no paraffin or candles on peninsula, rations also being shortened, rumours of blockade or else rough weather prevents rations being landed.

The Battalion History for that day notes that it was the 43rd day it had spent on the Peninsula. It goes on to say that in the afternoon the wind shifted suddenly to the north and a bitter, biting, piercing frost set in. Drenched great coats grew so stiff that they would stand up by themselves; the water froze round the men’s feet as they lay snatching the wretched sleep of utter exhaustion. Some of them were only kept alive by being made to work hard all day with pick and shovel.

The next day the Battalion History reports that the ground was covered with snow that morning and the fierce north wind was so strong that you could not stand against it; it lashed the face and inflamed the eyes. This weather continued all day but working parties from the Battalion carried out their work on the new winter quarters with the best of spirits. The thermometer kept well below freezing point.

**28 November** – Woke up to find snow on ground – went sick with rheumatism as can’t sleep at nights with pains in limbs – terribly cold day, snowing until midday – Tiny (Grenadier) & self spent morning in dugout – Bully for dinner again no fresh meat

obtainable, however had tinned tomatoes & apples so not bad - turned in during afternoon to try & get warm - had run round about 5.30 before turning in for night - bacon fat lamp lasted hour or so.

29 November - Dry and freezing hard all day long - bitter wind - dugouts 8-12 - an agony to hold pick and shovel until we got a bit warm - bully and rice for dinner - rifle inspection in afternoon - wrote home and smashed biscuits bought chocolate at Q.M. - had porridge in evening and fire in dugout - no light so couldn't read.

[Note - By then only Helles remained, where a curiously suspended state of warfare existed. The men of both sides were not inclined to be aggressive - the Turks because they thought the British would soon leave and the British because it did not make sense to die for a lost cause.]

20 December - Went to Bgde 8.30 - met Bob who said Syd had been slightly wounded - saw him later on way down, walking - heard that Suvla and Anzac had been successfully evacuated - looks as if we shall get rough time. - Bgde 6.30 - met some Frenchies & managed to talk to them a little - went up to Firing Line with Turgel, back about 2330.

On Christmas Day the 'Friends of the 2/4 Battalion' in England sent every man in the Battalion a Christmas card with the lines:

*God bless your arms,  
God speed your victory,  
God grant your safe return.*

The evacuation of Helles began on 1 January 1916 but at first, few of the men were aware that it was underway. By 7 January nearly half the men had gone. The last 17,000 were to be taken off in a single night.

1 January 1916 - Up at 3.30 to guide party to MG - back at 5 a.m. - C.O. stated he hoped we should be on "high seas" tonight - news that we were leaving Eski at 1700 - reported to Captain Arthur & followed at rear of Battn. - only A. Coy and details left (Syd with them) - slept with 5 Platoon.

2 January - Got kit-bag & changed & packed up - told we shall probably lose kit-bags - shells falling very near - went to Orderly Room about 10 am, had very little to do - hoped to go in evng. but no news - beach shelled all night.

3 January - Shells falling very near - smothered in dirt - suspense horrible now we know it is evacuation & not relief - guns being replaced by trees - adjutant says plans may have changed & we may be stopping to end - Bgde in evng with Turgel - Gen. Mercer said "last night but one" - barbed wire all across Peninsula.

6 January - Glorious fine mornng - Camp Commandant at 8.30 - Our aeroplanes busy - shelling fairly quiet - French soup for dinner - went in evng with CO to find way to "V" Beach - on return just starting macaroni when rumours come of some leaving - orders to go with Captain Arthur & draft from A, B and C Coys - left Caesar Camp 10.15 marched to "V" Beach in parties of 30 - went through "River Clyde" the "water boat" - about ¼ hour out collided with French boat which had to beach - got on SS "Esmanich" (Khedival Line) about 12.45 - found comfortable kip with Prior.

*[Note-Captain Keen and 5 other junior officers with 147 other ranks (including Norman) left the Battalion and embarked for Cape Helles. Four of these then volunteered to remain on the Peninsula to assist with connecting up mines for the evacuation of Cape Helles on the 7<sup>th</sup> January.*

7 January - Woke up to find boat in Mudros - sun shining - Biscuits, cheese & milk for breakfast - landed about noon - had wretched long march - saw Syd & Fred drilling & later on Will - wangled all in same tent relating various experiences - glorious feeling of security - wretched cold which started two days ago still hanging about.

The 8 1/2 month campaign was over two days later. The British Empire and its French allies suffered over 250,000 casualties. Britain had lost 21,255 men which was the highest of all the Allied forces but still only a quarter of the Turkish losses.

Norman's Battalion returned to Egypt in January 1916.

On their departure from Egypt, several months later, my mother quotes, I feel, this extraordinary letter from the 2/4 City of London Battalion records:

*"I feel very deeply sorry for your departure, and it seems to me that my sorrow will last forever. Your noble feelings to me that were clearly expressed in your letter and your kind words left a pleasant effect in my heart, which will never be forgotten. You thanked me for welcome and hospitality but what welcome did I extend to you? I have done nothing that can be mentioned beside the debt we owe the English. If we are happy or at comfort, if we enjoy peace and prosperity, if we are rich and can do any hospitality to our guests, it is to your kindness, true efforts and to the improvement you have done in Egypt since occupation that we owe all this. As for you personally and your Regiment, it is very difficult for me to see you off but I trust that you will leave Egypt only, but not our hearts. We shall always remember your kind treatment. Kind regards to you and best wishes to Great Britain and her Allies"*  
(Commandant from Said Melika of Beni Mazar Egypt, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1916)

At 8.15 a.m. the next day, the Battalion paraded in full marching order. At the station over 100 chiefs and notables had come to say goodbye. Norman's Commanding Officer Col Vickers Dunfee then replied to the above embrace of camaraderie from the Commandant, his Egyptian equal.

*"... We shall retain in our hearts many pleasant memories, and we trust that this happy friendship may be the means of drawing our country and yours nearer to one another."*

*These are not light words. Yet, exactly 100 years later Britain and her Allies have destroyed the Beni Mazar Commandant's kind, musical and gentle wishes. Egyptians still have not withdrawn the extended hand of friendship they offered 100 years ago.*

The Battalion went to France where Norman was injured. Although he must have felt frustrated at being left behind for so long at Rouen, he probably

later reflected that he was very lucky that he did not join his friends at the Somme. In that battle which lasted from 24 June to 18 November 1915, the British in one day suffered 57,400 casualties including 20,000 killed.

There is one other aspect of the diary which is interesting and that is the presence of lists. Apart from the usual lists of addresses of friends and relatives Norman kept records of his expenditure. He also took lots of photos and it appears that many of his mates asked for copies. These requests are listed in his little black book too.

There is a sad footnote to this story in that a number of Norman's comrades-in-arms did not survive the rest of the war. The following information is taken from the Battalion History:

*Bearman, W. (Will) transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment and was killed in action at the battle of the Somme on 11 July 1916.*

*Burford, D. was attached to 1/13 London Regiment and mortally wounded on 1 July 1916.*

*Foster, H. transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment from Rouen 30 July 1916. He was wounded in the left arm and discharged on 12 April 1917.*

*Lester, G.E. (Geoff) transferred to 1/4 Battalion London Regiment from Rouen. He was granted a commission and joined the new 2/4 Battalion, London Regiment. He was wounded 3 times and taken prisoner on 21 March 1918 when wounded.*

*O'Hanlon, S. (Sid) transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment on 6 May 1916. He was killed in action on 1 July 1916 (probably at the Somme).*

*Pearce, F.W. transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment. He was discharged in May 1918 after amputation of toes.*

*Shinkfield, E.S. transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment. He was killed in action on 28 May 1916 at Hebuterne.*

*Shinkfield, H.J. transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment. He was killed in action on 1 July 1916 at Hebuterne.*

Trayner, A. transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment. He was wounded and suffered shell shock. He was discharged on 27 February 1917.

Trayner, H. transferred to 1/4 Battalion, London Regiment. He suffered gunshot wounds and was in hospital for 5 months.

This diary of my mother's father-in-law is about peace, not politics. The war wasn't as they had all hoped it to be: "The war to end all wars." It was the war that had left all Norman's war friends disabled, shell shocked, gassed or killed as noted by my mother and emphasised by my stepfather, when he commented on this summary of his father's experiences. This list had been friends with whom Norman had **"wangled in the same tent relating various experiences"**, feeling a **"glorious feeling of security"** under a **"shining sun"** in Mudros, Greece, after Gallipoli. He had really hoped for peace after their abysmal treatment.

Perhaps future British and Australian soldiers will one day remember Egypt's peoples, the Commandant and Norman. The local Egyptians, it would appear, also wanted the same kind of peace that Norman had gloriously felt in Greece, after Gallipoli. Norman wrote, after the London Battalion abandoned Gallipoli, and was sent to Egypt to train:

**29 January 1916 - Cairo with Syd, Tiny & Jim - saw bazaars & Mosque of Am & did shopping.**

**22 February - Visited villages, got hair cut & watch glass - Gifts from the natives of Oranges, Tangerines, Sugar canes, molasses "honey" & cigarettes.**

*These men and women gave their allies all that they had to give. And friendship!*

*For the Egyptians, memories have value. They are the custodians of early civilization and the memories of the British and their Allies in 1916. We may be at one with them in attempting to eliminate Islamic terrorism, but for some of our latter-day knights it is for their own financial benefit. Britain and her Allies need to remember Egypt as a place of people rather than a zone for the mass destruction of culture.*

*Gallipoli was a forerunner to the following century of disasters in the Middle East. It was intended to provide a stronghold for a rear attack on Germany – a second front where they could fight the suspicious Turk. The Gallipoli campaign consequently helped accelerate the breakup of the Ottoman Empire.*

*The British will now, 100 years after Gallipoli and the Middle Eastern Campaigns, help ruin the lives of the descendants of these peoples with whom officers, officials and soldiers had exchanged promises of peace, by directly supporting the Saudis and selling them internationally illegal armaments. Politically Britain could study Arabic history.*

*Corporal Norman Boyden was spared in France, when his friends weren't. Disillusion later set in and Norman overtly hated war. All his friends, whom he had carefully photographed, had been left maimed or dead. Norman wasn't unique – this loathing of war was the culture in the 1930s and 1940s when Stephen, my mother's husband, grew up. Norman later told his children to never go to war, and they didn't.*

*After the war Staff Sergeant Norman Boyden became a bank manager. During WWII he did something he'd been taught to do well – he dug a bomb shelter – an escape 'trench' – in his London back yard. Also, as a warden, with his only son Stephen, he helped get people to safety in the underground during air raids.*



**On the banks of the Nile**

# Short Shrift Verse

...where "shrift" means Quick work



Old English scrift

Middle English shriven

Latin scriptum or "script"

Dutch schrijven "to write"

Low German schrieven "to write"

German schreiben "to write, draw or paint"

## Poppies

*Michelle Brock*



# Homecoming

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*Marilyn Humbert*

waiting for my boy  
to come home –  
hunger moon

shadow wings  
across a blood moon  
memories

silence  
after the battle  
snow moon

the fallen  
amongst russet leaves  
red plum moon

## My Boy

---

*Marilyn Humbert*

melting butter  
and golden syrup  
on the wood stove,  
mixing oats and sugar  
Anzacs for my soldier son

stitch by stitch  
mittens, socks, scarves  
take shape ...  
my boy, far away  
on the Western Front

his letters  
spotted with mud  
from the trenches  
begging me to pray  
for him and his mates

## Repercussions

---

*Marilyn Humbert*

In the time of falling leaves  
tidings of magpies swirl  
chimney-tops

I stop a moment,  
pen poised, ruffling pages  
in my mind

pale-men like mist  
in hollows of oak and pine  
gather below the crags of morn'

where land and sky knit  
breakers sniff sand-riven shore;  
the haunt of screaming gulls,

and the flood-tide of shadows  
pinned under the breath  
of those pale-men.

I've seen changelings;  
the battle lined, fear stained  
sprouting horns and devil's tails,

pale-men touched  
by the curse of ancient gods,  
repatriated to the present

victims, fighting spectres  
from the past.

# Slumber-in-Somme

Bonnie Goodfellow



Left like cut-off kites, in ground surrounded swirls of blooded barb wire endings.

I.

From blue gum heat to  
sea of ice-ground graves: wash'd souls  
left in furrowed holes

II.

Frayed at the edges.  
Aimed, framed at the heart, from  
the start, to grave's end.

III.

KnitArt or WordArt?  
What came first? The knitting or  
the verse? Do we care?

## 1915-2015: 15 Homefront Verses, Then and Now

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Bonnie Goodfellow

Slow moorings...

passenger ships' in  
decent haste to push our men  
and nurses off to war

Could we?

our desert rats learned  
to wash in petrol tins and  
shave themselves in tea

In muddy trenches...

they were returned  
to dust though knitted together  
in their mother's womb

Tax write-off...

proud governments  
see no value to move  
from war to peace

Return to Sender 1919...

we see that mouth  
on grandfather's face bloodless  
distant from our touch

Slow mournings...

her mournings drowned in  
drinking long hot cups of tea  
towards each evening sup

Broken promise...

age weary women  
left to read mourning pages  
without widow funds

Fe/male preserves...

men bring in firewood  
cut kindling to make fires  
women left to put them out

Homefront comfort...

sunlight in her lap  
comforting as a cat  
curled up warm asleep

1915 homefront cottage...

land subdivided then  
now rust red bent tin roof  
with fallen weatherboards

Family values...

not sure family  
still has value except  
to say you are loved

Inter-family fending...

on the train again  
northbound drawn as magnets  
by childlike charms

Post-war *kindergarten*...

post-modern morning dads  
trundle little lumberjacks  
to work in childseats

Careful step in time...

discarded bottles  
smash faces of those not healed  
or scar playground flesh

Barred from here...

we demonise  
call them terrors  
yet all are sacred

Partly written in response to Peter Temple's *Quinella*: Love. Not a word for casual use. The life-scarred use the word with extreme caution. If you're lucky, you go through life held up by people loving you...one day the love isn't there anymore and you're sinking...can't touch bottom.

## 15 Short Verses for our 1915 Anzac Centenary

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### *PeaceKnits*

Loved ones lost in war...

your life was like a  
red red rose – faded wasted scent  
blood shipped offshore

Fragments of the dead...

you need to dig deep  
to bury the dead – search  
to find puzzle pieces

Past tense / future wars...

when did our now start  
past tension feeds our future  
through rivers of time

*Bagarap* empires...

lie rusted in the sun  
while infinite oceans  
pool all our tears

Don't trifle with peace...

no pettifogging  
poems allowed – no custardy  
quibbles in joke books

All in the one boat...

live life *sans frontières*  
hold no one beyond the pale  
our paling fences

Folding cranes...

Sadako died in  
fifty-five just twelve years old  
one thousand cranes down

Naked truth...

see otherwise  
close eyes to hear truth disclosed  
*sans* emperor's clothes

Why write?

short shrift poems help  
unknot binding ties that keep  
us from finding peace

T-therapy...

there is no trouble  
that can't be halved by sharing  
a good cuppa tea

And so she knits...

eye far horizons  
to knit and weave distractions  
take thought away from hurt

Part 1: I knit because I am...

row on serried row  
forge on into the future  
knitting at the ready

Part 2: I knit because I am...

knit with others  
for the injured – needle them  
to weave in health and warmth

Part 3: I knit because I am...

knit fast or slow  
with mindful ease care less  
of ends than peaceful means

PeaceKnits how to...

bring back together  
weave warp and weft those sent  
to war those left behind

## "Je veux ma maman!"

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

Diggers, lost in France?  
Tongue in cheek? Or  
just embalmed in wine?  
Prepared to die? Or  
just worn down by war?

[Every lost child, looks for his mummy;  
*mum* in Oz; *maman* in French;  
*momie* in Old French: embalmed mummy]

This was written in response to a photo seen at State Library of NSW: A group of 2<sup>nd</sup> Division soldiers, 1918. AWM P10550.140 from Louis and Antoinette Thuillier Collection, available online at <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10550.140/>



# fit-for-life peace meditations

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

life's an infinity  
unceasing meditation  
all ways – walk, love, pray

helpless so I pray  
bad habit – can't help myself  
all needs all the time

life comes every day  
in our face to challenge us  
distract us not from love

oh that we all were  
people snugglers every day  
welcoming others

all of life is my  
meditation – no part is  
safe from mindful mode

love as first and last  
resort – hold dear to all that  
matters to last breath

# Memorabilia

---

*Michelle Brock*

campfire  
under she-oaks  
burnt to ashes  
the future they shared  
by the waterhole

*Dear Tom*

*I'm back at Roslyn to help out with the farm,  
starting the holidays early, not that I mind.  
Right now I'm sitting in Frank's favourite spot  
on that hollow log by the creek.  
You know the place where the three of us  
caught the eels and cooked them up last Easter.*

*They're calling Frank a hero.  
His name's on a plaque in the hall.  
Mum's put his shiny medal on the kitchen dresser.  
She touches it every time she walks past.  
There's a picture of him in his uniform beside it,  
smiling like he always did.*

*Dad said if you're back by Christmas he'll kill a calf.  
It'd make a nice change from his mutton stew.  
Mum hasn't been doing much cooking lately.*

*If you're not back, I'll be over there in April.  
Can't wait to climb a pyramid.*

*Anyway the dog's going crook so I'd better see what's up.  
Silly old mongrel still misses you.*

*Keep your head down till I get there.*

*Love Jimmy*

amongst  
thrift shop memorabilia  
vintage post cards  
just fifty cents  
for a soldier's untold story

## On a Nail

*Michelle Brock*



*on a nail  
above the workbench  
a coil of string  
still measures the distance  
around his sturdy fingers*

*Michelle Brock*

# Only the Wind

---

*Michelle Brock*



## She Complains

---

*Michelle Brock*



## Lest We Forget

---

*Dorothy Walker and Lois Holland*

### *Responsive tanka*

D

the tramp  
of a thousand feet  
fainter now  
the numbers lessen –  
we will remember them

L

we clean up  
after the flood  
debris, mud –  
my father told me once  
of life in mud in the trenches

D

he sits  
in the quiet room  
lost in memories...  
does he hear the voices  
of fallen comrades?

L

a child  
plays the piano  
Dad's choice  
"roses of Picardy"  
why does he feel so sad?

D

In Flanders field  
the poppies grow,  
in my garden  
sweet scented rosemary.  
Lest We Forget.

# Mannix, Goldstein & Conscription 1916



**Daniel Mannix (1864–1963)**



**Vida Goldstein (1869–1949)**

**FORM C.**  
**BALLOT - PAPER.**

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.  
*The Military Service Referendum Act, 1916.*

STATE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

**DIRECTIONS TO VOTER.**

The Voter should indicate his Vote as follows:—

*IF HE IS IN FAVOUR* of the question set forth hereunder he should *MAKE A CROSS* in the square opposite the word "*YES*";

*IF HE IS NOT IN FAVOUR* of the question set forth hereunder he should *MAKE A CROSS* in the square opposite the word "*NO.*"

**Submission of a Question to the Electors.**

**QUESTION:**—Are you in favour of the Government having, in this grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over citizens in regard to requiring their military service, for the term of this war, outside the Commonwealth, as it now has in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?

**YES.**

**NO.**

# Mannix, Goldstein & Conscription 1916

---

John Collard

## Introduction

When World War 1 was declared in 1914 there were many Australian volunteers who were eager to support the British Empire in its endeavours to defeat The Hun. However as 1915 progressed there was growing division over such participation. The losses of Anzacs at Gallipoli heightened this mood amongst the Australian public. Individuals such as Vida Goldstein were already decrying Australia's involvement from feminist and socialist perspectives. Bishop Mannix was slower to voice his opposition until the British executions of Irish Republicans without trial in 1916 inflamed his patriotism. Two referenda were conducted by Prime Minister Hughes in 1916 and 1917 to introduce conscription. Both were defeated by narrow margins.

## Cast

Daniel Mannix

Vida Goldstein

Dame Eva Hughes

Prime Minister William "Billy" Hughes

Hecklers (3 or more)

Mannix, Goldstein & Conscription 1916

*"Australia Will Be There" is being vigorously conducted by Dame Eva Hughes from The Women's Imperial League.*

Narrator: Scene – Melbourne, September, 1916. The steps of Parliament House, in Spring Street. A rally is about to commence in support of the "yes" case in the national conscription referendum to be held the following month. The convenor is Dame Eva Hughes, the aunt of Prime Minister William Morris Hughes.

You are invited to join in what may become a rowdy rally. Please feel free

to interject, cheer or boo or even to join in the singing if you so choose. To assist you I will hold up relevant signs when appropriate.

*A small group of Irish hecklers enters singing the lament "The Wearing of the Green", a street ballad related to the repression of supporters of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. They rise to a crescendo and drown out the other song.*

Hecklers: O Paddy dear, and did ye hear  
the news that's goin' round?  
The shamrock is by law forbid  
to grow on Irish ground!  
No more Saint Patrick's Day we'll  
keep,  
his colour can't be seen  
For there's a cruel law ag'in  
the Wearin' of the Green.

O, I met with Napper Tandy,  
and he took me by the hand  
And he said, "How's poor old Ireland,  
and how does she stand?"  
She's the most distressful country  
that ever yet was seen  
For they're hanging men and women  
there  
for Wearin' of the Green.

*Dame Eva raises her baton threateningly.*

Dame Eva: Would someone please shut down  
that Irish rabble who are disrupting  
these proceedings? Would the police  
do something instead of singing along  
with their drunken brethren? We are  
here to Support the War Effort and  
Stop the Hun! My nephew has just  
returned from meetings with Lloyd  
George and Churchill! That's right,  
the men who will save Our Glorious  
British Empire on which the sun  
never sets.

Ladies... distribute white feathers to  
those young Irish louts...

Heckler 1: Send yer own boys if yer so keen on the fighting Evie! Though with that sheep face, chances are Lady Muckety-muck would turn any man off giving her sons!

Heckler 2: Give it to her Paddy! Her old man ran off to Gallipoli to get away from her!

*Hoots of delight from crowd.*

Dame Eva: Any right-minded woman would rather be a mother or sister of a dead hero than of a living shirker like you lot from the streets of Collingwood and Richmond! My husband served in Gallipoli. Did you?

Heckler 1: Yeah but he was too old to be much use, never saw the business end of a gun, now did he? They sent the old bugger home and discharged him. Like you Evie – as useful as tits on a bull!

*Raucous laughter from the crowd.*

Dame Eva: Where are the police? Where is the law and order we have inherited from mother England? The streets of Melbourne have become the province of larrikins and Bolsheviks!

*Vida Goldstein walks to the steps. She nudges Eva aside and addresses the crowd.*

Vida: Dame Eva ...you are nothing but an imperialist warmonger! This is not your hallowed UK where women still await the vote which is their inalienable right. Australian women have that right and as mothers and sisters we oppose your jingoistic nonsense.

Ladies please distribute our pamphlet to the audience.

Narrator: While the Manifesto of The Women's Peace Army is distributed, Bishop Mannix is walking his Irish Terrier past. He stops and tries to listen discreetly on the edge of the crowd.

Vida: Women of Australia! I wish today to place before you a manifesto which I

have been preparing for release in October. Do I have your ears?

Heckler 2: Go for it Vida!

Vida: On October 28 we shall have had laid upon us the greatest responsibility and the greatest privilege that could be placed upon the women of any country.

For the first time in history, the people of a whole nation are being asked whether they shall declare their allegiance to the force of Might or the force of Right.

Heckler 4: Never did much for the Irish!

Vida: It has been universally recognised that conscription and freedom are mutually destructive, and in conscript countries the aim of the masses, in contradistinction to the classes, has always been to throw off the crushing yoke of conscription and militarism.

Vida: International commercial rivalry has developed to such an extent that the peace of the world has trembled in the balance many times during the past decade. Desire for commercial supremacy, or fear of losing it, has kept all the nations armed to the teeth. This weight of armaments, upon which our capitalistic system depends, and on whose maintenance the bulk of the national income must be expended, has kept the working classes (without whose labour no wealth could be created) in such an oppressive condition of wage slavery.

Vida: Financial magnates, backed up by their newspaper and naval and military tools, have openly declared that the only way to bring the working men to their senses is to have a great war, which would destroy the growing power of Trade Unionism, which is directly opposed to the established power of Capitalism.

*Applause*

Dame Eva: Bolshevism! Unadulterated Bolshevism like they preach in Russia. Australians do not want that!

Vida: Your ignorance is unpardonable!

Heckler 3: You sit in yer fancy mansion Evie and don't give a brass razoo about us workers! Remember the Shearers' Strike? Even your precious Billy Goat Billy supported the Maritime Strikers! Yer nothing but an ignorant parasite!

Vida: Now that war has come, Britishers who believe that Might is the guardian angel of Right, are driven to jettison all their cherished ideas of freedom and conscience in the frantic effort to get enough men to do enough killing to wipe out the enemy. Britain has become the land of military and industrial slaves, of shackled speech and shackled conscience. Instead of this being the "war to end all war", all nations, neutral as well as belligerent, are preparing for future wars, and arming more and more feverishly.

Vida: Under these circumstances, do you wonder that free Australian men have come to see that the war is not being fought for the great ideals of freedom that were held before them at the beginning? Therefore, the few men who might still volunteer in the cause of freedom refuse to volunteer in a cause that aims at riveting the chains of European militarism on Australia!

Vida: They begin to see that the belief in Might throws the nations into a bottomless pit of hatred, and oppression, and debt. They begin to see that conscription entrenches militarism still more deeply and breeds endless war, to which every conception of Right and Freedom must be ruthlessly sacrificed.

Vida: Therefore, we say, "To vote 'NO' means the beginning of the end of

militarism in Australia, and of every other nation; the beginning of the reign of Right as the only Might there is or can be."

Vida: And you, women of Australia, are asked to say the same thing, and more; for as women you are faced with a greater responsibility in this matter than men.

As the mothers of the race, it is your privilege to conserve life, and love, and beauty, all of which are destroyed by war. Without them, the world is a desert.

Vida: You, who give life, cannot, if you think deeply and without bias, vote to send any mother's son to kill, against his will, some other mother's son.

You may, if you choose, send your own son, but you are guilty in the first degree if you take upon yourself the responsibility of forcing someone else's son to defy God and break His commandment, saying to him:

"Thou SHALT kill."

We ask you to tell us what MORAL RIGHT you have to do this thing?

*Applause*

Vida: Which is the noble spirit? That of the woman who would say on October 28 to all men in Australia; "You SHALL Go, and KILL, KILL, KILL, till you have helped bring about 'THE DAY' when Germany is utterly crushed and every German mother has lost every son of military age?"

Or that of the Australian woman who stands for the eternal laws of God, of Right, of Reason, of Love.

Vida: So we ask you to be true to your womanhood, and, with your vote, bring to the State the same gifts that you bring to your homes, the gifts of order, of beauty, of forbearance, of harmony, of love. The nations are dying for lack of these gifts from

women. Give them freely, give them gladly, but GIVE THEM YOU CANNOT IF YOU VOTE FOR CONSCRIPTION.

Therefore Vote NO on October 28!

*Loud applause*

Dame Eva: Sedition! Treason! You betray all those brave boys who died for us at Gallipoli if you heed the words of this temptress. Stand up for Australia! Stand up for Britain! And here to remind you of our obligations to Britain is our esteemed Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes.

Narrator: Prime Minister Billy Hughes emerges from behind the dais where he has been listening to Goldstein. He is greeted with both applause and heckling.

Hughes: Take no notice of this rant! I have just returned from London and seen for myself how desperate the plight of our motherland and other European nations has become.

Heckler 3: Been slumming it at the workers' expense Billy?

Hughes: This dreadful war was forced upon us. We are by instinct, a peaceful people – a civilised people. No better and no clearer distinction can be drawn between us and Prussia, with which we are now locked in deadly struggle, than the fact that the British nation stands for the highest ideals of civilisation. What the other stands for – let all their dreadful deeds since war began and the vile doctrines upon which their nation for forty years has battered, say. With them "Might is Right." There is between the ideals of Britain and Germany a gulf as wide as divides heaven from hell, right from wrong.

The issues at stake are vital, and the fate of the world hangs upon them. The destiny of the world to-day is trembling in the balance, and every nation, as every man, must make up

its mind on which side it shall take its stand.

Dame Eva: Hear! Hear!

Vida: Jingoistic nonsense!

Hughes: This war has come as a mighty incentive to urge us on – a spur needed perhaps by our race for its salvation. Out of evil cometh good. There is not, from one end of this mighty Empire to the other, a place where the people do not stand foursquare against their common enemy.

We Australians have fought, are fighting, and shall continue to fight to the end for those free institutions which to free men are dearer than life itself. We fight for the right of every nation, small as well as large, to live its own life in its own way.

Hecklers: What about Ireland? How about rights for Ireland eh Billy?

Heckler 4: There are no rights in Ireland!

Hughes: Today, Germany knows that when she fights Britain, she fights not merely the forty-five million people in the United Kingdom, but also those millions of free men scattered throughout the world who look to Britain as the cradle of their race. Let us pay a tribute to the loyalty of the Irish people and the valour of the Irish troops. Pay a tribute to those thousands of young Irish-Australians in the Australian Forces, who have put the cause of liberty above life itself.

Heckler 2: They've been conned into taking the King's shilling outa poverty, nothing to do with supporting the bloody Empire!

Heckler 4: That's true! Ireland has been condemned to poverty!

Hughes: The Australian is coming out to do battle for the country that made him what he is. We speak with pride, and

rightly, of the glorious charge of Balaclava, where men charged bravely in the heat of battle. But that pales in comparison to the young soldiers of Australia who, in the cold hours before dawn, handed to those who were to remain in the trench their poor brief messages of farewell and waited calmly for the order before leaping out to almost certain death. Like the Spartans of Thermopylae, what these men did will never die.

Heckler 1: Brave and also stupid Billy! If they wants to volunteer let 'em, but we'll have no forced enlistment here!

Hughes: You shirkers! Indulging in idle pleasures while a small number fight for your freedom!

Vote 'NO' and you are supporting the vile Prussian doctrine of "Might is Right"!

Vote 'NO' and you are a blackleg and scab on the tens of thousands of brave Anzacs that have shown the world we are a nation that puts death before slavery and dishonour!

I urge all present to vote 'YES' in the coming referendum! We owe a vote of loyalty to those who have already made the supreme sacrifice. And we owe it to the future generations who will thank us for protecting their liberty.

Heckler 3: What about us black fellas, we're not even citizens!

*Hughes departs the podium and is escorted from the stage by Dame Eva.*

Narrator: At this point Vida spies Bishop Mannix in the crowd and calls to him:

Vida: Your Lordship! Please tell us where you stand on the conscription issue. I hear you had some new things to say at Clifton Hill last weekend.

*Mannix comes forward very reluctantly. Dame Eva is pushed to the background and valiantly waves her*

*umbrella as Mannix and Goldstein begin their first public exchange on the conscription issue.*

Mannix: I was just taking Rafferty here for his Sunday Constitutional in the gardens and was not expecting to be bailed up by an Ulsterite!

Vida: I am no bushranger My Lord Bishop! I have just heard such wonderful reports about your speech at Clifton Hill last Sunday and I would like to hear it from your own lips. I'm sure many in the crowd would appreciate it too!"

Heckler 4: Yes My Lord Bishop. Strike a blow for Ireland!

Hecklers: Avenge the deaths of the rebels!  
Why should the Irish die protecting the dogs who have oppressed us for centuries?

*Mannix reluctantly takes the bait.*

Mannix: I used to refer to this conflict as "just an ordinary trade war!" For that alone I have been categorised as a traitor by the Anglican Bishop, the conservative press and even one of my Catholic brethren. What I said at last week's bazaar was that I hope for an honourable peace. I hope and I believe that that peace can be secured without conscription.

*Applause*

Mannix: For conscription is a hateful thing and it is almost certain to bring evil in its train.

*Applause*

Mannix: I still retain the conviction that Australia has done her full share—I am inclined to say more than her full share—in the war.

*Applause*

Mannix: Australians, brave as they have proved themselves to be in the field, are a peace loving people. They will not easily give conscription a foothold in this country.

*Applause*

Mannix: We can only give both sides a patient hearing, and then vote according to our judgement. There will be differences among Catholics, for Catholics do not think or vote in platoons.

*Applause*

Mannix: On most questions there is room for divergence of opinion. But, for myself, it will take a good deal to convince me that conscription in Australia would not cause more evil than it would avert.

*Applause*

Mannix: And I am inclined to believe that those who propose it have misjudged the temper of the Australian people in the mass and their passionate love for freedom...

*Loud applause*

Mannix: ... and if it is a just war then I ask whether the Dublin rebel leaders received justice this very year when they were summarily executed without trial? The British cannot preach justice to the world while they practice injustice in Ireland.

*Loud applause. Renewed chorus of The Wearing of the Green. Vida approaches Mannix and pins a "Vote NO to Conscription" badge upon his lapel.*

Vida: My Lord, I also hope you will support other causes of The Women's Peace Army such as better working conditions, equal pay, better children's services!

Mannix: I will not be lectured by the likes of you on such matters! I am not a Bolshevik sympathiser. That ideology poses a great threat to the Catholic Church! The roles of women were clearly prescribed by our Church Fathers! They are primarily wives and mothers and that is what the Gospel proclaims!

Vida: You clearly read a different version of the Bible from me! That is outdated thinking from a patriarchal institution. You represent traditions which continue to oppress women!

Mannix: I shall not be joining you outside factories and sweatshops where you advocate contraception and abortion, two of the great evils of the current age!

Vida: No... like the Germans you would confine us to Kinder, Kirk and Kreche! Will you support equal wages for women?

Mannix: Indeed I will not! Women should leave the workforce upon entering into sacred marriage! Their husbands must be the breadwinners! That is their role!

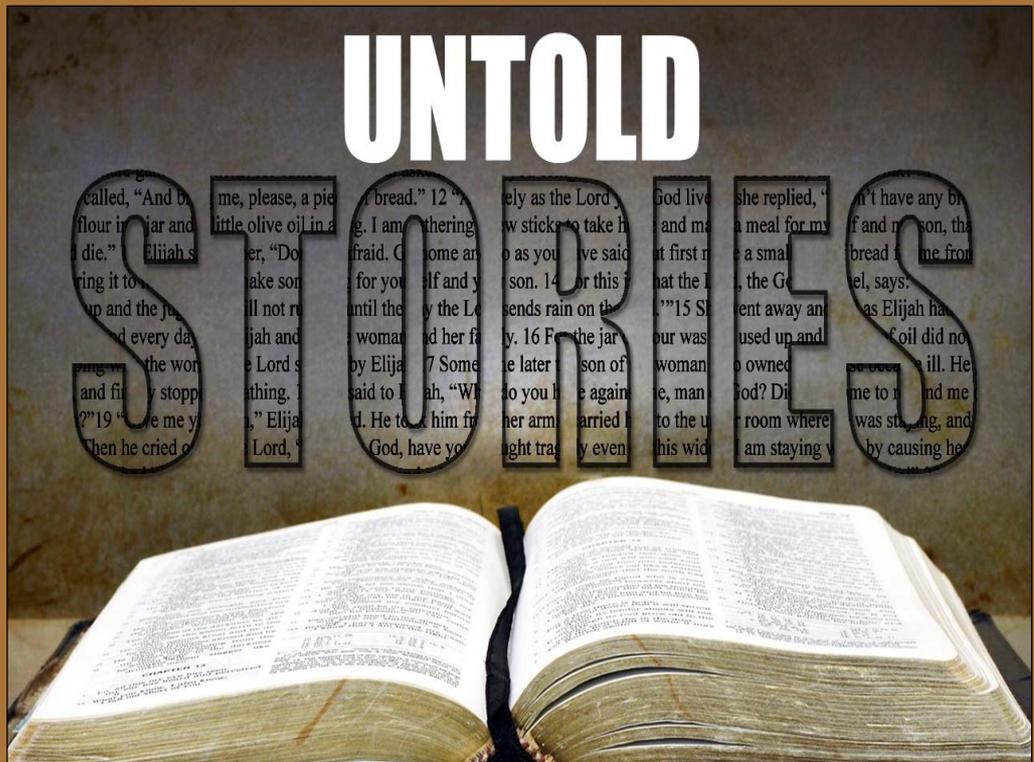
Vida: I shall not be inviting you to join us at our factory meetings!

Mannix: Even if you did Madam, I would not attend! Good day to you and may God continue to bless you.

*Mannix picks up the lead of his dog and exits. Vida makes a dignified exit while Dame Eva fusses over fliers still left on her podium. In the distance "The Wearing of The Green" gradually subsides.*

This play was performed at the Canberra Irish Club in December 2016.

# Untold Stories





**Handwork Under Glass**

*Family mementoes from three little girls*

## Three Little Girls in School – 1911

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*Bonnie Goodfellow*

I was handed a photo in 2014 at an extended family gathering – to look at, not to keep. The photo was taken in 1911 at Yahl Primary School near Mt Gambier, South Australia. This was the first, and only, time I had seen a picture of my three great aunts. They had lived in a state I did not visit until years after they died (Effie died in 1958, Ruby in 1969, Ella in 1973). Ella, the oldest of the three girls, was born at Mt Gambier in 1888. Effie and Ruby were born later – in 1890 and 1892 respectively – at Yahl Paddock, where their father farmed.

I had never thought of my three great aunts as being school girls. They had always been referred to as our three great aunts, in South Australia. I had vaguely known one (Ella) to have trained as a nurse, the others as teachers. The photo shocked me at age 60, because it was only then, in 2014, that I realised it was their generation who shouldered the great losses of wars and depression.

I had recently heard views that spurned the popular belief that World War 1 had somehow skewed the life-chances and demographics of a whole generation. This photo gave me palpable proof, that

popular gut feelings were not wrong: for my three great aunts had all been maiden aunts. Not one of the three ever married, ever had a partner in life, ever bore children. I looked up the family history details, and there it was: my great grandparents, Richard Batton and Grace Lean had five children, two boys and the three girls in the photo. Of the five children, only one of the boys (my grandfather, Mark Batton, born in 1887) lived to marry and have children with his wife, Ruby Ellen.

Naming our children these days is something we do with fashionable flair and long research in thick volumes of popular baby names. I am thankful and more thoughtful now (since seeing that photo in 2014) about those who have gone before us. Now I really understand how names can also remind us of our forebears. There in the photo, as a young school-leaver, was my great aunt Ruby, who shared the name with my grandmother and mother, also named Ruby; and, as of July 2014, with my granddaughter, named Calla Ruby.

## The Enemy

---

*Margaret Naylor*

He moaned, the young Turk clad in charcoal grey,  
eyes turned to where the foreign soldier lay.  
He licked dry lips and cursed his shattered leg.  
The enemy had water ... he'd not beg.

"I reckon they've forgot us" – grating sound -  
"I'll bloody cark it soon if I'm not found.  
Here, mate, you thirsty? Have a go at this –  
might do you good, although it tastes like piss ..."

They shifted, reached across, the canteen passed.  
"Just sips, don't know how long it has to last ..."  
Blue eyes met brown, pale hand met olive skin.  
We're enemies? Reality seeped in.

"Where is your wound?" "Oh, you speak English hey?  
I'm gut-shot, don't think I'll see out the day."  
Ignoring thirst and pain, they spoke of home,  
two nineteen year old boys, enmity gone.

"If I don't make it, will you go see Mum?  
After the war, when things have settled some ..."  
The promise given, now he closed his eyes  
and silence grew, save for the humming flies.

A long night passed before the medics came.  
He marvelled that the dead could look the same,  
just from the eyes the sparkle had gone out ...  
"Hey! Over here!" he heard the searchers shout.

And then, "It's Harry – and a bloody Turk!"  
He moaned in pain as rough hands set to work.  
"It looks like Harry's gone, but he's not bad.  
We'll take him in and try to save the lad.

Across the world a dusty country town,  
tiny oasis in a sea of brown.  
An old man, wrinkled face and hair gone grey  
puts on his uniform for ANZAC Day.

The march is off, with banners carried high,  
a polyglot collection passing by,  
a boy among the men, doing his best,  
wearing Harry's medals on his chest.

Beside the boy, the old man marches proud,  
eyes sliding sideways to the watching crowd.  
And then he hears her voice "Onya Kemal!"  
And Harry's sister smiles while he walks tall.

Bonded by war, his land and theirs both home,  
this foreign race once foes, and now his own.  
A promise kept that led to a new life.  
His grandson here beside him, there his wife.

Blue eyes meet brown, thoughts in a distant place.  
The Last Post wails, and now the pub awaits.  
"Here, mate, you thirsty? Have a go at this –  
might do you good, although it tastes like piss ..."

## "Miss Havisham" Story from 1915 Southern Highlands

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*Bonnie Goodfellow*

*A creative response to family and local history sources*

Hetta met Darcy around 1910 in Sydney. His parents had married in 1870 in South Australia. They moved to Port Augusta about 1875. Darcy, their eighth and youngest child, was born there in 1893.

Darcy was in the Navy from June 1913 to April 1914, enlisting as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Cook's Mate, and serving on the *Cerberus*, the *Warrego* and the *Parramatta*. Then came World War 1, when he enlisted at Holsworthy in NSW as a trooper in the Light Horse on 2 December 1914. His occupation was shown as "station hand."

He sailed from Australia on *SS Anglo-Egyptian* on 8 February 1915 as a private in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcement of the AIF 1<sup>st</sup> Light Horse Regiment. On 6 August 1915 Darcy was killed in action at Gallipoli and buried in an unknown grave.

Family historians were unaware of any engagement between Hetta and Darcy. So there may simply have been an understanding between the two of them, to be acted on when Darcy returned from the war. However, when Hetta died 51 years later, a new wedding gown was found in a trunk beneath her bed.

A family death in 1913 and loss of a love in war led Hetta and her mother to move to the Southern Highlands and establish a boarding school for girls there. This story, and others like it, of unexpressed loss, is echoed in Gellert's famous poem:

*There's a torn and silent valley...  
With some blood upon the stones...  
There are lines of buried bones...  
an unpaid waiting debt:  
There's a sound of gentle sobbing in the South.*

**From Leon Gellert's poem *Anzac Cove*,  
January 1916**

## The Bun that had to Change its Name

Bonnie Goodfellow

It's not unusual for people to change their names at different stages of their life. We know of one man, named Calla at birth, who later in life preferred to be known as Charlie. It's a bit more unusual for food to be forced to change names – though this isn't surprising in politically charged times of conflict.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Australia encouraged settlers to come from many countries. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many German Lutheran settlers came to Australia to escape religious persecution. With them they brought valuable skills, including their wonderful bakery traditions.

But when the two world wars brought conflict and division across the globe, many who had successfully settled in Australia were stopped from following German traditions. Family names and names of towns were "anglicised." It was not even allowed for the German language to be spoken.

It was due to times of conflict and distrust affecting Australia that the Berliner Bun was forced to change its name – when it became the "Kitchener Bun." This wonderful bun, made of soft doughnut texture with crinkly sugar coating, filled with berry jam and fresh cream, was re-labelled with the name of a British army field marshal. How uncomfortable for the bun!

Even today, if you drive around the country towns where German Lutherans settled in Australia, you will still find German bakeries. Many of their baked goods now proudly bear their traditional names – though not the Berliner. For it still goes by the Kitchener Bun label. It's a pity that this bun still can't proudly say today: *Ich bin ein Berliner!* [Pun intended, based on the John F Kennedy legend.]

Writing this story also led me to write this poem:



We live on truisms: Food maketh the man.  
An army marches on its stomach.

So it must also be true -  
and obvious to those of us  
who come from country:

Our "Anzac" basic food helped  
diggers survive in trenches.

But "damper" and  
"Anzac" biscuits, like  
larrikin boys' laconic humours,  
predated 1915 by decades.

Our "diggers" learned to survive goldfields  
long before warring minefields buried them.

Our "dampers" and oat crispies  
were bushie mainstays  
long before we used them to  
gird our sons in war herds.

In the deep peace of outback country  
did stockmen learn from black women  
to ground grains and cook in ashes?

It is also a truism that war makes us inventive.  
Rather, those who can best invent  
survive, perchance to re-invent a peace.

## After the Battle

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*Margaret Naylor*

After the battle comes the silence.  
All colour is leached from the land.  
The dawn is grey, as if the sun is ashamed  
to look on the devastation.  
This is spring, but where is the lush green  
that should soften the stark outlines?  
Acres of black mud, mounded, grotesque.  
Black branches, black flies, black smells.

Now grey shadows glide across the waste  
gathering broken bodies. These were men,  
their story just begun, eyes bright with hope.  
Now their eyes stare, blank with the final shock.  
This is April, when gentle rains warm the earth,  
life surging eager in the veins of men.  
But here the blood lies cold, soaked into mud.  
After the battle there is only death.  
And silence.

## Plane spotting during World War II

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*Helen McLaughlin*

I was 3 years old when they came to Oakdale, our cattle station over the range west of Mackay. One day in 1944 two magnificent men arrived at the homestead – they were enormous, at least 10 feet tall and dressed in magnificent army uniforms. They spoke gravely to my parents and unrolled two big posters with drawings of aeroplanes on them. They asked my parents to pin these up on the wall each side of the telephone in the hallway. I was to learn that the posters portrayed every aircraft that could possibly be seen in Australian skies – one poster showed the aircraft as they would appear viewed side-ways and the second portrayed silhouettes of the aircraft viewed from below.

We went out onto the verandah and the Officers talked to my parents very seriously with many gestures pointing to the sky. Of course they were explaining the basics of aircraft spotting: upon hearing an aircraft, a spotter was to locate the sector of the sky where it was flying, try to obtain a visual fix upon it, identify it if possible and then telephone the details to a base in Mackay. They provided my parents with a pair of powerful binoculars to assist in this task. This was a time when Northern Australia feared a Japanese invasion. Apart from the job of aircraft spotting, no doubt the Officers were discussing the possibility of this with my father and talking about contingency plans for people living in remote locations in case of such an invasion.

I well remember one of these magnificent men smiling and speaking to me, then bending down to me and gently placing the binoculars before my eyes and he explained how you could clearly see things far away through them. I was amazed to see one of our fine red and white Herefords so close to me that I felt I could reach out and touch it. The adults were suitably amused by my reaction.

I remember, too, that we went down into the garden and the Officers stood by a tall garden post and told us that a plane carrying some very important people would be flying over that very post on a particular date and time. My mother was very excited. Later in life I learned that the important people were the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, who, in 1944, during World War II, visited Australia as a gesture of support demonstrating the unity of the Empire.

My parents explained to me that whenever I was outside playing, I must listen for any aircraft, try to see where it was in the sky and then tell an adult immediately so that it could be reported. I took this task very seriously indeed and spent considerable time briefing the hens, the turkeys and the pet goats on the need to be vigilant! I am proud to say that I commenced work when I was three years old, as a volunteer gathering intelligence for the Military!

## Insight into a 'mixed marriage': the war a mere beginning?

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*Annie Didcott*

*An extract from our Family History compiled by my sister*

He'd had a premonition that he was to meet his fate. And then there she was, meeting the train to collect her group which she was to be taking on a week's walking holiday in the Bavarian Alps.

For him it was love before first sight, it took her somewhat longer. Although they came from opposite sides of the fence, after a year's courtship by letter, they married and he took her home to Britain and, as it turned out, relative safety.

A Naval base in wartime was not a place to raise their first child, so they left Plymouth and sought refuge in Central London, very close to a significant bridge over the River Thames and he took up his new job, running the Princess Beatrice Hospital on the North Bank in Chelsea.

A dedicated and committed worker, he spent all his daylight hours and often nights too, managing to keep the Hospital running as smoothly as possible, certainly not an easy task in the fierce early years of the war.

She spent long, agonisingly lonely days and often nights too, caring for first one and then two small

children, alienated from all around her on account of her thick German accent. Not a good recipe for a happy marriage but she was made of very stern stuff.

She had already lived through one world war, had experienced the loss of her father from meningitis at the age of twelve, had played a major role in raising her two younger sisters, whilst their mother had had to go out and earn a living, knew too much about poverty and hardship.

Stranded by the war raging between her country and his, she could not go back to her mother and sisters for love and support. She soldiered on with gritted teeth, making the best of it all. He then joined the Navy and her life became even harder.

He was a very charismatic, driven man with ambition, vision and integrity. His were the grand ideas, the relentless driving force, the manic energy and the indisputable successes. Hers was the steadying influence, the intuitive wisdom, the good sound advice, the quiet achievements, the dogged determination.

My parents' marriage was a volatile affair with not one single dull moment. It was one adventure after another, with the war a mere beginning.



## Control Z

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*Ann Howard*

Dear Cousin,

You will probably be surprised to get a letter from me after all this time. I could not believe that you were still at the same address after all these years and I've been turning it over in my mind. I do have a phone but I can't ring out, only receive calls. That way it's free. Especially I couldn't ring you on an overseas call. We have rain and I have lit the paraffin lamp, although it's still afternoon as it is so dark in here. The dogs have hardly moved for hours. The rain thunders and drums on the tin roof and there are three leaks. I don't worry about the leaks. They soon dry up. Usually everything is as dry as a dead dingo's donger, as the vet says.

But I do think about you. I have fond memories of your mother. After the bombing raids, she kept me with her for a long time. You were so young then, you probably don't remember. As we lived in the same road, you had spent a lot of time at our house before the bombings. Your mother got me a free passage to Australia. She hugged me and said I needed to get away. I travelled with 20 orphans from Barnardos, going out to Sydney for a better life. They were supposed to be orphans but several talked about their mothers, which was very sad. I kept in touch with all of them for a long time. They were all OK. I was supposed to go back to Norfolk a week after I reached Australia. That's why I didn't take Pip's photo. Your mother loved Pip too. His photo was safe with her. Then one thing led to another. I met your uncle on the boat and we drifted around, getting farther and farther away from the cities.

I have an old tower pc that someone gave me but I really don't understand how to fix it. Maybe water got into it. It worked for a while. I would love to be able to find things out, and write things down. My writing is so crabbed now with my crooked fingers. A woman told me that if you lose a page, you can hit Control Z and you get it all back again. If life was like that, I could bring back the boys, Stephen and Jim, Alf and Joe and Curly. All of them back and laughing loudly at some joke. Dancing. Especially Pip. It was

the time I felt most alive, being in the crowd and laughing with them. Especially Pip.

The iron smell of the rain is good, and the sizzle on the ground. I wonder about the worms. They will be deep under the ground in the dark and they will hear the rain drumming above them.

When I used to do paper rounds on my bike, down our road, at first light, after rain there'd be worms run over, lying stranded in pink ribbons on the road and drowning in gutters and puddles. I used to slip a soft leaf under them or a long piece of grass, wriggle it gently and flip them onto the earth. There were times when I was in a hurry and tried not to see them, but I had to look because my bicycle wheel would run over them. If I spotted one, I'd have to turn back – and then there would be more to rescue. I'd be late for my paper round, with no excuse to offer. Once I rescued so many, I put them in a bucket with some water. They got quite sexy and frothed up. Then I put them in my richest earth I could find.

I always wondered why they ventured onto the bitumen. Charles Darwin said in a book he wrote on worms: 'It has often been said that if the ground is beaten or otherwise made to tremble, worms believe that they are pursued by a mole and leave their burrows.' Maybe the worms think the pounding of the rain is a mole coming. Maybe they can't breathe in waterlogged earth, as they breathe through their skin.

Where my place is at Somewhere Else, at the back of Broken Hill, population 445, it's dry, dry, dry. And red. Sometimes the sky's red too. Hard for you to imagine over in the greenness of King's Lynn. I must be the farthest away from Pip's photo that I could be. I had to move here, on the outskirts of town, the only place with a bit of acreage for my animals that I could afford. I don't waste anything. My hot water bottle had a hole in it and I use it as a kneeler when I'm planting out. It took me a week to think of that. I had a tin bucket with a rusty hole and guess what, upside down it forced the rhubarb!

I was so surprised to get a reply from you. I read it so many times, then folded it up, then unfolded it and read it again. It was at the Post Office in town for a couple of weeks before people told me it was there. They were all talking about the stamp. I don't get into town much. I have a dress, and wear shoes instead of boots, which I need for the snakes here. I wash carefully. My long hair is grey now, not blonde, but still has a nice wave. I tie my hair back. I used to wear a hat, but I pinned it to my dress once, when my arms were too sore to reach up to the hook, then forgot it. I wore the dress to town with the hat pinned on the back. A lady tapped me on the shoulder and whispered to me. She helped me unpin it and put it on.

The animals keep me busy from first light: I have one rescued kitten, (my last), found outside the Post Office in a box, so named Postie. She is an only cat, half wild, with no mate so thankfully there will be no kittens. She thinks she is a dog and copies them, to their annoyance. There are 5 rescued dogs, all healthy, and 25 rescued sheep and lambs. I have an old ram, I call Archie, with Archibald Ormsby-Gore (John Betjeman's teddy bear), in mind. John Betjeman was clutching his teddy when he died. That's so British, isn't it. I keep Archie penned up as I already have too many lambs to care for and I won't allow them to be slaughtered. The things humans eat: whale, horse, dog, grated puffin! They all have souls. SOBs means souls on board – you can't argue with it. The vet is looking to place Archie somewhere else. He says he's too much for me. He is always looking for a blue. Ewegene, one of the oldest sheep comes to the back door and bellows for something to eat. If I go out, the back door is left open for the dogs and some sheep and lambs get into the house and chew things and poo. Lily is now toothless. She used to be really clean, not now. Her friend, Gran, stole an opened tin of beetroot last week, from the kitchen bench, which she shared with Lily. They drank the vinegar and strolled about with bright red lips. The dogs circled guiltily when I came home, so I knew the sheep had been inside. One sheep I named Carmen, after the opera character, but it didn't stick. She just didn't have the personality.

I have a blind black wether. None of the dogs ever chase her – she can't see them and they know. She wanders about bumping into things. I let her lie next to my desk and my bed. Yesterday, Lily had a

bellyache. Her ears flopped sideways and she didn't steal Ewegene's food. She drooled. She must have eaten something poisonous. I shouted at her to stick to the grass, but the wind fanned out the red dust in mockery and she just stared at me through the cloud.

No hot water for two months. I'd love a hot shower. Can't afford repairs. The dam has a sticky bottom with a few inches of muddy water in.

On a good day, over 100 magpies call in for breakfast. Honeyeaters, crimson and eastern rosellas, galahs, cockatoos, corelles, tufted pigeons and a goshawk swirl around me, in the middle like a plump St Francis with long, wavy hair and boots on against bitey ants. Two Willy Wagtails are learning to fly from my finger to their nest.

I struggle with bleak, black depression. All the time I slide back to the brave boys who left, not only killed but not given a proper burial. When I got the computer working I found a German list of burial sites, but it was all in German. I hoped the Allies would do what the people in Holland did for the war dead – they made a big effort. The Germans were the enemy but now with so many dead, they are not any more. Just someone's son, brother, husband chum...my boys, the laughing, joking fresh faced boys who joined the RAF, I knew so many. One of them, Pip – well I still catch my breath when I think of him but I was always too shy to do anything but catch his eye and be quietly with him. I'd love to be a writer and rewrite their end. Smashed to bits in the air, and not remembered.

Well I remember them. I wonder if you've had time to look through your mother's things for that photo of Pip. She had all the photos in a brown suitcase tied up with one of your father's belts. She wouldn't have thrown them out, I'm sure. Probably in the attic. The photo is hand coloured. He signed it in the corner, sideways. Pip is looking up and laughing, fair hair tousled, eyes so blue like the sky he disappeared into. The day he had the photo taken, he asked me to go with him. He wore his battle jacket with the sheepskin lapels, although it was a mild day. He was so proud of it and walked with a swagger. I had a new pink dress and he kept saying, 'The dress, eh? We do like the dress!' and I blushed the same colour. We stopped off at a pub and sat on the grass under a tree full of apple blossom, buzzing with bees. He laid my head in his lap and I shivered

with happiness looking up under his chin at the blue sky. I wanted that moment to go on for ever. Each time he flew out I died a little and then there was the day he came back with a chipped elbow and great jagged cuts across his lovely face. He had a week off. We looked at each other and I said, 'You're going back, aren't you', and the space between our faces said goodbye.

Would you have a photo of yourself as you are now? I would really love to see how you have grown. You had fair hair and your mother used to pull it back tightly in two big white bows. You said it made your head ache. I don't suppose you remember when I took you for walks to the Tuesday Market Place. Margaret Read, they called a witch, was burnt there in 1590. It is said that as the flames licked the poor old woman's toes, her heart burst from her body and struck the wall, leaving a heart-shape. There's a carving. I held you up to touch the heart. Just a poor old woman.

I have six more sheep to hand shear at the present and am bucketing water around the place. By the time I've done that, I'm sunburnt and quite weak. I've decided to shear the sheep continuously, so hopefully they won't get daggy. It will be cooler for them, too. I have to average two a week. Nobody comes except the vet and a young chap from the council wanting rates. I sheared one merino Christmas Eve, one Christmas Day, one New Year's Eve and one New Year's Day. Even my elbows ache. Who was that comedian that said his teeth itched? Tommy something. He always made me laugh.

The house is cooler than outside at night but I can't leave the doors and windows open because of the mozzies. They get in anyway. The dogs snap and snap at them. Postie goes under the sheets and sometimes bites my toes or puts her claws out on my leg and purrs. What can you do?

The good thing about sheep poo is that it holds the water, it's caught and held, so it doesn't run across the red dust. I've put it under the trees, where my animals go when their souls leave their bodies. The pear trees bear very well. I cut up the green ones for the sheep before the rosellas get stuck in. The apricot gets heavy with fruit, but last time the birds got them all except ten. It breaks my heart when a tree dies. I think of your mother's dewy garden with

hollyhocks and wallflowers and sweet peas and the small birds chattering. I have geraniums here, redder than the red ground. How I would love some white flowers.

Gran has become very frail. She eats, but walks very slowly like a ninety-year old human. She still has all her teeth but she is exuding frailty. Poor Gran has to avoid the boisterous young 'uns. Sometimes I clear a path so she can totter through. Some days her nose runs and I grab her and blow her nose for her like you do toddlers. Ewegene is very bolshy. She is strong and cunning and gives as good as she gets.

I am now completely vegetarian and just buy mince and bones for the dogs and birds. My brain and body unravelling fast. I suppose I'll be buried by loony Christians. I heard of a couple of unpleasant incidents and I'm careful not to put my address and state of health out. Nobody in town would know, because I always dress. I have some 4711 eau de cologne.

Do you know any males who were in the RAF in WW2? I would love to talk with them. That's probably a silly question, it was such a long time ago.

Wherever I've piled sheep poo, the worms have arrived. Poor little creatures have done it hard in the dry. I found a friendly farmer who let me get under his shearing shed and rescue some. I put chaff bags and old bits of carpet around for them. It's wonderful how they find the shelter. If I find a sick magpie, I kill it but I actually feel very guilty about killing anything.

All of the boys were Ozzies except for three. The eldest was 29, the youngest 19. Six of the seven dead, probably bailed out too late from a plane on fire and about to crash. Alf may have had a damaged parachute and gone down in the early hours over Holland. Or they got caught in fog and could not see the ground. Pip just disappeared.

I'm so hot. I will have two or three days of salad before everything rots. (No fridge) I've opened a tin of beetroot which means Gran and Lily will be very interested.

## The Motorcycle Man

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*Robyn McPherson*

She saw him on the bus, from Queanbeyan to Canberra, one day in 2015. He was old, looked frail. The younger man sitting next to him looked to be his “carer”, but he left the old man alone on his seat to get off the bus well before it reached the capital. This worried her, as the old man looked perturbed at the younger man’s leaving. So she reached out to ask if he was okay.

Then followed a short telling of his story, as the bus made its way through further stops and starts. He told her how he had survived his role in World War 2 only because of a last minute swap of shifts. He survived, but those who had “put their lives on the line”, that day, that shift, had not.

He returned home to life and work, thinking he had put the war behind him. Half a century later he became very ill. Doctors couldn’t pinpoint the cause of his pain, till one spent time listening to his story, and helped him realise how war trauma may have come back to “dog his last days” with ill health. This

doctor’s advice was to find ways of bringing joy into his life, to do those things he had yearned to do but never done.

So the old man, at age 80, bought his first motorcycle and took himself off to find parts of the country he’d never allowed himself time to see. After that first road trip he wore out half a dozen motorcycles, with many more freedom rides over a dozen or more years to the likes of Broken Hill and beyond.

He then reached the end of his bus ride. She watched him slowly rise from his seat to get off the bus, shaking her head at what she had just heard. No broken, frail man here, just one with well-worn tyre treads framing his late-in-life rides.

Robyn McPherson’s account of her meeting with the motorcycle man

# They also serve



Photo courtesy of the Kangaroo March (<http://kangaroomarch.org.au/location/yass>)

# Peace

*From Words for Peace by Eila, 10 years old*



# They Also Serve

Geoff McCubbin

*Original story, TV screenplay (The Twenty Fifth of April) and stage adaptation by Geoff McCubbin Copyright (c) Geoff McCubbin 2015*

## List of Characters

**Bill:** late 70s, retired school teacher, RSL office holder, and a man with strong views: his physical mobility is limited but his conversation flows more freely than ever.

**Joan:** mid-70s, Bill's dutiful wife who has kept the home fires burning: while an intelligent and thoughtful person she has never had the chance to expand her horizons.

**Andrew:** 50s, their nephew, also-ran university teacher who is trying to do the right thing both by his older relations and his daughter.

**Helen:** late 20s, Andrew's daughter, as "foreman material" is a well-informed younger woman who has made her own way in the business world and the capital city environment.

## Character Note

No character is meant as a caricature: the intention is to capture the attitudes of three generations, and to do so with sympathy and respect.

## Sets

Action takes place on the 25th of April around 1990, in Bill and Joan's modest house in a "generic" southern NSW country town. There are two areas on the stage, each set up with the necessary basics to suggest in the first case the living room (including a small dining table); and in the second, Joan's kitchen, which also has a small table. The action alternates between these two areas, lit as appropriate. On the wall of the living area are sepia family portraits, one of a couple with the man wearing a 1914-18 military uniform. There is a radio in the kitchen.

## Scene One: living area

*Both areas are lit: BILL is sitting with a newspaper at the table, and JOAN moves back and forth into the kitchen, as she clears up after the evening meal.*

**BILL:** It could have been a better day...good turnout at the march, although I reckon the schools could have done a lot better...not enough kids, and what there were were a pretty scruffy lot...I don't know about their band - I know we managed to keep in step most of the time...dah dah dah dah dah dah dah dada dah (*the tune is "Long, long ago"*)...I don't know if it was all that suitable, or even if it's a march...but I suppose they've got to have a go...and the whole thing was nearly ruined by that Elliott woman - she was a disgrace...

**JOAN:** It was a bit of a surprise, dear, yes: we're not used to that here, are we?

**BILL:** Surprise! It was unbelievable! And you'd think the Shire President could have got the guest speaker's name right: he's known he was coming long enough! I mean if these new Australians are going to go into public life you'd think they could take a bit more trouble to get it right...I felt down right embarrassed for old Beauchamp (*pronounced Beechem*): to be introduced (*bad Italian accent*) "and now I have much pleasure in welcoming our speaker, Wing Commander Bee-au-ooh-champ"...I ask you...

**JOAN:** Well, the children seemed to enjoy it.

BILL: Oh, so they did: people these days like nothing better than seeing the heavies make fools of themselves, and Piccolo obliged them. Up there with his gold chain and all!

JOAN: But surely it didn't really matter.

BILL: Things have got to be got right; he should have checked – and practised, if he had any doubts.

JOAN: It was nice to see some of the people getting out – Albert for one: he was only discharged from the hospital the other day, and there he was, stepping out with the best of you.

BILL: And so he should! With all the help he's had since he got sick, it's the least we could expect.

JOAN: I'm sure he appreciated it.

*Joan stays and sits in the living room about here, and the kitchen area lights fade.*

BILL: That's more than you can say for Jimmy Donoghue – he's a dead loss if ever I saw one: he's been given endless advice, put in touch with the right people, given the odd job, and where was he?

JOAN: Perhaps it's better he wasn't there... after all it's a holiday and he mightn't have been in the right sort of condition...

BILL: I bet he wasn't – and I don't know about old Henry: he can hardly walk straight, and there he was again: he's a bit of a worry, year after year.

JOAN: Yes, perhaps; but you know Henry still hates to miss anything.

BILL: You can say that again! He mightn't remember much else any more, but he still turns up. And that's about all he ever did: I know he got a medal, but that was a long time ago.

*(The door bell rings: Bill speaks on, but Joan gets up and goes out to answer it.)*

Who on earth is that? He's been a taker: we've put in the hard yards

ever since, and he's never even served on the committee. I don't know.

*(JOAN goes out, and BILL picks up the newspaper again. There are some excited noises off-stage, and JOAN enters with ANDREW and HELEN.)*

JOAN: Bill, here's a lovely surprise: it's Ann's boy Andrew, and his daughter Helen – someone I don't think you'd even recognise – it's so long since we've seen you.

HELEN: Yes, it is: I must have been about eight. I'm so glad you're home.

ANDREW: G'day, Uncle Bill: it's been a while: great to see you looking so well.

BILL: *(Stands, behind table)* Well, hello Andrew, hello Helen: pardon me for being a bit slow: it's been a long day.

HELEN: Hello: I've so been looking forward to meeting you again – it's just so lucky we were here.

ANDREW: Helen and I both had conferences in Canberra – different ones – that finished yesterday. So we stayed on a bit – went to the march – and called in here on the way back to town.

HELEN: I wanted dad to show me round his old haunts a bit, before we went our separate ways.

JOAN: Sit down, please do: *(they sit)* It's lovely to see you – but have you eaten yet?

ANDREW: Oh yes: we had tea at the Acropolis: I'm sure I've spilt milkshakes on the very same laminex tables. It hasn't changed a bit.

BILL: The Acropolis's a bit like us: it ought to be classified by the National Trust. But it's seen a few good times.

HELEN: Dad's told me how much he enjoyed the times he spent with you.

BILL: Oh, he was a bit of lad then, he was – and he and our kids got along so well.

ANDREW: We did – and it wasn't so long ago, really! It's a pity they've both moved away – like we did.

JOAN: Yes, it is: that's the sad part of living in a small town. They both -

BILL: We know that mother. It's the way the country's going. There aren't the opportunities for young people in towns like this any more.

JOAN: They've both been able to -

BILL: The Government has allowed places like this to fall apart. Neglect and discrimination, all along the line. The city gets all the attention, all the money – freeways, sportsgrounds, factories: our biggest workshops went years ago, the roads are crook, and we haven't a decent sized shop left in the place.

ANDREW: Well, I noticed things were pretty quiet – not many shops I remember are left, and there are too many frosted windows.

HELEN: It's still a lovely little town.

BILL: Perhaps, yes...but it's not what it was: there were lots more people here once: good people: did you see the war memorial in the park?

HELEN: Dad showed it to me, with all the Anzac day flowers still around. I couldn't believe how many names were on it.

BILL: That's right: there are just about more men named there than live in the town these days. They go right back to the Boer War. In this place, we really did our bit, we did it when it really counted, and what I want to know is, where has it got us?

ANDREW: Yes, they certainly answered the empire's call around here.

BILL: And where, I say, has it got us? The only people the Government helps these days are the ones who don't deserve it – the ones who won't get their hands dirty. We've still got plenty of them – and around here, too.

HELEN: It's not easy for young people to get jobs these days.

BILL: I won't have that. Any who wants to work can get something. You've got to be prepared to go to where the work is – to move around, to take on the hard jobs, put in the time and effort. Someone's got to do them.

HELEN: And of course your family had to go – and ours.

BILL: Yes, well...but not all the jobs are in the city – and you've done pretty well, haven't you? Computers or something?

ANDREW: Helen's customer support manager for Project Computers in Sydney. That's how we're here. She had a computer conference in Canberra and I had an education seminar. And we've spent the afternoon doing the old rounds here. Did you march today?

JOAN: Bill hasn't missed a march in forty years. Even now, when he doesn't walk as well as -

BILL: All right mother, I'm not in a wheel chair yet. Yes, I was there.

HELEN: Were you in Papua New Guinea during the war?

BILL: Well no, not actually: I spent a perishing long time in the Northern Territory: I was in Darwin when it kept getting bombed: that was no fun, I can tell you.

ANDREW: I'm always amazed at how little was said about that at the time -you weren't told about it, Auntie Joan, were you?

JOAN: I was very worried, of course, but I had no idea how much was going on. I suppose the Government didn't want to create any panic.

HELEN: That's all very well for the Government, but surely the families...

BILL: The Government has to make sure that everyone works together, and that won't happen if they panic – or worse still, argue about what ought to be done. That's what went wrong in Vietnam – you could see how all the arguing upset all we were wanted to do.

ANDREW: You remember I wasn't happy about Australia being in on that.

BILL: I thought you'd got over all that – all those moratoriums and demonstrations – how must the blokes over there have felt, knowing all that was going on at home? How could they have done a proper job?

ANDREW: The trouble was, Uncle, I couldn't agree with the job they were supposed to be doing.

HELEN: I think now most Australians feel our soldiers shouldn't have gone, don't they? After all, the United States was intervening in what was really a civil war...

BILL: That's not the point, Helen. We had made a commitment then, and we ought to have been allowed to get on with it. If the politicians after Menzies and the Americans hadn't been so pathetic it wouldn't have turned into the shambles it was. It was pathetic, the way it all finished up.

ANDREW: That's one of my most vivid memories – those pictures of the helicopters flapping away on the edge of ships, and just being dumped in the sea, as the Americans pulled out.

BILL: And what an incredible waste! Sometimes I wonder whether Governments ought to be trusted with all the taxes we pay them. It always seems to get spent in the wrong way, or in the wrong place, or on the wrong people.

HELEN: People can't always help getting into trouble. I know –

JOAN: *(getting up)* I think I'd better finish the washing up after tea. Would you like to help me, Helen?

BILL: That's a good idea, mother: and when you've finished you can make us a cup of tea. Go and have some woman talk, and Andrew and I can catch up on what he's been at.

HELEN: *(getting up)* Yes, of course.

ANDREW: Thanks Helen; I know Auntie Joan would enjoy talking with you.

HELEN: Yes, and I can dry up

Transition to Scene Two

*BILL and ANDREW settle back to talk as the living area lights fade, and as JOAN and HELEN move into the kitchen area the lights come up on that side. The men are not heard, and the attention falls on the women. HELEN sits, while JOAN gets the tea things together.*

JOAN: Of course the Vietnam war was – I think you would say – a very ambivalent experience for us. From what I read, I didn't feel happy about it, but we had a nephew in it; so it was very hard to have family discussions on the rights and wrongs while he was actually over there.

HELEN: That was your brother Ralph's boy? I don't think I ever met him, but I know he was drafted.

JOAN: Yes, that's the one. He was called up for National Service, that was the scheme, they had a ballot, and if your birthday came up, then you had to go.

HELEN: It all sounds totally barbaric to me. How did Bill feel about it?

JOAN: He felt Peter was keeping up the family tradition. I mean, the country called, and you had to respond. That's really all there was to it.

HELEN: But didn't he wonder if there were some other important issues – I don't

suppose he had much time for conscientious objectors?

JOAN: Don't ask about them! But really, I don't think Bill wanted to think too much about conscription, or whether or not we should have sent soldiers over there: it was all too unsettling...too many things might change...

HELEN: You mean he didn't want to rock the boat, or ask questions about law and order – things like that?

JOAN: That sort of thing, yes.

HELEN: But I expect when Peter got back he would have been able to help – I mean he'd been there, and he'd seen it all happening...

JOAN: Well, no: that's another side to this whole business: Peter wouldn't talk about it at all. Of course that made it hard when he saw Bill, and you know how much Bill is involved with the diggers' club. I think Peter blamed him somehow for the way some of the big city clubs treated him and his friends.

HELEN: How do you mean?

JOAN: They weren't all that welcome, or else they were looked down on; some of the old members seemed to see them as returned soldiers, second-class – like they'd been away on something less dignified, or...noble.

HELEN: That's incredible.

JOAN: It was awful for us. Peter wouldn't come and see us any more, and then he got married – much too soon – and I gather it didn't work out, and other things went wrong – I know a lot of things were patched up for the Vietnam veterans, but I think it was too late for him.

BILL: *(voice from living room)* Mother!

JOAN: Yes dear?

BILL: Are you going to make us a cup of tea?

JOAN: We're just catching up on some news. *(back to HELEN)* So you see, my dear, there are some things that we don't speak about very much. Bill has strong views about some of them, but I don't think he's able to look hard at some of the others.

HELEN: How do you manage to handle all that?

JOAN: Oh, I read a lot, and listen – there are some awfully good radio programs these days. I listen often when Bill is in the garden or at the club. I would have liked to have done what you've been able to do, but there was never the chance...the children, the war...no, it just wasn't what one did. Are you going to do more?

HELEN: Oh, perhaps: it depends on how my job goes.

JOAN: You have to travel a lot, don't you?

HELEN: Yes, I help people with new computers get up and running – I've done lots of technical stuff.

JOAN: What else would you like to do?

HELEN: Some of the humanities sort of things – arts, psychology, history and so on. The things that make people people – you know? And then again I might meet someone who could show me – you never know.

JOAN: You need a sensitive new age English professor!

HELEN: Now that might be interesting, but I don't meet too many of those in the places I have to go for work.

JOAN: You won't find any around here! Some of us tried to get adult education classes going once, but there weren't enough people to keep them going. I really enjoyed what we did, though. There was the one on Australian writing– “learning about ourselves” ...

HELEN: That sounds interesting.

JOAN: Oh, it was a while ago: we did “The One day of the Year” – I was thinking about it today, of course; and that other play about New Australians: “The Shifting Heart”, I think. It was so sad, the way some of the migrants were treated.

HELEN: I know, we did that play at high school. But was it really like that here?

JOAN: Well, nobody got killed. But there were quite a few migrants. Just after the war, there were “the Balts” as we called them – people from places like Latvia and Estonia. And after that there were Dutch, and Italians...

### Transition to Scene Three

*Attention shifts from the women in the kitchen to the men in the living room, so that while JOAN is organising the tea she is no longer heard; and the lights come up on the men.*

BILL: Oh, we had the main ceremony pretty well in hand – I mean, we’ve been doing it for long enough...but then, would you believe it, the Shire President got up to introduce the visiting speaker and totally buggered up his name. We had a lot of trouble getting this bloke – had one of those posh English names – Beauchamp – but there’s no excuse for getting it wrong.

ANDREW: That’s not the easiest one.

BILL: Oh, I know that, and the Shire President’s Italian, but he’s up front, he’s got to make sure he gets it right.

ANDREW: Perhaps that’s not such a major disaster – not as bad anyway as the time I remember – I was still at school – and you couldn’t get a bugler or anyone to play?

BILL: I know what you’re going to say!

ANDREW: And someone had the Last Post on a record, and Henry White put the needle down on the wrong track!

BILL: Ow, Ow!

ANDREW: Scrape, screech, scratch...then, drum roll – brrrrrrm, then *(sings)* “God save our gracious Queen” ...

BILL: And then he panicked...

ANDREW: Snap, crackle, pop: “Should auld acquaintance be forgot...” *(They laugh together)* Well, I suppose that’s sort of “lest we forget!” But at least he got it right after that.

BILL: That’s not one of my favourite memories.

ANDREW: Or was it “God save the King”? I forget but you know, I still haven’t forgotten the story our old primary teacher told us a dozen times about the time his father was late running to catch the train, and as he went past the park there was a band, and they started to play the National Anthem, and he had to stop and stand to attention until they’d finished, and he missed the train... Now today –

BILL: Yes, well..... Mother! How’s the tea going?

JOAN: *(from kitchen)* Coming soon, dear!

BILL: Music’s always a problem – getting someone to play, and getting the public to sing – and then there’s the school kids joining in – of course you were always in it when you were here.

ANDREW: Yes, I was – it almost seems like another life.

BILL: Not for me it doesn’t: that’s what this place has got: continuity. There are some things people can’t be allowed to forget. I know families have to move around the country a bit, but we’ve kept things going here, and we’re not the only ones.

ANDREW: Well, yes, of course you have, and so have other people. It's the same all over – I suppose they have the music problems too. I've never forgotten the time you booked a pipe band – I'd never heard bagpipes before, and I haven't got over it yet. I seem to remember that....

*JOAN and HELEN enter with the tea, and cups etc are organised, with tea served over the ensuing dialogue.*

HELEN: I suppose you've been catching up on all the old gossip.

BILL: You could say that: we've been talking about how hard it is to get proper music for a public function in a smaller town.

JOAN: I miss music very much here...

HELEN: I can imagine.

JOAN: You've no idea how wonderful it was when the new ABC FM station came on, so beautifully clear, and we were able to...

BILL: Mother likes to listen to the radio a bit; can't say I get much out of it: there's too much claptrap and bias these days.

ANDREW: But it must make a big difference being able to get all the national programs. Do you get the SBS TV? That's really special!

JOAN: No, we don't have that here – but I love the wireless. A pause...this subject isn't going any further.

*HELEN indicates the two sepia portraits on the wall.*

HELEN: Are these my great grandparents?

BILL: They certainly are: that's my mother, and my father in khaki: – I'm pretty sure that was done the day they got married. That's the way he is in the wedding photos, anyway.

HELEN: He got married in uniform?

BILL: Oh yes, probably the best clothes he had – but there wasn't time to wait,

especially since we lost so many at Gallipoli.

HELEN: To wait?

BILL: Oh yes, they were needed over there, straight away. We had the big recruiting marches, starting with the Coo-ee March from Gilgandra to Sydney, then lots of others like the Kangaroo march down this way. Dad felt he had to go.

HELEN: And then your mother was on her own for three years, or whatever?

BILL: The family looked after her all right. Now my father, he went to France: he went right through the experience with the trenches, and the mud and the gas, and he was lucky: he came home in one piece. And a lot of others he knew didn't. I know he missed them a lot.

HELEN: But really, how did your mother cope when he went away – straight after they got married?

BILL: Oh, she was all right – actually, my grandfather had died by then, and Nanna was on her own, so my mother looked after her – so she had something pretty useful to do. Like when I was away in the forties – you found things to do then, didn't you mother?

JOAN: Oh, I managed pretty well, yes I did.

ANDREW: Grandpa didn't talk much to me about it.

BILL: Oh, he was a great speaker at our Anzac Dinners. I remember the time...

HELEN: Did he feel it was all ...worthwhile?

BILL: I beg your pardon?

HELEN: I mean what did he see as the point of it all – like perhaps you did, with Hitler in Europe and with the Japanese on the way to invade Australia?

BILL: Well of course: he was needed – that's why he went.

HELEN: No, but I know there were arguments in Australia then, not just about conscription, but whether it was just – a sort of trade war between England and the Germans, and not really our business.

JOAN: That's right – a struggle between the two great empires. I heard a program about...

BILL: No, mother: he was needed, and he went. I know some of the bog-Irish Catholics didn't like it, but what do you expect? They just dragged some of the problems of their old country into the new one: that's the trouble with too many migrants who come here: they bring all their baggage with them – all their prejudices, and their feuds, and they won't let them go!

ANDREW: Well, it's a big change for some of them...but the British had the biggest empire, didn't they, Auntie Joan: we had a big world map on or classroom wall, and in those days it was red, more than anything else.

BILL: It certainly was.

ANDREW: And I remember we used to have a half-holiday at school on Empire Day: there'd be a special assembly, and we'd all be given little cardboard Union Jacks to pin on our jumpers, and we all went home at lunch time...the twenty-fourth of May, wasn't it?

JOAN: Queen Victoria's birthday, yes.

HELEN: Well, they stopped that before I started school.

ANDREW: You missed out on the half-holiday.

HELEN: Don't trivialise it, Dad: the whole idea sounds positively archaic.

ANDREW: I think it was supposed to remind us that we were part of something...

HELEN: Then? Then, perhaps, but not now – not really. And giving out just Union Jacks: why not the Australian flag – although I suppose we've even kept a Union Jack in the corner of that...

BILL: Now wait a minute...

JOAN: Lots of Australians these days don't come from British countries: I don't think they'd feel that...

BILL: Three generations of this family have fought under that flag – your grandfather, me and Peter; and so did a lot of others who never came back!

HELEN: I know, I'm sorry: I'm not criticising what any of them did; I'm just saying things have changed. They're not the same as they were.

BILL: Some things might have changed, but not the things that count. The things this country stands for – they're still the same. And if they're not I don't know what we fought for!

ANDREW: I saw a Leunig cartoon once about the flag – he had an idea for a good flag – like he had a picture of a flagpole and sticking out from it was a sheet of rusty corrugated iron, with a couple of nail holes in it; and he said it could be our flag because – I think – it wouldn't flop if there wasn't any wind, and it was true blue Australian, it wouldn't wear out, but best of all he said because most of us have fought under it...

BILL: I don't think that's very funny.

ANDREW: No, of course not: I'm sorry.

BILL: Yes, well: I mean you've got to draw the line somewhere, or the place will get taken over by the weirdos – like that Elliot woman at the service today. I don't know why she came. If she planned to act like that she had no right to be there – especially on the platform.

ANDREW: What happened?

BILL: They played the anthem, and she deliberately sat down, for God's sake!

HELEN: You mean she sat down for “God Save the Queen”?

BILL: She did.

JOAN: She was representing the school – the Principal was conducting the school band – but I hear she’s done a marvellous job this year with some of the more difficult children.

BILL: That’s got nothing to do with it, mother.

JOAN: You know the Williams family – how much trouble those boys used to get into –

BILL: She’s in a Government job, her Majesty’s Government’s job, and she’s not being paid to do that sort of thing. She won’t be on the platform next year – if she’s here next year. She ought to be sacked.

HELEN: Well I really think...

ANDREW: I think they’ll still need her at the school: good school counsellors are needed more and more these days, it seems. Ours does a fine job, anyway – but look we’re keeping you late, and if we’re going to get back to town tonight we’d better get going.

JOAN: Oh dear, do you really think so?

ANDREW: I’m on deck tomorrow, with all the catching up to do – you too, I think, Helen.

HELEN: Well...yes, it’s back to the rat race for me tomorrow, I’m afraid. It would be so much nicer to be able to work in a place like this.

ANDREW: It really is a special sort of place.

BILL: Well, I’m glad to have caught up with a few things: good of you to drop in, and you too, young lady: I hope you do well.

*HELEN shakes hands with BILL.*

HELEN: Thank you: I’ll do my best. Goodnight, then.

JOAN: I’ll come out with you to the car.

*JOAN and HELEN leave.*

ANDREW: Goodnight, Uncle Bill; great to see you again.

BILL: Don’t mind me not getting up. Hope it’s not so long before we see you again.

ANDREW: Oh, you never know. But we’ve all been scattered so long: it’s a pity to lose touch. That’s the way it seems to be these days, but we’ll have to do better.

BILL: I hope so.

*BILL and ANDREW shake hands, and with a couple more “goodbyes” she goes out after HELEN and JOAN. BILL reaches for his paper, and turns a few pages, until JOAN returns.*

JOAN: That was so nice to see Andrew again, after so long...and to meet Helen: I hope they have a safe trip back – you can get some people who shouldn’t be on the road on a night like this.

BILL: Yes, well...I’m glad they dropped in. Andrew’s still got some of his hippie ideas, but he’s all right – but he’s got his hands full with that daughter of his. She’s pretty bright, I’ll give her that...

JOAN: I liked her very much.

BILL: Huh!...It’s been a long day, mother. I think I’ll go to bed.

*BILL gets up, puts his paper down, and starts to move off.*

JOAN: Yes, certainly dear, you go. It has been quite a day. I’ll just finish tidying up, and then I think I’ll come too.

BILL: Goodnight.

*BILL goes out.*

JOAN: Goodnight, dear.

Transition to Scene Four

*JOAN goes into the kitchen area, as the lights fade on the living room and come up there. Before she begins tidying up, she switches on a radio, and continues her work as the piece of music being*

*played concludes. The music is Albinoni: Adagio in G Minor (about the last 60 seconds). As it closes she stands still, holding a cup.*

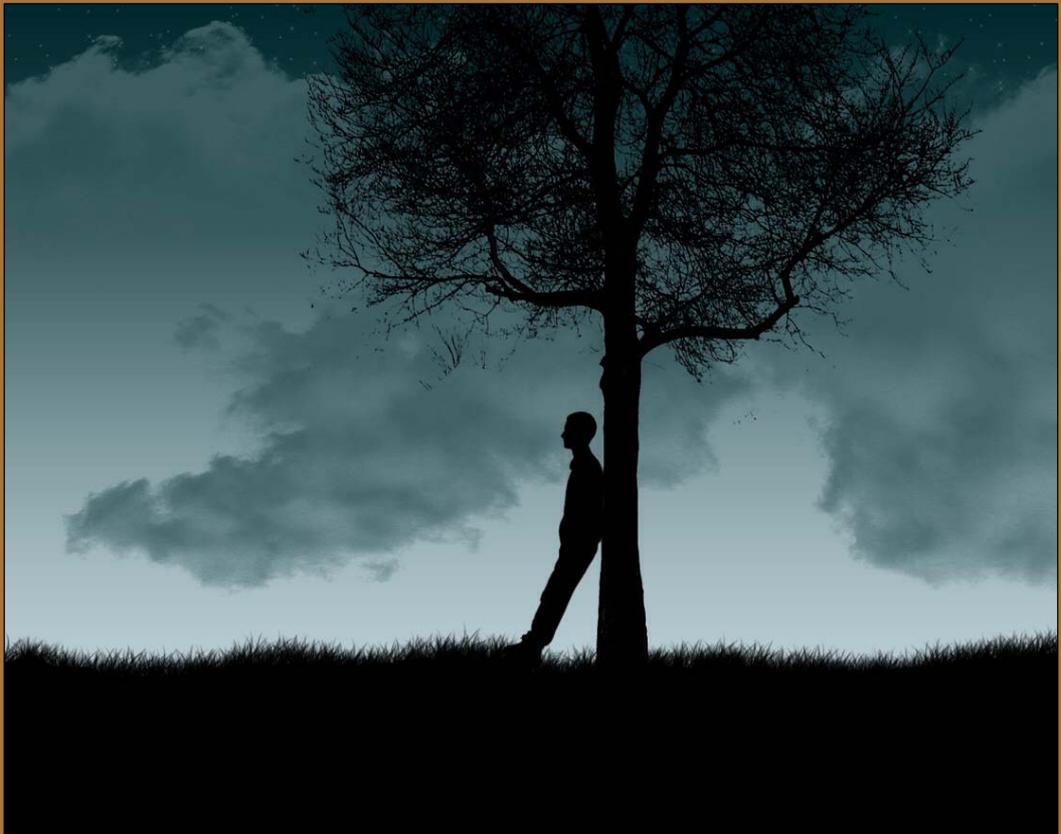
ANNOUNCER'S VOICE: And with that unforgettable work by Albinoni we've nearly finished our Anzac Day program. Many of you like me will never hear that without recalling the closing scenes of Peter Weir's wonderful film "Gallipoli." And now, we've just time to fit in some of the old digger songs: here we go!

*There are a few chords on piano accordion, (or from a brass band) introducing "Pack up your troubles' (or similar), but JOAN moves very quickly, and turns the radio off. She stands, holding the cup; the Albinoni is faded in, in the background, as she begins to weep; she slowly sinks into a chair at the kitchen table and sobs, holding her head in one hand and the empty cup in the other.*

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

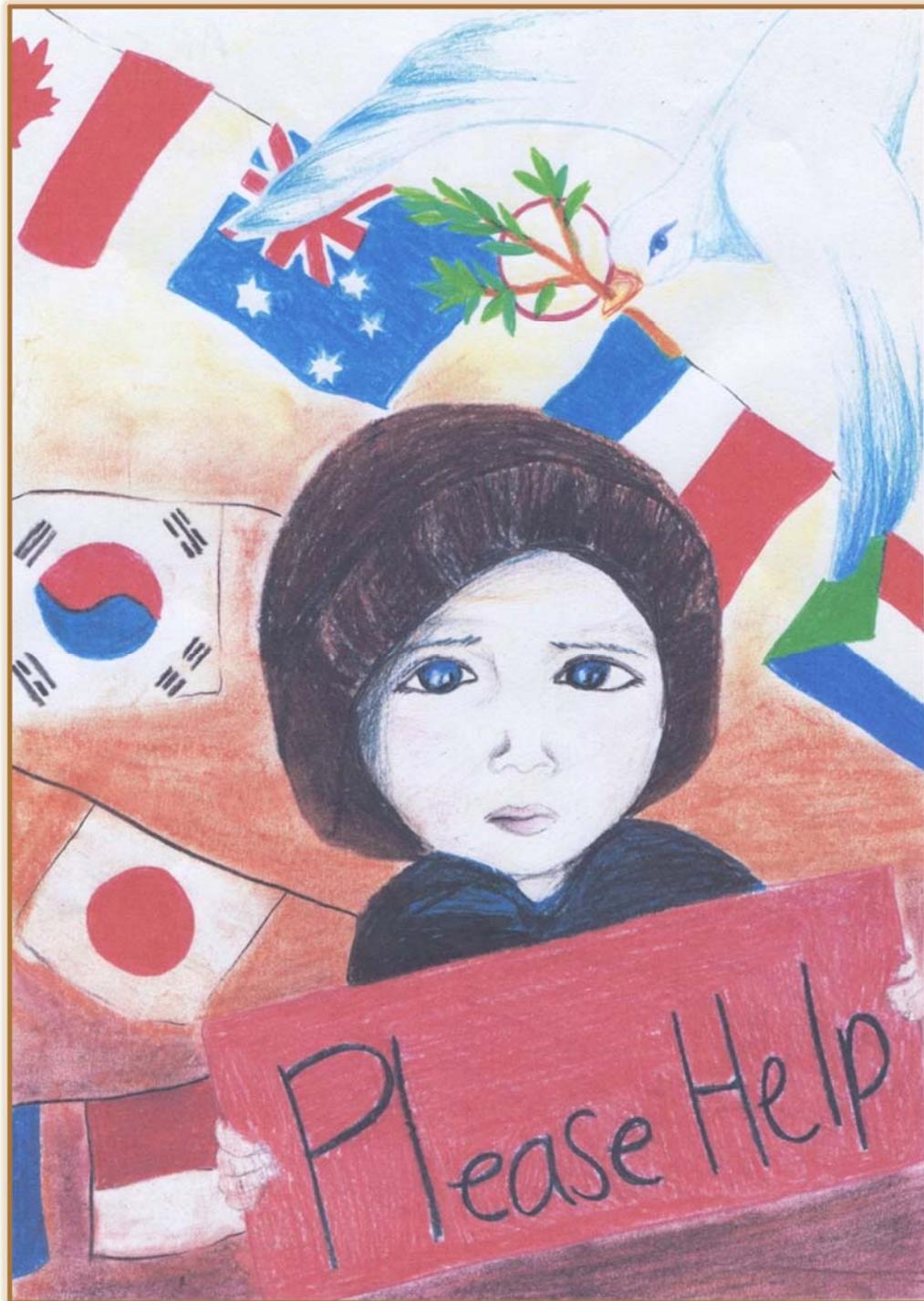
END.

They stand  
and wait



# Please help

*From Words for Peace by Isabella, 11 years old*



# Our Parents Return

---

*Robert Shiells*

*The following script is based on passages from George Johnston's My Brother Jack published in 1964. The early chapters chronicle the impact of World War I on the Johnston Family. The script was performed at the Official Launch of PeaceWorks! in Canberra in 2015.*

This story tells how two parents (who were involved with WW1) returned home. It depicts how its impact affected injured soldiers who inhabited their world.

## Characters / Costumes

Jack, late 30s, is the older brother of David. Jack wears business attire. He wears nice suit pants and shirt (blue or light colour, not white), braces and a jacket. Finally Jack has an old hat (like a bowler hat).

David, late 30s, is the younger brother of Jack. Like Jack he wears a nice suit shirt (light coloured) and pants with a belt with sleeves rolled up.

## Props

*Cane (Jack)*

*Pipe (Jack)*

*A beer bottle (Jack)*

*A hat (Jack)*

*1 harmonica (David)*

*2 bandages (David)*

## Script

*Jack and David walk on stage and stand facing the audience from difference sides of the stage. Jack walks on wearing a hat and has a pipe and a bottle of beer in his pockets. Jack uses a cane and after he walks on he places the cane upstage left in the corner then walks forward to face the audience in position. David walks on with a harmonica and bandages in his pockets. He walks straight to his*

*position and faces the audience. There is tension between the two.*

David: Hello everyone my name is David Meredith and this is my brother.

*Jack interrupts*

Jack: Jack Meredith at your service (*he salutes the audience*)

David: Yes Jack is my older brother Jack:

Jack: No Davy – You're my younger brother. Anyway we should start the story.

David: Yes, you're right!

*Looks back to the audience.*

This is a story about our parents' return from World War 1.

Jack: It is called – "Our Parents Return."

*Jack and David turn around and walk upstage and then turn back to face the audience. Jack takes off his hat when he starts to talk. They use their props at different points when it is appropriate.*

Dad was away at what was referred to as "The Front" for four years altogether, and Mother for rather more than three.

David: (*Smug*) Three and a half years Jack...

Jack: (*Sarcastically*) Why thank you David because three and a half years is not more than three. Now CAN I FINISH THE STORY?

*David signals to say that Jack can proceed.*

They both came home in 1919, but not together, because Mother returned, of course, in a hospital ship. An odd thing was that in all the time they were in France together they never once succeeded in making contact with each other. Dad went

back to his old job at the tramway depot but Mother got herself transferred to the operating theatre in the hospital and went on being a nursing sister.

*Jack picks up the cane and plays with it – walks forward with it from there.*

I remember artificial hospital limbs and crutches strewn all around the hall. When the front door slammed in a gusty wind one day it shattered the decorative leadlight side panels of red and green and blue and amber glass and the limbs clattered in chaos across the entry.

David: My earliest image is of the troopship Ceramic, with her four rakish masts and her tall tilted smokestack, coming home to the flags and the festoons of garlands and the triumphal arches and the bands playing Sousa marches on the pier at Port Melbourne. The Ceramic was the transport that had taken Mother away; the coincidence was that it was the same ship that brought Dad home. I had not expected the vivid redness of the rust and the red-lead, which to my awed childish imagination looked like blood pouring down the ship's side. Perhaps it was.

*Jack brings out the pipe and starts to smoke.*

When I was seven, and small for my age, a day stood out for me as the scariest day of my childhood. The fear involved the interminable blaring of brass bands, and a ceaseless roar of shouting and cheering, and the unending trampling past of gigantic legs. Then the scariest moment of all was when a strong voice, hoarse with excitement, began to shout "Minnie! Minnie!" and without warning I was seized suddenly and engulfed by a giant. I could only smell tobacco and beer but saw a ruddy face grinning at me below a tilted slouch hat and thin fair hair receding above a broad

freckled brow. Then there was a roar of laughter, and I was put down.

David: Minnie was my mother. She had come back from the war three months earlier than Dad, but was at the hospital and still pretty much a stranger so on the day of the scary event, while waiting for Dad to get off the ship, I squeezed Grandma's hand tightly.

*David tries to play one of the songs on his harmonica.*

Jack: At home neighbours and relatives had erected a big arch above the wire mesh of our front gate, with "Welcome Home" to mother and father picked out in daisies and snapdragons and carnations against a background of lily leaves and gum tips. The party that evening involved everybody crowded around the piano and singing "The Rose of No Man's land", "Blighty", "Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kitbag" and other songs. My fondest memory was everyone getting drunk and that was hilarious. I also recall that I was fed so much fruit salad and jelly that I vomited. That for me was how the First World War ended.

*David uses his bandages and wraps them poorly around Jack's arm. Jack allows him and then hits him with the cane.*

David: Jack and I must have shared certain similar feelings about the hallway and the wounded men in our house who Mother brought home to stay. We had to be turned out of our room, and for four years we shared a makeshift bed on the floor of the verandah which was partitioned off by fly wire screens and a lot of damp ferns.

In Melbourne when the hospital ships and transport were bringing sick and wounded Anzacs by the thousands to the military hospital, where mother worked, it became overloaded with

patients. Beds were shifted out on to verandahs or even crowded into hastily erected canvas-marquees. It got so bad that earlier patients able to exist on the pension outside of the hospital were discharged to make room for new patients.

This led to quite a few disabled men finding they were demobilised and helpless with no place to go. These were the people Mother brought to our house. Some stayed a few weeks or a few months, there were others who were there for years. Altogether I suppose forty of fifty of them inhabited our house at one time or another. I guess this was what peace became for them.

*Blackout / Curtain / Actors walk off.*

# The trumpet calls

---

*Hazel S Hall*

*Re-enactment of the Kangaroo Recruiting March 1915*

emu plumes  
on a second son's  
slouch hat ...  
another of her brood  
plucked for the table

his clydesdale's  
white feathered fetlocks ...  
a message  
slipped beneath the door  
after his rejection

an artist  
commissioned to paint  
the posters ...  
a bugler playing  
beside red trenches

\*

re-enacting  
the kangaroo march  
to sydney  
flesh and feathers  
decorate the wayside

so many singing  
in the britten requiem ...  
is it time  
to cut the strings  
to mother england?

First published in *Kokako 25 (NZ)*, 2016

# They came for us

---

*Keitha Keyes*

they came for us  
the recruitment drives  
enlist  
or you'll let  
your mates, your country,  
your king, your empire  
down  
... enlist  
or someone's mother  
will give you a white feather

they came for us  
the drill sergeants  
in the early hours  
to show us how to kill

they came for us  
the ships  
to take us to battlefields  
on the other side of the world

they came for us  
the stretcher bearers  
separating  
the living from the dead

they came for us  
the hospital ships  
to bring home the broken  
when we had no more to give

they came for us  
the nightmares  
we cannot share

surely  
this is the war  
to end all wars

surely

## Dearest Mother

---

*Adrienne Johns*

*Dearest Mother*, yes say that John.  
She mustn't twig that things went wrong.  
Just say I broke my arm,  
and that I didn't come to any harm.  
Tell her how the poppies grow,  
and even lilies make a show.  
Here, I want you to say, how I miss her.  
Then ask her to see Jean, and kiss her.

*I'm finding it hard to breathe now John*,  
and I can't see; are you there in the dark or have you gone?  
Please hold me dear friend.  
I'm afraid; I feel it's close to the end.  
Did you tell her how the poppies grow?  
*John, my world is getting slow.*

*Don't let her know about the trench.*  
The mud, and rats, and all the stench.  
Tell her how I miss her, and father too.  
The very best parents as we grew.  
Mention sister Helen, and young Beth.

Oh God John, I have so little breath.

*Take me in your arms John*,  
Let me feel safe; you were always so strong.  
I treasure you my friend and brother.  
You have been the best, like no other.  
Please tell Mother how the poppies grow.  
*Hold me John, for now I must go.*

And the road ahead is long and lonely.  
And I must tread it, me, only.

*Me; frightened; not brave, but longing*  
for children; laughing, singing, thronging.  
For mother's voice, and Jean's soft hands.  
I'll go along with these new plans.  
No wedding now; no children; only schemes.  
Tell all at home that they are in my dreams.  
And you, must have my dearest of possessions.  
Please marry Jean at end of these aggressions.

They tell us that we fight for peace.  
If that's the case, all war must cease.

## Our boys were not the sons of Adonis

---

*John Collard*

Our boys were not the sons of Adonis  
grown rangy under dappled skies,  
slender saplings easily bowed by scorching winds.  
The ragtag offspring of miners, factory hands and farmers' sons  
marshalled to become an army  
as mothers prayed for safe returns.

They signed up at sagging post offices and public halls  
where timbers moaned in the summer heat.  
Grey haired women  
wiped wisps from foreheads,  
clenched withered breasts  
and began to yearn for peace.

Grim-faced relatives accompanied them  
waved them off from red-brick stations  
as steaming giants swallowed them like prey.  
Wild-eyed children  
failed to keep pace  
with departing engines.

They ripened into mateship  
in trenches under Turkish skies;  
darkening like harvest prunes.  
Each sandhill burial  
blinded them to freckled girls  
knitting socks by empty hearths.

Upon return  
they waved at crowded platforms,  
tried to ignore splints and bandages  
before settling into Mallee Scrub or Saltbush Plains  
to spend silent years gazing into fruitless sunsets  
apart from wives and sons who learnt there were questions they should not ask.

## The Wayside Chapel creative response quilt

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*Visitors, volunteers and staff at The Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross, Sydney*

This original quilt was designed and created by visitors, volunteers and staff at The Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross, Sydney. 70% of the quilt was made using donated and recycled materials. All 162 hexagons have been hand sewn as this was a lovely way for people to contribute in a meaningful way.

Sewing the hexagons and the poppies has been a way for people to be able to take the material home and to fill in lonely hours. This quilt has also brought a sense of excitement from our community as visitors and volunteers discussed (while making Suffolk puffs and knitting) the issues of the ANZACs and what it was like for families and women left in Australia.

The lady sitting under the tree (feel the serenity) reminds us of all the hours spent knitting and thinking about those loved ones far away fighting in terrain they were not familiar with. In this quilt the red knitting represents the blood spilling out and the poppies to mark the fallen. The hands on the trees represent all the gloves knitted for our soldiers in the trenches living in weather conditions far different from Australia. The sun rising over the hill is the symbol for the ANZACs. To represent The Wayside Chapel a 'love over hate' tattoo (the Wayside motto) is on the arm of the lady. To recognise the peace we all wish for and for "peace knits" the word 'peace' has been quilted as clouds and in the mountain and surrounding terrain.



# Peace Knits

Australian War Memorial HO2438



Peace knits soothe souls  
external blessing  
warmth conveyed through woven strands  
internal serenity  
gentle cadence of sibilant needles  
rhythmically soothing;  
healing hands transmit comfort  
across miles  
maker and wearer bound together  
love in action  
memories of home lie in  
humble garments  
woollen talismans bear prayers  
for safe return.

Rachel Berry



Cudgewa, Victoria 1916, Photographer unknown  
State Library of NSW

# 100 Years

# Austin William Edwards



**Austin Edwards 3310 Ft. Batt. AIF**

*Taken in England 1917 after being twice wounded age 24*



**Austin William Edwards**

## Lest We Forget

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*Ella Edwards*

*This poem was written as a tribute to my father-in-law, Austin William Edwards, who as a handsome 21 year old farm boy, joined the armed forces and suffered hell, along with many young men of the time. Many of the short sentences in this poem are extracts from his written story. This was an era in our history that should never be forgotten and never be repeated.*

### *We will remember them*

It often takes time in the country, to get the latest news.  
So it was, with young Austin Edwards, from Wyoming.  
Hitched up the bullock team and donned his only shoes.  
To begin his lengthy journey and many years of roaming.

*Sign up young man, such adventure for you, all expenses paid.*  
From a remote country boy, who had never seen a city.  
A top shot rifleman, skilful horseman, he was not afraid.  
Left Australia's shore, singing the first of many a ditty.

This was probably the last time he was content and carefree.  
After six weeks training, over three thousand soldiers on deck.  
The sights of the ocean, and large ship for the five weeks at sea.  
Dressed in Aussie woollen khaki uniforms, up to their neck.

Slouch hats sat on their heads, army issue packs, on their backs.  
Straight to the front line, to help obstruct the enemy's attacks.  
Arriving after dark, the Germans fired their machine guns.  
Some were wounded, but they didn't kill any Aussie sons.

This, his first encounter, this part of the line was very still.  
Until the Aussies arrived, then it soon became a hot spot.  
Sandbagged trenches for protection, packed up to form a small hill.  
Ten days in the line then ten days' rest, that's if you didn't get shot.

This went on for four months, with many losses and many hurt.  
Ordered to march, with full packs to the Somme, a hard four day slog.  
Marching onwards as best he could through thick sludge, mud and dirt.  
Resting every hour for ten minutes, some trapped in the bog.

Moved on to Pozieres, into the dreaded Sausage Valley,  
Given that name by the troop, because of many losses.  
So many men were lost there, was impossible to tally.  
Buried bodies, ground soft and spongy, to anyone who crosses.

Austin filed into the trenches, where he was buried three times.  
Eighteen of his platoon, buried by the merciless shellfire.  
Another young soldier and Austin were sent for water sometimes.  
An enemy balloon spotted the trench, all dead in the mire.

They were far enough to miss the bombardment, when it decreases.  
They had to walk over the bodies, the road was red with blood.  
Most of the thousand men were not just dead, but cut to pieces.  
The name Sausage Valley fitting, as the flesh mixed with mud.

The world seemed on fire, only those who saw it could believe.  
The Germans pitted their best Prussian Guards against us.  
The Kaiser told them they would be fighting the Aussies, don't be naïve.  
The best soldiers in the world, the diggers becoming infamous.

Austin was wounded at Pozieres, walking out of the front line.  
Saw a mate in the trench said "Come on." "No, my arm hurts too much."  
Then Austin walked about fifty yards, the trench in align.  
Bombed, once again he had escaped death, could it be his angel's touch?

For three months, sent to a hospital in England, to convalesce.  
Then back to France, where Austin rejoined his company once more,  
Which had been in Gallipoli, he only recognised three or less.  
Many months in the front line, ten on ten off just as before.

Austin stayed in the trenches, with freezing mud up to his knees.  
Next rest break he took his boots off, for the first time in eight days.  
Feet were swollen, crawled out to sick parade, doctor saw disease.  
Had to argue to get help, doctor said walk or there you stay.

Austin had trench feet, impossible to walk, the troops left him.  
He got on his knees and crawled after the men, for a mile or so.  
Wearing out his pants and knees and palms, things were looking grim.  
Reached a road, an ambulance, off to hospital he could go.

Austin was like many young men of the time, Aussie proud.  
Fought in many battles, became a gunner, shot the Huns.  
Often wounded, back to the front line as soon as he was allowed.  
Watched the horrors of war, the death of many Australian sons.

**Lest we forget.** It is because of men like Austin, who wrote  
down their stories, eyewitness accounts, keeping the past alive.  
We should give thanks every day and of our freedom take note.  
To live up to their high expectations, we should always strive.

Austin William Edwards wrote a detailed account of his years in the armed services, a very interesting but sad record of the era. He lived to be 88 years old and had six children.

## Austin William Edwards

*Ella Edwards (editor)*

We live in such a sophisticated society today, that it is hard for younger people to imagine a world in which radio, television, and the daily delivery of newspapers had little part.

In our part of the country people had no electricity and our homes and streets were lighted by kerosene lamps. Our vehicles were horse drawn and the roads were mostly unmade. Bullock teams hauled all the timber from the bush and as there were no sawmills in our part of the country it had to be hand cut by a process known as pit sawing. Our normal working hours were from daylight to dark and Sunday was the only day of rest.

Dancing was very popular and we would ride many miles on horseback to attend the gathering. We all looked forward to picnic meetings, these outings were enjoyed by all of the family and horse racing was the main feature of the day. It was all good clean fun and we all enjoyed competing.

People in the country areas had to rely mainly on word of mouth, the main sources of information were either the Post Office or the Railway Station. News, first hand, was hard to come by, as people somehow seemed to colour a story with each discussion. They would either add to or leave out parts.

News of the declaration of war on the 4th August 1914, filtered into our district and feelings ran high, as the news became a constant topic of conversation. I was at home with my parents in the small village of Wyoming near Mount George on the North Coast of New South Wales when the news of war reached us.

My friend Harry Rootsey and myself were two of the local boys that decided to join the Army and so we left our work on Cowarral Station and journeyed to Sydney to enlist. We were like many others at that time and didn't realise what we were letting ourselves in for or the hardships we were to encounter. We enlisted in Sydney at Victoria Barracks on the 7th June 1915. I was twenty-one years old.



### **Three Friends**

*Egypt 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 1915.*

*From left to right*

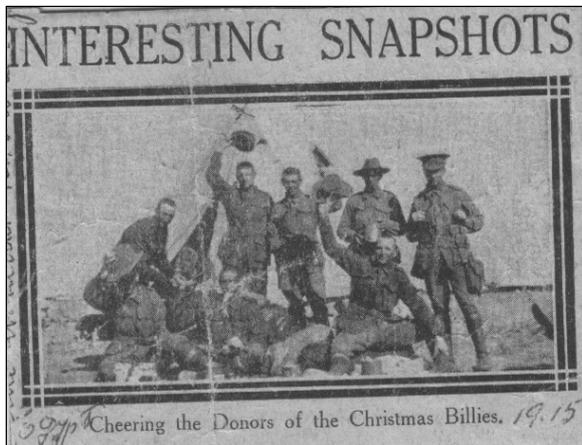
*Norm Way from Beechwood (killed in action)*

*Austin Edwards from Forbs River*

*Harold Andrews from Wauchope*

I went into camp at Liverpool along with many others and made friends with a couple of boys from towns not far from my own. Harold Andrews from Wauchope and Norm Way from Beechwood.

We drew three blankets each from the Q.M. Store and then filed into a large hut. We made our beds down on the floor side by side with one blanket under and the other two over us. It was our first night in the army and a night never to be forgotten. It was winter and the night was cold and the language hot. We had no sleep that night. I had



heard bullock drivers stuck in a creek with a load of timber on, but they were not in the same race. I hadn't heard anything to compare with it.

Next day we commenced our training and all went well for a week, then I developed Rheumatic Fever and was ill in the camp hospital for two weeks. Discharged from hospital I was given seven days leave and caught the train north for home at 8.00 a.m. the next morning. I left the train at Mount George and walked home, a little more than a mile. Feeling very ill I went to bed as soon as I arrived home and stayed there for six weeks with pneumonia and pleurisy.

I returned to camp again to go to Long Bay to the shoot. I didn't need any training as I had grown up with a rifle in my hands. From 600 yards I got the "possible" for the day, only one other soldier got it out of the three hundred.

One week later, on the 5th October, we left Woolloomooloo, Sydney, aboard the Themistocles, to serve in the Middle East. Seventeen hundred men left Sydney on this ship and we picked up a further fifteen hundred at Fremantle in Western Australia.

We arrived at Port Suez about five weeks later and were taken by train to a little town called Heliopolis, near Cairo. By this time Harold Andrews, Norm Way and myself had become good friends. When we could we would go to Cairo at the weekends just to visit the gardens where we were able to sit on the grass lawns and really enjoy it. There was no grass in Egypt other than the grass lawns in Cairo.

We went to see the rippling stream, where Jesus Christ drank water. I also drank water from the stream, and close by is the apple tree where the

Blessed Virgin Mary sat in the shade of the tree. I pulled leaves off the tree and sent them home to my mother.

We went to see the Pyramids, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Inside, they consist of only two large rooms. One was just an empty chamber and you had to walk up a few steps to the other. It had a stone coffin built into the floor, but no lid was to be seen. Our guide said that there wasn't any record of it ever having had a lid. The guide told us that thousands of years before, a King or Queen had died and the body was lowered down from the very top of the pyramid into the stone coffin. We tried to climb one of the pyramids but the going was too hard and we had to give it away. We climbed half way up and then turned back. The pyramids are built of sandstone; these are still a mystery as no one knows where they came from or how they got them there. Each sandstone block is very large and it really does make you wonder. We also saw the Sphinx, which is close to the Pyramids.

We often engaged a local guide to show us places of interest and to tell us the stories connected with them. We saw many interesting places and heard many interesting stories there in Egypt. It was in Egypt that we did our training for a few months awaiting the evacuation of Gallipoli.

It was early in 1916 that we joined the 1st Battalion. Harold and Norm were put into "C" company and I went into "D" company. We were posted to the Suez Canal and were to stay there as guard to the Suez. It was while we were there that we were to be visited by the Prince of Wales. I remember that day so well as the midday meal had to be deferred for some hours as he was delayed. Finally it was decided to serve the troops the long overdue and much looked forward to meal. So we all sat down and the meal was placed in our Dixies and the word came that the Prince of Wales had arrived and was ready to inspect the troops. That meant we had to leave the meal where it was and fall in. The boys, all hungry and tired by this time, sent up hoots and boos for the Prince instead of the expected cheers. Finally, when the inspection was over and we were dismissed, everyone made a dive for their tents to get back to their dixies holding the dinner of stew, but, as luck would have it, the fine sand that was always a curse had blown into the food spoiling it. Not one of us had dinner that day and we didn't get

another meal until late that evening. It was a tough life.

From Egypt we went to France in March 1916. We landed at Marseilles on the 22nd March 1916. From there we boarded a train heading for the front line. After four days and nights on the train we arrived at a town called Steensworth and then we were sent straight up into the front line at a place called Sailly. We arrived there in the dark of night.

It was at Sailly we had our first experience of war, at a place nicknamed VC corner. It was as we were marching around the bend at VC corner that a German machine gun opened fire on us. We dived for cover, into ditches, behind trees or any other place that we could find. No one was killed but some were wounded. This part of the line was very quiet, but it didn't remain that way after the Australians arrived there.

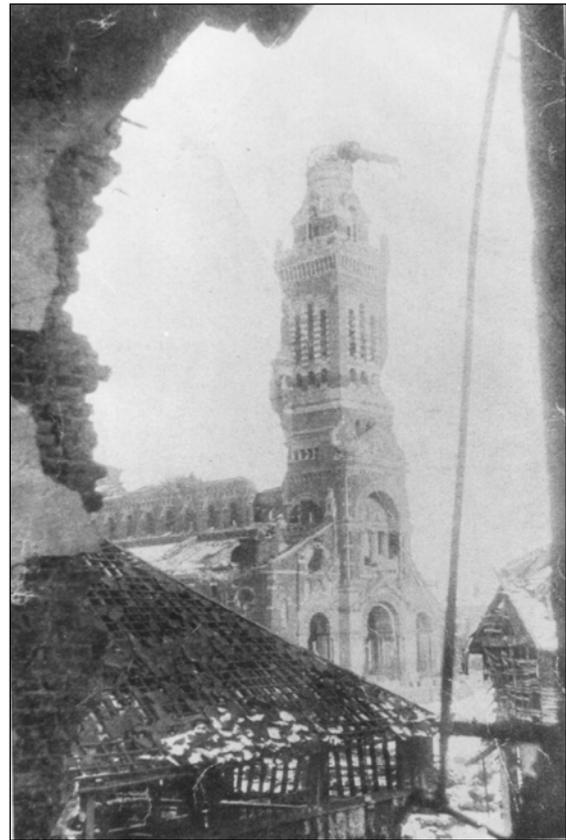
It soon became a very hot spot. We had sandbag trenches, but no "hopovers" or raids here. We stayed ten days in the line and ten days out for a rest. This went on for four months. After that we were marched to the Somme. It took four days with full packs on and we marched from early morning until late evening, with only a ten-minute spell in each hour. Many men could not make it and were forced to fall out and had to be picked up by horse drawn wagons.

At the end of the fourth day we came to a town called Albert. It had been shelled by German Artillery and set on fire. On the top of the tower of Albert Cathedral, was a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The heat from the fire, plus the weight of the huge statue had bent it forward so that it now leaned over our heads as we marched along the street past the Cathedral.

It remained in that position for many months, but was blown down later by German Artillery fire.

We marched on in broad daylight up into our close supports, which were just outside the front line near Pozieres (held by the Germans at that time).

Our close supports were on the edge of the dreaded "Sausage Valley." This valley was given its name by the troops that had fought there before our arrival. So many lives were lost there in that area, it would be impossible to estimate the number, but I can tell in all honesty, to walk anywhere across that ground, you could feel it soft and spongy underneath your



### **206. The Tower of Albert Cathedral**

*Past this the Australian troops marched on their way to Pozieres.*

*Near the buildings in the foreground were some which housed the Headquarters of the 1st, and afterwards of the 2nd, Australian Division during the greater part of the battle. Vol. III.*

*Aust. War Museum Official Photo. No. E167.  
Taken in January 1917.*

feet as so many bodies were buried under the ground by constant explosions from enemy shells.

Here all of "D" company filed into one trench and it was there, in that trench that I was buried three times that day. Each time, along with eighteen others from my platoon. Twice I was buried and the only one to get out alive. The rest were still buried there.

The reason for my escapes, I believe, was due to the fact that I would never lie down in a trench for a rest, no matter how tired I was. I made it a practice

to scoop out a hole in the side of the trench so that I could sit down. This enabled me to stand up and fight my way up to the surface if covered with rubble. I proved this to be the only way to rest if I was going to have a chance to survive when we were hit close by shells.

Later again that day, the Germans bombarded the trench for a third time after we had been reinforced, and again I was buried with the reinforcements who had only just joined us that day. Again I was able to get out by myself and rake the rubble away and found two others and helped them to safety. One was badly wounded and the other was suffering from shock. He was killed later the same evening in another shell attack.

After being reinforced again that day, myself and one of the other boys were detailed to go for water about four hundred yards away. Just at that same time, a battalion of men were marched up into a sunken road at the end of our trench, and halted. At the same time, a German observation balloon was sent up and they sighted the men on the road and opened up on them and our trenches. My mate and I, on our way for the water, had gone far enough away to miss that bombardment. As luck happened, it eased up enough to let us get back safely to our trench. As we came to where the battalion was, on the sunken road, there was not more than a dozen men left standing out of the whole battalion. Of the one thousand men, most of them were dead. Not only dead, but cut to pieces.

We had to walk over them to get to our trench. The road was red with blood and flesh. The next shock was when we walked along our trench that we had only left such a short time before. We found all our boys dead, not one was left alive. Once again luck was with me and I had been spared. We were almost shocked to death. I felt really ill with shock, and the sight of minced bodies was a horror never to be forgotten. It wasn't any wonder that this place was called "Sausage Valley".

It was four p.m. when we got back to our trench again and by dark that evening we were brought up to strength again for the big hop-over. Pozieres was ahead of us and held by the Germans at that time. My battalion was taken across "Sausage Valley" that night and stood in the front line of trenches waiting for the hop-over. (A hop-over is a bayonet charge).

At last the word was passed along the trench, the countdown was from five minutes to zero. Five minutes to go, was the message that was passed along, sixty seconds later, four minutes to go, etc., down to zero, then over the top. The artillery had already opened up as we went over the top with fixed bayonets.

The greatest battle that the world ever knew was on. The Germans knew that the Australians were coming to the Somme and they were ready for us. They put the Prussian guard in against us. They were Germany's best-trained men, according to the German soldiers themselves. The Kaiser had told them that they were going to fight the Australians, the best soldiers in the world.

The world seemed to be on fire. It was unbelievable, only those who saw it could believe it.

It was said that four million shells an hour had been fired on our Front that night and just as many seemed to come from the Germans. Later we found German machine gunners chained to their guns. The cost of the battle on the Somme is impossible to estimate. The shock of the British losses on that frightful first day was extremely great, not only to those who survived, but also to Australia and Britain.

Among those who began to ask whether the top commanders knew what they were doing were members of the A.I.F. (Australian Imperial Forces). On the heights of Pozieres ridge and near by, Australians had lost 23,000 men in seven weeks and the names of Pozieres and Mauquet Farm are one of Australia's greatest battle fields.

Pozieres had been taken once by the Black Watch, a Scottish regiment, but they couldn't hold it. Pozieres was Germany's strongest point, because it was the only area where the line had been pushed forward and there was a bend in the line there. This meant that German artillery could fire from three directions at once on the men dug in trying to defend the line, from the front, and from the right and left flanks.

Pozieres was taken by the Australians and held, after a long and bloody battle. The Germans counter attacked again and again with highly skilled soldiers, but failed. Here Australia proved to have the best soldiers in the world. This incredible barrage and counter barrage continued for three



**“Sausage Valley”, during the fighting near Pozieres**

*Through this valley led the communications to Pozieres. At the date of this photograph (28<sup>th</sup> August, 1916), and for a month before and afterwards, this was one of the busiest thoroughfares of the world. At the top can be discerned the crossroad leading to “Casualty Corner” and Contalmaison; about half-a-mile beyond was Pozieres. Vol. III.*

*Aust. War Museum official Photo. No. EZ113.*

days and nights. The men of the 1st division began to crack. They had lost about 5,300 men by this time. The village of Pozieres no longer existed by this time. There was simply no sign of it. Shellfire, and the powdered debris of the houses had been so churned up that it lay like a section of ash six feet deep. Men were buried dead or alive, only to be blown out and reburied again by German shells. Shell shock began to increase as men’s nerves gave way in the strain.

I was wounded here at Pozieres. Coming up to morning, I found my way back to the front line where we had started. By that time there were hundreds of others wounded and waiting to be taken back across “Sausage Valley.” The trenches were lined with men, some standing and others on stretchers. I said to one boy “Are you coming out Dick?”, he said “My arm is too bad to walk.” I said to him, “well it won’t get better standing there” and walked on. It was daylight then and I had only gone about fifty yards when the Germans bombarded the trench where I stood talking to Dick. I saw men and stretchers blasted ten to twelve feet into the air. I walked on thinking to myself “you wouldn’t come with me Dick, you won’t come now.” Once again I had walked away from death. As I crossed “Sausage

Valley” on my way out, the burying party was picking up what was left of men and stacking them in heaps ready to be buried. Our battalion was one thousand and forty men strong at midnight and after the battle of Pozieres there were only twenty men left to answer the roll call. The 2nd and 3rd battalion had about the same amount of men left, but the 4th battalion had fifty men left. So that should give you some idea. There were only a little over one hundred men left out of the 1st brigade of four thousand men killed or wounded. I was taken out from there and sent to hospital. Later I was transferred to England and was in hospital in Newport, Wales.

I had been in hospital in Wales only three days when, to my relief and great surprise, Harold Andrews was admitted into the same ward as myself, a distance of only two beds away. He had been hit badly in the leg and he told me later that he had been picked up in a trench three days after the battle of Pozieres. It was good to see him.

I left hospital before Harold and was soon back in training camp. Within three months of my being wounded, I was again in France and joined my old unit. I remember seeing only three men in my company that I had known. All three of these men

were at the landing of Gallipoli. Two of the men had been with the battalion all through the war and had not been wounded. They were Jimmy Coppen and Jimmy Rowe. The third man, Jimmy Allan, had been wounded once. They not only had the same Christian name in common, they shared other things equally as well. Two out of the three were in all major battles that the Australians took part in and had not been hit, but all three were killed later, in the Hindenburg Push, at the end of the war.

Jimmy Coppen and Jimmy Rowe had both been made sergeants. To see all three of these men suffering with shell shock and shattered nerves from the war strain while still soldiering on, was pitiful. It was a shame that they were sent into the line for that, the last battle of the war.

I have gone ahead of my story to explain about these gallant men and I will come to the Hindenburg battle later in my story. Returning to my unit, I went into the front line at Fricourt Farm. I missed the battle of Bullecourt, the second biggest battle for the Australians, but I was in many others. I stayed with my unit for many months, ten days in the line and ten days out for a rest. After our ten days rest as it was called, we went back into the line again and made another attack on the Germans, driving them out of the village called Albercourt and dug ourselves "in" on the outskirts of the village. At this time I was number one in a Lewis machine gun team of six men, including myself.

The Germans had made a stand, about 800 yards from where we had dug ourselves in. We could see them taking up position. A church was always the largest building in any small village in France and we dug our outpost in shoulder deep, 30 to 40 feet from this large brick church. We watched the Germans bring their big gun up on the railway and pointed it in our direction. We saw the gunfire and could hear the huge shell coming through the air. It hit the church and sent pieces of brick and rubble flying all over us and we couldn't see for brick dust. This was about eleven a.m. one morning. Afterwards there was a big bombardment from the German artillery and our battalion was forced to retire, I did not know this, but we didn't retire. That big gun fired one shell every three minutes from eleven o'clock in the morning until two o'clock the following morning. As each shell was fired we thought it would be the one to drop on us. This was very nerve shattering, our sergeant major came out

and gave us the order to retire and told us that our battalion had withdrawn the night before. He said a sergeant had been sent out to tell us to retire but failed the order. He was later court-martialled and received three years for cowardice.

After ten days in the line, we went back for our well-earned ten days. Back again on duty, still around Fricourt Farm, we drove the Germans back and took over their positions. As we approached one of their dugouts, we saw a smoke curling from it, we rushed it but found it empty. It was a good comfortable one, with table and chairs and a fire burning. We thought it was "the goods." I said to the boys, "We'll keep this one", and we stayed there about half an hour. Not long after that some officers arrived and took it over, telling us to get back out in the trenches. They were muddy and cold after the warm dry dugout and I remember having a little mumble to myself at the time. Less than another half hour later, the Germans opened up with artillery fire and killed all the officers in that same dugout. It was another time when I had one of those lucky breaks. The mud and the cold proved to be the best place for us after all.

We advanced again and took over an outpost held by the Germans and found it full of mud, we had to jump into it for cover and stood up all night, mud to the knees. Next day some of the boys dug a seat in the side of the outpost to sit down, but I stayed on guard on the Lewis Gun day and night for four days and never sat down once. It snowed and rained most of the time, but only light snow. At two o'clock in the morning, on the fourth day, we were relieved by another battalion and taken back into close supports, given one blanket each and a sheet of canvas (just enough to cover six men). As I had lost one man, we now numbered five, including myself. We laid the canvas onto the snow and got into it and wrapped a blanket around ourselves. My feet and legs felt dead. I had absolutely no feeling in them as I walked I had no feeling of them touching the ground. I stumbled, more than I walked.

At sun-up we were awakened to be taken back to where we could rest. By this time the snow had melted and seeped through the canvas and we were laying in pools of water. It was so cold and we were taken back to where there was a small village and told to make ourselves comfortable and dry our clothing. The sun struggled out enough to dry the blankets but it was still cold.

My feet and legs were still numb, and I had trouble trying to stand on them. I asked the other boys that could walk, to go out and see if they could find enough boards among the brick rubble to floor our dugout, while I dug a hole in the bank to give us a place to lie down. That evening when we had everything dry and made comfortable again and were looking forward to a well-earned rest and a good night's sleep, disaster struck. At "Stand To" that same evening (5.00 p.m.) the Germans attacked the 4th battalion on our left and we went back up into the front line and were again in a muddy trench for another four days and nights. This time it didn't snow or rain, but very little sun came out during that period. At the end of the fourth day, again we were taken back for a rest. This time we were taken to a woods, some few miles behind the front line, where they had pitched tent flies in the bush under cover. We were given a blanket each and told to get some rest. It was that night that I removed my boots from my feet for the first time in eight days and nights. The next day my feet were so swollen and painful that I could not get my boots on or even touch my feet. I couldn't stand and could not even think about walking, so I crawled on to sick parade. The doctor told me to put my boots back on, which was impossible and I told him so in no uncertain terms, so then he marked me light duties. I told him that if he did not send me to the hospital that I would sit down there until he did. He then marked me hospital.

The battalion formed up and marched away, leaving me sitting where the doctor had seen me. I could not walk and I had no idea where I was as we had arrived there during the night. When I saw that I was being left behind, I got to my hands and knees and crawled the way the battalion went. They were soon out of sight. I crawled for what I would approximate as a mile, then I came to a road. There I found a heap of empty sand bags by the roadside, but by that time I had the knees out of my trousers and the skin off both hands and knees from crawling, so I tied my feet up in sandbags and with the aid of a couple of hefty sticks for supports, attempted to walk when an ambulance came along the road behind me, picked me up and took me to the hospital.

From there I was sent to England to hospital. This time I was sent to Bethnal Green, in London. I had trench feet. I was bad enough, but I could have been

worse. I saw others in the same ward as myself that were a lot worse than me. When the nurses were dressing some of their feet they found that their toes had dropped off. They never lived, of course. I wasn't that bad, but I did suffer severe pain.

Three months later I returned again to France and rejoined my battalion. I went back into the Lewis Gunners, but as No. 2 on the gun. A boy by the name of Wetherhead was the No. 1 on the gun. He didn't like it and so he said to me "You take No. 1 and I will go No. 2." So I was No. 1 again on the Lewis. No one ever had to carry a rifle, but had to carry the big Lewis gun, with only a revolver (A.45) in a holster on the hip.

My platoon officer, a Lieutenant Clarke, was a fine fellow. He was a solicitor in peacetime, but he would lose his bearings in "No man's land" at night and so relied on me many times for direction. In and out of shell holes was out of his line. Once again we were back in the front line on the Somme. The weather was on the improve. We had little or no trenches and it was mostly outpost duty. As the weeks and months went by, we took our turn in the front line, the usual ten days in the line and ten days out for a rest.

Night after night we raided the German lines and advanced steadily, driving the Germans back. The lives of many of our men were lost during this time. As a rule you didn't get to know the men who were with you very long, today here, tomorrow killed in action. I remember one boy; he joined us just before we went into the front line. He was in my team and did not get as far as the front line when hit badly in the arm. It was his right arm, and as I dressed it for him he started to cry. I asked him what he was crying for and he said "I have only just got here and have seen nothing yet and now I've been hit." I said to him "You have seen all you want to see, think yourself lucky, I would give you a fiver for that "blighty" if it were possible." (A "blighty" was a wound bad enough to send you back to a hospital in England). I didn't see that boy again, and never found out if he ever got out of the front line alive. These events were happening all the time but I seemed to have a charmed life. I will tell you about one small incident, just to explain how I seemed always to just miss out being killed, and how lucky I was.

One day, my gun team was up in the front line and our outpost, about thirteen yards away from a German plane that had been shot down some time before we had arrived at the front line. "Darkey", my No. 2 said to me "I would like to go over and see if I could get a souvenir from that plane." I said in answer to him "well, why don't you go?" It was broad daylight and in full view of the German outposts so he said to me "You go." I laughed and said "I'm game if you are", and although we knew that the Germans were watching, he answered me with "come on then." We both jumped out of our outpost, which was about shoulder deep, and ran to the plane. We made it and jumped into a large shell hole under it as the Germans traversed the top of that shell hole, time and time again. We had to lay low there for an hour or so and then, when we thought it safe enough, made a dive back to our outpost again. The German machine gun bullets ripped the dirt along the top of our outpost. How lucky we were. Darkey said to me "Give me the gun", and lifted his head above the ground then fired. He could not have been on target, because they returned his fire while his gun was still firing. Some of their bullets hit the gun. He said "Damn that" and I said "Give me the gun", so I waited for their gun to stop firing, then opened up on them. I had their outpost marked and as the gun ceased to fire again, I guessed that I must have hit the gunner. After all that trouble to try to get a piece of their plane for Darkey, we found that there wasn't anything left to souvenir. I guess that many others before us had had the same ideas.

I remember one place at the Somme, (it was referred to as the Somme, but was actually the Somme River), in a communication trench, a dead man's hand and arm were projecting from the earth about a foot. Those boys who had dug the trench, rather than cut the limb from the buried body, left it there and many times I have seen men catch hold of that hand as they passed along the trench and say "How are you Dig?"

I had one twelve months stretch in France without leaving my unit, then I was granted fourteen days leave in England. Returning after my leave, my battalion went into the line at Hill 60 another "Hell Hole." Hill 60 is where the British undermined the Germans. It was there that the whole German front line of trenches were blown up, in the early days of the war. I do not know the width or length but guess

the length to be about a mile or more. I never did see the ends, but the depth would be about sixteen feet and the width about fifty yards. Half moon dugouts were made in the bank of this large valley, that would hold up to three hundred men in each of them. In these dugouts you could go to sleep and feel safe there. These were our close supports. Mostly it was outpost war here. My outpost was only about twenty inches deep and we had to lay down in it to keep under cover in the daytime.

My platoon officer visited the outposts at night and on his first round it was always hard to find all the outposts in the dark. It was one morning around about 1.00 a.m. when he arrived at my outpost. He flopped down beside me in the mud and said "I'm bugged." He went on to say "I have been trying to get here since dark and it has taken me all this time from my pill box to here, I don't think I can find my way back again before daylight, so I think you had better come back with me." I said to him "Can't you find your way back there?" "Not before daylight" he said. I laughed and said "How in the heck can I take you back there when I have never been there?" He said "I'll show you where it is from here".

The battlefield was full of shell holes and they were all full of water and limbs of trees, that had been blown down by shellfire. "My pill box is at the base of that tree" he said, pointing out a limb on a tree on the skyline. I was always good at night and was always chosen to lead the company in and out of the line for that reason. Off we went. I had only a .45 revolver on my hip so armed myself with three or four mills bombs in each pocket and had him safely back in his pill box in good time.

He said to me "There is a container of stew here to go back to the boys", and so I slipped the container of stew onto my back and off I went on my way back. These containers had two straps fitted to slip over your shoulders and fit across the back. These are what the cooks used to send the food up the line at night. They kept the stew hot for hours. The snow was about three inches deep; this helped to see at night. I was in "No Man's Land" and on my own, when I saw someone coming. I dropped to my knees, slipped the stew from my back, pulled out a bomb, pulled the pin out and held the lever down, then waited until they came within thirty feet and then called for them to halt. They did so, gave the password and came up to me. It was a party of twelve men looking for Headquarters. I told them

that they were going the wrong way and suggested they come back with me. I slipped on the stew again and they fell in behind me and we set off. We hadn't gone far when I saw someone else coming towards us. I waved for them to get down, and again took the stew from my back, and went through the same procedure with the bomb again. This time it turned out to be only one man, so I halted him. He in turn gave the password and it turned out to be one of our sergeants and we knew each other. He said to me "Where are you going?" "Back to our outpost", I said. He said to me "You are going the wrong way, you are walking straight into the German lines." "No I am not", I said "but you are." "You come with me" he said, but I said "If you think you are going to our line and I am going to the German line, well, you go on and I will go my way." "I make it an order, you come with me", he said. "Make it what you like, I'm not going with you", I said. "Well, you're under arrest", he said. "Alright, but I am still not going with you." It is a serious thing to disobey an order in the face of the enemy, but I did it knowing I was right and he was wrong, besides, I had the lives of twelve other men to think about. In spite of his order, I took the men and the stew and went on. It worried me that night and the next day. That sergeant had taken several men out on patrol with him that night, and when he approached me, I knew then that he was lost out there in "No Man's Land." When the officer came on his rounds the next night I reported the matter to him at once and he said "You did the right thing as he was taken prisoner up in the 2nd battalion lines last night." Luck was in with me again.

We finished our ten days in the line and then went out for our rest again. When it was time to go back into the lines again our company commander lined us up and told us that they were expecting the Hindenberg push and that if it came while we were in the line our Artillery was going to open up a bombardment fifty yards behind our Front line and one fifty yards in front of the line, this meant sacrificing all the lives of those in the front line to stop the Germans from breaking through. I said to my mate that I would go into the line, but if I was unlucky enough to be in the line when the "push" came and if I came out alive, that it would be the end of soldiering for me, and I meant it too.

As luck would have it, I was not in the line when the "push" came. It did not come when they expected it to either.

It was at Hill 60, during 1918, in the front line that we were shelled heavily for days and nights without respite. A great many of these shells were gas shells and small gas proof dugouts had been built. These dugouts would be safe enough from small shells, such as gas shells or wiz-bangs but we had to keep our gas helmets on all the time. One night the battalion was short of men, the sergeant had warned me that all men had to be called out on fatigue except myself, as I was No. 1 on the gun. No. 1 never leaves his gun. Our shallow trench was so heavily shelled that night that the sergeant could not get to us. We waited until 10.00 a.m. and no one came to us to get the men. We were all dead tired, sleepy and hungry. We seldom, if ever, had anything to eat until midnight each night as only one meal could reach us in every twenty-four hours in the front line. At midnight that night, when the shells got lighter and rations could be brought up to us, we received a small loaf of bread, half a tin of jam and a big block of cheese between the six of us. That was to last us for twenty-four hours. We settled down when things got quiet and I put a waterproof sheet up in the little doorway to stop any gas from getting through if they should start to shell again and we all soon fell asleep. When next I awoke, it was morning. The gas had come while we were asleep and me being the closest to the door, got most of the gas. My voice was gone, except for a whisper.

You might well ask how could anyone sleep under such conditions, but if you are tired and sleepy enough, you will learn to sleep through anything, even the greatest of bombardments and not wake up. I know this to be a fact as I have done it. I did not see a doctor for five to six days after that until we came out into close supports. When I did see one, he put me on light duties, but I stayed on my gun, as usual. I had trouble trying to make the sergeant understand that I wanted to stay on the gun instead of the suggested light duties. We were all sleeping in the half moon dugout that I have spoken of in Hill 60, and a guard was always placed on duty at the mouth of the dugout in case of gas coming over. This night after the Q.M. had sent some rum up the lines for the boys, the guard on duty found it and got himself blind drunk. When the gas did come over, he was too drunk to know and the entire three

hundred of us troops were gassed. This was my second dose and now I had no voice whatsoever. Our W.O. told me to report on sick parade. The doctor I had seen a few days before had been shelled in his dugout and had now been replaced by another M.O.

I went on sick parade before this new M.O. who said to me "How long have you been like this?" I raised up eight fingers as it was the only way I could tell him that I had been eight days like that. He said "Get on that stretcher, if you exhaust yourself the least bit, you will drop dead." I did just what he told me to do, though unwillingly, and two stretcher-bearers carried me out of the trenches, along duckboards and over the battlefield. The mud was so deep, if you stepped off the duckboards you would go down over your knees. The shelling was so heavy that some of them were only missing us by a few feet. This mud was the only thing that saved us, for when a shell hit the mud it would blast straight up instead of the normal explosion. The reason for this was that the mud was so deep and the shell would go down into it. I was taken to a road and a large shell and gas proof dugout. It must have held a least a hundred stretchers and as I was the last one in and close by the door, I was also the first out when the ambulance came.

Once again I was taken to hospital in England, this time to Birmingham Hospital. I was unable to speak a word for six weeks and had to be given shock treatment from batteries placed on my chest and throat to try to bring my voice back again.

I had been in hospital for three months and was boarded for home, but the doctors said if I came back to a hot climate I would die, so I was kept in England. I was burnt black with mustard gas, and my lungs were blistered, but with time I slowly recovered. Again I found myself in a training camp in England.

Meantime, my brother Edgar, who had been wounded again, was in hospital at Newport, Wales. He had somehow gotten himself transferred to a unit, Australian Ordinance Workshops; he had been in "C" company, 34th battalion before this. He told me that they needed tradesmen and I made an application for a position with them as a wheelwright. The O.C. of the unit made a claim for me and I was sent to London for a trade test. I passed the test and went back to France in the new

unit. This time I did not have to do any fighting, although we did do our work under long range shell fire and air raids but the shell fire was mostly at night.

Now we saw more of the French people and got to know them. Edgar, my older brother and I billeted with a French family, Mr. and Madam Defour and their young daughter Louise. Mr. Defour was the station master there in Bohain, a small town in France. Most of the houses had a cellar underneath and the Defour family slept down there for safety, in case of shellfire. Edgar and I shared a front bedroom of their home. One night a gas shell missed the top of our house and the house next door was hit by it. It went through the roof and landed down in the cellar of the house next door, which was occupied by three young girls, two were killed and one escaped but she was badly gassed. Madam Defour came up from the cellar and knocked on our door and kept repeating the same thing over and over in her own language, which meant "Come quickly." She had made a bed up in the cellar with her family for both Edgar and myself and would not leave us up in the bedroom when the house next door had suffered such an attack. We went down only to please her as we both knew that if a gas shell hit the cellar we wouldn't stand much chance. We were to spend many hours in that same cellar with the family and the next morning after the attack on the house next door the one girl that had survived the attack came into our house crying as her voice had been rendered to a slight whisper. She eventually calmed down when I told her the story about my own experience with the gas and that I was better as she would be with rest.

I was back in France for three months when the long awaited Hindenberg Push came. It was long overdue, but as luck would have it I wasn't with my old 1st battalion although a lot of my old mates were. So, as far as I knew, they were all killed and I feel sure that the original plan was followed. It was our company commander that had lined us up and told us what to expect when and if the Hindenberg Push came. So I felt sure it was our own artillery that had bombarded their trenches to stop the Germans from breaking through. That was the last battle of the Great War of 1914-1918.

It was only ten years ago that I made a journey to Canberra and went through the War Museum. I looked up the records of my old 1st battalion and

the list of killed in action and found the names of all my old mates listed there. They had all been killed in action in the Hindenberg Push, at the very end of the war. Lucky for me I was not amongst them.

I did not return home to Australia until the 19th August 1919. We were kept in France by the Captain of the unit I was in. He didn't want to come home and so he kept us working in the workshops under some scheme of his own. When he would not break up the unit, we all went on strike and refused to work. He placed us under close arrest and charged us with mutiny. He didn't have the power to do such a thing but he did get away with it for a few weeks, until I wrote a letter to General Monash, who was the Commander of Australian Troops in France. I wrote the General of the situation and shortly afterwards our O.C. was himself in serious trouble. I never did hear what did happen to him but we were all soon on our way home.

I was on draft for England. It was there that I met up with Harold Andrews again, of all things he was Officer in Charge of the draft. We had not seen each other for nearly a year. It was a happy reunion. We crossed the English Channel and were soon homeward bound.

Harold and I went over on the Themistocles together and as luck would have it, came back to Australia on the same ship together. We called into Capetown, South Africa, and were given leave there. We spent our time sightseeing as we took a taxi and went for a trip around the Table Mountain. The scenery was beautiful. We left Capetown that night bound for Australia but the old ship broke down and we drifted helplessly at sea for three weeks.

We arrived in Australia three weeks overdue and the ship berthed in Port Melbourne, Victoria. We had to get the train from Spencer Street Station back to Sydney. We had a wonderful reunion with our families on our arrival home. It was great to be back again after four years away at the war. My people lived at Wyoming on the Manning River, just out of the small village of Mount George at that time. I was given a welcome home in Sydney and my mother and sister Laurie and my nephew Eddie, son of my sister Ettie, rode home on the train with me to Mount George. The people of my home district of Mount George gave me a welcome home and presented me with a gold medal.

My friend Harold Andrews, invited me to meet his family and have a holiday with them. Whilst still on leave, I travelled across to Wauchope and met his mother, father and his six sisters and one brother. A beautiful family, I was made very welcome there by them and we are still the best of friends.

The people of Long Flat and the Forbes River also gave me a wonderful welcome home and I was presented with yet another gold medal there at Long Flat. Alf Way, Norm Way's brother, came over from Beechwood to Long Flat to my welcome home. He was so much like Norm that he gave me quite a shock when he sat down beside me and spoke. At first I thought it was Norm, they were so alike, but I knew that Norm had been killed in action near the end of the war.

At this time Bill Marshall had the Hotel at Long Flat. My sister, Amy, and her husband, Bob Cox, had the General Store. Peter Healy had the blacksmith shop there at that time and he asked me to go halves with him in the business. He was the blacksmith and I would do the wheelwright and coach building. I worked there with him for some time and we both boarded at the hotel. Jack Parry drove the four horses and van for Bob Cox, but Jack would get on the drink and I would take over his job and drive the four-in-hand for Bob until Jack was over his spree and could drive again.

I left Long Flat and went to Sydney. At the time Clyde Engineering was calling for carriage builders. They had just taken a contract to build fifty new electric railway carriages. They were the first electric carriages to be built in New South Wales. That was early in 1921. I was married in the same year, on the 7th May, 1921. That was while I was working at Clyde on the electric railway carriages. It was not long after the war and my nerves were still not back to normal. One day, not long after I started to work at Clyde, while I was working at my bench by the side of a carriage, some men came along to do some rivetting under the same carriage. I didn't notice them at the time and I had never seen or heard an electric rivetter operate before, when it opened up it was just the same sound as a machine gun. Without a thought, I threw myself face down on the floor, every one laughed at me, but I didn't see the joke. If they had gone through the terrible experiences I had gone through in the past four years, they would have done the same thing. It took me years to get over the shock of war. When being

shelled the only chance you have of saving your life is to get down quickly. I have thrown myself in the lower side of a brick cobbled street, not much more than five feet from where a German shell hit the roadway and didn't even get a scratch, where others who didn't react quickly enough were cut to pieces from the flying pieces of shells.

I worked there on the electric railway carriages for a year. It was while I was still there that I became ill with appendicitis and before I could be taken to hospital, the appendix burst. I was extremely ill in hospital for a month. When leaving the hospital, I had to have assistance to walk.

It was another five weeks before I was able to resume work and was forced back earlier than I should have been by lack of funds. I only stayed at work there for another three weeks and then had to give the job away. I left Sydney and went back to Wyoming on the Manning River and stayed with my mother and father for three months until I was well and strong again.

From there I went back to Long Flat and took a job driving a T. Model Ford truck carting cream from up the river to Wauchope butter factory.

At this time, Peter Healy from Old Bar, a beach resort near Taree, had married my sister Laurie and was living on the Comboyne and had the blacksmiths shop there in the village. I went to work with him again for a while and then went to Wauchope and did some work there for Dan White the blacksmith. I made the wheels for him that he put on the sulky that took off the first prize at Wauchope Show.

Herman Everingham was then the agent for Albion trucks. I went to Newcastle with Herman to bring the truck home. I drove the truck for twelve months and then became ill.

Dr. Begg from Wauchope said I had Bright's Disease and put me in Wauchope Private Hospital. From there I went to Taree to see Dr. Stokes, who said that I didn't have Bright's Disease, but a sister complaint. He put me into Taree Hospital where I spent the next eight months.

From Taree I went to Randwick Repatriation Hospital in Sydney and stayed there for another four months. It was while I was there that the Defence Department ran an advertisement in the paper for a wheelwright. I made an application for

the job and was successful. When I came out of Randwick Hospital, I went to Liverpool and took over the job and was the Wheelwright there for twenty-five years.

When World War Two broke out I was asked by Colonel Frank Field if I would enlist as soldiers would be coming into the workshops and Civilians over soldiers just would not work out. I enlisted again in World War Two and was given the rank of Sergeant. Later I rose to the rank of Sergeant Major and again had to go to the range for the Shoot. We had to do what was called the "Mad Mile." In the "Mad Mile" you had to run (double it is called in the army) from 600 yards we had to double to 500 yards and fire five rounds in seven seconds. Then do the same thing again on 400 yards and 300 yards and again on 200 yards and 100 yards and again at 50 yards. We only had seven seconds to fire the five rounds on each 100 yards, and again I got the possible for the day. I was told later that only one other soldier in the A.I.F. got the possible in the "Mad Mile."

At the end of World War Two, I left the Defence Department and came north to Taree where I bought a farm three miles from Taree. I lived there for eight years, then I sold out and left the area to go south to Wollongong. I took a building job at Windang Hotel until it was completed and then worked as a carpenter in the Public Works at Port Kembla on No. 6 Jetty, now the most modern jetty in the world. It was there that I retired at the age of sixty-nine years.

Later I purchased some land on the lake at Oak Flat, on the south coast. I bought some caravans and put them into the caravan park. This I found wasn't a good investment, so I sold some of them. I brought two of them back to Old Bar, near Taree, where I have lived ever since.

I have two sisters living in Wingham: Mrs. Cox, 93 years and Mrs. Healy, 79 years. I have another two sisters and two brothers living at Old Bar: Mrs. Tortsan, 62 years; Mrs. Barlin, 76 years; my brother Edgar, 90 years; Ernest, 88 years and myself, Austin, 85 years on the 10th October, 1977.



**World War Two**

*Sydney 1945 Sgt Major Austin Edwards  
Age 48 Years.*

## Death of a soldier

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*Ella Edwards*

When was that? the  
old man said.

I knew that man before  
he was dead.

A soldier a serviceman  
in armed forces served.

Came home and joined  
the army reserves.

The story was told of  
a battle fought.

Of courage or stupidity  
the answer we sought.

Lives were lost, just  
numbers all gone.

Young men of Australia  
in France's Somme.

The funeral was held  
at the local church.

The widow almost fell  
as she lurched.

He had survived the  
conflict and came home.

Was never the same  
just skin and bone.

When was that? The  
old man said.

I can tell you over  
his death bed.

When we were young,  
our hearts were free.

But we grew old as  
friends just him and me.

As the coffin lowered  
into the dirt.

The widow wiped a tear  
with the hem of her skirt.

The old man held out a  
hand and wrapped his arm

round her to make  
her feel calm.

An old soldier long  
after the glory.

Remembers the  
fighting and the gory.

A hero at least in  
everyone's eyes,

that were attending  
those sad goodbyes.

# Community memory





## Free-form Rose Window Blackout Curtain: *Move From War to Feel Peace*

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*Made for PeaceKnits Pop-Up by Mary Reilly and Kiama Knitters*

It would be reasonable to ask how an abstract knit and crochet rose window blackout curtain might be relevant to 1915 and World War 1. A simple answer could point to the damaging impacts of 1915 bombing raids on French Gothic Cathedrals. A longer answer might go into the detail of how free-form knit or crochet efforts can achieve a remarkable abstract rendition of the very traditional and highly structured rose window architectural form.

For those who do not know, a rose window (or Catherine Window, after St Catherine of Alexandria) is a general term for a round window. And, yes, these are especially found in the major Gothic Cathedrals of Northern France. Earlier origins of the rose window are found in the Roman oculus, or large circular openings that let in light and air (as found at the top of the dome in the Pantheon). An eastern equivalent symbol is the *Mandala* (Sanskrit for “circle”) used to establish sacred space or to aid meditation. Modern circular windows cover a range of influences, including abstract art.

The architectural art form of the rose window was used as a starting point for our abstract free-form knit and crochet pattern, ironically designed as a window blind or blackout curtain, to remember all those affected by bombing raids. To solemnly mark 1915-2015 centenary remembrances, the “rose” in our abstract window, has been replaced by red poppies (for remembrance) overlaid with white poppies (for peace).

Work on this started from one segment of the centre round made by Mary Reilly. This became one-eighth of the circle, used to inspire a one day free-form knit and crochet workshop with Kiama Knitters. Fifteen handworkers made individual pieces later crafted into the whole centre piece, again by Mary Reilly.

The abstract rose window blackout curtain emerged as we worked organically, through a group effort – there was no “pattern” as such to follow when we were doing the free-form handwork. The end result works well as a blackout curtain – it certainly blacks out all light, though in its own densely fibred way, with complex colour relationships and sensual impact.

## PeaceKnits Banner Blanket

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### *PeaceKnits*

#### *On the power of seeing otherwise...*

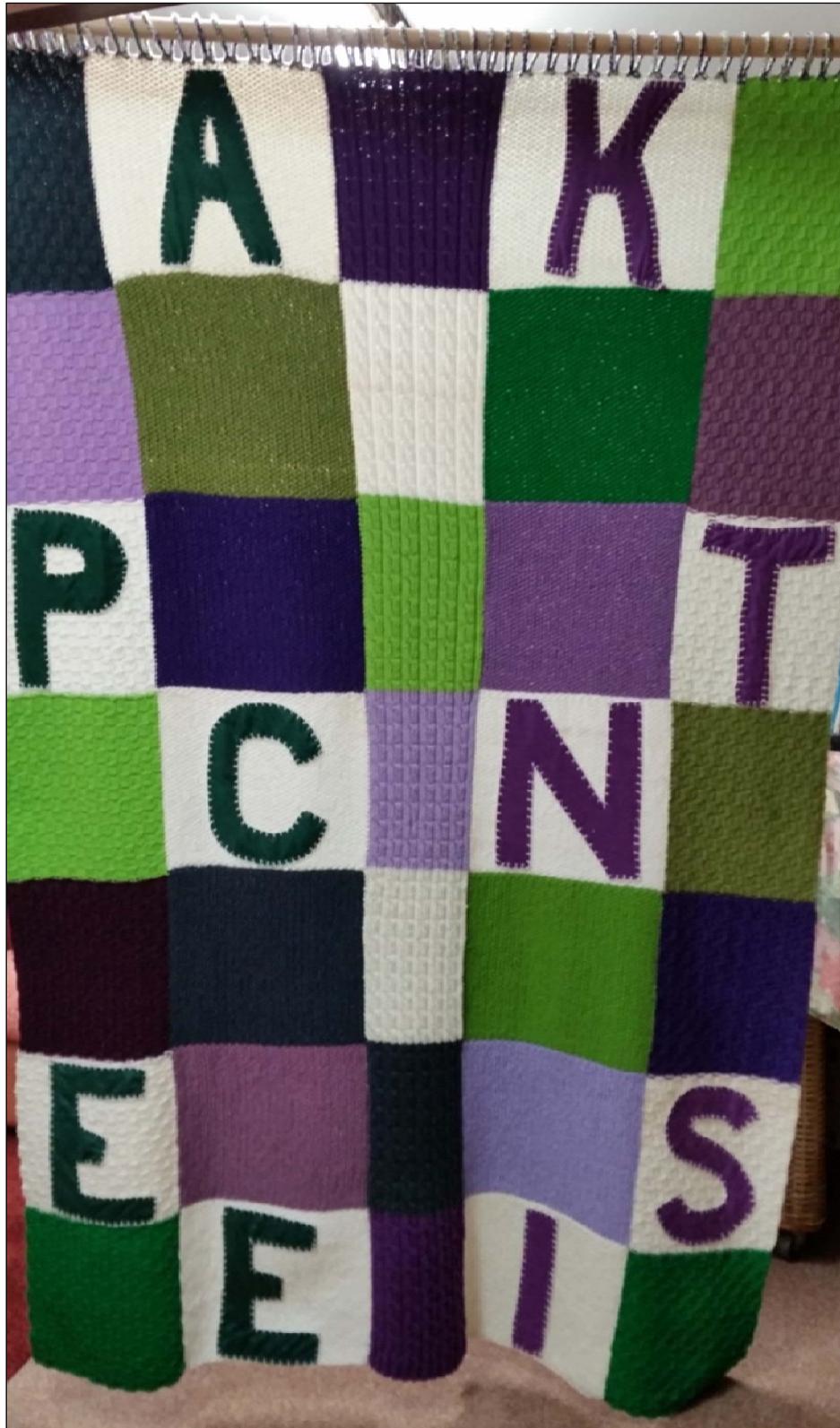
This blanket was used as the event banner, while still being finished during the day, for the PeaceKnits Pop-Up in April 2015. The blanket was hand knit in three different reversible stitches – reversible cable, moss stitch and basket stitch – that also gave the finished knit texture a 3D effect.

The importance of the particular stitches used is that, looked at from both sides, front and back, it's the same. There is no overtly "wrong" side. All sides and stitches are equal, yet different.

The banner blanket was used to travel with other PeaceKnits feature exhibit items through 2015-

2017 for showing at various events, and was used to start many discussions about the value of different points of viewing.

Completion of the banner blanket was only achieved because of a mammoth personal last month effort before the Pop-Up event by Janet Wheeler, who is well-known for being able to knit while walking to work, through meetings etc. BoniM provided the original design, a little start-off knit help and final hand-stitching of the columns to form the final blanket.



## People continue to knit

*Mike Bowern*



### **The Lone Pine Pole Cosy**

*Knitted by a team of PeaceKnits volunteers, with Jeane Bicket making a major contribution.*

*It was erected by electrician Celia Balfour of Hydro Electric.*

I recently read an essay recounting the history of the many women and girls who knitted socks for soldiers fighting in the “Great War.” Its publication, close to the centenary of the Gallipoli landing, coincided with other activities in Australia commemorating that event. One of these activities included women and men, calling themselves PeaceKnits, who wanted to create a different way for Australians to comprehend the impacts of World War 1. They wanted to remember those who gave

so much to secure a peace outside the military commemorations.

One inspiration for this was a conference in April 1915 when more than 1100 women from around the world met in The Hague to discuss better ways of securing world peace than they were seeing in the mayhem of trench warfare. Since that Women’s International Congress, 100 years of efforts towards more sustainable peace have been supported through the world’s longest running women’s peace organisation, the *Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom*.

The PeaceKnits project started in May 2013 in Queanbeyan. The plan was to produce knitted art installations and other craft and written display pieces, representing the impacts of World War 1. Over the next two years members of the group met monthly to talk, write, research and knit. They also helped with and contributed to about 60 community events, various annual show entries, craft and writing workshops. By April 2015 they had produced 42 major pieces. The final PeaceKnits activity was held on 11 April 2015, in a 100 year old cottage garden in Queanbeyan. They called this event a Pop-Up.

To reinforce the link to knitting the group was able to secure, from the Art Gallery of NSW, a full framed reproduction copy of Grace Cossington Smith’s *The Sock Knitter*. This was Australia’s first ever modernist painting, exhibited in 1915. Grace painted it of her sister knitting socks for soldiers in the family’s garden room at their home in Sydney.

PeaceKnits own KnitArt started by producing a seven and a half metre high *Lone Pine Pole Cosy*, which has been mounted on an unused utility pole in the cottage garden, and has remained there since the Pop-Up event.

They then knitted 100 cotton wash cloths, similar to those made and sent to the front line soldiers. Since the Pop-Up event, these have been gifted to children in countries affected by conflict.

Young Gen-Ys, new to hand-sewing, were shown how to hand-stitch, patch and quilt 100 potholders, which are now being sold for donations to help ensure that the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom* continues to secure future sustainable peace solutions.

The group did not knit any socks for this project but they did feature a pair made by a Queanbeyan woman who had knitted them as a schoolgirl in 1915, and they shared her story. They also featured an original hand-written "sock recipe" handed down from Dymphna Clark, Manning Clark's wife. She used the recipe to knit socks during the Second World War.

With members of Kiama Knitters Guild, they made a free-form knit and crochet *Blackout Curtain* in the design of a "rose window" as a reminder of all the people and the built structures across Europe that had been so damaged from aerial bombing raids in both World Wars. Rather than roses, they fringed the free-form central pieces with a circle of red poppies for remembrance, overlaid with white poppies for peace.

Visitors to the Pop-Up were able to hold a pair of mittens that had been sent by an unknown knitter and received by Bombardier Martin Collins in 1915, on the Western Front. Martin valued the mittens so much, to help him get through the severe European winters in the trenches, that he hand-stitched his initials on the cuff of each mitten. They were returned to his family after his death in 1917, as part of the few personal belongings he kept safely in a compartmentalised flour bag. These mittens were featured on the front cover of the *PeaceKnits 2015-2016 Remembrance Calendar*, produced with the support of a \$3000 grant from the ANZAC Centenary Local Grants.

The story of these mittens had also inspired the group to hand-knit 100 pairs of fingerless mittens. At the Pop-Up these were displayed on a 3 metre long hammock, titled *All Hands on Deck*. After the Pop-Up these mittens were offered as a gift to those people who call the Wayside Chapel their safe place.

One of the regular monthly knitters was born in Amsterdam in 1940, spending her preschool years in war-torn occupied Holland. Her story, and that of other Dutch and Belgian women, helped punctuate the group's monthly chats with the realities of war for families and communities affected by conflict.

PeaceKnits Pop-Up was so successful that Queanbeyan City Council acknowledged their work



### **All Hands on Deck**

*100 pairs of fingerless mittens*

with a 2015 Heritage Award for contribution to community cultural heritage. PeaceKnits continues to support community writing workshops, including through work being done by Peace Works! publication project ([www.peaceworks.org.au](http://www.peaceworks.org.au)) in order to find and record stories that have yet to be heard or understood.

Event photos courtesy of John Griffiths and Jan Goldsworthy

## Voices from the community

*PeaceKnits and Peace Works! event participants*

The First World War was disastrous for my mother

The First World War was disastrous for my mother. She had the misfortune to become pregnant to a handsome soldier, and, unusual for the time, had my sister Joy. When asked why she didn't marry she discussed the experience by saying: "He came back a drunk." He saw action so no wonder he did, but this changed the direction of both their lives.

They were followed by people, usually women, and this began a pattern of denial that runs deep like a river through all our lives. It didn't affect me, but "I was sorry for Mum" masked deep hurt and bitterness that lasted all my sister's life.

I often wondered what would have happened if there had been no war, no dislocation of relationships. It might have been less than ideal, but would have at least fitted convention, important to my mother.

War reaches down through generations, imprinted on people who have not known conflict but carry the real memory of hurt and loss in our genes.

It is up to us to break this cycle.

Norma, PeaceKnits pop-up event

April 2015

From Flanders - Julien and Anny du Pauw were both born in WW2 Belgium. They married in 1965 and migrated to Australia. They still receive regular family and community updates from Belgium, including this Flanders cushion (from their niece Mere).

A post-war migrant's story

I came to Australia in November 1951. I brought some luggage with me. My new eiderdown feather bed was removed – stolen. My water kettle with a whistle had at the bottom lots of holes poked through. My husband took it to Sir William Hudson, the Commissioner of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. He "dealt with" the matter.

In 1954 I asked my parents to come to Cooma. They brought with them two semi-trailer loads of German machinery. My father opened a joinery business and trained many Australian boys at the trade. These men are still thanking me (60 years later) for their good apprenticeships.

Our joinery delivered most of the timbers for the tunnels, firing rods and stop rods for the dams. We had the joinery for 25 years, working for Kaiser, Perrini, Raymond and Utah and also opened CAA Timber Industries in Queanbeyan for many years after. I was the Secretary of all of these companies.

Gerda, Peace Works! seniors' workshop

November 2015



## A postcard home to Italy

Dear Sister

I am living well in Australia and I love living in Queanbeyan. I arrived on the ship *SS Angelina Lauro*. After staying in Melbourne and then in Sydney, I lived for a while in Bonagilla. Then and now I lived in Queanbeyan and am very happy.

I am working very hard to save money and will come to visit you in Italy when I have saved enough.

Hope you are all well and write to me soon.

From your brother,

Eric

Eric, Peace Works! seniors' workshop

November 2015

## Casualties of World War 1

My friend and I came to this exhibition today to see the "Sock Knitter." We have a long association with a member of the Cossington-Smith family. However we are delighted and surprised with the folksy yet professional show we are enjoying and we haven't finished yet.

My great uncle Fred was honoured by his family as an ANZAC. He survived.

Another man I know was an artillery captain on the Somme who came home to a soldier settlement block on poor country in Western Queensland. A lot of those farms folded due to no access to finance, which led to more heartbreak. A sad story all round.

Another memory is of Miss Johanna and Miss Kate of Jerilderie, who were typical homefront casualties of WW1. With so many young men dead, these ladies were destined to never marry and moved to Ganmain for the care of their brother Simon. There they cared for and helped raise his family of seven children.

I regard this as a cruel cost and long-lasting legacy of a foolish war and Australia's part in it.

Janette, PeaceKnits pop-up event

April 2015



## PeaceKnits 2015: After the Pop-Up

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Peter Maywald and Bonnie Goodfellow

In May 2013 about 30 friends helped us blow out candles on a beautiful 60<sup>th</sup> birthday cake, and launch a mini social movement here in Queanbeyan. (Yes, of all places, we chose “struggletown” Queanbeyan – and our cottage garden, subdivided 100 years ago – to be the locus of Pop-Up preparations, as a fitting match with the period we were remembering.) All this to create a one day “PeaceKnits Pop-Up” (not to be confused with the more enduring, if not always endearing, 1960s *peaceniks* movement).

We wanted to create a different way for Australians to better comprehend the impacts of World War 1, than appeared likely in the military preparations around 1915-2015 Anzac commemorations. 2015 is a significant year for many reasons. Yes, we needed to solemnly remember those who gave so much to secure a peace, though not just within the confines of Australian military practice.

In April 1915, at the same time those Australian troops were launched on to the Gallipoli peninsula, more than 1100 women from around the world, and from both sides of the war, met at The Hague to consider ways to achieve world peace other than through armed conflict, and to formulate a detailed global peace strategy. After the congress, the women took their resolutions to talk with world leaders and eventually influenced United States President Woodrow Wilson in his work to form the League of Nations. Through the Pop-Up event (and its two years of preparations plus two years of “post-script” efforts to develop what was found) we’ve helped many to consider all views on war and peace, from both sides of the coin, with no exclusion zones.

From May 2013 to April 2015 an inclusive approach helped us to maintain forward momentum – with open community engagement and meetings at the cottage to chat, knit, write, discuss and prepare for a one day *PeaceKnits Pop-Up* held on 11 April 2015.

Incredibly, with friendly support, we ended up with 42 major pieces of *KnitArt* and *WordArt* about 1915 and the impacts of WW1. These were on display for

the one day Pop-Up, plus a range of all-age interactive writing and craft activities to support wider community involvement, as part of a free *open cottage garden* event. (*He Who Must Be Obeyed* in our garden was always at pains to explain that this was just a humble cottage garden – not to be confused with grand open garden displays of country estates.) The garden formed a safe and simple, calm and welcoming back-drop for the handmade and written displays on the challenging matters of war and peace.

Our first completed piece of community KnitArt was the seven and a half metre high *Lone Pine Pole Cosy*. For the Pop-Up, the fully hand-stitched and calico-lined pole cosy was mounted, in a remarkable one-woman feat, on an unused utility pole in the secret side garden of the cottage grounds (by our very agile woman electrician from *Hydro Electrics*). For the two years since the pop-up event, birds have been free to nest in the pole cosy and visitors to Queanbeyan have come to take photos of this colourful addition to our country town skyline. Now the Pole Cosy even marks Queanbeyan on the global map for the likes of Pokemon.

We built a Garden Room in the rear cottage garden, and during the Pop-Up this was used to feature local textile, sculpture and art works on the impacts of war and efforts to sustain peace. As a special feature in the garden room we secured from the Art Gallery of NSW a full framed reproduction copy of Grace Cossington Smith’s *The Sock Knitter*. This was Australia’s first ever modernist painting, exhibited in 1915. So the Pop-Up also helped to celebrate this remarkable painting and its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Grace painted it of her sister knitting socks for soldiers in their family’s garden room at their home in Sydney. So the cottage garden room seemed a fitting place to share a glimpse of this part of our art history with the local community attending the Pop-Up. It still hangs there, for visitors to the cottage to enjoy as a palpable part of our history.

Since the Pop-Up event, the free-form knit and crochet *Blackout Curtain* has served visitors to the cottage well. As a blackout curtain it does a wonderful job of providing quiet dark nights in its permanent place over the window in the guest bedroom of the cottage.

From 2013 we have listened to and shared incredible stories originating from 1915 that have changed many lives. We asked local seniors where their families were in 1915 – and were stunned to realise that no country of origin was repeated in the long list of source countries. The past century of war, displacement and seeking peace has truly seen Queanbeyan and the region accept and grow through migration from many cultures.

One of Queanbeyan's most talented fabric workers, Robyn McPherson, willingly completed a special task for the Pop-Up: she made a replica pair of mittens and compartmentalised flour bag as part of our reflection on this particular pair of mittens, and of more general issues around surviving war and efforts towards peace. Robyn even hand-stitched "M. C." initials into the replica cuffs as had been done in the trenches 100 years before. On the day of the Pop-Up we had both pairs, the original and the replica, side by side. This idea of challenging people to replicate comfort has been a potent way to help others handle difficult issues.

Since the Pop-Up event, we have helped local seniors, many who migrated here from war-torn Europe, to remember and write their story. One from the Netherlands has told us more of her father, who by day during difficult WW2 years, worked as a police officer under orders from German occupiers. By night he supported resistance efforts. So this woman as a toddler lived her first formative years under occupiers' watching eyes, stress and risk. Her story, and that of other Dutch and Belgian knitters, has helped inform our understanding and

writing on the realities of war for families and ongoing impacts for individuals and communities affected by conflict.

Quite late in the two years of pop-up preparations the story of Martin's mittens inspired us to have a go at hand-knitting 100 pairs of fingerless mittens (great for mobile phone texting). At the Pop-Up, these were displayed on a 3 metre long hammock, titled *All Hands on Deck*. In a quixotic moment of handmade exchange, after the Pop-Up we gifted these to those who call Wayside Chapel their safe place. As part of the creative exchange, Wayside sewing group had brought a hand-stitched quilt to display in the Pop-Up, that has since travelled to an exhibition in Brisbane and is now back in Sydney. One of our most privileged experiences after the Pop-Up was a visit to Wayside for an afternoon tea to hand over the hammock and 100 pairs of fingerless mitts. We were delighted to watch as people came in off the street on this May 2015 morning and chose the pair of mitts that suited them best to ease their daily life back on the street.

On 11 April, at the *PeaceKnits Pop-Up*, we solemnly remembered ongoing impacts of past conflicts, and helped each other better understand how to work towards more sustainable peace. Over the two years of preparation and display, we did this in ways that were creative, organic and inclusive. In the two years since the Pop-Up we have encouraged those starting to find their family stories and used KnitArt items at community workshops to help others dig deeper and better understand past meanings. We have simply been helping to join the dots in our nation's one long story – a little like Australia's Long Paddock – that waits for us all to find safe ways to travel across the many tracks we all share. We thank all who contributed to and supported *PeaceKnits*.

## "V" is for *Vrede*

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### *PeaceKnits*

These two crochet knee rugs featuring Green, White and Violet shades were handmade by Nel Donaldsen for 2015 PeaceKnits Pop-Up community event.

Nel used Admiral's Square pattern on one knee rug; and fashioned the shape of "V" (for "Vrede", meaning peace, in her home country of The Netherlands) by placing green squares strategically among white and violet on the other knee rug. The Netherlands was also significantly the site of the famous Peace Palace, established in 1913. The three

colours of **Green**, **White** and **Violet** were taken up by the women's suffrage movement to **Give Women Votes**, and were also used by parts of the global peace women's movement that arose from the 1915 global women's congress held at The Hague.

Nel is proud of this peace heritage in her homeland and impressed on us that, while allied forces (notably under Churchill in WW2) may have claimed "V is for Victory", in The Netherlands, always, "V" is for Vrede.





## Gen 5 [Post-War Life in 4 Stanzas]

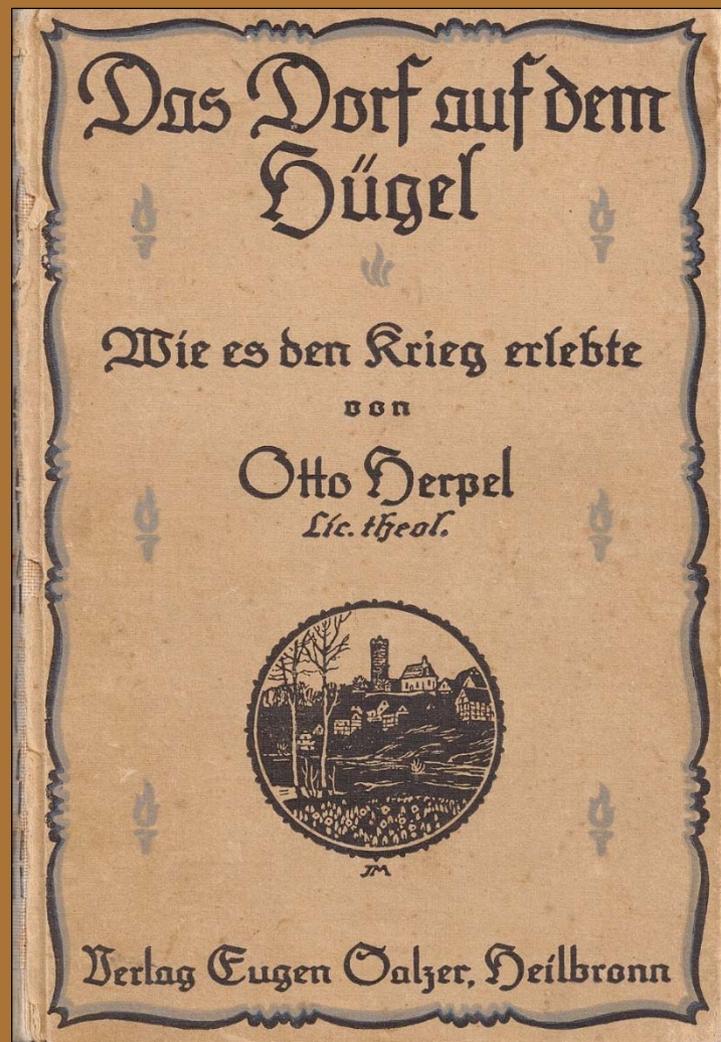
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Bonnie Goodfellow

- I.** 1915 was a very good year  
I'm sure, for some.  
Though not for granddad, shell-shocked  
and on his way from lone pine.  
[HG] Wells warned when war began:  
only [German] militarism's defeat would  
bring an end to war – *the war to end all wars*.  
Courage in failed offensive  
was held dear – comforted with knits – sent  
oaty biscuits, cigarettes, to soothe soggy tent-mates.
- II.** By '39 did Versailles *end all peace*?  
As leagued nations joined  
beleaguered markets,  
re-tooled industry failed returned soldiers.  
Those learning hard how to *make do* with little  
found themselves fit only for more war and arms-making.  
Did Wilson show them how to make our world safe:  
to arm and kill, in order to preserve our freedom?  
By second war end, more men returned home:  
harmed or armless; if only we'd disarmed then.
- III.** In '64 did you still need me...still feed me?  
We were cajoled to read against the grain:  
to find new ways to frame  
and shatter old dischords,  
to break gridlock swords.  
Yet flower power and maned musicians  
just distracted us  
from mega-death decisions.  
Nixon's only truth untold – he managed *not* to call  
Vietnam, our *war to end all wars*.
- IV.** 1989 and www when the wall came tumbling down.  
If people now, like wire-less kids, take to streets,  
do they refuse – or learn -  
to take up arms? Refuse to fight like  
fodder, fed to generals' wars?  
Why is a hammer (without sickle)  
the only tool for united fronts?  
With end of wall-divides,  
might we yet see other views than our own?  
All things, good and bad, led to 2015. For our grandchild  
is the answer to the meaning of life still birthed in war?

# Johann Otto Herpel

... a most impressive man



*Love,  
Life and Longing*



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Otto Herpel

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**Love, Life and Longing**

*Otto's poems published by Helen Ferguson in 2004*

## Johann Otto Herpel, a most impressive man

Annie Didcott



**Otto as a theological student at Gießen University, 1916**

There must be many families with a remarkable and extra-special member in their midst, a star in their own right, who can rise heroically above the difficulties and tragedies of ordinary life. This story tells of one such person.

Johann Otto Herpel was born in 1886, in the small town of Kelsterbach, which is situated on the river Main not far from Frankfurt, Germany. He was the first child of Peter and Amalie Herpel and his father was a teacher and later a rector. He was followed by seven brother and sisters, of which three died in infancy. When Otto was three years old the family moved to Bickenbach, a small town south of Frankfurt near Darmstadt, where his father had taken a new post in teaching and in 1892 Otto started school. There were two further moves –

Auerbach and Bensheim, where in 1896 Otto finished his schooling obtaining his 'Abitur', a considerable academic achievement, current to this day in German High Schools.

Otto set out on a career in theology, his family being staunch Lutherans, and studied at a number of elite Universities – Bonn, Gießen, Friedberg, Darmstadt and was finally ordained in Langen. All these towns are not very far from Frankfurt am Main in Germany. Otto's first professional position was as assistant vicar in Langen where he remained for six months.

Unfortunately Otto was afflicted by chronic nephritis, which had been identified at his medical examination when being checked for the two years' compulsory military service that all male school-leavers were required to undertake. He was advised then that he would most likely not survive beyond the age of forty. At the time, he was already engaged to be married to Martha Schmeckenbecher so he offered to release her from their engagement, but she would not hear of it.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> June 1911 they were married and went to Darmstadt where for two years Otto worked as an assistant vicar to the *Paulusgemeinde* and also served as chaplain for the prison.



**Martha and Otto's engagement picture, circa 1910**



**Otto with Martha and Ruth as a one year old**

On 12<sup>th</sup> August 1912, their first daughter was born – Katarina, Bertha, Martha, Johanna, Ruth! The first four names were after her Godmothers and Ruth was her personal name, by which she was known all her life.

The position in Darmstadt was very onerous and Otto was not a very strong man, so when Ruth was 1 year old they found a less demanding position in the medieval village of Lißberg.

Lißberg was a small village with about 300 inhabitants when Otto was sent there in 1913 to be minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church that had been built in 1618.

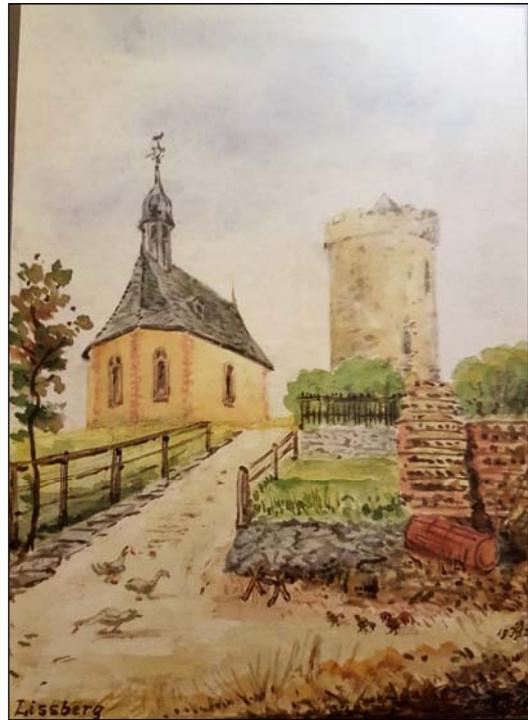
Otto was a very learned man and whilst in Lißberg he honed his skill as a writer. He published his inaugural dissertation in 1915 and became a doctor of theology of the University of Gießen<sup>1</sup>.

In 1915 he wrote an essay *‘Das Leben in alten Lißberg’* [Life in old Lissberg] a history of the nineteenth century.

In 1916 he published *‘Das Dorf auf dem Hügel – Wie es den Krieg erlebte’* [The Village on the Hill – How it experienced the war] (Herpel, 1916), in both soft and hard cover, in the German Gothic script and dedicated to Frau Martha (his wife). This is the book for which he is best remembered. It has been published several times, the latest in modern script in 1996<sup>2</sup>.

Also in 1916, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, Ursula Agnes Elizabeth was born. She now lives in the US and will soon be celebrating her 101 years of action-packed life!

1917 saw Otto, no mean poet himself, publishing *‘Die Frömmigkeit der deutschen Kriegslyrik’* –



**Lißberg Church and Tower**

*Watercolour, 1920 – Artist Unknown*

<sup>1</sup> 1915 Dissertation: *‘Das Wesen der Kirche nach Voraussetzungen und Grundsätzen des jungen Schleiermacher’* – ‘What the Church thought of young Schleiermacher’ – a famous theologian in the 1800’s.

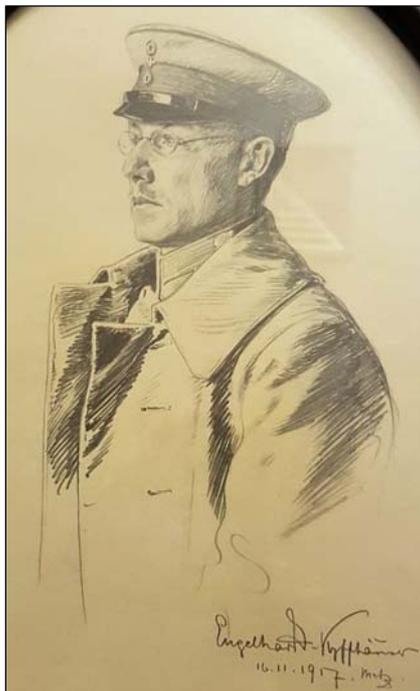
<sup>2</sup> First published by Eugen Salzer in Heilbronn (Herpel, 1916). Second edition (Herpel, 1970). Third edition (Herpel, 1996).

[The pious innocence of German war poetry], a quite remarkable book collecting and presenting the sensitivities of poetry relating to the war. This book is the third in a series looking at studies addressing practical theology. I have an original copy with its thick blue, slightly battered, paper cover and its cut pages; it is dedicated to Otto's parents (Herpel, 1917).

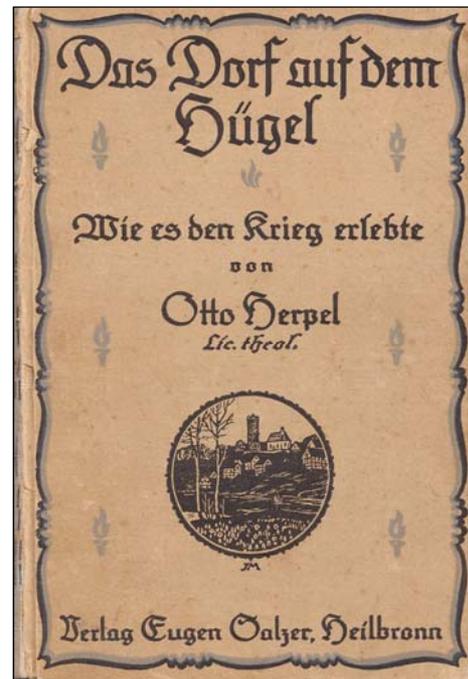
A new departure for Otto, he published in 1918 a small volume of five short stories in a book titled 'Die Übermacht' - [Superior Strength] (Herpel, 1918).

Otto Herpel left an impression with the Lißberg villagers that he was an extraordinary and intelligent and brilliant man. People still talk about him after all this time and he is still remembered.

Then in September 1917 things took a turn for the worse. Otto was commanded to take up the position of war chaplain to the army in Metz in Poland. Seemingly the powers-that-be felt that he was not supportive of the war and this was coming through in his work - probably considered to be affecting the morale of his contacts. During his time in Metz, Otto experienced at first hand the grim horrors of warfare and the dreadful pain, the anguish and sheer misery of the wounded. This affected him so



**War Chaplain in Metz, Poland, 1917-1918**



**Das Dorf auf dem Hügel**

*Original edition*

deeply that he was not able to maintain a positive appearance. His pacifist approach could not be tolerated by officialdom and he was posted East to the Province of Posen, presumably where he could do less damage!

His daughter Ruth takes up the story:

*My father was six months at the Western Front and was then sent to the East (because of his social-democratic ideas, as I heard later). He was stationed in Hohensalza - Inowratzla, which was Prussian at the time. Things there seemed peaceful, the Russian Front a long way off, so my mother, my sister Ursula and I, then two and a half and six years old, followed and lived in a furnished flat in the town. Being six, I also went to a primary school there.*

*We stayed about six months but then the revolution broke out. I can only remember things in snatches. School was closed. We kept away from the windows because there was shooting in the streets and we did not light any gas lamps. It was near Xmas and dark and cold. Father decided that we must make an attempt to get away, back into Germany.*

Xmas Eve found us sitting in a huge railway station waiting room, filled with grey uniformed soldiers, all having got away from the front, and waiting to go home. My father in his grey Army chaplain's uniform and peaked hat, was investigating trains, but had failed to get us onto any. Meanwhile my sister Ursula, now nearly three, sat on my mother's lap, fair hair falling all over her shoulders and singing Christmas carols. It was Christmas Eve! I was very astonished to see the soldiers around us openly cry – men with beards, unkempt, tired, dirty, and tears streaming down their faces.

Then my father turned up and announced that we had to get into the next train or we'd never make it. So we stood squashed on the platform and when the empty train arrived everybody tried to get in. We got into one of the compartments with wooden seats, where there are doors at both ends. Mutti had a seat and had Ursula on her lap. I sat on the knees of a soldier next to her. Father was strap hanging over us and as many people as could squashed in, sitting and standing.

Then a big row started outside. The door to the platform was torn open and all the soldiers were

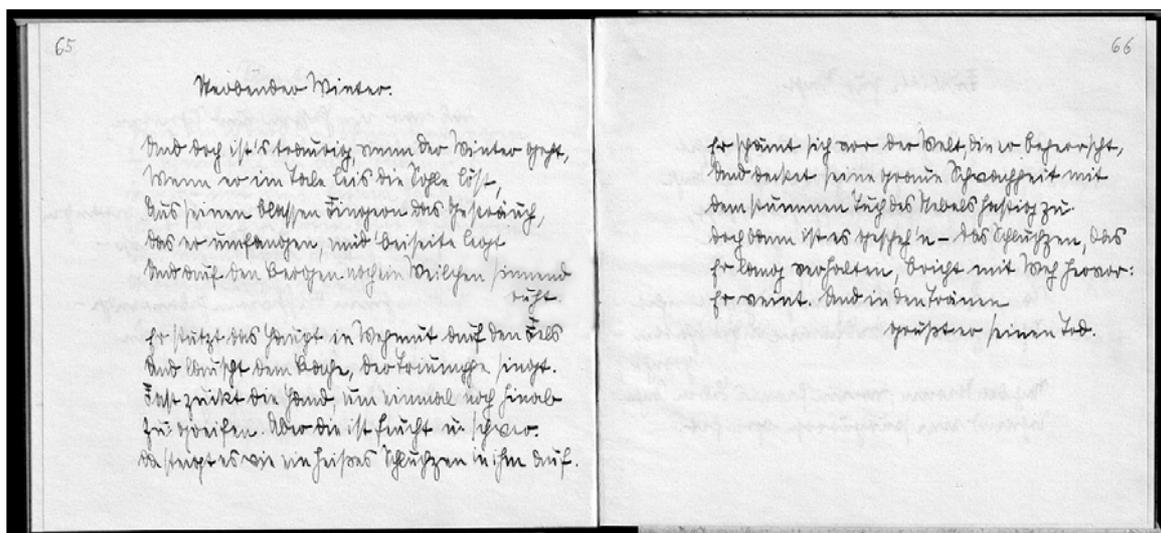
ordered out at the point of guns. Somehow our family was still inside when the train began to move. We children had to lie on the benches. Father and Mother crouched on the floor. Heavy-booted men ran along the train and shouted for it to stop. Shots were fired. One went through our compartment, in one window and out the other. But the train went faster and we were on our way. We heard later that the train driver took the risk that the points were set right and just took off. It was the last train out of Inovratzla for several months.

Our luggage arrived six months later, having been given up as lost. The transport firm very wisely had not dispatched it and had waited until things had quietened down and become organised before sending it off.<sup>1</sup>

And so the family managed to get out in the nick of time and Ruth, in her eighties, still remembered so much detail!

Otto the poet

Although he wrote poetry, Otto never had any of his work published and all the originals were lost, most probably during the Second World War. It was not until the death of his daughter Ruth in 2001, here in



A page from a poem handwritten in gothic script by Otto's daughter, Ursula

<sup>1</sup> Ruth's memories – "1918 and how we returned from Poland", written and audiotaped for the Family History.

Australia, that family members, sorting through her books, found a very small volume with poems handwritten in Gothic script, which no-one could decipher!

A trip was made to America where Ursula was able to transcribe what she had actually written out by hand in 1937 as a gift to her sister Ruth who was about to leave Germany to go and live in England. And so, in 2004 twenty eight of Otto's poems were made into a slim volume by his great niece, Helen Ferguson.

My reading of these poems was an eye-opener into the spirit and mind of this man whom I never knew. I worked hard to translate a selection of four of these quite beautiful poems, which were written during the war, when he was often parted from his family owing to the nature of his work as army chaplain.

The poems are presented below with the English translation on the left and the original German text on the right.

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The first poem is clearly written for his young wife back at home:

From the Tree in Bloom (number 5)

I want to decorate you, bind all the flowers  
Into a garland,  
Strew over your head,  
Weave into your curls,  
All manner of twigs  
To be enchanted by you.

I want to sing for you – let all  
The songs pour forth  
Grasp the jubilation of Spring  
Ring out in a thousand tunes,  
The sheer passion within me,  
In praise of you.

But you are far away! So sadly I give  
The beautiful flowers,  
Back to Spring;  
And my songs – softly, softly  
Die for love  
And ardent longing.

Vom blühenden Baum (V)

Dich möcht' ich schmücken, alle Blumen  
Zum Kranze binden,  
Auf's Haupt Dir streuen,  
In Deiner Locken aller Ranken  
Zweige winden,  
Mich Dein zu freuen.

Dir möcht' ich singen, alle Lieder  
Erbrausen lassen  
In tausend Weisen,  
Des Frühlings Jubeln, helles Stürmen  
In mich fassen,  
Um Dich zu preisen.

Doch Du bist ferne! Drum geb' dem Lenze  
Die Blumen ich trübe  
Zurück, die schönen;  
Und meine Lieder – stille, stille! –  
Sterben in Liebe  
Und heißem Sehnen.

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The second poem is from a collection relating to night fall:

Songs of the Evening (number 3)

Moss-dark pine trees,  
Sound of birds asleep,  
A darkening sky  
Like a canopy over all.

A questioning longing  
Deeply inhaled  
Eyes full of tears,  
From where I cannot tell.

An old sense of duty  
Streaming on downwards  
And a new yearning  
Pounds through my heart.

Into nameless space  
The soul soars upwards,  
With God, forest and moss  
Woven together as one.

Abendlieder (III)

Moosdunkele Tannen,  
Schlafender Vogellaut,  
Ein dämmernder Himmel  
Darübergebaut.

Ein fragendes Sehnen  
Im Atem der Brust,  
Die Augen voll Tränen,  
Mir selbst nicht bewußt.

Ein altes Sollen  
Strömt niederwärts  
Und neues Wollen  
Durchhämert das Herz.

In's Namenlose  
Die Seele schwebt,  
Mit Gott, Wald und Moose  
In Eines gewebt.

---

In spite of the war raging around him, Otto clearly never lost his faith in God. I found this next poem spine-chilling:

July Night 1915

Through the night I make my way home.  
The moon lights up the way for me.  
To the side the stream strides along.  
A song is calling a greeting from afar,

I cannot recall its name  
The song, yet I ought to know it.  
It is the song of the bitter  
Road which leads to death.

Two soldiers go marching past  
And are singing of a comrade.  
They are coming away from their homes...  
Silently the moon lights up the way.

Julnacht 1915

Durch die Nacht geh' ich nach Haus.  
Mir leuchtet der Mond voraus.  
Es schreitet der Bach zur Seite.  
Ein Lied grüßt aus der Weite.

Ich weise es nicht zu nennen  
Das Lied, doch muß ich's kennen.  
Es ist das Lied vom herben  
Hingehen um zu sterben,

Vorbei ziehn zwei Soldaten  
Und singen vom Kameraden.  
Sie kommen von zu Haus . . . .  
Stumm leuchtet der Mond voraus.

---

This fourth poem is one of my favourites. Written in the winter of 1916, it expresses so well the anxiety of war and, again, reflects Otto's love of God and how this sustains him:

Night Watch

Deep in the shadows the world grows dark.  
Above its dark bed  
The gleaming chain of stars is  
Shattered by the clouds below.  
Not a single little soul is keeping reverent watch.

The anxious ring of a bell lifts its wings,  
Hovers, trembling over field and hill  
Chirping and pleading for the abandoned Watch –  
Now see, the Lord has remembered the world.  
A comforting star sails on through the night.

Otto Herpel, 12.1.1916.

Nachtwache

Tief im Schatten düstert die Welt.  
Über ihrem dunklen Bette  
Ist der Sterne leuchtende Kette  
Unter den Wolken zerschellt.  
Kein Seelchen fromme Wache hält,

Ein ängstlich Läuten hebt die Flügel,  
Schwebt zitternd über Feld und Hügel  
Zirpt bettelnd nach der verlassenen Wacht.–  
Da hat der Herrgott der Welt gedacht.  
Ein Stern fährt tröstend durch die Nacht.

12.1.1916.

---

After the war

One happy event was the arrival of Ruth's sister Eva who was born on the 14th of November in 1919. She was baptised Dorothea Ida Emmy Eva.

Once back in Lißberg, Otto found it very difficult to settle into his old routine. Some profound changes had occurred for him and he turned towards political action, combining this with many very fundamental questions about Christianity.

*By 1919 he had become very involved with a movement known as 'The Neuwerk'<sup>1</sup> and was practically the founder of this Movement – 'he was the intellectual who gave the bones to it'. His agenda was pacifism, internationalism and socialism which is what he believed in, but it took a while until he reached these ideals.*

Otto believed that his vocation was to enter politics and do something for the greater Good. However this period of his life was fraught with dissention, frequent conferences, rejection, changes of heart between colleagues and debates with contentious thinkers. All this would have been some reflection

---

of how society in general had been shaken up by the recent war.

By 1922 he decided to leave the ministry and took up a teaching position at a High School for Girls in Offenbach am Main, teaching theology, philosophy, art history and Greek.

From this time, until his death on his 39th birthday in April 1925, he and his wife Martha devoted a great deal of energy to working actively with young people, participating in the growth of the *Wandervögel*, an informal movement of wandering youth known as the "birds of passage." Otto was a foundation member of the Youth Hostels Association, which exists to this day but not in the same spirit as he and his colleagues had envisioned.

Throughout all, Otto continued to write articles, anthologies and frequently contributed to diverse journals. He said already in 1924 that Hitler was mad – he prophesied this and warned of Hitler's 'pathologically affected brain material'! He also maintained that Germany would only have a future in a combined united Europe. Otto Herpel was far in

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<sup>1</sup> Antje Volmer's Inaugural-Dissertation: *Die Neuwerkbewegung 1919–1935. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Jugendbewegung, des Religiösen Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbildung* (Vollmer, 1973). Also her latest work: *Die Neuwerkbewegung: Zwischen Jugendbewegung und religiösem Sozialismus* (Volmer, 2016).

advance of his time and would have never survived the Third Empire (Hitler).

His funeral was organised by the young people whom he had inspired, with numerous oral tributes and songs. As Otto Herpel was lowered into his grave, a large ring of brightly coloured flags was lowered to the ground, a moving tribute to a unique man, so dearly loved by the many who knew him.

#### A personal note

This is the story of the grandfather that I never did know. He died as the result of meningitis when my mother, Ruth, was twelve years old. I only met Martha ('Mutti') my grandmother, for the first time at the age of 11, but we instantly formed a strong bond of affection and I visited her in Germany regularly thereafter. All I knew about Otto was through her and my mother's stories, my sister's Family History and now, through having made a

close study of some of his poetry. I also made frequent references to the Internet, which to my surprise and pleasure has a great deal of information about Pfarrer Otto Herpel.

Someone should write a book about his life!

#### Acknowledgements

First and foremost I owe my sister Sue Gibson a huge debt of gratitude for all the information she was able to provide from our Family History which she has been working on for very many years. And all the lovely photos.

Many thanks also to Johanna McBride and to Barbara Neu for working with me on the poems, especially those mysteriously elusive meanings. Johanna and I both got totally stuck over one word, so that poem had to be abandoned!

# Moving beyond 1915 remembrance



## Mango Soldier

*Susie Prest*

Tomorrow's ripe, juicy mango,  
That the soldier might eat,  
From the soil of his homeland.

If not for a bullet that felled his body,  
At rest in the distant soil,  
Of his sniper's country.

And his friend visiting the parents,  
Of a mate he loved,  
On the family's mango farm.

With stories of being abroad,  
His bravery in battle,  
And obsession with their soft, orange fruit.

Under the ripening mango tree,  
Reminiscing that quiet before conflict,  
And their final moments of contact.

And his grieving parents seeking comfort,  
From the company of this youthful stranger,  
A long way from the city streets of his home.

## Genteel Teachers

---

*Alison Charlton*

Miss Shaw, stately and genteel,  
Headmistress to us 1950s girls;  
Decrees that we, at table,  
Converse with her  
On topics with some depth.  
No silly schoolgirl gossip  
Allowed.

Miss Olsen, Miss Botterell  
And Miss Rose,  
(who wears hand knitted suits -  
One red, one green),  
Patrol the boarding school  
To oversee our dreams.  
Those dried up sticks,  
Ever alert to detect  
Lesbian tendencies,  
Of which we '50s girls  
Are ignorant.

Key-keeper, house-keeper, health-keeper;  
Miss Pillow, monitors our bowels,  
Administers castor oil to truthful girls;  
Of which there are none.

It is whispered  
That Miss Shaw's beau  
Was killed upon the Somme.  
But what of Miss Olsen,  
Miss Botterell and Miss Rose?  
Were there lovers?  
Gentlemen with whom to promenade?  
Bring home to tea?  
Did grief and sorrow  
Cause that bloom of hairy moles  
Upon Miss Pillow's crumpled face?  
Oh thoughtless nasty girls:  
We call her 'Warthog'.

Young men went out  
Did not return  
To Miss Shaw, Miss Olsen,  
Miss Botterell and Miss Rose,  
Who gave their un-lived lives  
To cruel pimply girls.

## Loss

---

*Alison Charlton*

Once  
I was supreme  
in glorious martial red  
and insignia of gold,  
a mount for my mistress;  
sometimes a noble steed  
prancing through time;  
sometimes a mechanised  
monster  
racing the wind,  
scattering gravel  
in the face of rivals.  
On quiet days  
I was a boat  
or a balloon aloft.  
Either way  
I'd float  
while  
my little mistress  
day-dreamed.

Then,  
all those long years  
deserted  
in the garden,  
weed encrusted, rusted,  
enduring weather,  
I imagined her chubby face  
shining, delighted:  
she running to embrace me.

But,  
I did not know War;  
fathers leaving wives and children  
to sacrifice supremely.  
I could not see that Time  
makes changes  
so we cannot recognise  
old loves and passions.

Now,  
who is this creature,  
long-legged and slender,  
standing close, so close  
to her soldier Dad  
in the garden?

Saying,  
'Is this really my treasured trike,  
my noble steed,  
my boat of dreams  
that I have longed for  
all these years?  
It's small and rusty.  
Daddy, Daddy, please,  
can I have  
a two-wheeler?'

## Snap-Shot 1917

---

*Alison Charlton*

Imaging my Mother,  
From snippets rarely told,  
Of when she was a girl:  
There she is, in sepia,  
A pretty thing with downcast eyes,  
Her name a burden.

It's not her fault,  
She's done no wrong.  
But there's suspicion  
Among the girls at boarding school  
That she doesn't have the patriotic spirit  
That is required to fight the Hun.

To fight the **HUN**,  
If not in fact,  
Then in theory:  
Because she bears the guilt  
Of that unbearable name –  
**MARGUERITE VON ZEE.**

## The Soldiers' Song

---

*Karen Dahlitz*

At an ANZAC graveyard  
Arose soldier apparitions.  
One by one they appeared from every grave  
They were ready to fight their final war  
Each in a ghostly soldier form.  
Dressed battle smart  
Ready to fight a different war.  
Waiting for their command  
They grouped in silhouette  
Standing at the ready.  
Then they marched in line  
Onto a busy city street;  
Cars screamed to a stop in their tracks.  
Pedestrians backed away in disbelief!  
All in awe and fear at what they heard and saw.  
Ghostly soldiers appearing from nowhere  
A bugle sounded  
Then the soldiers began to chant:

*"We come in peace  
We will not hurt you  
We've come only to request an end to war  
War will only be won  
Through non-violent negotiation  
Communication is the only way  
To stop the conflict  
Peace and prosperity for all"*

To everyone's astonishment the soldiers turned  
Continued in line up the hill to the War Memorial Hall.  
People ran and hid, not certain of what they'd seen.  
Were they soldiers marching for peace?  
The soldiers entered the War Memorial Hall.  
The bugle called again and the head soldier said to them:

"You who lost your young lives fighting other people's war  
Will stop it now from ever happening again.  
Enter and stay in all War Memorials across the vast land  
Greet the men, women and children who pay their respects to the ANZACs  
When they ask in trembling voice 'Who are you? Why are you here?'  
You will answer them with The Soldiers' Song:"

*We come in peace  
We will not hurt you.  
We've come only to request an end to war.  
War will only be won  
Through non-violent negotiation  
Communication is the only way.  
To stop the conflict.  
Peace and prosperity for all!*

No more war in Vietnam;  
No more war in Afghanistan;  
No more war in Iraq;  
And please, no war in Pakistan!  
The head soldier instructed the ghostly soldiers once more:  
"When people understand our mission  
That we have been reborn  
To erase the suffering once and for all!  
The lie that war is for peace and peace is for war.  
Listen and obey for we ghost soldiers  
Will haunt every place commemorating war.  
Nothing will be able to get rid of us!  
When you go to a War Memorial Hall  
Out of the shadows might come  
A kindly soldier's apparition dressed in army uniform  
Who might sing The Soldiers' Song to you!"

*I come in peace  
I will not hurt you.  
I come only to request an end to war.  
War will only be won  
Through non-violent negotiation.  
Communication is the only way  
To stop the conflict for ever more.  
Peace and prosperity for all!*

You too might start to sing The Soldiers' Song:  
"War will only be won  
Through non-violent negotiation  
Communication is the only way..."

## White Rocks

---

*Sandra Renew*

What were they thinking,  
the two camel drivers,  
who brought the war  
to Broken Hill  
under the Ottoman flag?

What were they thinking,  
the two camel drivers,  
in faded shirts and broken shoes,  
with rusty guns,  
firing on the miners' picnic train?

What were they thinking,  
surrounded by local militia,  
when they went to ground  
on the rocky outcrop  
outside the desert town?

What were we thinking?  
We ANZACS at Gallipoli,  
of the war fought at Broken Hill;  
fifty guns against  
two camel drivers and their ice cream cart,  
a legend lost in dust and wind.

## Anzac Villanelle – The Meaning of Peace

---

*From Words for Peace by Remy, 11 years old*

Fighting for friends awaiting a grave  
A fragment of ease glimpsed from a letter  
The meaning of peace is known to the brave

The lives that they had were the lives that they gave  
They wished there was peace and tried to fight better  
Fighting for friends awaiting a grave

All the souls that they tried to save  
As rain and blood made the ground wetter  
The meaning of peace is known to the brave

The rest and the peace that the ANZACS crave  
To have peace is to live free of the fetter  
A Fighting for friends awaiting a grave

Does war make us free or make us a slave?  
Does war make us rich or make us a debtor?  
The meaning of peace is known to the brave

As the ANZACS charged out they crashed down like a wave  
A fragment of bomb, no return letter  
Fighting for friends awaiting a grave  
The meaning of peace is known to the brave

## Why Remember Mary Gilmore?

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*Sylvia Bowring*

Her name was Mary Gilmore,  
From Roslyn proudly sprung.  
She saw with eyes that looked beyond  
The era just begun.

She railed against injustice  
And wrote of her concern.  
But as she's looking through the vale,  
She knows that we never seem to learn.

The parallels run true to form  
From age to future age,  
And we, puppet-like, perform  
On that same one-eyed stage.

Sylvia Bowring

The Measure

*Must the young blood for ever flow?  
Shall the wide wounds no closing know?  
Is hate the only lantern of the stars,  
And honour bastard but to scars?  
And yet, the equal sun looks down  
On kingly head and broken clown,  
And sees, not friend and foe, but man and man,  
As when these years began.*

*These are the days of all men's tears—  
Tears like the endless drop that wears  
The rock, and rusts the steel, and frets the bones  
Of dead men lying under stones;  
And, yet, the stars look on the earth  
As in the hour of Christ His birth,  
And see, not friend and foe, but man and man,  
As when these years began.*

*Weeds on the garden pathways grow  
Where the swift feet were wont to go;  
Closed are the doors that stood so wide—  
The white beds empty, side by side.  
But in the woman-breast the milk  
Tides under hodden grey and silk,  
Knowing nor friend nor foe, but man's child, man,  
As when these years began.*

*O Woman, mother of the sons of earth,  
Thou holdst one measure of our worth:  
A child's mouth on thy nipped breast;  
A child's head on thine arm to rest!  
There knowest thou, not friend or foe, but man,  
As when these years began.*

Dame Mary Gilmore DBE, 1918

## Words for Peace

---

*From Words for Peace by James, 17 years old*

The pursuit of peace, from deep within,  
The feeling of cleansing an eternal sin.  
Peace is defined as the absence of war,  
But to each person it means a great deal more.  
To me peace is a smile, on a carefree face,  
The feeling of serenity, in which we chase.

When you open the curtain and the sun kisses your cheek,  
When you see a child, so joyful and meek.  
When you smell a new book and gain a friend,  
To when you turn the last page, and tie the loose end.  
When I imagine myself, in the future years,  
I wish to be at peace with myself and my peers.

Peace is realising that perfection does not exist,  
It's when you accept the opportunities that you've missed.  
No one can teach you what peace really means,  
But it is present in everyone, from angels to fiends.  
Peace can be achieved in more ways than one,  
It's different for everybody, for some it's a walk and others a run.

Peace is when you laugh at yourself, for doing something wrong,  
When your own imperfections are what make you so strong.  
Peace will save you, from who you once were,  
It will quell your internal rage and anger.  
It will free you from your bonds of this mere state,  
Where there is no one but you, who will dictate.

Peace is present, in an open mind,  
But my dear friend, it's for you to find.  
When you stare upon death, deep in the eyes,  
Is your heart pounding?  
Spilling painful cries?  
Or do you welcome it, because you know it won't cease,  
You know it is present, an ever-growing peace.

## The Soldier

---

*AJ Thomas Bennett*

A young boy grows up to be a man  
And together they'll all make a fighting stand  
The glory **Short**  
But the victory **Grand**  
As one by one they fall to the land

It's for your country – *Men*  
They're told  
So they fight on so brave and bold  
Not one of them will they grow old  
As their bodies lie still  
And forever cold...

I need your forgiveness for all I have wronged  
For it is your strength not mine which makes me grow strong...

*Pray for me*  
*As I lie in the trench*  
*My nostrils assaulted by death's evil stench*

*Pray for me*  
*As my body does burn*  
*Has history taught you what we did not learn?*

*Pray for me*  
*Choose peace*  
*In all, you must share*  
*My triumph is yours*  
*Provided you care*

*Pray for me*  
*Kneel by my grave*  
*For it was your life,*  
*Not mine*  
*I was willing to save*

## Dear Dorothea<sup>1</sup>

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

So sad: that your one great poem -  
first penned in nineteen four,  
then published in '08 -  
is all we now remember.

For your family, life and loss  
were so much more than this:  
Core of your heart was, in fact,  
more than your country.

The "great" war gave your poem fame  
yet stole life and strength from your kin.  
On behalf of our country  
we say "sori" – to you and yours lost.

One hundred years late,  
we are sorry for all you suffered,  
for all family traces lost from war;  
more, that your poet's voice was lost in war's  
shadow.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to various online sources, Dorothea Mackellar – famously known for writing "My Country" – had 3 brothers. The eldest, Keith, was killed in action in South Africa in the 1900 Boer War. The 2nd son, Malcolm, who served in WW1 in the British Life Guards, was gassed and suffered serious after-effects. The 3rd son, Eric, was a Lieutenant in the AIF and did return to Australia to marry; but his only son died at age 15. So this family of "considerable fortune and social favour" left no successors, only Anglican burials. Dorothea herself, like many women of her war generation, never married and stopped writing in the mid-1920s. But in 1925 she did commission a cottage to be built at Pittwater, "Tarrangaua" (another part of her legacy, subsequently owned by author Susan Duncan and her husband). We all know and repeat the words "of droughts and flooding plains." Yet few of us know the back-story of her family losses from war. Current times have seen a proliferation of official apologies for harm done in the past. Since serving as a civilian peace monitor on Bougainville, I cannot think of the word "sorry" without hearing it in Tok Pisin, *sori*. Where is our apology to families like Dorothea's? This poem is a start.

# On Resistance: A Eureka Moments Triptych - From 1854 and 1915 to 1942 and the Present

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*Chris Burt and Bonnie Goodfellow*

My dad and two AIF mates became boat  
people ... to escape and survive 1942  
slaughter and surrender on Singapore.

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

He was an AIF truck driver. His battalion withstood Australia's most serious WW2 casualties on the Malay Peninsula, even before they faced decimation on Singapore. Unlike dad, those who surrendered their arms, ended up in death camps and on death marches.

I am thankful every day that he and his mates pushed off in that local fisherman's boat, to survive at sea, and be picked up by a troop carrier to return to Australia. In recovery mode, he met and married my mum, a WW2 Blue Gum Girl, after they danced the night away at Avoca Waratah ball. They were survived by four of their six children.

The Boat People

*Chris Burt*

The tide rocked the wreck, on a far distant shore,  
a remnant of a passing storm.  
Bodies; men, women and children lay abandoned,  
tossed and torn.

Gone forever their dreams, their hopes,  
trailing like seaweed within the current,  
drifted empty ropes.

At peace now, no more sadness, no more sorrow.  
Laughter, life, peace and security,  
passed now into obscurity.

Not for them a new tomorrow.

Destiny had struck with a cruel hand.  
South-south-west of sorrow, lay that land,  
for which they had given everything.

---

The above prose piece and poem were written in response to our reading of 'South-south-west of Sorrow' by Bruce Dawe.

From the Standpoint of a Legless Lizard

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

*Malestream* relations, pendulum pulled,  
from one side then the other.

Swung from paternal coalition to partnered alliance.

She - me - Australia: left without legs to stand on?

No. Like legless lizards,  
must find our own middling ways, to relate;  
must face imagined fears - to jointly survive.  
Think for ourselves, while balancing own with others'  
need for more open, long *duree*.



Hand knit meditation on 1854 Eureka Flag and Triptych

# Our 1942 Eureka Moment<sup>1</sup>

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

The full story of our nation's birth was never 1915.  
Our slow move from colony to nation  
first flamed in 1854 stockade resistance.

And loyal enlistments still joined colonial militia;  
with "Breaker" just the best-known  
to come a cropper against British orders.

Our stomach for obeying war's call -  
for allowing "normal wastage" -  
acted as stillbirth for our nation.

So much lost, in death and grief,  
by so many: All war is waste and failure  
for those misled by leaders on all sides.

So when a second world war  
affront was announced  
fathers told sons: "Don't rush to enlist."

"They didn't do right by us  
in the last one, son,  
so hold your powder dry."

Till February '42 and direct assault  
changed their minds to bear the grind  
and loss of war again.

---

<sup>1</sup> This poem was written in my 64th year (2016) of life slowly coming to grips with what "Australia" is, and has been. Most recently, the following concise summary, of what February 1942 signified for Australian families, helped inform my responses to 1915 and the concept of our Eureka Moments, to develop shared joint meanings:

*"Mainland Australia came under attack for the first time on 19 February 1942, when Japanese forces mounted two air raids on Darwin, planned and led by the commander who had been responsible for the raid on Pearl Harbour some ten weeks earlier. The first assault, starting just before 10.00 am, involved 188 strike aircraft launched from four Japanese aircraft carriers in the Timor Sea. Heavy bombers peppered the town, with Zero fighters striking shipping in the harbour, the military and civil airports and the hospital at Berrimah, ten kilometres away to the north-east. A second wave began an hour later, the two raids combined killing 243 people and wounding over 300. Most of the civil and military facilities in Darwin were destroyed, along with eight ships.*

*It was something that had to be experienced to be fully comprehended, and was the final straw for many of those in the reserved occupations. They were now ready to join the fight."*

Extract from John S Croucher's book *The Kid from Norfolk Island – The Story of the Remarkable Alf Pollard* (page 88, published in 2014).

## Anzac Day at Moruya 2005

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*Moya Pacey*

*Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies (Edna St Vincent Millay)*

The Light Horse Re-enactment: gun carriage,  
four chestnut horses, riders dressed as Anzacs,  
khaki, slouch hats with feathers, sweeps into Page Street.  
A brass band blows 'Lead Kindly Light' over the dusty town.

Vintage cars roll up. Old soldiers stagger, steady,  
fall in. Returned Service men and women grip flags.  
Boy scouts, sea scouts, track-suited walkers  
clutch medals. Children clasp their parents' hands.

Major General (Retd.), scornful of the microphone,  
squares his shoulders, remembers,  
'Our generation did a good job.'  
Jack dances a jig, 'I'm busting.'

The bugle plays 'The Last Post' then 'Reveille'.  
A marcher topples to the ground. The band strikes up  
'Abide with Me'. An ambulance, lights blazing,  
siren muted, scatters the crowd.

*When other helpers fail and comforts flee...*

Going home, Kate asks, 'What does fail mean?'

## The Last Voice

---

*Bede Tongs*

The Old Infantry Soldier, still fairly upright at age 93  
was guest speaker at an Annual Dinner in Sydney  
Raising money for the lovely people who helped  
the Australian Forces against a ferocious enemy  
in Papua New Guinea  
They are the descendant's of the brave Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels  
of the Kokoda Track and Beyond  
Some said he was the Last Voice  
The Last Voice of the Kokoda Track Firing Line Infantry  
Writers and journalists have spoken of the time  
along with Soldiers who had not trod the mud slush and grime  
Not truthful in saying they fought  
and witnessed death on the Track  
They should have courage and state the true facts  
Through the dedication of Australians who care  
the financial response from the Dinner was grand  
The descendants of the brave Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels  
would benefit in education, health care and medicine  
from the truth in what the Old Soldier said  
The Last Voice is history recorded forever  
In time The Voice will only be a whisper  
and from the Old Soldier, always a Smile.

An extract from the Ralph Honner Memorial Oration delivered in October 2013.

*560 men of the 3rd Battalion went on the Kokoda Track on 5th September [1942], 110 answered the role call on 4th December [1942] at Gona Mission, when the 3rd Battalion was taken out of action. There was a lot of sickness. There were 53 killed in action, died of wounds, died of illness and close on 102 wounded.*

*People have asked me why do I keep going back to Papua New Guinea. I have been in New Guinea 9 times, Kokoda 8 times. The last time with my son Garry in November last year. [The speaker, Garry and grandson David had also been there in February that year.]*

*I landed there on 27th May 1942. I met these lovely Papuan people, there has been an evolution in the meantime, but all the time to me they are such lovely people and we can never thank them for how they helped us and died for us in those grim days of the Kokoda Track campaign and beyond.*

*To give you an idea how the country and people affected me, I passed that enthusiasm on to my son Garry who was fifteen years old when he first visited Papua New Guinea. And*

*then later my wife Joan and I went up when Garry and his wife were in Mendi in the Southern Highlands.*

*I mentioned that I fought in the Aitape-Wewak campaign, 2/3rd Battalion. I have also been able to experience being on the Track with my son and grandson David. In 1983 we trekked the Track, my grandson David was 12 years old, I was 63 and Garry was 37.*

*I was in Savaia, the village of Savaia where I was confronted with the Papuans [in 1942], early in November [2012] last year and they made me Honorary Chief of Savaia. Pigs teeth and all sorts of regalia, which was pretty good. We're going back again. We took up some things for their school, chalk, exercise books, pencils, pencil sharpeners and so on. Stainless steel cooking utensils for the lovely women of Savaia and I'm looking forward to us both being there for the opening of the new Kokoda College next year.*

*We support The Kokoda Track Foundation and it is amazing the amount of activity and work that [CEO] Dr Genevieve Nelson is doing and [Chairman] Patrick Lindsay.*

*Thank you ladies and gentlemen.*

## Kokoda God

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*John Collard*

You watch us trawl through muddied slime  
lured by memories  
of scarlet roses entwined in picket fences  
before summer suns  
send heat waves  
to scorch their fragile beauty.

We wrestle with this slope,  
each step slipping  
as we grasp at tendrils  
to draw us through the sucking ooze.

Mosquitos attack more frequently than enemies,  
more toxic than a kamikaze strike!  
Plunge hypodermic poison  
into stretching arms and struggling souls!

We glimpse faces beyond the horizon;  
forlorn wives thumbing ration books,  
children locked into silent yards,  
friends waving bravely from the piers.

Next day we do not wake refreshed,  
but swollen by welts and memories  
resume the trail  
and wish we could be safe at home.

## 2016 Garage Sale Trail

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

The shed was grandpa's space,  
for withdrawing.

His 'drawing room,  
his chance for peace.

Now, that he's well  
passed, our grandkids stand  
a chance to pry,  
to find his last piece  
of mind: written in musty mess  
and hidden by planks  
from spying eyes.

But how, do tell,  
can we explain  
why kindness meant we left him  
there, to dwell so much alone?  
And why, now, we must all learn  
to dig, and find what  
ailed his times -  
from written scraps  
and photo snaps -  
through wars and  
struggletown downs.

Our nation's psyche -  
to be or not to be  
treasured – or turfed out and free  
to passersby at  
this year's garage sale trail.

## Beyond 1915 Remembrance

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

So much spent,  
spoken and aired,  
these days on our  
Anzac hundredth year.

Yet nothing in this flood  
is near to first  
necessary steps  
of learning:

How to avoid  
unnecessary wars.  
How to disarm  
worlds of difference.

Instead, we bulk up, warring;  
and grow in militarism.  
As if bearing arms helps us grow safe.

We delude ourselves.  
We do not learn to listen.  
We help ourselves  
to cushioned life, made soft  
on harsh deals with others.

An 80 year old –  
quiet and respectful,  
worldly-wise and worn by years,  
said to me in 2015:

“Enough, surely, 100 years remembering.”  
Yes, we must remember those lost,  
left breathless, witless, legless,  
without support.

Yes, remember; then forge better ways.  
Reconcile to past inept days.  
Find solutions, not war as first resort.  
Instead, have we come to this:

All depends on joint  
strike fighters and stealthy subs?  
Our freedom pegged  
on others having none?  
Enough of budget balderdash.  
Better to give one hundred billion bucks  
to strengthen global health.  
Our aid, now:

like the “horribly thin” – “poor little thing” –  
baby, thrown out  
with the bathwater,  
gone down the plughole?

Like them, I’ll not go quiet down that plughole  
or into an eighth decade.  
Instead, I’ll pour light and balm  
on harm or loss we cause.

Remembrance, guilt in two-up: Not enough.  
Remember and reconcile.  
Don’t arm to the brink of a next phoney war.  
Learn to live in peace.

# 1942: Ten Weeks that Forged our Nation



Darwin waterfront 1942



## 1942: Ten Weeks that Forged our Nation

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*Irving and Bonnie Goodfellow*

A captain (then retired, now passed)  
told me of his Kokoda trials in '42.  
He'd seen it through as a pacifist.  
He spoke of his father's words on world war  
two:  
"Don't rush to enlist, son.  
They didn't do right by us in the last one."  
He soldiered with my uncle on Kokoda.  
He led them there with one firm aim –  
to keep his men alive. I'm thankful, and I  
wonder  
how these two men, the captain and uncle Bill,  
both whimsical and gentle souls,  
managed all they found up that track?  
Sixty four years I've struggled  
to know my dad (now gone 16 years).  
Silent on his past, focused on his work,  
as builder and breadwinner –  
the gulf between youth and man filled  
for him on Singapore in '42.  
Then I found Alf, in a book;  
this unplanned third source helped triangulate  
proof of '42 – not Gallipoli – as our  
nation's crucible of shock and awe;  
to know how that sharp scalene angle of war  
raids had strafed pacific fleets and views.  
In ten short weeks our antipodes  
upended, and new views formed from  
Pearl Harbour, Singapore, Darwin:  
our remote felicity attacked, point-blank.  
In February '42: two raids, four carriers –  
243 killed in Darwin, on our soil.  
For dad and Alf, the captain and uncle Bill,  
this was their generation's "final straw"  
that broke the back of their resistance  
to being lured to fight others' wars.  
For many, only then,  
were they ready to enlist.

This poem was written after reading John S  
Croucher (2014), *The Kid from Norfolk Island – The  
Story of the Remarkable Alf Pollard*

### Historical Footnote

After the attacks on Pearl Harbour and Singapore, Australia declared war on Japan. We did not wait for a British declaration. In early 1942, as Japan pushed further south and invaded New Guinea, Prime Minister Curtin requested our troops be returned to (defend) Australia. Churchill wanted them sent to Burma. Curtin's resistance won out, "the mouse that roared." Australia adopted the Statute of Westminster in 1943 – no longer the colonial dominion. The British Government would no longer make decisions for Australia. So 1942 is our true national crucible – the situation of severe trial, that led to the creation of a new footing for our nation. It is, of course, a whole other question whether our ditching of the colonial yoke to hook up with post-WW2 US alliance, that new friendship forged through mutual trust, has not cost us more independence in the long run.

### Appendix

The following 1942 *Smith's Weekly* article was provided for inclusion in Peace Works! publication from the private papers of Irving Goodfellow, one of the AIF escapees from Singapore. (It is not available on Trove.):

"A.I.F. Escapees from Singapore Treated as Deserters", *Smith's Weekly*, 21 March 1942, pages 1 and 2

Immediate inquiry should be made by Army Minister Forde into the treatment of a group of some thirty young A.I.F. heroes, who escaped from Singapore, and are now in a West Australian camp.

Just before the surrender they were told by their officers: "Every man make a break for himself."

Some Gaoled; Others on Fatigues in W.A. Camp

These men did so. After a series of hair-raising experiences and hair-breadth escapes, they got away, arrived eventually in Fremantle, where they were treated as deserters and placed on the dirtiest fatigues about a camp.

Some were arrested, and gaoled, and had their pay docked.

They are some of Major-General Gordon Bennett's boys.

Perhaps he will use his influence to have them transported to their home towns and given a period of rest leave before resuming military duties.

These boys are not deserters, as facts gathered by "Smith's" will show.

They came away from Singapore Island when they were told of its surrender, and instructed to "make a break" by their officers.

In these circumstances nobody has any right to treat them as deserters.

They believed they would be of more use to their country as fighting men in Australia than as prisoners in the hands of the Japs in Singapore.

If their action in escaping is wrong, then so is that of Major-General Bennett, Major Charles Moses, and Lieut. Gordon Walker.

But all Australia was glad to welcome these three officers back.

Account of their experiences as told by one of the men is as follows:-

"We are all from Singapore Island. We are from the first units which went to Malaya a year ago. We were the first A.I.F. troops in action in Malaya.

"Our units were cut to ribbons. Only 253 men came out of our first engagement. We re-formed and, in relays, made the withdrawal, eventually crossing the causeway to Singapore Island.

"We were at the point on Singapore Island where the Japs landed first. We were shelled and bombed continuously for 18 hours and machine-gunned constantly and had no air support at all. We defended an aerodrome which had wood and paper planes on the field.

"Here we were cut to pieces again. Out of three battalions we could re-form only one battalion.

"One day was given to re-form, and we went back into action again. Very few escaped death.

"We retreated and fought right into Singapore itself under shell, mortar, machine-gun, and snipers' fire, and the ever-present formations of bombers and dive-bombers, the planes using explosives, armor-piercing, and incendiary bullets on our troops.

Plenty of Equipment

"Japs bombed and shelled hospitals constantly while patients walked aimlessly around.

"On the Wednesday we were told to get on a ship. Next morning orders came for all A.I.F. to go ashore. British troops and Air Force units then went aboard.

"We went back to the Botanic Gardens, picking up all the equipment we could find. There was plenty: Armored vehicles everywhere, with no crews. We took up a position in the Gardens and were bombed mercilessly all day and night.

"Jap planes came low, disregarding 'ack-ack' fire. We were told 300 planes were coming to help us; but, as usual, just talk!

"Tanks of the Japs were playing havoc.

"In all this time no one could find Major \_\_\_; but Lieut. \_\_\_ and Lieut. \_\_\_ gave us the order for every man to make a break for himself as the rumor of surrender was going round.

"Eight of us made a break through the Japs to the harbor. We found no boats other than barges and junks, which were quite impossible to get away in, as the Jap planes were on top.

Continued from Page 1

"We took an R.A.F. truck and drove madly round to Keppel Harbor and found a pilot launch, but the motor was no good.

"Our mechanics slaved over it and at last got it to work. Some of us dashed off in the truck for petrol and found an abandoned petrol dump.

"We took a case of bully beef on the lorry and were bombed for hours before leaving the wharf.

"Smoke from Singapore helped us and as it was late in the day, night brought us a little respite.

"We had to go round and round in a circle till daybreak, and all that night we could hear the sound and see the flashes of gun fire.

"Saturday saw us hiding round one side of the Island while planes escorted Japanese warships into the main harbor.

"By dodging round the Island we were not seen, but two bombers gave us a scare.

"Well we travelled about 345 miles in that launch, finding 15 tins of petrol in another launch, drifting somewhere near Sumatra.

"When we got there we found the Dutch Controller and we were put on an island boat, named 'Indragirl.'

"The Japs had convoys and ships in Banks Straits and so we had to go round them to Banks Island and were machine-gunned by Jap troop-carrying planes. From there we risked the minefields to Java.

"Arrived in Batavia and the consuls there would not have anything to do with us, according to the corporal from our boat, who went ashore. He could not find out if there were any A.I.F. units on the Island.

"Dutch officials then told us that a ship was sailing for Australia in two and a half hours. We rushed down to the wharf and got aboard and were well-treated there.

"In due course, we arrived in Fremantle and, instead of being heroes for having escaped from Singapore, we were – and still are – treated like deserters.

"Some boys from other units of the A.I.F. came in a boat straight from Singapore. They were, on landing, put under arrest and spent three days in gaol, being allowed only 1/- [one shilling] a day.

"We were a little luckier as we were not arrested. There are at least 30 of us now and every dirty job in the camp falls on us.

"Instead of being given a rest and sent back to our own State [N.S.W.] we are almost prisoners – washing up for the sergeants and officers and doing work in the kitchens for men who haven't been in the fight yet . . .

"Is this the way men should be treated in their own country, who have been fighting the Japs since they declared war? . . .

"We all want a couple of weeks leave. We have only had five to ten days' leave in one year in Malaya and think we are entitled to a brief rest. Then we'll gladly and willingly help others to know how the Japs fight.

"We are all experienced men and know from hand-to-hand fighting their weaknesses and tricks.

"But the military does not seem to want us. We cannot even draw the money that is in our paybooks.

"Three more Australians and four Englishmen have just arrived and they have been put under open arrest.

"But why? Don't they want men to escape from Singapore? Or are they afraid of what they'll tell their people and what Australia should know?



# Post-conflict Children: Suffer Not

What children suffer in conflict, *the body does not forget*



## Australia – Multicultural Country Quilts

*Queanbeyan Multicultural Centre*



In September 2015 Queanbeyan Multicultural Centre formed a volunteer creative team: Mahsa (Iran), Nadezhda (Russia) and Neha (India). We came up with the idea of creating a reversible quilt.

We selected 14 kinds of fabric. Since this was a new experience to many participants, we started by cutting squares and rectangles.



For the other side of the quilt, we created a tree, to symbolise Australia. Each leaf of the tree has a country name, from the people that came to live and work here. Both sides of the quilt were equally wonderful – so we backed them separately, for showing, but it is not for sale. We are very grateful

to all who participated in our project; also a very special thanks to the management of the Queanbeyan Multicultural Centre. The centre has been supporting migrants and refugees for over 30 years in Queanbeyan region.



The new quilt project of Queanbeyan Multicultural Centre started in September 2016. The volunteer team consisted of Mahsa, Nadezhda (now with baby Svetlana) and Paola (Chile). They created the design with the theme "Australia, a welcoming country for children" representing different countries who are living in Queanbeyan. With the help of many other

young people from the Centre they worked hard to present their colourful quilt. It shows children from Russia, Mexico, Iran, Chile, Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Nepal, China, Brazil, Italy, India and Vietnam. Of course children from everywhere are included.

## A Child's Wartime Memories

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Annie Didcott

*We lived in a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor flat very close to Putney Bridge in London throughout the whole war:*

Dread noxious clouds mask  
Lost promise of sun's comfort;  
Sweet scent of wallflowers.

*Rushing indoors from the garden as the air raid warnings sound:*

Safe home, blessed peace  
Shut out rage, noise, violent pain.  
Mummy, where... are... you...?

*In the blackout the Lancasters follow the stars' reflection in the waters of the Thames. The child does not know these are friendly aircraft:*

Fearsome low groaning  
Pathway of stars up the Thames;  
Will we be dead soon?

*Warfare is dreadfully loud:*

Thunderous crashes  
Terrified children scatter.  
Oh, where is my boy?

Noise, fear, sirens, stench  
That's this child's normality.  
What is a sunflower?

Fire sirens, loud bangs,  
Adrenalin – heart pounding.  
Never can forget.

*The innocence of children is so badly betrayed:*

My darling sister  
Sweetly smiling, innocent babe  
Asleep in her drawer.

*Wartime separations and losses can be deeply wounding for children:*

A stranger! Daddy?  
Tall dark bearded stranger? No,  
He's just a sailor.

Off to hospital –  
Scarlet fever stalks the land;  
Can't take my doggie.

Back from hospital  
Black scottie gone, bed all bare;  
My heart dies within.

*My brother was just a toddler:*

Wrenched from downy nest  
Now locked in a vast white cot;  
Damned fever germs.

M-u-m-m-y! Such wailing  
Makes the gods in heaven weep.  
Who is my family?

*The confusion and chaos gets unbearable:*

Black doom, no reprieve  
All noise, fear and dread of pain.  
How bright the night's stars!

Sirens howl, bombs scream  
Oh no, that shelter again,  
Hated concrete stench!

*With the arrival of the deadly V2s we are evacuated from our home:*

Off to the country!  
Swinging on farm gates we watch  
Soldiers throw Hersheys.

It's all so different,  
Past fields with lambs, off to school  
Down strange country lanes.

## Bridges to safety

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

Build bridges to safety  
one plank at a time;  
traverse centuries of hurt,  
to find calm, peace of mind.

The Keep-safe snug baby travel rug pattern was inspired by a 19th century Australian baby rug pattern. The colour scheme of Green, White and Violet draws on late 19th-early 20th century suffrage and global peace colours. The wool used is

two yarns knitted together of 4 ply super wash wool to make each of the (approx.) 62,000 stitches. The number of stitches is significant and helped define the final size of the rug. The Australian War Memorial approximates 62000 as the number of Australians who died during WW1. And also as the number who died from war related issues after coming home to Australia after the war. So each stitch holds together both. The verse for the rug was written with the sense of keeping safe (rather than just having a "keepsake") those little ones needing to survive conflict impacts on community.



# Secret Garden Child

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

*Verse penned on Remembrance Day 2016*

It took my life time  
to learn: our inner child  
must find – needs – safe  
kinder garden space  
for life beyond conflict.

The other Freud knew:  
Anna fled home on crystal night-  
mare eve for safety, then  
set up *kindergarten*  
living space in London.

So sad – that more don't  
learn to act with grace:  
to free and not restrain  
the post-trauma child. Yes.  
Mobile comfort blankets

help secure them in  
escape. Then we need to  
give them space to dig -  
free to tend their own  
secret garden story.



## Hidden Wounds of War

---

*Anonymous*

*The author is anonymous to protect the sensitivities of family and friends.*

My brother Jamie<sup>1</sup> died two months before his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was suicide.

He'd been born in 1942 – a bad year to start life, especially living in central London. He was such a sweet baby, two years younger than me, but luck was not on his side. With the war raging all around us, he was subjected to constant alarms, loud noise, a tense atmosphere and far too many challenges for such a little child. Our mother writes in the Family History:

*One day when the all-clear siren went off I rushed out to get provisions, pushing the two younger ones in the pram with A... holding on to the side. I wasn't halfway up the road when a doodlebug came over and a man came running out of a house, dragged us in and pushed us under the stairs. After the next all-clear sounded we continued on to the greengrocer's under the railway bridge. Suddenly there was another big rumble; I didn't know whether it was a train going overhead or a doodlebug but as we rounded the corner there was such a blast I thought that pram and everybody would be pushed into the plate glass window.*

These doodlebugs were so treacherous that our father arranged for us to be evacuated to a farm right away from London. So we all had to move out, travel for ages packed like sardines in a train, settle into new accommodation, adjust to a completely different environment and I had to go to a different school. Jamie and I had one consolation in that we would hang over the farm gate and wave to the passing US soldiers who would throw Hershey bars down for us! But even in the peacefulness of the countryside, the air raid sirens reached us and as soon as they started up Jamie and I would flee into

the house where we hid under the bed. But at least we weren't separated from our mother during this time; I forget who looked after our beloved cat, Blackie.

The many separations from mum were the worst for Jamie: at 13 months after a very long train-ride to Edinburgh, our parents handed him to very good friends of theirs to look after as they took a last walking holiday in the Scottish Highlands before our father entered the British Navy. Eight months later Jamie was billeted with a (somewhat reluctant) 82 year old family friend for a month whilst mum had a very difficult delivery of her third child, our sister. When he was nearly three years old the family was split up again. Our mother had to have complicated surgery, so baby sister went to a residential nursery while Jamie and I were taken by the Navy's social worker to a residential hostel for three weeks somewhere in Wales. I do not have one single memory of this, although I was four and a half years old, and Jamie came back home with nightmares. Then, not so long afterwards, when Jamie was three years old, both he and I went into separate wards in isolation hospital with the dreaded scarlet fever and NO contact with either parent. I came home after four weeks but Jamie stayed in having subsequently contracted chicken pox. He had been incarcerated in a cot for so many weeks that he had to learn how to walk again.

After the war things settled down somewhat and Jamie developed into our 'little funny man' – always playing tricks, making jokes, pulling faces and laughing. However this new-found security was shattered when our father's contract to a top position in British Guiana was cancelled by the US; it was the McCarthy era and he'd been a member of the Communist Party way back in the early 1930s, along with considerable numbers of the English intelligentsia. As our house had gone with the job from which he had resigned in the UK, we found ourselves homeless. Our mother was German and

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonym

the only solution was to graft ourselves on various friends and relatives of hers, all in war-torn Germany. So the family was split again, now in a foreign country with the children at the ages of eleven, nine and seven for a period of six whole months. Although this was challenging for all three of us, Jamie was the one who came out worst – emotionally he was verging on a breakdown and his hosts asked our mother to keep him with her (difficult, as she was working!)

As he grew older it became apparent that Jamie did not make friends easily. He told me that he was 15 years old when he experienced his first depression. He did very well academically, played the violin well, acted in school plays, sang in choirs, played Rugby for the school. Then he went to Oxford University's elite Balliol College where, again, he did well, rowed for his college eight and proceeded to a PhD and career in academia. But Jamie never felt happy with his achievements, nothing was ever good enough. Approaching middle-age his depressions increased, his relationships both socially and at work suffered and his own family split up when his rages became unendurable. The wider family became deeply concerned about his mental health, all his personal difficulties and low self-esteem; he had started to talk about ways to end his misery. I once took him to task with how abusive he was towards his beloved and faithful dog and his response was, *"Well, I've got to have something to kick!"*

Then came the time when I went to help him with some jobs around his house, about ten years before he died. We got talking about his fearsome rages, which he acknowledged, but didn't know what to do about them. I asked him, "Jamie, what's your worst

fear?" He paused, thought for a while, and then said, "Being abandoned .... **again!**" Having known him all his life and worried about him for the last 15 years or so, the penny dropped loudly and clearly for me with the word 'again' – he was referring to all those periods of 'abandonment' that he'd experienced in those first three years of his life. These three years are when the developing personality has to realise its own ego, the sense of self, and detach gently and gradually from its dependence on the 'primary carer', usually the mother. I had already noticed that the adult Jamie seemed inexplicably ambivalent towards our mother and our family had already realised that his emotional problems spoke of Narcissism, the condition where an individual draws on the resources of those close to them to provide those attributes that are missing in their own inner selves. It now became crystal clear to me that his personality had been damaged by those early wartime separations from his mother, which the toddler could only experience as abandonment.

One of Jamie's daughters raises the possibility that Jamie had a genetic vulnerability to mental problems, which was then compounded by his early childhood experiences and this may well have been the case. All those families that lose a member to suicide are invariably left with the all-consuming need to get an answer to the burning question, 'Why did this happen?' My own 'Why?' question has been largely answered by Jamie's "being abandoned .... **again!**" statement. Apart from that, all I can sadly say is that we lost a very gifted, interesting, lovable, knowledgeable and precious person as a result of those hidden wounds of warfare inflicted at too tender an age.

## Riverside Fun-gi

Bonnie Goodfellow

*A Poem for 3 Puff Mushrooms: No Apologia Please – Just Say "Sori"<sup>1</sup>*

Give thanks for humble fungi,  
greatest kingdom on earth!  
Which, like *sori* clusters under ferns,  
regenerate by moving, not warring.

More animal than plant-like,  
but we fail to learn their style:  
not one in twenty of their millions yet  
classified.

Before our first "great" war ended,  
Beatrix penned her animal tales.  
Yet these were not her greatest mark:  
Woodland fungi grabbed her first.

Great Linnean patriarchs barred her  
talking. And like our warring ways,  
it took them 100 years to  
apologise, put down their blinkers.

Perhaps now we can all say "sori"  
for harms done to earth;  
to each family, tribe and land:  
100 years' heedless fighting is enough.  
Better to grow through movement.



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<sup>1</sup> For those unfamiliar with various meanings of "sori": in Tok Pisin or Pidgin languages used in Melanesia it means sorry; and in botanical studies it refers to a cluster on the back of a fern frond, or a spore mass in some fungi and lichens. So, yes, this poem quite deliberately plays on the different meanings of the word *sori*.

## Vietnam split our boyhood...

---

*John Collard*

... like a thunderbolt severing rock into separate spheres

You were too eager to escape  
the cross-fire of your parents' divorce,  
the night when your father's skull  
crashed to the Beach House floor.

I called Emergency  
corralled weeping sisters in my car.

I moved in earnest spheres (as you left to serve the nation),  
dripped red paint onto campus posters,  
resisted the draft in crowded courts,  
while mothers scattered mice from handbags  
and girlfriends sang of peace.  
I even played Miss Napalm before unsuspecting shoppers.

Yet we both survived the war:  
you too squeamish for combat,  
deployed to an orphanage  
where you fell in love with children  
you had to abandon.

I graduated into progressive marriage,  
wrote theses about violent dispossession,  
fathered children  
and sprinkled pacifist genes  
on every bedtime tale.

Somehow things were never quite the same again  
as I surfed the waves of radical chic  
you meandered through toxic love affairs  
then disappeared from my rear-view mirror.

You found me again quite recently  
but it is hard to glue splintered pasts together:  
my righteousness is too entrenched,  
your pain too palpable.

And now, decades later,  
you are on the combat trail again  
against homelessness, and the dispossessed,  
diabetes and depression amongst rural men.

Suddenly we are together again like those boys in the history class  
alarmed by past atrocities,  
dreaming up better worlds  
and wondering how we still connect.

## Secret Rainbow Serpents Gathering

---

*Bonnie Goodfellow*

*A verse from Remembrance Day 2016, for watching arm-clad militaries march*

For 60,000 years...  
before this century of warring;  
before the war that ended peace;  
and generated Barker's sad trilogy:  
Rainbows and serpents helped  
Aboriginal Australia survive,  
find waterholes  
and quench deep thirst.  
...Now we must learn from them:  
safe movement across lands;  
safe sharing of water and story,  
for life beyond borders, to survive.

Hand knit rainbow serpents gathered around an open page of author Sally Morgan's "The Last Dance" was a show stopper and conversation starter at Peace Works community and library events.



# Manfred's Story





**Five storey bunker in Bremen**

*At the time the picture was taken Manfred, his brother Günther and his grandmother would have been inside – after three days on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor they came out to the devastation of all the city's buildings.*

*File: Bremen, Royal Air Force Bomber Command, 1942-1945 CL3259.jpg*

# Manfred's Story

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*Manfred Schulmeister*

I, Manfred Schulmeister, was born on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1937 in Bremen, North West Germany. In 1939, the Second World War started. In 1940, my mother Elly Henriette Schulmeister and my father Anton Karl Schulmeister had another son, Günther Karl. Soon thereafter, my father was called up to fight in North Africa, while my mother was called to the north of Germany for duty on the telephones in the war.

My brother and I were living with our grandparents, Anna and August Rueckbrodt in the Hemmstraße in Bremen. The war, as always, was doing plenty of harm to the fighting men on each side, but also to the ordinary people and children on both sides, as we all know by now.

For many years, we all had to sleep in our overcoats to be ready to get into nearby bunkers when the sirens started; to let us know that we needed to get underground until the air raids were over. Many times we came out to see some houses destroyed and burning. For us kids, it became normal to be woken up in the middle of the night to find shelter across the road.

I do remember the day very clearly when a German soldier came to our door. (I was about 20 metres away.) I could see on their faces that it was not good news. I knew somehow that my father had been killed in the war. I was able to find out just a few years ago, while in Australia with the aid of a computer and the internet, that he was wounded in Africa and died on a hospital ship on the way to Italy. His grave site is in Bari, on the eastern side of Italy.

We never had the chance to go to kindergarten. It was not easy for people in those war years to do much besides waiting for the bombs to fall around us, while at the same time the young men and women on both sides gave their lives for their countries.

In 1943, I was ready to start my schooling in Bremen, but just then the bombs partly destroyed the school buildings. There were two schools, with

a playground in between them. Now I had to wait another year before I could start my schooling.

I remember how in 1944, the sirens went off again in the dark of night, but this time the whole sky was lit up with floating lights as markers for the bombers to drop their loads over us. I have only recently found out that this was done with lights hanging on slow release balloons, according to an ABC television documentary.

This was the time when my grandfather told us not to go into the bunker across the road, but into a five-storey one about a mile away from our home near the Hemmstraße. My grandmother, Günther and I finally got to this bunker and found a seat each on the third storey.

We were in this place for three days and two nights – three days of being bombed. Phosphorus bombs about 16 inches long and two inches wide were dropped on us, burning the outside of the bunker. Large conventional bombs were also dropped all over our lovely city and on our bunker. Some people were killed in the top (fifth) storey of the bunker, as the cement ceiling fell on them. How lucky we were to get through all that, thanks to my grandfather's foresight. But where was he?

At last, after three days of the bombing of Bremen, it finally was over. Slowly all the people made their way out of this hellhole, only to see the damage outside. Everything was destroyed. I don't want to go into it in detail, as it was not a pretty sight, with bodies here and there.

The three of us left our bunker to find our way back to our street – it was about a mile or so to walk. We walked past apartment buildings and homes which were destroyed and most still burning; some were about to collapse. We had to get back to our home in Hemmstraße.

As we came closer, we heard people say that the whole city had been wiped out, including our street. Yes, there was no home left – like so many others, it was flat to the ground. All that we had left was what we were wearing, with the exception of a block of

land with a small hut in 31 Meyersweg, in Bremen Walle near the Autobahn.

At this time, we were again thinking about our grandfather. Just on the end of our street there was a vacant space next to the main road, where they had put the dead in rows for identification. There would have been 800 or 900 people – maybe more – men, women and children.

My grandmother, Günther and I started to walk along these rows of bodies, searching for my Opa, but a policeman told off my Oma for taking kids through there. He made us stand to the side so my grandma had to look for my grandpa on her own (what a sick joke). We kids were still amongst all those dead bodies. Anyway, she did not find him there.

As we left the scene, we came across a lady and asked her if she had seen our grandpa. “Yes, I believe he spent his time near the Autobahn”, she told us. He knew somehow that they would not bomb the Autobahn, as they might need it for themselves in future. We walked a few miles to our little block and found him there at last. The block itself was only about a kilometre from the nearest point of the Autobahn. What a relief – he was alive!

After a few days, we went back to the ruins of our house to clean the mortar off the bricks and stack them up. Other people who had lost their homes did the same. We then used a small cart to take those bricks to our block at Meyersweg 31. It was a good few kilometres to walk. My grandpa built our home there, where we lived until Günther and I moved to Australia in 1954.

The war was still going on for a few more weeks. I remember that the bombs were dropping all around us. The first thing we were taught was to get down low. On one occasion, I did this right next to a brush fence. Just above my head I heard a noise. A fragment of shrapnel came flying an inch above my head (through the brush) and buried itself 15 feet

away on the other side of the dirt track from where I was. I dug this nine inch long and two inch wide piece of hot silver shrapnel out of the ground. I cannot remember what I did with it. That was one of many close calls for me, but I was lucky enough to survive it.

Bombs were landing even on some farms and killing cattle. Some people went with their little trolleys to collect the meat from those smashed up animals.

What a strange feeling it was for me when an aircraft came flying over us without dropping bombs. Even then, I was still doubtful and in two minds about whether to seek shelter.

In 1945, the war was finally over and life started to be normal and peaceful. It is sad that after all these wars, we humans have still not learned anything. It is still going on all over the world, and always will. These days we don't even know who the enemy is.

Günther and I were called to go to Australia in 1954. It was a sad day when we left Meyersweg 31. I can still see my Oma, who walked us to the front gate – I could see the sadness in her eyes, as only she would have known that she would never see us again. Many years later, I can still see her and understand what it really meant to her.

My Auntie Hertha and my grandpa walked us to the train station in Bremen to go to Bremerhaven. To my surprise, my grandfather suddenly stopped in his tracks about a block from the ship. There he was – a hard man who had gone through so much – in tears, but not wanting us to see him like that. But I did see him like that for the first time.

My auntie took us to the ship (SS Seven Seas) and fixed up some papers. That was the end of our lives in Germany.

The full, unedited version of Manfred's story is available from the Peace Works! website at: <http://www.peaceworks.org.au/>

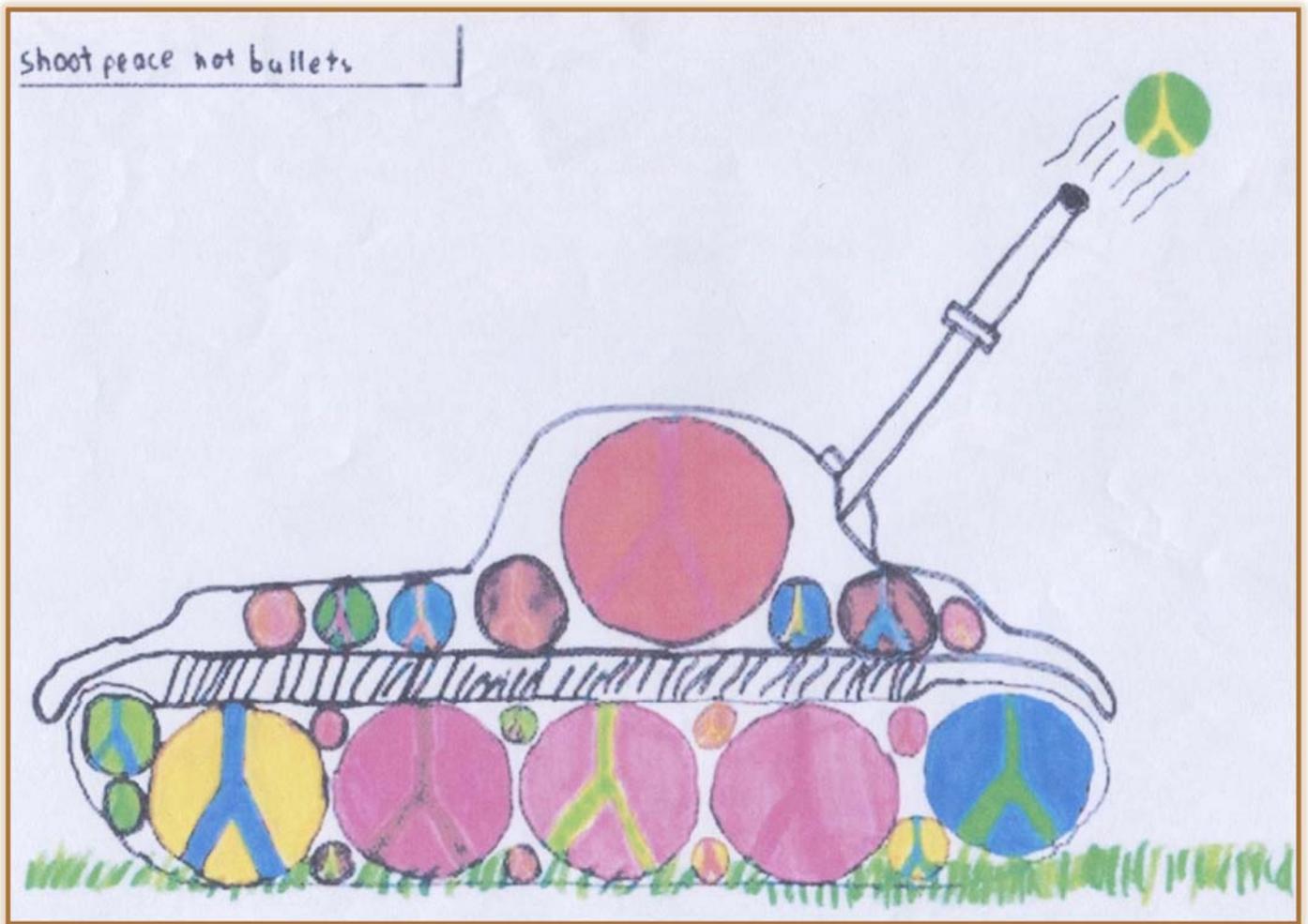
# Commentary

Thoughts and opinions



# Shoot peace not bullets

*From Words for Peace by Ari and Antoine, 11 years old*



## A nation of “shirkers, quitters and losers”?

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*Peter Maywald*

*A reflection written on Anzac Day, 2014*

This week in 2014, many Australians have joined in Anzac Day events, the purpose of which is said to have been to remember the sacrifice of our soldiers killed in war. Some of those who attended the dawn services, marches, barbecues, footy matches and two-up games might even have believed this to be true. But the conscious and sinister purpose behind Anzac Day has been unwittingly revealed in the recent plethora of publicity from government, media and corporate sources.

For the past few weeks, the inappropriately named government body which celebrates war, the Australian War Memorial (AWM), has been running television and YouTube advertisements featuring a handsome young soldier and Victoria Cross recipient telling us that our “national values” were forged on the battlefields of the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915. If a pharmaceutical manufacturer or fast food company was to spread such misinformation, it would rightly be prosecuted for misleading the public. Instead, taxpayers are bearing the cost of expensive advertising to allow powerful vested interests to put false words into the mouth of a young man who fought with distinction in the nation’s armed forces.

If we were to accept that our national values were actually forged in the military disaster of Gallipoli, we would indeed be a sick and sorry country described by Guy Rundle as comprising “shirkers, quitters and losers” (Rundle, 2014). Nothing of any substance or positive value to Australia was achieved through the pointless deaths of 8,000 of our soldiers in the defeat which we suffered in the doomed invasion of Turkey – a nation with which we as a country really had no quarrel. Even if the bizarre campaign had by some miracle succeeded in its objectives, the only possible benefit to our nation could have been to show that it was a loyal ally of a huge and greedy colonial power which was fighting to maintain the ability of its capitalists to exploit the resources of a vast subservient empire.

Of course, the official AWM version sees this very differently:

*“When war broke out in 1914, Australia had been a federal commonwealth for only 13 years. The new national government was eager to establish its reputation among the nations of the world. In 1915 Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the allied expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the allied navies. The ultimate objective was to capture Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, an ally of Germany.*

*What had been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months. At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated, after both sides had suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. Over 8,000 Australian soldiers had been killed. News of the landing on Gallipoli had made a profound impact on Australians at home, and 25 April soon became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who had died in the war.*

*Although the Gallipoli campaign failed in its military objectives, the Australian and New Zealand actions during the campaign left us all a powerful legacy. The creation of what became known as the “Anzac legend” became an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping the ways they viewed both their past and their future.” (Australian War Memorial, n.d.)*

Much of this is nonsense. The Great War didn’t just “break out” – it was a deliberate declaration of hostilities between competing colonial empires, to which Gallipoli was largely irrelevant. Journalist Guy Rundle summarised it as follows: *“The idea that World War I was some sort of crusade against*

*German militarism has gained great currency lately. The more reasonable argument would be that Germany was trying to dominate Europe, while the British Empire was trying to encircle them and choke them off, in alliance with France and Russia. But even if you gave some credence to the anti-German argument, the decision to attack the Ottoman Empire has not a jot of moral character.”* (Rundle, 2014)

According to the AWM, the ANZAC forces were “evacuated” from Gallipoli, when in fact they retreated in defeat. We remain one of the few nations in the world to celebrate a humiliating military defeat as our national day, marching, praying and drinking to excess, purportedly in memory of those said to have “given their lives for our country.”

While we owe the legend of the heroic bronzed ANZACs largely to a historian (Charles Bean) – who created the myth that these men established the essential values of our national character – more recent historians from Bill Gammage<sup>1</sup> to Joan Beaumont<sup>2</sup> have undertaken painstaking research which shows this to be totally untrue. As well, numerous other scholars have shown that there was a coherent set of national values which long predated 1915. Australian literature, journalism and art from the 1880s onwards reveals the widespread acceptance of values such mateship, solidarity, egalitarianism, support for the underprivileged, independence, suspicion of authority and pure larrikinism which predated the establishment of the Commonwealth.

Some of these values might have been displayed by the troops at Gallipoli, but they certainly did not originate there. In fact, some much less desirable qualities became evident among the hapless Aussie soldiers trapped on a narrow stretch of barren land between the Turkish guns and the sea. Our brave

heroic boys were despised by many other allied troops for their high rates of desertion and refusal to obey orders (although perhaps these might have been understandable and even laudable qualities given the senseless nature of the conflict).<sup>3</sup>

By the time of their shambolic retreat, few in the front line believed that the conflict with Turkey had anything to do with the defence of their motherland – unless of course they were convinced by the propaganda that they were fighting for “king and country” – that is, someone else’s king and someone else’s country.

“Our brave boys” also earned some dubious reputations for their behaviour away from the front lines. Australian troops had the highest rates of syphilis of any of the allies – said to be contracted by enlisted men in brothels but transmitted to officers from contact with toilet seats!<sup>4</sup> They were also noted for cruel and demeaning treatment of local ethnic communities (Rundle, 2014).

Rundle provides a telling summary of the senseless nature of the ‘Great War’ and the cruel falsity of the ANZAC legend:

*“As World War I has receded in the visceral memory, so too has the mammoth slaughter at the centre of it. The phalanx of right-wing pundits who want to argue for a kernel of moral sense at the heart of the war have to simply remove the idea that the event, at its bloody core, was not simply a giant crime against humanity, whose participants could have made different, less lethal decisions along the way.*

*Central to that conception is the idea that men, our men, were noble and died stoically, laconically -- that they saw a sense in their own deaths. We can be pretty sure that the former was not true -- much of the Australian*

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example *The Broken Years* (Gammage, 1974)

<sup>2</sup> See her most recent work: *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Beaumont, 2013)

<sup>3</sup> See Australian War Memorial – *Tommy: Australian soldiers' relations with the British* (Australian War Memorial, n.d.)

<sup>4</sup> Numerous sources. See, for example (Debney-Joyce, 2015): “...by the middle of 1916, the infection rate amongst Australians was 178.8 per thousand, six times the incidence amongst British troops”; and (Dunbar, 2014): “‘Soldiers’ Diseases’ were the dark side of the Anzac legend. Fear of drunken diggers infecting Australian homes with the ‘red plague’ drove six o’clock closing of pubs and stigmatised returned men for decades. Within the army, venereal diseases weakened the force and drained medical resources.”

*forces' reputation for "larrikinism" was really gained from their appalling treatment of local Arab populations, unquestionably a transfer of anti-Aboriginal racism. And we can be reasonably sure, from every record of violent combat, that they died as men often die, shitting their pants and crying for their mothers." (Rundle, 2014)*

For centuries, despotic rulers, titled monarchs and arms manufacturers have manipulated ordinary citizens into marching off to slaughter citizens of other states in the name of patriotism and heroism. They have built up national myths to protect their

positions of power, wealth and influence, sacrificing whole generations of young people in brutal conflicts portrayed as glorious and heroic.

Few of the rich and powerful have been killed in the frontlines compared with the millions of ordinary soldiers, persuaded that they are fighting for their families and the survival of their motherlands. The true values of nations are not shaped in such vicious and senseless conflicts, any more than Australia can trace its national character to the Gallipoli disaster – unless we are prepared to accept ourselves as a nation of “quitters, shirkers and losers.”

## The Guardian Weekly – an Article and a Response

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Annie Didcott

The Guardian Weekly of 1 – 7 August of 2014, on its back page, carried an article by Santanu Das with the heading:

*‘Eurocentric views of the first world war ignore the millions of people around the globe – Asians, Africans and Pacific islanders – who fought on the same side.’*

I was immediately struck by the absence of any mention of the Indigenous Australians who had also ‘fought on the same side’ and decided to consult with the Australian War Memorial for some hard facts. From the material that they had to hand, I was able to respond to Das’ article and The Guardian Weekly of 22 – 28 August 2014 printed my letter as the very first letter on their ‘Reply’ page:

### **Forgotten war veterans**

*I read with interest Santanu Das’s article (1 August) about the first world war and was disturbed by a significant omission in his account. He needed to continue south from India until he reached the continent of Australia and include in his discussion all those Aboriginal men who served in the conflict.*

*A 1901 estimate indicates that there had been almost 100,000 Indigenous Australians living in this country. It is known that of these, about 1,000 served during the first world war and just over 100 were either killed in action or died of wounds or disease. It should be acknowledged that officially they were not allowed to enlist, it being considered that they could cause irritation to the white men with whom they will serve. Those who were successfully recruited had needed to resort to such tactics as hiding their Aboriginality, claiming foreign nationality or by travelling hundreds of kilometres to find a recruiting centre that would accept them.*

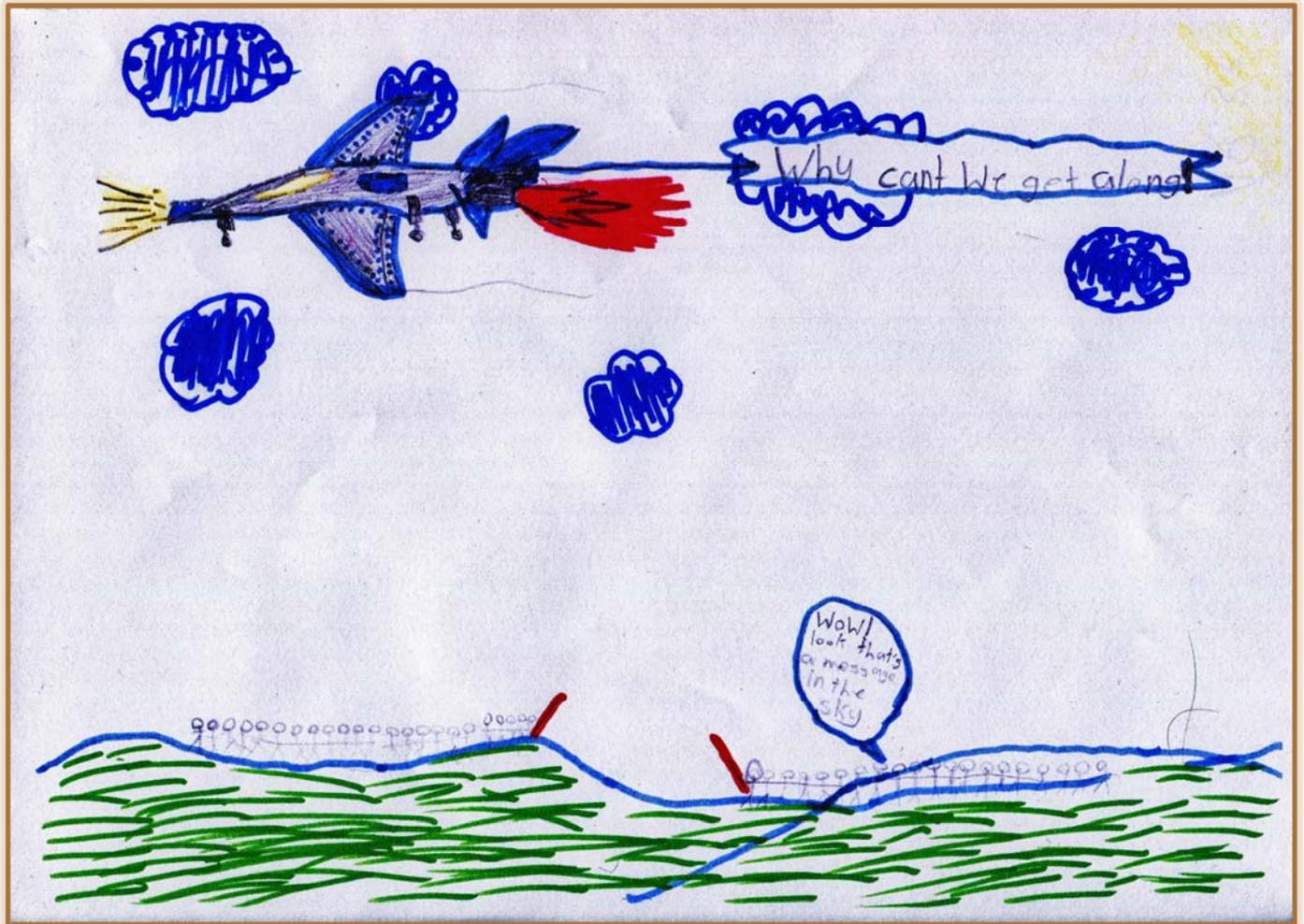
*The Australian War Memorial is working hard to compile a more accurate account of the war history of Indigenous Australians, a task made very difficult because of the rubbery nature of early 20th-century records. This would have been largely due to the prevailing attitudes of the day, which regarded Aborigines as a lesser race. Indeed, there are stories coming to light of some extraordinary feats of valour by these black first world war soldiers that have never been acknowledged.*

*A former prime minister of Australia offered a very moving and articulate apology to the Indigenous peoples, but sadly there is still a very long way to go before there can be reconciliation in this country.*

Annie Didcott  
Canberra, Australia

## A message in the sky

*From Words for Peace by Blake, 9 years old*



*"Why can't we get along!"*

*"WOW! look that's a message in the sky"*

## Lest we remember

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*Peter Maywald*

*An ANZAC Day reflection, 2012*



Around 500 years before the birth of Christ, the Greek dramatist Aeschylus wrote *“in war, truth is the first casualty”*, a phrase which has become accepted as a truism down the centuries since. In 2012 as Australians commemorated Anzac Day, I reflected that perhaps it is in the *aftermath* of war that truth suffers most – possibly because “history is written by the victors” (another truism of unknown origin, although it has been attributed to Pliny the Elder, Napoleon Bonaparte and Winston Churchill, among others).

As we approach the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, for perhaps the first time since the 1970s, there has been a flood of new books, research papers and documentaries challenging almost every aspect of the myth of the heroic Aussie diggers, fighting fiercely but within the accepted rules of war and always showing respect for the enemy.

Among the many recent publications challenging the myth of the brave bronzed Anzac are *ANZAC’s Dirty Dozen: 12 Myths of Australian Military History* (Stockings, 2012) and *Witnesses to War: The History of Australian Conflict Reporting* (Anderson & Trembath, 2011).

ABC Radio’s conservative commentary program *Counterpoint* aired a three-part series (Vanstone, 2015) which documented some very grave actions by Australian troops in the two world wars. The

books and radio documentaries refute the claim by General John Monash after the First World War that our troops had been “sportsmen who had never mistreated enemy prisoners”, by providing detailed evidence of situations in which enemy prisoners were killed or tortured after they had surrendered on the Western Front.

They also documented many instances from the Second World War which included bayonetting of prisoners tied to trees at Milne Bay, Charles Lindbergh’s description of Aussies throwing live prisoners from aeroplanes in the Pacific and the aerial machine gunning over several days of hundreds of civilian and military Japanese survivors of torpedoed vessels in the Bismarck Sea as they clung to debris. (Vanstone, 2015)

These instances should not be used to malign all of our armed forces, most of whom fought with bravery and behaved appropriately. But they do challenge the myth that somehow we were of greater moral virtue than other participants in the carnage of battle, and always stood aside from the acts of personal or collective brutality which are the universal hallmark of war.

Maybe it says something about our collective national mindset that we regard Breaker Morant, who openly shot prisoners during the Boer War, as a national icon. By contrast, the British are far more reserved in their view of T E Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) and his controversial “no prisoners” strategy in the desert campaigns.

Another myth coming under increasing challenge as we approach the centenary of the Anzac landings is about nationhood. For many years, we have been told by our leaders and media commentators in the build-up to Anzac Day that our nation was forged on the beaches of Gallipoli when our boys fought heroically against great odds, establishing a military legend that has become the very core of our national public values.

This overlooks many relevant factors, including that the entire campaign was a fiasco which

resulted in a crushing defeat with horrific loss of life on all sides. In celebrating this disaster as a defining moment in Australian history, we also tend to ignore that there were many more British and French soldiers involved in the allied invasion, not to mention the significant numbers of Senegalese and Kiwi infantry.

Our national history of this unmitigated disaster has remarkably been written by us as the losers, not as victors. But while we lost the battle, the coalition of which we were a part won the “Great War”, and for almost a century we have built up a collection of myths and legends about the first major campaign of the conflict in which we played a part.

It is interesting that Gallipoli has become our equivalent of Mecca, with so many young Aussies making a pilgrimage there each April. It is estimated that in the past decade, around 50,000 Australians have made this trip. In the same period, more than four million Turkish nationals have visited the site, to commemorate their dead and to celebrate the decisive turning point in their national history marked by the great victory over the invading imperial powers. Turkish historians regard this event as the effective end of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the War of Independence, which finally resulted some eight years later in the establishment of the modern republic of Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

When you visit our National Capital, you will find that the memorial on Anzac Parade closest to the National War Museum is not in memory of our brave soldiers, sailors, airmen or nurses, but to Atatürk – an officer who commanded enemy troops against us in 1915!

No doubt much of the record of conflagration, suffering, sacrifice and heroism at Gallipoli is accurate, and we rightly remember those who gave

their lives in the service of our nation. But now many military leaders, researchers, historians and descendants of the diggers are asking whether the terrible losses were largely in vain.

Perhaps the retrospective questioning of the worth of the Gallipoli campaign has been heightened this year because of growing Australian unrest and frustration at our 10-year involvement in the “unwinnable” war in Afghanistan. In recent times, very senior military and political leaders have publicly stated that it was never in our national interest to be involved in Afghanistan, and that the expressed goals of our involvement cannot be achieved. In short, they say that we have lost that war, the deaths of some 42 diggers have been in vain and we should withdraw as quickly as possible.

On this topic, respected independent Australian commentator Professor Hugh White wrote: “...it seems very unlikely that the lasting achievements of our military operation in recent years will justify the costs, especially the cost in lives. The mission will have failed to achieve its strategic objectives, and the decision to commit Australian forces to the operation must be accounted a costly failure of strategic policy. We should be asking some searching questions about how precisely that happened.” (White, 2011)

It is appropriate that we should honour the sacrifices of brave fighting women and men and the losses endured by their loved ones each Anzac Day. But perhaps we should also remember that our nation was not forged in the savagery of war but in the coming together of people of goodwill with a vision for a safe, prosperous and egalitarian nation which could demonstrate to the world a peaceful formula for people to live in harmony and comfort. Lest we remember only the Anzac myths, let’s also remember this vision of the founders of our nation.

# The Concert that made me cry

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Annie Didcott

It was a good few years ago that I treated myself to a gold pass for the Canberra International Music Festival and, taking some leave from work, prepared for a glorious feast of beautiful music.

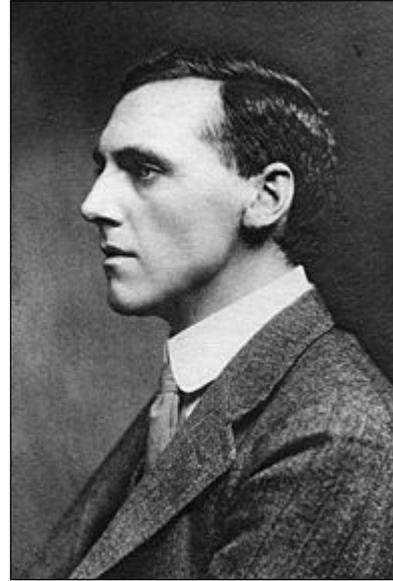
One of the concerts was held in the foyer of the National Museum and it was billed as featuring Gallipoli in some way that I don't recall. However there is no forgetting the impact that one of the items had on me. The piece was announced as being an unfinished piano sonata, as the composer had been killed in action and the manuscript had been found among his belongings after he was brought away from the carnage all around.

The music had me spellbound, it was so incredibly beautiful and I was entranced by it. Then it suddenly went no further and I came back down to earth with a thump! Of course – this was the point at which this man had been slaughtered! It was very evident that the piece was incomplete and my initial reaction was one of being deprived. Then the tears came.....

Here I was feeling deprived, when this lovely, lovely man had been killed!! He must have been a lovely man to have written such sublime music.

The tears continued as I grieved for his loss, grieved for all of those lost around him, grieved for his family and his friends, grieved for all the music he must still have had in him and grieved for us all for the hellish waste, the fiendish trauma, all the hatred and violence, the pointlessness... OF ALL WARS!!

Maybe my reaction was the result of having lived all through WW2 in Central London. The German psychoanalyst Professor Michael Erman was interviewed by Der Spiegel in 2009 about the long-term effects of being born into war. This article bears the title 'Der Körper vergisst Nicht', which means 'the body does not forget', and I can vouch that this is so very true. My childhood was nothing but fear, anxiety, noises of a hundred kinds, smells, absence of one or both parents, to the point where at the age of four I didn't realise that this tall strange man in a sailor suit coming into our sitting room



**Frederick Septimus Kelly**

was my father, removal from home [we were evacuated to the countryside for a short while in 1944-5], isolated in hospital with the dreaded scarlet fever, changes of school and numerous other disturbances. At 77 years of age I can still remember so much of the detail and to this day get uncontrollable adrenalin rushes at sudden noises, sirens, low-flying aircraft.

Getting back to the composer, I researched his story for this item for Peace Works! He was called Frederick Septimus Kelly, born 29 May 1881 and died 13 November 1916, and was an Australian and British musician and composer. He was educated at Eton [a very elite British Public School] and Balliol College, Oxford, where as it happens both my father and my brother obtained their degrees – what a coincidence!

There is a great deal of information on the Internet about Kelly – and other composers who died in WW1. I plan to investigate his story further and hopefully acquire a copy of his beautiful and unfinished Piano Sonata in F minor and maybe sit

and weep again for the fruitlessness that is all warfare.

**Postscript:** some time after I had drafted this for consideration by the committee organising the book *Peace Works!*, I happened to hear a programme on Radio National Music Show on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2016 entitled 'Flowers of War'. This

is an undertaking by Chris Latham who is researching the contribution and terrible loss of so many musicians during WW1 and introducing us to the very fine music that he has been able to uncover. For those who are interested, it would be worth seeking out this programme to discover more on this sad topic.

## Reflections on Seeing *Black Diggers*

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Colin Keith

*I am three, standing in the clothing section of Myers. Mum is behind me, but I look around and she isn't there. I see coats and scarves. I see pullovers and cardigans. I see hats and umbrellas. No Mum. My tummy feels empty. I don't know this shop. I don't know where I am. I don't know which way to go. Where would Mummy go?*

I think this is as close as I can come to understanding some of the feeling of separation endured by so many affected by conflict—victims, participants, families, friends and communities. The play *Black Diggers*<sup>1</sup> was written to bring to the stage an understanding of the contribution of Indigenous Australians to World War I, but brought to me a deeper understanding of the nature of humanity and society, through a number of themes. It also gave me new perspectives on Australian society and our history.

Starting from the first scene in which a group of settlers is hunting Aborigines, *Black Diggers* shows us the diversity of people's views and behaviours. It invites us to look at the impacts of conflict from new perspectives and provokes thinking about the impacts of all our conflicts. Conflict creates isolation of its victims, both civilian and military, in many forms. Although the focus in *Black Diggers* is a story about Indigenous Australians who participated in WWI, the story is part of a continuum of isolation created through conflict that affects our society still.

We are all individuals

A key theme of *Black Diggers* is that the Indigenous experience has been very varied. In the first scene settlers have hunted and killed an Aboriginal family, but are debating what to do

with a picaninny. Other settlers recognise Aborigines as people and take the picaninny into their home.

In the act of the play that describes the recruitment of Indigenous people into the army, many recruiting officers take the official position that Aborigines are not citizens and therefore cannot be recruited. Others take the position that the army needs all the people they can get and bend the rules about being "substantially European" to enlist Indigenous people who are willing.

During transit to the theatre of war, some European diggers are offended by the presence of Aboriginals, while others step in to defend their place.

On return home, many people mistreat Indigenous veterans as they do the rest of the Aboriginal population. Some people, particularly the other Anzac veterans, treat the Indigenous veterans as peers.

When we are reflecting on our history and seeking to redress the inequities of the past we must recognise that there is not one story, but many. We should refrain from using labels for people, but recognise their behaviour. Australia is not racist, but there are Australians who express racist views.

People need to be connected

As humans we naturally form connections. Connections give us an understanding of self and place. Connections give us support and confidence. We connect to our family, our friends, our social groups, our culture, our locality, our nation, our race and our humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Black Diggers* is a play by Tom Wright written to place on the public record the forgotten stories of Indigenous Australians.

*Black Diggers* is a story of connections broken and new connections made. The picaninny is separated from its family through murder, but connected to a new family through adoption. Indigenous people are separated from their land and their culture. Indigenous youth can see that their parents are disconnected and seek new connections.

Both Indigenous and migrant Australian soldiers are soon disconnected from land, family and society. Through the experiences of war they are also disconnected from culture, humanity and sanity. Both Indigenous and migrant Australian soldiers become connected through their shared experiences and through a common sense of being disconnected.

When the veterans return home they no longer have their old place in family and society. They are unable to communicate. This lead me to reflect on another production, *The Long Way Home*<sup>1</sup>, where I can see many possible reasons for disconnection:

You can't inflict the anguish of your  
memories on those you loved,  
You can't describe the indescribable,  
You aren't permitted to divulge secrets,  
You can't betray the confidence of shared  
dark memories.

They can't understand.  
You are blind with pain.  
They can't understand.  
You can't sleep.  
They can't understand.  
You are alone, in the midst of those you  
loved.

When they returned home, many veterans are treated with disdain. Veterans are given allotments in Soldier Settlements. Bank clerks

find themselves gifted with barren ground that leads ultimately to failure and despair. Veterans become separated from society, country, family and love.

Through their experience of disconnection, maybe our veterans can understand the plight of Indigenous people better than most of us?

One hundred years past

*Black Diggers* reminds us that Australia's history of conflict takes us back beyond the hundred years of Anzac and takes us through the post war years. Since World War I Australia has had involvement in many conflicts, from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq to Afghanistan. Although many things have changed, many things are still the same.

Indigenous people are now citizens, but still experience a diverse range of attitudes. Government recognises Indigenous culture through welcome to country and acknowledgement of country protocols, but there is still disconnection of people from land and culture.

Veterans still experience isolation and a lack of understanding. From settlement days through world wars, Korea, Vietnam to Afghanistan, soldiers take the long way home.

One hundred years hence

Will there be another "Black Diggers" in 2115 to commemorate 200 years of Anzac? Will the audience in 100 years' time be wondering how we can resolve the conflict of cultures? Will plays still be telling the stories of people separated, isolated and in need?

What decisions will each of us make to create a history in 100 years' time different from the history of today?

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<sup>1</sup> *The Long Way Home* is a play by Daniel Keene that tells the stories of today's veterans returning home and continues to find that veterans have challenges reconnecting with the lives they had before.



# When Hope and History Rhyme



The Sisterhood of International Peace Committee, 1915, State Library of Victoria

# When Hope and History Rhyme

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*Glenda Cloughley*

## History Becomes *A Passion for Peace*

The idea of turning the historical records of the only international peace conference of the First World War into a full-scale choral drama arrived when I saw they were criss-crossed by the same paths of transforming emotion that run through all the myths of regeneration.

In early 2013, when I began reading the archive, I only imagined setting the first of the 20 conference resolutions to music. Its 'protest against the madness and horror of war' was silent in the Australian Government's plans for commemorating Gallipoli. In A Chorus of Women meetings we considered Canberra places where we might sing the piece as the centennial Anzac Day approached. We talked about publicity opportunities we could develop from the coincidence in April 1915 of the peace conference and the Anzacs' first days at Gallipoli.

A Chorus of Women knew the power of good timing from our first song in Parliament House on 18 March 2003, when 150 Canberra women became a national media event by singing a lament for the people of Iraq while the Prime Minister announced Australia was going to war.<sup>1</sup>

By mid-2013, the Chorus women were enthralled by the extraordinary story the research was uncovering. I was wondering if the peace conference was a modern epiphany of the death-and-renewal regeneration rhythms that drive the dominant mythic narratives and symbolic patterns of indigenous cultures, including Europe's.

Song-cycle shapes seemed to circle through many of the conference documents. Mapping them showed that through the sharing of sorrow and intelligent, peaceable reflection, people's remorse about the

state of the world could turn from fixity in fear and grief towards the longing, dreaming and hope that tend to bring forth something new. I recognised the creative potency of that course of emergent emotion from the way the ancient social role of a citizens chorus had come alive in us Canberra women in our first decade of commenting on events and issues. We were proof – to ourselves, at least – that the love songs of empathic sorrow could be more fertile than the angry roar of protest. And so the feeling grew that we had discovered the potential to place a substantial counterweight of harmony on the grim scales of history.

Nicknamed 'the forgotten congress', the 1915 peace conference was ignored by the military historians who told the official story of human experience during the war. The 1300 mostly unenfranchised women from 12 warring and neutral nations who attended it were not interesting to writers of reports and books whose subjects were men, war and nationalism. Neither were the Australian and New Zealand members of the well-organised worldwide web of women that the Congress sprang from.

While young soldiers like my 20-year-old New Zealand grandfather were being 'blooded' at Gallipoli, the 1915 International Congress of Women in The Hague set a 100-year agenda for European unity and international peace, law and human rights. Its resolutions ranged from protest about 'the reckless sacrifice of human life' and 'the horrible violation of women which attends all wars' to recognition that the 'common ideals' of the mass of the people in each country at war were 'a basis upon which to build a magnanimous and honourable peace'. The congress proposed that women should be granted equal political rights with men, and that no people should be refused

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<sup>1</sup> I initiated the 'Lament' and wrote words. Judith Clingan AM composed the music. A recording in a 2004 concert in the Hall of Memories of the Australian War Memorial (arr. Judith Clingan) is at <http://www.chorusofwomen.org/sound files/Lament.mp3>



autonomy and a democratic parliament. They made the first proposal for an International Court of Justice and other institutions to further the international co-operation that would base permanent peace on principles of justice. They demanded a peace settlement that did not recognise the right of conquest, or the transfer of any territory without the consent of men and women in it. Advocating universal disarmament, they proposed that secret treaties should be outlawed, and that all countries should agree to take over the manufacture and international traffic of arms and munitions of war. Perhaps most telling of their understanding about ways to engender and sustain cultures of peace through generations to

come, they passed a radical resolution urging 'the necessity of so directing the education of children that their thoughts and desires may be directed towards the ideal of constructive peace'.<sup>1</sup>

By the time the Anzacs were evacuated away from the graves of 11,488 of their comrades in December 1915, envoys of the Congress had met with more world leaders than anyone else saw in the four years of the war. Their report notes that they presented the resolutions and 'the definite method of a conference of neutral nations as an agency of continuous mediation for the settlement of the war' to the governments in 14 capitals.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the Congress Resolutions adopted 1 May 1915. *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and its Results* (Addams, et al., 2003, pp. 72-77), originally published 1915 by Macmillan, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Berlin, Berne, Budapest, Christiania [Oslo], Copenhagen, The Hague, Havre (Belgian Government), London, Paris, Petrograd, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna and Washington. 'We were received by the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of the Powers, by the King of Norway, by the Presidents of Switzerland and of the United States, by the Pope and the Cardinal Secretary of State,' the report states. 'In many capitals more than one audience was given, not merely to present our resolutions, but for a thorough discussion. In addition to the 35 governmental visits we met--everywhere--members of parliament and other leaders of public opinion.' (Addams, et al., 2003, p. 78)

After these diplomatic missions, work towards establishing a framework for permanent peace continued through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) – now the oldest international women's organization in the world. In 1919, WILPF's voice was the first to warn that harsh reparations imposed upon Germany would lead to another war. In 1920, several of the 1915 Congress resolutions became a basis for founding principles of the League of Nations, forerunner of the United Nations. Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, leaders of the Congress and WILPF, were awarded Nobel Peace Prizes.

Although there were many robustly debated differences between the remarkable women who led the 1915 Congress, they shared a visionary ethical philosophy which underpinned all their actions. After finding the essence of this articulated in several speeches and writings by Jane Addams<sup>1</sup> I set the words to music for her voice with a Women's Chorus.

Peace is the Nurture of Life

Peace is not merely an absence of war

Peace is the nurture of human life

Yes, peace is the nurture of Life!

As my research broadened, a sense of excitement about its current relevance grew within A Chorus of Women. The feeling strengthened when we discovered that the wonderful story was virtually unknown to the politicians, historians, diplomats, feminist cultural analysts, international lawyers and even pacifists we began telling it to.

I was deeply moved by the realisation that the well-ordered, accessible Congress archives and many thoughtful reflections and memoirs of individual women were the contents of a valuable will. To read this bequest was to know that in 1915 the Congress leaders had set out to resource people like us. They had consciously acted for posterity, determining to preserve and pass on the wisdom they had garnered.

I also began to see that their actions provided a marvellously coherent 100-year-old exemplar of

global citizen action, and key elements of a method for turning a tragically stuck round in the cycles of human life from death to renewal.

I kept remembering a verse of Seamus Heaney, another Nobel Laureate:

*History says, don't hope  
On this side of the grave.  
But then, once in a lifetime  
The longed-for tidal wave  
Of justice can rise up,  
And hope and history rhyme. (Heaney, 1991)*

We Chorus women often talked about the possibility of a system-changing, people-powered wave like that. But while we dreamed hopeful, regenerative movements, Australian prime ministers and government publicists were deliberately, and very expensively, constructing another kind of myth.

Theirs is the story that young Australian men were somehow shaping a heroic national identity for us all as they were killed or had their physical and mental health blasted away in the battlefields of Turkey and Europe. I knew the present intergenerational consequences of not reflecting on the meaninglessness of that sacrifice from decades of comparative studies in the cultural psychology of wellbeing and trauma. In the face of immensely complex international challenges like climate change, migration and security, I thought our national leaders were deploying the centenary of the First World War to replicate an immature, degenerative, trauma-based model for our political future.

Seamus Heaney also spoke about 'the redressing effect of poetry' (Heaney, 1995). He liked to quote French philosopher Simone Weil's view that 'If we know in what way society is unbalanced, we must do what we can to add weight to the lighter scale.' (Weil, 1963)

Playing my cello late one night in April 2014, a song arrived. I'd been thinking of Margery Cloughley and Ellen Thwaites, my two great-grandmothers who both had young children at home when one of their sons was killed in the battlefields of France.

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g. in 'Democracy or Militarism?' (Addams, 2005) and *Twenty Years at Hull House* (Addams, 1961)

## The Canticle of Night

Threads of memory and dream  
I'll sing for you  
In night's black and silver mantle  
we'll sound the round from death to birth  
And when the shining young moon  
lifts the old one high  
lament will turn to lullaby  
And hope will turn the night  
Lay lulay Lulay my little babe  
And when the world's at war  
it seems love's circles are all torn  
Though a hundred years may pass  
yet mothertime is now  
And before each new child's born  
we'll sing for peace  
And hope will bring the light  
Lulay Lulay

While the Honest History Group of eminent historians worked to expose the horrifying realities of the First World War and the excesses of 'Anzackery', a sense of creative prospect about the Congress story intensified within the Chorus. Possible story structures, musical strands, and 100-year-old images from women's writings had started following me around, though nothing cohered yet. Ideas brewed in other women.

Around us, ample signs showed that schools, community groups, national institutions and media outlets were keen to provide the return governments expected for their allocation of \$325 million to centennial commemorations of the war.<sup>1</sup> The specified focus on Australia's 'history of service and sacrifice' was sharpening. The Anzac Centenary Arts and Culture Fund offered \$4 million for arts projects that 'will tell the story of the Anzacs and how their sacrifice shaped our nation' (Attorney-General's Department, 2014). Although able critics deconstructed it,<sup>2</sup> the concocted trauma-based

myth of redemptive sacrifice was being reinforced. And the regenerative story that could have brought peace to the world before the Anzacs left Gallipoli was more or less silent.

My Jungian-trained brain produced questions based on homeopathic principles and alchemical equations. How to imagine the canticle of every loving parent's promise towards its political fulfilment? If the 1915 Congress was a microcosmic remedy of peace for the contagion of war in the great world, what healing harmony would our Canberra chorus of citizens sing in 2015 to redress the trauma storytellers' public relations barrage?

I jotted down a nursery-style tune for children's voices that wouldn't leave me alone and seemed to want to become more than I thought it could be. I imagined four or five generations of mothers singing lullabies to the babies born into our family in the past hundred years.

The sorrowing hope of my young great grandmothers' Canticle became clearly associated with the Congress. In the Chorus, the conversation turned to current issues and the imperative of singing a nurturing politics of peace as we reflected on mysteries Jane Addams touched upon in her Closing Address:

*Why then were women from both the warring and neutral nations ready to come to this Congress? ... By what profound and spiritual forces were they impelled, at this moment when the spirit of Internationalism is apparently broken down to believe that ... they would be able to declare the reality of those basic human experiences ever-perpetuating and cherishing the race, and courageously to set them over against the superficial and hot impulses which have so often led to war.<sup>3</sup>*

The sense of the women of 1915 as spiritual great grandmothers of A Chorus of Women strengthened. Soon after, the Chorus women gave their full support for my composition of a 90-minute

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<sup>1</sup> See [Excess in the Anzac centenary overlooks other military endeavours](#) (Brown, 2014) and *Anzac's Long Shadow: the cost of our national obsession* (Brown, 2014)

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *What's Wrong with Anzac: The Militarisation of Australian History* (Lake, et al., 2010), Henry Reynolds' *Forgotten War* (Reynolds, 2013) and *Unnecessary Wars* (Reynolds, 2016)

<sup>3</sup> See *Jane Addams' Essays and Speeches* (Addams, 2005, pp. 75-78)

community oratorio to be called *A Passion for Peace*. And I wrote words for the Children's Chorus to introduce the Congress with the nursery tune:

The Children's Dreams

*Children's Chorus:*

In our dreams Great Grandmas singing  
songs of nurture for our future

*The children teach the tune to the  
Women's Chorus and Audience  
through repetitions of...*

*Children's and Women's Choruses with the Audience:*

We hear Great Grandmothers singing  
songs of nurture for our future!

Much energy flowed when we decided to organise a five-day peace festival on the centenary of the 1915 Congress. This gave a container to hold many expressions of the need and meaning of peace now.

With Chorus musical director Johanna McBride and other creative friends alongside me, I got on with composing *A Passion for Peace*: a big task that would bring a cast of 110 Canberra adults and children together with generous support from some of our city's greatest musicians, artsACT, the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, and the embassies of New Zealand and six European governments.<sup>1</sup>

From 28 April to 1 May 2015, we staged the successful premiere season of the *Passion* as centrepiece of Canberra's first Festival for Peace while 1000 women from 30 countries filled The Peace Palace in the Dutch capital for the Centennial Congress of WILPF.

Regenerating Hope Now

In the long process of bringing the *Passion* to life I often thought of the 1915 International Congress of Women as a microcosm and model for the kind of political regeneration that global people's

movements are currently striving to enact in the world-at-large.

Theatre is often regarded as that kind of intense, alchemic double of life.<sup>2</sup> Across cultures, ceremonial traditions associated with seasonal renewal (including Christianity's passion plays) point communities and persons from the excruciation of death towards regenerative possibilities. In Australia during April 2015, the relative proportion of the women's story to the Australian Gallipoli myth certainly meant *A Passion for Peace* had to be thought of homeopathically: as the balancing tincture of a potent, specific antidote.

Most of my selections in the *Passion's* creative development were based on the recurring correspondences I found between the extremely serious pathologies and predicaments of complex political systems in 1915 and 2015, and the timeless good health of the ways the women worked together towards the goal of permanent peace.

Of course there are obvious differences between present contexts and concerns, and those of the 1300 peacemakers and human rights activists who gathered in The Hague 100 years ago. But there are many similarities.

When I asked First World War specialist Professor Peter Stanley if he would check the *Passion* libretto for historical accuracy, he happily agreed.

"The 1915 International Congress of Women is the best kind of history because it shows us something about how to live well now," he said.

His words are encouragement to relate the creative action of the women in 1915 to what we could do now, and to identify and elaborate the methods they followed. He also points to archetypal features of the Congress that cross time, place and human generations, embodying cultural laws for living well.

These features distinguish the Congress as an exemplar of 'that unending myth of death and

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<sup>1</sup> The *Passion* received funding from the embassies of the European Union, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and The Netherlands, as well as the New Zealand High Commission.

<sup>2</sup> The idea is at the core of Aristotle's *Poetics*. See also Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double* (Artaud, 1958) and *The Theatre of Jean-Louis Barrault* (Barrault, 1961)

rebirth' which C G Jung described as 'the story of mankind'. Writing in 1918, during the last horrific months of the First World War, Jung associated this myth with 'the truly creative activity of the brain' and said it had 'nothing to do with' what is commonly thought of as 'objective' history.<sup>1</sup> Although, as Jung said, 'multitudinous figures ...weave in and out of this mystery', very few of those have been the commanders of empires or armies.

The long reign of the warrior king on world stages has meant that conjunctions of history and regeneration mythology are unusual and rarely documented. The predominating reflections of the warrior king and his armies' violating, acquisitive activities in the mirrors of myth and art are other causes of cultural blindness to wisdom -- with the

result that there are few great humane, politically savvy teaching stories and little system-enhancing organisational history or theory for the leaders of people's movements to consult.

This paper is a first step towards the goal of contributing to those vital resources by making an exemplary case of the 1915 International Congress of Women. The next step is to sketch the main elements and dynamic structures of regeneration mythology as I distilled them from the Congress records and women's stories into the libretto of *A Passion for Peace*.

For more information about A Chorus of Women, see <http://www.chorusofwomen.org>

A performance video of *A Passion for Peace* can be purchased or watched via the website.



***A Passion for Peace* company and audience are conducted by Johanna McBride in 'The Children's Dreams'**

*At centre stage are soprano Louise Page as Congress President Jane Addams and mezzo soprano Angela Giblin as Dr Aletta Jacobs who called the 1915 International Congress of Women.  
Albert Hall, Canberra April 2015*

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<sup>1</sup> See 'The Role of the Unconscious' – the first paper in *Civilization in Transition*, the volume of C G Jung's *Collected Works* which contains his studies of collective dynamics in contemporary events.

## One Giant Washcloth for Mankind

*PeaceKnits*

*One Giant Washcloth for Mankind:* For PeaceKnits Pop-Up, 100 handknit cotton washcloths, knitted by individuals, were assembled in the pattern of a giant licorice allsort – to reflect that “conflict affects all sorts”. During 20<sup>th</sup> century wars, Australian schoolchildren, both boys and girls, learned to knit to make home comforts like these cloths to send to those sent to fight overseas. The 100 individual washcloths, including smaller pairs made into soap

savers, were hand-stitched on to a 1930s South Australian wool mills blanket. Use of “blanketing” helps convey the idea of soothing the mental health challenges triggered and exacerbated by conflict, experienced at all levels of human encounter during war. Work on this “giant washcloth” included knitting by people with disability and ongoing mental health challenges.



# One Giant Potholder for Womankind

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*PeaceKnits*

A companion piece was also handmade in the form of *One Giant Potholder for Womankind*, from 100 hand-stitched and thermally insulated potholders, to help us remember the contribution of those who managed family, work and the home front during war. Colours chosen for the 100 potholders – shades of green, white and violet, identified with women’s suffrage and peace movements – remind us that not everyone supported the “great war.” Many women and men made life-changing efforts

and sacrifice to call for more peaceful means of resolving international differences than what was experienced in the devastating WW1 trench warfare.

Photos were taken at Albert Hall in May 2015, when display of these items helped mark the centenary of the 1915 International Women’s Peace Congress at The Hague.



## Peace

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*From Words for Peace by Aidan, 17 years*

For me, peace is freedom. Freedom from conflict, from war. Freedom from pain. Freedom from isolation. Freedom from despair. Freedom to be whoever you, no matter where you are.

Peace is life in its purest, untouched form. It is fluid and always sought-after. Crime, war, pain and anguish all soil any attempts at creating real peace. Yet, peace exists, in its many forms. In its own way, peace is a form of love; a free, far-reaching and equal form of love. It is the truest, most greatest form of love. There is a sanctity to peaceful environments. Something ancient. Something molecular. Some say that the universe is comprised of an unending torrent of chaotic moments, with every rock, every cell, every piece of matter striving to exist. Yet, they are all striving for their own

individual moment of true peace, where they can exist untroubled.

Doesn't this show that peace is the most important thing that can exist? Peace, perhaps, is the most important thing we can strive towards achieving. Perhaps, even, we exist to find peace, to seek it out in all of the chaos. If this is so, then could peace be the balancing point, singing into the mess and the darkness to soothe them?

These questions are important, but they are little comfort for those who actively strive towards peace, those who would lay down their lives to stop any other from being hurt. It is to those people, those precious sentinels of freedom, that we send our awe, our hope and our love. May we draw inspiration from them and seek peace in our own lives.

# Let There Be Peace



Anzac Eve Peace Vigil, Remembrance Park, Canberra

# Wings Over War

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*Talitha Thompson*



To me this painting conveys a sense of hope. Butterflies have always comforted me through troubles. So I see this painting as the butterflies trying to lead the bombs away from their intended mark. A sign that war cannot be won without hope.

## A prayer for peace

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*Lee Davy*

To pray for peace is of the essence.  
It is a gift, a very real presence.  
It is indeed a noble calling,  
So needed in a divided world that is falling.

To build bridges, to point to where we are going,  
To give, so full, to overflowing.  
In peace all good things are sown.  
In peace the future becomes known.

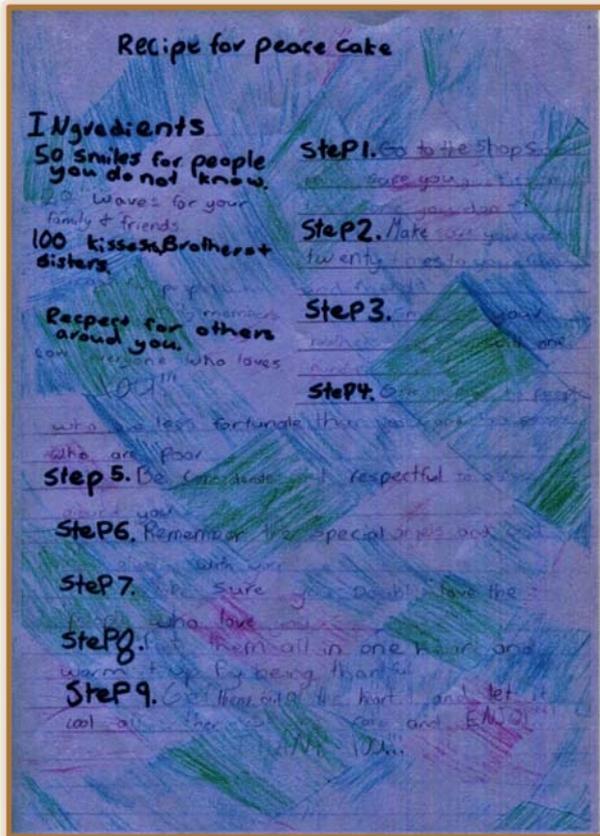
The way is steep, the yearning deep.  
The peace is failing, the world is trailing,  
But the work goes on, strivings do not cease.  
We must persist, endure, to keep the peace.

Victory will be ours, when we humbly see  
We do not own and control the fragile economy.  
The cut and thrust of turmoil and strife,  
The giddy heights of all of life.

Once we surrender, we will be enabled, to defy.  
Our judgement transformed in the blink of an eye,  
We will a prayer warrior be, on our knees to fight another day,  
To ring out a resounding peace. Amen all say!

# Recipe for Peace Cake

*From Words for Peace by Ashlyn, 9 years old*



## Ingredients

50 smiles for people you do not know

20 waves for your family and friends

100 kisses for brothers and sisters

Courage for people who don't have family members.

Respect for others around you.

Love everyone who loves YOU!!!

Step 1.

Go to the shops and make sure you give fifty smiles to everyone you don't know.

Step 2.

Make sure you wave twenty times to your family and friends.

Step 3.

Smother your brothers and sisters with one hundred kisses.

Step 4.

Give courage to people who are less fortunate than you and the people who are poor.

Step 5.

Be considerate and respectful to others around you.

Step 6.

Remember the special angels and God are always with you.

Step 7.

Make sure you Double love the people who love you.

Step 8.

Put them all in one heart and warm them up by being thankful.

Step 9.

Get them out of the heart and let it cool off then cut the cake and ENJOY!!!

THANK YOU!!!

## Yearning for Peace

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*Lee Davy*

The War to end all Wars ushered in a new age.  
A new society – no longer innocent, but free.  
The futility became clear, the reality a rage.  
The finality was evident – men maimed, ceased to be.  
The ravages of war took their toll.

Family left behind on the home front had no ease.  
Saw results of death and destruction strewn about.  
The longer the war went on, they began to yearn for peace.  
Lives were changed, ripped inside out.  
The ravages of war began to roll.

Fabric of life was torn irrevocably.  
We who follow grateful for sacrifices made for our gain.  
Why can't we keep peace, and learn from past pain?  
The human heart continues to know.  
The ravages of war endlessly flow.

Gone forever a way of life – yesterday gone, the future bleak.  
Amidst the chaos, study to be quiet.  
A tidal wave of grief – a tsunami unable to speak.  
The remembrance became a sacred riot.  
The ravages of war caused the world to stall.

An unstoppable force – a deep longing to reconnect.  
Touched so very deeply – a shared consciousness, raw nerves.  
The past, present and future collide, with effect.  
Remembrance that is sacred, the poppies laid to serve.  
The ravages of war take their toll.

The bell tolls, and life carries on.  
But change has come, we are never the same again.  
Yet peace can bloom in our hearts, to be watered, nurtured, stored.  
To grow and share with love – to plant wisely, and harvest abundantly.  
Then the ravages of war take their toll no more.

## What Have They Done ... ?

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*Margaret Naylor*

Our Grandpas eagerly signed up, left home.  
It was the Great War, war to end all wars,  
and in Gallipoli and Flanders' fields  
they died that peace might wash the Empire's  
shores.

Baptised in mud and blood they came of age.  
From trench to trench the deadly steel was hurled  
and most men never saw the enemy.  
Then armistice, and peace to heal the world.

And what did they do with the peace?

The hedonistic twenties, Wall Street's crash.  
The nightmare thirties, greed and arrogance.  
The ragged unemployed, a new word "dole."  
Cries of despair "Give battlers a chance!"  
Conceived of xenophobia, monstrous birth,  
resurging national pride, the twisted cross,  
'All for the Emperor!' The gathering storm,  
inevitable war, and reason lost.

That's what they did with the peace.

And so once more the call to arms went out.  
Our fathers sailed to keep the Empire whole.  
"Arbeit macht frei" and kamikaze pyres,  
Cologne, Hiroshima, Nagasaki toll.  
Gaunt faces, haunted eyes, returning home,  
unspeakable the horrors seen and made.  
The spoils divided, nations broken up,  
foundations for a lasting peace thus laid.

And what did they do with the peace?

Red terror, yellow peril, war grown cold.  
The running sores in Asia patched, not healed.  
Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, jungle heat  
where dead men rot before their blood's  
congealed.

Our brothers conscripts to a phony war,  
no noble fight for freedom this, just pain,  
knowing that their sisters marched back home.  
Uneasy peace, a war with nothing gained.

And what did we do with the peace?

A generation drugged, out of control,  
naively pandering to Mammon's men.  
Beirut, Baghdad, Afghanistan in flames,  
the Bear's death throes, the hounds let loose again.  
Sarajevo, Grozny, Dili, Kosovo,  
the dirty wars, hate festering, breaking out.  
Our fresh-faced children eager for their role,  
peacekeepers, so they say, and who can doubt?

So, what will you do with the peace?

## Yearning for Peace (a song)

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*June Foster*

Put hands together  
Petition, praise, pray  
For peace and compassion  
Together, today.

Put hands together  
Petition, praise, pray  
For peace and compassion  
Now and always.

Yearning for peace  
Where there is strife.  
Let anger subside  
Into silence  
Nurturing prayers  
In quiet reflection  
Nations rejoice in  
Thanks for peace.

Far-off countries  
Over this earth  
Rejoicing for peace.

Put hands together...  
Everywhere...  
And be...  
Content on this...  
Earth...as we are meant  
...As we are meant.

*Chorus*

*Be content, as we are meant...*

## A unique memorial to war – and peace

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*Peter Maywald*

### *A memoir and commentary*

Almost every Australian town, district or suburb has at least one prominent war memorial to those who served and those who lost their lives in the Great War. Many also have memorials to other wars in which locals were involved, including the Boer War, World War II, Vietnam, Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan. Most of these “sacred” sites consist of statues, cenotaphs, crosses of remembrance or memorial buildings.

However, in a few locations you may find war memorials of a quite different kind. One of the best known examples is the War Memorial Community Centre at Nuriootpa, my home town in the heart of South Australia’s picturesque Barossa Valley.

In the aftermath of the Great War, the 2,000 residents of Nuriootpa, many descended from Pastor Kavel’s German refugee fleets of the 1840s, decided that its memorial should promote peace and community reconciliation. So they started on the creation of an enduring public institution to provide services and facilities for the entire community – and thus the Nuriootpa War Memorial Community Centre Inc. (NWMCC) came into being. A brief excursion into the social history of those times might help to put that momentous decision into context.

As Australia sank rapidly into economic depression in the late 1920s and through the 1930s, there was a revival of interest in localised consumer and producer cooperatives, especially in rural areas. These were largely based on the principles established within the Rochdale cooperative movement in Britain in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Without going into too much detail, the principles included a commitment to open membership, equal and democratic decision making, cash trading and fair distribution of surpluses based on members’ contributions.

As the depression deepened, many rural communities established such cooperatives in a flurry of enthusiasm – or perhaps it was

desperation – to ameliorate the havoc wrought by the global economic collapse. Some of these new cooperatives succeeded and prospered, while others withered away as economic times slowly improved. A few grew into large economic players, especially those which were based on individual rural activities such as wine grape growing, citrus production and dairying. The majority of these producer/consumer cooperatives have now been bought out by multinational firms and few survive today.

The Nuriootpa War Memorial Community Centre is a notable exception, as today it is probably stronger than ever. Perhaps this is because it was founded on a slightly different basis from those cooperatives which have gone out of business. As well as the common economic goals, the Centre was created as an ongoing tangible war memorial but also a beacon of peace lighting the way to a better future. As well, there were some fortunate coincidences which gave it greater financial strength and resilience.

In 1937, the Nuriootpa community collectively invested in the purchase of the largest hotel and accommodation venue in the town. Now known as the Vine Inn, it continues to provide hotel services and has comprehensive function facilities, a range of high-quality restaurants, 47 modern suites, a large swimming pool and a spa. Its website proudly proclaims: *“As a community owned business, all hotel profits are returned to the region through sponsorship and donations to local sporting and service clubs, schools, kindergartens and community projects.”*

Revenues from the Vine Inn funded the initial projects of the Centre, which for almost 80 years has prospered and gradually added to the wide range of projects and services which it provides.

The first big project resulted in the creation of a large and popular community swimming centre. Its main Olympic Pool has a distinctive fan shape, based on a design by prominent Adelaide architect

Louis Laybourne-Smith. All of the earthworks and the digging of the actual pool were completed in the 1950s by voluntary labour, including the efforts of many local schoolchildren (among whom my older sisters were willing volunteers).

Over subsequent years, the NWMCC also built and operated a modern kindergarten (now a preschool and early childhood education centre); a memorial hall, ballroom, theatre and library; a community park with sportsfields, playing courts and caravan/camping grounds; the Barossa Valley Senior Citizens Homes and nursing home; an arboretum and a range of sporting and social facilities around the town and district.

The town still lacks the traditional “war memorial” statue or cenotaph although there is a modest park area with small plaques and a flagpole adjoining the high school, where remembrance ceremonies are held. However, it has wonderful community-owned facilities which collectively serve as its memorial to those who have served the local area and the nation in war and peace.

Since the establishment of the NWMCC in 1937, Nuriootpa has become noted as a model for community participation and productive joint local investment. As long ago as 1944, the progressive Adelaide movement Common Cause arranged a visit by future Prime Minister Ben Chifley to Nuriootpa. Inspired by the town’s approach, he championed it as a model for community cooperation around the entire nation.

Also in 1944, a new opportunity presented itself to the community, when a well-established family department store in the town was listed for sale. Sufficient additional funds were raised by residents and the Nuriootpa Community Store came into existence, selling a wide range of goods including

food, furniture, clothing, hardware and housewares. The “Co-op Store” has grown into a significant Barossa Valley institution, incorporating a large independent supermarket and significant national franchises in areas including insurance, hardware, electrical goods and floor coverings.

The Co-op Store now employs more than 250 staff, turns over more than \$60 million a year and has 12,000 members who receive discounts and annual dividends. The store is not specifically a part of the NWMCC, but its continuing success illustrates the extent to which this small town has embraced the ethos and principles of community cooperatives.

As well, the people of this close-knit community have created a model of a productive and creative peace memorial, which has helped to unite citizens by ploughing its revenues into a wide range of worthwhile facilities and services.

This stands in stark relief against the hundreds of communities which have built ostentatious “war memorials”, some of them gothic monstrosities that older citizens regard with reverence but which are increasingly irrelevant to younger generations. Worse, they continue to encourage a dewy-eyed nostalgia for non-existent past military glories and a destructive enthusiasm for more interventions in foreign conflicts at the cost of young Australian lives and adding to the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians.

As a nation, we need much less Anzackery and many fewer memorials glorifying war. I’m proud to have come from Nuriootpa, with its enlightened and successful model of a memorial based on collective action leading the way to peace and social cohesion.

# Peace Rainbow

From Words for Peace by Ella, 9 years old



## After reading 'The Clock of Man' by Eric Lomax<sup>1</sup>

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*Bonnie Goodfellow*

Her empire falls from Singapore.  
We watch his life-and-death  
experience play out as  
"The Railway Man" and then I write:

So many conflicts  
in our past 100 years.  
Yes, we must remember them.

Yet it's not enough,  
this remembrance  
of those who died in war.

Still less adequate  
to say, forget it.  
Get over it.

Go home and live  
your tomorrows.  
For the body remembers trauma.

We must remember them  
then reconcile gently  
with our past

to move on  
and live today in peace.  
The clock man tells us so, who  
learned to live by railway clocks.

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Lomax was a British military officer and prisoner of war after the fall of Singapore in 1942. He lived through forced labour and torture on the Thai/Burma railway in 1943. He composed the "Clock of Man" verse, contained in his 1995 autobiography "The Railway Man," while in a tortured delirium - and used it to survive mentally and physically through hard times. In 1987 he was the first patient of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Journalist John McCarthy describes the Lomax autobiography as "an extraordinary story of torture and reconciliation." (Wikipedia contributors, 2017)

# Spirit Songs for Anzac Eve

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*Glenda Cloughley and Judith Kelly*

*Words and music by Glenda Cloughley. Verse 3 words and music by Judith Kelly.*

## A CHORUS OF WOMEN:

*Sounds like wind in the eucalypts and the soft cries of mothers*

Whispers in the wind Sighing in the trees  
We hear spirit women calling for their children in the night  
On Anzac Eve near the lantern light  
Spirit mothers keening as the dark mountain breathes

## A MOTHER:

Lulay my boy, are you come to me? Oh come to me!  
In the dream of death I heard you crying far away  
Child, you were crying My son, you were dying!  
O gone to war far away Lulay, lulay

## ANOTHER MOTHER:

Our women and our children around the fire we mourn  
Crying and weeping our tears of loss, of loss so great  
Our fire, our fire The ancestors are here  
The flames reach to the sky as we cry and we cry

## WOMEN'S CHORUS:

On Anzac Eve near the lantern light  
Spirit voices singing to the people in the night

## SPIRIT MOTHERS:

O sorrow of the Earth Sorrow of the mothers Sorry songs  
Love and longing, breathing in the wind, sighing  
Swirling round the flames, our sorry spirits grieving  
Through the wartime, deathtime Still whispering the love Lulay, lulay

## SPIRIT MOTHERS AND WOMEN'S CHORUS:

People, hear the law of the seeds in your lament  
Dark seeds In the fire humming like a new song growing  
Opening with your longing Sprouting in the night  
Flowering new songs, old songs, the love songs Lulay, lulay, lulay

Ngunnawal elders have told us that Mt Ainslie is a woman's place in local Indigenous tradition. At night on the mountain, looking down at the lights of the Australian War Memorial and the city of Canberra, Glenda heard the keening of mothers in the wind and wrote this song. Judith Kelly, a Yamatji-Noongar singer-songwriter from West Australia, contributed an Aboriginal mother's lament as verse 3. The song has been part of the ceremonial beginning of the annual Anzac Eve Peace Vigil on Mt Ainslie since 2011.

# Spirit songs for anzac eve

Words & Music Glenda Cloughley  
and Judith Kelly, verse 3

The Chorus sounds the wind above the Australian  
War Memorial on Mt Ainslie, Canberra

Guitar: Low E string



## SPIRIT SINGER

4 E string Em D C Am Em Am Em

A. Ooh Ooo Ooh Ooh

## CHORUS

13 Em D C Am Em Am

A. Whis-pers in the wind, Sigh-ing in the trees We hear spi-rit wo-men call-ing for their

A. Shee - ee, Shee - ee, Shoo - - -

19 Em D C Am

M-S. chil-dren in the night. On An - zac Eve near the lan - tern light

A. Oo - she - ee - ee - ee, Ooh

25 Em Am Em Low E string

M-S. Spi - rit mo - thers keen-ing as the dark\_ moun - tain breathes. *Wind sounds*

A. Spi - rit mo - thers keen-ing as the dark\_ moun - tain breathes. *Wind sounds*

A. Shoo Ooh

## SPIRIT SINGER

31 Em B7 Am B7 Em

A. Lu - lay, my boy, Are you come\_ to me? Oh, come to me,

36 B7 Em Am Em Am

A. In the dream of death I heard you cry - ing, far - a - way. Child, you were\_ cry - ing, Ooh, my

# Let there be peace

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*Judith Kelly*

Let there be peace in all the lands  
where culture and harmony have been lost.

Let there be peace on the streets  
where all who walk on that sacred soil  
feel safe and secure.

Let there be peace so all can sleep  
without fear of bombings and missiles.  
Let there be peace without fears of knives and shootings and fights.

Let there be peace when all are sick  
of fighting wars of misled trust.  
Let there be peace where all children grow up in caring communities.  
Let there be peace where hatred and anger are diffused  
where tolerance and communication open up to equality for all.  
Let there be peace in people's hearts to lift up their brothers and sisters.

Let there be peace for the forests around the planet  
where so many of our animal relatives live and now die.  
Let there be peace without greed and consumerism  
where everyone on this planet has enough.

Let there be peace instead of blood on our hands.  
Let there be peace and time to listen and reflect,  
to make peaceful decisions in our lives.

Let there be peace without envy, jealousy and falseness.  
Let there be peace without religion to bring about pure spirituality.  
Let there be peace and treaty to heal our wounded souls and minds.  
Let there be peace.

*To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one's family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one's own mind.*

Buddha

*Peace, if it ever exists, will not be based on the fear of war, but on the love of peace ... if their remembrance can lead us from the long, long time of war to the time for ...*

Herman Wouk, *The Winds of War*

*I speak not for myself but for those without voice... those who have fought for their rights... their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated.*

Malala Yousafzai

## Postscript

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Wilfred Owen's poem *Dulce Et Decorum Est* (from Horace, "it is sweet and honourable...to die for one's country") was published posthumously in 1920. Owen had died as poet and soldier on 4 November 1918 in France. The title of his poem that quotes Horace is described in his penultimate line as "The old Lie." Many of the 168,000 Australian men and women left to make their way slowly back home from Europe after World War 1 would have felt as he did. They too were "coughing like hags...had lost their boots / But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind / Drunk with fatigue..."

We have been told that the official Australian death toll during WWI was about 62,000 (give or take a few thousand in a war in which "normal wastage" counted on thousands of new recruits being made available every single day to throw into battles to die in a war of attrition). The official estimate of Australians who returned "home" and later died from war-related causes is also around 62,000. Yet this figure is unlikely to include the likes of Adrienne's "Uncle Tom" who committed suicide after decades of limping with blindness and gas injuries. This underestimate of long-term and intergenerational impacts of conflict is a major insight gained from reading across the range of perspectives offered in this book.

If you have found this publication educative or enlightening, you may wish to access some of the materials which we were not able to include by consulting our Peace Works! website (see [www.peaceworks.org.au](http://www.peaceworks.org.au)). Some were simply too long to fit, while some very interesting material was received too late to meet our publication deadline.

These include a detailed memoir about Lieutenant Gordon Frederick Nalder, written by his nephew.

Nalder served in the AIF in several theatres of World War I and was killed at Bullecourt in 1917. The memoir includes extracts from Nalder's diary, which illustrate the relentless grind of war and the fluctuations from severe danger to sheer boredom of being in the frontlines of battle.

On the website you can also access the full and unedited memoir written by Manfred Schulmeister, who as a young boy survived the firebombing of Bremen by allies in the last year of WW2. His memories complement the voices of communities and children who suffered in war and yearned for peace, some of which are found in this publication and on the website.

When our nation's funds are used to upgrade the national war museum to grander status by \$300m, and the NSW Anzac memorial made more "educative" by spending \$30m, is this done to perpetuate "The old Lie?" Much better to help us all understand (without such grandstanding) the true costs, losses and impacts on our past and present generations, to educate better and enable us all to negotiate rather than just be beguiled into standing, fighting and dying for country.

Most important is the need to understand intergenerational impacts of conflict; to challenge each of us to ask what we have learned from the 1915-2015 centenaries that might help us better negotiate 21st century "minefields" towards more sustainable and peaceful ways (instead of turning to war as first resort). If you could hear their stories, like Wilfred Owen, "you would not tell with such high zest / To children ardent for some desperate glory, / The old Lie: *Dulce et Decorum est / Pro patria mori.*"

## Acknowledgements

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We thank respected historian Joan Beaumont AM, who attended the public launch of the project in April 2015 and who has agreed to launch the published books. We are also grateful to the many contributors, musicians and helpers who have agreed to participate in the launch event and associated displays, performances and catering.

We acknowledge the valued contributions from community groups involved in the publication project, which included:

- ACT Poets for Peace
- The Fellowship of Australian Writers
- The Watson Poets
- The School of Music Poets
- Festival for Peace
- A Chorus of Women
- Queanbeyan Writers
- Queanbeyan Bush Poets
- Queanbeyan Poetry Reading Group
- Queanbeyan Multicultural Craft Group

- Queanbeyan Quilters
- PeaceKnits Pop-Up: provided handmade items (including those made with Kiama Knitters and Queanbeyan Quilters) for Peace Works! exhibits at community events including those at Bundanoon, Albert Hall and regional agricultural shows and workshops with schools, seniors, at the National Archives and Queanbeyan Library

Many individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds in our region and well beyond have provided thoughtful and creative responses to our call for submissions. We have valued every item received and are pleased to be able to publish the vast majority of them. Contributors have been very responsive to our suggestions for editing changes and have cooperated on many levels to ensure that the publications could be successfully finalised.

We are also extremely grateful to our independent advisory group, consisting of Hazel Hall, Sandra Renew and John Stokes, who provided thoughtful and positive feedback on submissions, especially in the early stages of the project.

Many individuals in our group have worked long and hard on this project, and we respect and honour their commitment and contributions.

John Collard, Annie Didcott, Colin Keith,  
Boni Maywald, Peter Maywald, Margaret Naylor

For Peace Works!

May 2017

## Brief biographies of contributors

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AJ Thomas Bennett	No biography by request
Rachel Berry	Optimist. Idealist. Believer in the inherent goodness of humanity, and the healing power of creativity.
Mike Bowern	Dr Mike Bowern lives in Moss Vale. He is a retired engineer who has 50 years' experience as a practitioner, manager and consultant in the public and private sectors of the computer industry, and as a teacher and researcher in academia. He is a Fellow of the Australian Computer Society.
Sylvia Bowring	Sylvia Mavis Bowring, born in London in 1939, migrated to Australia in 1959. Married, with three daughters and seven grandchildren, Sylvia and husband John lived in Campbelltown for 42 years before moving to Crookwell in 1942. Membership of the Laggan Bush Poets' Society "introduced" them to Dame Mary Gilmore.
Michelle Brock	Michelle grew up in Brisbane and now lives near the Molonglo Gorge on the outskirts of Queanbeyan, where she is pursuing her dream to be a writer. She is a member of Limestone Tanka Poets, Friday Writers and Queanbeyan Writers. Her work has appeared in various tanka journals and anthologies.
Chris Burt	Christine (Chris) Burt is a wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She is a retired nurse and is enjoying the opportunity to write in her retirement. She is an avid reader and still manages to while away a few hours with a book.
Alison Charlton	During senior school days one book fostered a love of words and poetry. I return to that book, <i>Feet on the Ground – An Approach to Modern Verse</i> , frequently. It remains "modern", a joy and an inspiration though published over seventy years ago.
Glenda Cloughley	Glenda Cloughley PhD loves retelling old wisdom stories to refresh the way we view today's social dramas. Her big choral works for Canberra's A Chorus of Women, <i>A Passion for Peace</i> and <i>The Gifts of the Furies</i> , are examples. Glenda's career also spans Jungian analysis, public affairs consulting and newspaper journalism.
John Collard	John Collard has studied literature and history and has taught in schools and universities in Australia, Canada, China, Thailand and the USA. He has published widely in academic and professional journals and published several books He has been a pacifist since his school days.
Helen Curry	I am a beginning artist and this piece was produced for the PeaceKnits exhibition held in Queanbeyan in April 2015. It represents the shattered lives of those who served, of those who returned and the shattered lives left behind.
Karen Dahlitz	A writer from Australia who uses poetry as a way to express her desire for peace.

Lee Davy	Mrs Lee Davy is passionate about history, and have worked for many years with the National Archives of Australia in Canberra. I was born in Wahroonga and grew up in West Pymble, NSW. I studied at the University of Sydney and UNSW. I now live in Queanbeyan NSW, and am involved in the management committee for Queanbeyan museum and in local community activities.
Annie Didcott	I was born in Plymouth, UK (a naval port), as WW2 started. This being no place to raise children we moved to central London, where we spent the rest of the war! Those experiences in my first six years ensured that I became a committed, active pacifist in adult life.
Lesley East OAM	I am a retired school teacher, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. The photographs were taken by my granddaughter Christine Buurman.
Ella Edwards	I developed an interest in poetry and began writing at the age of sixty.
Lisa Forward	Lisa Forward is a media, ESL and Spanish teacher, Buddhist and explorer. She believes that minor and major historic events, before and after Christ, influence us to make us the people we are today. This is what she writes about.
June Foster	June was born in Singleton NSW in 1927 and has resided in Canberra from 1953 until her death in January 2017. She enjoyed reading, writing, storytelling and studying nature. June has won a number of competitions for her lyric poetry and is represented in various local anthologies.
Bonnie Goodfellow	Bonnie Goodfellow (now Boni Maywald ASM), daughter of Irving and Ruby Goodfellow (nee Batton), offers her creative responses in this publication in their memory. Bonnie became “Boni” on Bougainville in 2000 – shortened to label peace monitor gear.
Irving Goodfellow	Irving Goodfellow (1917-2001) enlisted in WW2 to join Light Horse; was soon transferred to 2/19th infantry as a truck driver on Malay Peninsula and Singapore campaigns. His escape from Singapore (only 30 of 140,000 allied troops escaped back to Australia in 1942) meant he lived rather than died for country.
Lois Holland	Lois Holland and Dorothy Walker are both members of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and the Bottlebrush Tanka Group in Sydney. Both in their 80s, they remember the WWI generations well, and of course their own families and the communities in which they grew up.
Ann Howard	Ann Howard is a well-known writer of Australian history and short stories who lives on Dangar Island. Her last book, <i>You'll Be Sorry!</i> about women in WW11, was shortlisted by the Society of Women Writers for their 2017 non-fiction History Prize.
Marilyn Humbert	Marilyn Humbert lives in Sydney. Her tanka and haiku appear in International and Australian journals, anthologies and online. Some of her free verse poems have won awards in competitions and some have been published.

Adrienne Johns	Adrienne Johns, retired teacher/RN. Passionate collector of people and animals. Anglo-Irish upbringing in 1940's Sydney. Lived in Scotland, emigrated to Canada. All this influences my writing.
Colin Keith	Aspiring writer and thinker with social concern. Confessed cynic.
Judith Kelly	Stolen Generation Yamatji woman Judith Kelly has been interested in spelling, writing and poetry since childhood. Now as an adult Judith is an oral storyteller, actor, singer, songwriter and activist. She knows how powerful words can be in theatre, songs, herstory, history, wars, protests, peace, life and love. Until now she has been unpublished.
Keitha Keyes	Keitha Keyes lives in Sydney, surrounded by antique irons and ship models. She enjoys writing free verse, tanka, haiku and related genres. Her work is published in journals and anthologies in Australia and overseas.
Geoff McCubbin	Geoff grew up in country towns in the forties and fifties, and was very aware of the heavy impact the two World Wars had on smaller communities and their people.
Helen McLaughlin	Originally from Mackay in Queensland, Helen spent most of her adult life in Canberra working in the field of Indigenous policy. Since retirement Helen has travelled extensively in outback Australia. Her interests are writing, travel and photography.
Robyn McPherson	Robyn McPherson has been working predominantly with textiles since she was four. She was taught to knit and sew before going to school. Robyn completed a Fine Arts degree in 1974 and has exhibited in quilt, craft and knitting shows for over 60 years.
Natalie Maras	Natalie is Designer/ Maker at Findi Flooshki – <a href="http://findiflooshki.com">http://findiflooshki.com</a>
Peter Maywald	Peter fusses over the garden at Boab Book Cottage, Queanbeyan, writes a weekly news commentary column for Norfolk Island and enjoys frequent trips to Sydney to join Boni in wonderful times with their young grandchildren.
Margaret Naylor	Margaret Naylor is an educational researcher, technical writer and curriculum designer, as well as a registered nurse. Now semi-retired, she is a full time writer/editor and a member of Southside Poets (now Poets for Peace). Margaret's grandfather, Hugh O'Donnell, fought on the Somme in WW1 where he was gassed. He died in 1942 while Margaret's father, Kevin, was training with the RAAF for WW2.
Moya Pacey	Moya Pacey's poems are published widely in Australia and overseas and have won prizes. <i>The Wardrobe</i> , (Ginninderra Press) her first collection, was published in 2009. In 2015, she published <i>One Last Border</i> : poetry for refugees with Hazel Hall and Sandra Renew (Ginninderra Press). Her second collection is to be published in 2017.
Susie Prest	No biography by request

Queanbeyan Multicultural Centre	The women's craft group is composed of women from several countries who participate in this Queanbeyan Multicultural Centre voluntary activity on every second Friday of the month. They enjoy sharing various crafts which include those from their countries of origin, while establishing ties with the community and, above all, enjoying a special multicultural moment.
Sandra Renew	Sandra Renew is a Canberra poet who has published in Australia and overseas. Her poetry is social critique and commentary, dissent and protest, about war, peace, gender, environment and climate change.
Glen Haxton Riley	Glen Haxton Riley has been a resident of the Canberra rural area for almost 25 years. He and his wife run a small hobby farm but he finds time to pursue writing as a time-consuming hobby.
Robert Shiells	Robert Shiells is in his third year of study at CADA (Canberra Academy of Dramatic Art). He is studying acting on stage and screen, live and recording singing, teaching kids acting. He intends to become a professional actor/singer.
Talitha Thompson	Talitha Thompson is a student at Merici College. She completed this painting in Year 9, when she was studying WWI in History. "After reading and learning about all these different conflicts I wanted to paint something that explained a different aspect of war."
Bede Tongs OAM MM	Captain Bede Tongs OAM MM (1920 – 2015) was born in the Riverina. A carpenter by trade who in his own words, 'followed in the footsteps of the Lord'. A decorated Soldier who loved his country. He remembered the past, lived in the present and looked forward to the future. His submission was presented by his son Garry Tongs.
Dorothy Walker	Lois Holland and Dorothy Walker are both members of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and the Bottlebrush Tanka Group in Sydney. Both in their 80s, they remember the WWI generations well, and of course their own families and the communities in which they grew up.
Wayside Chapel	The Wayside Chapel has provided unconditional love, care and support for people on and around the streets of Kings Cross since 1964. Today, under the banner of love over hate, The Wayside Chapel creates a community where there is no 'us and them' by breaking down the barriers of judgement and providing a safe place where people from all walks of life are welcome just to 'be'.

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Please note: some Australian references follow the format of Trove citations from 2017.



It may surprise some that this publication, which presents itself as a memorial to peace, could come from the Monaro tableland region. For this south-eastern part of New South Wales is home to Australia's oldest war memorial structures (remembering those killed in the Boer War: in Queanbeyan, erected in 1903, complete with gas carriage light; and in Goulburn, erected in 1904). The region is also home to the nation's grandest remembrance structure in Canberra's Australian War Memorial. In a country that boasts building more war memorial plinths per head of population than any other, it is an uphill struggle to seriously engage on possibilities of peace in place of resort to war. Hard, in fact, to simply say: let us not forget the past while we build peace as our future.

The Monaro has potency for Indigenous peoples from its mountains and limestone plains to the sea – with a vast stretch from alps to coast and the most extreme mainland climate variations. As home to the Snowy Mountains and the Riverina, it has also provided potent inspiration for walkers, bikers, writers, arts and crafts people. No surprise then that from this region has come a yearning to establish a memorial to peace. This Peace Works! publication seeks to remedy our collective failure to ask questions of, and help each other creatively recover from, the past century of marching to war orders. It supports listening and talking in community about real alternatives rather than just war as first resort.

This publication and website at [www.peaceworks.org.au](http://www.peaceworks.org.au) provide starting points for community conversations about peace, and possibilities for us each as fractured selves to remember, reconcile and recover from our past. A creative starting point is the image below of the Queanbeyan Multicultural Craft Group. This expresses what the publication seeks to do: value peace and reconciliation as important steps beyond remembrance.

