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Welcome to HIST 203: Australians and the Great War. This subject examines the impact of war on European Australian society to 1918. The subject’s primary interest lies in the First World War and the Home Front although reference will be made to selected campaigns deemed significant in Australia’s military history. Major themes examined include the nature of war, the geopolitical context of Empire, enlistment and conscription, women and families, ‘enemies within’, religion and the use of war as moral persuasion, the soldiers’ war, digger and Anzac and the nature of grief and commemoration.

The subject falls into six broad modules. The first provides the prelude to the war. The second examines responses to the outbreak of war, Gallipoli and the soldiers’ war. The third looks at government and war and ends with the conscription plebiscite and its consequences in 1916. It then shifts tack and examines the impact the war had on people, the way war was used, notions of loyalty, promises made and broken and attempts made to make sense of 1914-1918. It ends with an examination of the contention inherent in two powerful myths in Australia today, Anzac and digger.

Each tutorial is accompanied by a series of documents. These are a vital part of tutorial preparation for two reasons. They introduce you to the basic sources historians use. Read them critically and use them in tutorial discussion.

The subject co-ordinator is Associate Professor John McQuilton 19.2051, 02 42213748, (jmcquilt@uow.edu.au). My consultation times will be advised during the first lecture. Consultation times and places for tutors in this subject will be advised during the first tutorial by your tutor.

HIST 203 also has its own Web Page: http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/histpol/histoutlines/hist203/index.html. It contains a copy of the subject guide, links to relevant sources for HIST 203, links to the e-readings and other relevant information. Lectures, however, will not be published on this site.
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**Class Contact Details**

Contact details staff teaching the subject will be announced in Week 1.

Lecture and tutorial times and locations are available from the University’s home page. Please note that tutorial times on the timetable are provisional.

Students should have enrolled in tutorials via SOLS before the start of session.

Those with time tabling difficulties should see the Subject Co-ordinator.

**Subject Requirements**

*Attendance requirements:* This subject requires an 80% attendance at all classes unless this is unavoidable on medical or compassionate grounds and evidence of this is provided through SOLS. Attendance that falls below the 80% requirement, irrespective of the cause, may require you to complete additional written work to complete the subject. If in doubt, consult either the subject co-ordinator or your tutor.

*Completing the subject:* All assessment components of this subject must be attempted to complete the subject.

*Extensions for written work:* Requests for extensions must be lodged through SOLS.

*Penalty for late submission of work:* Late work (i.e. any work required for assessment that has not been given an extension) will be subject to a 10% penalty per day. The penalty is applied to the original mark awarded. Work submitted after seven calendar days will not be marked and will be given a mark of 0.

*Preparation:* For tutorials, ensure that you read, at a minimum, the material provided with this Subject Guide and the material set from the textbook.

*Tutorial presentation:* You may use your presentation as the basis for your essay topic.

The **essay** must follow the conventions set out in the *Guide for History Students*. Penalty
marks are applied to essays where these requirements are not met. Copies of the Guide can be obtained from either the Faculty Inquiry Office or downloaded from the Faculty’s website. A minimum of six sources is required for the essay.

Failure to meet these requirements can lead to a technical fail in the subject.

Textbook and Subject Guide Information

McQuilton’s *Rural Australia and the Great War* is the set text for this subject, more through default than any other reason. It is available from the University’s Bookshop. Beaumont’s *Australia’s War 1914-1918*, McKernan’s *Australian People and the Great War* and Scott’s *Australia During the War* are also central texts and are on reserve.

*Reserve and e-readings*: Titles held in the Reserve Collection, both physically and as e-readings, are listed at the end of this Subject Guide.

The list of references that accompany each tutorial topic are lengthy. They have been designed to ensure that students have access to sources they need. If a book is out, then there are alternatives. All journal articles are available through the Library’s database or as e-readings. Some of the books listed are also available as e-readings. E-readings are listed at the end of this document.

The readings that accompany each tutorial topic are not an exhaustive list - students should use the Library catalogue and databases to locate additional sources.

Use of internet sources: The internet now offers students a rich range of sources. Journals, newspapers, government material and archival material is now readily available. Use these freely in this subject. There is also a lot of junk on the internet. When using any site, ask yourself the following questions: do they offer evidence or sources? If they do not, why use them?
### Other Information

**Why two essay submission dates?** In part this depends on the essay topic chosen, in part it reflects the bottlenecks that build up during session and allows you to make your own choices to suit your deadlines. Extensions beyond the second date are almost impossible to obtain. Of course, students are more than welcome to submit their essays before either due date.

**Help:** Do not be reluctant to seek help from the subject co-ordinator or your tutor if you are having difficulties, no matter how trivial they may seem. These can range from problems in interpreting essay topics to problems of a personal nature. Students are advised that they may also seek help from the University's Student Councillors. It is far better to seek help earlier rather than later.

### Assessment Tasks - in detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: Introductory Exercise</th>
<th>due:</th>
<th>In tutorials Week 3 of Autumn Session 2006</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weighting:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>length:</td>
<td>500 words</td>
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<td>Four documents drawn from the Subject Handbook are provided at the end of this introductory section. Choose one and briefly comment on its content and how it might be used as an historical source. No reading is required for this exercise. (Assessment is based on the evaluation of the document chosen as a historical source.)</td>
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<th>2: Tutorial presentation with annotated bibliography</th>
<th>due:</th>
<th>To be submitted to your tutor on the day of the presentation</th>
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<td>weighting:</td>
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<td>Each tutorial topic is introduced by a general description and is followed by a set of specific questions. These are a guide to the major issues raised by each topic. You can answer as many, or as few, as you wish. <strong>Presentations, whether solo or shared, should last about 20 minutes in total.</strong> If you are sharing a presentation ensure that you meet with your co-presenter to divide up the questions. A maximum of two students is allowed for each tutorial topic. On the day of the presentation students must submit an annotated bibliography of 1000 words critically evaluating the sources used. A minimum of six sources is required. (This Subject Guide can be one of the sources used.) Students may use their presentation as the basis for their essay question. (Assessment is based on the capacity to present an argument reflecting the readings and the capacity to engage the class in discussion.)</td>
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<th>3: Participation</th>
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<td>This should be a familiar beast to you by now. Every member of the tutorial is expected to contribute to the discussion. (Assessment is based on evidence that you have prepared for the tutorial and a capacity to engage in debate.)</td>
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### Essay

**due:** Either Monday 10 April or Monday 22 May  
**weighting:** 30%  
**length:** 2500 words  

The essay, in hard copy with a cover sheet, should be posted in the History and Politics essay box located opposite the Faculty’s Inquiry Office by the due date(s). A minimum of six sources is required for the bibliography and the essay must include a synopsis and an annotated bibliography. (Assessment is based on the research undertaken, the capacity to synthesise material collected to form an argument, the ability to interpret what you have read and fluency in written English.)

**Essay Topics**

1. Explain the importance of Empire in Australia until 1914.  
2. Why did Australians fight in the Boer War?  
3. Why did the Gallipoli campaign fail?  
4. Why did men enlist between 1914 and 1918?  
5. Why was the conscription plebiscite lost in 1916?  
6. What roles did women fill during the Great War in Australia?  
7. How was the war used to promote moral campaigns at home?  
8. Using local sources, describe and explain the building of a local war memorial.  
9. How effective was William Morris Hughes as a national leader in war time?  
10. Using two examples, describe and explain how ‘disloyalty’ was defined during the war.

### Unseen 2 hour examination

**due:** Date to be advised by ARD  
**weighting:** 30%  
**length:** -  

The examination paper’s structure will be discussed in the last lecture of the session. (Assessment is based on the capacity to argue a case within a constrained time frame with an identification of the key elements raised by the question being answered.)

### Learning Outcomes/Tertiary Literacies

By the end of this subject, students will demonstrate a knowledge of the impact of war on Australian society; critically evaluate the historiography of war and Australian society; express clearly in written and oral form views on issues raised by the subject and critically evaluate the work of historians in the field. Tertiary literacies include a commitment to independent learning intellectual development and critical analysis; coherent and extensive knowledge
within an aspect of a discipline; self confidence combined with written and oral skills of a high
level; the ability to logically analyse issues and critically evaluate sources; acknowledgment of
individual responsibilities and obligations with a capacity to challenge assumptions of
homogeneity.

Conventions Governing Written Work

Consult the relevant School and Program on the Faculty of Arts website for the appropriate
referencing system used for this subject at www.uow.edu.au/arts

Presentation

• assessments must be laid out in 1.5 line spacing (minimum) or in double spacing
• use A4 paper
• leave a margin of no less than 4 cm
• use only one side of the paper
• all assessments should be word processed
• all assessments must be page numbered, including bibliographies or works cited (not
including coversheets or title pages).

Plagiarism

Giving and gaining credit for ideas is so important that a violation of established procedures
has a special name: plagiarism. Plagiarism means using the ideas of someone else without
giving them proper credit. That someone else may be an author, critic, journalist, artist,
composer, lecturer, tutor or another student. Intentional plagiarism is a serious form of
cheating. Unintentional plagiarism can result if you don’t understand and use the acceptable
scholarly methods of acknowledgment. Irrespective, plagiarism will not be tolerated and the
University may impose penalties which can be very severe.

For full details about the University’s plagiarism policy see:

Submission of Assignments: Wollongong Campus

Unless your tutor or lecturer asks you to do otherwise, submit all assignments by depositing
them in one of the three School slots opposite the Enquiry Centre (19.1050 in the Arts
building).

All assignments deposited in the School slots must be have a cover sheet attached. Ensure
that all sections are filled in including your tutor’s name, the assignment question and sign
the plagiarism declaration. Coversheets can be found above the bench opposite the Enquiry
Centre. You can also download a coversheet from the Faculty’s webpage at:

Receipts are not mandatory (you can just drop the assignment in the box if you wish), but if
you want a receipt for your assignment, just fill out the bottom section of the coversheet and
ask the person to whom you submit the piece of work to sign the form or date-stamp it for
you.

Students must keep a copy of all work/assignments handed in.
Assignments sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted unless by prior agreement between the lecturer and student.

**Submission of Assignments: South Coast and Southern Highlands Campuses**

Unless your tutor or lecturer asks you to do otherwise, submit all assignments following the procedures set out on your campus.

All assignments must be have a cover sheet attached. Ensure that all sections are filled in including your tutor’s name, the assignment question and sign the plagiarism declaration. You can download a coversheet from the Faculty’s webpage at: [www.uow.edu.au/arts/coversheets/index.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/coversheets/index.html) - Make sure you download both pages.

Students must keep a copy of all work/assignments handed in.

Assignments sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted unless by prior agreement between the lecturer and student.

**Return of Assignments: Wollongong Campus**

The University’s Code of Practice Teaching and Assessment requires that at least one assignment be assessed and returned before Week 9 of session.

Assignments submitted during session will be returned to you by your lecturer or tutor. The Enquiry Centre does not hold any assignments during session.

Assignments submitted at the end of session will be held at the Enquiry Centre until the end of Week 6 of the following session. After this time, assignments will be disposed of. Please take your student card with you when collecting your work. During this period, assignments can be collected: Monday-Friday between 11.30am-12.30pm and 3.30pm-4.30pm.

**Return of Assignments: South Coast and Southern Highland Campuses**

The University’s Code of Practice Teaching and Assessment requires that at least one assignment be assessed and returned before Week 9 of session.

Assignments submitted during session will be returned to you by your lecturer or tutor.

Assignments submitted at the end of session will be held at your campus until the end of Week 6 of the following session. After this time, assignments will be disposed of. Please take your student card with you when collecting your work.

**Special Consideration**

Students who miss a deadline, or fall below the minimum attendance requirements, or otherwise find their work in the subject affected by illness or serious misadventure should lodge a formal request for Special Consideration via SOLS. The procedures for lodging a request are available at: [www.uow.edu.au/handbook/courserules/specialconsideration.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/handbook/courserules/specialconsideration.html)
The University has in place codes of practice, rules and guidelines that define a range of policy issues on both educational and student matters. The policies relevant to the Faculty of Arts and their web addresses are as follows:

**Code of Practice Teaching & Assessment:**

**Code of Practice Honours:**

**Code of Practice Students:**

**Code of Practice Student Discipline:**

**EEO Policy:**
staff.uow.edu.au/eeo

**Special Consideration Policy:**

**Non-Discriminatory Language Practice & Presentation:**
staff.uow.edu.au/eeo/nondiscrimlanguage.html

**Occupational Health and Safety:**

**Intellectual Property:**

**Human Ethics Research Guidelines:**
www.uow.edu.au/research/rsoresearch/ethics/

**Student Academic Grievance Policy:**

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**Support Services**

Both the Faculty and the University offer support services to its undergraduates.

**Arts Administrative Support**
Faculty of Arts Enquiry Centre - 19.1050
phone: 02 4221 5328    fax: 02 4221 5341
www.uow.edu.au/arts

**Sub Dean**
the Sub Dean is located in room 19.1074 -
to make an appointment to see the Sub Dean,
contact the Sub Dean's Assistant in room 19.1073
or phone: 02 4221 4838

**Course Readers and Textbooks**
UniShop - Building 11
phone: 02 4221 8050    fax: 02 4221 8055
unishop.uow.edu.au

**Student Administration**
Student Enquiries Counter - Building 36
or Student Service Centre - Building 17
phone: 02 4221 3927    fax: 02 4221 4322
e-mail: studenq@uow.edu.au
www.uow.edu.au/student/centre
www.uow.edu.au/student/sols

**Disability Liaison Officer** - Building 11
third floor of the UniCentre building

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**University Library**, including the Faculty Librarian
Building 16
phone: 02 4221 3548
library.uow.edu.au

for enquiries for the Faculty’s Disability Officer or Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Officer,
contact the Arts Enquiry Centre

**Learning Assistance**
Learning Resource Centre - 19.G102
phone: 02 4221 3977
www.uow.edu.au/student/services/ld

**Careers Service** - Building 11
phone: 02 4221 3325
www.uow.edu.au/careers

**Counselling Service** - Building 11 (level 3)
phone: 02 4221 3445
www.uow.edu.au/student/services/cs

**Woolyungah Indigenous Centre** - Building 30
( Aboriginal Education Centre)
Faculty Handbook

The Faculty issues a Handbook free of charge to all students enrolled in an Arts Subject. It contains information on the structure of the Faculty’s degrees, the majors offered, the more important University policies and other matters that may affect your time as a student in the Faculty.
DOCUMENT EXERCISE

As noted earlier, you should select one of the following documents and evaluate it in 500 words. (If you stray over the 500 word limit that is fine but if you reach over 1000, alarm bells should ring!) The purpose of the exercise is to introduce you to the sources used by historians. Divide your response into three sections: what is it describing; how does the author see the issue; how would you use it to write history. You will come across your choice again later in the subject. You may well have a different perspective when you do. You are not required to read for the exercise and there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ element here. It is simply an introduction to the questions any historians asks when confronted with a primary source.

This is how a regional columnist reacted to the outbreak of war in 1914.

Scriptus

WAR! At any time, this word has awful significance, but when our Empire is interested, when our Australian coast is in danger, when our very cities and homes are threatened, it has a terrible meaning. No wonder then that the fearful conflict now raging throughout Europe has put all other topics in the background. I never remember Australians being so profoundly moved since the reverses in the Boer War as they were when the first intelligence came through by telegram the early part of last week that Germany had declared war against Russia, and that Great Britain was preparing for emergencies. Loyalty to our own kinsmen across the seas was at once the dominant impulse of everyone. All party feuds were dropped as by magic, and we were united Britons once again. It is intensely satisfactory to learn that the same splendid patriotism prevails in all the chief outposts of the Empire.

When I said just now that loyalty was the dominant impulse of everyone I made a mistake. I met with one exception on Monday. This thing - I cannot call him a man - knew all about the declaration of war; he knew what this meant to Australia and the Empire; he was eagerly looking for the newspaper boy, who was just ahead of me. He got his 'Argus', and I waited a moment to see if he would make any comment on the latest intelligence. Imagine my disgust when I saw him open the centre portion of the paper with its sensational headlines, throw it aside, and search through the remaining columns for the report of the Australian Hurdle Race, in which he at once became engrossed. I could not help exclaiming, 'You poltroon.' Contrast this conduct with that of 100 athletes who reached Spencer Street on the same day after taking part in a cross-country run. They formed up into a body, and with uncovered heads sang the National Anthem. When asked for the reason by a Pressman the leader replied, 'We did it merely to show our unswerving loyalty to the Empire, for during the present crisis sport occupies but a very secondary consideration, and it is well for Great Britain to know and feel that her subjects across the sea are loyal to her.'

Ovens and Murray Advertiser, 8 August 1914.

Ashmead Bartlett

The news of the landing of Australian troops at Gallipoli was first reported by the British journalist, Ellis Ashmead Bartlett.

The Australians rose to the occasion. Not waiting for orders, or for the boats to reach the beach, they sprang into the sea and forming a sort of rough line, rushed at the enemy’s trenches.

Their magazines were not charged, so they just went in with cold steel.
It was over in a minute. The Turks in the first trenches were either bayonetted or they ran away, and their Maxim was captured.

Then the Australians found themselves facing an almost perpendicular cliff of loose sandstone, covered with thick shrubbery. Somewhere, half-way up, the enemy had a second trench, strongly held, from which they poured a terrible fire on the troops below and the boats pulling back to the destroyers for the second landing party.

Here was a tough proposition to tackle in the darkness, but those colonials, practical above all else, went about it in a practical way.

They stopped for a few minutes to pull themselves together, got rid of their packs, and charged their magazines.

Then this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliffs without responding to the enemy’s fire. They lost some men but did not worry.

In less than a quarter of an hour the Turks were out of their second position, either bayonetted or fleeing...

In the early part of the day heavy casualties were suffered in the boats conveying the troops from the destroyers and in the tugs from the transports. The enemy’s sharpshooters were hidden everywhere, and they concentrated their fire on these boats.

But then the Australians, whose blood was up, instead of entrenching, rushed northwards and eastwards, searching for fresh enemies to bayonet. It was difficult country in which to entrench. Therefore they preferred to advance...

A serious problem was getting the wounded from the shore. All those unable to hobble had to be carried from the hills on stretchers, and then their wounds hastily dressed and the men carried to boats.

The boat parties worked unceasingly through the entire day and night.

The courage displayed by these wounded Australians will never be forgotten. Hastily placed in trawlers, lighters, and boats, they were towed to the ships, and, in spite of their suffering, cheered on reaching the ship from which they had set out in the morning.

In fact, I have never seen anything like these wounded Australians in war before.

Though many were shot to bits, without hope of recovery, their cheers resounded throughout the night. You could see in the midst of suffering humanity arms waving in greeting to the crews of the warships. They were happy because they had been tried for the first time and had not been found wanting.

For fifteen mortal hours our men occupied the heights under incessant shell fire, without the moral or material support of a single fun ashore, and they were subjected the whole time to the counter-attacks of a brave enemy, skillfully led, with snipers deliberately picking off every officer who endeavoured to give a command or lead his men.

There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights, above all holding on whilst the reinforcements were landing.
These raw colonial troops in these desperate hours proved worthy to fight side by side with the [British] heroes of Mons, the Aisne, Ypres and Neuve Chapelle...

*Argus*, 8 May 1915.

**Agnes Jones**

Agnes Jones was a nurse who enlisted in 1915 and by 1917 had seen almost two years of service on the Western Front. She wrote home in 1917.

We are right on the banks of the Somme here. It is a magnificent river, but somehow when one looks at its beauty, one shudders and remembers - for I suppose it is the bloodiest battlefield in the history of the war. That is where Harry Martin [a Harrietville volunteer] went out in the biggest fight Australians ever set out on. I saw a boy fishing there the other day, and I registered a vow never to eat fish again here. It made my very soul sick. We travelled through miles of the most gorgeous country to get here, and places that were battlefields in the early history of the war are now all planted with crops. Growing amongst them are cornflowers, poppies, daisies and many other flowers. Then one would pass through acres of land marked with its little wooden crosses, with plenty of wildflowers growing over the little mounds. These places are well tended by the French and by the troops out on rest, and I think that those at rest underneath are really the best off as they are finished with the heart scalding that those left behind are suffering. The Queen passed along the other day and placed flowers on the graves, but I think nothing could be as sweet as the decorations nature has provided - cornflowers, poppies, marguerites, tiny forget-me-nots, and lily of the valley. I think it would do many an Australian woman's heart good if she could see how beautiful the resting place of her boy is, and she would be glad he had done his bit.

*Alpine Observer*, 21 September 1917.

**William Morris Hughes**

In 1916, the prime minister, William Morris Hughes, opened the campaign to introduce compulsory overseas military service of Australian men in the Great War.

To every man and woman in Australia’, Mr Hughes concluded, ‘the appeal of our soldiers fighting on the battlefield falls upon our ears and reaches straight to our heart. These comrades of ours, those brave volunteers who went through the glories and agonies of Gallipoli and who are now gaining fresh laurels in the gigantic battles on the soil of France, repose full trust in us. Shall we fail them now? (Cries of ‘No’). Shall we send their regiments into battle under strength? (‘No’). Shall we condemn them to death – (‘no, no’) – for they go to their death unless we send support. Nothing will turn them from the path of duty – they will advance as ever to the order - and though outnumbered and beaten to their knees, they will still fight, and if need be, die. Shall we fail them? (‘No’). Are their sacrifices and those of our glorious dead to be made in vain? (‘No’). Are their deaths to be unavenged? No, I say, a thousand times no!

‘Duty and national honour alike beckon us on. What Australian will consent to partial withdrawal from this life and death struggle? Who among us will support a base abandonment of our fellow citizens who are fighting for us to the death with deathless heroism? Tens of thousands of our kinsmen in Britain have died that we might live free and unmolested (Cheers). Is there one man who will say that we ought not to pay the debt we owe to Britain with our lives if needs be, for shielding our country with the bodies of her glorious soldiers and sailors from the
scorching blast of war? (Cheers). In this great hour, when our country and all we hold dear are in deadly peril, who among us will not rise greatly, and putting aside all other things, prove himself by his deeds worthy of these great sacrifices, and prove himself worthy of the great privileges of citizenship in a free democracy?

‘Australians! This is not time for party strife. The nation is in peril and it calls for her citizens to defend her. Our duty is clear. Let us rise like men, gird up our loins, and do that which duty, and self-sacrifice alike dictate’. (Loud and prolonged cheering).

Fellow-citizens:-

The citizens of Australia will decide on Saturday the greatest issue ever put before a free people. From out the fog of lies with which the opponents of the Government deliberately sought to obscure it the great issue shines out clear and distinct. We are part of the British Empire; that is, we are one of the family of free British nations that engirdle the earth. While the Empire stands, we and all that we hold dear, the many privileges that self-government has enabled us to secure, the White Australia policy, are safe. If the Empire falls we fall with it. The Empire is fighting for its life. Britain has asked us to do our share. The question is - Are you going to do it? By your answer the world will judge you. By your answer, you will decide the destiny of Australia, if not that of the Empire. Is Australia going to prove true to herself, to the traditions of our race, to the men of Anzac; or stand out before the world as degenerate and unworthy?

The need for men is obvious and imperative. Germany is not beaten. The fury of her onslaught upon Roumania and her great counter-attacks upon the western front prove indeed that her strength is still enormous. The commanders of the Allies’ armies, the great statesmen of the Empire, and the leaders of Labor in Britain and France, all tell us plainly that we cannot win decisive victory without more men.

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1916.
HIST203: Australians and the Great War Tutorial Schedule and Readings

TUTORIAL 1: ADMINISTRIVIA

This tutorial will be devoted to introducing the subject, discussing the assessment requirements, allocating tutorial topics, answering any questions students may have and the usual administrivia. Make sure you have read the introductory pages and chosen a potential tutorial topic before the tutorial.

TUTORIAL 2: WHAT IS WAR?

This tutorial will be given over to a general discussion of two issues that has preoccupied scholars for centuries. What is war and why does war occur?

How is it defined? Is there a difference between an armed conflict and war? What makes the difference, a legal matter like a declaration of war? Are insurgency, guerilla activity or terrorist attacks war? Is resistance, like that mounted in Nazi-occupied Europe, war? Should women participate in war as combatants? Where do non-combatants fit in any definition of war? Is Australia at war in Iraq?

Why do wars occur? The following are examples: war is a natural phenomenon, based on an innate aggression and herd instinct found in human beings; it is a function of economics, reflecting a struggle to control resources; it reflects the vested interests of the ruling cliques in society seeking their own personal gain and glory; it is simply an element of diplomacy when the talk fails; it is a disease; it is an expression of nationalism and idealism; it is a watershed in the history of nations; it is a gendered construct – only men fight; irrespective of the ‘cause’ war is inevitable.

Documents:
Extract from Keegan.

Readings:
TUTORIAL 2 DOCUMENTS

From Keegan, J., War and Our World.
Empire was an integral part of life in Australia by 1914. Britain was the ‘Mother Country’. The ties with Britain, culturally, economically and ethnically, were so strong they were referred to as the ‘crimson thread of kinship’. This does not mean that everyone in Australia embraced the notion of Empire: Irish Australians had their doubts as did the more radical members of the labour movement. And even the most ardent imperialists were sometimes disconcerted by the fact that in the interests of Empire, Britain was quite prepared to ignore Australia’s interests. The signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1905 rang alarm bells in a ‘White’ Australia.

For Australia, a key element in the relationship with Britain was defence. Australia needed a powerful ally. Yet Britain insisted that Australia should prepare for its own defence (as well as paying a hefty subsidy to the Royal Navy). In 1909, Australia created its own navy, in 1911 established Duntroon to educate forty-one ‘future generals’ and in the same year introduced compulsory military training to provide the future generals with a civilian militia for home defence. It provoked sustained opposition.

How ‘British’ was Australia by 1914? How was the notion of imperial loyalty promoted? Was it endorsed by all Australians? What were the major principles underpinning defence policy in Australia between 1901 and 1914? Why was a civilian militia preferred to creating a standing army in Australia? Who opposed ‘boy conscription’? Why the pre-occupation with ‘masculinity’?

Documents:

Empire Day, defending compulsory military service, the Australian Freedom League and the ‘Revolutionary Socialists’.

Readings:

Note: for some, matters related to the military and defence can be somewhat arcane: all those titles, agreements, conferences and so on. Any of the general histories located in 994 in the Library will provide a good general background but particularly recommended is Crowley, F. K. (ed.), A New History of Australia, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1974, chapter 7.


Empire Day

Empire Day was created in 1902 to commemorate the birthday of the late Queen Victoria. In 1905, the premiers of the states agreed to make 24 May a public holiday and introduce its observance into the state schools. Two newspapers comment on its introduction into the school curriculum and, more broadly, its significance seven years later.

Today will witness the inauguration of a festival unique in the history of the world. For the first time the British people will dedicate a day to the great Empire which binds together in an Imperial brotherhood about one-fourth of the human race. In that vast community are included men of every color and every creed, all of whom enjoy the most perfect liberty of thought and expression, and whose lawful liberty of action is bounded only by respect for the equal rights of their fellows. To the meanest man amongst the hundreds of millions who live under its world-embracing folds, the British flag guarantees that full measure of rational freedom, and, if need be, the whole strength of the Empire, which is theoretically at the back of every policeman in the discharge of his duties, protects him in the enjoyment of it [sic]. The Empire Day celebration will serve the highly practical purpose of emphasising that fact, and so assisting all who enjoy those privileges to estimate them at their proper value, and likewise appreciate the responsibilities which they involve. It is no time for any vain jingoism or vulgar spread-eagling, which, besides being out of harmony with the British temperament, would be quite fatal to the dignity of the occasion. The first thought which today’s celebrations awakens is the tremendous influence exercised by the British Empire in the cause of peace on earth. It has welded a quarter of the world into one nation, and thereby eliminated from that section of humanity all the elements of internicine war. Countries separated by the bulge of a hemisphere, peopled by races divergent in color, creed, language, and laws, look up to the one flag as they do to the one sun, and see there the symbol of that mutually guaranteed peace in which they live and prosper...

Daily Telegraph, 24 May 1905

Almost every country has agreed to set apart some particular day as worthy of especial honour by reason of its associations with the past. In Australia we have two such days, the one which witnessed our birth, and Empire Day, which marks our recognition of the fact that we are members of the Imperial household. It was a happy thought that perpetuated the birthday of Queen Victoria by this celebration, for it was during her reign that for the first time Imperial sentiment was fully realised, and the attitude of Britain towards her Dominions came to be what it is now. The time is past when the word ‘empire’ carried with it the idea of domination on one hand and subjection on the other. The time is past when ‘colonial’ was a term of reproach. The significance of Empire Day is that it is a spontaneous manifestation of the new spirit which animates millions all over the world who pay willing allegiance to the Union Jack. A few years ago Imperialism had fallen into some disrepute. Jingos and Little Englanders had, each in their respective ways, done much to discredit it, the one by indulging in extravagant rhodomontade, which disgusted even the best disposed; the other by belittling the whole concept, and denouncing it as theatrical and ridiculous. Since then we have come to a truer perspective of its purpose and value. Imperialism is not a pretext by which Britain can vaunt itself at the expense of the rest of the world, or by which the Dominions can vaunt themselves at the expense of Britain... Imperialism and nationalism are not mutually exclusive, but complementary, and the one helps the other...
At the present time, more than ever before, it behoves us to show the world that the Empire is united. It is an age of war and rumours of war, and who can say when the blow will fall. Our fate is bound up with Britain, and that of Britain with ours. Neither can stand alone.

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 1912

**Defending compulsory military service**

For those of you used the directness of foreign and defence policy pursued by the current president of the United States, Australia’s defence policy between 1901 and 1914 may seem somewhat circumspect. Initially, its focus was on naval defence, within both imperial and regional contexts. Then the focus shifted towards creating a civilian army for home defence through compulsory military service. The Labor Party was a strong supporter of the scheme. Here W. M. Hughes makes his case.

In some quarters the amended Defence Act requiring all males between certain ages to undergo training in order to fit them to defend their country has evoked strong opposition. The proposal is denounced as making for militarism, as unnecessary, as undemocratic, and as opposed to an advancing civilisation... Quakers and Socialists alike speak a great deal about peace and its many blessings. Peace is to them the great desideratum. War is an anathema. Compulsory training of citizens to enable them to fight in the defence of their country is opposed to the ideals of peace. It is therefore accursed. According to them, the way to ensure peace is to refrain from making preparation for war... Peace is not to be obtained without money and without price, either amongst individuals or between nations. There is but one way known to us at the present time by which we here in Australia can hope to insure the maintenance of peace. It is by being prepared for war. And our friends the Quakers, and their allies the Revolutionary Socialists, who denounce our compulsory training scheme, and declare their belief in the influence of the Brotherhood of Man to prevent war, do not in their daily lives act as though they thought it [the same principle] is effective to prevent crime... The critics of the Commonwealth defence scheme are, generally speaking, advocates of international peace. So am I. They say war is unnecessary and wicked. So do I. I say, also, that it is foolish. But I say, also, that war is a fact, very real and very terrible. In view of all this, all talk about the blessings of peace is futile unless it helps us secure peace.

*Daily Telegraph*, 7 October 1911

**The Australian Freedom League replies**

The Australian Freedom League was established to protest the introduction of compulsory military service. A goodly number of the founders included the Quakers Hughes dismissed but they were not alone. The Freedom League mounted an argument against compulsory military service on grounds that are now very familiar to use: civil liberties. In 1914, this was still a rather novel approach to society. The following comes from a pamphlet the League issued c. 1914. Note the use of the noun ‘conscript’.

To sum up, our exposure of the Compulsory Military Training scheme is:-

1. Freedom of speech is destroyed. No Conscript can publicly protest against the Act, nor send communications to the press, *without special consideration*. Standing Order 116 of the regulations [states] Officers and soldiers ‘are not to attempt to
raise a discussion in public about orders, regulations, or instructions issued by their superiors.’ This will include practically the entire male population.

2. Civil liberty is endangered by setting up courts martial.

3. Conscience is coerced. Section 143 allows that those who are forbidden by the doctrines of their religion from bearing arms shall only ‘as far as possible be allocated to non-combatant duties.’

4. A military test is imposed for public offices… Section 136 of the Act reads:-
   ‘Every person who… evades or fails to render the service required… shall… be and remain ineligible for employment of any kind in the public services of the Commonwealth.’

Are we wrong in naming this the Black Statute? Unless we protest, in two years the military control will be complete. Already the mailed fist is being felt. Do not let any fear of a possible foreign foe blind us longer to the fact that the military caucus have the power of supreme control of our national institutions.

Citizens of our beloved land, proud of the freedom the British name has bestowed upon you, at once uphold the standard of our ancient liberties. Help us to abolish the tyranny of Conscription from Australia.


The ‘Revolutionary Socialists’ get stuck in

There was, is, and perhaps always will be, confusion over the relationship between the Labor Party and the labour movement. Some of the most strident attacks on ‘boy conscription’ came from sections in the labour movement who acted as an alternative voice to the official workers’ party. Note the sanctimonious tone of the first extract and note the utopianism of the second. Both would become pivotal political attitudes between 1914 and 1918.

It was the opportunity of the Federal Labor Party, when they first came into office, to declare to the world that they, the first Labor Government having power to deal with the question of defence, refused to touch militarism, or to create soldiers. Such a refusal was their opportunity and they missed it. The moral effect on the whole world would have been incalculable; the workers of every land would have received an inspiration and an example. Australia would have proclaimed to the world that she really meant what she was saying about democracy. The Australian Labor Party would have made an historical declaration, and the year of their entry into power would be remembered forever in world history. But this opportunity was shamefully bartered for votes. The Labor Party knew that an anti-militarist policy would drive them out of office, and they ingloriously preferred office to honour.  

*Socialist*, 1 December 1911

Fellow Workers—

We stand today in Australia at the parting of the ways. Patriotism, ‘the last refuge of the scoundrels’, as the great Dr. Johnson termed it, is being appealed to as a final resort to dam back the advance of the working class. It is for you which cause you will choose to abide by. Will you menially serve the capitalist nation who demand the defence of your stolen property? Or will you organise the army of the working class, and join hands with your fellows the world over to end the capitalist system?

Militarism! Conscription! Compulsory Military Service! Citizen Defence Force! Call the thing what you will, disguise, cloak, cover, make it how you may, the blood-lust is being conjured up in defence of the money lust, and with the designed purpose also of counteracting and sapping the strength of the working class movement in this country. Is this true, you may ask?… Are the Australian workers
ignorant, besotted, down-trodden serfs, more backward in development than Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, Germans, Italians, Russians?... What idiocy to tell you, as the ‘Labor’ advocates of militarism do, to submit to capitalistic government compulsion to drill and train, in order to turn your arms against capitalism (perhaps!) later on, when by organising the Industrial Workers of the World Union (the I.W.W) you can paralyse any capitalist army when the time of social revolution dawns, by cutting off the supplies of the hired murderers who are sought to be used against you. Organised industrially in the one class union you will have in your hands a mightier power than the armed force, and one that cannot be used against you.

G. Herve, *Antimilitarism*, IWW pamphlet, 1910
There is little doubt that colonial Australia was somewhat keen in helping out with the occasional imperial stoush. Colonial contingents served Greater Britain’s wars in New Zealand, the Sudan and even took part in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion. These were limited in both the number of men involved and even combat experience. The New South Wales contingent to the Sudan, for example, arrived when hostilities had basically ceased. The first major military involvement of Australians came in 1899 with the outbreak of the Boer War. Initially, it was seen as yet another colonial escapade and the colonies offered troops, more or less. The war, however, was not simply another colonial escapade. British reversals in late 1899 brought the war more sharply into public focus and the war would last until 1902. In all, between 16,000 and 20,000 men and eighty nurses served in South Africa (as did 16,000 Australian horses). For the first time, it brought death in war to scattered local communities. It raised doubts about the abilities of the British commanders and resentment that Australian contingents were subsumed into British contingents. It provoked opposition at home. It produced one of the more controversial figures in Australian military history, a bush poet and one-time lover of Daisy Bates, ‘Breaker’ Morant. And it provided an irony for Australian History. One of the themes pushed at the centenary of Federation in 2001 was the idea that this was one of the few modern nations that came into existence without warfare. Yet even as the new Commonwealth was inaugurated in 1901, Australian troops were fighting in South Africa.

Why did the colonies send men to fight in South Africa? What is jingoism? How was the Home Front organised? Did Australians lose interest in the War after Mafeking? Who opposed the war and why? What was the role of women in the war? What reputation had the Australians earned as soldiers by 1902? Was Morant a scapegoat or a war criminal?

Documents:

The Courier approves, a politician has doubts and Rivett stirs up the locals.

Readings:


Dennis, P. and Grey, J (eds), *The Boer War, Army, Nation and Empire*, Army Historical Unit, Canberra, 2000.


TUTORIAL 4 DOCUMENTS

Greater Britain’s war

The mainstream press supported the war with little reservation from the country newspapers to the metropolitan dailies. Although the ostensible trigger was the denial of the vote to the Uitlanders, others drew a broader bow. The Brisbane Courier was typical.

The struggle so long threatened in South Africa has begun, and the first blood shed is apparently that of innocent women and children seeking refuge from the horrors of war. An armoured train, conveying [British] refugees from Mafeking southwards, is reported to have been attacked and destroyed by the Boers, with heavy loss of life. One of the outstanding facts in connection with the contest that has now been entered upon is that the issues involved are not local ones. They affect the honour, and perhaps the very integrity of the whole British Empire. The suspicion which suggested itself long since, in relation with the difficulty in the Transvaal, that the hostility of the Boers towards British residents was associated with the idea of the ultimate establishment of Dutch ascendancy in the whole of South Africa derives the strongest confirmation from recent developments. A distinct challenge to British supremacy was conveyed in the document drawn up a little while since by the State Secretary for the Transvaal, Mr. Reitz, for presentation to the British Government as the Boer view of the situation. It was claimed that the rights of the Boer Republic were those of a sovereign and independent state...

It may be well for some of our legislative sympathisers with the Boers to bear that fact in mind when eulogising Mr. Kruger’s countrymen...Of course if Great Britain once acknowledged that the Transvaal were utterly beyond her control, and that she could merely advise and request when her own interests were at stake, her authority in the whole of South Africa would soon become a shadowy thing. Such a confession of weakness - for it would be nothing short of that - would in all likelihood in a very little while stimulate into activity the jealousy of much more formidable opponents of the British Empire than are to be found in the Transvaal... That the manner in which Great Britain may bear herself in the contest she has entered upon in South Africa will be apt, for good or ill, to affect the future of the entire Empire is to be very plainly gathered from the tenor of some of our latest cablegrams... In fact, the situation with which she is now brought face to face is one charged with possibilities of the very gravest kind - possibilities the bare thought of which should be an incentive to the patriotism of every Briton, whether at home or abroad, who cherishes the traditions of British liberty. It is in defence of those traditions that the sword has been drawn in South Africa. Assuredly it will be as much to the interest of Australia and every other portion of Greater Britain as to that of the parent land herself to see her emerge triumphant from a contest which has been virtually forced upon her. She can accept war with a clear conscience in view of the fact that, to quote a memorable phrase, she has exhausted every effort to secure peace with honour.

Brisbane Courier, 14 October 1899.

Some have their doubts

Some politicians had their doubts, especially member of the Labor Party who spoke for their working class constituents. The following doubts were voiced by a man who would dominate Australian politics during the Great War. His name was William Morris Hughes. In the New South Wales Parliament he said:

... I do know that it is against the law of nations, it is against justice, it is against the eternal principles of that religion on which the greatness of the empire is
alleged to be founded, that we should deliberately force upon other another nation, and a foreign nation, our interference in regard to their internal affairs. What is it to us that they will not give a vote to an alien or stranger unless he has been there for five years?... this war shall be undertaken in the interests of that powerful clique in Africa whose only desire appears to be to press on and on, not to plant the seeds of Christianity - if it were for that purpose I would cast a vote for this proposal tonight - not to plant the seeds of Christianity, but that they may by fair means or foul put their hands on the best lands and best property in Africa... All I can say is that if these colonies are led into this infamous attempt to crush a handful of people very like ourselves, if it be our lot under any set of circumstances to lose the protection of Great Britain, the very same treatment might be accorded us by Russia or any other Continental power. Therefore, I say we should be actuated by a desire for justice... If it comes to this, that we are forced to choose between one nation and another, that we shall never hesitate as to which nation we shall give our allegiance, whether right or wrong, when it is in the last extremity...in a life and death struggle... But when it comes to a great pugilist attacking an infant, and asking his little brother to come and hold the infant while he gets at him, it savours too much of political bravado and swashbuckling to be on all-fours with the noble traditions of the British race...

We are now asked to send troops to the Transvaal, not because the empire is in danger, but only to show the solidarity of the empire. It may be so; but if we are only going to have a parade of our solidarity, we are at the same time going to commit acts of shameful immorality and the grossest injustice; and I say that such a parade is an undesirable thing. We have been accused of being disloyal... I wish now to say one or two words about what I may term this colonial jingoism. It was formerly the peculiar prerogative of the people of Great Britain alone amongst the British people to clamour for war. That most undesirable and immoral feature had not extended to these shores, and until the Soudan contingent was sent away there were no blood stains upon this country. But, since the inception of what is known as the federal spirit, there has been a tendency on the part of a great many who formerly the most determined opponents of militarism and jingoism to come round and point out to us that it is our duty to stand by the empire through thick and thin. I say that our duty is perfectly clear. So long as we are prepared to accept the protection of Great Britain we must be ready to lend her a hand in the hour of need; but it does not follow that when, by the machinations of a band of buccaneers she has been landed in difficulties with the Boers of South Africa, or with any other people, that we should be led by the nose also... No one compelled these men [the Uitlanders] to go to the Transvaal...

New South Wales Parliamentary Debates, 1899.

The Rev. Rivett speaks

Rivett was Beechworth’s Congregational Minister when the Boer War broke out. Rivett was strongly opposed to the war and had no qualms about publicly expressing his opinions. He soon found himself in hot water. The following is a paraphrased summary of an article he wrote in 1900.

The Boer and the Briton

It is enough for many to go to war because Great Britain is in South Africa. But the questions need to be asked, how did Britain get there? And what right have they to be there? Those who oppose the war are publicly abused but the following are facts enough to modify the unreasonable and Pharisaic cocksureness so prevalent everywhere. South Africa is not a British colony. It is a conquered country. Over
two hundred years ago the Dutch settled the cape and, under God’s guidance, tamed the wilderness. In 1795, we annexed the Dutch colonies because France had occupied Holland. Britain promised to return them at the end of the European wars but broke that trust. The Dutch rebelled and the rebellion was ruthlessly crushed. Then in 1834 the British forced the Dutch to break their labour covenant with coloured labour. The Great Trek of 1835 followed. The Boers were assured that England would not interfere in the new republics the Boers established to the north with the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and Natalia. Paul Kruger was a lad of ten at the time of the Great Trek. The assurances were worthless. We took Natalia in 1844 and called it Natal. In 1848, we annexed the Orange Free State and returned it in 1854 under international pressure with another guarantee that it and the Transvaal would be free from interference. But diamonds and gold were found in the Transvaal and Britain annexes it in 1877. In 1880, the Boers fought a war of independence and forced Gladstone to the peace table. In 1886, further gold was discovered in the Transvaal and foreigners poured into the territory. The Jameson Raid failed in 1896 but it was a beginning. What do we have in this conflict? On the one side there is a motley crowd of gold seekers, immoral men with little thoughts beyond personal gain. On the other we have a small community of Dutch farmers - narrow-minded, prejudiced, brave, stubborn, independent and God-fearing. What is Britain fighting for? It is not for the right to vote, one of the liberties of the British Empire and its citizens. That argument is hypocritical as anyone who reads last year’s report of the Aboriginal Protection Society can attest. Britain wants the Boer Republics, it wants their land, gold and diamonds but is not honest enough to say so. Cecil Rhodes and his South African gang are responsible for this war, not Kruger.

Ovens and Murray Advertiser, 10 March 1900
Australians greeted the outbreak of war in August 1914 with a near universal enthusiasm. Different groups in Australian society may have cast their support in different ways. Irish Catholic Australians and German Australians were less inclined to trumpet support for the ‘Mother Country’, for example. Some sections of the labour movement were uncertain as were the country’s farmers. Yet open opposition was rare indeed. This tutorial will consider the response of Australians in 1914 within a broader context as the questions that follow show.

Can you explain the response of Australians to the outbreak of war in 1914? Was it naïve? Or could it be repeated today?

Documents:

Attached are examples of the response to the declaration of war in 1914. (Note: I will ask some poor unfortunate who the International Socialists were.)

Readings:


Oliver, B., War and Peace in Western Australia, the Social and Political Impact of the Great War, 1914-1926, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995, chapter 1.


Scott, E., Australia During the War, vol 11, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1989 (1936), chapters 1-2.

Williams, J. F., Anzacs, the Media and the Great War, UNSW Press, University of New South Wales, 1999, chapters 1 and 3.
Unanimity Of Political Leaders

When war was declared, Australia was in the middle of a Federal election campaign.

This is no time for the obtrusion of party differences. If Great Britain becomes involved in the war, the time will have arrived for the display of patriotism that knows no party. Speaking at Horsham on Thursday night, Mr Cook [Liberal Prime Minister] said, 'Whatever happens, Australia is part of the Empire right to the full. Remember that when the Empire is at war, so is Australia at war... So far as the defences go here and now in Australia, I want to make it quite clear that all our resources in Australia are in the Empire and for the Empire, and the preservation and the security of the Empire.'

At Colac on Friday night, Mr Fisher [ALP Opposition Leader] said, 'Turn your eyes to the European situation and give the kindest feelings towards the mother-country at this time... Should the worst happen after everything has been done that honour will permit, Australians will stand beside our own to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling.'

There is a fine touch in each of these utterances. There is an expression of affection for the motherland and of determination to uphold the Empire, and there is promise of help should help be needed. The hour has come for Australia to make a definite offer, and it would be a wise action and a spectacle exemplary in the eyes of the Empire if Mr Cook and Mr Fisher at this juncture, as the leaders of the two great parties of Australia, were to confer and consider the best means of helping Great Britain.

Argus, 3 August 1914.

Church Leaders Speak

In Bathurst, Bishop Long gave a stirring address:

Dr Long’s rise to support the motion [supporting Australia's loyalty to Britain in the present crisis] was the signal for a tremendous outburst of enthusiasm, which lasted some minutes. The present crisis, he opened, was absolutely unique in the world’s history. Never before had such great issues been at stake. While he was speaking, things of enormous moment to the peace, freedom, and stability of the Empire might be happening. If anything untoward happened to the British fleet, we knew how terrible it would be. He felt that every man in the Empire had confidence in the judgement, honour and integrity of our rulers at the present time. (Loud applause.) Something which went to re-assure them in the present situation was the fact that a Liberal Government with its traditional reputation for peace, was in power. With men with pacific minds and calm judgement like Sir Edward Grey and Mr Asquith taking the course they had, indicated to his, the speaker’s mind, that there was no other possible action. They realised that honour had dictated the course. And honour had compelled us to stand by our friends in the present crisis, and every dictate of nationalism appealed to us to try and uphold the nationalism of Denmark, Holland and Belgium. If we stood outside, there would be the greatest danger that those three countries, each of whom stood for certain principles in national freedom and life very dear to them, would be mopped up in a great teutonic Empire (loud applause)...

An example of unity, devotion, loyalty and preparedness had been furnished by the Nationalists in Ireland (loud and prolonged cheering). If ever a great cause demands
generous treatment, it is that, ‘the adherents of which, in the hour of Britain’s peril, have offered to stand shoulder to shoulder in a time like this (applause). Such an example, coming from a people who for more reason than anyone else at such a time, to nurse a grievance, shows what an enormous wave of devotion and enthusiasm will sweep over the whole Empire.’ The principle that animated them was that they must all fight to the last ditch. (Loud Applause.)

Amid great applause, Dr Long said we were not going to add anything to the Empire by our Present action, but we were going to preserve the peace of the world, and the best way and the nearer way to do that, he thought, was for the Empire to declare war.

_Bathurst National Advocate, 6 August 1914._

The Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Michael Kelly, had a slightly different response.

The war now broken out challenges the attention of all. The issues at stake are tremendous. The sacrifices by which alone favorable results may be looked for by us are exceptional. War, being the worst of the three evils by which mankind may be overwhelmed, cannot be regarded passively. War is worse than pestilence, worse than famine. Often, nay generally, it embraces both to some degree. Yet war evokes patriotism, courage, wisdom, fraternal regard, individual heroism - all noble and manly virtues. Evil is not unmixed with good; yes, and when a just war, nobly waged, is crowned with victory. Then our nation wins imperishable glory. Our present duty is manifold - first, in our Masses and in our churches, we should, in faith, hope, and charity, implore the blessings of reconciliation between Governments, from the mercy and benignity of God. Secondly, we should stand shoulder to shoulder with our responsible rulers and leaders, in word and action, trusting one another, and exciting one another, to do manfully, as the occasion arises, both in restraint and exertion - restraint of self interests, exertion in fulfilling our respective duties. Thirdly, we are always to remember the wounded and the slain, praying for their relief, and helping them according to our opportunities.

_Daily Telegraph, 8 August 1914._

_Scriptus_

_Scriptus_ was the pen name for a country newspaper columnist.

WAR! At any time, this word has awful significance, but when our Empire is interested, when our Australian coast is in danger, when our very cities and homes are threatened, it has a terrible meaning. No wonder then that the fearful conflict now raging throughout Europe has put all other topics in the background. I never remember Australians being so profoundly moved since the reverses in the Boer War as they were when the first intelligence came through by telegram the early part of last week that Germany had declared war against Russia, and that Great Britain was preparing for emergencies. Loyalty to our own kinsmen across the seas was at once the dominant impulse of everyone. All party feuds were dropped as by magic, and we were united Britons once again. It is intensely satisfactory to learn that the same splendid patriotism prevails in all the chief outposts of the Empire.

When I said just now that loyalty was the dominant impulse of everyone I made a mistake. I met with one exception on Monday. This thing - I cannot call him a man - knew all about the declaration of war; he knew what this meant to Australia and the Empire; he was eagerly looking for the newspaper boy, who was just ahead of me. He got his 'Argus', and I waited a moment to see if he would make any comment on the
latest intelligence. Imagine my disgust when I saw him open the centre portion of the paper with its sensational headlines, throw it aside, and search through the remaining columns for the report of the Australian Hurdle Race, in which he at once became engrossed. I could not help exclaiming, 'You poltroon.' Contrast this conduct with that of 100 athletes who reached Spencer Street on the same day after taking part in a cross-country run. They formed up into a body, and with uncovered heads sang the National Anthem. When asked for the reason by a Pressman the leader replied, 'We did it merely to show our unswerving loyalty to the Empire, for during the present crisis sport occupies but a very secondary consideration, and it is well for Great Britain to know and feel that her subjects across the sea are loyal to her.'

*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 8 August 1914

**The Labour Movement's View**

Australia is as much part of the British Empire as England is, and while we remain so any attempt to evade responsibilities under present conditions would not only be courting eventual disaster as a people, but would be altogether unworthy of us.

Our beginnings in the matter of defence have been based upon the principle that our army and navy are primarily for defence, and not for aggressive purposes. No man can be compelled to leave his own shores to fight. This fact stands out too plain to be overlooked. But had this country been attacked by foreign foe it was known as an absolute certainty, not only here but throughout the rest of the world, that the available forces of England would have been ready to come to our assistance.

That being so, where is they who would say to Australians: ‘It is no affair of yours to protect from aggression the motherland that was always ready to defend you?’ Shall we be content to be branded as a people willing to take the hand of a mother in our time of need, and afterwards see her in trouble and not go out to help her? Australian Labour has shown the world many object lessons in the way of standing shoulder to shoulder in time of trouble. And now that war has been proclaimed, Australian Labour will stand shoulder to shoulder with old England in this her hour of storm and stress.

*Worker*, Brisbane, 6 August 1914.
‘The Mad Drama In Europe’

War has been declared in Europe and the bells are pealing and priests praying for successful slaughter. The newspapers will soon be filled with the horrible deaths of fiendish atrocities.

The editors of the daily press of Europe are virulently stirring up strife and hatred between alliances and groups of nations, and are urging them in the name of patriotism to adopt manslaughter as the only logical means of settling their differences. Manufacturers, merchants, contractors for military stores, are hurrying gleefully about their business in the hope of making double profits.

Government officials of the countries involved will have a busy time, for during a war there are many more perks to be stolen than at other times. The military authorities will have the treasuries at their disposal and will draw double pay and rations, and be rewarded later on with certain ribbons, crosses, orders, and stars - silly little gew-gawgs which small-minded men greatly prize. Idle ladies and gentlemen, in search of relief from satiety, will rush to join Red Cross Societies and bind up the wounds of those who have been wounded by their husbands and brothers. And they will fondly imagine that in doing such work they are doing a Christian duty.

As for the conscripted men, they will drag along to the front to stop bullets, scream, and bite the dust. Some may live to sack and ravage the enemies’ towns putting to death thousands of non-combatants and outraging their womenfolk.

They will march, freeze, hunger, sicken and die for glorious war. They will either be killed or kill other men whom they have never seen before; and who have never done them any injury.

When the number of wounded and killed is too great, and the air is infected with the stench of the putrefying ‘food for powder’, a truce will be called and the authorities will proceed to remove the nuisance. The sick and wounded will be picked up and huddled together in heaps; the dead will be covered with earth and lime if that is available, and once more the crowds of deluded men will be set to the job of murdering each other. This will continue until the money and men of one side have been used up and exhausted, or till those who wrought to make it profitable receive their spoil.

After the war is over the nations will call for tenders for the supply of artificial limbs so that the maimed workers may not look so shocking, and so that they may able to work once more for their masters. The authorities will reward some of the baubles and fill their ears with claptrap of the glories of the war, and the maimed workers will be left to wonder why they fought and what the war was for. Meanwhile, the men who reaped a profit from it all, will urge that new preparations must be made for the next war - which is sure to come sooner or later. The editors will take up the cry and the whole futile business will be gone over again. This will go on until the workers, who have to do the fighting, become wise enough to refuse to do it.

*International Socialist*, 8 August 1914.
Gallipoli: the noun sparks myriad reactions amongst Australians even today and books with ‘Gallipoli’ in the title sell well. Journalist Les Carlyon wrote a best seller on the campaign. His is a traditional military history and it is rare to see such works at the top of the best seller lists. Yet few Australians know what happened on the Peninsula in 1915, even fewer know that not only were the Australians there but also the New Zealanders, the British, the French, the Indians and other colonial troops. Few even know it was a defeat. It therefore seems appropriate that what really happened on the Peninsula should be examined.

What were the basic objectives behind the Dardanelles Campaign? Were the Australians and New Zealanders landed at the wrong place? What were their objectives? What was the basic strategy employed by both the Allies and the Turks between April and August 1915? Why did the August offensive fail? How was the evacuation of the Anzac Sector handled? Did the failure of the Dardanelles offensive finally come down to Hamilton or London? How did the Australians regard the Turks?

Document:

The campaign and Ashmead Bartlett.

Readings:


TUTORIAL 6 DOCUMENTS

The campaign

From Dennis, P. et. al., The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History.
Ashmead Bartlett

Although C. E. W. Bean was Australia’s official war correspondent, the first news of the landing came instead from the British journalist, Ashmead Bartlett.

The Australians rose to the occasion. Not waiting for orders, or for the boats to reach the beach, they sprang into the sea and forming a sort of rough line, rushed at the enemy’s trenches.

Their magazines were not charged, so they just went in with cold steel.

It was over in a minute. The Turks in the first trenches were either bayonetted or they ran away, and their Maxim was captured.

Then the Australians found themselves facing an almost perpendicular cliff of loose sandstone, covered with thick shrubbery. Somewhere, half-way up, the enemy had a second trench, strongly held, from which they poured a terrible fire on the troops below and the boats pulling back to the destroyers for the second landing party.

Here was a tough proposition to tackle in the darkness, but those colonials, practical above all else, went about it in a practical way.

They stopped for a few minutes to pull themselves together, got rid of their packs, and charged their magazines.

Then this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliffs without responding to the enemy’s fire. They lost some men but did not worry.

In less than a quarter of an hour the Turks were out of their second position, either bayonetted or fleeing...

In the early part of the day heavy casualties were suffered in the boats conveying the troops from the destroyers and in the tugs from the transports. The enemy’s sharpshooters were hidden everywhere, and they concentrated their fire on these boats.

But then the Australians, whose blood was up, instead of entrenching, rushed northwards and eastwards, searching for fresh enemies to bayonet. It was difficult country in which to entrench. Therefore they preferred to advance...

A serious problem was getting the wounded from the shore. All those unable to hobble had to be carried from the hills on stretchers, and then their wounds hastily dressed and the men carried to boats.

The boat parties worked unceasingly through the entire day and night.

The courage displayed by these wounded Australians will never be forgotten. Hastily placed in trawlers, lighters, and boats, they were towed to the ships, and, in spite of their suffering, cheered on reaching the ship from which they had set out in the morning.

In fact, I have never seen anything like these wounded Australians in war before.

Though many were shot to bits, without hope of recovery, their cheers resounded throughout the night. You could see in the midst of the mass of suffering humanity
arms waving in greeting to the crews of the warships. They were happy because they had been tried for the first time and had not been found wanting.

For fifteen mortal hours our men occupied the heights under incessant shell fire, without the moral or material support of a single gun ashore, and they were subjected the whole time to the counter-attacks of a brave enemy, skillfully led, with snipers deliberately picking off every officer who endeavoured to give a command or lead his men.

There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights, above all holding on whilst the reinforcements were landing.

These raw colonial troops in these desperate hours proved worthy to fight side by side with the [British] heroes of Mons, the Aisne, Ypres and Neuve Chapelle...

*Argus, 8 May 1915.*
TUTORIAL 7: KING AND COUNTRY OR 6/- A DAY

During the war, and in the immediate post war years, it was simply assumed that the vast majority of men enlisted for patriotic motives, the love of King and Country. It was an assumption that added the lustre of selflessness and nobility to the image of the First AIF. Subsequent research, however, has suggested that the reasons behind the individual decision to enlist were far more complex, ranging from the patriotic to the more pragmatic and were subject to change over time. Chief among the alternative explanations offered has been an economic one. The AIF paid a handsome £2/2/- a week, clothing and full board.

Why did men enlist? Do you find any single explanation satisfactory? Can the decision to enlist be explained by class, ethnicity, religion, propaganda, social pressure or the idea of masculinity promoted before the war?

Documents:

Letters often provide an insight into the reasons why men enlisted - or do they? Attached are three letters and a table.

Readings:


McQuilton, J., 'Enlistments in the First World War in Rural Australia: the Case of North Eastern Victoria', Journal of the Australian War Memorial, 33, 2000.)


*Note:* There are now many individual memoirs of men who enlisted and fought in the First World War.
Dear Father,

I have made up my mind to enlist and am writing to get your consent as, though I am sure you will grant it, yet I would not like to go without it.

This matter has been worrying me for several months but has at last reached a climax and I feel I must go.

It is hard to explain what is impelling me to go but there is something allied to conscience which bids me go.

A factor that will make it much pleasanter to go is that Malcolm Stirling one of my sincerest friends is also going. And to have the company of one such as he in such a crisis would be a great help. Especially when I am beginning to enjoy my work, as I have never enjoyed it before; however I think that if I did not go now I shall always regret it.

I believe in the hereafter and if following the will of my conscience I enter it sooner than under ordinary circumstances I do not think that anyone should regret it.

Those things that hurt most however, are not the laying aside of a promising course or a life which I enjoy very much, but the sorrow which I know I shall cause both Mother and you. Also the fact that what has been spent on my education, at the cost of many comforts you have not been able to have, may perhaps be wasted.

What comes home to me a great deal is, that I am abiding here in comfort while others perhaps having people dependent on them are fighting my battles and giving their lives for me.

Death must come to us all sooner or later and there is no way so noble of leaving than that in which you ‘Lay down your life for your friends’.

You must not think that I am making a hasty decision. The decision has been arrived at after long hours of meditation.

I have not told mother yet but I thought you would make things easier.

Would you please wire me an answer as now that I have definitely made up my mind I do not like waiting. I shall go and get medically examined tomorrow.

Your loving son,

Owen.

Lewis, B., Our War.
Dear Dad,

I have written to mother often enough asking her could I go to the war. Well I am eighteen this week, and will be able to go. Of course it will be hard on mother for a while, but still it is my duty to go to war, and I must go. Mother put a lot of rot in her last letter saying she would not give up any of her sons except to God. Well she must know that if my time has come, I must go; but I am not frightened to die.

You must get an idea of how I feel when you read the latest recruiting figures. All the able-bodied men are going, and those who are left behind are looked down upon and scorned. You must let me do my duty, not that I expect a joy trip, but to do my duty as a Britisher; and you as a Britisher, do yours. Of course if I don't get your consent I'll go all the same. Only what I don't like is going without your consent; but I must go. If I go out to camp without it and I am brought back I will be disgraced. I am sure you don't want me to be like that. And if I am not allowed to go to the war I will never come home again. I'd sooner die than be one of those who didn't go. You can't imagine half the insults that are hurled at a big man like me. What about when the war is over, life won't be worth living.

I have thought this out pretty thoroughly during the last nine months - weighed everything carefully, and I find it my plain duty to go to war. I know it will be hard on mother, but somebody must sacrifice their best. I don't know what it is but I have got the fighting blood in me, and it is rotten to be tied down by parental affections. Of course any mother thinks the world of her boys when the time to leave has come.

Now, Dad, do your duty to your country and give me consent. We will see what you are made of now, Dad. Somebody must avenge Charley Powley's death and it's me for the job.

Your loving son,

E Edwards

Private Collection

Chooks of a certain colour

SIR- Some old tart in Yackandandah has posted me some White Leghorn Plumage. Little does she know that I have been turned down for various defects including hammer toe and varicose veins. Knowing I was not an absolute physical wreck I gladly offered my services as a camp attendant. Turned down again, sir, most unanimously. Further, the YMCA politely informed me that their was no opening to outsiders in their line. Being musical and energetic I offered to sing at patriotic concerts, but nobody seemed to be having any. Is there anything you would suggest, sir, that I might do to help the cause? - Yours etc. WILLING

Yes, subscribe weekly to the War Loan - ED

Yackandandah Times, 27 July 1916
% Occupations of Men Enlisting and % Occupations of the Male Population by Shire, North Eastern Victoria 1914-1918

The following table compares the three major occupations of men enlisting with the occupations of males within each shire or borough in North Eastern Victoria. What conclusions can be drawn from the figures? (Note: LGA means local government area).

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<th>LGA</th>
<th>LABOURERS</th>
<th>FARMERS</th>
<th>MINERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Ovens</td>
<td>27 35</td>
<td>51 30</td>
<td>3 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rutherglen</td>
<td>30 43</td>
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<td>Chiltern</td>
<td>25 42</td>
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<td>Yackandandah</td>
<td>23 38</td>
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<td>29 36</td>
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<td>40 39</td>
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<td>Oxley</td>
<td>30 33</td>
<td>56 41</td>
<td>1 2</td>
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<td>Bright</td>
<td>21 30</td>
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<td>Beechworth</td>
<td>17 34</td>
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<td>REGION</td>
<td>30 36</td>
<td>28 18</td>
<td>12 7</td>
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Rates of pay per day, First AIF

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>In Australia</th>
<th>On Embarkation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>15/-</td>
<td>21/-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>10/-</td>
<td>10/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>9/-</td>
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<td>Private</td>
<td>5/-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How does one make sense of the carnage that was the First World War? It was vast in scope with armies of millions. The Official Histories produced by most nations at war’s end provide detailed descriptions of battles and strategy. But where did the individual soldier fit? The Australian Official War Historian, C. E. W. Bean tried to incorporate this element in his work and was roundly condemned by his peers in other countries for doing so. His was not an ‘Official History’, they sniffed. Military history was about commanders and generals, not the men in the trenches. Yet, for the ordinary folk, the war was about their men in the trenches.

The best way to access the experience of Australian soldiers at war is through their letters, diaries and memories. They can be cheerful, evasive, home-sick, bewildered, disillusioned and pragmatic. (Gammage was one of the first of the historians to gather the letters of men to try and gauge what the war may have meant. If you read only one book for this subject, his is the book to read.) Few talk about the reasons for enlisting which reflects earlier discussions in tutorials. Many families kept the letters written by these men, especially the families of men who did not return.

Yet, the letters and the recollections of men who served in the Great War raise methodological issues. Some historians argue that many men avoided the realities of combat in their letters, perhaps to shield those at home from what the war really meant. Others argue that the men sought to reconstruct their memories to match a popular perception of the ‘digger’. Thomson’s work in particular is worth noting in this regard. And although the men wrote about death, they rarely wrote about killing. Bourke managed to ruffle more than a few feathers with her argument that an essential component of the soldiers’ war was a joy and sense of liberation in the act of killing.

How did men react to battle and death, the enemy and the ‘Tommy’? What was ‘shell-shock’? How important was leave, touring and news from home? What insights into the war are offered by the Keat letters and the way his death was described? Why do men kill in war? Or should the question be why do combatants kill in war?

Documents:
Alick writes home, death of a soldier, the ‘joy’ of war.

Readings:


-, From the Australian Front, Cassell, Melbourne London, 1917.*


Bean, C. E. W., Anzac to Amiens, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1946.


King, J., Gallipoli: Our Last Man Standing, the Extraordinary Life of Alec Campbell, Double Day Australia, Sydney, 2003.


* Wollongong campus only
Alick writes home

Alick to his mother 1

France
14/3/18

My Dear Mother,

Here I am again writing to you a few lines just to let you know how things are getting on over here. Things are very quiet at present. At times, one would not know there is a War on We are expecting things to be pretty lively this spring, their is a bit of noise on now with the big guns, I was on top of (hill sixty) in the last stunt My word it is some place Could tell you a lot more, but one has to be very careful what they write about.
I received the sixpence, I have the 3d still
I was in a town called Baillent the other day and who should I meet but Douglas Carmichael from Wang. The girls [Alick's sisters] will know who he is. The day before I met him, I got a letter from Bertha, telling me about his Brother We had quite a long yarn he is a Lieut now How is things getting on with Walt [a brother], I think I will have to send him a French Girl, think it is about time he got married. It is a pity you did not sell the Piano. You know it is not a good one, so if you want to sell it at any time do so Have received letters from you and Bertha Dated Dec & Jan If you address them two the 24th Machine Gun Company AIF abroad (now don't put any other address but that), you have been addressing my letters to Salisbury Plains I am in France now, so don't do it again. Now don't forget to send me some newspapers. I sometimes get a Weekly Times but not very often, now be careful of the address, I will get everything if you put the right address on them. I think I have done enough growling about the address. Give my love to the Girls... So must close, hope Doll don't suffer with the wind still from your loving son Alick

Alick to his mother 2

Paris
21/8/1918

Dear Mother,

Hope this finds you in the best of health, am having a great time while in Paris. I am on 9 days leave, will not be going back to camp. Must close now with heaps of love and kisses, Your loving Son, Alick

Alick to his mother 3

3/9/18

My Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to let you know I am tip top. Just arrived back from Paris had a great time & I am sending you a small parcel with this note I will tell you what is... got for you While I was away some... a buckle of a German's belt and also some of his shoulder straps There was about 2 dozen letters waiting for me and some
papers & also a tin of sweets Dollie sent me thank her very much and don't forget to give her a big kiss from me. I also received your letter with the... of Bertha with the photo in & an account of the wedding. I hope you receive the parcel you should get about Xmas time. Well Mum must close with heaps of love and kisses for all

From your loving
Son Alick

Alick to his mother 4

France
16/9/18

My Dear Mother,

Your ever welcome letter to hand, Dated July 12 & 6th & also three from Bertha. I was very pleased to hear that you are keeping so well. We are having lovely weather here now. I am writing this outside my dug-out, their is only room in it for two, so it is not very big, we are on the move in two days time. Well Mother I wonder when this war is going to end. Am pleased to hear Mrs Owen and Daughter is well give them my kind regards...

I have some more Shots to send you. The ones I had taken in Paris they are not very good; they are back in Camp, so can't send them till I get back so of course you have an idea of where I am...

I had £20 in my paybook, & nearly spent it all in Paris That is the place to spend money, shall be able to tell you about it when I get back.

So must close lots of love and kisses from your loving son Alick.

This was the last letter that Alick Keat wrote. He was killed in action two days later. In his will, he named his mother as the recipient of any pension due if he died. His mother received a war pension of 4/- (40¢) per fortnight and his Victory Medal.

Death of a soldier

The first document is a letter written by a soldier knowing that his death was imminent. Bert Crowle was a builder from North Adelaide with a wife (Beatrice) and son (Bill) in Adelaide.

24/8/16

Dearest Beat and Bill

Just a line you must be prepared for the worst to happen any day. It is no use trying to hide things. I am in terrible agony. Had I been brought in at once I had a hope. But now gas gangrene has set in and it is so bad that the doctor could not save it by taking it off as it had gone too far and the only hope is that the salts they have put on may drain the gangrene out otherwise there is no hope. The pain is much worse today so the doctor gave me some morphia, which has eased me a little but still is awful. Tomorrow I shall know the worst as the dressing was to be left on for 3 days and tomorrow is the third day it smells rotten. I was hit running out to see the other officer who was with me but badly wounded. I ran too far as I was in a hurry and he had passed the word down to return, it kept coming down and there was nothing to do but go up and see what he meant, I got two machine
gun bullets in the thigh another glanced off by my water bottle and another by the periscope I had in my pocket, you will see that they send my things home. It was during the operations around Mouquet Farm, about 20 days I was in the thick of the attack on Pozieres as I had just about done my duty. Even if I get over it I will never go back to the war as they have taken pounds of flesh out of my buttock, my word they look after us well here. I am in the officers ward and can get anything I want to eat or drink but I just drink all day changing the drinks as I take a fancy. The Stretcher Bearers could not get the wounded out any way than over the top and across the open. They had to carry me four miles with a man waving a red cross flag in front and the Germans did not open fire on us. Well dearest I have had a rest, the pain is getting worse and worse. I am very sorry dear, but still you will be well provided for I am easy on that score. So cheer up dear I could write on a lot but I am nearly unconscious. Give my love to Dear Bill and yourself, do take care of yourself and him.

Your loving husband
Bert

Gammage, B., *The Broken Years*

One of the most treasured items received by parents coping with the death of a son was the letter written by a comrade on the field of battle. These were hard letters to write, yet many men wrote them and later visited the parents of their dead mates. Note the shifts in tone in the letter and the details of Alick Keat’s death that have been omitted. A photograph of the grave was included with the letter.

21. 10. 18
France

Mrs M Keat,

Dear Friend: -

On opening this letter you no doubt shall be surprised to know of who I am. So please allow me to introduce myself as a soldier Pal of your son Alex Keat. Of course ere now you have had the news of your son’s death. I do not care to recall those sad memories, but excuse me this much, when I think I should give you a full detail of his death. He had ever been a Pal of mine, & his presence & good nature has been ever so much missed since he has been taken away. he died the death of a fighting soldier gloriously doing his noble duty for king and country. He had been attached to my section for some good time, and as to orders he was in the midst of battle in that glorious advance on the morning of 19. 9. 18 when we captured the village of Le-Verguier which is some distance to the west of St Lucutine. The morning was one of the worst we have ever seen in both for the Rain, Fog and Fighting. He was with us going through Le-Verguier Village and was carrying ammunition and parts of our Gun to a further forward position he was passing on just about 15 paces in front of me with a gun mate assisting him when a shell fired from the enemies guns fell and exploded 2 yds in front of him and his mate. he got almost the full force of the shell explosion in the front part of his body and his face and with a murmur fell dead at my feet, with his mate. I got an awful shock but soon gained my senses and lifted both of them to the side of the road and put their coats across them. I then proceeded on with our advancing to gain a much further forward position which we captured later in the day. at dark that night under heavy shell fire I and another mate got permission to go back and bury the bodies of your son and his gun-mate. We discovered the Cemetery of the village about 300 yards from where he was killed so we carried the bodies to
that Cemetery and dug the graves side-by-side and placed them there to rest. Word was sent back to Headquarters about their deaths & they forwarded up to us two beautiful crosses fully inscribed to memory of both of them 1 cross each.

No 466 Pte A L Keat
Killed in action
18. 9. 18
24th Aust Machine Gun Comp
For King and Country.

I arranged these graves and dressed them in the best manner possible and planted a few Pansies and Primroses on them. That was all I could do. I grieve with you in the loss of such a fine lad & no one was more missed in our company than he was. God’s will be done. If there is anything else you should care to know please don’t be afraid to ask. All his personal property was taken and I now understand has been forwarded to you.

Now please allow me to remain yours very Truly,

No 3146 Geo Elliot
24th Australian Machine Gun Company
On Active Service
France.

Keat Papers
TUTORIAL 9: GOVERNING FOR WAR

During the election campaign in 1914, Andrew Fisher wrote to his wife suggesting that it might not be a bad thing if Labor lost the election. A major element in Labor’s domestic platform was the transferral of powers from the states to the Commonwealth to control trusts, prices and industrial disputes. It needed a referendum. A skilled leader of his party, he was acutely aware of the difficulties war might pose for a domestic platform. He was prescient. Fisher resigned as prime minister in October 1915 and was replaced by his deputy, the Attorney-General, William Morris Hughes. The plans for the referendum were promptly dropped and Hughes would dominate Australian politics for the rest of the war.

Fisher’s promise of the last man and the last shilling was genuine enough and the government quickly placed Australia on a war footing with the passage of the War Precautions Act and censorship. It conducted a war census and conducted two major recruitment campaigns, one in mid 1915, the second in early 1916. In both, the government, and private business, promised the men enlisting generous entitlements and jobs on their return. The response to the first was extraordinary, the response to the second lack-lustre, despite an invitation sent by Hughes to every ‘eligible’ in Australia. Voluntarism seemed to be failing. Between February and July 1916, Hughes was in Britain where he was lionised as an Imperial loyalist – and where he was converted to the idea that conscription for service overseas was the only answer to falling enlistment rates back home.

What powers did the War Precautions Act confer on the Executive? How were they used? Why did the recruitment campaign of 1915 work so well? Why wasn’t that success repeated in 1916? What role did Hughes play in British politics in 1916? Why did Hughes change his mind on conscription for service overseas? Was the government over-zealous in its prosecution of the war effort?

Documents:

Enlistments, the war census, dropping the referendum, an ‘invitation’, prosecutions.

Readings:


Greenwood, G. and Grimshaw, C. (eds), *Documents on Australian International Affairs, 1901-1918*, Nelson with the Australian Institute of International Affairs and the Royal Institute of International Affairs London, West Melbourne, 1977


Scott, E., *Australia During the War*, vol 11, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1989 (1936), chapters 2, 3, 6 and 8


*Note*: Students are advised to visit the Australian War Memorial’s web site which has a collection of recruitment posters which you can view.
### Enlistments

**1914**

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The war census

Although Australia had conducted its first genuinely national census in 1911, the government conducted a war census in 1915 to ascertain the wealth of the nation (the last shilling) and the potential number of men who might enlist (the last man). Little came from the former but the latter would provide fertile grounds for information and misinformation on the number of eligible men in Australia. Hughes, as Attorney General, introduced the War Census Bill into the House.

This measure arises out of, and finds its justification in, the tremendous conflict in which Australia, as part of the Empire, is now engaged. Its object is the organization of the forces of the country so that we may put forth the greatest effort of which we are capable. It provides for the registration of our resources in both men and material. The Bill does not contemplate conscription, nor is a measure to legalize conscription necessary so far as service within Australia is concerned... I do not believe conscription is necessary. I do not say that the future may not hold within it possibilities which may shatter our present conceptions of what is necessary, for no man can say what this frightful war may yet involve. But this Bill has not been introduced with a view to conscription...

This, then, is the problem: To maintain our fighting forces at the front at the highest possible pitch of efficiency and to so organize the industrial resources of this country as to enable those industries that have direct relation to the war... Without organization of these forces, Australia will be unable to do her part in this great contest. For we must not rely on outside help. For the first time in her history Australia is called upon to maintain herself... The Bill deals not only with men, but with wealth. We propose to marshal all our resources, and as patriotism calls for sacrifice, that sacrifice must fall equally on all sections of society...

We are asked to contemplate the sending to the front of 100,000 of the best and bravest of our men, and to keep our fighting force at that strength. Any man who studies the dreadful casualty lists can calculate without much difficulty what that means. The country is to be depleted week after week, and month after month, of its best men. To keep 100,00 men at the front means, if the war lasts another year, not far short of 200,000 men all told. It is perfectly obvious that we cannot meet such a demand upon our manhood without completely disorganizing the whole economic fabric of our existence, nor is it possible to maintain such a force at the front unless we marshal our resources and utilize them to the very best advantage, and call upon wealth to make its corresponding sacrifice. Therefore, when the right honorable member asks me for the justification for inquiry into the wealth of the community, I answer that it is because in this struggle there are no distinctions of class; every man is to give of his best without stint. Let the man who has merely his body give that, and let the man who has both body and wealth give both.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, 1915.

Dropping the referendum

With Federation, the bulk of fiscal and industrial powers had remained with the states. It was a central plank of the Labor platform to transfer these powers to the Commonwealth and Hughes had been a major champion of the cause. But the war over-ride domestic considerations. The mainstream press thought so. It would take another World War before the current system would be put in place.

It would, perhaps, be too much to ask Hughes to signalize his entry to the leadership of his party by dropping the referendum. Yet such a move would be proof of a
capacity and clear-sightedness; and its dramatic value, with the limelight so strongly concentrated upon the new Prime Minister, would be immense. It would be ‘good business’ in a remarkable degree, apart from the genuine assurance of relief to the public at large. Moreover, it would represent wisdom, because every week shows how little interest the electors are taking in the Labor party’s proposals for amending the Constitution. These proposals are irritating. When attention is given to them there are expressions of disgust not of approval; and it is becoming increasingly likely that the Commonwealth by majority will meet them with an emphatic ‘NO’... If the caucus will allow the new Prime Minister to make capital today, it may be sure that he will turn things over at a handsome profit before the next elections. For, of course, Mr. Hughes must be empowered by the caucus to make a somersault... Is he not being asked to eat his own words? How can he possibly do it? Well, the apparently impossible is possible if the people of Australia as a whole, and not a section, be placed first in the Prime Minister’s mind. As a mere party leader he will, of course, continue as he has begun. But as a war leader he will go to caucus and force upon it the case for a cessation of hostilities at home until Germany is beaten...

*Sydney Morning Herald,* 28 October 1915.

An ‘invitation’

With the dropping of the referendum on prices, it was clear that Hughes had turned his back on any domestic agenda in favour of the war effort. The figures provided by the war census mesmerised Hughes. He saw the response to the recruitment campaign in 1915 as the tip of the iceberg. In December 1915, on the eve of the second recruitment campaign, he sent the following invitation to all males aged between eighteen and forty-five in the country, close to a million men.

*Commonwealth of Australia*

**CALL TO ARMS**

Prime Minister 15th December 1915.

Dear Sir,- The present state of war imperatively demands that the exercise of the full strength of the Empire and its allies should be put forth. In this way only can speedy victory be achieved and lasting peace secured.

If those rights and privileges for which Australian democracy has struggled for so long and values dearer than life itself are to be preserved, Prussian military despotism must be crushed once and for all.

The resources of the Allies are more than adequate for this task, but they must be marshalled. To wage this war with less than our full strength is to commit national suicide by slowly bleeding to death.

Our soldiers have done great things in this war. They have carved for Australia a niche in the Temple of the Immortals. Those who have died fell gloriously, but had the number of our forces been doubled, many brave lives would have been spared, the Australian armies would long ago have been camping in Constantinople, and the world war would have been practically over.

We must put forth all our strength. The more men Australia sends to the front the less the danger will be to each man. Not only victory but safety belongs to the big battalions.

Australia turns for you to help. We want more men. Fifty thousand (50,000)
additional troops are to be raised to form new units of the Expeditionary Forces. Sixteen thousand (16,000) men are required each month for reinforcements at the front.

This Australia of ours, the freest and best country on God’s earth, calls to her sons for aid. Destiny has given to you a great opportunity. Now is the hour when you can strike a blow on her behalf. If you love your country, if you love your freedom, then take your place alongside your fellow-Australians at the front and help them to achieve a speedy and glorious victory.

On behalf of the Commonwealth Government, and in the name of the people of Australia, I ask you to answer “Yes” to this appeal, and to do your part in this greatest war of all time.

Yours truly
W. M. HUGHES
Prime Minister of Australia.

A form was enclosed, which had been authorised by a regulation under the War Census Act:

Write in your answers legibly, place in small envelope, address, and deliver or post the envelope to nearest Local Recruiting Centre.
Do this at once.
Replies to these questions will be treated as strictly confidential.
Post answers to reach the local recruiting committee within seven days.
Name in full.
Give your postal address.
State -
Age last birthday.
If unmarried, married, divorced, unwidowed.
Number fully dependent on you.
Number partly dependent on you.
Present condition of your health, whether good, indifferent, bad.
If deaf, blind, or if you have lost arm or leg.
Your occupation.
If willing to enlist now? Reply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.
If you reply “Yes” you will be given a fortnight’s notice before being called up.
If not willing to enlist now, are you willing to enlist at a later date?
Reply “Yes” or “No”, and willing, state when.
If not willing to enlist, state the reason why, as explicitly as possible.
Signature in full.
Write your name distinctly.
N.B. - If you have already enlisted, please state date of enlistment and camp at which stationed.

Prosecutions Brought Under the War Precautions Act

The War Precautions Act, introduced in 1914 by W M Hughes in his role as Attorney General, gave the Executive arm of government broad and sweeping powers. What follows is a sample of the 3422 charges brought under the Act.

Selling or offering for sale commodities at a price in excess of the maximum fixed by Regulation (216 cases).
Obstructing an officer in the course of inspecting books of firms.
Falsely representing to be returned soldiers.
Wearing returned soldiers’ badges without title to them.
Misleading a military officer.
Being in possession of a forged military discharge certificate.
Wearing a soldier’s uniform without the right to do so.
Being in possession of official documents.
Failing to register as an alien (about 650 cases).
Selling badges without authority.
Selling uniforms without authority.
Making unauthorized use of military and naval uniforms.
Exhibiting the red flag (37 cases).
Evasion of censorship of letters from enemy countries.
Attempting to transmit letters from the Commonwealth otherwise than through the post.
Accepting assignment of allotment certificates from female dependants of soldiers.
Using, for purposes of trade, names other than those by which the accused were known at the date of the commencement of the war.
Being in unauthorized possession of wireless apparatus.
Using a code for secretly communicating naval information.
Disclosing information with regard to the movement of ships.
Using the word ‘Anzac’ without permission for purposes of trade.
Selling goods issued by the Red Cross Society.
Collecting for patriotic purposes without authority.
Advocating action calculated to prevent the production of warlike material for purposes connected with the war.
Making statements prejudicial to recruiting (about 150 of such cases) ;-
‘Any man who puts on a uniform is a fool. A German has as much right to live in this country as an Australian.’ ‘Do not enlist to fight for a man like ‘Billy’ Hughes. He owes me a quid. I am a German and proud of it.’ ‘Poor fools are going to the war because they have no sense.’ ‘England is decaying. She wants Australia to go. Australians are fools to go.’ ‘These men in khaki are hired assassins and murderers. They are only a pack of mugs who put on khaki.’ ‘Our men are nothing but murderers and baby killers.’
Exhibiting disloyalty or hostility to the British Empire.
Making statements likely to cause disaffection to his Majesty.
Publishing information that might be of use to the enemy.
Spreading reports likely to caused alarm.
Publishing printing matter that had not been previously submitted to the Censor.
Attempting to cause sedition or disaffection among the civil population.
Having in possession prohibited publications.
Making false statements likely to prejudice the judgement of voters in connection with the military service referendum.
Disturbing referendum meetings.
Taking part in a meeting of a number of persons exceeding 20 in the open air in a proclaimed place on the pretext of making known their grievances.
Showing, in printed matter, alterations made by the Censor.
Distraining on property and raising the rent on female dependants of soldiers.
Addressing a public meeting after being ordered to refrain from doing so.
Harbouring an unnaturalised German.
Wrongfully dyeing military overcoats.

Scott, E., *Australia During the War*. 
TUTORIAL 10: CENSORING FOR WAR

Initially, the government felt it had little need to censor the Australian press. German language newspapers were closed down but the more radical elements in the labour movement continued to publish its often impassioned views with little interference. But from 1916, that changed. Although the government did not set up the censoring mechanisms on the scale seen in Britain, it did begin to move against those it thought were a menace to the war effort. Editors and writers were expected to have ‘sensitive’ material cleared by the censor, especially during the conscription campaigns. And officers were expected to censor the letters of their men. But what constituted a threat to the war effort? How could it be defined?

Today’s tutorial is a form of ‘practical work’. Four documents are provided. Each tutorial group will be divided into discussion groups to ‘censor’ the documents provided and will report back to the tutorial group as a whole. Bear in mind the Hughes government’s attitude to war, and your responsibilities as an officer, as you ‘censor’ the documents. What would you allow to stand? What would you delete? Be prepared to explain your decision in reporting back to the tutorial group. At the end of discussion, how these documents fared will be tabled and discussed.

Note: there will be no paper giver for this tutorial.

Documents:

Two soldiers write home, Manifesto of the National Executive of the Trade Union Congress, 18 July 1916, Queensland’s Anti-Conscription Committee 1917.

Readings:

Readings for the previous tutorial provide background.
Soldiers write home

‘From Somewhere’ 21 Aug 1915

[The soldier described his first days on the Gallipoli Peninsula before continuing] I have often sat on a corpse to eat my dinner or have a spell. I have also lain on one, with another for a pillow, to have a sleep. They were Turks - not our fellows. It seems “big talk” but it’s true... The strain was too much: the sight of the decomposed bodies hanging over me, on which the Turks continually played a machine gun, and the loss of sleep. It was nothing but calling for stretcher bearers, and the groans from those who were hit. Nobody can form any idea of what it is like here in a charge. I have been in three, but want no more in daylight. The charge is only for a few minutes, but an awful price is paid while it lasts. The worst comes when it is over and you can hear your mates, who have fallen wounded, calling for help, and it is impossible to get to them. I have heard them in their delirium talking of home until their time came. The waiting for the order to charge, and the cries of those in agony afterwards, are the worst part of it...

Ted Hamilton

France, August 1916

We have been in action again lately - you've no doubt seen in the papers about the Australians. We were in a pretty lively corner this time, and had rather a too interesting time while it lasted, but I was lucky enough to get through without a scratch. Anyway we now know that our infantry is miles ahead of Fritz's, but his artillery is some class. The rotters use gas and lachrymatory shells. At present we are well away from the firing line resting in a peaceful French village. The weather is all that could be desired... But the people are far behind the times, and for a perfect fright commend me to an old French peasant woman. The poor old girls work hard in the fields (no paddocks here), and some of them that look about 80 can swing a hoe to some tune... You have no idea of what a mess shell fire can make of any place where it is at all concentrated. This is one of the bonniest of countries, but the place we have seen lately is like a desert... We saw one of our airmen bring down a Fritz plane. He succeeded somehow in setting fire to it and of course the poor devils in it had to jump out to escape the flames...

Reg Street

Manifesto of the National Executive of the Trade Union Congress, 18 July 1916.

Although Hughes had yet to announce conscription, the labour movement could detect which way the wind was blowing and issued the following manifesto.

MANIFESTO OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE CONGRESS

Fellow Unionists,

Conscription is the law in Great Britain and in the Republic of the French.

In both countries conscription has been used to null and void all the achievements of Trade Unionism - to destroy customs, rights and practices - to dilute and whittle away - to put unskilled in the place of skilled, women in the place of men, children in the place of adults.
In both countries conscription has been used not merely as an instrument of national defence, but as a bludgeon to break down the standard of the industrial classes.

In both countries conscription commences not in the seizure of the body for slaughter, but originates in the proclamation itself.

From that moment every subject within the prescribed ages is a potential subject of the sword. From that moment every industrial is a slave, every act of protest a crime, and every workman who rises in indignation against the destruction of some hard-won right or privilege of his occupation is seized, interned, deported or conscribed.

In both countries the industrial magnates, the controllers of ocean transportation, and the great financiers have been permitted to wax fat on the blood of slaughter. In both countries the suspension of trade union conditions, the coercionist and the suppressive practices permissible under conscription has made trade unionism a mere name, a memory of the past; has made the worker the helpless victims of every Gradgrind.

These things have happened in the land where 'Britons never shall be slaves', and under the banner of Republican France. In neither country have the toiling multitude been permitted to express an election opinion upon the economic serfage created by conscription - no more than if they had been inhabitants of the most absolute despotism.

The principle of conscription is one thing - its practice is quite another. In principle it is an instrument of national defence; in practice it is made an instrument of working class subjugation. It is so under the Kaiser and the Czar. It is so under the Union Jack and the Tricolor of France, and since in Australia we have seen a slavish imitation of the laws, regulations, verbiage and practices of the Imperial Government it behoves the organised toilers of Australia to speak and act before the clock of trickery is permitted to strike the hour of doom.

Because, when the proclamation of conscription is made, the hour is past, the democracy is too late, its lips are sealed, it can speak no more; every man is a soldier, subject to the laws, the decisions, and the abrupt penalties of the drumhead.

We place no value on the promises that conscription will not mean for the workers of Australia what it has meant for the organised working classes of other lands.

We remember the promises made during the passage of the War Precautions Act, and under it and its regulations we have seen suppression of free speech and press, imprisonment of workmen, and unpunished brigandage on the part of predatory interests.

Control of the metal resources of the continent by men who were the intimates of the Germanic interests they introduced and fostered; control of primary products by the wheat sharks; control of shipments by Bell, by Darling, and allied interests; control of Commonwealth financial arrangements by bankers and stockjobbers. To all these is to be added, if possible, control of the lives and working conditions of the wage earners by the bugle and drawn sword of militarism - such are the contrasts that confront us.
Because of these facts the trade unions have taken steps to guard the rights achieved by long years of sacrifice and toil. They will not lightly let them go. They will contend with all the powers at their disposal and all the resources at their command against the enactment in Australia of practices and conditions imposed, under the pretence of national salvation, upon the workers of other countries.

For these reasons, and in order to meet any contingency that may arise, the Trade Unions met in Congress. The Congress represented 280,000 unionists drawn from all States. It did not represent the whole body of organised Labor; but it did include in its representation the most powerful and the most militant unions of this continent. Many organisations that, because of time, distance and expense, could not send a delegation, sent intimations of their views, and those views, in nearly every case, coincided with the decisions of the Congress. A week after the Congress, the Grand Council - the supreme official body in the Australian trades union movement - at its Conference in Hobart recorded opinions identical with those of the Congress in Melbourne.

The opinions and resolutions of the Congress are set forth in the official record of the proceedings.

The need for the Labor Party to reverse the capitalist style of war policy was emphasised by the Congress.

A resolution submitted in favour of a general cessation of work should conscription be brought in, was not carried, but it was agreed that if conscription became imminent a referendum of members of unions should be held to decide as to the calling of an industrial strike in Australia. The Congress also agreed to co-operate in opposing political candidates speaking or voting in favour of conscription, thus giving backing to the action by the Victorian P.L.C. and the P.L.L. of New South Wales.

[Signed by 14 members of the Executive]

Pamphlet issued by Queensland’s Anti-Conscription Committee, 1917.

The adoption of the conscription proposals of the Federal Government for military service will automatically enforce industrial compulsion in the workshop, in the mine, in the factory and on the wharf.

To admit the case for military compulsion gives away the case entirely against industrial compulsion. Conscription places military law above civil law. The conscription campaign can, and undoubtedly will, be used to paralyse the biggest efforts of organised labour. Trade unions may exist in name, but their power is gone once conscription is established. Industrial coercion is the inevitable corollary of conscription. The workers of Australia dearly prize the conditions of labour won by the trade unions after years of hard fighting. Remember that conscription is destroying unionism in France, in Britain, in New Zealand - in every country where the conscription curse is in operation.

The real reason for the adoption of conscription in Australia by the union-hating ‘Win-the war’ Government is not for military purposes, but in order to destroy the power of unionism... Here is the sinister motive behind the whole conscription plot. Enslavement of the workers - not reinforcements for soldiers in the trenches. The destruction of labour organisations in Australia, not the destruction of Prussianism in Europe. Military control of the workshop - not military supremacy in the battlefield - this, and this alone, is the real conscription desired by the bitter labour antagonistic Hughes-cum-Irvine cabal.
In every country where conscription is the law it has been used to render null and void all the achievements of trade unionism - to destroy customs, rights and practices - to dilute and whittle away - to put unskilled in the place of skilled - women in the place of men - children in the place of adults.

It is used not merely as an instrument of national defence, but as a merciless bludgeon to break down the standard and rights of the industrial classes. When conscription commences, from that moment every worker is a slave - every act of protest a crime, and every worker who dares to rise in just indignation against the violation of hard-won rights can be seized, interned, deported, or conscribed.

Queensland Anti-Conscription Committee.
Conscription is the one issue that has dominated studies of the First World War. It brought to the surface basic divisions within Australian society that had become quiescent in a nation at war: sectarianism, the rift between the political and union elements in the Labour movement and notions of loyalty – King and Country became King or Country? for some. It may well have left Australia with a tradition, in military terms, that refuses to allow men conscripted to fight overseas. And it introduced, for the first time, the notion that the laws governing due legal process can be overturned if an external threat warrants it. In 1916, the exemption courts reversed the basic assumption underpinning British law that any individual was innocent until proven guilty.

No paper will be given for this tutorial. Instead, there will be a class debate. Each student will be allocated a ‘character’ by drawing a name from a box and will debate the proposition Hughes put to the people in 1916. Some of these are real people (like Hughes and Mannix). Others are creations representing a section of society - a farmer, a middle class woman, a working class girl, a mother of a soldier serving in France, a member of the labour movement or the IWW, or someone before the exemption courts as well as others. Many of you may find that the ‘character’ you’ve drawn has very different views to your own. Put that aside. The purpose of this tutorial is to try and understand how people thought in 1916 - and what they were allowed to hear. Your tutor will act as the ‘War Precautions Act’ to ensure that the debate is conducted within proper democratic bounds. At the end of the debate, you will vote on the question put in 1916 and then discuss what happened in class.

To establish what your character would have thought, and what your opponents may think, read the documents and at least chapter 4 of the textbook. The reading list also holds material relevant to your part. The documents have been arranged in the following way. The ‘prelude’ sets the scene with early calls for conscription, Hughes’s return and the ‘grave communications’. Then comes the YES case. The exemption courts act as an interlude. The NO case finishes the documents.

Scenario: A public meeting has been called in the Upper Kumbucta West hall to hear both sides of the issue. You are lucky: both Hughes and Mannix have agreed to attend - and the exemption courts have just finished their hearings in the district.

Documents:

The following collection contains both speeches and some of the attempts to persuade voters through visual means.

Readings:


Oliver, B., ‘“Rats”, “Scabs”, “Soolers” and “Sinn Feiners”: A Reassessment of the Role of the Labour Movement in the Conscription Crisis in Western Australia, 1916-1917’, *Labour History*, 58, 1990, pp. 48-64.


Stock, J. T., ‘Farmers and the Rural Vote in South Australia in World War 1, the 1916 Conscription Referendum’, *Historical Studies*, 21, 84, 1985, pp. 391-411.


Forward, R. and Reece, B. (eds), *Conscription in Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1968.


Oliver, B., *War and Peace in Western Australia, the Social and Political Impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995, chapter 3.


- Wollongong campus only
TUTORIAL 11 DOCUMENTS

PRELUDE

Calls for conscription for service overseas had come as early as 1915 from the Universal Service League. So had opposition to any such call. The first document is the League’s call.

The Prime Minister [Fisher], in a phrase which every Australian endorses, has declared that Australia would send her last man and spend her last shilling in the defence of the Empire. This extreme necessity has not yet arisen. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the situation is one of great anxiety. The existence of the British Empire and all that it stands for, to its own citizens and to the world at large, is in danger. If the Empire should fall the rights and liberties which, to a British community, are as necessary and natural as the air they breathe, will fall with it. There is a not a man, woman, or child in the Empire whose interests are not directly at stake.

Australia has done much. But she has not done enough. Nothing is enough, short of her utmost. Her efforts are still far short of that. The Mother-country, at enormous cost, has kept open the seas with her navy. She has also found vast sums of money for her Allies. In addition she has raised and equipped a military force, which relatively to her population, is very much larger than our own. In face of these facts it cannot be said that we have done our share.

Our first duty is to send more men to the front. Lord Kitchener, Sir Ian Hamilton, and others, to whose words we do not dare remain indifferent, have appealed to us to do so. This is not all. Besides sending more men to the fighting line we must so organise the community that every man and every woman may be able to render the best service of which he or she is capable, in the Empire’s cause. The War Census Act, recently passed, will furnish the information necessary to enable this to be done. But meanwhile we must send more men.

We must also prepare for the future. Men cannot be trained in a day. It is wasteful and criminal to send men inadequately trained into the fighting line. No one knows how long the war will last. No one can say how many men will be wanted or when they will be wanted. We must have them ready, in such numbers and at such times, as they are required.

It is now evident that voluntary effort is not meeting these requirements. Even if it were its incidence is unjust and often harmful. Men have gone who should have stayed; many more have stayed who might have gone. Others, with obligations here, would go cheerfully if the State called upon them to do so, but they hesitate to take the step until the call is clear and definite. The time has come for the State to give this call, and at the same to adjust the burden of military service with more regard to equity and the public good.

There is but one way to do this. The people of this country, through their parliamentary representatives, must voluntarily adopt the principle of compulsory and universal war service for all classes. This principle is already embodied in our defence law. In time of war every man of military age is now liable under clause 60 of the Defence Act to be called up for the defence of Australia.

But today Australia is being defended in the fields of Flanders and on the hills of Gallipoli. If she is to be saved at all it must be there. If, through some disaster to the armies or fleets of the Allies, it should become possible for the enemy to land a force in Australia, our hope of successfully defending her shores would be slender.
Let us then make it plain to our own Government and to the world at large that we, men and women alike, are prepared for any sacrifice and eager for any service at home or abroad, in the battle field or elsewhere, that may be necessary for the defence of the Commonwealth and the Empire, and the principles for which they stand.

With this end in view, many men and women in the various States have joined to form a Universal Services League. They represent all classes, creeds and parties. Differing widely, it may be, on all other matters, they are firmly united in their desire that Australia should play her part in bringing about a speedy and successful termination of the war - that nothing she can do shall be left undone to secure that the lives of her sons shall not have been sacrificed in vain; and that no help she is capable of offering to the Empire, in this gravest crisis of its history, shall be withheld.

_The Upper Murray and Mitta Herald, 16 September 1915._

The _Australian Worker_ replied:

To say, as the Universal Service League says in its manifesto, that ‘the principle (of conscription) is already embodied in our defence laws’ is to betray an ignorance so fundamental that it vitiates the whole purpose of the League, and stamps it as a dangerous meddler in things it does not understand.

Conscription, being entirely subversive of freedom, is alien and hateful to a free people. On the continent of Europe national prejudices, fomented by the ruling classes, and combined with geographical proximity, has driven the peoples to submit to this system. With what results we all know.

Those countries groan beneath the iron heel of militarism. The burden of crushing military taxation is imposed upon them. Their young men are torn from their industrial occupations, immured in barracks away from healthy social influences, and their best years devoted to learning the art of killing their fellow workers over the border.

The whole body politic breathes with difficulty in an atmosphere poisoned by the ascendency of a military caste.

Germany has its Zabern atrocities, France shudders at the recollection of the Dreyfus tragedy. Russia's bureaucracy of despotism is a by-word in the world.

Do we want that sort of thing in Australia? It is inseparable from conscription. It belongs to it as disease belongs to a cesspit. You cannot have the one without the other. Militarism and conscription are convertible terms. . .

There is reason, also, to suspect the League of scheming to bring about a sinister discrimination in the sending of men to the front.

Premier Holman, who is one of its leading lights, is very anxious that University undergraduates should not be exposed in the firing lines. He thinks it a pity that these cultured young swells should run the risk of being shot when there are plain, working men, who have not had their educational advantages, who might be shot in their stead.

It is a gross error, rooted in snobbery, to imagine that the son of a rich man, whose head has been stuffed at great expense with the classical rubbish of the
Universities is of greater social value than the young worker, producing useful things for the community, and developing his faculties in the great School of Life.

But the Universal Service League is probably of the same opinion as Premier Holman. At any rate, its system of conscription lays it open to that suspicion... it certainly looks as though what is meant by conscription is a scheme to force the workers to fight without pay, and keep the influential classes at home, to lend their money at five per cent, and wax fatter than ever on the exploitation of a war-embarrassed people.

*Australian Worker*, Sydney, 16 September 1915.
Hughes returns

Hughes returned at a critical moment in Australian politics. The pressure from some quarters was growing for the introduction of conscription, especially after Britain had introduced it in 1916. There was also growing opposition to any such move, mainly in the labour movement and sections of the Labor Party. Hughes put the case to the House of Representatives on 30 August 1916. It is vintage Hughes.

In view of certain urgent and grave communications from the War Council of Great Britain, and of the present state of the war, and the duty of Australia in regard hereto, and as a result of long and earnest deliberation, the Government has arrived at the conclusion that the voluntary system of recruiting cannot be relied upon to supply that steady stream of reinforcements necessary to maintain the Australian Expeditionary Force at their full strength.

As the Government are very strongly of the opinion that it is the plain duty of Australia to do this, and as they believe that their opinion is one which is held by the country generally, they have formulated a policy which they believe to be at once adequate to meet the gravity of our circumstances, and compatible with the principles of democratic government, under which it is our privilege to live.

I intend to-morrow to lay before honorable members of both Houses the position as I know it to be, and as set out in the recent secret communications from the Army Council of Great Britain; but it is due to the public that they should be told how imperative and urgent the demand for men is. The number of reinforcements required for next month is 32,500 and subsequently 16,500 a month. The number of recruits for June was 6,357; July 6,170; and up to the 23rd of August, 4,144; or a total of 16,689. The most recent list for eleven days shows the number of casualties to be 6,743. These figures speak for themselves.

They show that the position which confronts the Government, the Parliament, and the people, is that while it is our clear duty to keep the number of our Forces up to their full strength, the stream of recruits under the voluntary system has fallen to less than one-third of what is necessary.

The great offensive, in which our troops have covered themselves with glory, has cost a fearful price; yet it is, and must be, pressed forward with an implacable resolution. To falter now is to make the great sacrifice of lives of no avail; to enable the enemy to recover himself, and, if not to defeat us, to prolong the struggle indefinitely, and thus rob the world of all hope of a lasting peace. Now is the psychological moment when every ounce of effort is called for.

To the principle of compulsion for military training and service the country has long been committed. But a clear line has been drawn between compulsory service within the Commonwealth and service overseas. For the first we relied entirely on compulsion; for the latter on voluntaryism. Until recently, voluntary recruiting proved sufficient to meet the demands made upon us; but latterly it has quite failed to do so. This failure, however, does not release us from our obligations to the Empire, to its Allies, and to the Commonwealth, whose fortunes rise or fall with the ebb and flow of this dreadful war. For it is literally true that defeat in this war sounds the death-knell of all our hopes and aspirations, and robs us at one stroke of all the privileges and liberties that make our lives worth living. Though voluntaryism fails, the country must not fail. It dare not; its honor and its safety alike are at stake.
But this is a country where the people rule; and in this crisis - in which their future is concerned - their voice must be heard. The will of the nation must be ascertained. Autocracy forces its decrees upon the people; Democracy ascertains, and then carries out the wishes of the people. In these circumstances, the Government consider there is but one course to pursue, namely to ask the electors for their authority to make up the deficiency by compulsion.

Set out briefly, the policy of the Government is to take a referendum of the people at the earliest possible moment upon the question whether they approve of compulsory overseas service to the extent necessary to keep our Expeditionary Forces at their full strength. If the majority of the people approve, compulsion will be applied to the extent that voluntaryism fails. Otherwise, it will not.

I now make an earnest appeal... If volunteers respond in sufficient numbers there will be no need for compulsion. But to the extent that voluntary recruiting fails to supply the numbers necessary the Government will use the authority of the people, if given, to call to the colours, until the supply is exhausted, single men without dependants. It is not intended, until the supply of single men without dependants is exhausted, to apply compulsion to married men, youths under twenty-one, to single men with dependants, or to the remaining sons of families in which one or more of the members have already volunteered.

As the necessity for more men is not only imperative, but urgent, and ... that the approval of the people, if given, should not be abortive... the Government have decided that, if within one month the appeal for volunteers does not bring in a sufficient number of recruits, they will issue a proclamation under the Defence Act, and call up for purposes of training the number of single men without dependants necessary to make good the deficiency.

I hope that the appeal which I now make to the patriotism of Australian manhood will make such proclamation unnecessary.

Unless and until the people of Australia approve of extending the compulsory provision of the Defence Act to service overseas, no man will be sent away against his will.

*Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, 1916.

The ‘grave communications’: Cable message from General Sir Douglas Haig, G.C.B., Commander-In-Chief of the British Forces in France, 1916

The Australian Divisions in France are far below strength, and drafts are not arriving in sufficient numbers. The divisions have fought splendidly, and their heroic efforts will live in history, but they cannot continue to achieve results unless their strength is kept up. The success of the past few months justify absolute confidence in our power to win final victory, but it is not yet won. To complete our work and ensure a future enduring peace the utmost efforts of the Empire and of the Allies are required for a long time yet. I hope strong drafts for your divisions will be despatched, and their strength maintained.

From Greenwood and Grimshaw, *Documents on Australian International Affairs*. 
Hughes Campaigns

‘To every man and woman in Australia’, Mr Hughes concluded, ‘the appeal of our soldiers fighting on the battlefield falls upon our ears and reaches straight to our heart. These comrades of ours, those brave volunteers who went through the glories and agonies of Gallipoli and who are now gaining fresh laurels in the gigantic battles on the soil of France, repose full trust in us. Shall we fail them now? (Cries of ‘No’). Shall we send their regiments into battle under strength? (‘No’). Shall we condemn them to death - (‘no, no’) - for they go to their death unless we send support. Nothing will turn them from the path of duty - they will advance as ever to the order - and though outnumbered and beaten to their knees, they will still fight, and if need be, die. Shall we fail them? (‘No’). Are their sacrifices and those of our glorious dead to be made in vain? (‘No’). Are their deaths to be unavenged? No, I say, a thousand times no!

Duty and national honour alike beckon us on. What Australian will consent to partial withdrawal from this life and death struggle? Who among us will support a base abandonment of our fellow citizens who are fighting for us to the death with deathless heroism? Tens of thousands of our kinsmen in Britain have died that we might live free and unmolested (Cheers). Is there one man who will say that we ought not to pay the debt we owe to Britain with our lives if needs be, for shielding our country with the bodies of her glorious soldiers and sailors from the scorching blast of war? (Cheers). In this great hour, when our country and all we hold dear are in deadly peril, who among us will not rise greatly, and putting aside all other things, prove himself by his deeds worthy of these great sacrifices, and prove himself worthy of the great privileges of citizenship in a free democracy?

‘Australians! This is not time for party strife. The nation is in peril and it calls for her citizens to defend her. Our duty is clear. Let us rise like men, gird up our loins, and do that which duty, and self-sacrifice alike dictate’. (Loud and prolonged cheering).

Fellow-citizens:-

The citizens of Australia will decide on Saturday the greatest issue ever put before a free people. From out the fog of lies with which the opponents of the Government deliberately sought to obscure it the great issue shines out clear and distinct. We are part of the British Empire; that is, we are one of the family of free British nations that engirdle the earth. While the Empire stands, we and all that we hold dear, the many privileges that self-government has enabled us to secure, the White Australia policy, are safe. If the Empire falls we fall with it. The Empire is fighting for its life. Britain has asked us to do our share. The question is - Are you going to do it? By your answer the world will judge you. By your answer, you will decide the destiny of Australia, if not that of the Empire. Is Australia going to prove true to herself, to the traditions of our race, to the men of Anzac; or stand out before the world as degenerate and unworthy?

The need for men is obvious and imperative. Germany is not beaten... The commanders of the Allies' armies, the great statesmen of the Empire, and the leaders of Labor in Britain and France, all tell us plainly that we cannot win decisive victory without more men.

Sydney Morning Herald, 19 September 1916.
The Methodist Church of Queensland

Although the occasional minister was opposed, the majority of the Protestant churches and their clergy supported conscription. This is what the Methodists had to say.

The Committee of Privileges representing the Methodist Church in Queensland, having been called by the President of the Conference to consider the present grave emergency of war conditions and proposals, after prolonged and earnest consideration, has issued the following resolutions:

(1) To direct the attention of our people to the following clear and emphatic declaration of the last Conference: - ‘In view of the great interests involved, the Conference is of the opinion that the only attitude to be encouraged is that of “an unaltered and unalterable determination to prosecute the war until victory has been won, and the rights of the smaller nations vindicated, and freedom secured from an aggressive militarism.” However costly the necessary sacrifices to be made in order that this may be secured, the Conference will renew the call, and encourage obedience to it as a solemn, patriotic and sacred duty’.

(2) To remind our people of the imperative call of Empire to which it is our glory to belong, whose traditions and blessings we enjoy, and whose prestige and influence we are bound to uphold and extend, that Australia shall maintain at its full strength during the course of the war the Expeditionary Force it has been our honour to raise. While devoutly grateful for the spontaneous devotion of our volunteers and their heroic achievements on the field of battle, we are now reluctantly compelled to concur in the authoritative admission that our obligations to the Empire, and to our brave soldiers representing us at the Front, are not being adequately met by the voluntary response now being made.

(3) The proposal of the Prime Minister regarding the necessity of a popular declaration by means of a referendum on the extension of the principle of compulsory service overseas, with a view to the burdens of war being more equitably borne and a sufficient supply of reinforcements being made available, in our opinion casts upon all citizens a great national duty. We therefore strongly recommend this proposal to the favourable consideration and endorsement of our people...

From Greenwood and Grimshaw, Documents on Australian International Affairs.
Some Reasons Why Women Should Vote ‘Yes’

This war is a just war.

It is waged that the eternal principles of truth and right and justice may be upheld in the world.

It is being fought that the smaller nations of the world may live in peace and security.

Our men have joined the noble army of Allies that their homes may not be defiled or their hearths desecrated.

They have gone in all the splendour of their manhood, trusting in all our promises to send them comfort and help of every kind.

Munitions and clothing have been supplied with a lavish hand by our Government; no better-equipped force has ever taken the field.

The great Red Cross Society has succoured the sick and wounded to the fullest extent.

The Amelioration and Repatriation Committees care for those who return.

The War Chest and Battalion Committees have worked in magnificent unison to look after the men in the trenches.

So far the women have not failed in any way to meet the obligations which they have undertaken. We want them to realise their true positions today.

It is the women’s vote which will turn the scale on Saturday. It is to the women we look to uphold the honour of their country. It is to the women we appeal to stand behind the men who are holding the first line of defence.

They form a solid phalanx, the women whose sons, husbands and brothers are there, and they should use every effort and strain every nerve to see that all those who are likely to vote YES have an opportunity to vote on Polling Day.

We feel sure that we shall win but it can only be by a great, united effort that our YES will have a majority that should redeem the honour of the nation.

Sydney Morning Herald, 27 October 1916.

Annie Gunter agrees

On Saturday afternoon about 100 ladies attended at the Red Cross Depot, Rutherglen, to listen to an address by Mrs Gunter on the reasons why women should vote ‘Yes’ on the 28th October.

Mrs J Prentice occupied the chair, and briefly introduced the speaker.

Mrs Gunter was well received, and for upwards of half an hour explained the reasons why women should support the government. She pointed out that for over a 1000 years Britain had upheld liberty and freedom, and were the women of this country to vote ‘No’, [it] was in favour of the Kaiser and German rule. They had read of the suffering of the women of Belgium... and the ill treatment and abuses they had been subjected to by the German invaders and
despoilers of their country. In Australia they had their homes, but in Belgium they had been driven out of their homes. Did they picture what would be the position of Australia if the Allies were beaten and the Germans came to Australia. The brave boys were putting up a brave fight for the flag of freedom and they should do everything to help them... At the conclusion of the address a vote of thanks was accorded to Mrs Gunter... and at the close of the meeting ‘God Save the King’ was sung.

_Rutherglen Sun and Chiltern Advertiser, 24 October 1916._

‘The Other Woman’s Son’

Not all anti-conscription women are the shrill, self-assured, determined ones in evidence at meetings. There are many of them silent, timid, unhappy, genuinely struggling with the problem that seems to be presented to them by the question - ‘Shall I vote to send another woman’s son to the trenches?’ They are the women in whom sentiment holds stronger sway than reason, and who must not be blamed that this is so, since it is a matter of constitution. They are the women upon whom the framer of the question - some lover of Germany, without a doubt - counted when he concocted it. ‘Appeal to sentiment in a woman, and you’ll win every time,’ he said to himself, and went out and sowed it broadcast, with his tongue in his cheek. ‘Shall I vote to send another woman’s son to the trenches?’

Let the timid women answer this for themselves by asking themselves, quite quietly, another question -

WHAT WOMAN’S SON?

Do you mean the woman who already has given more than her share? You know that you do not, since she is already exempt. Do you mean the woman who has her son for her sole support? No; you know that she also is exempt.

IS THIS THE WOMAN YOU MEAN?

The one who is contentedly continuing to enjoy life as if there were no war, spending more money than she has ever spent before, pluming herself in the latest monstrosity of fashion, demanding rich foods, soft living, gaiety, while other women’s sons are keeping the country safe for her and making it possible for her to have exactly what she demands?

OR IS THIS THE WOMAN YOU MEAN?

The one who, though she may be spending as much as before the war, and is even retrenching and subscribing to war funds and working for soldiers, has several stalwart sons who are staying behind with the women and children while the other women’s sons are dying because they must stay in the trenches till fatigue and disease do what the German bullets do not do, since no one comes to relieve them?

OR PERHAPS IT IS THIS WOMAN

The one, whoever she is or whatever she is doing - whose sons are shouting themselves hoarse with applause at the Stadium, where blows are delivered that nothing on earth would induce them to face, or who are looking on and cheering at games they do not play?

AND NOW,
Ask yourselves afresh the question that is troubling you - ‘Is my sentiment going to prevent me from voting to send the sons of these women to the trenches?’ You know that it is not. You know that the thought of the other woman’s son staying in these trenches to his death through not being reinforced is, day by day, as the time for decision draws nearer, burning into your profoundest sentiment like a live coal.

Timid women, cast off your fear. Justify your womanhood at whatever cost to yourselves, and say to all efficient manhood, in a voice that shall roll next week from shore to shore of this vast continent-

Strike - for your altars and your fires,  
Strike - for the green graves of your sires,  
God - and your native land!

Ethel Turner

FOR THE SAKE OF THE MOTHERS OF SOLDIER-SONS VOTE YES
A DISTRACTION?: THE EXEMPTION COURTS

The exemption court hearings conducted in 1916 have been basically ignored by historians. The defeat of the conscription referendum rendered their judgements invalid, even though the courts continued their hearings after the loss sustained by Hughes. Yet, in many local communities, the court hearings may well have swung wavering voters and played a significant part in the final vote.

Grounds for exemption were as follows: those deemed medically unfit; members of parliament, judges, magistrates and police; ministers of religion; doctors and nurses; conscientious objectors; those employed in occupations deemed to be in the 'national interest'; those 'not substantially of European origin'; only sons; sons from families where 50 per cent or more had enlisted; men who were the sole support of their parents; men who had not completed their education.

The following cases have been taken from the hearings in North Eastern Victoria. Note the arguments presented and decisions made.

Explanatory Note: Pennefather was the magistrate appointed to hear exemptions; Taverner was the prosecutor appointed by the Defence Department.

**Wodonga**

Robert Richardson, farm hand, applied for exemption on the grounds that he was the only remaining son. - Granted.

John Joseph Cummings, grazier, Bonegilla, applied for exemption on the grounds that he was managing his father's property. Had two brothers enlisted and was executor of his deceased brother's estate. - Two months temporary exemption granted.

Joseph Peter Schultz applied for exemption on grounds of being engaged in work of national importance. He was a farmer residing at Wodonga West, in partnership with brother and father. Had seven brothers, none of whom had enlisted. In reply to Captain Taverner, applicant stated that he was engaged by the Defence Department at present looking after horses. About 18 months ago his brother had enlisted at the Albury Battery, but at the last moment was thrown out. He then went to Condobolin with his brother and took up land. His brother was now looking after it. - Temporary exemption to the end of January.

Erskin William McFarlane applied for exemption on ground of being sole support of his parents. Applicant worked his father's farm on shares. He had two brothers, one of whom had enlisted and the other had been rejected. Had four sisters. His father is not fit to do much work.

Samuel T Parker, farmer, gave evidence that applicant was the sole support of the family. The father was a victim of asthma.

In answer to Mr Pennefather, witness said applicant was a friend of his. **Mr Pennefather:** Then you will be very handy in assisting claimant to take off his crop. Temporary exemption granted until January 21st.

Richard Leslie Harper applied for exemption on the ground that he was the main support of his mother. He had five brothers, two of whom had enlisted and were on active service. Two brothers were aged 10 and 16. - Application refused.
Thomas Maloney, laborer, applied for exemption on the ground that he was the sole support of his mother and five children under fifteen. His father lived at home. - Exemption refused.

Frederick Charles Hollands applied for exemption. No appearance of applicant, who stated on his application form that he was to be married on the 25th ult. and found that it would be more convenient for him to stay at home than go abroad. - Struck out.

Wodonga and Towong Sentinel, 10 November 1916.

Tallangatta

A Military Exemption Court was held at Tallangatta on Monday before Mr Pennefather, PM. The Defence Department was represented by Captain Taverner. Proceedings opened at 10 am, and lasted close on to six hours. The court was thronged throughout the day. Some 62 applicants were listed, all but one of the applicants being in attendance, while numbers of men were present out of interest or mere curiosity. All applicants were sworn, and each applicant (excepting the few refused exemption), after stating his case, had to submit to what one man designated ‘a sample of Prussian military methods’ by giving impressions of his thumb prints. He placed the ball of each thumb on an inking pad and then transferred his thumb markings onto official stationary bearing his name and number... The bulk of the applicants were fine upstanding young fellows, sinewy, strong and sunburnt... Even a short course in military training would do some of the wayback boys a world of good; at present some of them seem to know little about any sort of discipline, and display absolutely no sense of the power of constituted authority...

Matthew Mullins, farmer, Tallangatta Valley. - Sole guardian of aged father. Works his own and father’s farms, altogether about 1400 acres, 50 acres crop. Four brothers, none enlisted. One, single, manages property for widowed sister; two married and one in holy orders. - Temporary exemption until the end of January.

Martin Joseph Kelly and James Ignatius Kelly - Applicants are brothers, who hold farm property in partnership. No other sons in family. Holds 400 acres, 13 acres in crop. James also helped on father’s farm, 600 acres, about 8 acres in crop, with about 1500 sheep to be shorn. - PM said one of the applicants would have to go into camp. - Martin volunteered to go if granted temporary exemption for shearing. - Martin Kelly was granted temporary exemption until the end of January; James Kelly being granted a conditional exemption as long as his brother serves.

Alexander Charles Ronald. - Works on mother’s farm at Annandale, 809 acres, no crop. Had six brothers but two lost their lives in this war. Of the four remaining, one is a police constable, one is employed at Ormidale, one is in the Garrison Artillery at Queenscliff. Applicant was not the sole support of his parents. - To Captain Taverner: My deceased brothers’ life assurance policies were paid, one to my father, the other to my mother. - Temporary exemption granted to end of January.

Upper Murray and Mitta Herald, 16 November 1916.
George Henry Croucher, four brothers, three enlisted. - Conditional exemption as long as two other brothers are serving. [The court had before it evidence that one of the three brothers had been killed in action in May 1915 on the Gallipoli Peninsula.]

Yackandandah Times, 2 November 1916.

Henry Adolphus Beatty, farmer, Boralma, applied for exemption on the grounds that he has conscientious objections to bearing arms. He works his mother’s farm.

The PM: How long have you had this conscientious objection?
The Applicant: Not since the beginning of the war; but always had a certain amount of objection, more so since last February. I do not belong to any specific religious body.

The PM: Have you made any sacrifices whatsoever because of the conscientious objection you hold?
The Applicant: No.

The PM: You have no objection to taking part in non-combatant work?
The Applicant: Not at all. I would do certain duties.

The PM: What kind of work would you have no objection to?
The Applicant: Any Red Cross work.

The PM: You could help make munitions.
The Applicant: I would not be willing to take part in the manufacture of munitions.

The PM: Have you done anything to help your country?
The Applicant: No, not nationally.

The PM: Did you ever volunteer?
The Applicant: I volunteered in 1914 for service. I have changed my mind since then.

The PM: Why?
The Applicant: I was not a Christian then. I was a luke-warm Christian then.

The PM: You are a burning hot one now? (Laughter)
The Applicant: Yes.

The PM: If your life was endangered would you not protect yourself?
The Applicant: Not by taking life. If anyone attacked me I would not resist.

The PM: If you saw a burglar attacking your sister, what would you do?
The Applicant: I would protect her, but not harm her assailant. I might take the firearm from the man that threatened her life. I would not go beyond that.

The PM: I will not grant this application as his decision has been too recently acquired and applicant does not belong to any particular religious body. - Refused.

SHALL WE BE SLAVES?: VOTE NO!

Some Reasons For Voting ‘No’

If you vote ‘YES’ on October 28, many men may die because of your vote. Don’t send them to their death against their will.

They are human beings, just like you, with the same love of mother, wife, children, happiness; with reasoning faculties, directive consciences, and spiritual attributes that mark them out from all the multitudes of men that have ever lived as separate and distinct individualities, each with a part to play in the great drama of existence - a part which, howsoever humble, no one else, howsoever great, can fill.

To apply military compulsion to these men, and deprive them of all control over their own destinies, and their own lives, is to be guilty of the sin of SACRILEGE AGAINST HUMANITY.

DO NOT VOTE TO RUIN THE COUNTRY under the false impression that you are helping the men at the front.

The men at the front cannot possible by helped by any action that will paralyse and pauperise the land they are fighting for. With 300,000 men already withdrawn from its social and industrial activities, a further drain of 16,500 men a month, or nearly two hundred thousand by the end of next July, would be simply disastrous. It would be like cutting open the veins of the country, and letting the vital stream gush forth till it expired of exhaustion.

AUSTRALIA BIDS FAIR TO BE A WHITE MAN’S PARADISE: DO NOT RUN THE RISK OF TURNING IT INTO A BLACK MAN’S HELL.

William Morris Hughes is feverishly protesting that he will not permit coloured labourers to enter the Commonwealth during the period of the war. Don’t be fooled by such promises. They are worthless. The policy he has begun is stronger than he. A very little man can start an avalanche, but the biggest man that ever was is not able to stand against one. It is as sure as the law of gravitation that if the white workers are conscripted and sent abroad, other must come in to take their places, unless our industries are to be permitted to perish for lack of labour.

Mr Hughes has received a cable from Mr Bonar Law, Secretary of State for the Colonies, stating that the Imperial Government has no intention of supplying labour to Australia. Nobody has said that any intention existed in the mind of the Imperial authorities. The question has simply been asked of Mr Hughes: If 200,000 white workers are conscripted in twelve months under your scheme, how will you provide labour to carry on the industries of the country?

Mr Hughes has not satisfactorily answered that question.

Do not, therefore, trust the conscriptionist who declared last year: ‘In no circumstances would I ever agree to send men out of this country to fight against their will’, but vote ‘NO’ and KEEP AUSTRALIA WHITE TILL THE MEN COME HOME

Henry E Boote, St Andrew’s Place, Sydney

Australian Worker, 26 October 1916.
The Enslavement Of Women

CONSCRIPTION MEANS ENSLAVEMENT OF WOMEN
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ENGLAND

WOMEN WORK LONGER HOURS UNDER WRETCHED CONDITIONS AND LOW PAY. They are halved, and DARE NOT LEAVE THEIR WORK. OVER 300,000 CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGES ARE FORCED TO WORK IN FACTORIES, and the maximum for them is 7s. 6d. per week.

THE RAILWAYS ARE LARGELY STAFFED BY WOMEN, WHO GET TWO-THIRDS OF THE MAN’S PAY, yet they have families or dependents to keep.

Grocers ask for 20,000 women at two-third’s of the man’s pay.

On Glasgow tramways there are over 400 women at 4d. per hour.

Women agricultural labourers get 7s. 6d. per week. Munition labourers, women 13s. 6d. for 60 hours’ work, £1 for 93 hours’ work.

Women letter carriers, 7s. 6d. to 15s. per week.

Women generally work for 5d. an hour at the following rate of time:- from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., on all week days but Saturdays; on that day from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sundays 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. ON GOD’S DAY WIVES AND MOTHERS OF CHILDREN TOIL AS THE VERIEST SLAVES.

These conditions were brought to light in May, 1916, by a deputation of women that waited on the House of Commons to protest against the twelve hours’ shift.

WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA

WILL YOU SELL YOURSELVES INTO SUCH CONDITIONS? Will you leave it possible for men to glut their selfish ambitions at the cost of your womanhood, your children’s welfare, the freedom of your fathers, husbands, sons and brothers?

Show your sterling integrity and strength to resist oppression by VOTING A MIGHTY NO!

FOR THE CAUSE OF GOD’S FREEDOM AND HUMANITY.

EMULATE THE GLORIOUS JOAN OF ARC!
Mannix tests the waters

Daniel Mannix, the Catholic Co-adjutor of Melbourne, was a figure of some authority, unlike the ‘ratbags’ in the labour movement who opposed conscription.

I am as anxious as anyone can be for a successful issue and for an honourable peace. I hope and believe that peace can be secured without conscription. (Applause.) For conscription is a hateful thing, and it is almost certain to bring evil in its train. (Applause.) I have been under the impression, and I still retain the conviction, that Australia has done her full share - I am inclined to say more than her full share - in this war. (Applause.) Her loyalty to the Empire has been lauded to the skies, and the bravery of her sons has won the admiration of friend and foe alike. (Applause.) There may be in the Commonwealth those who have not borne their fair share of the common burden, but I think their number is comparatively small. It seems, therefore, truly regrettable that Australia should be plunged into the turmoil of a struggle about conscription, which is certain to be bitter, and which will give joy to Australia’s enemies. (Applause.)

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.) The Prime Minister has very wisely ignored evil counsel and allowed the people to decide for themselves. (Applause.) He has promised them full freedom of discussion. I hope the discussion will be conducted with as little heat and friction as the circumstances permit. I trust that the voice of the people will be heard, and that it will prevail. (Applause.) We can only give both sides a patient hearing, and then vote according to our judgment. There will be differences among Catholics, for Catholics do not think or vote in platoons - (applause) - and 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.) I honestly believe that Australia has done her full share and more, and that she cannot reasonably be expected to bear the financial strain and the drain upon her manhood that conscription would involve. (Applause.) If conscription were adopted I should expect to find later on that many who are now its loudest advocates would be the first to rise up against the taxation necessary to redeem our obligations to the returned soldiers or to their widows or orphans or dependants in case the soldiers gave their lives on the Battlefield. I think I can say that I have read most of the appeals that have been made for conscription in Australia. But in spite of these eloquent and impassioned appeals my common sense will not allow me to believe that the addition of 100,000 or 200,000 conscript Australians to the 15,000,000 of fighting men that the Allies have at their disposal could be a deciding factor or even a substantial factor in the issue of the war. However, the people must decide for themselves. The vast majority of the voices at the referendum will, of course, be persons who could not be called to serve in a conscript army. But still, I think that even they, or a majority of them, will prefer to rely on the voluntary system and make it more efficient, if they can, rather than to force the men of Australia, married and single, to face enemy guns in Europe. That is what conscription, in many cases, would mean, and I incline 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.) I notice that certain authorities of the Anglican Church have given their public support to conscription. They are, of course, quite within their rights in doing so. We all have equal right to contribute to the discussion, and in the exercise of that right I have spoken tonight.

*Argus*, 18 September 1916.
Hughes had lost the plebiscite, if only by a narrow margin. The fallout, however, was significant. The Labor Party split and Hughes formed a new coalition with those who had once been his political rivals, the Liberals led by Joseph Cook. The new coalition was called the National Federation. Hughes remained prime minister. Labor turned inwards, seeking new policies and a new leader in Frank Tudor. Although Tudor had a son in uniform at the front, the new policies developed by Labor was anathema to many, including a call to end the war by negotiation. Hughes went to the polls in May 1917 and won the election handsomely. He promised he would not introduce conscription for service overseas without another plebiscite, a promise he kept by presenting the voting public with a second plebiscite in December 1917. The question was again lost, this time with an increased majority.

Why did Labor split in 1916? What role did Munro Ferguson play in the political crisis that followed? What policies did Labor follow after the split? Why did Hughes win the 1917 election so comfortably? Why was the second plebiscite lost? Should Hughes have resigned in December 1917?

Documents:
Hughes’s new Government, Labor’s war policy, Hughes in 1917, Mannix in 1917, ‘Lottery of Death’ and assorted pamphlets.

Readings:
(Note: Many of the readings for the previous tutorial are relevant for this tutorial).


Forward, R. and Reece, B. (eds), *Conscription in Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1968.


Oliver, B., *War and Peace in Western Australia, the Social and Political Impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995.


**TUTORIAL 12 DOCUMENTS**

**Hughes announces the policy of his new Government**

In Parliament, Hughes announced his new Government’s policy.

Under what baneful influence have my honorable friends in the Official Labour party, in whose company I have spent my whole public life, lately fallen? Why do they shut their ears to the call of country and duty? Why did they not join hands with us, their old colleagues, their friends of a life-time, their fellow soldiers in the cause of the people - those men against whom the envenomed tongue of slander and hatred cannot even now charge a single violation of that Labour platform upon which we were all elected?

Why, I say, did not the Official Labour party accept the invitation to join hands with us and with the Liberals, to form a National Government, in which all parties should be represented, so that the full force of the nation should be behind its war policy?...

The reason is obvious on the face of things. The Official Labour party is no longer the master of its own actions. It is a mere pawn in the hands of outside bodies. It does what it is told to do... Beyond hatred of myself, what does it stand for?...

The Government is a War Government. It is not a Government formed to destroy, but to build up. It does not come into existence to serve the cause of reaction, on the one hand, or of advanced legislation on the other. It comes to deal with the war... It is not a rich man’s government, nor a poor man’s government; it is the people’s Government; not a Government for some people, but for all peoples. And it will deal fairly with all.


**Labor announces its war policy in 1918**

1. The attitude of Labour towards the publicly declared objects of the War is what it was at the outbreak of the War:-
   (a) For Liberty and Democracy and the Independence of Small nations.
   (b) For the Honoring of Publicly Made Treaties.
   (c) For the Maintenance of Public International Law.

2. The aims of Labor in participating in the War purposed:-
   Assistance to Great Britain, under the voluntary system, in maintaining the publicly declared objects for which she entered the War (as described in the first paragraphs) to the best of our capability, consistent with Australia’s paramount and essential needs.
   Bringing about an enduring World Peace, on terms of equity and justice to all mankind.

**ATTITUDE TOWARDS RECRUITING**

Further participation in recruiting shall be subject to the following conditions:-
1. That a clear and authoritative statement be made on behalf of the Allies, asserting their readiness to enter into Peace negotiations, upon the basis of no annexations and no penal indemnities.
2. That Australia’s requirements in man-power be ascertained and met with respect to-
   2. Industrial Requirements.

Seventeenth Commonwealth Conference of the Australian Labor Party, June 1918.
THE SECOND REFERENDUM 1917

The second referendum campaign was harsher in its rhetoric, reflecting the bitter divisions created in 1916. Mannix was now recognised as a powerful leader of the ‘NO’ movement.

Hughes opens

Fellow citizens, I tell you plainly you stand now in grave danger. I say to you that the succession of ominous events which has followed one upon the heels of another during the last fortnight has changed a situation which, through our successes on the Western front, seemed bright with promise to one that is black with portents of evil ... Australia must do her share. (Loud cheers.) We must keep our five divisions in France and our forces in Palestine and elsewhere up to their full fighting strength. To do this it is necessary to raise 7,000 men a month. We cannot do with fewer. (Applause.)

Voluntary recruiting has failed... It has not failed through lack of men of military age, for there are in Australia over 770,000 males between the ages of 20 and 44, the majority of whom are fit for service. Making liberal allowance for the medically unfit, there are over half a million eligibles between 20 and 44. In addition, there are about 68,000 eligibles between 18 and 20 years, of whom say, 45,000 are fit. Yet in the month of September the number of voluntary recruits was only 2,460, and for the five months January 1 to May 31, 23,710.

The effect of the failure of voluntary recruiting has already make itself definitely felt. We have five divisions in France, but owing to the recent fighting, and the fact that they were approaching the limit of exhaustion of the reserve of sufficiently trained reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force in England, General Birdwood has been compelled to use one of the five divisions as a reserve for the other four. This decision has caused keen disappointment and strong feeling amongst the Australians comprising this division. And apart from the gravity of the situation caused by the Russian collapse and the Italian debacle, the need for more reinforcements is therefore urgent and imperative. Voluntarism has not failed for lack of men, nor because Australia is war weary, for with the exception of those families who have sent men to the front, the people of Australia have not suffered from war at all. No! Voluntarism has not failed for these reasons, but it has failed because of a systematic campaign of poisonous doctrines insidiously disseminated throughout the country. (Hear, hear.) And those who were responsible for the defeat of the referendum on October 28, 1916, those who clamoured for voluntary recruiting, are responsible for its failure! (Hear, hear.) The elections on May 5 last conclusively proved that Australia was loyal to the Empire, that it realised that its national safety absolutely depended upon that of the Empire - (applause) - that it was enthusiastically in favour of a policy that would enable the Commonwealth to do its share, that it was against a premature peace, that it repudiated the pernicious doctrines preached by the men who had continued to control organised labour - (hear, hear) - that it regarded I.W.W.-ism with abhorrence, that it repudiated those disloyal sections in our midst who sought to sacrifice Australia and the Empire in order to serve what they considered to be the interests of Ireland. Australia, by giving the National Government the largest majority known in history of the Commonwealth, proved its loyalty. (Cheers.) In one respect and one alone, I repeat, did it limit the Win-the-War Government. It decided to rely on voluntary enlistment for reinforcements. And through this chink in its armour, the disloyal sections of the community have ceaselessly endeavoured to hamstring the Government’s efforts in regard to recruiting and to all other things ...
beneath the surface, has now dared to raise its head openly to avow its hatred to Britain and to the Empire. Sinn Fein is here in our midst - Sinn Fein, whose present avowed object is an Irish republic, independent of and outside the Empire. And Australians have been told lately that they are Sinn Feiners! (Hear, hear.) What a vile insult to hurl at the loyal citizens of Australia! (Hear, hear.)

The issue before the electors, therefore, is clear and distinct; the number of casualties demand that 7,000 per month shall be forthcoming. Under the voluntary system we cannot rely on half that number being obtained. We ask for power to supplement the number raised by voluntary enlistment by compulsory ballot.

Voluntarism, which leaves to some the duty which should be performed by all, which leaves the unworthy, the disloyal, to reap the benefits of the valour and sacrifice of the brave and patriotic, has after three years of war broken down hopelessly, and in the face of this great imminent danger that now confronts the Commonwealth, it must be abandoned. (Cheers.) Every free nation that is fighting this great battle for liberty against military despotism has abandoned voluntarism ...

Fellow-electors, the Government proposal is before you. We who were elected on a Win-the-War policy tell you plainly that the situation in Russia and Italy is such that without the power to ensure reinforcements we cannot give effect to the policy which you approved with such enthusiasm last May. I tell you plainly that the Government must have this power. It cannot govern the country without it, and will not attempt to do so.

Argus, 13 November 1917.
Mannix responds

People had been told that everybody who voted against conscription was a disloyalist who deserved to be run out of Australia. (Laughter.) If that were so, then it was wrong to put the question to the people at all, but obviously since the question was put to the people there must be two sides to it; and if a man put such a question with two sides to it he ought to be prepared to have it candidly and deliberately discussed. (Applause.) But in this case only one side could get a fair hearing.

All the money bags, the paid organisers, and speakers, the press, the ‘public halls’ belonging to the people, were on the side of the conscriptionists. He wished the conscriptionists would give up the unfair business of branding all oppositionists to conscription as disloyalists, and all the talk about ‘enemies within the gate’. Whether they came from the pulpit, the bar or the bench, they were utterly silly statements. (Applause.) If all the anti-conscriptionists were ‘enemies within the gates’, did the conscriptionists mean to brand all the soldiers at the front who last time voted ‘No’ as enemies within the gates? (Cheers.) If so, those soldiers were literally enemies fighting for their traducers, who were never likely to go to the front and fight for themselves. (Applause.) Also were the people who talked so much of disloyalists forgetting that on the last occasion the majority of the people of Australia voted ‘No?’ Were all these people, too, disloyalists?

Let the Government get the military dominion it was seeking, and it would send men to the front until the war was won, and the war would not be won to their idea until the Empire secured economic domination of the world. If conscription were carried and the war went on, the married men, as in the case of New Zealand, would soon be driven into the camps, and the authorities would not stop at men 30 to 40 years of age, but would ultimately walk into camp every man who was able to walk. (Applause.)... If we rejected conscription we kept this small remnant of power - to say whether we should or should not continue in the war - in our hands. If we adopted conscription we became henceforth simply puppets in the hands of those who happened to rule, and we prolonged the war. (Applause.) ... Thus far, Australia had done splendidly. We had done better than any of the other Dominions, and probably as well as any two of them. The best thing we could do was to keep our supplies of food for our Allies. (Applause.) Also, if the proper methods were pursued and bigotry and sectarianism were dispensed with, Australia would do all that was required of her in the direction of voluntary recruiting. (Applause.) Australia, he repeated, had done more that her share. She was doing her share, and would do her share. Australia, though, he fervently hoped, would continue to share with Ireland the distinction of freedom from conscription. (Cheers.)

Catholic Press, 29 November 1917.
The ‘Lottery Of Death’

(The Australian Worker was prosecuted for printing this statement in its issue of 15 November 1917.)

We are to have in Australia, if the people’s enemies can get their way, the ghastliest gamble ever conceived in the brain of man.

Conscription is to take the form of A LOTTERY. Lives are to be drawn for on Tattersall principles; souls to be made the subjects of a hideous sweep.

The equivalents of eligible males are to be tossed into a hat or something; then someone – Death, who knows? – plunges in a hand, and all who are drawn are doomed to be the victims of bloody war.

It is the most immoral of all forms of gambling. It is fraught with tragedy; red with murder and foul with abomination.

If Australia accepts the scheme of military compulsion formulated by the Prime Minister at Bendigo on Monday night, it will abandon every pretension to be a democratic nation, and reduce its citizens to the level of cannibals drawing lots for an obscene feast.

A CALCULATED PESSIMISM

The Government demands seven thousand men per month, and what voluntarism will not supply it proposes to secure by means of a game of chance viler than any played in the hells of Monte Carlo.

In order to lend some color of justification to this outrageous measure, the Prime Minister paints the military situation in the gloomiest colors.

The position of the Allies is represented as desperate. Russia is routed; Italy is in process of being crushed; we are asked to contemplate the possibility of the English and French forces on the Western Front being driven back to the sea, and the whole world brought under the Teutonic heel.

But the picture is overdone. By its own grotesque exaggerations it DEFEATS THE PURPOSE AIMED AT. If matters on the battlefield were as bad as represented, the proposals of the Government would be so HOPELESSLY INADEQUATE that the Devil might well laugh at them as the latest joke.

It would be like trying to extinguish a mighty conflagration with a penny squirt; Australia’s 7000 a month being the merest drop of water in a mass of roaring flames.

We have reached that stage in the war when NOTHING that this Government can do with arms will affect the FINAL ISSUE. If we are winning, conscription in Australia will not hasten the overthrow of militarism by a single day. If we are losing, as the howls of the jingoes and junkers suggest, conscription in this country would ruin Australia without rendering the smallest material assistance to the Allied nations.

The Government is on the horns of a dilemma. Its scheme of compulsion on the one hand is UNNECESSARY, and on the other hand is USELESS.

Australian Worker, 15 November 1917.
‘Disloyalty’ is an easy accusation to make - and one that can be almost impossible to prove. Patriots saw any questioning of the commitment to war as ‘disloyal’. And they believed that Australia had more than its fair share of those who were disloyal to the war and Empire. Hughes lost little time in identifying them: the shirker, the Peace Army and other anti-war organisations, the farmers, the IWW, the Labor Party, Mannix and Australians of Irish-Catholic descent, women, the union movement. He certainly cast a broad net. Astute as he was as a politician, Hughes had missed a fundamental point evident in the exemption court hearings: by late 1916, war weariness was setting in. The issue was no longer ‘the’ war but rather ‘whose’ war. Did Australia really need its ‘last man’, especially after the ‘last shilling’ had long been lost from sight? Was that all the war meant?

The essential issue in this tutorial is the notion of loyalty and disloyalty in a society at war. The paper giver(s) should use only one or two examples to make their point after answering the first and last questions.

Define ‘disloyalty’. What was a ‘shirker’? Why did the Easter Rebellion in 1916 raise doubts about ‘Irish Catholic’ Australians? Who were the I.W.W.? Were they a threat and the twelve deserved their fate? Did the industrial unrest after 1916 reflect working class disloyalty? Was the anti-war movement in Australia between 1914 and 1918 taken seriously? Can a government allow opposition to its policies when the nation is at war?

Documents:

Shirkers, Hughes identifies the ‘enemy’, the I.W.W., Hughes and Mannix.

Readings:

Note: Some of the readings in previous tutorials are also relevant for this tutorial.


Oliver, B., *War and Peace in Western Australia, the Social and Political Impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995, chapter 2.


Shirkers

Despite the best efforts of patriotic citizens, some men seemed impervious to the call of duty. These men were singled out for attack as early as 1914. The ‘shirker’ had the capacity to reduce the patriotic citizen to bewildered anger as the extracts from two letters to the editor below show.

**SIR, -** ...A goodly number of young men are joining the expeditionary forces but... there is no great diminution in the number of able-bodied young men at Sydney’s street corners, or at the popular rendezvous in large and small country towns; and one wonders why a at least a reasonable percentage of these people do not offer their services, seeing that they apparently have nothing to do but stand in bunches and talk turf or cricket... Mr. Justice Pring... at an education function last week said: - ‘It was unfortunate that there were men in this country who never worked or did anything. One only had to go down George-street any day to see men 20 or 21 years of age, loafing in the streets, who would be performing a service if they went to the war to fight the battles of the nations.’ And again, in a country newspaper, a correspondent signing himself ‘Patriot’, writes:– ‘I see a great number of young men hanging about the streets, apparently unemployed. Cannot some of them volunteer to face and fight the enemy! Why should they hang back, while the men they vote against every year fight to secure their safety?’ Such small matters as an increase in the price of beer or a rise in the entrance fee to picture shows can produce an outburst of public opposition, and threats to strike in certain circles; but the fate of the nation, which now hangs in the balance, produces no wild outburst of enthusiasm.  

**J. C. L. Fitzpatrick**

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 1914.

**SIR, -** I wish to draw your attention to some of the brave men who stay at home... One evening last week the recruiting sergeant while engaged in taking a volunteer to the medical officer for examination [for enlistment into the AIF] came into contact with four eligible single men who expressed their desire to ‘enlist’. On proceeding to the medical officer’s gate they were inclined to be rather witty. One energetic young fellow tried to show his temerity by opening the gate for the volunteer, but none had the courage himself to follow. It appears that these physically fit young men were out for a jest making a mockery of their duty...Two of the would be heroes decided to retreat to the suburbs, where they could find mother’s apron strings to play with. While their brave school-mates are away making every sacrifice, such shirkers remain at home to reap the benefit... Where is their intrepidity? Surely if they are Australians they are not lacking in it! If this type of ‘humanity’ don’t intend to enlist why show their stupidity? Thank the Lord the country is not depending wholly on this sort of cowardice for its future freedom! What prevents them from helping their brother Australians to maintain the majestic name which the world has given our men for their intrepidity in this great struggle? Should we honour these men or treat them as shirkers? Why, in some towns they would be hunted by the community.  

**Yours, DISGUST.**

*Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, 22 June 1916.
Hughes identifies the ‘enemy’

Hughes opened the January 1916 recruitment campaign in Melbourne. After praising the bravery of the men at Gallipoli (and claiming that if the number of Australian soldiers had been treble, the campaign would have been won) he turned his attention to those in the labour movement who opposed recruitment.

I appeal to the people of this country to join the Expeditionary Forces. I appeal to them to join that heroic band of men who have cast an eternal lustre on the name of Australia. I ask them to strike a blow for their family, for this great Australia of ours, which has done much for them. I appeal to those men; I appeal to the manhood of Australia. I do not appeal to those men who, posing as lovers of liberty, do what they can to prevent men from joining the Expeditionary Forces. These men - I must speak plainly - these men pretend to speak as the mouthpiece of labour and unionism. They have nothing in common with labour and unionism. (Great cheering.) They are foul parasites. They have attached themselves to the vitals of labour. They seek, as it were, to take up their foul abode in the vitals of their host - to speak for him, to usurp those functions which belong to him. There is between syndicalism - and that is its name - and unionism and labour, as we know it in this country, a gulf as wide as hell. (Loud cheers.) If the world depended upon the strength of the arms of these people who speak as lovers of liberty it would have been in chains today. These men sneer at patriotism, because the very sound of it cuts them to the quick - because patriotism is based upon the sacrifice of self, and their religion is the apotheosis of self. Self is the beginning and ending of everything they have. (Great applause.) These men know no nationality, religion, or principle, and in the name of unionism and labourism I cast them out like devils out of swine. (Tremendous cheering.) Unionism today has found representatives in the armies. One of the unions, to which I have the honour to belong, containing only 5,000 members, has over 1,200 fighting at the front. The Waterside Workers have sent 4,000 and the Australian Workers' Union over 20,000. Are these men, who are the very bone and sinew of unionism, to be told by such as these no-conscription - these peace people who babble about peace, who have a good word for every country except this - that they stand for unionism and labour? Let them stand where they will, so long as they stand not with us. (Applause.)

Argus, 14 January 1916.

The I.W.W.

In January 1916, Hughes had made a general reference to his enemies within the labour movement. On the eve of the 1916 plebiscite, he named them. Twelve members of the I.W.W. in Sydney were charged with conspiracy to commit arson and sedition. They came to trial in December. The twelve were convicted and went to jail. The first extract below represents the mainstream press view of the I.W.W. The second is a condemnation of the sentences by Henry Boote in the Australian Workers’ Union paper. The third is the I.W.W. The fourth from a deposition from one of the twelve.

While the State Cabinet is considering whether it shall declare the I.W.W. an illegal organisation public opinion may be said to be strongly on the side of such action. Were it only a question of free speech for visionaries intent upon bringing in the millennium, the old unassailable arguments would bar the way against such extremists. In our experiences as a community there is nothing like the open air for ventilating grievances... But since war was proclaimed in August, 1914, the I.W.W. has shown itself not to be a mere coterie living by dissent. Its doctrines have been preached with constant incentive to anarchy and destruction. It has proved to be a veritable enemy in our midst, doing precisely the things that our enemies must approve since a full realisation of its program would lay our cities in
ruins, bring in civil war, and throw us open to every attack from every quarter. Members of the I.W.W. have not been content to plant moral dynamite against the walls. They have actually taken their inflammable oils and chemicals and cotton waste into our buildings and have destroyed many thousands of pounds worth of valuable property...

It was a direct challenge to the whole Constitution of the State. It was war without any of the preliminaries and without the slightest suggestion of remorse after the deed or of second thoughts during the carrying through of the crime. How is the State to defend itself under such conditions? Surely the only way now that prominent members of the organisation and apologists for its propaganda have been found to be criminals, is to declare it outcast and itself a body with criminal intent. But the main reason is that in a time of war, when every citizen ought to be engaged against the common enemy, there cannot be room in our midst for bodies like the I.W.W., whose objects are the undoing of the community. The time for argument has gone.

Sydney Morning Herald, 5 December 1916.

Whether these men, or some of them, are guilty or not guilty of incendiaryism, we do not know. But we are perfectly certain that the charge of exciting sedition, when levelled against industrial agitators, is only a weapon for repressing the expression of working-class discontent and upholding the moral code of exploitation. And we do not hesitate to declare the belief that, on the more serious charge of firing buildings... the evidence on which these men were convicted was ROTTEN through and through... Organised Labor should not rest until the prisoners are set free, or their criminality established, on testimony less grotesque, less tainted, and less obviously twisted and distorted to the needs of an unscrupulous prosecution.

The Worker, 7 December 1916.

Fellow Workers -

The I.W.W. is now on trial. It is now facing its most critical period in the whole of its history. The next few days will determine whether we live or... die.

The I.W.W. has been long enough in Australia now for the working class to know what it is, and what it stands for. The question which one is now forced to ask himself or herself is: Is the I.W.W. worth fighting for?...

There are hundreds of men and women in Sydney who have never taken the platform before, but, if necessary, are prepared to do so today... Only by a bold and open front can we expect to win... Wobblies, the eyes of the world are upon you, so let us now show the world that we are worthy of our steel.

We will go to Long Bay. We will go through hell and fire and water, and insects like Hughes and all his slimy crawling satellites will never stay us. We will answer the call in our hundreds and our thousands, the spirit of the wealth producers, who have toiled and groaned and died within us.

Direct Action, 16 December 1916.

If we are denied the right to free speech in a country like Australia, then we must go back into the impervious gloom of hopelessness and despair. If we, the I.W.W., are on trial today, it may be the trade unions tomorrow. If Australia is to be a country
where no man has the right of free speech, to freely organise for the betterment of his fellow men, then I tell you... I would sooner die.

M. Sawtell to Justice Burside, 6 December 1916.

An Irish-Australian mother

From the outbreak of war, the loyalty of Australians of Catholic Irish descent had been doubted. The doubting was not new. It was part of the social fabric of Australian society. The Easter Rebellion of 1916 prompted two ministers of the Queensland Parliament (Messrs Fihelly and Lennon) to attack the British response to the rebellion. Fihelly claimed that every new Irish-Australian recruit released another British soldier to oppress the Irish people and suggested that Irish-Australians should donate funds to the Dublin relief fund than patriotic funds at home. Lennon urged the Irish to refuse to allow their country to remain Britain's doormat. Yet there were thousands of men of Irish Catholic descent serving in the AIF. The mother of one wrote to the press.

Sir, - Please allow me a small space in your paper to protest against the disloyal speeches lately made by two Irish members of Parliament. It is not possible for us mothers with sons at the Front to remain dumb when our own flesh and blood is being injured by these men. It would not be hard to guess what their object was in declaring such sentiments at this time of day. I have my one and only son fighting somewhere in France, and there are many other Catholic mothers like myself deeply afflicted by the thoughts of the harm done by these men, Messrs Fihelly and Lennon. It must not be thought either that we agree with our own clergy on Irish matters always, and I am a Dublin woman who says it. There are many of us who see two sides of an event in history, even Irish.

We Irish are loyal and true enough if left to ourselves in Australia or anywhere. We hear the brace deeds of our gallant Irish at the Front extolled by our clergy, too, and proud we are to hear it, and pleased, but the truth must be regretfully told that very little encouragement or urging has been extended to our boys from the same quarter. - I am, sir etc, Margaret Mary Gillespie.

Courier, 26 September 1916.

Hughes and Mannix

The relationship between Hughes and Mannix between 1915 and 1921 deserves a PhD. Hughes was gifted, fiery, arrogant and brooked little interference when he had decided on a course of action. Mannix was cool, intellectual, witty, arrogant and equally unmoved when he had decided on a course of action. For Hughes, Empire was important. For Mannix, his Irish Catholic flock, Australia and Ireland were important. Mannix, indeed, was Hughes’s ‘turbulent priest’. The following extracts have been taken from different speeches made by Mannix.

If [Catholics] were to believe certain reckless people they might think that Catholic soldiers here were few in number. To that statement Catholic Australians have given their answer at the Dardenelles. It might have been expected that Australian Catholics before going to the assistance of outraged Belgium would have asked for freedom for their religion and for their schools... But Australians had asked for no promises, they had simply joined the ranks (Cheers.)... and the reward was to be accused of disloyalty...

The Age, 15 February 1916.
There have been found a few irresponsible persons to question the loyalty of the Catholic body. If the Catholics would only do the fighting, these people would undertake to look after the division of the spoils - among themselves of course. The Catholic schools - all of them, apparently - have been singled out as breeding grounds of disloyalty. Probably the nuns have not been enlisting in sufficient numbers.

At a time when all should be united for a common purpose, there are suspicions and distrust... It is an unhealthy thing - in some circumstances it might prove a dangerous thing - that a fourth part of the people should feel that they have a grievance against the majority. (Cheers.)

*Advocate*, 19 February 1916.

As a matter of fact, this was a trade war - simply an ordinary trade war. He remembered the time when their present enemies were capturing the trade of the world... The Germans were anxious to extend their trade and so were other people. War for the past 20 years had been inevitable, and it was only a matter of accident that it had came about. Proof of the fact that it was a tradewar lay in the way in which people were talking about what was coming when peace was declared.

*Catholic Press*, 1 February 1917.

By the time of the second conscription plebiscite in 1917, although Hughes still condemned a disaffected labour movement, Mannix was his principal target. Hughes was astute enough not to name Mannix, yet his audience knew exactly who he was talking about. Hughes opened the second conscription campaign in Sydney.

Recruiting did not fail because of a shortage of men nor for the want of work, nor want of money, nor because the Government held up the spectre of compulsion to frighten the people. It failed because there had been these many months past in our midst, propaganda preached by various sections, having, perhaps, nothing in common with one another, expressing hatred of all that we have, hatred of the British, and hatred of all those things that Australia and loyal citizens value, spragging the wheel of voluntary recruiting. It failed, as did the Russian Army, as did the Italian army, because of treachery in our midst.

I say deliberately that there is a section of men in our midst, in addition to the I.W.W, Syndicalists and reckless extremists - a band of men whose one most foremost desire is to hinder England and do her harm. (Applause.) They are the followers of that society known as Sinn Fein. I say that it is vile that a certain ecclesiastic should declare- Voices: Why don’t you intern him? Kick him out of Australia. [Clamour.]

This ecclesiastic insulted the Australian people vilely. More than any other section, he insulted those loyal Irish Australians who have gone out to die for these man, and who put Australia first. (Cheers, and voices: Intern him.) This man and those who follow Sinn Fein are prepared to offer up Australia on the altars of something attainable only by the disintegration of the Empire. (Applause.) A voice: You made him Chaplain-general of the Australian forces.

[At this stage a woman in the front seats stood up and cried, ‘Why don’t you deal with him? If you think these things about him, why haven’t you the courage to deal with him - applause and dissent.]
What the Sinn Fein desired could only be brought about by the disintegration of the British Empire. Whether you be English or Irish, show that man and those who stand with him that you do put Australia first... I say to you, Irish Australians, that if you want to prove your loyalty to Australia, do not desert these gallant men - these gallant Irish. (Cheers.)

*Daily Telegraph*, 15 November 1917.

**STRIKES**

The Labour Movement had grown increasingly restive during 1915 and 1916: prices rose yet wages lagged behind. The split in the Labour Party in 1916 following the failure of the conscription referendum created new tensions and a series of strikes followed, especially in New South Wales. Leaders of the Labour Movement argued that the ordinary workers were making the greater sacrifice. They were sending their sons to fight and they were being forced to endure a decline in their standard of living. The Railway Strikes of 1917 was criticised by the premier, Holman, and the prime minister, Hughes, but was defended by the New South Wales Labour Council spokesman, Kavanagh.

*Holman*

The Government is convinced that a section of the men were determined to have a strike under any circumstances.

There can be no compromise on the part of the Government when as issue of this kind is raised.

The time has come for the people of this State to take their stand against those extremists who have for a long time been deliberately conspiring against the national interest and who have been responsible for the industrial ferment which has disgraced this State since the beginning of the war.

It may be that this conflict will have serious results, and will for a long time affect the general prosperity of the State.

But in every country there comes a crisis when the people must be asked whether or not they will declare for the supremacy of the State, as against the turbulence of a minority. That is the issue in this conflict.

I know that a large section of the men concerned are not in sympathy with the strike, but are blindly following the majority.

I know of and appreciate that spirit of loyalty which animates men in their resolve to act together rightly or wrongly once a strike begins.

But to those who, in their hearts, are against this upheaval, I say this is not an ordinary strike. This is not a question of loyalty to fellow workmen. This is a case in which the loyalty of a man to the supremacy of the State over the individual is involved.

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 August 1917

*Hughes*

The recent strike, the most serious in the history of Australia, was the fruits of a deliberate conspiracy for this purpose. It was engineered by the same men who had driven out of the Labour movement every man who dared to put his country, in the hour of its greatest peril, before his party, and its mean and petty interests. (Hear,
hear.) It was supported by the I.W.W., by Sinn Fein, by every disloyal section in Australia. A strike in time of war ought not to be entertained by citizens of a free country. Such a strike as that which has just passed, a strike which tied up shipping for weeks when shipping is the very life’s blood of the Empire, is a heinous crime. These men boast that thousands of unionists are fighting at the front. Yes, thank God, they are, but they are not the type that engineered the last strike. (Applause.) I do not speak of the unfortunate rank and file unionists, but of those reckless and disloyal men who have led unionism to political and industrial destruction.

Argus, 13 November 1917

Kavanagh
It was originally intended to confine the strike to those directly affected by the Card System, but this was found impossible owing to the general dissatisfaction which existed throughout the Railway service, due to the failure to remedy long-standing grievances and to the limited scope of the Arbitration Act, which precluded the Court of Boards dealing with matters of vital importance to the employees. Consequently the strike extended right through the services.

The next difficulty the Committee was faced with was in keeping the waterfront free, but, unfortunately, owing to apostles of the general strike seeing in the ‘black Doctrine’ the chance of realising their ideal, this was also found to be impossible, and the Waterside Workers became involved. This, as was anticipated, involved the other States, and thereby added to the difficulties of the Committee without in any way assisting the cause.

In the meantime Unions outside the Railway service, in addition to those on the waterfront, were affected mainly by the employment of ‘Loyalists’ to take the places of men on strike, and by shortage of material, especially coal. In fact, it would be difficult to name one Union that was not to some extent affected by the strike.

The strike lasted about eight weeks, and it was estimated that at least 100,000 men were affected throughout Australia, and 65,000 in this State alone...

Argus, 13 November 1917
The Shirkers’ Idol.
With the outbreak of war, German-Australians attracted immediate attention. There were calls to ban lager beer, German sausage and even performances of Beethoven. This passed as Australians looked forward to the grand adventure. Kaiser Bill was no match for the Empire. But by 1916, the telegrams with their brief notification of time and place, had become all too common. And although Hughes and Munro-Ferguson found many disloyals to explain a growing war weariness, Australia did have one minority ripe for the picking in the hunt for the ‘enemy within’ - German-Australians. There is, of course, an irony here. German immigrants and German-Australians were often regarded as model citizens and exemplars until 1914. Most settled in rural districts where they became farmers. But the German immigrants and their children aggressively maintained their German heritage. They had their own language press, often frowned on intermarriage with the Anglo community and maintained links with the Fatherland, especially with the appointment of German pastors for their communities. Some historians argue that this ethnic minority allowed the government to manufacture the threat of an ‘enemy within’ - and they present a very bleak picture of the fate of German-Australians.

How did German-Australians respond to the outbreak of war? Why did German Australians enlist? Were the rights of German-Australians denied by parole, internment and the changing definition of who was a ‘German’? Or did the Australian government take a sensible approach in a nation at war?

Documents:

The Mayor of Brisbane, South Australia, a ‘deadly peril’ and Daisy Schoeffel.

Readings:


Oliver, B., *War and Peace in Western Australia, the Social and Political Impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995.


* Wollongong campus only
The Mayor of Brisbane

At the outbreak of war, the mayor of Brisbane, W. J. Down, addressed a packed meeting in the Albert Street Methodist Church. Although the bulk of his speech was devoted to Empire, he drew a distinction between Germany and German Australians.

There was a marked difference in what had been termed ‘jingoism’ and what was true patriotism, and it was with the latter spirit that he desired to address this magnificent gathering. The mother country had been drawn into the conflict now raging through no fault of her own, and with no wish to be embroiled in international strife, but when her honour, as well as her very national existence, was at stake, Great Britain, with all her traditions, could not do otherwise than fulfil her treaty obligations. She was in honour bound compelled to stand by those nations with which she had treaties. (Applause.) We knew from our experience of German colonists here that they were a hard-working and thrifty race, and he had no reason for believing otherwise than the agrarian residents of Germany were animated with similar ambitions. We had no quarrel with the members of the tuetonic race who had settled amongst us, and we must so conduct ourselves towards them, and not make their lot harder to bear. (Applause.) For some years Germany had been ruled by a military caste, and had become the ‘bully of Europe.’ She had coerced and cajoled weaker nations, and by a course of quiet, determined antagonism, accompanied by occasional rattling of the sabre, had, under the present Emperor, taught Great Britain to distrust her...

Courier, 10 August 1914.

South Australia’s Nomenclature Act 1917

By 1917, such an appeal for tolerance would have fallen on deaf ears. In South Australia, the government moved to change German place names in the state.

... it was generally agreed that something should be done to remove from the map of this State the names of enemy origin which have become obnoxious to the people of the State generally. It is not surprising that in the early days of South Australia, when so many people were coming from Germany... that they should bring fond memories of their native land... and that they should delight to hear familiar names... As many of these names have become obnoxious, it was felt that everything possible should be done to remove what might be described as a preservation of racial instinct as far as enemy countries are concerned. For that reason it is proposed in this measure to remove names of enemy origins and substitute others.

We could, for example, call Kaiserstuhl Hill, in the Barossa Ranges, Mount Lord Kitchener, so that our children in days to come when going along the northern areas of the State seeing that hill and asking should have the opportunity of being told it was named after one of the greatest heroes of the mightiest conflict the world has ever seen... The principle has been agreed to that German names should be removed from our map, because we cannot afford, and do not want, to extend and perpetuate racial memories and feelings. It is the same principle that underlay the Education Act carried a year or so ago [which banned German language schools]... I take it for granted that these German names, which have been put on the map, have to come off.

South Australia’s Nomenclature Act 1917
A ‘deadly peril’

As late as November 1918, the government was still alerting Australians to the German menace with advertisements in the press.

AUSTRALIA’S DEADLY PERIL

When Germany’s iron heel descends upon the lands she has conquered the result is shame, slavery, and death. Australia’s peril will not be over till the day when peace is signed. A drawn war would be almost as dangerous to her as a lost war; it would only mean a postponement of the peril till Germany could choose her own time and wreak a fresh outrage on the world. That is why she must be beaten outright, and beaten now. Go forth and help to beat her!
The Government of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Argus, 2 November 1918.
‘At the hands of our own men’

The following is an edited version of a letter written by Daisy Mildred Schoeffel. A fourth generation Australian, she married Alfred Emil Schoeffel in 1913 and accompanied her husband to Fiji. There her sister met, and married, her husband’s business partner, Alfred Kienzle, in 1915. Both men were German born but naturalised British subjects. The letter was written in May 1919 as she and her husband faced deportation to Germany.

The Hon H. Gregory

Dear Mr Gregory,

At your request I am hereby giving an account of some of my experiences during this war... I was married to my husband in 1913 and went with him to Levuka, Fiji, where he had been living since 1908. He is a naturalized British Subject and left Germany when a lad of 16 years and has not been back since.

As for myself, you know well enough who I am and that my people in WA have done everything possible to help win this war. My brother and cousins only returned last week after 4 years active service.... All went well until September 1917, when a small launch containing Count von Luckner and four other German Sailors... was blown to one of the Fiji Islands called ‘Wakaya’ in a great storm... This incident gave the Fiji business people the opportunity they had been waiting for for over 3 years and they made capital of it! Everybody simply went mad! Nothing was allowed to appear in the papers and the most terrible stories were circulated about the naturalized Germans living on the different islands and the Government did nothing to clear the matter up... I also should never have believed it possible that a British Community could act as they did, had I not been there and stood the many insults; I can forgive them, when I know they were temporary mad. After a few days the people calmed down when they found out the truth. It seems that they thought hundreds of Germans had landed in the group and were being led and helped by naturalized Germans and as I said before, the Government did absolutely nothing to contradict these wicked and false rumours, in fact I have proof that some officials encouraged them. Anyhow the result of all this was that all Germans, men, women and children whether naturalized or not, were deported and their properties taken over by a liquidator... I protested that I was British and that my brother was at the front fighting... but I could do nothing; it was said that no exceptions could be made...

On 1st November 1917 we left Suva... I shall never forget that trip, it nearly killed me. I had just undergone a serious operation for gallstones and appendicitis and was very weak and nervous. We were guarded by 10 soldiers with fixed bayonets and our party consisted of 20 men... there were also about 15 women including myself and sister and our children. My two children were 3 years and 15 months resp.

We arrived in Sydney at daylight on Nov 9th and were strongly guarded by military forces with fixed bayonets... I begged to be allowed to send a wire to father to tell him in what awful trouble I was, but this was refused me. But one soldier who was in the guard said ‘well, this is the limit, to see Australians treated like this’, and he went off and got me something to eat and some baby food. No officer came on board the ship during the day and we were just left boxed up not knowing what was to happen to us, until 8.20 p.m. when a young officer came... and took us to the railway station and we were put on the train for Bourke. This was the first information I had about our destination and you can imagine how I felt. I have to state here that Fiji told us we would not be interned and that I could do as I liked when I arrived in Sydney... We arrived in Bourke just before dark... Here the Sergt Major told each family to what room to go to... When I was able... to see the state of the rooms we had to live in, we women... just broke down. I wished to God that I could die and my
babies with me! In my room were two broken bedsteads and nothing else but filth and dirt...

The first week at Bourke was hell on earth. I lived worse than a nigger. I washed my babies under a tap in the back yard and cooked on four bricks and a bar of iron with the temperature about 110 in the shade... I tried to wire my father from Bourke but was not allowed; had it not been for the generosity of some of the German internees my sister and I would probably not be alive today!... About a week after we arrived in Bourke we all got dysentery and we got precious little medical attention and what we got was chucked at us...

Regarding the rations we received at Bourke it was simply disgraceful, and no human being could have lived on what we got there. For 2 months one time we received absolutely nothing but bread and meat, the latter being flyblown...

You might say, why didn't I write and complain? It was simply impossible; we were allowed to write 2 letters a week of 150 words each but we were not allowed to complain of anything, or the letters would be returned. We soon found the only thing to do was grin and bear it like the rest. In May 1918 we were packed off to Molonglo, Canberra, which camp had just opened. Oh, the difference in the treatment here was very marked indeed and we all said if only we had been sent there in the first place! The officers and men were all very kind, especially at first and were most sympathetic to my sister... But there was one marked drawback and that was that we were in a camp, whereas in Bourke we lived amongst the people in comparative freedom...

Before I close this, I wish to state that what hurt us more than all the insults and hardships we were forced to endure during our 2 years internment, was the fact that we should have to suffer this at the hands of our own men and in our own country! Had we received this treatment in Germany it would not have hurt so much for then we should have known that we were in Enemy Country and should further had everybody's sympathy in Australia, whereas now we are made to feel as if we were criminals...

My people are very sensitive and ashamed about our position and for their sake I ask you not to mention their name...

Letter from Daisy Mildred Schoeffel to the Minister for Defence, May 1919, from Fischer, G., *Enemy Aliens*.
Some historians argue that the war blunted the development of first wave feminism, reinforcing the stereotypical roles of women as mothers and nurturers, the dominance of patriarchy and undermining the notion of separate but equal spheres. Others argue that women played a much more prominent part in the war effort in both the private and public domains than hitherto suspected. Middle class women in particular were prominent in organisations like the Red Cross. Women were prominent in both the pro- and anti-conscription campaigns. Vida Goldstein founded the Women's Peace Army. And the government paid special attention to women during the recruitment campaigns. But little is known of the daily lives of women as mothers of sons who went to war, as wives of soldier husbands bringing up the family, struggling to make ends meet, dreading the appearance of the local clergyman at the front gate. Even the women who volunteered as nurses remain under researched. If the place of women remains sketchy, the kids are almost invisible in the literature. Yet they were constantly used for the war effort: they marched, knitted, sang, raised money and were responsible for creating the first commemorative icons of the war, the local honour roll.

What roles did women play between 1914 and 1918. How did the government sell the war to Australia's women? What ideals were expected from womenfolk? Did Maria Keat match these? Is there evidence of a gendered response to the war effort? What was the place of nurses in the war effort - exemplars, stereotypes, sex objects? What did children contribute to the war effort?

**Documents:**

Activities, Maria Keat, Nurses, Vida Goldstein, kids.

**Readings:**


Manuel, J., "We are the women who mourn our dead": Australian Civilian Women's Poetic Responses to the First World War, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 29, November 1996.


Activities: the local press reports:

**DEREANG**

The patriotic euchre party and dance organised by the ladies of the district recently was a great success financially, about £13 being raised for the great national cause, and will be forwarded to the Lord Mayor’s Fund shortly. Everything required for the event was donated gratis, and the ladies are worthy of the highest commendation for the manner in which everything was carried out.

*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 26 September 1914.

**BEECHWORTH**

**LADIES’ PATRIOTIC LEAGUE**

The following donations have been made to the Beechworth Women’s Patriotic Fund [list of 70 women cash donors follows]. The following have also been given:
- Two pairs socks, Mrs Harry Bartsch; two flannel shirts, Mrs Fred Phillips; six pairs socks, Mrs Barnes snr; parcel wool, Mrs Pearson; one lb wool, Mrs Gunion; 18 yds flannelette, Mrs Egan; three pairs socks, Miss Scott; one flannel shirt and parcel of magazines, Mrs Ellis; one lb wool, Mrs McBean; one flannel shirt, Mrs Edwards; flannelette and pocket handkerchiefs, the Misses Bacon; two pairs socks, Mrs Bennett; tea and sugar bags, the Misses Sinclair; material for kit bags and one lb wool, Miss Dalgleish; one lb wool, Miss Lowe; magazines and musical instruments, Mrs Kelly; magazines, Mrs Skinner; magazines, Mrs Hope.

The following goods were packed on Wednesday afternoon and sent away by Thursday afternoon's train: - 20 flannel shirts, 10 underflannels, 10 flannelette nightshirts, 40 pairs of socks, 110 handkerchiefs, 10 Balaclava helmets, 10 tea and sugar bags, 10 knitted scarfs. 37 kit bags were also sent to the Victoria Barracks in response to special request for same. Sewing meetings at the Town Hall are now discontinued, but work will be given out to those willing to do it at home, on Thursday next 10th inst, after which meetings will be held fortnightly to receive and pack finished work and give out more.

*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 9 September 1914.

**The soldier’s mother**

Lionised during the war and then promptly forgotten, even during the resurgence of feminist history during the 1970s, the soldier’s mother deserves more attention in Australian historiography. The following letter was written by Maria Keat to her son Alick. She wrote many, but this is the only one that survived.

July 12/18

*My darling Soldier Boy* just received you letter hand dated 7 of the fifth month also field card dated 16 of the fifth month, so glad to here that you are well, have sent you lotts of parcles, I do hope you will get them all, just fancy dear, I got a letter from Mr Dearden, such a nice one... he said you made a lot of friends while you were at Myrtleford & hopes to see you again... I had a nice letter from Miss Parry your mates sister, she sent me a photo  it is a group, she put a dot on the top of her Brothers head so that I would know him  he is a fine Soldier Boy...
may you always keep friends, it is nice to have a mate, my word the papers are
given the Australians a good name, God bless you all dear Boys, it is lovely to read
all about you, I do a lot of reading, still in bed, you used to love to read in bed &
have some apples to eat, I am saving some books for you to read when you come
back... I hope you are having nice weather, my word it is cold here, I am glad you
get plenty of letters, Mrs Owens and Baley are getting on fine she sends her love
& Mr & Mrs Daly to, Bertha and Doll are tip top... Well dear I dont know what else
to tell you... God bless you and keep you safe my darling Boy  the girls send lotts
of love, with lotts and lotts of love your loveing mum Maria Keat

Keat Collection

Nurses

The nurses who enlisted were accorded a special place both at home and by the men at the
front. They also wrote home and their letters were circulated among women in the local
community.  The following are three such letters. The first was written by Evelyn Davies from
the Hospital Ship *Oxfordshire* in Mudros Bay, Lemnos, on 15 January 1916.

My Dearest Mum,

You have heard all about the evacuation of the Peninsula no doubt how successfully
it was accomplished there only being 3 casualties. Mum it was wonderfully arranged
the Turks being quite unaware that the Australians were leaving, they had fixed
rifles on the Parapets of the trenches and with water tins perforated and allowing
water to gradually fill another tin which was attached to the rigger of the rifles and
the requisite weight to fire off the Rifle, altogether it was well thought out. I shall
never forget the Suspense watching for the boats to come in during the night, and
also listening for bombardment, it took in all about five days ...

It does seem sad to leave the Peninsula after so many valuable lives being lost and
having to leave them behind for their Resting places perhaps to be desecrated Mum
Dear it must hurt those Brave Women who let their men come out. The saddest
part of all is to hear the men talk about their Mates who have fallen, I didn’t think
men became as fond of each other as they really do, they are fine even the
roughest of them. Have you heard of the man named Simpson belonging to the
Field Ambulance who did such excellent work rescuing the wounded under fire with
the aid of a donkey. Mum he was a ‘White man’ as the Boys say, he worked night
and day going from the firing line down to the Beach taking two patients sometimes
on the Donkey and perhaps supporting two or three others he wouldn’t pause even
for meals the men would try and get him to take tea he would have a few sips and
then get back to work, he worked two Donkeys resting them alternately he seemed
to have a charmed life and did most daring deeds and was known as ‘The Man with
the Donkey’ however he at last was Killed by a Sniper... he was one of many Heroes
who deserve but do not get Victoria Crosses...

On New Year’s Eve Gertie’s Birthday (I thought of her all day) well we went to
Castro the Capital of the Island which is about fifteen miles from our Camp we
drove in a Gharry (a Phaeton like contrivance) drawn by two ponies and driven by a
Greek man clad in the baggiest of trousers and a plush Cap on his head. I sat on a
high seat beside him right in front, and in attempting to pull up the Rug I pulled his
pants one time, much to my embarrassment...

Castro is a dirty place much the same as other villages but larger and right on the
water’s edge, they have a rather fine fort with a Turreted Castle-like appearance,
it is quite a steep climb to the top and one passes under Moorish arches and up old steps past the queerest old guns fenced in with rows and rows of old Cannon balls some of which were in halves joined together with 2 links about six inches in length the object is for them to spread when fired and encircle masts or Rigging of ships and thence do a great deal of damage, then we visited the Dungeons. Mum they were fearful places just dens right down under the ground, it seems too awful to think of people living there.

We picnicked right up on the cliff and it was beautiful, the air was so clear and refreshing. Down in the Town everything was changed, the streets are narrow, winding, and unclean and Simply thronged with children who demanded ‘Bucksheesh’ at every turn, such dirty little varmints too, the prices demanded in the shops were exorbitant... I have great admiration for Donkeys since coming here the poor wee patient beasts are cruelly treated, such loads the Greeks pile on them, and adding insult to injury by climbing up on its tail then they goad the poor beast on with a pointed stick... I am afraid that you will have to wait a long time for this letter Mum Dear but during the Evacuation I couldn’t write at all, and now there is a further delay I know you’ll feel worried too, if I thought you were getting all my letters I wouldn’t mind a scrap, but so many go astray one way and another... I am wonderfully well Mum, I haven’t been as stout for years, the life seemed to agree with most of us in fact it would be difficult to elicit sympathy, and people wouldn’t believe we ever had hard times from our present appearances...

One of our Sisters Daley by name was married out here and consequently is to be sent back to Australia her name is now Lawrence and her people live in St Kilda, I am sending a parcel by here which she has promised to deliver either by post or rail, but she will drop a line to let you know when to expect it... I wish I was going home too, but suppose it will be much nicer to return when this War is all over. Mum Dear won’t it be nice to see Port Melb. Again I get excited when I think about it, no one Knows the longings for familiar faces that come over us at times...

In the book of Snaps I am sending is a view of Kondia a Greek village near which the Horse figuring in the ‘Siege of Troy’ was supposed to have been made, altogether the place is very historical. Wasn’t it on Lemnos that Vulcan was supposed to land after being cast out of Heaven? I wish I knew more about ancient history... Much love to your Dear Self, Treg and Rupe

From your loving
TEV

Bassett, J., As We Wave You Goodbye
Sister Jean Todd wrote to parents in 1916.

Dear Mr. Asbury,

Your son No. 154 Pte. Asbury, A.G. 20, AIF, was admitted to this Hospital on the morning of the 6th suffering from a gunshot wound of the abdomen. He was seen by the surgeon who operated almost at once. After the operation, he was rather collapsed, but restoratives were applied and he rallied considerably, but as consciousness returned a great restlessness began, and a kind of low delirium. Still there was no sickness - he somehow got through the first night and the next day, and we hoped against hope. Yesterday his pulse improved but always the restlessness and delirium - he would say ‘all right sister’ or ‘thank you’ quite clearly, then wander off to machine guns and so on. Towards night he grew worse and passed away at 5 minutes to 9. He was so very ill all the time that I did not ask him whether there was anything he would like me to tell you. I am deeply sorry not to be able to say how he got hit or anything. I am, yours truly, Jean Todd, Sister.

Ovens and Murray Advertiser, 5 July 1916.

Agnes Jones, from Harrietville, wrote from France in 1917.

We are right on the banks of the Somme here. It is a magnificent river, but somehow when one looks at its beauty, one shudders and remembers - for I suppose it is the bloodiest battlefield in the history of the war. That is where Harry Martin [a Harrietville volunteer] went out in the biggest fight Australians ever set out on. I saw a boy fishing there the other day, and I registered a vow never to eat fish again here. It made my very soul sick. We travelled through miles of the most gorgeous country to get here, and places that were battlefields in the early history of the war are now all planted with crops. Growing amongst them are cornflowers, poppies, daisies and many other flowers. Then one would pass through acres of land marked with its little wooden crosses, with plenty of wildflowers growing over the little mounds. These places are well tended by the French and by the troops out on rest, and I think that those at rest underneath are really the best off as they are finished with the heart scalding that those left behind are suffering. The Queen passed along the other day and placed flowers on the graves, but I think nothing could be as sweet as the decorations nature has provided - cornflowers, poppies, marguerites, tiny forget-me-nots, and lily of the valley. I think it would do many an Australian woman’s heart good if she could see how beautiful the resting place of her boy is, and she would be glad he had done his bit.

Sister Jones, Harrietville, Alpine Observer, 21 September 1917.

Vida Goldstein

Goldstein was a feminist and pacifist who worked tirelessly for female suffrage both in Australia and overseas. She stood unsuccessfully for Federal Parliament five times between 1903 and 1917, established and edited the Woman Voter and founded the Women’s Peace Army in 1915. The following is taken from the Woman Voter after Hughes’s electoral victory in 1917.

FROM ‘WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!
WOMEN OF THE WORLD UNITE’!

Immediately on the declaration of war many of the foremost women in the woman movement in every country set to work to bind together the forces that stood true
to peace and internationalism in war-time as in peace-time. In far-away Australia the Women’s Political Association took the lead, and when news came through it was found we had taken exactly the same line as our fellow-women in other countries. In spite of every difficulty placed in their way by Governments and by the Press, the women held an International Congress in the Hague in April, 1915, for the purpose of formulating terms for a constructive and permanent peace. Quietly, steadily, surely the gospel of internationalism has spread, and nowhere has it spread more rapidly than in Russia and in Germany amongst the women, the workers, and the soldiers themselves. It is good indeed to think that the men who have borne the brunt of the actual fighting and have survived it will return from the battlefields to swell the forces of anti-militarism and internationalism. And the people must not fail them. It will be said that the small number of votes cast for me as a straight-out pace and anti-militarist candidate proves that the people of Australia do not want peace. Nothing of the kind. It only proves that party allegiance is stronger than allegiance to principle. The Labour vote in each State, except, perhaps Western Australia, represents in the main a peace vote, but the domination of the ‘ticket’ was stronger than fidelity to peace. The seeming triumph of the National Party is not a war vote as much as a Press, anti-Labour, and fear vote, backed up by a few thousand men and women of the working classes with capitalist minds. An election does not decide principle as a referendum does; prejudice, personalities, and side issues overshadow the real issues. Bendigo, for instance, does not mean a victory for Mr Hughes’ policy. It means that thousands voted for Mr Hughes merely because they were flattered by the idea of their constituency being represented by the Prime Minister. My vote represents the number of people in Victoria who put principle before everything, the small number who could be reached by an organisation which is absolutely ignored by the powerful daily papers; but I would rather have my 7000 votes than the 200 000 recorded for the Labour Party, which betrayed the working people of Australia. It is a fact that cannot be gainsaid that any party that does not stand resolutely opposed to militarism is the enemy of the working people, even though it professes to represent them.

The vote against conscription was a magnificent triumph for principle by the people, but unfortunately the Labour Party could not follow up the victory to its logical conclusion - peace and anti-militarism, because the Labour Party in Australia is a Militarist Party. It stands for a worse phase of militarism than any other country - conscription of boys of 13. After October 1916, the oppressed people of the world looked to Australia to save them from militarism. Australia has failed them. The honour and privilege of giving the lead in this direction has fallen to the working people of Russia, and the working people of Germany are the first to respond to their Russian brothers. The Russian workers demand PEACE WITHOUT ANNEXATIONS. The German workers, as one would naturally expect Germans to be, are more direct and logical, and demand in addition the ABOLITION OF COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE.

We of the WPA have demanded this reform since the election of 1913, and it must now be our task to urge the workers and the women of Australia to unite in working for this great ideal.

Woman Voter, 11 May 1917.
**Kids**

**STATE SCHOOLS' PATRIOTIC FUND**

Children were encouraged to make regular contributions to the war effort through the State Schools' Patriotic Fund. The spirit behind the contributions is summed up below:

But the children do not do any collecting in the ordinary sense. The bringing of a coin regularly for [the Fund] gives the child a real love for his country, and the proud feeling that he is giving real help to the Empire. More so is this when the child earns the coin he brings and it is one of the best features of this movement that so many children are really doing so, and being encouraged to do so, by their parents.

*Upper Murray and Mitta Herald, 6 June 1918.*
War is sometimes seen in religious terms: it is punishment by God for the sins of human beings. God does not unleash the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse without due cause. In 1914, most religious leaders had little doubt that the war had a divine purpose. Ascertaining that purpose, however, was a bit of a problem. Was the war a reflection of sinfulness at home, God’s punishment of German militarism or the sign that Christ was about to return? The clergy enlisted as chaplains in the AIF and those who remained at home undertook a responsibility that many would find difficult to discharge as the war ground on: delivering the telegrams to families of the same religious denomination. In time their appearance on the street was dreaded. Often, they found the families were not members of their congregation: nominal religious affiliation was part and parcel of Australian society by 1914.

War also provides moral interest groups in society with the perfect opportunity to push particular agendas. Temperance had long been waging a losing battle in Australia. The war would see it triumph. But grog was not the only target in a moral crusade the linked war with moral virtue. For the patriots, it was clear that too many Australians were wasting their time, and money, on sport, especially football and racing (although cricket seemed to be sacrosanct). The men chasing a ‘bag of wind’ and those watching in the crowd were failing in their duty.

How did the churches react to the war? How did they explain it? What were the responsibilities faced by the clergy? What were the responsibilities of chaplains at the front? Did the churches bring different interpretations to the war? Why were sport and grog targeted by the moral reformers? How successful were the reformers in their campaigns to attack these twin evils? Why?

Documents:

The clergy respond, ‘JB’ predicts, the ‘poison glass’, drunken soldiers and temperance.

Readings:


TUTORIAL 16 DOCUMENTS

The clergy respond

The Rev. Robert B. Macleod

Robert Macleod was a Presbyterian minister based in Beechworth. Twice he answered the question ‘what does the war mean’?

I believe the answer is because the Christian nations have largely forgotten and neglected the teachings of Christ. I believe that we have forgotten the God of our forefathers and that God is punishing us with a terrible punishment... It is a fight between autocracy and democracy. It is a question of whether we are to slaves or whether we are to be free... Many of us saw this terrible war coming. I have frequently told you it was coming but it came quite unexpectedly... But we have been saved from the sound of the guns, the wall of death and the cry of anguish... Another great danger we have here is the danger of class hatred. One of the things that makes my heart sick is to read of strikes in the midst of these terrible times... In Australia we have suffered nothing. Make it your prayer that God will steer our Empire through the danger and keep us in the way of righteousness and make us victorious, in so far as we are in the service of right.

Ovens and Murray Advertiser, 11 August 1915.

But there are reasons for this madness. They told us of the plottings of Germany but these were only secondary causes. Why was it that Germany which had produced many great men had fallen. He believed it was not natural. That the declension of this people was willed by the war lords and that the decline in German religion and the sense of responsibility to God was caused by attacks on the Bible... Germany became a materialist society. God sent the war because we forgot our duty to him and to our fellow man, and our children’s children would work as slaves to pay the interest only on the money we were squandering now. What a different world it would be if people would sit at the feet of God and do His will.

Chiltern and Howlong Times, 7 August 1917.

Catholic Archbishop Carr agrees, almost.

At the beginning of the war many persons believed - and he was one of the number - that the conflict would be a long-continued one, and that it would be very sanguinary and very destructive and that it would inflict punishment on a great number of nations, as well as on individuals, for the reason that the efforts of the nations and individuals in modern times seemed to get rid of the idea of God and Divine Providence; to run the world on their own account, according to their own philosophy, or according to their own theology. God looked on, heard the words, witnessed the profanity and irreligion prevailing so much in many countries of the world, as on so many occasions He looked upon the crimes and infidelities of men. They knew from former history, both sacred and profane, that if there was an accumulation of crime and perversity, and nations and individuals went away from God, He inflicted such punishments as would force them to acknowledge Him and realise that crime was not to go unpunished...He did not say that God created the war; he did not mean that. God took advantage of the crimes of men for a just punishment of men and nations.

Catholic Press, 1 March 1917.
The Church Standard

The Israelites in the desert hankered after the flesh pots of Egypt, but their true blessedness was not to be found in the prosperous and peaceful civilisation of that country but in the Promise Land. It needed years of hardship to change the murmuring mob into a strong God-fearing nation; and who can tell the countless heartbreaks as the flower of their manhood fell fighting the desert tribes... But it was thus that they learnt to trust God and serve Him. We, too, shall find the blessedness that lies hidden in these surroundings, when to the human heroism which is being so magnificently exhibited there is added the sense that we are learning God’s lessons, consenrating [sic] ourselves to His service, furthering His cause.

From the Ovens and Murray Advertiser, 12 August 1916.

The Catholics offer prayers

Tomorrow (Thursday) the Feast of Corpus Christi, and the eight following days, ending with the Feast of the Scared Heart, the prayers for peace issued by Pope Benedict XV will be recited after the Mass, instead of the De Profundis. The Masses will be offered with the following intentions:-
(1) For the blessings of peace throughout the world; (2) for the eternal repose of Australian soldiers who have fallen in battle; (3) For the grace of a happy death for all the soldiers of the Empire who will die before the war is over; (4) For the speedy recovery of all soldiers who have been wounded or will be wounded; (5) For the success and safe return of the great body of the Australian troops; (6) For the comfort and consolation of the parents, wives and friends of all our troops who die in defence of the Commonwealth and Empire.

Ovens and Murray Advertiser, 2 June 1915.

A local paper reports

Church services in connection with the war were held throughout the district Sunday last, and a large congregation attended in each case. At Upper Buckland and at St Andrew’s Bright, Mr McKenzie Harrison preached to the congregation. Mr Harrison took as his topic, ‘The war and its lessons’. He emphasised the substitution of the superficial for the natural and the substitution of lower values of human life for the higher value of God. There was, he said, a danger in substituting arrogant pride for self-respect. The perils of war were graphically depicted and the preacher urged as the remedy for war the trial of Christianity. If men would live in Christ’s light, he went on to say, weakness would be protected, wrongs would be redressed and power prevented from becoming autocratic...

At All Saints Church, Bright, the Rev. G. Brammall preached sermons on obedience to the wishes of the Commonwealth Government. Taking the theme back to the commencement of the war he traced how Britain had been brought into it through the Central Powers making themselves slaves to conquer the world and if we hadn’t been arisen we would have become conquered slaves. Much that had happened over the last year was disappointing, but we could take God’s encouragement to Joshua as ours, and be strong and courageous and determined to do all in our power to bring about a successful issue. It was a duty to all that we hold sacred, i.e., our homes, our religion, our highest ideals and with the Righteous God on our side we must eventually win...
At the local R. C. Church, Rev. Father McMahon announced that Mass would be celebrated for our Australian soldiers living and dead. During the course of his remarks the rev. gentleman said he desired the prayers of the people for the protection of those who were fighting in battles, also for an early and honourable peace.

*Alpine Observer*, 10 August 1917.

‘JB’ predicts

There is little doubt that some saw the war as heralding the end of the world (even if it was thirteen years late). The following come from ‘JB’ in two letters he wrote to a local paper.

When the nations’ attentions are turned towards Jerusalem and Palestine then they will have great cause for fear. The big battle is to come but it won’t take place in Servia, but in Palestine... The earth will soon be filled with warriors and warfare... According to Scripture Turkey is the King of the North, Russia is gog and magog... When Michael stands up events will change rapidly. The Euphrates will be dried up so that the way might be prepared for the Kings of the East and the whole world to come up to Armageddon... The current war is a minor matter but will lead to greater and more ominous results... Turkey will come to her end in Jerusalem and a religious war between Christians and Muslims is to come... The world’s armies will yet assemble, as the Scriptures proclaim, upon the fields of Palestine.

*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 5 and 26 August 1914.

The ‘poison glass’ and drunken soldiers

Although Australia had long boasted temperance movements led by Protestant middle class religious and feminist groups, the Catholics also had their temperance movement. In 1895, the Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter condemning excessive drinking. It is a mirror of the Protestant literature devoted to the same cause but avoids the middle class concentration on the evils of a drinking working class.

It wrings our hearts to think of the miseries, spiritual and temporal, which comes upon individuals and entire households from the one sin of drunkenness. The baneful influence confronts us daily, and in every station of life... The tippling young man becomes the drunken husband, the drunken father. In his sober hours he may be faithful and affectionate to his wife and children, but who can answer for him when he is no longer fit to answer for himself? Here begins the long drawn tragedy of home. Here the canker that enters the soul of the poor confiding woman who trusted her maiden sanctity and all her hopes in life to this man out of all the world. First comes poverty, loss of money, loss of place; then the loss of hope that anything can avail to reform her drunken husband; and in the blank despair that comes upon her, what wonder that she seeks forgetfulness of her miseries in the glass herself, or that she succumbs to want and heartbreak, leaving her dear little ones to the cold care of a State department. But we need not rehearse the saddening tale of a drunkard’s career and end. Our concern is rather to devise counter influences by which the vile appetite may be arrested. And, to begin with, we do not look for any single panacea. Healthy, religious home life will do much; regular recourse to the Sacraments and assiduous prayer will do even more. In this, as in all dangers to the soul, the avoidance of occasions which suggest or lead to the transgression, are of the utmost consequence... in populous centres especially, where the dangers of demoralizing associations are urgent, societies for the promotion of temperance ought to find a place amongst parochial guilds.
Mutiny and drunkenness

The war allowed the temperance movement to bring a patriotic string to its moral bow, especially after the drunken spree by soldiers at Casula in February 1916 at the height of the second recruitment campaign. Some 15,000 men broke out of camp, raided the local hotels, commandeered trains and spent a lively day in Sydney. The ‘flower of Australian manhood’ had well and truly disgraced itself.

It is quite plain to everybody that the two main causes of the mutiny were indiscipline and drink. If Senator Pearce [the Minister for Defence] must be held responsible for the lamentable lack of discipline among the soldiers, Mr Holman [the State Premier] must share with him the blame for the deplorable plentfulness of drink. Day after day, in every way by which public opinion could express itself, Mr Holman was begged - often in the most poignant and pitiful language - not to persist in allowing the liquor bars to sell drink from 6 o’clock in the morning until 11 o’clock at night, to the degradation and ruin of the young lives that Australia is giving to the service of the Empire and the cause of liberty… Since the State Government refused… to take any effective steps against the debauching of our soldiers by the liquor traffic, how can it be held that Ministers are not responsible at large, and even to a preponderating, degree for the mutiny of the soldiers...

The presence of that great rabble in uniform on Monday afternoon and evening in the streets of Sydney was proof positive of mutiny and desertion. It was a spectacle to bring a flush of shame and indignation to the cheeks of every citizen who loves Australia and is jealous of her honor. Half-intoxicated soldiers, drinking our of bottles in the middle of the streets and on the sidewalks, crowding onto trams and hustling the passengers, jeering at those who reproached them, robbing shops and overturing barrows, and desecrating the flag, under which their brethren in Europe are fighting, by raising it aloft over a staggering crowd who had forgotten the obligations of their manhood - these men have dishonoured themselves and their country...

Daily Telegraph, 16 February 1916.

Although most states introduced early closing by legislation, in New South Wales the matter was put to the electors in June 1916. The hotel trade knew some form of early closing was inevitable. The following present the cases for closing at 6 p.m. (the temperance movements option) and at 9p.m., the hotel trades option.

A Case for Closing at 6 p.m.

On Saturday next, June 10th, there will be decided one of the most important social and moral issues in the history of New South Wales. Compared to any ordinary political contest, the fight between the patriotic citizens of the mother State, and the representatives of the most unpatriotic institution which has ever debased any community, is of overwhelming magnitude. This is not so only because of the present war, when the destinies of our nation hang in the balance, and all civilisation is menaced by the Teutonic demon, but because the opportunity has arrived for the true mind of the people of the State upon the subject of the long continued tyranny of the drink trade be made known. Quite apart from the social side of the drink question - the whole question of national existence is to be fought out at the polls on Saturday. In saying this we do not infer that the drink question alone cannot be dealt with at other times, but inasmuch as our national existence depends on an adequate
supply of fit and competent soldiers, and plenty of ammunition, and the concentrated and devoted efforts of all parties of the State - and inasmuch as the more the temptations to drink the less is the efficiency of the soldier - it becomes in the last analysis as we say a fight for national existence. It is pitiful, indeed, to read the defence put up by the ‘trade’, whether through the contribution of its agents, or the advertisements in the Press. Reduced to their essential elements, the appeal of the Liquor Party is to the inherent selfishness of human nature. The oratoring against increased home drinking is a piece of arrant hypocrisy. What do the liquor people care about the ruination of homes and the degradation of families? Their position simply amounts to this: ‘There are a certain number of persons who are bound to go to the Devil, but we prefer they should go by the way of the place of toll at which we sit rather than by any private road.’ We believe that there are men and women also who are such slaves to the drink habit that their salvation lies in preventing them from obtaining any liquor - for them the only cure is prohibition. We also believe that the vast majority of the people who have been accustomed to take their glass at the public house - will be quite willing to forego the habit as a patriotic duty, and we don’t believe that the populace as a whole is as addicted to liquor as the trade makes out, but in any case there is a great opportunity to strike for God - for Home and Empire - on Saturday next, and we beseech our readers to go to the poll and vote 6 o’clock.

Australian Christian World, 9 June 1916.

A Case for Closing Hotels at 9 p.m.

The reason for 9 o’clock Closing as against 6 o’clock can be summed up by the General Public under five dominant Headings:-

1. The Convenience of the Community.
   Between the hours of 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. hotels are more generally used by the public than at any other time. There are in N.S.W. 340,000 tired workers daily who are entitled to refreshment after the day’s work. Is every diner at an hotel, club or restaurant to be deprived of his glass of spirits, wine or beer with his dinner? What right has a section of the community to say that drink must be consumed after 6 o’clock either in the home or sly grog den?

2. Effect on Military Efficiency.
   The armies of France and Britain have been freely supplied with Beer, Wine and Rum, and the word ‘Anzac’ was sent ringing around two hemispheres by men who had lived under ‘11 o’clock closing’. The War Office and Lloyd George have not objected to 11.30 closing, except in Munitions Areas, where they ‘proclaimed’ 8.30 p.m. as the closing hour, and the French closing hour is midnight! Is this community to be inconvenienced and disorganized at the dictates of Prohibition Fanatics and Self-advertising Patriots?

3. Increase of Home Drinking.
   After the day’s work the worker - be he artisan or craftsman, clerk or professional man - must, under 6 o’clock closing, be deprived of his glass of wine, beer, or spirits unless he takes the bottle home! Can it be denied that Increased Home Drinking may result? There is a danger that the bottle at the elbow will become handier than the bottle on the hotel bat shelf! Is that in the interests of temperance?

4. Encouragement of Sly Grog Selling.
   Already there is joy in the dens of the sly grog seller, and worse! Men who cannot get a glass of beer and wine under proper licensed conditions and controls will become easy prey in those dens of iniquity that flourish when liquor cannot be sold under proper licensed conditions after 6 o’clock. Already the experience of 6 o’clock
closing in Adelaide is that the magistrates there have to confess it is no use continuing to inflict fines for sly grog selling and to have to sentence offenders to terms of imprisonment. Under 8 o'clock closing during the months of March and April in Sydney the fines at the Central Police Court alone amounted to £1, 160! Are you going to vote for 6 o'clock and Sly Grog Selling?...

*Sydney Morning Herald, 9 June 1916.*

**Sport**

There is little doubt that sport occupies a significant place in Australian popular culture. It has always done so. It has served (and still serves) a myriad of purposes: tribalism and local identity, national identity, personal enjoyment, a social function and so on. Yet, in 1914, sport was also connected with notions of masculinity. Patriots could not understand why sport detracted attention from the war. Surely the sports fraternity should be rushing to the colours? In May 1915, the *Bulletin* had its say.

The nation refuses to be downhearted. The Autumn races in Sydney allured crowds of about 30,000 a day, and arrangements are already in place in Melbourne for the jumping events of the winter. The tennis tournaments have been quite successful, though a few of the leading players were inconsiderately away at the Front. The N.S. Wales Football League has asked Maoriland to send a team over in June. The cricket season - the bloodiest in the history of the ancient game - closed a few days ago in a blaze of glory. The theatres are full...

*Bulletin, 6 May 1915.*

The impact of the war on sport was considerable. Regional football clubs closed their competitions and racing was restricted, yet it was not enough. In 1917, the Minister for Defence, Senator George Pearce announced that the government would further restrict sporting activities. It was a curious statement. Perhaps the Senator had had a bad day:

He said that the Government, in dealing with the control of sports, had under consideration horse racing, football and boxing. It was recognised in connection with horse racing that in the interests of horse-breeding it was advisable that a reasonable amount of horse racing should be permitted; on the other hand it was obvious that in some of the States an excessive amount of racing was indulged in, and that in the interests of the community a reduction should be made, particularly in the number of week-day meetings...

Unregistered meetings are not to be permitted, and with regard to country meetings the State Commandant, in conjunction with the controlling racing authorities in each State, will allot the dates to the clubs on the fairest basis possible, taking into account the number of meetings and the population to be served in the various parts of the State. In South Australia and Tasmania it was not found necessary to make any reductions, and in Victoria, the position is practically unchanged... Very substantial reductions in the number of meetings have been found necessary in New South Wales and Queensland...

With regard to boxing, major contests of 20 rounds are only to be allowed in each State one a fortnight. It has not been considered necessary at present to restrict the number of mixed boxing and vaudeville contests, but conditions have been laid down that half the programme should be vaudeville or pictures. No contest in boxing is to exceed 10 rounds of two minutes, and the maximum price of admission is fixed at 2s. Provision is also made to allow the Amateur Boxing Association to hold a limited number of contests and purely exhibition contests are not to be interfered with.
With regard to football it was not considered necessary to take any action at present.

*Sydney Morning Herald, 13 September 1917.*
Australians had been half-expecting some form of peace from mid 1918. When the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918, spontaneous celebrations broke out across the country. For a brief moment, it seemed that the divisions that had emerged during the war were forgotten. The mood did not last. Local, state and federal governments bickered over the formal celebrations to be held once a peace treaty was signed. They also bickered over the promises made to men enlisting during the war. The men returning home brought with them the Spanish Flu, an influenza epidemic that would claim more lives world wide than the war had done. There was an enormous upsurge in industrial and sectarian strife in the immediate postwar years. The war may have ended but there seemed to be little peace at home.

Hughes was in London attending an Imperial Conference when the Armistice was declared. He was outraged when he discovered that Britain had decided that it would speak for its dominions and colonies at the Peace Conference in Versailles. He insisted on, and secured a place for Australia at the negotiating table and was a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles. Australia also joined the League of Nations as a nation in its own right yet left the control of its foreign affairs in Britain’s hands.

How was peace celebrated? How did communities welcome home their returning soldiers? How did the governments implement repatriation policies? What was the attraction (and fate) of soldier settlement? What did Hughes ‘achieve’ for Australia at Versailles? Did the war change Australia’s status in the international arena?

Documents:

The Armistice, Repatriation, Soldier Settlement and Versailles.

Readings:


Oliver, B., *War and Peace in Western Australia, the Social and Political Impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995, chapter 4.


* Wollongong campus only
The Armistice

W. A. Watt was Acting Prime Minister when the Armistice was declared. He addressed the House on 13 November.

During the past few weeks the peoples of the world have been living amid volcanic conditions; it has been a world of falling thrones and rising republics, of dismembered Governments and of hunted monarchs. We have seen the royal families of the House of Hohenzollern and the House of Hapsburg, whose lineage stretches back to the dim records of mediaeval history, hunted from their high estate by an indignant and outraged people, never to return. I think that never before in the annals of man have so many fateful and stupendous events occurred in such a brief space of time. The changes have crowded on us almost too fast for record, remembrance, or appreciation. All this portends more than a mere military victory. Despotism has been beheaded in Europe; militarism has been burned at the roots. The ideals of the Allies have triumphed, and as a consequence the world is now, and for many generations will remain, a safer and happier place to live in. Honorable members who have read the full terms of the armistice will agree with me when I describe it as stern and rigid, and they will also agree that it is just, and, in all the circumstances, prudent.

So, in a spirit of great relief and thankfulness, we address His majesty the King. We assure him of our unfaltering loyalty to him and all that he stands for. Our British throne symbolizes popular liberty; it is not like the Teutonic empires of Middle Europe, based on a tyrannical usurpation of the rights of the people. We are proud, and I trust we will always remain proud, of our Australian citizenship, but we are proud, too, and at this time especially, to be Britishers; proud of our blood and our race and of our partnership in the Empire whose existence means so much to our safety and welfare... Of course, to our own boys we feel the most intimate gratitude. One hardly cares to speak about the men who volunteered from Australia for active service and have done such great things. They came from far off country places... from homes of luxury, and from factories in the cities... and though reared to thoughts of peace and to hopes of peace, when called upon to take up arms and face the relentless ferocity of German might, they have behaved as well as any men have behaved since this earth was flung into space. For their deeds, this Parliament, speaking for the nation, must give them praise and undying gratitude. Later, when they commence to trickle back to us, we must assure them of a glad homecoming, and when that joyous time is over, whoever is in power in Parliament or in Government must see that the men who have done the work shall be properly treated by the nation.

Amid our jubilation, we must not forget the brave men who have fallen... They have given their lives under the inspiration of a great ideal, and when other soldiers return to their homes, let us keep in mind those parents and relatives whose loved ones will never return, and in this radiant hour of victory, pay to the deeds and memories of those who sleep their last long sleep the loving and respectful homage of an appreciative and united people.

I should like to say a few words regarding the women of Australia, and pay, if I may, in feeble words, a special tribute to their courage, fortitude, and self-sacrifice. Through the weary months of suspense, scores of thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, of the women of Australia have shown a Spartan control in the face of death and other sorrows equally beyond repair, such as we did
not expect from our sisters, wives, and mothers. I think we men who, for the
time being, are placed in the control of the affairs of Australia, should say that
they are worthy mothers, wives and sisters of the great Anzac breed, and that
we must recognise their splendid courage and work.

*Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 13 November 1918.

**Repatriation**

There is, perhaps always will be, a clash between political promises and ‘fiscal responsibility’. Although the governments had promised generous repatriation measures, they also moved to limit the costs. The Commonwealth Department of Repatriation was established in April 1918, but from the start its brief was sharply limited and it avoided like the plague any notion that mental illness could have been caused by war. By the end of 1919, complaints from returned men forced the Minister to defend the Department.

[The Department] was not an institution for the mere scattering of money. He
[the Minister] had always held that if it were desired to give the men a bonus
this should be done apart from the repatriation Department, and upon some
fixed and definite scale. The Government was doing this by means of a war
gratuity. The duty of the Repatriation Department was to look after the
helpless, and to restore others to civil life. In spite of the publicity given to
complaints and errors, he claimed that the Department had done its work with a
great measure of success. It was inevitable that those who were dissatisfied
should become articulate; but the much larger number, having no complaint,
were silent.

The country did not appear to recognise that if there was yet much to do, the
back of the repatriation problem had been broken. Over 250,000 men had been
returned to Australia, leaving only 13,000 yet to arrive. During the last six
months 116,000 had reached these shores, an average of 4,451 a week. Even if
the industries of the country had not been dislocated by the war, and if no
drought were in existence, it would have been accepted as an impossibility to
immediately restore such a large number to civilian occupations, bearing in mind
the rapidity with which the men had returned during the period referred to. Yet
there were on the books of the Department today awaiting employment only
between 13,000 and 14,000 men...

_Provision had been made for technically training up to 20,000 men. Instruction was
being given in 164 trades. Not only would this training be of great benefit for the men
themselves, but he thought it was an asset to Australia to have 20,000 skilled men
where previously there were 20,000 unskilled. Delay had undoubtedly taken place in
connexion with the housing scheme, but it was largely due to the efforts which had
been made to obtain material at less than the current market rates, so as to give the
soldiers houses as cheap as possible...

A total of 130,140 applications for all sorts of benefits under the repatriation
scheme had been received to June last, and he felt that he was well within the
mark in assuming the number received to date to be 170,000. Bearing this in
mind, he asked them not to judge the Department by the comparatively limited
number of cases which formed the subject of public comment...

*Repatriation*, December 1919.

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Soldier Settlement

Settling the returned man on the land was extraordinarily popular amongst the politicians, the returned men and the electorate. Its cost in fiscal and human terms, however, was extraordinary. Mr Justice Pike reported on soldier settlement a decade after it had started. He began by listing the total losses sustained by the states which he estimated came to over £23.5 million. He continued.

To these figures must be added the amounts, when ascertained, of further losses due to providing home maintenance areas and to the further writing down of indebtedness in the States of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania...

Dealing generally with the question of soldier settlement, and after considering fully the evidence produced in each particular State, I am satisfied that the main causes of failure are due principally to the following:-

5. Want of capital;
6. Want of home maintenance area
7. Unsuitability of settlers; due to a large extent to war services and want of training;
8. Drop in value of primary products...

As my inquiry was directed to the losses on soldier settlement, of necessity I was brought into contact with what I may term the seamy side of that scheme, but there is no question that in very many cases, particularly in the grazing and mixed farming propositions where all the settlers had been given a sufficient area, the settlers are doing well and making quite a good living...


Pike’s Report reassured governments. But did he get it right?

Eight thousand men turn out of bed this morning [in the Mallee] to rub sleepy eyes at doorsteps which are scattered over 3600 square miles in the dry areas, the 14-inch rain belt. For every acre in these parts which is included in the holding of a non-soldier, ten are held by combatants of the Great War who went to the mallee during or after 1919.

This was a desert. The 2.300,000 acres of the Mallee which are occupied today by wheatgrowers under the Closer Settlement and Soldier Settlement schemes, constitute rather more than a third of the north-western drylands which a Parliamentary committee of 1879 described as ‘a vast wilderness dotted with patches of what appears to be good land...’

[The following] may be taken as the typical experience of an ex-A.I.F. man who immediately after his repatriation from the theatre of war in Europe set himself to clear of pine and belar and mallee the square mile on which he had established himself under the soldier settlement scheme. Axe to the pine and belar, the roller and fire to the mallee - and 200 acres were cleared for sowing for the season 1920-21 and a rough house built.

The virgin land returned eight bags of wheat (24 bushels) to the acre, and that year the price was 22/6 per bag. A hungry post-war world paid 7/6 a bushel for grain... It was never so good again... In 1926-7 the yield was only three bags per acre. The land was fighting back. It intensified its opposition to the settler-invader until in 1930 came total drought. Our settler harvested not one bag from
all his acres. He had 500 sheep by then, too, and not a blade of grass to feed them. The duststorms swept over the square miles of desert which he called his own, obliterated the wire fences which were his sign-manual of an objective gained. He had to build new fences on the graves of the old.

In the season of 1931-2 the price of wheat - eloquent commentary on the uncertainty of the elements of weather and market arrayed against the agricultural settler! - sank to 1/6 a bushel, or one-fifth of the price of 1920-21. There was by this time no equity left the soldier-settler in any of his acres, he was behind with interest and principal payments to the Closer Settlement Commission, his sheep were dead, he was in debt to the storekeeper...

But he is still holding his position. He is out in No Man’s Land, which is no longer No Man’s Land, but is conquered territory. Despite his lack of the sinews of war, despite the inclemency of the seasons, despite his inability to send his children to school beyond the little Mallee township five miles away, despite the widespread ruin about him of that so resurgent world of past-war, he has not given back his square mile of sand to Nature who endowed it so capriciously.

He is still there.

Herald, 15 October 1934.
Hughes had certainly made the world aware that this nation called the Commonwealth of Australia existed and the Treaty of Versailles was the first time that Australia had acted as a signatory for a peace treaty. It was heady stuff. In September 1919, he asked Parliament to approve the provisions of the Treaty. He also took the opportunity to sketch out his own role in the international arena and the protection of a White Australia.

In order that Australia shall be safe, it is necessary that the great rampart of islands stretching around the north-east of Australia should be held by us or by some Power in whom we have absolute confidence. When the Armistice terms were decided on the 5th of November, I protested because our national safety was not guaranteed, inasmuch as there was no assurance that the possession of these islands would be vested in us, and afterwards, when we went to the Conference, we sought to impress on the Council of Ten the position as we saw it, and fought for the guarantee of our national safety... but President Wilson’s fourteen points forbade it; and, after a long fight, the principle of the mandate was accepted...

Two principles arose here, to which I may direct attention. One was the open door. It was sought to couple this mandate [over German New Guinea and other islands in the Pacific south of the equator] with the condition of an open door for men and goods... I ask my fellow citizens throughout Australia to realise what an open door for men and goods into those islands would mean. Our control of trade and navigation would be gone, and within 80 miles of us there could come pouring in those who, when the hours should strike, could pounce upon us in the mainland. We fought against the open door, and the mandate was at length obtained in the form in which it now stands...

The next point we had to deal with was the White Australia policy. Honorable members who have travelled in the east or in Europe will be able to understand with what difficulty this world assemblage of men, gathered from all corners of the earth - men representing 400,000,000 Chinese, men representing Japan, men representing India, Siam, Hayti, and Liberia; men representing partially coloured populations - were able to appreciate this ideal of those 5,000,000 people who dared to say, not only that this great continent was theirs, but that none should enter in except as they chose... We are all of the same race, and speak the same tongue in the same way... We are more British than the people of Great Britain, and we hold firmly to the great principle of the White Australia, because we know what we know. We have these liberties and believe in our race and in ourselves, and in our capacity to achieve our great destiny, which is to hold this vast continent in trust for those who come after us, and who stand with us in the battle of freedom....

What has been won? If the fruits of victory are to be measured by national safety and liberty, and the high ideals for which these boys died, their sacrifice has not been in vain. They died for the safety of Australia. Australia is safe. They died for liberty, and liberty is now assured to us and all men. They made for themselves and their country a name that will not die.
In line with British policy, the Australian government agreed not to repatriate the bodies of the dead. Yet some form of commemoration was needed and commemorative symbols were developed as early as 1915. Honour rolls were unveiled in schools, churches and union headquarters. After the war, local communities turned towards building one of the most ubiquitous elements in the Australian landscape, the local war memorial. They are a mute testimony to the impact of the First World War with their simple instruction, ‘Lest We Forget’. But ‘forget’ what? Some see them as symbols of a national unity forged by war and sacrifice: others see them as a permanent reminder of a society divided by the war. For some, they were a reminder of imperial loyalty, for others a symbol of Australian nationalism, and for others a symbol of waste and futility. There is the comfortable assumption that they were built with little trouble or controversy. That may well be a misreading of what happened. Local communities were faced with the questions of what form the memorial should take, who should be named on it and the appropriate recognition of the dead. But they do reflect the attempt made by Australians to make sense of what was, in essence, voluntary death. It found its quintessential expression in the Australian War Memorial.

The memorials may well have served a more emotional function for some. They represented the graves of loved ones that the bereaved could never visit. Gallipoli and Europe were a long way away and few could afford to pay the fare to visit the battlefield cemeteries. But their descendants, and even those who were not, can and do.

How did society react to death? How was the news delivered? Why were memorials built? What forms did they take - and why? Who was named, in what order and why? What can you deduce from Oxley’s war memorial honour roll (numbers, families, ethnicity)? Report to the class on a local memorial you know.

Documents:

‘In Memoriam’ notices, a patriotic family, Oxley Shire’s Honour Roll.

Readings:


In Memoriam

Newspaper columns have always offered paid space for advertising births, deaths and marriages. Between 1915 and 1918 these columns reflected the reality of death in war, and attempts to make sense of it, as the following extracts from a regional newspaper show.

CLARK. - In loving memory of my dear husband, Private Jack Clark, killed in action, March 11th, 1917.
   His country called him, and honour bade him go.
   To battle against a grim and deadly foe;
   He helped bring Australia into fame,
   To build for her a never-dying name.
   Foremost was he, in thickest of strife,
   For King and country, laid down his life.
   Inserted by his loving wife and children, Jane and Jack Clark, Carrington.

GIBB. - In loving memory of our dear friend, Private George Gibb, who was killed in action in France, April 25th, 1916.
   Inserted by his loving friends, Mr. J. Winship and family, Mrs Mouter, and J. Hogg, Wallsend.

FUNSTON. - Private Hubert Emile, of Malvern, Victoria, killed in action March 18, 1917; aged 181/2 years, beloved nephew of Mr. And Mrs R. P. Simmons, Bingle Street, Newcastle.

RICHARDSON. - In loving memory of our dear brother, Private George Edward Richardson, 35th Battalion, killed in action, March 25th 1917; aged 24 years and 7 months.
   Somewhere in France our brave brother lies.
   In a far-off land, ‘neath alien skies.
   No stone is raised above his head,
   No words inscribed the one that’s dead,
   Whose history will go down in the book of fame,
   And one who nobly played the game.
   Inserted by his loving brothers and sisters, Mrs and Private J. W. Richardson, Private E. Gatens (on active service), and R. Gatens, Scone, and Mr And Mrs J. W. Gatens, Werris Creek.

RICHARDSON. - In loving memory of our dear brother, Private George Edward Richardson, 35th Battalion, killed in action, March 25th, 1917, aged 24 years and 7 months.
   Over in France they have laid him,
   A soldier, brave and true,
   But still out hearts are aching,
   Dear brother, Eddie, for you.
   No one he loved was by his side,
   To hear his faint last sigh,
   Or just whisper just one loving word Before he closed his eyes.
   Inserted by his loving sister and brother, Mrs and Mr C. Mackenzie, Scone.
RICHARDSON. - In loving memory of my dear brother, Private George Edward Richardson, 35th Battalion, killed in action, March 25th, 1917, aged 24 years and 7 months.

Somewhere in France they have laid him,
My hero so true and so brave,
Far away from the land of wattle,
No loved ones to weep o’er his grave,
He died as he lived, nobly.
Inserted by his sorrowing sister, E. Gatens, Scone.

SCOTT. - In loving memory of my dear comrade, Private James Scott, killed in action, April 9th, 1917.

Sadly I am thinking
Of my soldier comrade brave,
Who died for the cause of freedom,
And sleeps in a hero’s grave.
Inserted by his loving friend, Private John Allan, Alberdare Street, Kurri Kurri.

Newcastle Morning Herald, 28 April 1917.

After the war, when the cemeteries were being built for the Australian dead, families were allowed to suggest an inscription to be placed on the headstone of those they had lost. As one might expect, these were carefully vetted, just in case doubt was raised about the war. The following have been taken from stones on Gallipoli and the Western front cemeteries. The last is for the men who could not be identified.

He died for King and Country.
He is lost to us.
A mother waits patiently to join you on the other side.
A gallant boy.
Australia was his home.
He sacrificed his life for freedom.
A popular officer.
Loved husband of Annie Smith.
Deeply missed but never forgotten.
With God in a better life.
Cruelly taken, ever loved.
A soldier known to God.

A Patriotic family

Some local families were lionised for their contribution to the war effort. The Handcocks lived on a small farm at Myrhee in the Oxley Shire. Students might care to consult the Oxley Honour Roll reproduced below after reading this extract.

At the Town Hall, Wangaratta, on Friday evening, the Mayor of Wangaratta, on behalf of a large number of subscribers in Wangaratta and Oxley, presented Mr and Mrs Handcock, of Myrhee, with a valuable marble clock as a mark of admiration for the family, no less than eight of the sons of Mr and Mrs Handcock having now enlisted for service in the war. Mr Handcock, in returning thanks, said he had one son left, and if he desired to follow the example of his brothers, the consent of his parents would not be withheld.

Yackandandah Times, 26 April 1917.
Oxley’s Honour Roll

Oxley Shire’s memorial is an imposing granite monolith with four panels. The front, or south, panel lists the names of the men who paid the ‘supreme sacrifice’. The other three list the Oxley folk who served. In 1914, Oxley Shire had a total population of 4311, 2350 males and 1961 females.

Erected by the residents of the shire of Oxley to perpetuate the memory of citizens in the shire who served in the Great War 1914-1918.

[SOUTH FACE]

Armstrong, W J   Izzard, L W
Baillie, R       Jarrott, W T
Bateman, H G     Jeffrey, J T
Bodkin, J        Jude, H D
Burke, J         Kennedy, R C
Carey, F         Kidgell, W C
Carey, C H       Leslie, J F
Carmody, H       Lewis, C C
Chick, C A       Macklan, A J
Coulter, T       Mahoney, A J
Cozens, T E      Meagher, J P
Crockett, J M C   McAliece, C F
Crockett, T      McCarthy, T
Culph, T W       McCormick, J
Dunne, J H S     McGregor, David
Evans, D G       McGregor, Daniel
Evans, F         Newton, J J
Ferguson, H V    Nolan, E
Ferguson, N      Plant, H
Ferguson, T L    Potter, H
Floyd, H         Raison, E
Foster, F A      Raison, A
Foster, N        Reid, G
Gale, J W        Reid, F
Gay, T           Robertson, W F
Goodland, C      Robinson, J
Hackett, F       Roxby, M
Handcock, A J    Shanks, D
Handcock, C      Tanner, H
Handley, J A     Thomas, H E
Handley, L L     Usherwood, T W
Harris, C        Ward, G
Hart, B          Ward, H
Haynes, C        Williams, E G
Humphrey, C      Law, J A
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TUTORIALS 19-20: GALLIPOLI

Peter Weir’s film Gallipoli was released over twenty years ago to both national and international acclaim. It has since become a staple in any cultural history of Australia. The film touches on most of the themes discussed in this subject: Empire, enlistment, disloyalty, the digger and nationalism. It can also be read as a comment on Australia in the decade in which it was made.

Today’s tutorial will be given over to a screening of the film.
TUTORIAL 21: DIGGER AND ANZAC

The experiences of the men (and the nurses) who were part of combat activity between 1914 and 1918 were quickly appropriated by Australians. From this has emerged two of the most enduring, and controversial, elements in Australia’s social history: the ‘digger’ and Anzac. To many the two are synonyms. But are they? Seal argues that the two are very different indeed.

Although different organisations were set up after the war to represent the voices of the returned men, Hughes only recognised and listened to one, the Returned Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Imperial League of Australia. The other associations were either incorporated into the RSSILA or folded. The League was conservative and jealous of its rights to protect, and promote, the memory of Australian soldiers. Its politics drove many ex-soldiers away and the League could never boast the majority of men who had served overseas in its membership. The League also tied the notion of Anzac to the Right in Australian politics.

By the 1970s, both digger and Anzac were dismissed as museum pieces. They were attacked for being right wing, racist, masculinist and exclusive. Today, both have re-emerged as a vital part of Australian culture and society as the numbers attending the Dawn services both here in Australia and on the Gallipoli Peninsula attest. Historians have described the latter as a ‘pilgrimage’. Behind it all lies the work and influence of C. E. W. Bean, the Official War Historian.

What are the differences between ‘digger’ and ‘Anzac’? Did C. E. W. Bean invent both? Why has Anzac Day re-emerged as a major national day? Has its rhetoric changed? Why do Australians visit the battlefield cemeteries on the Gallipoli Peninsula and on the Western Front?

Documents:

Note: the documents for this tutorial reflect the contested nature of the subject. Digger yarns, contemporary extracts and Howe.

Readings:


Bean, C. E. W., *Anzac to Amiens*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1946


McKernan, M. and Browne M (eds), Australia, *Two Centuries of War and Peace*, Allen and Unwin and the Australian War Memorial, 1988, chapters 6, 8 and 13.


TUTORIAL 21 DOCUMENTS

‘Digger’

The following extracts encapsulate some of the characteristics Australians believed were unique to the digger.

Two diggers on leave in London failed to salute a passing British officer. The outraged officer demands of the diggers, ‘Do you know who I am?’ One digger turns to the other and says casually, ‘Did you hear that, Dig? He doesn’t even know who he is.’

Another yarn on the same theme involves a Digger travelling on a train with two English officers. The officers are discussing their family backgrounds, relationships and pedigrees. After listening to the conversation for a while, the Digger introduces himself to the officers as ‘Bluey Johnson, not married, two sons - both majors in the British Army.’

A wounded soldier was being carried across No Man’s Land on the back of a perspiring comrade. Rifle and machine gun fire was heavy. ‘Ere’, suddenly exclaimed the wounded soldier. ‘What about turning around and walking backwards for a spell. You’re getting the VC, but I’m getting all the bullets.’

Seal, G., *The Digger and Anzac, Tradition, Myth and Legend*.

Anzac Day

The first anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli was almost ignored by government and much of the public. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Catholic *Freeman’s Journal* proved prescient in its editorial.

ANZAC DAY

The Birth of a Nation

The price of nationhood must be paid in blood and tears; there is no country that truly loves its flag which has not made the supreme sacrifice - which has not freely offered up the lives of its best and bravest for a dream, for an ideal, for a solemn purpose. It is the fortune of Australia to find her true soul in a great and glorious struggle to preserve the liberties of the smaller nations, to crush a despotic militarism which would awe and subjugate the rest of the world. Anzac Day, which we have celebrated for the first time, and celebrated, we hope, in a solemn and thoughtful mood, means more to us than an immortal charge up the slopes at Gallipoli. Whilst it reminds us of the valour of our dead heroes, who live in lonely graves on classic ground, it reminds us, too, in a much greater degree, of the day Australians knew themselves. Before the Anzacs astonished the watching nations, our national sentiment was of a flabby and sprawling character. We were Australian in name, and we had a flag, but we had been taught by our politicians not to trust ourselves - we were constantly admonished by our daily journals to remember that we were nothing better than a joint in the tail of a great Empire. There were patriots who protested against the slavish and sycophantic doctrine. But, generally speaking, it was assumed that Australia only lived by the grace of England, and the Empire Day orators had a better hearing than the faithful souls who clung to Australia Day and gave special honour to their own starry banner.

Anzac Day has changed all that. The Australian flag has been brought from the garret and has been hoisted on a lofty tower in the full sight of its own people. No
matter how the war may end - and it can only end one way - we are at last a nation, with one heart, one soul and one thrilling aspiration. There is mourning in our homes and grief in our hearts, and the flower of our youth will not return to us; but there runs through the Commonwealth a lifting spirit such as it never knew before. Australia is no longer merely a prosperous country in which it is good to live. The blood of our dead heroes was shed afar from us, but their spirit has come home across the seas to dwell for ever among us, to whisper that we have taken our place among the nations, and to inspire us to be ever faithful and ever true to the land that gave us birth and to the glorious banner which waves over it. Anzac Day and Australia Day, honoured by hundreds of thousands of deeply-stirred people - what a great change is this! What a miracle it seems to those who not so long ago noted with sadness that the name of our country practically had no meaning!

Freeman’s Journal, 27 April 1916.

The Round Table on the Australian soldier

The Round Table, a London-based journal devoted to the Empire, sought in 1919 to define the distinctiveness of the Australian soldier.

No more original figure than the Australian soldier has appeared in the war. The ‘Digger’, as he is affectionately called, is as unique as the ‘Poliu’. Hard to manage in camp, he improved in morale as he neared the firing line. He was fearlessly himself. He behaved in the Strand as he would have done on Saturday night in the streets of Wagga Wagga. Defiance of convention was his one pose, and he maliciously encouraged the idea, in the conventional among Englishmen, that he was totally lacking in discipline. But there was no body of men who so triumphantly satisfied the supreme test of discipline, the test of being ready in the field just when they were required, and of moving under fire to whatever point they were asked to occupy. The German High Command marked the Australians as First Class Storm Troops. The German lines opposite the Australians had during the last few months to be manned by volunteers. Sir Douglas Haig in his last dispatch gives several ‘striking examples of the ascendancy’ of the Australians over the German infantry opposite them. The courage of the Australians was not the courage of the savage or the devotee. It was never buoyed up by sentiment or illusion. Its most wonderful feature was a wide-eyed habit of facing things as they really were - of looking at the worst and defying it. The Australian was seldom an optimist. He was always a critic, but he was possessed of a fierce lust to accomplish the job he had been set. This clearness of vision gave him that initiative, that skill under fire, which made up so large a part of his value in the field.

On the human side, few soldiers have had in such measure the supreme soldierly gift of comradeship. Whenever they were in a fight, breaking King’s regulations, or raiding the Hun trenches, they stuck together. The Battalion was the digger’s home, and he was never truly happy, or a really first-class soldier, away from it... The thing, however, that made the Digger the perpetual delight of all who love human nature was his constant play of humour. In this he expressed his soul, his criticism of life, with its wonderful range of insight and feeling, now grotesque, now gay, now grim and sardonic, feeding on the terrible contrasts of the life around him. The ‘Digger’ is the best thing that Australia has yet produced. She will preserve forever the memory of this heroic and lovable figure...

The achievements of these men will play an integrating part in the future of Australia. They will form the basis of a noble national tradition which will, it is
hoped, play some part in mitigating the bitter and destructive political feuds which have developed while our best have been away.

*Round Table, March 1919*

**John Monash on the Australian soldier**

In 1920, Sir John Monash published an account of the Australian victories in France in 1918 in which he played a significant part.

Success depended first and foremost upon the military proficiency of the Australian private soldier and his glorious spirit of heroism. I do not propose to attempt here an exhaustive analysis of the causes which led to the making of him. The democratic institutions under which he was reared, the advanced system of education by which he was trained - teaching him to think for himself and to apply what he had been taught to practical ends - the instinct of sport and adventure which is his national heritage, his pride in his young country, and the opportunity which came to him of creating a great national tradition, were all factors that made him what he was.

Physically the Australian Army was composed of the flower of the youth of the continent. A volunteer army - the only purely volunteer army that fought in the Great War - ...

Mentally, the Australian soldier was well endowed. In him there was a curious blend of a capacity for independent judgment with a readiness to submit to self-effacement in a common cause. He had a personal dignity all his own...

His intellectual gifts and his ‘handiness’ made him an apt pupil... At all schools and classes he proved a diligent scholar, and astonished his instructors by the speed with which he absorbed and bettered his instruction... His adaptability spared him much hardship. He knew how to make himself comfortable. To light a fire and cook his food was a natural instinct. A sheet of corrugated iron, a batten or two, and a few strands of wire were enough to enable him to fabricate a home in which he could live at ease.

Psychologically, he was easy to lead but difficult to drive. His imagination was readily fired. War was to him a game, and he played for his side with enthusiasm. His bravery was founded upon his sense of duty to his unit, comradeship to his fellows, emulation to uphold his traditions, and a combative spirit to avenge his hardships and sufferings upon the enemy.

The sense of duty was always very high, and so also was the instinct of comradeship. A soldier, a platoon, a whole battalion would sooner sacrifice themselves than ‘let down’ a comrade or another unit. There was no finer example of individual self-sacrifice, for the benefit of comrades, that the Stretcher-bearer service, which suffered exceedingly in its noble work of succouring the wounded, and exposed itself unflinchingly to every danger.

The relations between the officers and the men of the Australian Army were also of a nature which is deserving of notice. From almost the earliest days of the war violence was done to a deep-rooted tradition in the British Army, which discouraged any promotion from the ranks, and stringently forbade, in cases where it was given, promotion in the same unit. It was rare to recognize the distinguished service of a ranker; it was impossible for him to secure a commission in his own regiment.
The Australian Imperial Force changed all that... There was no officer caste, no social distinction in the whole force. In not a few instances, men of humble origin and belonging to the artisan class rose, during the war, from privates to the command of Battalions. The efficiency of the force suffered in no way in consequence. On the contrary, the whole Australian Army became automatically graded into leaders and followers according to the individual merits of every man, and there grew a wonderful understanding between them.

John Monash, *The Australian Victories in France in 1918*. 
A different side

The extracts to date have been celebratory in nature. Yet Anzac Day in particular had always had its critics. Howe’s polemic, which first appeared in the Melbourne Journal of Politics in 1984, provides a very different view on the matter.
TUTORIAL 22: CONCLUSION

At the beginning of session, we discussed the nature of warfare and over the following weeks have examined the place of war in Australian history. If this subject has served its purpose, it should be clear that war has many meanings. It is part of nation building myths; it is part of the way Australians see themselves; it is part of our popular culture and it is used to serve political ends. Yet these general observations can often over-ride the personal side of war which is often the most accessible way of beginning to understand what it may have meant. The lives and fate of individuals make sense of more abstract concepts and even allows a questioning of them. Did Harold go to war for Empire? Perhaps not but Owen may well have done so. And did the war bring benefit to Australia? The passionate commitment to Australia and Empire so evident in Hughes now seems almost quaint yet to ignore it is not only anti-historical but blinds us, perhaps, to today’s global politics and our place in the world as seen by the current government.

The questions for this tutorial are deceptively simple. Should Australia have gone to war in 1914? Was it Australia’s war? If not, whose war was it? ‘Lest we Forget’ - what? Was it a watershed in Australia’s history?

Readings:

*Note: Readings from any of the tutorials are also relevant here.*


Wilcox, C. and Aldridge, J. (eds), *The Great War: Gains and Losses - Anzac and Empire*, Australian War memorial and the Australian National University, Canberra, 1995, chapters 1, 2, 7 and 8.
RESERVE LIST HIST 203: Australians and the Great War


E-readings for HIST 203: Australians and the Great War, Autumn Session 2007


Oliver, B., ‘”Rats”, “Scabs”, “Soolers” and “Sinn Feiners”: A Reassessment of the Role of the Labour Movement in the Conscription Crisis in Western Australia, 1916-1917’, *Labour History*, 58, 1990, pp. 48-64.


Stock, J. T., ‘Farmers and the Rural Vote in South Australia in World War 1, the 1916 Conscription Referendum’, *Historical Studies*, 21, 84, 1985, pp. 391-411.


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