

REFLECTION



## Archives and the Australian Great War centenary: retrospect and prospect

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### ABSTRACT

Based on a keynote address to the 2018 International Society for First World War Studies conference, the author's survey of a centenary of archival endeavour comprises four time periods and two themes. It highlights the unique role of the Australian War Memorial and its initial documentation priorities favouring Dr C.E.W. Bean's official war history, the battlefield and the war dead. A post-centenary open-ended aftermath is also discussed covering processing backlogs, the prospective idea of 'digital breakthrough' and the archival implications of ever-widening understandings of the war and its endless aftermaths. The paper ends with an appeal for new voices in researching the documentation of Australia's Great War experience.

### KEYWORDS

Australian War Memorial;  
Australian archival history;  
war archives

In 2015, the editors of *Reading and the First World War* wrote that 'With the death of the last veterans the conflict has entered the world of the archives.'<sup>1</sup>

Well . . . yes, and no. Archives are *ab origine* not *post hoc*; present at, not in the wake of, beginnings. And, as Geoff Dyer explained in his meditation on remembrance *The Missing of the Somme*, things like soldiers' photos and war poetry can shape the way we will remember war in advance of its conclusion. Indeed, even when the diplomats' flurry of telegrams failed to prevent hostilities, war could not be declared in August 1914 without the relevant paperwork. Within months, Germany and Britain had published records to show who was responsible for starting the war.

In 1994 Dyer described the approaching centenary as 'the temporal equivalent of a total eclipse', an inspired comparison given the lunar effect it could be said to have triggered.<sup>2</sup> Here government and private sector spending were bizarrely disproportionate, prompting phrases such as 'festival of Anzackery' and 'memory orgy'.<sup>3</sup> The centenary also supercharged scholarship. As it approached, there appeared new multi-volume histories, new syntheses, battalion histories, accounts of battles and generals, and scholarly journal theme issues. Inevitably too monographs for the general market, a good number by so-called 'storians' such as Peter FitzSimons.<sup>4</sup>

There have been excellent surveys of this literature,<sup>5</sup> reappraisals of the official histories, and discussions of what Lake and Reynolds have called the militarisation of Australian history.<sup>6</sup> Plus numerous studies of commemoration, pilgrimages, artistic and

creative responses and family and community websites – although this summary barely does justice to the range of new history-making.

In parallel, over the past century, we see the evolution of archival arrangements and archival activity – *enabling* new writing research and cultural production, but also *stimulated* by it and occasionally *frustrating* it.

My plan now is to present an archival survey of the war's aftermath using four time periods and two themes. Of the latter, one will highlight the unique role of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and the other will consider the idea of stalemate applied to processing backlogs of documentation. Then the prospective idea of 'digital breakthrough' will introduce discussion of a post-centenary open-ended archival aftermath.

## Four stages

Stage one of this parallel archival century I'm calling *Collecting with a purpose*. It spans the war and the 1920s and 1930s and starts *informally* with C.E.W. Bean in 1914 as official war correspondent writing his diaries and notebooks. It starts *formally* with the appointment of a war photographer in late 1916 and the creation of the Australian War Records Section in May 1917.<sup>7</sup> Then, from war's end to the beginning of the next, one of the Memorial's main roles was to help Bean and his co-authors by gathering and organising the records, at all levels of formation, and to obtain copies of relevant allied and enemy records. For a few years, the Memorial Director J.L. Treloar sought the donation of individual soldiers' diaries and letters. Given that his tiny staff was dispersed, the official historians scattered, and a permanent building non-existent until 1941, the 15 volume official history was a remarkable achievement.<sup>8</sup>

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library also actively pursued books, pamphlets, photographs and maps, and in the early 1920s briefly was embroiled in a collecting turf war with the Memorial's precursor the War Museum Committee.<sup>9</sup> Coincidentally, the Mitchell Library in Sydney also aimed to document the war, advertising its keenness to purchase diaries and letters. By 1922 it had over 260 collections, then 'having fed greedily of the records available from ex-soldiers', as Anne-Marie Condé has explained, it 'decided it had had enough', and stopped.<sup>10</sup>

Stage two, covering the 1940s to 1960s, could justifiably be labelled *Destruction*. In 1943, 2 years after the Memorial to the First World War opened in Canberra, Gavin Long was appointed general editor to write and coordinate the twenty-two-volume official history of Australia's involvement in the second. Again there was a need to gather and prepare sources. The Memorial barely coped. Commenting on Jim McGrath, the Director whose term spans most of this second stage, Bill Sweeting wrote that we owed him our sympathy, not least as he 'inherited a building where every room and corridor was packed jam tight with un-crated relics and space was at a premium'.<sup>11</sup>

Helping Gavin Long and his team was difficult enough. Now the Memorial had to deal with the so-called overseas registries of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) shipped back from Britain, France and Egypt to Melbourne in the early 1920s, transferred to AWM control in the early 1930s, then physically moved up to Canberra in the late 1940s. Limited knowledge of their contents, minimal official and scholarly incentive to gain it,

storage pressures, and the urgent priority to help Long led to culling. By the late 1950s, hundreds of metres of files had been destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

AIF records still in Defence custody did not fare much better: even the fabled personnel dossiers were subject to ‘extensive culling’ by the Department of the Army from the early 1930s.<sup>13</sup>

Stage three *Discovery and re-discovery* starts in the 1960s.<sup>14</sup> In 1965 Inglis wrote his now famous *Meanjin* essay,<sup>15</sup> heralding an intellectual interest in and popular engagement with the Anzac legend. The reasons for the ‘reinvigoration of Anzac’ are complicated,<sup>16</sup> but of more relevance here, 1965 was also the year Bill Gammage wrote his honours thesis on the AIF in France then a doctorate, ‘the first non-official researcher to use the Memorial for a sustained research project’.<sup>17</sup> Rewritten, it appeared in 1974 as *The Broken Years* and became a classic. Others in the vanguard of this renaissance included John Laffin, Patsy Adam Smith and Alistair Thompson.

There were also renewed appeals by other libraries and scholars for letters and diaries, publications of them and based on them,<sup>18</sup> and a final burst of oral histories before the last of the veterans died. Autobiographies too, including in 1981 Albert Facey’s staggeringly successful *A Fortunate Life*.

And professionally the Memorial’s work, attitudes and staff came of age. In 1965 it *already had* the letters and diaries Gammage made famous, but no reading room, not even a reader’s chair and desk. By the early 1990s, it had a Research Centre, 3.7 km of Commonwealth records properly registered and cleared under the 30-year rule, published guides to collections and a public catalogue providing online access to metadata and images.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, an institutional obsession with its putative founder, C. E.W. Bean worsened, though his archives benefitted.<sup>20</sup>

The final stage, *Beyond the Memorial*, brings us to ‘memory boom’ times, from the turn of the century to the end of the centenary. Archivally a lot happened and still is.

The dominant feature has been new institutional websites (for example the National Archives of Australia’s *Discovering Anzacs*<sup>21</sup>) to which the public is encouraged to add its own content. And individuals themselves are increasingly documenting a First World War connection to locality, family, event or ethnicity via websites blogs and Facebook. Both trends have stimulated digitisation and the discovery of diaries, letters and photos (if too often uploaded with poor metadata).

Second, an expanded understanding of Great War studies had archival implications. Now letters and diaries were not just sources but studied for their meaning within families and communities, especially to wives, widows and others within war’s never-ending aftermath.<sup>22</sup> Archivists took time to react. With ‘the cost of war’ now in scope, one of the key sources were the Repatriation Department files. Like the AIF personnel dossiers, these were intended just for long-term business needs and thought otherwise to have little value.<sup>23</sup> Once in danger of culling as discussed below, they are now classified as ‘Retain as National Archives’.

## The Australian War Memorial, Canberra

Threaded through these stages are several issues now worth separate comment. As the stages began and, in a sense, ended with the Memorial, it warrants further and specific attention not least for its unusual combining of ceremonial, commemorative, research

and heritage roles. Compared with, for example, Canada<sup>24</sup> and New Zealand<sup>25</sup> and the UK,<sup>26</sup> we do things differently here.

Being then a British Dominion, Australia's institutions evolved with close attention to arrangements in both London and Ottawa. However, they already had official archives while we had nothing more than hints of *any* national cultural institutions. By the passage of Memorial legislation in 1925, a single basket solution began to fill with more and more eggs. As a museum, repository of records and a shrine, Inglis ranked the Australian War Memorial 'alone among Great War memorials anywhere in the world in combining those purposes'.<sup>27</sup>

The Memorial quickly evolved into the custodian of works of the official war artists, and operational units' diaries, and the personal diaries and papers of numerous individual participants, and of the war component of the papers of the Defence Minister Pearce, Governor-General Lord Novar and General Sir John Monash, and of the official and personal papers of the official war correspondent and historian C.E.W. Bean. It also became the coordinator of the resourcing, writing, publishing and marketing of the official history, and later its publication and re-publication. And the venue, from the opening of the building in 1941, for the national Remembrance Day ceremony (and attended by the Governor-General). And the location of a permanent public display of names of the war dead. Then, in 1988 came an Eternal Flame, and in 1993 a 'Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier'. Finally, in 2019 a Memorial bid for a A\$498 million expansion was justified in part to provide a place for veterans and their families.

Not least because of that Tomb, and because the Memorial has become so politically useful, it has evolved into a quasi-Yasukuni Shrine, the sacred epicentre of the Anglo-Australian *volk* notwithstanding the AIF's and our ethnic diversity. It is a *lieu de mémoire* trying to rekindle a *milieu de mémoire*. Despite appropriate indigenous alternatives, it has become the obligatory first stop for visiting monarchs and presidents. National sports teams too before departing overseas to do battle. And it has become a memorial to C.E.W. Bean despite the fine achievements of Gavin Long and other official historians.<sup>28</sup>

The archival consequences are worth noting. The Memorial's original archival efforts were focussed on a single user group – Bean and his co-authors, and it had no compunction in creating artificial series of copies and original documents to serve him. Too bad if later researchers wanting to use AWM26, Operations files did not wish to follow his official history structure.<sup>29</sup>

What started in mid-1917 under the banner 'Australian War Records Section' as an all-encompassing proactive total archives and records management standard setter, became – by the end of 1917 – the Australian War *Museum* Committee.<sup>30</sup> By 1925 when it achieved statutory existence it was the Australian War *Memorial*. From *Records* to *Museum* to *Memorial* in 8 years. Its legislation and official history priority predisposed it to the battlefields and the dead over Australia and the living. It was not until 1980 that legislation expanded its focus (and thus its collecting) to include the *aftermath* of war. Bean's much quoted 1946 conclusion that 'the AIF on its return merged quickly and quietly into the general population' was not based on archives at the Memorial – except in the ironic sense that relevant material had simply not been collected.<sup>31</sup> Even its pursuit of letters and diaries in the late 1920s, however valuable to Gammage, was more a by-product of its research to compile the Roll of Honour, and thus was doubly biased,

ignoring the soldiers who returned unless they had material, and often ignoring letters sent to them from Australia.<sup>32</sup>

This hybrid narrowness dawned on the Memorial Director as the centenary approached. He told the National Press Club in September 2013:

I've said to the directors of the other cultural institutions – . . . , if all Australians do over the four years of the centenary is come to the Australian War Memorial, we've failed. Because it's important that we understand what happened in these four years and how it informs who we are now.<sup>33</sup>

Even so, *only* the Memorial received the bulk of initial national centenary celebration funding – the Gillard government in April 2012 announcing a special allocation of A\$ 27 million for the redevelopment of its First World War galleries.<sup>34</sup> Funds directed specifically to archival projects at the national and state levels were quite limited comparative to the millions spent elsewhere.<sup>35</sup>

There was a further imbalance. Although in the early 1920s and early 1940s Bean and others pushed the Commonwealth to establish proper arrangements for official archives, in 1952 the Memorial had its authority to house the records of defence related departments removed, and its responsibility narrowed to 'records of the heads of fighting forces' and any records of the Service Departments which were directly related to the operation of those forces in wartime.<sup>36</sup> In any case, its storage capacity and collection priorities were now directed to the Second World War. Thus, while it was culling the AIF registers, the Archives Section of the Commonwealth National Library was establishing a national network of repositories and encouraging departments to fill them regardless of value. When the Archives Act was finally passed in 1983, the Memorial's minor archival role was confirmed, and later reinforced when the AIF personnel attestation and repatriation files were sent to the National Archives.

## Stalemate

Archival stalemate was implied in my *Destruction* stage, and it is still with us now *Beyond the Memorial*. It starts with the staggering amounts of paperwork the war generated, with some scholars referring to 'clerk power' and wondering when there was time to fight. Occasionally statistics can paint a picture. The British Post Office handled over 2 billion letters and 114 million parcels between 1915 and 1918; *each day* ten million inbound letters and parcels arrived at the battlefields, and seven million left for home.<sup>37</sup> For Australian figures, we know from Major James Lean's audit in late 1922 that Base Records alone held over 750,000 personal files and 1,557,000 correspondence files.<sup>38</sup> And when it was time to fight? During the 3–4 weeks in 1916 AIF troops were involved in the battle of Mouquet Farm, 10,000 field messages were passed between its formations.<sup>39</sup>

Stalemate today arises from the backlogs of unprocessed and barely touched records – material that has never before been consulted, material not yet known to include relevant sources, and series not yet listed at file level, *let alone* physically prepared and cleared for public access,<sup>40</sup> *let alone* added to online public catalogues, *let alone* digitised.

Not just files either, Peter Stanley's *The Crying Years*<sup>41</sup> was inspired by a talk given by the National Library's Pictures curator to the Canberra Great War Study Group. The curator had shown them a selection of the Library's relevant images, 'many of which'

Peter wrote 'were new even to members of such an expert group'. What the Library held was 'immense', and those reproduced in *The Crying Years* represented a 'tiny selection'.

At the AWM, enormous quantities of relevant archives are assessable in every sense, as one might expect after a centenary. They include, in addition to the expected military record types, the 32,000 case files and administrative papers of the Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Inquiry Bureau – some digitised and available online, some controlled by in-house handwritten indexes. But collectively the AIF registries are not adequately controlled, and not an institutional priority. Item listing is being undertaken by a volunteer working 1 day a week, and at that rate will take probably another fifteen to 20 years to complete.<sup>42</sup>

At the National Archives, AIF personnel (B2455) and Army Militia attestation (B4747) files are accessible in every sense, but it is the standard by which so many other relevant series fail. The 207 m of AIF applications to enlist files (MT1486/1) at least are individually described online, but only a portion of its name-rich files have been digitised. From there the picture becomes seriously depressing: a sample of the relevant half dozen general correspondence series included in *Fact Sheet 135*<sup>43</sup> shows only two series are fully item-listed and few have been digitised.

Even the much-publicised repatriation files almost didn't make it to *stalemate* status, with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and parts of NAA struggling to justify their long-term preservation. The issue emerged around 2002 when DVA transferred over 10 km of files. Solutions were canvassed within and around the NAA Advisory Council and resolved a decade later, due primarily to the advocacy of historians on the Advisory Council.<sup>44</sup> Needless to say, centenary and research grant funds have ensured repackaging, file descriptions, data loading and scanning of a sample component have happened, and researchers have immediately demonstrated their usefulness.<sup>45</sup> However, processing of *all* 600,000 First World War servicemen and women's repatriation files, not to mention all relevant lands department and soldier settlement records in state archives is decades away, and the centenary pretext for funding has now gone.

## **New questions, new sources?**

*Known* backlogs of *official* files are one form of stalemate. Another asks if the breadth of new scholarship has now reached the limits of available sources? Regardless, the scope of Australian First World War studies has been expanding for decades. Traditional battle narratives are being revised and gaps remedied,<sup>46</sup> and understandings of soldiers – including their ethnic diversity, captivity, health, misbehaviour, reading and religious beliefs – continue to deepen. A parallel non-combatant list ranges ever wider, from battlefield tourism to games where children played soldiers.<sup>47</sup>

There is also continuing scholarly and popular interest in every imaginable aspect of Australian society during the war – including families, communities and localities. For the official history, in 1936 Ernest Scott needed to cover social political and economic developments in Australia in a single volume but, writing in his Preface, admitted 'it was not possible to discuss every aspect of life, even for so short a period as five years'. He added 'A complete book could be written on each of the topics to which a chapter is here allotted'.<sup>48</sup>



In her 2013 *Broken Nation*, Joan Beaumont's summarising challenge was even more severe, recognising the home front as an 'essential part of the national experience of war' and knowing 'every dimension of Australian life' was in scope.<sup>49</sup> The relevant volume of the Oxford History has 28 chapters divided into three parts (Economy, Politics and Society), yet here too its authors had to condense much. Scott drew on papers of key government departments, newspapers, personal papers of the Governor-General and Prime Minister, and parliamentary papers. Now? Writing on aspects of Australia during 1914–1918 is appearing in journals as diverse as *Gender and History* and *Australian Geographer*.

Finally, there are the multiple experiences of the aftermath (including of the returned servicemen and women and their families), and in the ways the war has been understood, represented, commemorated and mythologised. Scholars are now even interested in the post-war celebration of Anzac Day in the UK between 1916 and 1939 and Prime Ministerial Anzac Day addresses between 1973 and 2016. Already there are studies of the centenary itself here and in the UK.<sup>50</sup> Australia's 'exiting' from the war has been a century-long process wrote Fathi and Ziino, adding, 'one might argue that the effort to demobilise culturally remains unfinished'.<sup>51</sup>

Where are the sources to sustain all this? In which homes, schools, churches, clubs, businesses and local historical societies; which libraries, museums and archives? The centenary itself encouraged material to surface, but we don't truly know what is out there. Even if we did, archivists and librarians cannot collect prospectively because the boundaries of the subject keep moving. It becomes harder and harder to remedy past inaction too.

## Towards the digitised bi-centenary

Just before he died in 2016 Jeff Grey wrote a paper reflecting on C.E.W. Bean and the writing of official histories. There he discussed past UK and Australian official war historians, their correspondence and document sharing. This was, he explained, in an age before emails and long-haul air travel, when extensive research into original sources was difficult, expensive and time-consuming. But in a jolting aside, Grey noted that extensive research into original sources was 'something of an academic novelty still!'<sup>52</sup> That novelty has also been romanticised as 'journeys' and 'encounters' and dissected for pathos and inner meaning. For exhibition purposes too there surely *is* something to the physicality of the document, even ones such as diaries damaged by bullets long removed from their context of creation.<sup>53</sup>

Such considerations pale beside the benefits of digitisation. To be able to see, from the other side of the world, a unit war diary or a soldier's photo or an official historian's notebooks is remarkable (if increasingly taken for granted with little appreciation of the backlog of digitisation). So is being able to reduce a month's toil in a reading room to a day with a smartphone. So are the many kinds of re-use the digital enables. Remarkable; convenient; and greatly appreciated especially if you know what it replaced. Decades into the second post-war century, the benefits of digitisation have become normalised when combined with the increasingly powerful gateway of choice, TROVE.

This should not blind us to the consequences of a *streetlight effect*, the ease and speed of digital access begetting repeat use rather than scholars and archivists taking pains to

uncover the analogue alternative sources. And digitisation is often the only thing which will attract funding, but has an opportunity cost too, with basic though ‘un-sexy’ access and preservation priorities missing out or underpinned by a worrying political economy relying on volunteer labour.<sup>54</sup> The announcement in 2018 of a wonderful new funding program being offered by the UK National Archives and The Pilgrim Trust to support ‘the cataloguing of archive collections’<sup>55</sup> was, to Australian eyes, exceptional.

Until definitive studies are produced showing how and to what degree ‘the digital’ has shaped the quality and significance of research findings<sup>56</sup> – until then – let us agree there are and will be innumerable benefits for First World War studies in the second post-war century. Indeed, some have talked of a digital ‘big bang’, with more digital activity funded than for any other historical period. In addition to the now standard online accessible catalogues and content, enablers such as Web 2.0 applications and social media have led to

- individual archiving and memory practices (family; locality); excellent examples include ‘Shire at War’ about Alberton, Victoria;<sup>57</sup>
- community additions to cultural institutions’ sites, including material never previously available for research and whose originals do not necessarily end up in public collections;
- community participation in transcribing (for example, NAA’s ArcHIVE and NLA’s TROVE);<sup>58</sup> and finally
- large data analyses, mashups and other digital humanities approaches such as Diggers to Veterans.<sup>59</sup>

If one case may stand for the incredible power of the digital my nomination would be what happened when thousands of First World War glass plate photos of soldiers, including Australians, were found in Vignacourt in 2010. They featured in TV shows, literary festivals, exhibitions and Ross Coulthart’s book *The Lost Diggers*.<sup>60</sup> The quality of the 250-megabyte copies allowed researchers to zoom in on colour patches to help identify the uncaptioned portraits, as did a Facebook page which received 11.5 million views in 4 months.

### **The unrecognised weapons of warfare, a vast machinery of surveillance**

In 2013, the blurb for Joan Beaumont’s award-winning history *Broken Nation* called it ‘the first book to bring together all the dimensions of World War I’, while David Horner praised it as ‘deeply researched’. Her bibliography began explaining the book primarily drew on archives at the Memorial, the National Library, the National Archives and the Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University.<sup>61</sup> Deeply researched yet only four institutions! A hundred years hence, will that list have changed?

A second recent, if larger, project was the five-volume *Oxford Centenary history of the Great War and Australia*. Jeff Grey’s foreword to the series explained that it drew on ‘extensive research and a wide range of archival sources, many of which were not available to ... C.E.W. Bean, and his authors in the 1920s and 1930s’.<sup>62</sup> A hundred years hence, what comment will a new Jeff Grey make?



If the focus of inquiry is events occurring between 1914 and 1918, we have surely reached peak archives. The coming century will see fewer and fewer new primary sources emerge. But new questions will continue to be asked regardless of available sources – in Australian First World War studies, as in other areas of historical inquiry.

Unless the Memorial institutes a whole new copying program of ‘enemy’ archives, what is in custody now is pretty much it. The backlogs of listing and digitisation *will* disappear, and the product re-mined remotely in tune with the ever-changing interests of public and scholarly history. Analyses of the AIF will go deeper and wider. And who knows, new bio-databases will be developed, at last shifting focus from a narrow understanding of ‘sacrifice’. My wish list starts with the dozens of New Guineans executed during our military administration to 1921.<sup>63</sup> And what of the 6,150 German Australians comprising ‘a mass deportation unparalleled in Australian history’?<sup>64</sup>

Rarely will more soldiers’ letters and diaries emerge (from families direct to the web, or first to public collections). The Mitchell Library had collected 247 diarists by 1921 and another 300 by 2015, but holdings will hardly double again there, or at the Memorial, or anywhere else. A few will be repatriated, finally returning to their rightful families, like those collected from Australia and New Zealand by UK historian Peter Liddle in 1974.<sup>65</sup> And perhaps, like rusting ordnance, a few more troves of glass plate negatives will surface to match those created by the Thuillier family of Vignacourt.

We can certainly anticipate existing collections attracting new questions. Reflecting on his PhD sources, Gammage said *they* had ‘inspired and shaped my thinking’. In 2015 Peter Cochrane foresaw ‘a student as bold’ as Gammage, but ‘with a different objective – not trauma but survival, not ruin but transcendence’.<sup>66</sup> Whatever the new angles, such a student will not need a desk and chair at the Memorial but will search aggregated digitised content using voice and AI. Surely too scholarship will go deeper still into established areas – even without new collections. Deeper, but also spiralling ever outwards beyond commemoration and the home front to topics still unnamed.

Anything else? Let me preface a final hope with two quotes with clear archival implications. Reflecting on the kind of warfare waged on the Somme in 1916, William Philpott noted that ‘Armies were becoming vast, managerial bureaucracies sustained by paperwork: the telephone, typewriter and copying machine are the unrecognised weapons of modern warfare’. Reflecting on medical repatriation’s formidable administrative structures, Bruce Scates saw ‘a vast machinery of surveillance, monitoring and accounting’.<sup>67</sup>

There really does need to be more research of the kind reported at the 2018 International Society for First World War Studies conference when, for the first time ever it considered ‘recording, narrating and archiving the First World War’. Sobering to realise however that most speakers were historians. As a profession, we still include people interested in recordkeeping systems, but for the specific military focus here, the Australian community is tiny. We should be keener, not least because our national war history links so directly to the establishment of our national archives.<sup>68</sup> My hope is that from the conference and this theme issue our numbers will grow.

## Notes

1. Shafquat Towheed and Edmund King, *Reading and the First World War; readers, texts, archives*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015, Introduction, p. 2.
2. Geoff Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme*, Hamish Hamilton, 1994. My quote is the 2016 paperback by Canongate Books, Edinburgh, p. 137.
3. Analysis of the excesses of Australian commemoration were tracked during 2014–2018 particularly by journalists such as Paul Daley at *Guardian Australia* and historians such as David Stephens at Honest History (see <<http://honesthistory.net.au/wp/category/centenary-watch/>>, accessed 11 July 2019). See also Joan Beaumont, ‘Commemoration in Australia. A memory orgy?’, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2015, pp. 536–44.
4. Others usually bracketed with FitzSimons include Roland Perry, Les Carlyon and Jonathan King. On the ‘storian’ approach, see Martin Crotty, ‘The sufferings of so and so; hackneyed perennials of Anzac mythmaking’ [review of Jonathan King’s *Palestine Diaries; the Light Horsemen’s Own Story, Battle by Battle*, Scribe, 2018], *Australian Book Review*, March 2018, pp. 56–7.
5. For example Michael Walsh and Andrekos Varnava (eds), *Australia and the great war: contemporary and historiographical debates*, Melbourne University Publishing, Melbourne, 2016.
6. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (eds), *What’s wrong with Anzac. The militarisation of Australian history*. NewSouth, Sydney, 2010.
7. On the AWRS, see <<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/the-australian-war-records-section>>, accessed 12 July 2019.
8. For an overview of the histories, see <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1416531>>, accessed 17 July 2019.
9. For example, over defending Norman Lindsay’s wish to donate to the Library the originals of his war posters. See Andrew and Margaret Osborn, *The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, 1901–27 and the Origins of the National Library of Australia*, Department of the Parliamentary Library in association with the National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1989, pp. 126–8.
10. Anne-Marie Condé, ‘Capturing the Records of War. Collecting at the Mitchell Library and the Australian War Memorial’, *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 125, April 2005, pp. 134–52, esp. 136–42.
11. AJ Sweeting, Review Article of *Here is their spirit* in *Canberra Historical Journal*, New Series, no. 29, March 1992, p. 41.
12. Typically, 95% of files were destroyed. See description of the remnant series registered as AWM11-15, AWM18-19, AWM22-24, AWM221, AWM223, AWM256, AWM258 and AWM259. Go to <<https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection>> and follow the link to RecordSearch to do series searches for these series. See also Craig Berelle’s blog, 7 January 2016 available at <<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/highlight-official-records-first-world-war-awm22-australian-imperial-force>>, accessed 11 July 2019.
13. For the quote, see ‘Series Note’ for Commonwealth Record Series B2455 by going to <<https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection>>. Follow the link to RecordSearch to do a series search for the series. See also Paul Dagleish, ‘Keeping the AIF’s Personnel Records’, in Jean Bou (ed.), *The Australian Imperial Force*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2016, pp. 175–91 and Anne-Marie Condé’s article ‘A Societal Provenance Analysis ...’ in this issue, especially towards the end of the section headed “‘2,308,070 distinct records on charge’: the post-war years’.
14. This was a key decade in the UK too with war records becoming available. Ditto Canada; see Tim Cook’s review article ‘Tools of Memory’, *Archivaria*, no. 45, Spring, 1998, p. 194.
15. KS Inglis, ‘The Anzac Tradition’, *Meanjin Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 1, March 1965, pp. 25–44, reproduced at <<https://meanjin.com.au/blog/the-anzac-tradition/>>, accessed 25 June 2019. More generally, see John Lack (ed.), *Anzac Remembered. Selected Writings by K.S. Inglis*, University of Melbourne, 1998.

16. Christina Twomey, 'Trauma and the reinvigoration of Anzac', *History Australia*, vol. 10, no. 3, December 2013, pp. 85–108.
17. Bill Gammage, 'The broken years', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 24, April 1994, p. 34.
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19. Janette Condon and Elizabeth Brown, 'A repository of change: the re-development of the Australian War Memorial's Research Centre', *The Australian Library Journal*, vol. 49, no. 1, February 2000, pp. 45–50, and Robyn van Dyk, 'ANZAC Connections: delivering and connecting real content and data online', *The Australian Library Journal*, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 40–7.
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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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