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# Editorial

## History in the Making Journal Collective:

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In early August 2014 many European nations commemorated the beginning of the Great War, the supposed war to end all wars, which claimed the lives of millions and whose consequences paved the way for a second, even more deadly conflict barely twenty years later. In Australia, some of these overseas events made the news, while at home, Albany (WA) held a ceremony for the centenary of the first Anzac departure from the commonwealth's shores. However, on the whole, it has been all quiet on the commemorative front. And so it remained until this month, when Australia's commemorations finally began in earnest. Come the dawn of Anzac Day, thousands will gather around memorials or on beaches to commemorate the sacrifice of the first Australians to land at Gallipoli as well as to celebrate the birth of a nation. Watching, perhaps even participating, and certainly analysing the unfolding rituals will be many historians.

Taken at face value, academic interest in Australia's First World War involvement and its enduring repercussions is unsurprising. After all, the Anzac legend has come to occupy an increasingly central position in contemporary popular and political discourse about Australian history. Nonetheless, this interest is a fairly recent phenomenon. During the interwar period, Australians wishing to learn more about their country's role in World War I beyond their own lived experience could really only turn to C.E.W Bean's *Official History*, a twelve-volume behemoth, published between 1921 and 1942. After World War II, nothing changed for another two decades. In the 1950s and 1960s, academic circles still snubbed Australian war history as a topic worthy of study. Around the same time, the pageantry and ritual of 25 April was suddenly struggling to attract widespread popular attention and, for a moment, Anzac appeared destined to become an obscure reference

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in Australia's past, forgotten by scholar and public alike. However, from the mid-1960s onwards, a combination of circumstances, including the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign, the opening of sealed archives, the Vietnam War and ensuing debates concerning conscription, saw World War I become a relevant, even pressing issue in Australian society again.

Leading the initial charge of academic interest was Ken Inglis, who was soon followed by many others, such as Lloyd Robson and Bill Gammage. Their pioneering work went beyond analysing the conflict's purely military aspects and considered the social and cultural implications of Australia's Great War involvement. These initial studies, which cover issues such as the Anzac tradition's roots, the 'civil' religious aspects of commemoration and the social history of the first Australian Imperial Force, have remained hugely influential. This influence is reflected in the central themes and debates that make up Australian Great War historiography today, which include: the Gallipoli campaign; Bean's role in the propagation of the Anzac legend; the validity of the Anzac legend's claims; conscription; bereavement and mourning; memorialisation and commemoration; and the dominant position of Anzac in contemporary Australian history. Nevertheless, as broad as this list appears, there are also significant gaps in Australian First World War studies. For example, the predominance of Gallipoli in the public's understanding of the war is reflected in the historiography, and there are few in depth analyses of other major campaigns in which the Anzacs fought. Australian war art and literature has also received relatively little attention, especially when considering the amount of scholarship available on British, French and German works. Recent publications suggest that historians are beginning to explore these areas and others, but so far the surface has only been scratched.

For those who find the First World War fascinating, confronting, intriguing, or perhaps a combination of these sentiments, it is an exciting if somewhat overwhelming time to undertake research in this domain. Approximately half a century ago, Ken Inglis looked back at Australia's Great War history and, apart from Bean's government sponsored magnum opus, he found very little. Five decades later and we can now turn to an increasingly rich historiography to inform and challenge our approaches to the study of an event popularly conceived as having given birth to the Australian nation. For the greater public, 2015 may be the centenary of the Anzac Landings, but for historians it also marks fifty years of independent Australian First World War scholarship.

Of the six articles published in this issue of *History in the Making*, four speak to this theme of war and memorialisation. Jackie Lobban unpacks the complex depictions of the Anzac legend in children's literature, in her article 'Homogenous Heroes, Selective Memory and Exclusive Myth: Representations of War and Military History in Modern Australian and New Zealand Children's Literature.' Emily Gallagher's 'The First Casualty When War Comes is Truth': Neglected Atrocity in First World War Australian Memory' examines representations of wartime atrocities during the First World War. Closer to home, Patrick White explores political and military discourses of post-war, home-front defence in his article, 'A Chain of Fortuitous Circumstances: The Sudden Rise of a Military Base in Townsville.' Meanwhile, as part of a wider examination of Australian memorialisation trends since the mid-nineteenth century, Elizabeth Morgan reflects on the impact of the First and Second World Wars on cemetery structures in her article, 'Waking Albury's Dead: An Investigation into How Tombstones and Epitaphs in the Cemetery at Albury, NSW, Reflect Grief and Memorial Trends.'

The remaining two articles published in this issue of *History in the Making* once again reflect the dynamic and disparate fields of academic history studied by Australian tertiary history students.

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The practice of convict flogging in early colonial Australia is the subject of Matthew Firth's 'Reformation or Rebellion: Convict Discipline and The Lash, 1788-1838, while in 'History and the Subliminal: Uncovering Ideology in Historical Films,' Melissa Laughton presents a nuanced investigation of the ways by which history is portrayed on film.

With a strong focus on Australian history and a rigorous engagement with both archival material and historiography, each of the six articles published in Vol. 4 No. 1 of *History in the Making* is indicative of a vibrant intellectual culture in history departments across Australia. We hope they inspire you as much as they have inspired us.

*Guest editorial by Matt Haultain-Gall*

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Article Abstracts

### **Reformation or Rebellion: Convict Discipline and the Lash, 1788 – 1838**

Matthew Firth

*Masters, University of New England*

Early European settlers in Australia needed to become self-sufficient to establish viable colonies thousands of miles from Britain, requiring a disciplined, productive workforce. With workers drawn entirely from a convict population, the colonial administration faced considerable challenges in extracting profitable labour. This article explores the role that flogging played in enforcing work-discipline, with particular attention to the relationship between the lash, alternative disciplinary punishments and labour incentives. Focusing on the evolution of labour incentives between 1788 and 1838, the article uses governmental reports and eyewitness accounts of discipline in the colonies to identify the changing policies of the colonial government toward flogging. In doing so, it seeks to analyse the balance between discipline and inducement the colonial authorities were required to strike under the influence of British penal philosophy and the immediate labour requirements of the colonies.

### **History and the Subliminal: Uncovering Ideology in Historical Films**

Melissa Laughton

*Masters, University of New England*

Historical film is an increasingly popular form of entertainment and education in the twenty-first century. However historians have raised concerns about the distortion of historical fact in film for the sake of entertainment. This paper explores this concern through analysis of three significant films produced over a period of fifty years. Casablanca, Breaker Morant and Pocahontas are films that claim to retell historical events. Analysis of the films suggests that underlying ideologies are hidden within engaging visual representations of events and people, either untrue or altered. This analysis adds to the discussion about the implications of the increasing popularity of film as a method for learning history. It suggests critical discernment on the part of historical film audiences is required, to ensure the subliminal ideologies are uncovered by an aware general public. Critical engagement should ensure history is not forever altered by a film script.

## **Special theme: World War I, War and Memorialisation**

### **Waking Albury's Dead: An Investigation into How Tombstones and Epitaphs in the Cemeteries at Albury, NSW, Reflect Grief and Memorial Trends**

Elizabeth Morgan

*Second Year Undergraduate, University of New England*

This article examines the cemeteries at Albury, New South Wales, in order to track changes in Australian memorialisation traditions since the mid-nineteenth century. The Victorian 'cult of mourning,' arising from Georgian traditions and modified to particularly Australian habits in the colony, emphasised public displays of grief. The dual processes of secularisation and World War I brought an end to public grief and, following World War II, death became taboo, as medicine

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and bureaucracy moved death out of its traditional place in the home, into cemeteries styled as landscaped gardens. The work of psychiatrists in promoting the acceptance of grief in the late twentieth century has allowed the public celebration and memorialisation of the dead to become culturally appropriate again. Rather than grand Victorian funerals, however, this memorialisation takes the form of more individual and customised gravestones, 'In Memoriam' notices in newspapers and, in the case of those cremated whose remains are scattered rather than interred, no permanent memorial at all.

### **Homogenous Heroes, Selective Memory & Exclusive Myth: Representations of War and Military History in Modern Australian and New Zealand Children's Literature**

Jackie Lobban

*Third Year Undergraduate, University of New England*

Children's literature is a key means by which societies, cultures and nations indoctrinate the next generation with their values, beliefs and collective memory. Since the late twentieth century, war has been a recurrent theme within Australian and New Zealand children's literature. However, in attempting to convey the experience of war to younger generations, these texts have helped to depict and perpetuate certain perspectives of war and military history. This article examines how modern Australian and New Zealand children's literature has perpetuated (and, in some cases, challenged) notions such as the ANZAC legend, gender roles, representations of 'the enemy' and the glorification of war and militarism. Images and text are presented as being integral to the formation of historical understanding and to national memory. The article aims to illustrate the centrality of children's literature to national memory and to the avoidance of historical amnesia. It concludes that, while there has been a shift towards transnational and inclusive historiography, much of children's literature remains in the grip of the 'cult of ANZAC,' with prejudices, silences and misrepresentations permeating this literary space.

### **'The First Casualty When War Comes is Truth': Neglected Atrocity in First World War Australian Memory**

Emily Gallagher

*Fourth Year Undergraduate, University of Notre Dame*

The construction and glorification of the ANZAC legend in Australia has resulted in a patriotic identity that romanticises war and dissociates its brutal reality. Exploring the extent of these romantic influences, this article examines how terror and atrocity have been neglected in World War I (WWI) history, and reflects on recent academic critiques of the ANZAC myth. An examination of the nature and use of chemical warfare in WWI and historiographical analysis of Australian scholarship on the war form the foundation of case evidence. Complementing this analysis, the concept of 'joyful slaughter' is discussed as a lens through which the truth of war can be exposed.

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**'A Chain of Fortuitous Circumstances': The Sudden Rise of a Military Base in Townsville**

Patrick White

*Postgraduate, James Cook University*

This article demonstrates how Australia's defence planning and foreign policy perspectives became linked to the civilian development of northern Australia during the 1960s. It discusses the role of the politics of northern development in establishing Lavarack Barracks in Townsville. It investigates the events associated with the planning, development and opening of Lavarack Barracks during its formative years between 1964 and 1966. To provide a better platform for understanding and analysing these events and their consequences, this research centres on the factors motivating the Federal Government's decision to expand the Army's resources and the decision to locate the base in Townsville.

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