

The symbolic significance of archives: a discussion*

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This article is concerned with some of the unexpected ways that a sense of significance is created around archives. It takes as examples the records of some Australian soldiers who died during or shortly after the First World War. In the late 1920s, these soldiers' next-of-kin were asked by the Australian War Memorial to donate the records to the Memorial. The records that were received might seem, at first glance, rather meagre. But are they? The author suggests that if we listen carefully to the voices of the donors, we might hear a more complex story, one that enhances our understanding of the role that archives play in people's everyday lives.

The American historian and archivist James O'Toole has called attention to what he called the 'symbolic significance of archives'. In an article published in 1993 he identified tensions between those archivists with a practical outlook on their work, and those who pause to reflect upon the fundamental nature of archives. On balance, he found that archivists tend not to be over-reflective about where archives come from and why. Leading archival theorists, and he quotes Hilary Jenkinson and TR Schellenberg, have seen archives as 'straightforward and inevitably practical'. Moreover, he notes that historians of archives have identified 'constants in record creation' over long periods of time, particularly to

do with legal and financial affairs, which are purely pragmatic and relate to a fundamental human need to create and keep records. But, he suggests, as archival theory and history have matured, we have learned more about the non-literate, non-documentary, ceremonial uses of literacy and the written record. Classicists and medievalists have paid particular attention to the nature of literacy and its relationship with oral culture, and O'Toole has himself drawn upon the insights of these scholars to suggest that archivists need to think again 'about the human needs and activities that call records into being'.¹

What might be the *impractical* reasons for the creation of records, he wonders? Can the symbolic significance of a record be as important, or more important, than the information it contains? Can the act of recordmaking be more important than the record that is made? As an historian, one who is used to interrogating all sorts of records in all sorts of ways, O'Toole unsurprisingly answers 'yes' to these questions. But while acknowledging that the practical meaning and use of records will always be important, O'Toole's purpose is to analyse certain kinds of records in which the symbolic values *outweigh* the practical ones. His discussion ranges over a variety of records, from family bibles and school diplomas to the American Declaration of Independence and the Domesday Book, as a corrective to the practical approach of previous writers. He concludes that if archivists are interested fundamentally in the circumstances of a record's creation – which of course they are – they cannot ignore the record's symbolic context and meaning.

O'Toole asks us to expand upon his thinking by multiplying the number and kind of examples he considers, and I would like to do this by considering certain kinds of personal records held by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.² The Memorial exists to better understand and commemorate the experience of people who have lived through, and died in, war. So it would seem to offer rich possibilities for picking up O'Toole's challenge. However, O'Toole looks for symbolic significance mainly in the creation of records and their use by creators and those who come later. He is particularly interested in records whose significance is so great that they transcend the boundaries of the institutions that hold them (if indeed they are held in an institution at all). My purpose, by contrast, is to wonder about a very brief moment in the history of a record: the moment that it passes from private into institutional hands. My discussion is based upon research on the history

of the collection of soldiers' private papers held by the Australian War Memorial.³ This magnificent collection has its origins in the late 1920s, when the Memorial began to write to thousands of returned soldiers and next-of-kin of the dead, asking for donations of private papers.

One of the many aspects to this story is the conversation that was carried out between the Memorial as a collecting institution, and the potential donors. It is easy to listen in on this conversation for it is contained in nearly five and a half thousand correspondence files (one for each potential donor) that were created between 1927 and 1939. Having read about a 7% sample of these, it was impossible not to be struck again and again by the generosity of many of the donors and how powerfully the relatives of the dead responded to the idea – put to them by the Memorial – that their son or daughter's sacrifice could be recognised through their *records*. Of course, when looking at these stories, we are inclined to rejoice at the many historically significant acquisitions that took place and lose sight of the instances where a few fragmentary bits of paper, or nothing at all, came into the institution. But in these cases, the relatives still felt an acute sense of the importance of the records, and this perspective is the subject of this article. In listening to the voices of the donors, we might learn something of what mattered to *them*, of the urgency of their efforts to preserve a record, even though those efforts sometimes faltered and failed. Might there be symbolic significance here, in the moment that the record stands on the 'threshold of the repository', as Eric Ketelaar puts it?⁴ Can records accrue symbolic meaning at the point when, in Sue McKemmish's terms, 'evidence of me' becomes 'evidence of us'?⁵ Let us try and find out.

'A lot in it of historical interest'

In August 1930, Mr William Bennett, of Penguin in Tasmania, received a letter from the Australian War Memorial. He was asked to consider donating to the Memorial any papers he might have had associated with the First World War service of his late son, Private Gordon Bennett, of the 49th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force.⁶ Mr Bennett and his wife might have been surprised at the request but the Memorial was serious. On the Memorial's part, much thought had gone into how grieving families might react to an appeal to part with precious mementos. Families were told that the records that the Memorial already held were being 'studied by official historians' who were writing the

history of Australia's war effort. But what was still needed were records of the 'thoughts, hopes and fears which were then uppermost in [a soldier's] mind'. Evidence of 'supreme effort and endurance' could be found in 'practically no other existing record', families were told. They were encouraged to think beyond the personal and family significance of the records, for the great national story of Australia's war would be incomplete, it was implied, without records of individual experience. The letter was drafted by Arthur Bazley, revised by Charles Bean, and polished by John Treloar.⁷ Bazley was an assistant to Bean, who, of course, was Australia's official historian of the First World War. Treloar was the Director of the Australian War Memorial. No-one bothered much with distinctions between 'archives' in the Jenkinsonian sense, and personal records. Both sorts of records were needed, and were thought to be complementary. The two types of records spoke to one another, as indeed they still do today within the collection of the Australian War Memorial.

Even the paper the letter was typed on was part of the Memorial's effort to create 'the right attitude' in the minds of potential donors.⁸ Each letter was personally signed by Treloar, and was headed with an artist's impression of the monumental building planned for the Memorial in Canberra. There was also a quote from Thucydides, the speech by Pericles over the Athenians who had died in war:

They gave their lives. For that public gift they received a praise which never ages and a tomb most glorious – not so much the tomb in which they lie, but that in which their fame survives, to be remembered for ever when occasion comes for word or deed.⁹

In style and content, the letter appealed to history, sentiment and tradition. It created a richly symbolic structure within which recipients might respond.

The Bennetts, however, were largely unmoved. After two lengthy reminders, Mrs Bennett finally wrote back to the Memorial in December 1930. She was apologetic, but her husband had not been well. They had carefully read over their son's letters, and with the exception of one describing rifle training on Salisbury Plain in Britain, they thought there was 'nothing in his experiences different or in any way of more historical interest than the average soldier's'. His letters were very short, she



From a Painting in the Field by 2^d Cpl. J. S. Butler (VIP.)

Printed in the Field by A.I.F. Printing Section.

The illustration from the Christmas card donated to the Australian War Memorial by Mrs A Bennett, in memory of her son, William Miles Bennett.

added, and he had been careful not to mention his whereabouts. However, she had a reproduction of a painting which her son had sent her, a scene 'showing shell holes and wire entanglements ... and in the distance the ruins of a Town'. She would send it if the Memorial thought it would be of 'historical interest'. John Treloar, a most determined and steadfast collector on the Memorial's behalf, wrote back to Mrs Bennett on Christmas Eve, accepting her offer. He would be glad to receive it for the 'national collection'.¹⁰ There was more delay before the reproduction was finally received in March 1931. Treloar had to send two more reminders – a total of five letters in all – chasing this one item.

Compared to the abundant collections of letters and diaries that the Memorial was receiving as donations or loans for copying, it is a small thing. It shows a battle-scarred wasteland, much as Mrs Bennett had described, by a soldier artist, James Somerset Butler. It was reproduced for a printed greeting card sent out by some technical units within I Anzac Corps to other units, in the new year of 1918. It is not 'archival' in the sense that it is not unique and in 1931 it was placed in the Memorial's collection of 'souvenir publications'. To try to find it today in the Memorial's large collection of greeting cards takes a bit of detective work. There are now three copies of the same item and, sadly, it is impossible to tell which is the one donated by Mrs Bennett. For someone coming at it through the greeting card collection, rather than via the donor file, it bears no trace of the experience of her son. Most researchers would pass over it with hardly a glance.

What then are we to make of this apparently insignificant donation? The Bennetts had a collection of letters; they scrutinised them carefully, trying to judge whether they offered special insights or 'historical interest'. They had to decide this by themselves, based upon the information they received from the Memorial and their own ideas concerning the war, history and the role of libraries and museums. They did not doubt the appropriateness of the Memorial's request for records. One letter, about rifle training, was felt to be perhaps what the Memorial was after, perhaps because it was the most 'military' out of a group of otherwise short and uninformative letters. But all they would offer was the Christmas card. Treloar's encouraging reply seems to have resolved any doubts Mrs Bennett had had about its significance because when she finally sent it she says, 'It is only small but there is a lot in it of historical interest'.

Further research shows that Private Bennett's story is a terrible one, even among the many tragedies of the First World War. Gordon Bennett was a farmer living in Westbury in northern Tasmania when he enlisted in April 1916. He arrived in France in September that year. He was slightly wounded several times, including once at the battle of Messines in June 1917; then, in March 1918 his right hand was shattered while he was assisting a wounded man. His hand was amputated at the forearm and he returned to Australia in August 1918. He faced a long period of rehabilitation, and was apparently still in hospital in Melbourne in November 1919. But during a period of leave from the hospital, he dived into shallow water and hit his head. The injury caused massive spinal injuries and paralysis. When brought back to the hospital he was conscious but a few days later he lapsed into delirium and unconsciousness. He died on Armistice Day, 11 November 1919. His father had rushed across from Tasmania and was with his son at his death.¹¹

So this was the context within which the Bennetts tried to make a decision on whether or not to donate to the Memorial. For them, two years of constant anxiety during the war ended with the relief of knowing that their son had returned: disabled, but alive. Then, as they were preparing to help him try to return to some kind of normal life, the accident occurred. The war for them had been unimaginably cruel. But is this the context within which to judge the worth of their donation to the Memorial? Does the little illustration gain 'symbolic significance' in James O'Toole's terms, once one knows the background? I suggest that it does, with the important qualification that the symbolic significance lies in the dialogue between the document and the administrative record surrounding it, and not, as in the case of many of O'Toole's examples, in the look of the document, or its ceremonial or political use. Once the Bennett story is known, everything changes. We empathise with them as human beings; we can imagine the texture of their lives, and the lives of other grieving relatives. The experience exercises our historical imagination – our emotional literacy, if you like. When Mrs Bennett writes on two occasions that her husband had been unwell, we feel as if we understand. Looking again at the picture, we are grateful to her for parting with even as much as she did. She tells us that her son had sent it to her. Perhaps it was his way of trying to convey to her something of the sights he saw and the reality he experienced, which he was unable

to do in his letters. Could it be that the reproduction is therefore *more* significant than the letters? If so, her gift cannot be dismissed as an archivally dubious trifle. Moreover, I suggest that it symbolises the Bennetts' desire to insert their son into Australian history, just as the Memorial had encouraged them. The picture is an iconic western front battle scene, which perhaps summed up the First World War for them, and many people, and indeed probably for us as well. By submitting it, the Bennetts seem to be signalling their desire to find a place for their son in that narrative; a way of saying: 'He was there. This is evidence of *him*'.

Negotiating memories

I have dwelt on this story hoping to demonstrate that it is worth the effort to do as Eric Ketelaar suggests: to 'look up from the record', to look through it, beyond it and to question its boundaries.¹² In doing so, we notice in the cases under discussion that there is rarely one single 'donor', but a number of people, usually members of the same family. The case of Private Frederick Bournes is typical of the many where a relative replied on behalf of a family. Bournes, of the 44th Battalion, was killed at Hamel in July 1918. He was originally from Britain and had only lived in Australia for three years before he enlisted in June 1916. In 1927 the Memorial approached his mother, who was living in Tunbridge Wells, and her daughter Alice replied. Frederick had written home, she said, but his letters were often sent on to another brother, serving in Mesopotamia, who was 'always glad of news'. Most letters were either personal in their content, she added, or had been censored. But in view of what we have learned from the Bennett case, it is worth listening carefully to what Alice Bournes has to say next:

The spirit breathed in [the letters] was that of pluck, and a grim determination to carry out their job, with special reference to the atrocities towards innocent women and children. That was sufficient. His personal testament to his comrades in arms was that of personal admiration for their pluck, endurance, and good humour under the most trying of circumstances.¹³

She could not donate the letters but wanted the Memorial to know of the 'spirit' of them, to affirm that her brother's experience was worthy

of a place in the Memorial. But what are we to make of the sinister reference to the 'atrocities towards innocent women and children'? Clearly, but unlike Gordon Bennett, Bournes managed to convey something of horror of war his letters home and his sister wanted the Memorial to know that too. If the letters had been offered, would the Memorial have accepted them? The exchange between Alice Bournes and the Memorial is a reminder not just of a story which is difficult to reconstruct from surviving sources, but of the complex negotiations that sometimes have to take place before the evidence can make it into public hands.

Over time, John Treloar grew accustomed to the delicate aspects of dealing with grieving families. Sometimes, after lengthy and complicated transactions with donors, or much effort in finding correct addresses, he simply felt obliged to accept what was offered. Months of negotiations might result in just a few newspaper cuttings, postcards, and stray official documents which added nothing to what was already known about a soldier. Eva Murray was the widow of a returned man, Clive Murray, formerly of the 107th Field Artillery Battery, AIF. Clive Murray had recently succumbed to the effects of having been wounded and gassed during the war. Eva Murray sent the Memorial a copy of the official letter she had received from the Department of Defence, notifying her of her husband's wounding in 1917. Even Treloar would have had to admit that this latter document was almost valueless to him, but it is not hard for us to see that it had immense significance to Mrs Murray. It brought momentous news; every relative would tremble as they opened such a letter. All would forever associate it with news that changed their lives. To look at it now, all we see is a much folded piece of paper which has been pasted into a family photograph album or scrapbook. That sheet has in turn been clipped out and sent to the Memorial. Pasted next to the letter is a fragment of a newspaper cutting in which Murray's name appears among the dead and wounded for that day. Next to his name is a large cross in ink. That's all.¹⁴ But Mrs Murray was grateful to be asked by the Memorial and hoped that the documents would 'find a niche in your archives'.¹⁵ They did.

Treloar's negotiations with the Murray family were complex because three brothers had enlisted. All survived the war but two died in the early 1930s, so he had to deal with several recently bereaved relatives at the one time. They were generally cooperative, but other cases show

that members of the one family would react differently to the Memorial's request for records. Some were keen, others reluctant. A request was made for the records of Captain Francis Aylwin Leslie, of the 15th Battalion, who died at Bullecourt in April 1917, and his brother Lieutenant Stuart Leslie, of the Army Pay Corps, who died in 1926 from the effects of rheumatic fever contracted during the war. Their father's response promised much but delivered little. In March 1930 Francis Leslie (senior) wrote very earnestly to the Memorial:

This is a matter which will take some time to go into. We also desire to confer with the Widow of our younger son, Mrs Dorothy C Leslie, who resides in Hamilton, Victoria ... For the moment, all we can say is we recognise the force of your reference to the value of personal Memorials in the War Services of our sons for lodgment [sic] with [the] Australian War Memorial ... It will take a few weeks; I will write to you again.¹⁶

On 25 November Leslie telephoned Treloar to apologise for the delay, but he had 'put in a fair amount of work on the records, had those for one son finished, and expected, within the next few days to finish the records for the other'.¹⁷ What 'work' this was we shall never know, for by February 1931 something seemed to go wrong. Leslie told Treloar that he had no letters or diaries. The few effects of one son had been lost when the ship carrying them home was sunk. He promised some photographs but they were never sent.¹⁸ What he finally handed over were merely some copies of letters (Mr Leslie himself lost the originals),¹⁹ biographical details for both brothers, some poems and a magazine article.²⁰ Again, Treloar seemed to resign himself to disappointment, realising probably that something had dampened Leslie's initial enthusiasm: the daughter-in-law, perhaps, was unwilling to cooperate. The relationship between parents and a widowed daughter-in-law must have been an unusually complex one, particularly, as was the case with one of the Murray brothers, mentioned above, when there were grandchildren. The stories of the Murrays and Leslies suggest that it is not the records that are important so much as the way they show grieving families trying to negotiate their relationships, their losses and their memories.

Father and son

Joy Damousi has written about how family relationships affected the way people grieved. Widows and mothers have always attracted special interest and sympathy, but Damousi was also interested in fathers. Fathers, as she suggests, could identify emotionally with the AIF in a way that women did not, and by forming friendships with their son's former comrades, hope to enter 'the male fraternity of the army'.²¹ In doing so they could learn more about their son's experiences and perhaps find a means of separating themselves from the rawness of their grief. In the Memorial's correspondence with Newton Wanliss, father of Captain Harold Wanliss, killed at Polygon Wood in September 1917, we see a father in exactly this situation. Newton Wanliss spent the immediate post-war years writing a history of his son's battalion, the 14th. The book, *The History of the Fourteenth Battalion*, was published in 1929.²² In pursuit of it he wrote to hundreds of former 14th Battalion men, asking them for accounts of their experiences. He also held his son's letters and a diary, as well as a diary of his own kept during the years he worked with the Red Cross in London. He was master of a large collection of manuscript material and the Memorial wanted it all.



A studio portrait taken in Melbourne 1915 of Captain Harold Wanliss DSO.
Australian War Memorial negative number DASEY1210.

Wanliss first promised his son's records to the Memorial in March 1927. 'My natural hope and ambition of founding a family that would take a prominent part in the history of the country I love so much has been destroyed by the death in action of my only son', he wrote, but he appeared to think that the Memorial was the natural place for his son's records to be preserved.²³ He wanted to keep them until his book was finished, he said, but in the meantime he presented to the Memorial his other 14th Battalion records, mainly post-war narratives and letters written to him by 14th Battalion veterans, in installments. 'You have so far only tasted the entrees of my collection', he wrote, teasingly, in 1931, 'and the rest of the literary dinner in my possession will be unloaded in the future ... You might get literary indigestion if all were unloaded at once'.²⁴ He was proud of the contributions he was making to the Memorial. 'Some day your records may prove the food on which some Australian Homer may build up an inspiring national poem'.²⁵ So long as he could focus on the records of his son's comrades, Wanliss could stay cheerful. The records of his son were much more difficult. At different times he claimed that Harold's records were 'scrappy', or 'fragmentary' and that he never wrote more than the 'barest details'.²⁶ More bundles of 14th Battalion narratives arrived in 1934 and 1935, and in 1934 Wanliss finally handed in some of his son's letters. He agreed to donate the originals provided typewritten copies were sent back to him.

Fortunately, the keepers of the Memorial's records were extremely good listeners. They completely understood people like Wanliss: knew when to press him, when to leave him alone. Such skill is obviously critical in obtaining records of the bereaved and is, perhaps, one of the more subtle ways that, as Terry Cook says, the 'mediation by the archivist' helps shape the meaning of the record, in this case the record that we now have of Australians at war.²⁷ So in 1940, the Memorial's Acting Director, Arthur Bazley, tried again for the records Wanliss still had. Wanliss was now aged 79, and living in a guest house in Ballarat. After Bazley's gentle prodding, he said he would send his son's diary and the rest of his letters, but he wanted to read the diary again 'before I part with it for good'.²⁸ Finally, in May 1940, having given away everything that had been easy to give, he copied out his son's diary for himself and posted the original to the Memorial.²⁹ His own diary and the rest of the letters he kept. A set of tributes and condolence letters, written to Newton Wanliss at the time of his son's death, and which Wanliss had

had printed and circulated,³⁰ was never mentioned in any of Wanliss's discussions with the Memorial. Wanliss must have kept these too.³¹ But Bazley was satisfied. In acknowledging Harold Wanliss's dairy, he told Newton that it had 'taken its place in the War Memorial library among other cherished records of the AIF'.³²

A 'cherished record of the AIF': it seems that we come back to symbolic significance. The Wanliss records successfully made the journey from personal memento to national treasure; let us further examine this journey. The Wanlisses came from a respected family from Ballarat with roots reaching back into colonial Victorian society. Community service and love of country were held dear. Harold Wanliss was thought to be a young man of very great promise. He had been a brilliant student, and in periods of leave during the war he studied 'industries new to Australia' and dreamed of entering politics and introducing these industries to Australia. For Charles Bean, Australia's official historian, Wanliss's loss was a 'grievous one'. And yet Harold Wanliss's letters and diary are indeed quite 'scrappy', as his father said. The diary covers only about ten pages and the few letters were mostly written during periods of training and leave.³³ The records tell us little about the man who was thought by his friends and commanding officers to be 'a young man possibly destined, if he lived, to lead Australia'.³⁴ It is possible that Newton Wanliss himself was disappointed that the papers are not more revealing, and this might be why it took him so long to give them up. Perhaps, like Mrs Bennett, who donated the little illustration, he found that the records people keep in the thick of events can leave behind a very pale trace of those events. The narratives Wanliss collected from veterans after the war might have seemed to him to be much more suitable for the 'Homer' who might one day write an 'inspiring national poem'. Nevertheless, the Memorial accepted the papers in the spirit in which they were given. In the end, possessing the Wanliss papers was more important than learning from them.

I have been asking the reader to enter the mind not of the creator of the records but the depositor, who, in these cases, is a different person. These people spoke on behalf of the dead and out of a deep need. They wanted their soldier to be remembered, not just in war memorials and monuments, but through their records. They cared passionately about archives, and as archivists and historians, we should listen to what they have to say. Their words form some of the 'tacit narratives' of archives

about which Eric Ketelaar has written.³⁵ For as Terry Cook warns us, there is more to a record than its 'actual informational content'. One of the implications of postmodernist thinking about archives, he says, is that meaning is '*relative* to the context of the creation of the record' (his emphasis), and behind the text there are many other texts concealed.³⁶ My purpose in this article has been to expose some of these texts. The reader might think that all I have been doing is indulging in some simple storytelling, but still I think that more storytelling – and I do mean storytelling, not just case-studies – in archival discourse might refresh our thinking and help bridge the gap between theory and practice.³⁷ Alan Atkinson has reminded us of what Thomas Carlyle had to say about historical novels. They show that:

the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies and abstractions of men. Not abstractions were they, not diagrams and theorems; but men.³⁸

Any collecting archivist (or museum curator) knows what it is like to have to refuse an offer of material which is more valued by the people who own it than by the institution to whom it is offered. Most will have stories like mine and I am sure that they share them among themselves in informal contexts: in corridors, at the photocopier, in the carpark, in the tearoom. Archivists frequently tell each other that they must pay special attention to the social and cultural factors that surround the creation of archives, and that they must make their own assumptions, decisions and actions more transparent. And perhaps it is not that hard: we could start by just listening some more to our own stories.

Endnotes

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1 James M O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', *The American Archivist*, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 1993, pp. 234–55. Quote is on p. 237. See also by the same author: 'Back to the Future: Ernst Posner's *Archives in the Ancient World*', *The American Archivist*, vol. 67, no. 2, Fall/Winter 2004, pp. 161–75, especially p. 170–71; and 'Archives and Historical Accountability: Toward a Moral Theology of Archives', *Archivaria* vol. 58, Fall 2004, pp. 3–19.

2 Adrian Cunningham has also responded to O'Toole's article, drawing upon collections at the National Library of Australia. See: 'The Chamberlain and Mabo Papers: Case Studies of Personal Papers of National Symbolic Significance', Australian Society of Archivists Annual Conference, Alice Springs, May 1996, <<http://www.nla.gov.au/nla/staffpaper/acunning4.html>> (accessed 18 May 2005).

3 See Anne-Marie Condé, 'Capturing the Records of War: Collecting at the Mitchell Library and the Australian War Memorial', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 36, no. 125, April 2005, pp. 134–52.

4 Eric Ketelaar, 'Archivistics Research Saving the Profession', *The American Archivist*, vol. 63, no. 2, Fall/Winter 2000, p. 328.

5 Sue McKemmish, 'Evidence of Me ...', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 24, no. 1, May 1996, pp. 29–45.

6 John Treloar to WM Bennett, 6 August 1930, series AWM93, item 12/11/3900, Australian War Memorial.

7 Arthur Bazley to Treloar, 3 March 1927, and Treloar to Bazley, 14 March 1927, AWM93, 12/3/62 part 1.

8 Bazley to Treloar, 11 October 1926, AWM93, 12/3/62 part 1.

9 AWM93, 7/1/27; and also series AWM38, item 3DRL 6673/809, Australian War Memorial. The passage was especially translated for Bean by his literary advisor, Professor TG Tucker, from the University of Melbourne.

10 Mrs A Bennett to Treloar, 17 December 1930, and Treloar to Bennett, 24 December 1930, AWM93, 12/11/3900.

11 Gordon Miles Bennett, personal service record, series B2455, control symbol Bennett GM, National Archives of Australia.

12 Eric Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives: the Meanings of Archives', *Archival Science*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2001, pp. 131–41. Quote is on p. 132.

13 Alice Bournes to Australian War Memorial, no date, AWM93, 12/11/390.

14 Personal Records of Bombardier CCD Murray, 2DRL/0120, Australian War Memorial.

15 Eva Murray to Treloar, 26 September 1930, AWM93, 12/11/3320.

16 Francis Leslie to Treloar, 17 March 1930, AWM93, 12/11/3140.

17 Treloar to Tas Heyes, 25 November 1930, AWM93, 12/11/3140.

18 Treloar to Heyes, 9 February 1931, AWM93, 12/11/3140. A photograph of Francis Leslie, negative number H05587, was later received as part of a separate donation from an unknown source.

19 Treloar to Heyes, 12 August 1931, AWM93, 12/11/3140.

- 20 Personal records of Stuart Leslie: 2DRL/0435; and Francis Leslie: 2DRL/0434, Australian War Memorial.
- 21 Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1999, p. 61.
- 22 Newton Wanliss, *The History of the Fourteenth Battalion, A.I.F.: Being the Story of the Vicissitudes of an Australian Unit during the Great War*, Melbourne, The Arrow Printery, 1929.
- 23 Wanliss to Treloar, 25 March 1927, AWM 93, 12/11/14.
- 24 Wanliss to Treloar, 24 November 1931, AWM 93, 12/11/14.
- 25 *ibid.*
- 26 'Scrappy': Wanliss to Treloar 25 March 1927; 'fragmentary': Wanliss to Bazley 11 April 1940 and 29 May 1940; 'barest details': Wanliss to Treloar 27 May 1933, all on AWM93, 12/11/14.
- 27 Terry Cook, 'Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth?: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives', *Archivaria*, no. 51, Spring 2001, pp. 15–35, quote is on p. 27. Also on the archivist's role as mediator and memory builder, see especially Terry Cook, 'What is Past is Prologue: a History of Archival Ideas since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift', *Archivaria* no. 43, Spring 1997, pp. 17–63; Ketelaar, 'Archivistics Research', pp. 330–32; Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives', p. 136; and Robert McIntosh, 'The Great War, Archives and Modern Memory', *Archivaria*, no. 46, Fall 1998, pp. 1–31. In my own work on John Treloar, one of Australia's pioneering institutional collectors, I also hope to make a contribution to this discussion.
- 28 Wanliss to Bazley, 15 May 1940, AWM93, 12/11/14.
- 29 Wanliss to Bazley, 29 May 1940, AWM93, 12/11/14.
- 30 Copy on series AWM43, item A911, Wanliss HB, Australian War Memorial.
- 31 But it is possible that some of this material found its way into the Wanliss family papers at the State Library of Victoria.
- 32 Bazley to Wanliss, 31 May 1940, AWM93, 12/11/14.
- 33 Diary and letters of Harold Boyd Wanliss, 2DRL/1170, Australian War Memorial.
- 34 CEW Bean, *The Australian Imperial Force in France, 1917*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1939 (eighth edition), p. 828. Also DR Macdermid, 'Captain Harold Boyd Wanliss', *Reveille: the Official Journal of the Returned Sailors' & Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (NSW Branch)*, vol. 5, no. 8, 1 May 1932, pp. 7 & 26; and CEW Bean, 'Harold Boyd Wanliss', *The Link: Official Journal of Toc H (Australia)*, vol. 1, no. 9, 1 October 1926, p. 6.
- 35 *op.cit.*, Eric Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives', p. 132.
- 36 *op.cit.*, Cook, 'Fashionable Nonsense', p. 27.

37 For a recent discussion of the importance of storytelling within the humanities and social sciences, see: Tom Griffiths, 'Commentary', *Australian Book Review*, no. 268, February 2005, pp. 45–6. On archives, storytelling and historical imagination, see Penny Russell, 'Almost Believing: the Ethics of Historical Imagination', Stuart Macintyre (ed.), *The Historian's Conscience: Australian Historians on the Ethics of History*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004, pp. 106–17. On archivists as keepers of stories, see Julie Greaves and Sarah O'Neill, 'Preserving the Old School Tie', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 31, no. 1, May 2003, pp. 51–62.

38 Thomas Carlyle, 'Walter Scott', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. 4, Chapman & Hall, London, 1899, pp. 77–8. Quoted in: Alan Atkinson, 'Do Good Historians Have Feelings?', Stuart Macintyre (ed.), *The Historian's Conscience*, p. 26.