# A working man's hell: working class men's experiences with work in the Australian imperial force during the Great War

**Author:**
Wise, Nathan

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# A Working Man's Hell:

# Working class men's experiences with work in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War.

by

Nathan Wise

School of History and Philosophy

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

University of New South Wales

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Historical analyses of soldiers in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) during the Great War have focused overwhelming on combat experiences and the environment of the trenches. By contrast, little consideration has been made of the non-combat experiences of these individuals, or of the time they spent behind the front lines. Far from military experiences revolving around combat and trench warfare, the letters, diaries, and memoirs of working class men suggest that daily life for the rank and file actually revolved around work, and in particular manual labour. Through a focus on working class men's experiences in the AIF during the Great War, this dissertation seeks to discover more about these experiences with work in an attempt to understand the broader aspects of life in the military.

In this environment of daily work, many working class men also came to approach military service as a job of work, and they carried over the mentalities of the civilian workplace into their daily life in the military. This dissertation thus seeks to understand how workplace cultures were transferred from civilian workplaces into the military. It explores working class men's approaches towards daily work in two different theatres of war, Gallipoli and the Western Front, in order to highlight the significance of work within military life. Furthermore, it evaluates aspects of this workplace culture, such as relations with employers, the use of workplace skills, and the implementation of industrial relations methods, to understand the continuities between the lives of civilians and soldiers. Finally, this dissertation is not a military history: it adopts a *culturalist* approach towards the lives of people in the AIF, and in the environment of the Great War, in an effort to place the military experiences of these working class men within the context of their broader civilian lives.


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**Abstract**

Historical analyses of soldiers in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) during the Great War have focused overwhelming on combat experiences and the environment of the trenches. By contrast, little consideration has been made of the non-combat experiences of these individuals, or of the time they spent behind the front lines. Far from military experiences revolving around combat and trench warfare, the letters, diaries, and memoirs of working class men suggest that daily life for the rank and file actually revolved around work, and in particular manual labour. Through a focus on working class men's experiences in the AIF during the Great War, this dissertation seeks to discover more about these experiences with work in an attempt to understand the broader aspects of life in the military.

In this environment of daily work, many working class men also came to approach military service as a job of work, and they carried over the mentalities of the civilian workplace into their daily life in the military. This dissertation thus seeks to understand how workplace cultures were transferred from civilian workplaces into the military. It explores working class men's approaches towards daily work in two different theatres of war, Gallipoli and the Western Front, in order to highlight the significance of work within military life. Furthermore, it evaluates aspects of this workplace culture, such as relations with employers, the use of workplace skills, and the implementation of industrial relations methods, to understand the continuities between the lives of civilians and soldiers. Finally, this dissertation is not a military history: it adopts a *culturalist* approach towards the lives of people in the AIF, and in the environment of the Great War, in an effort to place the military experiences of these working class men within the context of their broader civilian lives.

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present my findings at the annual Labour History Conference through a postgraduate scholarship, and to all people associated with these organisations I am very grateful.

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**List of Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2/Lt | Second Lieutenant |
| AAMC | Australian Army Medical Corps |
| AGH | Australian General Hospital |
| AIF | Australian Imperial Force |
| ANZAC | Australia and New Zealand Army Corps |
| ASC | Army Service Corps |
| AWM | Australian War Memorial |
| Bde | Brigade |
| Bn or Btn | Battalion |
| Bty or Btty | Battery |
| Capt or Cpt | Captain |
| CB | Confined to barracks |
| CO | Commanding Officer |
| Coy | Company |
| Div | Division |
| Dvr | Driver |
| FAB | Field Artillery Brigade |
| Gnr | Gunner |
| GOC | General Officer Commanding |
| HMAS | His Majesty's Australian Ship |
| HMAT | His Majesty's Axillary Transport |
| HQ or HQRS | Headquarters |
| L-Cpl | Lance Corporal |
| Lt | Lieutenant |

| | |
|---|---|
| ML | Mitchell Library |
| NAA | National Archives of Australia |
| NCO | Non-commissioned officer |
| OC | Officer Commanding |
| Pte | Private |
| QMS | Quartermaster Sergeant |
| Reg | Regiment |
| RFA | Royal Field Artillery |
| RHA | Royal Horse Artillery |
| RMS | Royal Mail Ship |
| Sgt | Sergeant |
| SLVIC | State Library of Victoria |
| SM | Sergeant-Major |
| Spr | Sapper |

## List of Illustrations and Tables

## A note on style

The focus of this dissertation is upon recreating the thoughts and experiences of working class men in the military through an examination of their letters, diaries, and memoirs. The environment in which these were written was not always comfortable, the material used to write with rarely the preferred option, and the time available to write often limited. As such, the process of writing these letters and diaries led to a large number of errors: capital letters are misused, full stops and commas often completely omitted, and words frequently misspelled. In some diaries, sentences give way to short one or two word summaries of daily life. To retain the feel of the material, and to maintain strong links with the thoughts of the diary and letter writers, the author has kept these mistakes as they appear in the original source. In addition, because of the frequency of these mistakes in some sources, sic has not been used to denote that they were 'as written', as such use would flood many entries and reduce the significance of the extract. Given the omission of sic, the author has made all attempts to keep the extracts provided as accurate as possible, spelling mistakes, missing or misplaced letters, and the lack of punctuation have been checked and re-checked with the original source to ensure they all appear 'as written'. Ultimately keeping the material in this way provides the reader with greater insight into the mindset of Australian soldiers of the Great War. These men were not always given the time or space to think carefully about what to write down, and thus the extracts appear as close as possible to the way they were recorded.

## CONTENTS

## Chapter One: Introduction and Historiography

### A job of work.

On 3 August 1918 John Bruce, a private with the 3rd Field Artillery Brigade of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), penned the following entry within his diary, 'Same old dope. Dodging work. Pritchard + I were kicking around the cookhouse all day. Peeling spuds etc'.[1] Several days later the five Australian divisions, working together for the first time in the Great War, broke the back of the German army in what has been described as the 'black day' of the German army.[2] Thomas Richardson, a sergeant with the 6th Field Artillery Brigade of the Australian Imperial Force, wrote within his diary on this day, 'Got barrage sheets 4.00 a.m. Opened up three rounds…per minute 4.20 a.m. Got knocked 5.00 a.m.'[3] The disparity between the comments of Bruce and Richardson have never been reconciled by the Australian historical literature on the Great War. Bruce describes the mundane work of 'peeling spuds', and attempts to evade this work, whilst Richardson describes his vital participation in providing artillery support for the infantry and receiving a wound from a shell fragment.[4] Richardson's diary has since been published as *An Anzac's War Diary*; Bruce's diary, with his regular criticism of officers and complaints about work, has never been published.

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[1] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, Australian War Memorial (hereafter AWM) PR87/115, diary entry dated 3/8/18.
[2] B. Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian soldiers in the Great War*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1987, p. 218.
[3] Thomas William Victor Richardson, No. 9022, Salesman, Parkside, in A. D. Bell, *An Anzac's War Diary: The Story of Sergeant Richardson*, Rigby, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, 1981, diary entry dated 8/8/18 p. 80.
[4] The nature of his wound was explained in later entries. See Thomas William Victor Richardson, No. 9022, Salesman, Parkside, in Bell, *An Anzac's War Diary*, diary entry dated 10/8/18, p. 80.

The reason for this disparity is simple, Australian historians have largely treated the years 1914 to 1918 in the lives of people who enlisted as a world apart. It is a world of war, of violence and murder, of wanton destruction and endless fighting. Furthermore, it is a world that few have wanted to link with the relative peace of civil society. The study of work, and of workplace cultures, has traditionally been placed within the context of civil society; by contrast, the study of combat has traditionally been placed within the context of the military, and during wars. Only recently have international historians such as Janet Watson and Peter Way begun to reconcile the divergent approaches and identify how workplace cultures and attitudes towards work were carried over from civil society into the destructive world of the military.[5] This dissertation follows on from their investigations with an examination of the workplace cultures of working class men who served in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War.

The clear advantage of examining the broader lives of working class men in this environment is that it provides insight into how they lived their day-to-day lives.[6] It allows us to broaden our understandings of what 'military service' entailed as well as presenting a wider environment for understanding the culture that developed amongst men in the AIF. Of particular importance in this approach is determining the extent to which men carried their workplace cultures, their approaches to daily life, and their attitudes and behaviour, from their civil lives into the military.

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[5] J. S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, P. Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War', *Labor History*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 2003, pp. 455-481 and P. Way, 'Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol. 57, No. 4, October 2000, pp. 761-792.

[6] That is, without the focus being entirely upon the trenches.

This dissertation focuses upon just one aspect of this transformation - the change in attitudes towards work. It explores how men came to approach and to understand their military service as a job of work, and how this understanding was conveyed and clarified through their writing. J. G. Fuller argues that British and Dominion troops 'carried over from civilian life many institutions and attitudes which helped them to adjust to, and to humanise, the new world in which they found themselves'.[7] Adopting attitudes towards military service as work was one of the ways in which working class men in the AIF attempted to achieve this.

This approach may have been a way of understanding the world that soldiers found themselves in. So accustomed to having their lives revolving around work, they thought of their lives in the military as also centring around some type of 'work', this being the job of soldiering. In civil society people were not provided with the mental tools to explain daily life amidst the slaughter of a battlefield, the sight of shattered and decaying bodies, and the stench of the unburied. They were not taught how to explain 'what they did' in this environment, nor what part 'they' played in it. No amount of education or training could prepare people for the pure otherworldliness of the Great War. There were no lectures on 'how to react' to a dead body, 'how to feel' when one loses a mate, or 'what to think' when one kills another human being. These people were left to their own thoughts and they were instinctively those of their pre-war lives.

To understand why soldiers came to explain their military service as a job of work historians also need to understand more about the environment they were in. How exactly did the nature of this service come to be understood and explained

[7] J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 175. For a similar exploration see Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*.

through the language of work? How did the structure of the military come to reflect, through soldier's eyes, the structure of their pre-war working lives? In civil society most people spent more time in doing work than they did in any other single activity.[8] It occupied the majority of their waking hours and came to form a large part of the way people approached life, understood the world they lived in, and identified with others.[9] As the following chapters will explore, for soldiers in particular, their work within the military encompassed almost every aspect of their daily life.

The military fed, clothed, equipped, sheltered and guided soldiers through their daily life. They were always required to wear their working uniform, they were always required to be under the authority of their superiors, and they could at any moment, at any hour of any day, be called upon to perform a range of work. Their officers predetermined where they would march to, where they would sleep, and whom they would sleep alongside. Their entire life was spent in this environment of work. This service time ultimately formed an integral part of their self-identity and critically shaped the way they approached life both during their service time and for the remainder of their lives afterwards. Graham Seal argues,

> Just as [Alistair] Thomson's diggers preserved their sense of self by adjusting their memories of the war with their subsequent experiences of peace, so the group of which they were a part created its sense of self by adjusting the

[8] C. Fox and M. Lake, *Australians at Work: commentaries and sources*, McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, 1990, p. 1.
[9] C. Fox, *Working Australia*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1991, p. *xi* and Fox and Lake, *Australians at Work*, p. 1.

> cultural baggage brought with them from civilian life against the experiences of the war.[10]

Australian historians have at times touched upon an awareness of the soldier as a worker. Graham Seal briefly observed in *Inventing Anzac* that the Australian soldier,

> is a temporary bearer of arms and uneasy wearer of uniforms. He is "an ordinary bloke" doing a job of work for a reasonable day's pay. That this work was in the interests of the Empire to which Australia belonged was a commonplace of the time.[11]

L. L. Robson and J. N. I. Dawes have further acknowledged that enlistment in the AIF was another way in which men could economically support their families,[12] whilst Bill Gammage also noted that new recruits in the AIF 'considered the army a job which should be regulated by the conventions attached to any employer-employee relationship. Out of working hours their time was their own, and men cheerfully left their training camps after work to go home or to town, reporting for work the next day as a matter of course'.[13] However, these observations were only made in passing. There have been no detailed examinations of Australian working class men being

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[10] G. Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 2004, p. 24.
[11] Seal, *Inventing Anzac*, p. 3.
[12] J. N. I. Dawes, and L. L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier: Australia before the Great War. Recollections of Members of the First AIF*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1977, p. 14.
[13] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 31.

motivated by the potential for employment, nor of how the high rates of pay amongst Australian privates lured men away from civilian employment into a paid adventure.

The importance of investigating soldiers' approach to military service as a job of work has been identified by a number of international historians. Peter Way has provided an ideal example with his research on the Seven Years' War in North America.[14] Way argues that common soldiers were firstly common workers who viewed their service in the military as a job of work, 'In return for this work, these men received a wage, the illusion of a craft offered by the uniform and a special code of behaviour'.[15] Similarly Janet Watson identified soldier's approaches towards military service as a job of work in her study of the British men and women who served during the Great War. Watson argued that 'Some members of the population, both male and female, while generally articulating a clear patriotism, saw their efforts on behalf of the war as work'.[16] Understanding how soldiers approached their service time, and importantly, why they approached this as such, provides further comprehension of their experiences in the military and the significance of this experience in their greater lives.

Within the international literature on the Great War, Eric Leed also provides a brief, but vital, appraisal of war service as a job of work for soldiers.[17] Leed argues that 'The realization that war was work and that the comradeship of soldiers was little different than common subjection to the necessity of labor was the essence of the disillusionment of the volunteer'.[18] Yet in spite of the attention that has been given to

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[14] See for example Way, 'Rebellion of the Regulars' and Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War'.
[15] Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War', p. 455.
[16] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 5.
[17] E. J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, p. 95.
[18] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 90.

the history of the Great War, for all the recognition the AIF has received as being entirely a volunteer force, for the observations of these historians that war was seen by soldiers as work, and for the legendary status given to the Australian soldier for being 'a civilian in arms', no historian has yet provided a detailed and systematic evaluation of the approach by Australian soldiers towards their service in the Australian Imperial Force as a job of work.

Australian soldiers identified trench warfare as the 'real work' of war and the 'real job' of the soldier.[19] Australian historians have also identified this belief among soldiers, and it is evident in the overwhelming focus on the 'combat experience' within histories of the Great War. The result of this focus, as will be explored in greater detail in chapter four, has been the absence of any considerable study of the non-combat experiences of Australian men. This focus also assists in understanding why the workplace cultures of the AIF have been almost completely overlooked. By contrast with this traditional focus, this dissertation instead seeks to provide a hitherto missing sense of continuity in the lives of working class men, and to link together the world of war with the world of peace.[20] In J. G Fuller's analysis of the continuity of lives from civil society to military society he concluded,

> The fact that there was a large decree of continuity in enthusiasms and attitudes from civilian to military life is significant not only in its effects but also in what it says about the nature of the war experience. It suggests that for many men the war was not quite the chasm, cutting across individual and

[19] N. Wise, 'Playing Soldiers: Sydney private school boys and the First World War', BA Hons thesis, University of Wollongong, 2003, p.59.
[20] N. Wise, 'The Lost Labour Force: Working class approaches towards military service during the Great War', due for publication in *Labour History*, no. 93, November 2007.

> collective experiences and sundering past from future, that it is sometimes depicted.[21]

This continuity is rarely considered within an Australian context.[22] In order to rectify this gap, this dissertation focuses primarily upon the *non-combat* experiences with work. Certainly whilst Australian soldiers did identify combat as work, this aspect of their experiences has already been extensively covered in the existing literature, and the inclusion of combat experience into this dissertation would only overwhelm any consideration of non-combat experiences.

**Representing the underrepresented.**

This dissertation is not a military history, rather, it attempts to fill gaps in the literature of a number of fields of historical enquiry within Australia. It certainly relies in part upon military history as a background - to understand the environment that people were in, what they went through, and how they survived. It also relies in part upon the work of social and cultural historians - to understand the environment that people came from, how they lived life before the war, and how this shaped their lives. As a history of the working class, it also relies upon the approaches to the past by Australian and international labour historians. And finally, in its attempt to reach a greater understanding of the attitudes of people in the past, it has been influenced by

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[21] J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 154.

[22] Several international historians have done so. See P. Parker, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public-School Ethos*, St. Edmundsbury Press, London, 1987, Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, and Leed, *No Man's Land*.

the approach to history of the French *Annales* historians.[23] This is not so much an attempt to claim the recreation of the *mentalities* of the past,[24] but rather to better understand how people's attitudes towards work were represented in their writings and how this changed during a traumatic period of Australian history.

Labour historians around the world have been hesitant to focus too greatly upon this traumatic period. Many feel 'let down' by a working class that surrendered their 'class loyalty' to a greater 'national loyalty';[25] others simply have a distaste for examining war in general.[26] In Europe, the international socialist (and anti-war) movements that had blamed the ruling class for advocating war in the 1900s and early 1910s turned on each other when war was declared. Their supposed 'union for a common "international" cause' disappeared amidst an environment heavy with international hatred.[27] Within Australia, national and imperial identities and interests came first; class identity and interest came second. The result has been the absence of many extensive studies of the AIF within the field of labour history in Australia.[28]

Instead of considering the nature of this national interest amongst the working class as a motivating factor in their enlistment, historians have instead focused more

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[23] That is, those historians associated with the French academic journal *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*.

[24] See for example, P. H. Hutton, 'The History of Mentalities: The New Map of Cultural History', *History and Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 3, October 1981, pp. 237-259, A. Green and K. Troup (eds.), *The Houses of History*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, or S. Clark (ed.), *The Annales School: Critical Assessments, Volume 1: Histories and Overviews*, Routledge, London, 1999, in particular 'Part Four: The History of Mentalities', pp. 381-490.

[25] D. J. Silbey, 'Their Graves Like Beds: The British Working Class And Enthusiasm For War, 1914-1916', PhD Thesis, Duke University, 1999, p. 40.

[26] Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War', p. 457.

[27] M. Ferro, *The Great War 1914-1918*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982 [Originally published in French as *La Grande Guerre*, 1969], translated by Nicole Stone, p. 38.

[28] Bruce Scates has provided a review essay on the work of several labour historians who have addressed the impact of the Great War on the home front in Australia. See B. Scates, 'The Price of War: Labour Historians Confront Military History', *Labour History*, No. 84, May 2003.

upon the home front, worker's resistance within Australia, those who chose to resist war service, those who fought against conscription, and those who protested against the war.[29] This certainly reveals a history of workers that one can admire for their courage in resisting social pressures and forging their own paths in life. But in the focus on such issues the hundreds of thousands of working class men who did not 'resist', and who decided to fight in the war have been passed by. These men also had their own agency. They made an active and important decision to enlist and to shape their lives in a different way by taking a considerable risk.

There is clearly a balance that needs to be made in this area of labour history between social causation and working class agency. It cannot simply be assumed that the social pressures of Australian society during the 1910s were complete and irresistible in shaping, guiding and determining the lives of people.[30] Working class agency needs to be considered, and in the case of the Great War this is far overdue. The balance needs to be restored first in understanding the social pressures that were upon these people, and secondly, in understanding the active decisions that they made to change their lives.

Historians have often found it difficult to confront the nature of this patriotism that flowed throughout society, its mix of loyalty to empire and nation, and the

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[29] Some notable examples within Australia are, F. Cain, *The wobblies at war: a history of the IWW and the Great War in Australia*, Spectrum Publications, Melbourne, 1993, K. J. Kenafick, *The Australian Labour Movement In Relation To War, Socialism, And Internationalism, Book I: Labour, Militarism, And War Up To 1914*, K. J. Kenafick (self-published), Melbourne, 1959, pp. *v-vi*, R. Evans, *Loyalty and disloyalty: social conflict on the Queensland homefront, 1914-1918*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987, and B. Oliver, *Peacemongers: conscientious objectors to military service in Australia, 1911-1945*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 1997, see in particular chapter two, '"The Minotaur Maw of War": World War I', pp. 29-50.

[30] Miguel Cabrera argues that in any situation, consideration of social pressures and individual agency must be considered, see M. A. Cabrera 'On Language, Culture and Social Action', *History and Theory, Theme Issue*, Vol. 40, No. 4, December 2001, p. 84.

uncertainty that lay beneath this mix in the first three decades after the Federation of Australia. Within England, many questioned what the war had to do with English workers; Britain was never directly threatened, they barely received mention in the 'peace negotiations' of July 1914,[31] the working class areas of England were under no risk of enemy occupation, and the people whom they were asked to defend spoke French or Flemish and lived in places unpronounceable to the average Briton.[32] Twelve thousand miles away Australians were even further removed from the primary causes of the Great War, yet, given the voluntary nature of the AIF, they still enlisted in numbers relatively proportionate to those of the European conscript armies of Britain and France.

In order to understand the different motivations for enlistment for different groups of people, historians need to reanalyse the argument of the official war historian, Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean, and reconsider the pre-war background of the men of the AIF. Beyond every individual lay a class, political, religious, residential, and family background that, in a myriad of ways, shaped an individual's reasons for enlisting. As Gammage emphasised of his one thousand letter and diary writers, there were 'a thousand particular and personal reasons for enlistment'.[33] Contrary to Bean's legend, these men were not all crafted in the image of the bushman.[34]

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[31] Ferro, *The Great War*, p. 40.
[32] Silbey, 'Their Graves Like Beds', pp. 2-3.
[33] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 10.
[34] For more on Bean's bush legend see D. McCarthy, *Gallipoli to the Somme: the story of C.E.W. Bean*, John Ferguson, Sydney, 1983, D. Winter (ed.), *Making the legend: the war writings of C.E.W. Bean*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1992, K. Inglis, *C.E.W. Bean, Australian historian*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1970, R. Glenister, *C.E.W. Bean, colonial historian: the writing of the history of the AIF in France during World War I*, Mitchell C. A. E., Bathurst, 1983, and A. Thomson, *Anzac Memories: living with the legend*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994.

Contrary to the Anzac myth and Bean's assertion that the AIF made all men equal, Dale Blair has questioned 'Do we really expect that Australian soldiers drawn from different age-groups, from different work-places and social environments, religious denominations and national backgrounds would respond to their collective experience in exactly the same manner?'[35] People thought, behaved, spoke and wrote differently in Australia. They likewise thought, behaved, spoke and wrote with similar differences in the AIF. J. N. I Dawes and L. L. Robson further assert that 'Most of the 416000 men who enlisted in the AIF had their attitudes shaped during the first decade of Australian federation'.[36] It is important to note that these attitudes were shaped differently because of the diverse social backgrounds of individuals.

In addressing these issues of difference this dissertation employs the argument of Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob that cultural experiences shape expectations of events, and these expectations heavily influence reactions to and experiences of these events.[37] An individual enlisting for King and Country and expecting a difficult time may have been willing to endure the hardships of the military life more than an individual enlisting for a job and expecting to be treated well by their employers. Thus in attempting to understand the experiences of members of the AIF it is important to remember that these men did not form a homogenous group; the AIF was made up of people from vastly different social and cultural backgrounds who recorded differing experiences within the military.

The AIF was also not a 'classless' force, as Bean would have liked them to be remembered. Bean argued early in the first volume of *The Official History of*

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[35] D. Blair, *Dinkum Diggers: An Australian Battalion at War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 2001, p. 3.
[36] Dawes and Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, p. 2.
[37] J. Appleby, L. Hunt, and M. Jacob, *Telling the truth about history*, W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 1994, pp. 217-220. This argument has also been central to other works; see for example Parker, *The Old Lie* and Wise, 'Playing Soldiers'.

*Australia in the War of 1914-1918* (hereafter *Official history*) that 'the wealthy, the educated, the rough and the case-hardened, poor Australians, rich Australians, went into the ranks together unconscious of any distinction'.[38] Yet shortly afterwards he notes that upon enlistment some of the rank and file were initially conscious of what Bean called the '"officer" class' because differences existed between the two.[39] Distinctions were made in civil society. Putting on a uniform did not immediately remove the pre-war mentalities of men. It is unreasonable to expect that a lifetime of memories and attitudes could be wiped clean in an instant. As in civil society, some people held the power of authority over others. This power became the basis of inter-rank relationships and military law clearly dictated how one rank should behave towards another rank.

Blair also questions those who propagate the Anzac myth and further supports a re-evaluation of Australian historiography of the Great War. He argues with regards to the myth that,

> Its perpetuation deflects attention from the sometimes horrific realities of individuals' variegated experiences, and thereby limits our understanding of Australian experiences in the First World War. It implies a uniformity of experiences and responses by Australian soldiers. All assume the same identity in the khaki of the Australian Imperial Force…As individuals we are

[38] C. E. W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918* (hereafter *Official history*), *Volume I: The Story of Anzac, From the Outbreak of War to the End of the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941 [first published 1921], p. 45.
[39] Bean, *Official history: Vol.I*, p. 48.

> all innately different and our perceptions are shaped by biases and prejudices that dictate our responses at any given time or place.[40]

Historians have examined the differences that class, religion, geography, wealth, and experience made to people in civil society, yet by comparison historians have been hesitant in taking up these same issues in their studies of the military.

Bean was the first to consider the importance of pre-war socialisation on experiences of war with his argument that the bush 'made' the Australian soldiers the 'great men' they have been remembered as.[41] This rather deterministic and overgeneralised argument has failed to sit well with contemporary historians. In an appendix to his *The Broken Years*, Gammage chose to refer instead to Ernest Scott's breakdown of the AIF into occupational groupings in Volume XI of the *Official history*.[42]

However, little extensive research on the pre-war lives of the members of the AIF was made until the late 1970s. In 1977 J. N. I. Dawes and L. L. Robson followed on from Gammage's cultural history approach to Australians in the military and further dispelled Bean's assertions by exploring the pre-war lives of Australian soldiers and their motivations for enlistment in *Citizen to Soldier*.[43] Several years later in 1982 Suzanne Welborn published *Lords of Death* and argued that the unique Western Australian environment resulted in the men from this state having a different

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[40] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 3.
[41] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, pp. 4-5.
[42] E. Scott, *Official history: Volume XI – Australia During The War*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941, Appendix 6, p. 874, Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Appendix 1, p. 310. Gammage also noted the religious and residential backgrounds of the individuals he examined.
[43] Dawes and Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*.

experience of war compared to soldiers from other states.[44] Then in 1986 Richard White took this line of argument further with a detailed examination of two case studies to further emphasise the importance of social background.[45] White compared a middle-class volunteer with an English immigrant cabinet-maker and argued that a comprehension of an individual's social class and socialisation is integral in understanding their motives for enlistment. The former recruit revealed notions of duty to King and Country and a sense of adventure as his motivations for enlistment. The latter revealed a sense of social compulsion, a feeling of homesickness, and, through his lack of civil work, a need for economic support.

The importance of understanding soldiers' pre-war backgrounds has also led to a run of studies in recent years considering the impact of social class and national heritage. In 2003 'Playing Soldiers' explored the educational background of middle class private school boys in order to understand their experiences during the Great War.[46] The importance of this pre-war background was also the focus of John F. William's *German Anzacs and the First World War* and Elena Govor's *Russian Anzacs in Australian History*.[47] Both William's and Govor considered the experience of a select group of men in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War, but governing their foci upon these men was their German-Australian and Russian-

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[44] This was later re-published as *Bush Heroes*. See S. Welborn, *Bush Heroes: a people, a place, a legend*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2002. Welborn argues that the outlook of Western Australian men towards the war was shaped by their pre-war lives; they likened whistling bullets with the singing of birds, and the crackling of gunfire with a raging bushfire. Similarly the deserts of Egypt and the coasts of Gallipoli were likened with the environment of Western Australia, whilst for some soldiers shooting the Turkish on Gallipoli reminded them of shooting kangaroos at home. See for example p. 84.

[45] R. White, 'Motives for joining up: self-sacrifice, self-interest and social class, 1914-1918', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No. 9, 1986.

[46] Wise, 'Playing Soldiers'.

[47] J. F. Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2003 and Elena Viktorovna Govor, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005).

Australian cultural background. These men had motivations for enlistment that were different to those of others, they may have wanted to prove themselves as 'loyal Australians' and to show that they were as Australian (or British) as a Scottish, Irish, or English immigrant.[48] Further to this, their background also led them to have a different experience of war, they again may have had to prove that they really were 'in the fight', and that, as German-Australians and Russian-Australians, they were intent on fighting, and killing, just like the other soldiers in the AIF.[49]

Although studies of war and memory generally focus upon the post-war period,[50] it is important also to note that personal memories also affected the way an individual approached their military service during the war. Thus, whilst in the post-war years men struggled to reconcile their memories of military service with the peace of civil society, during the war years these same men struggled to reconcile their memories of pre-war work with the uncertainty of war. Memories of pre-war civilian life affected individual approaches towards military service.

Alistair Thomson has made a significant contribution to the study of memory in Australia in *Anzac Memories*. Thomson highlights social background as a significant factor in the differing experiences of war of the men he examined. He approaches this subject through oral testimonies to understand how Great War veterans situated their service time amongst their lives as a whole. The men whose stories Thomson tells in *Anzac Memories* reveal that their methods of dealing with

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[48] See for example Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War*, pp. 8-9.
[49] Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War*, pp103-106.
[50] See for example, B. Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, and J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

this memory of war, and of adjusting to life in the post-war environment of a civil society, varied depending on the cultural background of the individual.[51]

Thomson asserts that 'Remembering is one of the vital ways in which we identify what we think we have been, who we think we are now and what we want to become'.[52] This way of remembering influences the way we behave and the way we relate to others. During the war men remembered their pre-war lives and wrote about this in diaries and letters; after the war, they remembered both their pre-war and wartime lives and this had a large influence on their outlook on life. This post-war memory and its conflict with the Anzac legend forced men to readjust their understandings of their life. So too, during the war, their memories of pre-war lives, and the horrors they were facing, forced them to rethink their situation and to place their experience within a context that they would find more rational.

This remembering and rationalising of the world is an ongoing process. Anders Schinkel has argued that our remembering of the past is not so much different from our remembering of the present, 'In both cases a selection is made, which means that some elements in our perception will feature more prominently, and others will remain hidden in the background'.[53] In Thomson's case studies, the use of spoken language, the words used, and specifically what was remembered, was partly a conscious choice, and partly influenced by pre-war cultural background. Beyond this, how Thomson's interviewees behaved and what their attitudes were, were all

[51] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, see in particular see chapter three ' Memories of war', pp. 73-102.
[52] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp. 9-10.
[53] A. Schinkel, 'History and Historiography in Process', *History and Theory*, No. 43, February 2004, pp. 39-40.

significantly shaped by what they remembered, and the manner in which they dealt with these memories.[54]

Within the context of this dissertation, the impact of working class men's shared memory of work will be explored within the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. More importantly, it will be seen how the working culture derived from this 'collective memory' shaped this specific cohort of men's experiences of war.[55] These collective memories of work form a critical part of working class men's socialisation process through which they developed what Appleby, Hunt and Jacob refer to as a 'mental universe'.[56] In Dale Blair's analysis of the 1st battalion of the AIF he argues that these pre-war understandings and socialisation, this 'mental universe', heavily influenced the initial attitudes of people within the unit.[57] Whilst the structure of the military attempted to rigidly establish the relationship between officers and their men, the individual pre-war ideals of what egalitarianism and independence of spirit entailed came to be expressed in a sense of 'equality [that] they expected to see displayed in their relationships in the army, particularly with their officers'.[58] However, Blair suggests that in spite of the ambitious ideals of the rank and file, the class basis of Australian society was not only reflected in the attitudes of Australian volunteers, it was also evident in the structure and operation of the AIF.[59]

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[54] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, in particular see pp. 215-221.
[55] For a forum on collective memory and cultural history see J. Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, No. 65, 'Cultural History/Cultural Studies', Spring - Summer 1995, pp. 125-133 and A. Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 5, December 1997, pp. 1386-1403.
[56] Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *The truth about history*, p. 218.
[57] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, see for example chapter one 'Formation of the 1st Battalion' and chapter two ' "Class is everything": The officer-man relationship', pp. 17-68.
[58] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, pp. 18-19.
[59] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, see for example pp. 18-26 for an analysis of the structure of the 1st Battalion.

The significance of this cultural background and class prejudice is most evident in the patterns of promotion of the AIF. Bean's writings and the Anzac myth would have people believe that promotion came 'from the ranks' and that class was *not* a factor in promotion.[60] Blair argues otherwise. He highlights the influence of class upon the selection process for promotion by providing a comparison between the occupations of the men of the original 1st battalion, with the occupations of the officers of the original 1st battalion and the 1st to 26th reinforcements of the battalion. From this he finds that whilst tradesmen, labourers, and men from the industrial and manufacturing sector made up 52.23% of the original battalion, they only made up 15.62% of the original officers, and 12.78% of the reinforcement's officers. On the other hand, men with a professional or clerical background made up only 15.77% of the original battalion, yet contributed 53.12% of the original officers, and 55.17% of the reinforcement officers.[61] Whilst promotion may have been from the ranks, class was certainly an issue when considering which individuals to promote. Men with a middle class occupation were, based upon Blair's figures, selected above men with a working class occupation. Further to this, the figure from reinforcements suggests that class bias increased, rather than decreased, as the war progressed.

There are of course more reasons behind these promotions than pre-war occupation. Middle class men would have been more likely to be educated in a private school and to be members of a cadet corps.[62] Such education and membership were important criteria for a commission. In the early years of the war and in the formation of the AIF when any war or leadership experience was sought after, many of the

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[60] Indeed, as noted earlier, Bean and other contemporary middle-class sources asserted that class was almost entirely absent from the AIF.
[61] From Table 1: Comparison of the occupations of the 1st Battalion officers against occupations of the original 1st Battalion, Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 24.
[62] For a detailed examination see Wise, 'Playing Soldiers'.

original officers and non-commissioned officers may have been selected largely upon this factor alone.[63] This class of men did not *necessarily* make 'better officers';[64] rather, they more accurately fitted the 'image' and the 'type' of officer that was being sought after in the AIF.[65]

Blair further supports this argument through letters and diaries from 1st Battalion men in the chapter 'Class is everything'.[66] He argues that 'Soldiers writing about their officers generally referred to them by their designated rank, sometimes by their nickname, and often by the more formal title of "mister"'.[67] Relations between officers and their men were *not* intimate. Men were clearly aware that middle-class men were being promoted above working-class men. Sergeant Larking revealed,

> We have been silly enough to think that the Australian Army had been democratised. There was never a greater delusion. *Class* is everything for advancement. There have been three glaring cases – or rather four – and you can bet that someone will get a rough time over them one of these days.[68]

If one were convinced that this was the case early in the war and that things later changed, or that it was only a view of a disgruntled assembly worker from the ranks,[69]

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[63] 'Playing Soldiers' notes that of the Old Boys examined who had served in a private school cadet corps before the war, 66% were commissioned as officers, 14% were non-commissioned officers, and only 21% were from the rank and file (with a 1% margin of error). See Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', p. 13.
[64] Leadership experience in cadets was quite different from leadership experience, or war experience, in the Great War, yet this could have helped and must not be discounted. Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', p. 13.
[65] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 35 and pp. 56-57.
[66] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, pp. 37-68.
[67] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 54.
[68] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 38, italics Blair's.
[69] Information from 1st Infantry Battalion Embarkation Roll, C Company, AWM8, Unit embarkation nominal rolls, 1914–18 War, p. 11.

Blair also presents evidence from General John Monash who declared with regards to his Third Division in April 1918,

> The officers (the great majority of whom I have promoted from the ranks), represent the cream of our professional and educated classes, young engineers, architects, medicals, accountants, pastoralists, public-school boys, and so on.[70]

Monash may have been writing for a select middle class audience, but his reassurances nonetheless provide some insight into the pressures placed upon commanders to promote the 'right sort'. In the meantime, the labour propagandists on the home front could possibly have been correct; the majority of working class men *were* left behind in the rank and file and they *were* left to do the dirty work.

Blair's argument that the class relationships of the AIF reflected those of Australian civil society leads on to another fundamental basis for this dissertation, a focus upon the working class. Whilst the treatment of the AIF as a homogenous group may be helpful in drawing comparisons between Australian and British or Australian and French troops, it does not do service to the range of social and cultural backgrounds behind the men of the AIF. In particular the working class have been greatly under-represented in general histories of the Great War. John McQuilton observes that whilst 37% of the AIF were labourers in their pre-war lives, these men made up only 22% of L. L. Robson's sources, and only 30% of Bill Gammage's sources.[71]

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[70] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 23, see also F. M. Cutlack, *War Letters of General Monash*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1934, p. 233.
[71] J. McQuilton, 'Enlistment for the First World War in Rural Australia: the case of north-eastern Victoria, 1914-1918, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 33, 2000, paragraph 13.

In the under-representation of the working class, there is, in counterbalance, an over-representation of the middle-class. In Gammage's *The Broken Years* the 4.75% of men embarking in the AIF with a professional background made up 15.8% of chroniclers, similarly the 7.36% of men embarking with clerical backgrounds made up 20.2% of chroniclers. This minority of 12.11% made up 36.00% of Gammage's chroniclers. They have almost a three to one ratio of material to personnel, an over-representation of 297%, compared with the working classes representation of only 72%.[72] Although Bean claimed that the 8000 soldiers whose names appear in the *Official history* were 'a fair cross section of our people',[73] Thomson argued that in his process of forging the Anzac legend he was guilty of the selection, simplification, and generalisation of sources to support his motives.[74]

This misrepresentation of social backgrounds is also evident in Blair's *Dinkum Diggers* with regards to ranks. The average percentage of officers in an infantry battalion in the AIF in 1917 was about 2.88%,[75] Blair points out that in the original 1st Battalion there were 32 Officers out of a strength of 1030, making approximately 3.11%.[76] Yet in his analysis of the 1st Battalion this 3.11% of men made up a staggering 31.16% of his chroniclers.[77] This is an over-representation of more than 1000% and far overemphasises the experience of the officer class in understanding the general experience of war. This over-representation is also evident in an examination of the representation of non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Blair again highlights

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[72] To use the example of Gammage's sources. See Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 310. Based also upon Butler, *Official history: Vol XI*, see 'Appendix No.6: Occupations of members of the AIF', p. 874.
[73] Cited from Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 144.
[74] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 47.
[75] See 'The Australian War Memorial, Australians At War, Military Organisation and Structure', http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/structure/army_detailed_structure.htm Accessed 23 May 2005.
[76] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 25.
[77] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 10.

that NCOs made up 156 of the original battalion of 1030, or 15.15%.[78] Yet these made up 41.55% of chroniclers, another over-representation of almost 275%.[79]

This over-representation is naturally counter-balanced by an under-representation of other sources; these of course have been from 'other ranks'. With 3.11% of the original 1st battalion made up of officers, and 15.15% made up of NCOs, the remaining 81.74% comprised of 'other ranks'. This is where the problem of under-representation of sources in the literature is most evident. These other ranks, 81.74% of a battalion, 842 out of 1030 men, were represented by only 25.97% of Blair's sources. This is a gross under-representation of 32%. The result of this is that 'general histories' present a history of the Great War based too heavily upon inaccurate representations of a 'general sample of soldiers', with a subsequent loss of focus on the experience of the rank and file soldier. With Australia's middle class making up the vast majority of officers,[80] the consequence is that the experience of working class men has remained obscure and unexamined.

In attempting to understand the experience of the working class, historians must also be cautious of the extent to which they rely upon middle-class sources. David Johnson Silbey, in his analysis of British working class men's motivations for enlistment in the Great War, criticises Gerald DeGroot's *Blighty* for attempting to understand working class motivations through middle class sources.[81] Whilst DeGroot argued that motivations for enlistment differed based upon pre-war social class,[82]

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[78] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 25.
[79] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 10.
[80] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, pp. 28-29.
[81] Silbey, 'Their Graves Like Beds', pp. 38-39.
[82] G. J. DeGroot, *Blighty: British society in the era of the Great War*, Longman, London, 1996, pp. 46-48.

Silbey asserts that 'Without evidence from working-class men themselves, the conclusions DeGroot reached are suspect'.[83]

The same caution must be made in any study of Australian history, but in looking at the AIF one must be careful about making broad generalisations about the experience of Australian soldiers or their motivations for enlistment. One must also be particularly careful of sources that were motivated by a wartime desire to increase enlistments, to raise a national image, or to support the myth of the Australian soldier. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, for example, asserted of the AIF as early as 14 October 1914 that the 'uniform has made them all equal. There are no social distinctions'.[84] The egalitarian myth thus entered the public sphere very early in the war. It had been the dream of the Australian working classes for many years and the language of classlessness was perhaps carefully utilised by authorities to present a more comfortable picture of army life. Again Blair questions this supposed lack of 'social distinctions' and 'equality', arguing that in reality it was unrealistic for the egalitarian expectations of civilian life to transfer to the 'regimental environment of an army'.[85]

It must also be acknowledged that the sources used in this dissertation are only a microcosm of those involved. As noted above, over 416 000 enlisted, over 330 000 embarked, yet given the number of participants, relatively few personal records exist. As demonstrated above by Blair's *Dinkum Diggers* even fewer working class records are available. Yet it is through this investigation of the few that patterns will be uncovered to reveal an understanding of the many. Dale Blair has achieved this with a focus upon a single battalion, John McQuilton has achieved this with a focus on north-eastern Victoria, and Blair further notes the argument of Richard White that

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[83] Silbey, 'Their Graves Like Beds', p. 39.
[84] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 October 1914, as cited in Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 19.
[85] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 18.

‘The microcosm might well prove to be far more revealing than the macrocosm’.[86] This dissertation neither attempts nor claims to be a general history of the Great War. It focuses upon a specific class of men and places emphasis upon restricting the possibility of misrepresentations of class. It does not seek to present a comprehensive history of working class men serving with the AIF during the Great War, but rather it seeks to highlight some of the experiences and approaches toward military service that have hitherto remained unrecognised or ignored.

As a focus upon the working class, this dissertation examines a group of people who have shared a particular type of social and cultural background. Given the broad interpretations of class within the historical literature it is important at this stage to clarify the people whose lives are being explored. First and foremost, this dissertation sees class background and class relationships as having significant effects on experiences of war, for as E. P. Thompson asserts, ‘I do not see class as a “structure”, nor even as a “category”, but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships’.[87] In spite of what the Anzac legend and the egalitarian myth of the Australian soldier suggests, class did in fact happen within the AIF and it had real and visible effects.

The accumulative patterns of these social and cultural background and the shared experiences of daily life result in class formation and class occupancy. Thompson argues that class

> happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between

[86] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 6.
[87] E. P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1974 [First Published 1963], p. 9.

> themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs.[88]

Thus, the relationship between the working class and the middle class is largely oppositional. Their (class) relationship largely takes the form of opposing attitudes, beliefs, and identities, based upon personal life experiences.

For the working class one common theme in these attitudes is the sense of being in a social environment heavily influenced by the power of the classes above. Thompson adds that 'The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born or enter involuntarily'.[89] The working class share the sense that they are on the 'lesser end' of these 'productive relations'. In civil employment, employees were subject to the authority of their employers, upon enlisting in the military, the same working class men were subject to the similar authority of their officers. Upon returning to civil society, little changed, and many once again returned to the same pattern of relationships, being situated so as to be subject to the authority of employees.

But it is also the patterns of life, the ways of living and behaving, and the mental outlook that accompanies these productive relations that leads to class occupancy. Because of the diverse nature of these life experiences and the situations people are in it is difficult to attribute class to a single overriding factor. During childhood family background is undoubtedly the primary class determinant as there is little choice available. Later however, a number of indicative factors emerge, with

[88] Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 9.
[89] Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 9.

economic issues being primary signifiers.[90] Thompson again asserts that 'If we stop history at a given point, then there are no classes but simply a multitude of individuals with a multitude of experiences. But if we watch these men over an adequate period of social change, we observe patterns in their relationships, their ideas, and their institutions'.[91] For the working class, it is these patterns of relationships, ideas, and institutions that assist in understanding their modes of life and their shared experiences. In the AIF for example, we can observe patterns of working class men sharing the title of 'other ranks', commonly that of 'private', without receiving the same rates of promotion as men from the middle class. Looking at the pre-war background of these men reveals familiar patterns of not extending their education beyond the secondary level, not holding highly paid employment or owning large property, and of relying on selling their labour to survive.

Dale Blair has provided the only detailed analysis of these class relationships in the Australian Imperial Force in his chapter 'Class is everything'.[92] However, the focus of this dissertation is different to Blair's in that it has the objective of differentiating the working class from a homogenous image. A focus upon middle and working class sources would enable an analysis of the relationships between the two in the AIF from the perspective of both classes,[93] but the abundance of middle class sources could potentially overshadow the experience of the working class and present a skewed 'general' view of the relationship, thus defeating the purpose of the study. Instead, the focus of this dissertation is upon how one side of this relationship dealt with their position and how the working class saw the relationship from their

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[90] See for example P. Joyce, 'Class and the Historians: Introduction' in P. Joyce (ed.), *Class*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 127-128.
[91] Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 11.
[92] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, see 'Class is everything', pp. 37-68.
[93] As Blair has done, see Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*.

perspective. It considers how workers on one end of the relations of production in civil society managed being on the same end of these relations within the military.

Historians must also probe further to understand why people would give up life in civil society and risk everything for the terrible conditions of the military and of war. In analyses of the working class, a common consideration is why people accept their underprivileged positions.[94] In an analysis of the working class during the Great War, perhaps an even more important question is why people would surrender an underprivileged position in civil society, to enter what appears to be an even more underprivileged position in the military? It is only through an analysis of those in an underprivileged position that these issues can accurately be addressed.

Historians have also warned against histories of the working class or working class politics that focus too heavily upon leadership and individuals, leaving the workers largely ignored.[95] Whilst studies of leadership and individuals are important for informing historical understandings of the paths of working class politics, the objective of this dissertation is more one of understanding the paths of working class lives, and as such the focus is upon those who actually performed the labour and experienced the conditions of work.

**Experience and language.**

One of the most common ways in which soldiers attempted to understand and rationalise the environment they found themselves in was to put pen to paper and write their feelings down in words. These words form a vital link between the past

[94] G. Rose, *The Working Class*, Longmans, London, 1968, p. 8.
[95] See for example, R. W. Connell, *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture: Studies of conflict, power and hegemony in Australian life*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 4-5.

and the present.[96] The way people wrote about their attitudes and experiences provides an insight into their ideas at the time of writing, and within their own past.[97] Reflections are often made within soldier's letters about what life was like before the war, of how they had changed as people, and of how different things had become. Eric Leed demonstrates the importance of these reflections in *No Man's Land* through focusing upon 'the cultural repertoires of meaning drawn upon by participants to define felt alterations in themselves'.[98] Within this dissertation these 'cultural repertoires of meaning' will be analysed through the letters, diaries, and personal reminiscences of soldiers to understand how the Great War affected their attitudes towards work.

Blair again highlights the importance of these 'cultural repertoires' and the cultural background of language use in his comparison of the letters of middle class and working class men. He argues that,

> The writings, and presumably the speech, of officers…reflected the idiosyncratic vernacular of the English upper and middle classes that had become popular by the turn of the century. The mimicked language of these officers marked a certain social status of proclivity and, as was the case in wider British society, reinforced the notion of a social hierarchy within the Battalion.[99]

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[96] Gammage provides an example of the applicability of this through writing a history of Australian experiences in the Great War based upon the writings of a thousand Australian soldiers, Gammage, *The Broken Years*.
[97] See for example Cabrera, 'On Language, Culture and Social Action', p. 84.
[98] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. *x*.
[99] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 55.

Whilst his analysis of the use of language is restricted to the relationship between officers and other ranks, Blair establishes an important foundation for further examinations into the use of language as a way of understanding experiences of war.

These two themes, language and experience, are so intricately related that it is advantageous for historians to accompany consideration of one in their analysis of the other. In Deborah Schiffrin's analysis of the language used to describe Second World War experiences she argued that

> Just as our understanding of the motivation and effects of linguistic changes can be enriched through knowledge of social, cultural and political history, so too, our understanding of social, cultural and political changes can benefit from attention to the changing discursive representations of people, places, events and most generally, experiences.[100]

To understand the differences that existed between the soldiers of the AIF historians need to provide closer analyses of the language of the past, the effects of socialisation on the formation of this language, the ways in which this is put into practice, and the differences in experiences that the use of this language reveals.

This link between language and experience has been elaborated on by Graham Seal who argues that 'The language of the diggers was their means of expressing a sense of coherence and self-identification as members of a social group distinctive from all other groups'.[101] Language can be a subconscious form of communication,[102]

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[100] D. Schiffrin, 'Language, experience and history: "What happened" in World War II', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2001, p. 346.
[101] Seal, *Inventing Anzac*, p. 24.
[102] That is, in the sense that people are not always conscious of the constructions and meanings they are creating through language.

and it can be a conscious way of asserting a sense of belonging to a group, of conveying specific beliefs and attitudes, and of representing pride and patronage for a culture. Michael Lemon argues that 'no thinker actually *says* all that he thinks; and secondly, what he *does* say is what he has *chosen* to say, this choice being evidence of uncommunicated thinking which therefore has to be inferred'.[103] Thus the words these working class men actively chose to put down on paper are evidence of their active and conscious thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. The choice of words and the structure of sentences are conscious ways not only of representing one's attitudes and immediate thoughts, but also of displaying affiliations, relationships, and cultural backgrounds. On this point, Graham Seal argues with reference to 'diggerese', the language adopted by Australian soldiers of the AIF, that,

> As well as ensuring communication and confidentiality, such language also allowed the diggers to trumpet their distinctiveness. There is a definite awareness of difference embedded in the vocabulary and the use of language; a flaunting of linguistic and cultural distinctiveness.[104]

The language that these soldiers used reflected their understanding of the situation they were in; the change in this language over time can thus be seen as a change in these understandings.

This language, as words on a page, presents the historian with evidence both of understandings of a situation, and of the situation itself. Anders Schinkel argues that although at any given time we only see the fixed words on a page, these words

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[103] M. C. Lemon, *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 198.
[104] Seal, *Inventing Anzac*, p. 27.

'have a chain of events, both in time and space, which sustains a certain character'.[105] The words have their own past and their own history that can be traced back through the writing of the individual, through the comprehension within their minds of what to put down on paper, and further back through their personal experiences in their attempts to understand their daily life.[106]

This link between the written word and the lived experience helps historians to comprehend contemporary understandings of the past. Michael Lemon argues that 'The language we use is demonstrative of our understanding of reality – and that we use language rather than something else is demonstrative of a *way* in which we understand reality'.[107] Thus, for example, the language of work in a diary can be read as evidence of active thoughts within the mind of the diary writer about the 'reality' of work. Eric Leed also argued in his analysis of the use of memoirs in reconstructing the past that the Great War,

> experience is an ultimate confirmation of the power of men to ascribe meaning and pattern to a world, even when the world seemed to resist all patterning. The war mobilized all the cultural resources of meaning available to Europeans in the first decades of the twentieth century. It allows us to see what those resources were, not as an abstract system of thought but as something which rendered experience coherent and meaningful.[108]

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[105] Schinkel, 'History and Historiography', p. 42.
[106] Alfred Norton Whitehead provides an extensive discussion of this theory in A. N. Whitehead (edited by D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherburne), *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, The Free Press, New York, 1979, see in particular, p. 73.
[107] Lemon, *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought*, p. 196, italics in original.
[108] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 10.

During the Great War these attempts to 'ascribe meaning and pattern' and to understand life and the immediate environment forced a change in people's attitudes. It forced them to rethink what they were seeing in an attempt to comprehend it.

After being accustomed to living in civil society and working five and a half days a week these people found it difficult to comprehend this new world, everything seemed unknown. They did not know how long they would be in the trenches, where they were going next, when they would return from the trenches, which of their co-workers would still be alongside them in the next battle. Life was very much a mystery. In letters and diaries their attempts to explain the situation and to explain what they were doing increasingly came to be expressed in the language they were accustomed to. Language is both a way of making sense of one's world,[109] and of communicating thoughts to others within a recognisable framework.[110] Using the language of civil society to describe the unknown within the military was a way soldiers gave some sense and meaning to the unfamiliar and unpredictable world of the military.

The debate over the viability of analysing this language as 'evidence' of a past reality, or of an experience of a past reality, has developed within the study of history over the past forty years. In labour historiography Gareth Stedman Jones has more recently argued that the language of class has been created and employed to support political motives, and, as language is a material construction, it cannot reflect the reality of human experience in the past.[111] Similarly Patrick Joyce has added that

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[109] See for example, N. Chomsky, *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind*, p. 5, and J. W. Scott, 'Language, Gender and Working-Class History', in Joyce, *Class*, p. 158.
[110] Schiffrin, 'Language, experience and history', p. 323.
[111] See for example G. S. Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 18-21. Gareth Stedman Jones' claims that written evidence is not evidence of 'experiences'

since individuals re-construct reality (that is, through language), the experience that one reads or hears is only a construction and 'what matters is the way in which people put this experience together in the first place'.[112] Stedman Jones and Joyce make valid points in that language certainly cannot *recreate* a perfect image of the past. What is perhaps being passed over is that this language does give an important *reflection* of human experiences. As examined above, the language used by people is shaped by, and reflects, what they see in the world, the relationships they experience with others, their lived experiences, and more specifically, their personal understandings of these.

Language may be a construction, but it is a construction that enables communication through which details are conveyed.[113] Joan W. Scott asserts that '"language" reveals entire systems of meaning or knowledge – not only ideas people have about particular issues but their representations and organizations of life and the world'.[114] It is a crackling phone line to the voices of the past, a blurred image of former times, or more accurately, a worn out page in an old diary written long ago. In the case of these diaries and letters this language is a *representation* of a reality experienced that can be understood through a participant's writing. If the language of class is used, then it is the language of cultural understandings of *real, lived* experiences of difference from other social or class groups.

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has been extensively debated amongst historians. Examples of appraisals are D. Mayfield, 'Language and Social History', *Social History*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1991, pp. 353-358, D. Mayfield and S. Thorne, 'Social history and its discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the politics of language', *Social History*, Vol. 17, No. 2, May 1992, pp. 165-188, and P. Joyce, 'The end of social history?', *Social History*, Vol. 20, No. 1, January 1995, pp. 73-91.

[112] See for example, P. Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p. 12.

[113] See for example Scott, 'Language, Gender and Working-Class History', in Joyce, *Class*, pp. 154-156.

[114] Scott, 'Language, Gender and Working-Class History', in Joyce, *Class*, p. 158.

These differences are evident in the language used by people because they were evident in their daily lives. Indeed, the primary distinction between middle class and working class cultures is most often found in the way they 'lived' and the way they 'related' to each other.[115] In newspaper correspondences these working class people referred to themselves as 'an employee', or as a 'Labor man', sometimes simply as 'a worker'.[116] This language expressed a sense of distinction apart from their employers and the middle class. At times it could be aspirational, revealing desires for further social mobility,[117] but it nonetheless revealed an identification of the differences that existed not only in lifestyles and in relations of production, but also in attitudes and beliefs. To ignore the effects of class as being 'illusory' or even absent altogether is to ignore a large and important social factor that is fundamental in understanding the lives of people in the past.

**A Grand Entrance**

The Australian historical literature examining the Great War has had a tendency to focus upon the individual in its accounts of the past. This is evident in the vast quantity of biographies, autobiographies, published diaries, letters and memoirs, and the focus upon personal experiences in attempting to understand the war 'from below'. This concentration upon the personal provides a glimpse into the 'minds eye' of participants at the time. It reveals an attention to the permanency of war; a

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[115] R. Williams, *Culture and Society*, cited by C. Critcher, 'Sociology, cultural studies and the post-war working class', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher, and R. Johnson (eds.), *Working-Class Culture: Studies in history and theory*, Hutchinson & Co., London, 1979, p. 37.
[116] To give several examples of the pseudonyms of correspondents in the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, see for example 21 February 1901 and 2 August 1902.
[117] These aspirations can be seen throughout this thesis in the diaries of Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, Mitchell Library (hereafter ML) MSS 1300.

recognition that those who enlisted were not just ‘soldiers’, but husbands, fathers, brothers, sons as well as neighbours, co-workers, and friends. They had a life before the war, and, for those who survived, a life after the war.

This dissertation largely follows this historiographical trend by focusing upon the ‘minds eye’ of men who served in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. It is a history of the cultural representations of the working class in the military during the Great War. It does not attempt to reinforce any myths or legends nor to big-note or praise the actions of any individuals. It is neither a history of battles, nor of great people. Instead, it recognises principally that the Great War was one of the worst disasters to befall human beings in their history, and any account of such a period must always keep in mind the real and revolting consequences of human-to-human conflict.

Within Australia, the historical literature relating to the Great War began in grand style with the publication of Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean’s twelve volumes of *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*. This compilation, researched and written from the time of Bean’s appointment as ‘Official War Correspondent’ early in the war, form the core basis of our historical understanding of the Great War. Bean witnessed much of what he wrote about, and when he could not be there in person he conducted interviews with participants at a later stage to gain a broad perspective on events. As a key witness to events, and ever-mindful of the historical significance of the Australian involvement, Bean’s attention to detail makes his histories one of the most important primary sources available to historians analysing Australian participation in the Great War.

Within the context of this dissertation Bean’s work is also identified as an essential foundation for understanding the lives of individual soldiers serving in the

Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. Bean's interpretation of events has shaped the nature and direction of Australian historical writing for over nine decades. Whilst smaller unit histories and soldiers' diaries were published in considerable numbers after the war, it was the *Official history* that reached a mass audience and was received as the 'official' view on Australian participation in the war of 1914 to 1918. The *Official history* is used widely throughout this dissertation because of its impact in shaping the nature of Australian war-writing, its scope in covering all theatres of action throughout the war, and its depth in probing into the finer details of daily life within the AIF. Surprisingly however, the twelve volumes scarcely address the nature of work within the AIF directly. Rather its value and its use within this dissertation comes more from the understanding it provides of the environment surrounding this daily work: of the locations individuals were forced to work at, of the conditions they were forced to work in, and of the people they were forced to work alongside. To understand the significance of the *Official history* it is important first to understand how it has shaped the nature of Australian historical writing on the Great War, and furthermore, where it fits within the present body of historical literature.

Bean's purpose in writing was made clear from the very beginning of Volume I of the *Official history*. Reflecting upon his task in the preface to the first edition of the *Official history*, Bean explained,

> The more he saw and knew of the men and officers of the Australian Imperial Force the more fully did the writer become convinced that the only memorial which could be worthy of them was the bare and uncoloured story of their part in the war. From the moment when, early in the war, he realised this, his duty became strangely simple - to record the plain and absolute truth so far as it

> was within his limited power to compass it. To the men and officers of the Australian Forces, both those who live and those who fell, whose comradeship is his proudest and dearest memory, he dedicates this effort to produce a history in which he has striven to attain a truthfulness worthy of them and of their nation.[118]

Bean laboured throughout his life to provide such a worthy memorial for those affected by the war. His unique position in the war as the 'Official War Correspondent', and later as the 'Official Historian', led to the formation of a close bond with the men of the AIF and his history strived to 'record the plain and absolute truth' of their part in the war.

However, this impassioned interest in writing for the Australian soldier and attempting to immortalise those who served contributed towards the formation of national myths and legends that still heavily influence understandings of Australian history. Primarily, the Anzac legend has presented the Australian soldier as a masculine, noble, godlike individual. Alistair Thomson has argued that men not fitting this image had difficulty living with their memories and coping with the popular image of the soldier in their post-war years.[119] Further to this, the homogenous image disguises the differences that existed amongst the 416 000 men who enlisted.

Bean saw the Australian soldier as a product of his pre-war environment. He was the first to consider the impact of pre-war socialisation on the experiences of Australian men in the AIF by arguing that the Australian bush 'set the standard of

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[118] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. *xxx*.
[119] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, see for example chapter nine 'Living with the legend', pp. 205-221.

personal efficiency even in the Australian cities'.[120] The Australian bushmen were seen as the 'ideal Australians', the men to whom all other men should aspire to be like. In his earlier work, *On The Wool Track*, Bean had praised the masculine superiority of the outback Australian; here, he argued, was 'a region where bad men are very bad, and good men are magnificent, but where all men are interesting'.[121] The 'country man', Bean added, 'will remain beyond comparison the most capable man in the nation'.[122] This belief remained with him throughout his life and was most evident in his writings of the *Official history*.

Through his writings Bean praised the regional Australians for their instincts, their ability to endure hardships, and their skills and qualities that were perfectly suited for soldiering. All these, Bean argued, had been developed in the Australian bush where men were, for example, 'frequently called upon to fight bush-fires; and fighting bush-fires, more than any other human experience, resembles the fighting of a pitched battle'.[123] These aspects of the pre-war lives of the Australian bushmen were supposedly the perfect preparation for becoming a soldier. Adding to this, Bean asserts,

> The greatest strain upon soldiers on active service is generally the want of sleep. In war men are required to work for sixty or seventy hours without closing their eyes, toiling with all their strength until they often drop from weariness. In most countries a man lives his life without ever having to work

[120] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 46.
[121] C. E. W. Bean, *On The Wool Track*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1968 [First Published 1910], p. *vii*.
[122] Bean, *On The Wool Track*, p. 79.
[123] Bean, *Official history: Vol* I, p. 46.

> continuously through a day and night. But in the Australian bush that effort may become necessary at any moment during the long summer months.[124]

The bush was portrayed as an exclusively male domain; it was an environment that tested and reaffirmed masculine ideals through the hardships faced and thus ideally prepared men for war.

The Australian soldier, in Bean's eye, was clearly the Australian bushman. The reality that the majority of men in the AIF came from the city simply did not factor into the image that Bean hoped to portray of the AIF. Instead he noted that,

> The bushman is the hero of the Australian boy; the arts of the bush life are his ambition; his most cherished holidays are those spent with country relatives or in camping out. He learns something of the arts of a soldier by the time he is ten years old.[125]

Thus Bean asserted that the metropolitan male, whilst not actually living in the bush, learnt from his regional counterpart. The attributes of the bushman supposedly rubbed off onto his distant cousin, and thus the Australian Imperial Force was for the most

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[124] Bean, *Official history: Vol* I, p. 46. The idealisation of rural life was not new, nor was the link between rural socialisation and soldiering. For example, Bean's argument draws striking similarities with another made by Adam Smith over a hundred years earlier. In *Wealth of Nations* Smith argued 'They who live by agriculture generally pass the whole day in the open air, exposed to all the inclemencies of the season. The hardiness of their ordinary life prepares them for the fatigues of war, to some of which their necessary occupations bear a great analogy. The necessary occupation of a ditcher prepares him to work in the trenches, and to fortify a camp as well as to enclose a field.' See A. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book V, 'Of the Revenue of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', Chapter I, 'Of the Expences of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', paragraph V.1.5. http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smWN.html (Accessed 13/7/05).

[125] Bean, *Official history: Vol I*, p. 46.

part an army with the typical characteristics of the Australian bushman. As such, the Australian soldier was egalitarian minded with a sense of duty not only to his King and Country, but to the mates that he fought and worked alongside. The bonds of camaraderie and of mateship which bound men together in times of war was also a key feature of military life for the Australian soldier. The AIF would be classless, the best man would get the job, promotion would come from the ranks, and pre-war differences would be forgotten, or at least, this was what was purported.

**Questioning the myth.**

This image of the Australian soldier was not significantly challenged by the readership of the *Official history* or by Australian people in the post-war era. Instead, it tied in comfortably with the 'typical Australian' image that had been propagated in Australian poetry, literature, and art throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the states came together and as federation 'created the nation', people looked for a national identity, a way of understanding who they were and where they came from. In the post-war confusion, and in attempting to understand what had taken place and why so many had fought and died, the memory of war was transformed through this positive language as having united the nation and forged this national identity.

The country Australian male was again held up as an example of this 'typical' national (and exclusively white-male) type who had contributed towards this nation building. Russel Ward asserts that according to the myth this 'typical Australian' was,

a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing "to have a go" at anything, but willing too to be content with a task done in a way that is "near enough". Though capable of great exertion in an emergency, he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion. Though he is "the world's best confidence man", he is usually taciturn rather than talkative, one who endures stoically rather than one who acts busily. He is a "hard case", sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally. He believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better, and so he is a great "knocker" of eminent people unless, as in the case of his sporting heroes, they are distinguished by physical prowess. He is a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority, especially when these qualities are embodied in military officers and policemen. Yet he is very hospitable and, above all, will stick to his mates through thick and thin, even if he thinks they may be in the wrong. No epithet in his vocabulary is more completely damning than "scab", unless it be "pimp" used in its peculiarly Australasian slang meaning of "informer". He tends to be a rolling stone, highly suspect if he should chance to gather much moss.[126]

[126] R. Ward, *The Australian Legend*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2003, pp. 1-2.

The image was clearly constructed to serve nationalistic political purposes.[127] It attempted to distinguish the Australian people, and in particular the white Australian male, apart from their British ancestors and to instil a sense of national pride.[128] Britain, and anything British, was seen in this myth to be weak and 'old'. The unique Australian bush was thus seen as the pure, untainted source of the Australian character, the cities by comparison, still stained with British influence, were weak, over-crowded and debilitating.[129]

Russel Ward's examination extended this line of argument even further in the late 1950s by asserting that,

> a specifically Australian outlook grew up first and most clearly among the bush workers in the Australian pastoral industry, and that this group has had

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[127] See for example R. White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1981, p. *ix*.

[128] White, *Inventing Australia*, p. 83. White has also argued that this myth propagated by the ruling class encouraged the working class to feel privileged in their social position and ease class antagonisms.

[129] White, *Inventing Australia*, p. 83. It may also be observed that this process was not unique to Australia; the same process of national identification and rejection of the 'old' was occurring in other places around the world at the same time. Frederick Jackson Turner's 'Frontier Thesis' was attempting to explain the American national character, and in both Switzerland and Canada a number of artists, literary figures, and poets were, as in Australia, ascribing the 'unique' Swiss or Canadian national characteristics to the 'unique' Swiss or Canadian environments. Likewise, in the post-war years in Canada Harold Innis argued the equivalent of Bean's *On The Wool Track* but within a Canadian context. Instead of the wool trade, he ascribed the source of the qualities of the 'typical Canadian' to the fur trade, and the harsh masculine conditions of the frontier. These were all parts of attempts to understand the national character, perceived as integral for the strengthening of patriotism. Within Australia the writing of the Official History and the image of the soldier as sustained throughout Australian literature must be seen as another way in which these beliefs were promoted and maintained. There is a wide body of literature that examines these beliefs, see for example R. A. Billington, *The Frontier Thesis: Valid Interpretation of American History?*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1966, and E. Kauffman and O. Zimmer, 'In search of the authentic nation: landscape and national identity in Canada and Switzerland', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1998 and for Bean's interest in creating a 'national image' and its durability throughout Australian historical inquiry see for example Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp. 146-156.

> an influence, completely disproportionate to its numerical and economic strength, on the attitudes of the whole Australian community.[130]

The homogenous image of the Australian soldier as a bush worker followed on smoothly from the nationalistic images of the 1890s and 1900s. With the nationalistic images of the bushman and the soldier combined, the effects were all the more convincing. Thus, in the early historical literature on the Great War it was largely assumed that all who served were of the same stamp and character; those of metropolitan background were simply influenced by the idealised and romantic regional image.[131]

As noted above, Bean's claim that the AIF was an army of bushmen has since been widely disputed, and Russel Ward's argument has been challenged by historians such as Richard White who point out that 'national identities are invented within a framework of modern Western ideas about science, nature, race, society, nationality'.[132] More recently, historians such as Bill Gammage, Dale Blair, Alistair Thomson, and John McQuilton have increased our understanding of the social and cultural makeup of the AIF through considering the pre-war backgrounds of individuals. Within this new wave of 'cultural histories of the military' Bean's original assertions in the *Official history* have come under increased pressure.

The image of the regional Australian as the typical Australian soldier remained strong within Australian popular culture until the mid-1960s. Ken Inglis has been credited as changing the way Australian historians look at the Great War with a

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[130] Ward, *The Australian Legend*, p. *v*.
[131] Ward for example argued that such national images 'often modifies current events by colouring men's ideas of how they ought "typically" to behave'. Ward, *The Australian Legend*, p. 1.
[132] White, *Inventing Australia*, p. *ix*.

turning point coming at the publication of his article, 'The Anzac Tradition' in March 1965.[133] In this, Inglis questions why Australian historians have not followed up investigation on the Great War after C. E. W. Bean's work and why the questions raised by Bean have not been addressed. Inglis asserts that 'by and large his work has been not criticized, but ignored. His question: "How did the Australian people – and the Australian character, if there is one – come through…their first great war?" has not seriously interested other historians'.[134] Inglis' article sparked the beginning of a new stage in Australian historical war writing and, as Alistair Thomson argues, spurred greater investigation into the Anzac legend and the historical understanding of Australia's involvement in the Great War.[135]

This development was followed several years later with another significant milestone in Australian historiography with the publication in 1974 of Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years*; an essential single volume history of the experiences of Australian soldiers in the Great War based upon the letters and diaries of one thousand soldiers.[136] Gammage's book marked the clear beginning of a new cultural history approach to histories of the military in Australia.[137] Within *The Broken Years*, Gammage presented a history of Australian cultural representations of the war; how these men chose to put into writing what they saw and experienced, how they chose to omit certain unfavourable aspects, how they chose to highlight other, happier moments, and how they translated the mass, mechanical slaughter of the battlefields, the horror of limbless, headless bodies, the foul unimaginable stench of death, and the

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[133] K. S. Inglis, 'The Anzac Tradition', *Meanjin Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 1, March 1965, pp. 25-44. For comments relating to Inglis' importance see Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp. 190-191.
[134] Inglis, 'The Anzac Tradition', p. 33.
[135] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 191.
[136] Gammage, *The Broken Years*.
[137] Patsy Adam-Smith's *The ANZACS* followed this in 1978. See P. Adam-Smith, *The ANZACS*, Thomas Nelson, West Melbourne, 1978.

constant fear that accompanied time in the lines, into a context that was readable and to some extent comprehendible to external readers.

Inglis' enquiries and Gammage's approach inspired a new strand of Australian literature on the Great War. These new 'culturalist' approaches to 'histories of the military' remove combat as the sole focus of historical inquiry.[138] This new approach recognises that histories of the military need not necessarily focus strictly upon the 'lives of people at war', but instead may consider the 'lives of people in the environment of war'.[139] The differences between the two foci have been very revealing. They have led to closer scrutiny of Bean's initial assertions about the nature of the AIF, a rethinking of the Anzac myth and the digger legend, and a new history of the Great War that finally recognises the different types of people that made up Australia's armed forces.

Since Gammage's *The Broken Years* Australian military historiography has increased both in quantity and popularity. The resurgent recognition of Anzac Day commemorations during the 1980s and subsequent growth of interest in Australian military history have encouraged a number of acclaimed publications and contributions to the field.[140] It is within this environment of 'culturalist' approaches to military history that this dissertation takes its shape. It sees these approaches as essential for a greater understanding of the Australian people's diverse experiences of society and culture within Australian civil society and in the AIF during the Great War.

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[138] See Scates, 'The Price of War' and Wise, 'The Lost Labour Force'.
[139] Wise, 'The Lost Labour Force'.
[140] The past fifteen years in particular have seen several important additions of special relevance for this thesis, notably Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, J. McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 2001, Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, and Seal, *Inventing Anzac*.

**Approaching the issues.**

The above understanding of class was of principal concern when compiling the list of sources. It is important to call attention to the fact that the sources were not selected based upon the quality or quantity of material inside. Rather, the individuals researched were included on the basis of social background. Each individual's background was determined as far as possible through service records and embarkation rolls before an examination of the material commenced. Thus, within the acknowledged criteria of class, the inclusion of all available sources, and the exclusion of none fitting these criteria, provides as close to a rounded and objective collection as could be obtained.

The records used in the research for this dissertation were collated from the State Library of New South Wales, the State Library of Victoria, and the Australian War Memorial. Lists of records available in these archives were searched through individually and cross referenced with personal information available in service records kept at the National Archives of Australia, and on embarkation rolls and nominal rolls available at the Australian War Memorial.[141] The service records contain all surviving official papers relating to an individual's service time. The attestation papers in particular provide a glimpse into the lives of individuals around the time they enlisted.[142] They give the original unit that an individual belonged to as

[141] The embarkation and nominal rolls are indexes of the Australian soldiers who embarked for overseas service. They include details such as date of embarkation, age, occupation, regimental number, marital status, address at date of enlistment, religion, and date of joining.

[142] The Attestation Papers are the documents signed by individuals upon enlisting into the AIF. This contains details such as date of enlistment, age, occupation, and previous military experience.

well as full name, place of birth, and age upon enlistment. But of particular use to this dissertation are the questions about ‘trade or calling’ and ‘next of kin’. The ‘next of kin’ information gives basic information about the family background of men, if they were married, where their relatives lived, and this can be compared against their residential address to grasp an idea of their residential background. The ‘trade or calling’ information was referenced against the New South Wales Statistical Register and the 1911 Census of Australia to get an understanding of typically working class occupations and the income from these. With this information and the signifiers of working class identification, as examined above, a list of primary sources began to come together. The diaries, letters and memoirs of individuals on this list were then reviewed to provide further details on the individual and to confirm social identities.

It is also important to note that the material that made up this collection is also as diverse as the men who wrote it. Although grouped for the purpose of this dissertation as ‘the working classes’ these men were still from vastly different social and cultural backgrounds. The upper working classes approached work with a different mindset to the lower working classes and thus wrote differently within their diaries and letters home. At the same time the different motivations for enlistment led to different expectations of military service, and this subsequently led to different reactions to war. All these factors, and many more, shaped the nature of diary and letter writing. Such motivations need to be considered when reading these diaries. Individuals writing for their parents felt a form of personal censorship. They would be wary about writing anything too ghastly, or anything that could potentially damage their image. James Green, a labourer before the war, thus began one entry with, ‘arrive at a place known as sausage Gully move up to front line 7PM met with terrible sights on our way up. dead laying all around our having been in the thick of it

here'.[143] Below these sentences the rest of the page, and the following two pages, have been torn out of his diary. Perhaps the entries were too disturbing for his parents to read, on the other hand they may have been memories that he felt were best left unwritten and unremembered. By contrast with this, on 25 July 1917 John Meads wrote 'Went to bed at 4.am this morning. Parker + I going up to Richmond with a couple of girls for the day'. This brief description was followed by seven lines of writing that have been well and truly scribbled out to the point of illegibility. Readers of Meads' diary were thus left to wonder what he scribbled out, and why he did so.

The writing of memoirs, or of diaries in shorthand, made this censorship an easier task. Reynold Clive Potter wrote a diary in a personal form of shorthand during his military service, and then translated this into two separate copies upon returning to Australia to provide an account that all could read.[144] The translations are highly descriptive and creative, suggesting that in the process of translation entries were edited, additional comments made, and certain unfavourable items potentially removed. This is further evidenced by the fact that the two translations differ on a number of entries. The same form of censorship applies in the writing of a memoir. Events can be retold in a more comfortable form and an air of creative narrative added to the story-telling process. Arthur Miller felt obliged to introduce his memoir with the following,

> In writing a full description of our trip I am going to try to keep each event in its proper order something like a diary but not exactly so, as for some days there was absolutely nothing to chronicle. I want to forget that there were any

[143] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, diary enty dated 25/7/16.
[144] Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944.

> eventless days – and there were many – so, therefore, I will do my best to cover up the blanks and also describe what I have seen as well as I possibly can. So here goes.[145]

As the following chapter will show, there were expectations of style and content in the writing of letters home and in the keeping of diaries for later reminiscences. Some were conscious of the significance of their wartime career and wrote with the purpose of keeping a record for generations to read. Others perhaps planned to write a memoir after the war to collate their thoughts and thus wrote single point entries every day with little detailed information. Some chose to hide the war and speak only of the good things within the military, others found this too difficult and tried to convey the more ghastly side of their experiences to be revealed at a later stage to those at home. Many seemed to follow the daily rigmarole of filling in an entry with 'normal' daily events, in a way to provide some sense of normalcy and regularity to an abnormal and irregular world. At the time they may not have seemed important, but they have proved highly valuable for historians decades later.

In total, the archival files of 74 Australian working class men were used for the research of this dissertation. They served in most arms of the AIF though, as the following chapter will demonstrate, the vast majority of these worked within the infantry. By contrast, there is a significant under-representation of the experiences of individuals who served with the Light Horse, perhaps reflecting the class status of these regiments.[146] As a result, this dissertation primarily focuses upon the

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[145] Arthur William Miller, No. 5404, Groom, Cootamundra, AWM PR91/118, unpublished memoir written whilst on active service, p. 1.

[146] By contrast with this, the author's previous study on middle class experiences in the AIF during the Great War presented an over-representation of men from the Light Horse. See Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', pp. 14-15.

experiences of working class men in the infantry who served at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. At the same time, whilst it does not seek to specifically highlight certain occupations within the military, there are some specialized occupations that are explored in the course of analysing the continuity in workplace cultures. Thus Thomas Goodwin, as a farrier, is not explored because he was a farrier, but rather because he kept up a detailed diary on his experiences with work in the military. As a result of the compilation of these sources, there is an overwhelming focus on the experiences of the 'combat soldier' during the Great War, though this was never intended to be the case. The working experiences of non-combat soldiers in the military, such as batmen, medical staff, and men serving in the supply corps, are worthy of further examination, yet lay beyond the scope of this dissertation.

One additional omission is that of the role of Australian women in the AIF during the Great War. Janet Watson has argued that there were a number of social and cultural divisions within the military that resulted in different approaches towards military service.[147] These divisions partially account for the absence of batmen, medical staff, and men in the supply corps from this study, and it partially explains the absence of women from this study. This is not an attempt to silence the experience of Australian women, many of whom experienced the same physical and psychological traumas of war as men. Rather, it is primarily an identification that the gendered politics of work in civilian Australia meant that their workplace cultures were strikingly different to that of men, and an exploration of the transition of these cultures into the military would require a substantial increase in the word limit - much as an exploration of medical staff or officers would.[148]

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[147] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, pp. 2-3.
[148] For more on these differences see R. Frances, *The Politics of Work: Gender and Labour in Victoria, 1880-1939*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1993, and

The individuals explored within this dissertation also came from all around Australia, however, due to the location and size of the State Library of New South Wales and the Australian War Memorial, most of the records are of men from New South Wales. The State Library of Victoria provides a broader scope amongst the available records, but the number of records on offer is markedly less. In addition, throughout all archives the material within an individual's archival file varied from items as simple as a bible with a brief note from a soldier's parents,[149] or a single piece of delicate paper upon which a soldier wrote a poem to his wife,[150] through to a collection of letters neatly typewritten and bound with the clear intention of being read by a wider audience.[151] However, within these one cannot simply equate quantity with quality. John Clark's single page poem to his wife may reveal a surprising deal more about a soldier's hardships in the military then another person's daily diary of random notes about the weather. At the same time, the ephemera present in some files provides some small insight into items that the working classes believed were significant records of their military service. Thus, the two pay books in Edwin Robert Cassidy's file in the Australian War Memorial suggest that he found these to be important records of his military service and of value to historians seeking to understand the war.[152] Similarly, the only item within Darcy Benedict Smith's file, a photograph of his grave at the Salisbury Isolation Hospital in England, suggests that

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R. Frances and B. Scates, *Women and the Great War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.

[149] Roy Harold Boyton, No. 2783, Farm Hand, Wagga Wagga, AWM PR86/029.

[150] John Clark, No. 6718, Labourer, Leeton, AWM MSS1219.

[151] Charles Granville Smith, No. 1084, Carpenter, Wagga Wagga, AWM PR03066.

[152] Edwin Robert Cassidy, No. 2080, Farmer, Redfern, AWM 3DRL/7506.

his family found this to be one of the more important records of his military service.[153]

As noted above, the focus of this dissertation is upon the 'cultural repertoires of meaning' as expressed by working class men. Whilst pay books, honour rolls, and photographs provide an important insight into the memories of working class families, it is the diaries and letters that provide a more detailed look into the attitudes and mentalities of working class men during their military service. The ability for diaries to unravel the day to day events within the military has been well noted by historians,[154] though much less attention has been given to the way these diaries, the language within them, the length of entries, and the changing patterns and styles of writing can reflect the more longer term changes in individuals' approaches towards military service. These patterns and styles cannot be seen or read in one or two lines, a single entry, nor from the brief extracts from a secondary source. Rather, understanding these long term changes comes in reading across an entire diary and paying attention to the changes in entries.

Eric Leed divided his seminal cultural history of the Great War experience into a 'beginning, middle, and end', so as to more fully understand the extent of changes that war experience brought into people's lives.[155] To approach the issues that have been addressed above this dissertation is structured in a similar manner through the division of the service period of working class men into a beginning, a

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[153] Darcy Benedict Smith, No. 2740, Labourer, Newtown, AWM PR86/264. For a recent examination of these 'objects of memory', and in particular on photographs of soldier's graves as memory objects see Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*, pp. 16-24 and B. Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 2007, pp. 136-162.
[154] See for example Gammage's introduction on 'Sources' in Gammage, *The Broken Years*, pp. *xiv-xvii*, and Winter's brief examination in D. Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War*, Penguin Books, Camberwell, Victoria, 1979, pp. 15-21.
[155] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. *xi*.

middle, and an end. In this way it seeks first to understand motivations with which working class men enlisting into the military and how this shaped their initial expectations and approaches towards military service. The 'middle' examines how these understandings and expectations were referred to in the environment of war to attempt to make sense of the world and to attribute a comprehension of the 'known' to the 'unknown'. And finally, the 'end' considers the position of these men at the cessation of hostilities. The end of the war meant an end to their work for the military, and a return to the life of the civilian.

Finally, it must be clarified that this focus on the working lives of soldiers in the military is not an attempt to disguise the horror of the front lines. The work of historians such as Dan Todman and Gary Sheffield in attempting to reduce the significance of front line service in cultural understandings of war have little room within this dissertation.[156] Todman and Sheffield agree that front line service was terrifying, but they highlight the point that the allies ultimately won the war, and both suggest this theme should form the focus of historical inquiry and popular memory. Such a focus ultimately seeks to diminish historical studies of the trench experience by proclaiming that the lost lives of millions of men and women and the grief suffered by countless more families was all 'worth the effort'. For example, Sheffield argues that the higher casualty rates of the Second World War put those of the Great War into 'sobering context',[157] and instead of focusing upon these losses, historians should consider the 'peace and prosperity' that were gained from the conflict.[158] From any angle, the loss of millions of lives, both civilians and soldiers, and the disruption and

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[156] See for example D. Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory*, Hambledon and London, London, 2005, and G. Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory, The First World War: Myths and Realities*, Headline Book Publishing, London, 2002.
[157] Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory*, p. 276.
[158] Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory*, p. 280.

suffering of tens of millions more is an extreme price to pay for such short-lived prosperity.

By contrast with the outlook of Todman and Sheffield, this dissertation's focus upon workplace cultures within the military does not seek to detract from the terrifying experiences of individuals in the front lines nor does it attempt to present a view of war as a 'normal' human experience. Rather, it simply hopes to bring greater attention to a hitherto overlooked aspect of military service. It identifies that whilst the front line experience was the extreme and enduring experience, there were also other non-combat experiences that had lasting effects on individuals' lives. Once again, this dissertation recognises that it only took one short stretch in the front line to experience a devastating artillery bombardment, to suffer a gas attack, or to begin suffering from a psychological illness. Although the focus of this dissertation is largely on the work of men behind the frontlines and in relative peaceful environments, the fundamental cost of war should always be kept in mind and must never be forgotten.

Ultimately, at the end of 1918, the Great War could be seen as one of the greatest tragedies to have affected the world. It involved the participation of approximately 65 000 000 combatants, of whom over 8 500 000 died.[159] Within Australia alone, of a population of less than 5 000 000, approximately 416 000 enlisted, over 330 000 embarked, and about 63 000, around one in five, died on active

[159] Nicolson puts the number killed at 9 million, see C. Nicolson, *The Longman Companion To The First World War: Europe 1914-1918*, Longman Press, Harlow, Essex, 2001, p. 248. Doughty and Gruber argue that approximately 8.5 million died, see R. A. Doughty and I. D. Gruber, *Warfare in the Western World: Volume II – Military Operations Since 1871*, D. C. Heath and Company, Lexington, Mass., 1996, p. 631. Alomes gives 10 million as the total killed, see S. Alomes, *A Nation At Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988*, Angus and Robertson, North Rydem 1988, p. 58.

service.[160] These figures, as numbers alone, do not even come close to doing justice to the scale of the horror and the inhumanity that the Great War brought to the world. Bill Gammage goes so far as to argue that 'There never was a greater tragedy than the First World War'.[161] A tragedy for the world, for the civilians who were directly involved in the fighting, for the families of those who served, and of course for the men who made up the armies that faced each other across the so called 'fields of battle'. Even those unaffected physically by combat were left with an experience of a life unknown to those who were not alongside them. But without a doubt the greatest tragedy is that the war was ever allowed to happen. The Great War, its mystery, its size, and its deep sense of displacement from the values and morals of a supposedly civilised world, has spurred one of the broadest collections of historical literature available and no single study can ever hope to do justice to the experiences of those affected by the war.

The analysis that follows falls into areas that are largely unfamiliar to labour historians. Whilst clearly being a 'history of lives in the military' it also explores the subject through labour history approaches in an attempt to link pre-war, war, and post-war lives together. An additional objective was to present a history of the lives of workers in the military during the Great War that would touch upon themes and issues recognisable within the broader labour history coverage of Australian society. Bruce Scates has argued that 'writing about war is too important, too inclusive a task to be abdicated to the memoirs of veterans or the specialism of military history'.[162] The cost of the war and the horrific destruction of the lives of both combatants and non-combatants were too vast to simply leave this area of investigation out of labour

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[160] Based on the figures of Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Appendix 2, p. 313.
[161] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. *xviii*.
[162] Scates, 'The Price of War', p. 143.

history. As the following chapters will show, these men were workers, and they took their attitudes and approaches towards work with them into military service.

## Chapter Two: Civilian to Soldier: The transition of working class men from civil employment to military service.

### Fair days pay for a fair days work…

The 416 809 Australians who enlisted into the Australian Imperial Force formed roughly 13.43 per cent of the white male population, or about half of the eligible number believed to be available.[1] From this number, some 330 770 eventually embarked to serve overseas. They came from small country towns and the burgeoning Australian cities, from large families where brothers fought side by side, and from small families where mothers would send one son off to fight, whilst the other stayed at home to work.[2] But significantly within the context of this dissertation, the vast majority of these recruits came from Australia's working classes. In Ernest Scott's analysis of the occupational backgrounds of members of the AIF he notes that 112 452 men were previously tradesmen, 99 252 were labourers, 57 430 came from 'Country callings', 6 562 were from seafaring occupations, and an additional 14 122 were from miscellaneous occupations.[3] Tradesmen, labourers, and men from country callings alone formed 81.36 per cent of those who embarked.

This chapter focuses upon the initial experiences of a small part of this 81.36 per cent of men upon their enlistment into the Australian Imperial Force. In particular, it considers the typical motivations felt by working class men to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force, and explores the difficulties they faced on making the

[1] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Appendix 2, p. 313.
[2] McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, p. 177-178.
[3] Scott, *Official history: Vol. XI*, p. 874.

transition from civilian employment into a service contract with the military. Whilst historians have long debated the broad range of motivations felt by individuals upon enlistment, this chapter focuses upon just two of the more prevalent of these – enlistment for a job of work, and enlistment for an adventure. Through a focus upon these two motivating factors this chapter seeks to bring greater attention to the common expectations of working class individuals, and establish how this later led into an approach towards military service as a job of work.[4]

Instead, this chapter seeks to explore the long-term effects of motivations for enlistment as an adventure, and as a job of work. Upon enlistment, working class men brought their unique cultural contexts into the military. They were not the 'typical' soldiers of Great Britain, but instead brought a different approach to military life with a range of expectations on what daily life would involve. With such overwhelming numbers these attitudes became an active force through the behaviour of the rank and file in shaping the culture of the 'digger' and the nature of the AIF throughout the war.

When William Throsby Bridges, the 'father of the AIF', was working out the finer details of the new army he decided that Australian soldiers would be paid a much higher rate than the citizen forces and the British 'Tommy'. Specifically, the pay for privates when on active service, five shillings per day,[5] was set at a rate that was higher by one-quarter than the pay of the existing citizen militia force of Australia. Before the war the rate of pay for Australian soldiers and sailors in peace-

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[4] Other motivations to enlist, such as patriotism, social pressure, hatred of Germany, and the pursuit of glory, undoubtedly motivated many to enlist but these motivations for enlistment have been covered extensively within the existing literature. See for example Dawes and Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, Gammage, *The Broken Years*, White, 'Motives for joining up', and McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*.

[5] An additional one shilling per day was 'deferred pay', resulting in six shillings per day.

time, as Bean argues, 'was calculated to yield them the same return, when their rations and lodging were taken into consideration, as the average Australian worker obtained in the shape of wages; six shillings a day'.[6] The idea behind setting the new rate of pay at this level, in addition to luring men of the citizen force into the new AIF, was that civilian working men would be lured by the high rate of pay to enlist in the army. This was supported later in the war by the introduction of a separation allowance whereby men would receive additional income for time spent away from their family.[7] As the diaries and letters of working class men make clear, the opportunity for a regular job of work, a decent rate of pay, and the potential for further benefits upon discharge, were primary factors in motivating men to enlist.

Motivations for enlistment have been a favoured topic amongst Australian historians of the Great War. It became a focus of Lloyd Robson and John Dawes,[8] it appears as a constant concern in John McQuilton's study of north-eastern Victoria during the Great War,[9] and it haunts the reader throughout Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years*.[10] Other historians such as Richard White, Dale Blair, and Alistair Thomson have also sought the answer, considering how the experiences of individuals reveal broader patterns of enlistment.[11] Factors such as employment, family pressure, community pressure, a sense of duty, a sense of adventure, a sense of patriotism, the expectation of a free trip to England, a desire for revenge upon Germany, a sense of mateship, amongst many others, led working class men to enlist in the Australian

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[6] Bean *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 42.
[7] Bean *Official history: Vol. I*, pp. 42-3.
[8] See L. L. Robson, *The First A.I.F.: A study of its recruitment 1914-1918*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1982 (First Published 1970), Dawes and Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*.
[9] McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*.
[10] Gammage, *The Broken Years*.
[11] White, 'Motives for joining up', Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, pp. 17-36, Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp. 25-46.

Imperial Force during the Great War. Background considerations have ranged from social class and regional background, as in the case of McQuilton and White, to patriotism and adventurous aspirations, as in the case of Dawes and Robson. In recent years historians have also identified that many men were motivated to enlist specifically for a job of work, and a term of employment. Dale Blair argues that 'Unemployment was one factor that influenced the decision of some within the 1st Battalion to enlist, and coalminers out of work since the outbreak of the war were reported among those presenting themselves for service in the first contingent'.[12] Alistair Thomson also suggests that,

> enlistment was an alternative to poverty and unemployment…Low and intermittent wages, large and sometimes single parent families, bad housing conditions, and prospects of an uncertain future in factory or farm labouring work meant that enlistment provided an attractive alternative for young men.[13]

And in a similar vein, John McQuilton noted in his study of north-eastern Victoria that 'The men enlisting were overwhelmingly young and single and, although their motives were varied, it is difficult to shake the feeling that economic considerations were fundamental in the decision to enlist'.[14] Yet whilst these motivations have been well recognised, the historical literature is yet to see a detailed examination of how this motivation for enlistment for a job of work translated into an approach towards service as a job of work also. For England, Janet Watson has explored enlistment as a

[12] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 17.
[13] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 29.
[14] McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, p. 218.

term of employment, and the subsequent approach towards service as work, but a similar study has not been made within Australia.[15]

The diaries and letters of working class men make the link between initial enlistment and active service all the more clear. Upon enlistment Thomas Goodwin, a farrier from Stanmore, was 34 years old and well established in his trade. Unlike many other younger recruits in their early twenties, Goodwin expressed few thoughts to suggest that he expected an adventure.[16] Likewise, he echoed few patriotic sentiments to suggest that he enlisted for King and Country, yet from the outset his outstanding dedication to military service makes it clear that he felt a sense of duty to someone, or something. At first glance this duty may easily be interpreted as part of the nationalistic fervour that gripped tens of thousands of eligible men in the early stages of the war, yet a detailed reading of his diary entries suggest that Goodwin's dedication and sense of duty were more likely directed towards the horses under his care, and to the job for which he was being paid.

Later chapters in this dissertation explore Goodwin's approach to work in more detail, but for now it is important to highlight Goodwin's motivations for enlistment. At a time when the army was searching for tough Australian horses Goodwin may have felt some sense of duty in following these animals away to war.[17] Most of his entries describe his experiences with artillery fire, the condition of his horses, or the difficulties he faced in doing his job under unfamiliar military regulations. Thus whilst one entry focused upon the war in describing 'Fierce fighting on right flank, the hill is almost surrounded, thousands of dead Turks lying about.

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[15] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*.
[16] The average age of Australian's serving in the AIF during the Great War was 24. J. McQuilton, 'Enlistment for the First World War in rural Australia'.
[17] For similar attitudes see R. Pearson, *Animal Allies*, Australian Military History Publictions, Loftus, 2005, and J. Cooper, *Animals in War*, Corgi Books, London, 2000.

Battle ship pulling in a few shells last night. 5 of our men wounded yesterday',[18] another focused upon his work where he wrote 'Orders to draw a Naval 3 lb gun from ordnance today, also ammunition from 17th B.A.C. Drew 300 rounds'.[19]

Another outstanding feature of Goodwin's enlistment is that he signed up early in the war with the first contingent, yet served throughout the war as a farrier. Historians have identified different motivations for enlistment at various stages of the war. Thus the recruits of 1914 are commonly identified as the adventurers, those who believed they would have a quick opportunity to see the world and be back home by Christmas. The recruits of 1915 are identified by their desire to participate in the Gallipoli campaign, to be part of the 'making of a nation', and to 'help out their mates' now fighting in the 'real thing' overseas. By contrast the later recruits of 1916, 1917 and 1918 are recognised as the 'dinkums', those who increasingly knew more about the cost of the war and were familiar with the long lists of dead and wounded that were regularly printed in newspapers. Thus, in 1914, Goodwin may have enlisted along with the 'adventurers' in the belief that he could escape the worst of the war, help out the horses whilst experiencing military service, and return home and be back at work as a farrier in civilian society by Christmas. Again, in spite of his early enlistment, there is little to suggest any sense of an adventure in Goodwin's diary. Goodwin also cared little for the military regimen; he saw officers as the mere tools of the military with a job of their own to do, whilst the infantry were the hands that did the dirty work. When everyone performed their job properly, Goodwin wrote happily. When a cog in the war machine broke, and Goodwin's work was made difficult, he wrote angrily. Amongst all this it is clear that a primary factor in Goodwin's decision

[18] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 14/7/15.
[19] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 15/7/15.

to enlist was that he would be signing on for a term of employment, and whilst experiencing military service he would be performing a job of work.

A similar approach towards enlistment and military service can be seen in the daily entries of Charles Granville Smith. Smith, a Carpenter before enlisting, also appeared to join the AIF for the job of work and to participate in something that he believed would be a valuable life experience. As with Thomas Goodwin, Smith was 35 years old and revealed little of the sense of adventure that is evident in the diaries of younger men, further suggesting that differences in age may have had some influence in different motivations for enlistment. Smith had seen three years of prior military experience, yet unlike his younger counterparts he did not look forward to going off to war. He identified the danger that the front line held and even before spending any time in the trenches Smith repeatedly stated that he wanted the war to end so he could return home. In a letter to his wife dated 5th January 1917 Smith wrote, 'Keep your pecker up, Pet. The game is nearly at a bubble so we are only waiting for it to burst, and so are you I know. Well, everything comes to those who wait even if it takes a long time it will come some day'.[20] The 'burst' that Smith was hoping for was the end of the war, yet by this stage Smith had not even seen the trenches.

This apparent lack of enthusiasm about the war, and about fighting suggests that Smith may have wanted to 'serve' without having to actually 'fight'. Given he was a married man it was unlikely that there were social pressures from his local community that were pressuring him to enlist,[21] and he does not reveal any overt

[20] Charles Granville Smith, No. 1084, Carpenter, Cootamundra, AWM PR03066, letter home dated 5/1/17.
[21] Single men were usually the target of these social pressures and there is no evidence in Smith's diary to suggest he was subject to these pressures. See for

sense of patriotism to King and Country. Unemployment may have been an issue and he may have enlisted in the search for other sources of income, though as a skilled rural carpenter it is also unlikely that there was a scarcity of his form of work. However, when all these issues are combined, Smith's enlistment may have been a case of finding a seemingly simple solution to several minor problems through another brief stint in the military. He was an 'old soldier', familiar with the work of the military, and may have preferred to volunteer himself in the place of other, younger, and more inexperienced men. By enlisting in the AIF Smith would also ensure that his wife received his separation allowance,[22] and upon return he could claim that he had served with pride.

Charles Smith's letters home support these motivations even further. But whilst expressing a desire for the war to end and to return home he also expressed a desire to be close to the front lines, even if only once. Thus in a letter home he wrote, 'I have plenty of good chance on the staff, but you know Pet that is not what I came for. I might take them on when my part of the war is over but not before'. Whilst promotion was a primary goal, clearly Smith still felt he had some 'part' to play in the war, as though one had to experience a bombardment to truly feel worthy as a soldier. His initial aspirations of rising through the ranks of his trench mortar unit and returning home to his wife were eventually rewarded in March 1918, as a letter home made clear,

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example McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, in particular 'How Can You Stay?', pp. 31-50.

[22] McQuilton notes that social pressures in rural communities may have been greater that in urban centres because of closer relations amongst people. See McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, in particular 'How Can You Stay?', pp. 31-50.

> I am rather pleased that I have been promoted to Corporal because you never know what it will lead to. You see, Pet, our unit is different to Infantry, the promotions are not so quick and our officers are mostly Artillery officers ... Still I think I can prove myself good enough for what ever position they put me in.[23]

Several weeks later Smith re-iterated the economic factor in his motivations in another letter home,

> I have little news, Pet, your allotment will be 6/- per day now. I am made a Corporal I get 2/6 per day 1/6 deferred pay, and that amounts to 10/- per day, so if I have luck and still keep as keen a soldier as I am now, I might soon get my old three back ...[24]

Given the large amount of money he sent his wife it is likely that this was a significant motivating factor for serving. King and Country and the chance for an adventure meant little to working class men such as Smith who had families to support, and found military service a better option than unemployment and social exile.

As noted above, economic pressures undoubtedly played a part in the enlistment of many working class men. As the widely recognised 'breadwinners' at the time many men saw it as their masculine responsibility to supply income for their

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[23] Charles Granville Smith, No. 1084, Carpenter, Cootamundra, AWM PR03066, letter home dated 20/3/18.

[24] Charles Granville Smith, No. 1084, Carpenter, Cootamundra, AWM PR03066, letter home dated 9/4/18. Smith's reference to the 'old three' is most likely a reference to a rank he may have held during his previous military service.

families.[25] Additionally, as greater numbers of women joined the workforce during the war and increasingly took on roles traditionally seen as men's occupations, men found themselves under increasing pressures to find new ways to assert their masculinity. But beyond this, wartime economic conditions made it increasingly difficult for working class families to survive. Sherry Morris argues that whilst middle-class families played an important part in raising funds and providing comforts for the 'boys' at the front, it came down to the working classes to survive with lower real wages and rising taxes.[26]

In 1914, Henry Wyatt, a boundary rider from Surry Hills, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force,[27] and two years later in 1916, Cecil Monk, a farmhand from the nearby inner-city suburb of Newtown, also enlisted.[28] Given the relative shortage of farms in Surry Hills and Newtown these two men were likely itinerant workers, travelling across the Australian countryside in search of any available work. For both of these men, enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force may have been a solution to their economic insecurity. The pay was regular and it was relatively decent, whilst the promise of further benefits upon discharge were an additional encouragement. As chapter four will explore, the roaming lifestyle of these men also made the transition to military service a little easier, and the life of the soldier seemed well suited to these itinerant workers when compared with many other occupations.

The high rate of pay for privates and the ability to set allotments aside for family members was thus a significant incentive to lure working men away from their

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[25] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1995, p. 28.
[26] S. Morris, *Wagga Wagga: A History*, Bobby Graham Publishers, Wagga Wagga, 1999, p. 116. See also McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, pp. 179-181.
[27] Information contained in the file of Wyatt. Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608.
[28] Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, NAA B2455 MONK CECIL GEORGE, Attestation Paper.

civil employment into a new form of employment in the military. Indeed, the relatively high rates of pay for privates were not matched by rates of pay for the higher ranks, suggesting even further that the target of this high pay was working class individuals on wages of six to eight shillings per day. Thus, for example, Australian ranks above brigadier generals received less than their British counterparts.[29] The diaries and letters of working class men also make it clear that this pay was a motivation in their enlistment. 'Pay day' was always eagerly anticipated and was regularly noted within the diaries of men. For example, John Bruce noted on 6th September 1917, 'Got paid at Battery Office at 4pm £1. Had to go to R.B.A.A Pay Office for extra-duty pay £13.8. Who said a corporals job was no good. What, what? still owing us £3.4-0'.[30] On many occasions 'pay day' was the only thing that men would put into their daily entry, thus Sidney McCarthy simply wrote on 5th January 1916, 'pay day'.[31] It occupied his entire entry for the day, nothing more was written about.

Employment and the high rates of pay need not have been the only factors in motivating men to enlist. Young recruits eager for an adventure were even more attracted to the idea of a 'paid adventure'. An Australian recruiting pamphlet from the Great War advertised a 'Free Tour to Great Britain and Europe' as 'The Chance of a Lifetime'. The illustration on the front cover portrayed a troopship sailing across the oceans. For a young recruit picking up the pamphlet the opportunity for a free trip to Great Britain to visit family, or the chance to see sights many had only ever read about in papers, was very much 'The Chance of a Lifetime'.

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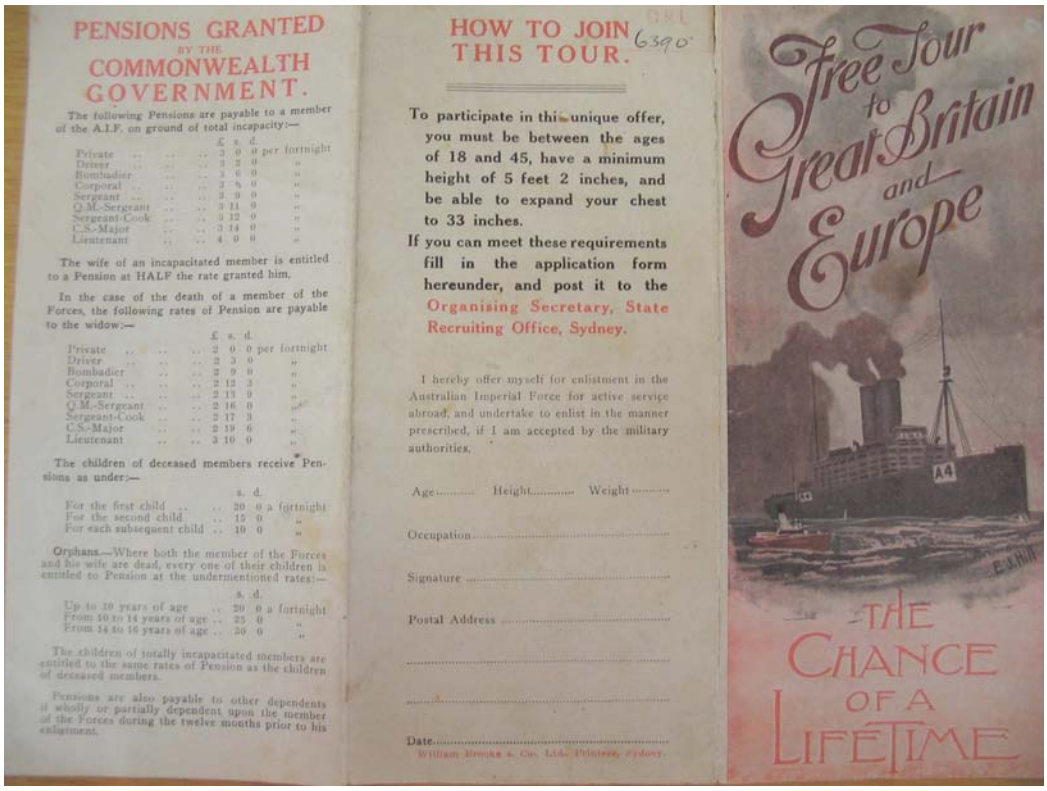
[29] Bean *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 43.
[30] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 6/9/17.
[31] Sidney McCarthy, No. 225, Shearer, Redfern, ML MSS 1098, diary entry dated 5/1/16.



PENSIONS GRANTED BY THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT.

The following Pensions are payable to a member of the A.I.F. on ground of total incapacity:—

| | £ | s. | d. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Private .. .. .. | 3 | 0 | 0 | per fortnight |
| Driver .. .. .. | 3 | 2 | 0 | " |
| Bombadier .. .. | 3 | 6 | 0 | " |
| Corporal .. .. .. | 3 | 8 | 0 | " |
| Sergeant .. .. .. | 3 | 9 | 0 | " |
| Q.M.-Sergeant .. .. | 3 | 11 | 0 | " |
| Sergeant-Cook .. .. | 3 | 12 | 0 | " |
| C.S.-Major .. .. | 3 | 14 | 0 | " |
| Lieutenant .. .. | 4 | 0 | 0 | " |

The wife of an incapacitated member is entitled to a Pension at HALF the rate granted him.

In the case of the death of a member of the Forces, the following rates of Pension are payable to the widow:—

| | £ | s. | d. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Private .. .. .. | 2 | 0 | 0 | per fortnight |
| Driver .. .. .. | 2 | 3 | 0 | " |
| Bombadier .. .. | 2 | 9 | 0 | " |
| Corporal .. .. .. | 2 | 12 | 3 | " |
| Sergeant .. .. .. | 2 | 13 | 9 | " |
| Q.M.-Sergeant .. .. | 2 | 16 | 0 | " |
| Sergeant-Cook .. .. | 2 | 17 | 3 | " |
| C.S.-Major .. .. | 2 | 19 | 6 | " |
| Lieutenant .. .. | 3 | 10 | 0 | " |

The children of deceased members receive Pensions as under:—

| | s. | d. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| For the first child .. .. | 20 | 0 | a fortnight |
| For the second child .. | 15 | 0 | " |
| For each subsequent child .. | 10 | 0 | " |

**Orphans.**—Where both the member of the Forces and his wife are dead, every one of their children is entitled to Pension at the undermentioned rates:—

| | s. | d. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Up to 10 years of age .. | 20 | 0 | a fortnight |
| From 10 to 14 years of age .. | 25 | 0 | " |
| From 14 to 16 years of age .. | 30 | 0 | " |

The children of totally incapacitated members are entitled to the same rates of Pension as the children of deceased members.

Pensions are also payable to other dependents if wholly or partially dependent upon the member of the Forces during the twelve months prior to his enlistment.

HOW TO JOIN THIS TOUR.

To participate in this unique offer, you must be between the ages of 18 and 45, have a minimum height of 5 feet 2 inches, and be able to expand your chest to 33 inches.

If you can meet these requirements fill in the application form hereunder, and post it to the Organising Secretary, State Recruiting Office, Sydney.

I hereby offer myself for enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad, and undertake to enlist in the manner prescribed, if I am accepted by the military authorities.

Age..... Height..... Weight.....

Occupation.....

Signature .....

Postal Address .....

.....

.....

Date.....

William Brooks & Co. Ltd. Printers, Sydney.

Free Tour to Great Britain and Europe

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

**Figure 1: 'Free Tour to Great Britain and Europe', an Australian recruiting pamphlet from the Great War. The left panel details rates of pay, the centre panel details how individuals may enlist, and the right panel presents the adventure on offer to young Australian men.**[32]

But of course this was much more than just an adventure. The reverse side of this pamphlet informed potential tourists of their pay whilst on this adventure in addition to advising them of separation allowances for wives, and fortnightly income for dependents. Gunners, sappers, privates, saddlers, wheelers, cooks, batmen, stretcher-bearers, among others, were all paid 6 shillings a day. Beyond this, the pamphlet also advised men on how the pay differed depending upon the wide range of

[32] 'Free Tour to Great Britain and Europe', AWM RC02289, 5/5/3.

jobs required within the army, and how this would increase with promotion; shoeing smiths and drivers for example were paid 7 shillings a day, mechanics 8 shillings a day, whilst corporals and armourers were paid 10 shillings a day.

This 'tour' then, was also a paid tour. Here was the chance to get away from the doldrums of work and the regularity of the workplace to be paid to see the world and experience military service. Once again, this becomes evident upon reading the daily entries in diaries. Shortly into his service career Hector Brewer wrote, 'Paid for the last fortnight wages of 136 piastres or 28/-',[33] then, several months later, 'I have been promoted to full corporal dating from 2nd August. This will mean an increase in pay'.[34] At a time when the workforce within Australia was becoming more segmented and organised this was the opportunity for working class men to return to an older, more adventurous, and more mobile form of work.[35] Enlistment in the military may well have been a reaction against employer's attempts to control the modes of production within civil society. These men knew little at the time of the extent to which the military would control their lives.

Other enlistment pamphlets also highlighted the rates of pay as a key appeal of military service. Another Australian recruiting pamphlet shaped as a ruler advised men to 'Put your best foot forward'. But once again, the reverse side of this pamphlet maintained the key lure by informing potential recruits of their daily pay in the

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[33] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 17/2/15.

[34] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 4/8/15.

[35] There is a wide body of literature on the increased organisation of the labour force during this period. See for example Frances, *The Politics of Work*, and L. Taksa, '"All a Matter of Timing": Managerial Innovation and Workplace Culture in the New South Wales Railways and Tramways prior to 1921', *Australian Historical Studies*, No. 110, 1998 and L. Taksa, 'The diffusion of Scientific Management: Reconsidering the Reform of Industry Related Training in the USA and NSW during the Early 20th Century', School of Industrial Relations and Organizational Behaviour, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 1994.

military, and how they could potentially rise to the rank of brigadier-general with a pay of '53/- per day'.


**Figure 2: 'Put your best foot forward and join the AIF', another innovative Australian recruiting pamphlet combining a call for men to put their 'best FOOD FORWARD and join the AIF' (below) with details on the rates of pay (above).[36]**

Whilst food, clothing and shelter were all provided for the men of the AIF, money was still spent in large amounts. John Meads explained one reason why, 'Went to the silk bazaar today beautiful silk there also the Amber bazaar but the prices are very high especially for Australians'.[37] In another entry he provides further details,

14/8/17 Pay day on Wednesday good job too as I am broke + have been for some time will draw £5 this pay. Have £8 in the book. I draw £4-2-6 every 2 weeks but it soon goes. The more you draw the more you seem to spend. A trip away from camp runs through a lot of money as everything is so expensive. What 5/- would purchase in peace time will

[36] 'Put your best foot forward and join the AIF', AWM, RC02289, 5/5/3.
[37] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 18/3/16.

not buy more than 2/6 worth now. Everything is frightfully expensive and seems to be getting higher every day.[38]

The food supplied by the military was of poor quality and as a result many men were content to pay to eat out. Gambling on games such as two-up could increase this spending limit, or wipe it out entirely, whilst other expenses such as drinking and sex could empty the pockets just as easily.

Whilst the six shillings a day was quite an enticement for working class men to enlist, many soon found that as prices rose, and as the conditions of the military and the demands for work were revealed, this became less a 'paid holiday' and more 'underpaid employment'. James Green summed up the sentiments of many in an entry from May 1916,

12/5/16 There is a lot of talk of the 6/- a day we get. But there's nothing said about us being starved. If it was'nt for the few extra shillings I don't know how we'd get on the rations being very light at times. It a case of toss the penny's Head's I live', and tails you starve.[39]

The six shillings a day 'adventure' quickly became a six shillings a day 'job'. Regular patterns of work disguised the 'chance of a lifetime', and as the 'Free Tour to Great Britain and Europe' was redirected through Egypt and Gallipoli men soon found that they had to resort to traditional approaches towards work in order to deal with their situation. Those working class men who had enlisted for the job, or more specifically

[38] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 14/8/17, underline in original.
[39] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, diary entry dated 12/5/16.

for the money, soon found out that the demands of their officers were far greater than any daily wage could cover. Others who had enlisted for the adventure, or for King and Country, in time came to see that they were all simply the tools of the military, working towards fighting a long and drawn out war. Their expectations dissipated over time in a cloud of mass disillusionment, and as the real work of war began, men found themselves looking for other reasons to continue in their service.

**'Free Tour To Great Britain and Europe'**

The costs of international transport in the 1900s and 1910s meant that few Australian working class individuals had the chance to see different parts of the world during peacetime. The Great War, the fighting in Europe, and the dedication of Australian soldiers to the British war effort gave these individuals such an opportunity through enlistment in the AIF. A primary drawcard of enlistment was the chance for a great adventure. As explored above, recruiting pamphlets and posters from the time focused upon the youthful sense of adventure amongst potential recruits to lure them into military service. Great passenger liners, such as in Figure 1 above, were portrayed cruising the oceans to some far off land, whilst for individuals with family in England the AIF was presented as an easy means of getting a free trip to London. This section explores the adventurous expectations of working class men upon enlistment, and how this slowly began to translate into an approach towards military service as a job of work.

Australian historians have long identified the motivation amongst Australian soldiers to enlist for an adventure. Bean often noted the adventurous mindsets of the Australian bushmen at the time, whilst Richard White took this one step further in

identifying the often hidden motivations of Australia's 'six-bob-a-day' tourists - men who publicly proclaimed they were enlisting for King and Country yet privately harboured more personal reasons, such as being able to reunite with family in England, see the world, and be part of the great adventure.[40] As White also identifies, the Australian experiences with the military through Australia, Ceylon, Egypt, France, Belgium, and England took them through the popular tourist sites. Photographs of soldiers in front of the Pyramids are commonplace within the files at the Australian War Memorial's Research Centre, whilst within the diaries of working class men White's argument that these men were motivated by a sense of adventure holds true. Similarly John McQuilton notes that recruits from rural Australia were motivated by a desire to escape the 'Boredom with a rural rut'.[41] In addition to escaping boredom, many felt that enlistment would be an escape from domestic responsibilities. If the pressures of work, family, or close community life became too great an individual could simply enlist, and have the military take care of their affairs. In essence, enlistment could be an escape from civilian life and all that it demanded.

This motivation to escape boredom in civilian employment is further evidenced by the familiar pattern during the war whereby groups of workers downed tools together to enlist as a group.[42] Enlisting with a co-worker, a neighbour, a family member, or a mate, contributed to the sense of adventure as individuals would immediately have somebody to share the exciting journey with. In this way Charles Lee described his enlistment less than a fortnight after the opening of hostilities,

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[40] R. White, 'The Soldier as Tourist; The Australian Experience of the Great War', *War and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 1, May 1987. For the specific example of John Simpson Kirkpatrick see P. Cochrane, *Simpson and the Donkey: The Making of a Legend*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1992, p. 6.
[41] McQuilton, 'A shire at war: Yackandandah, 1914-1918' in *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 11, October 1987, pp. 5-6.
[42] McQuilton, 'A shire at war', p. 28.

'Went to Victoria Barracks with a mate to the enrolling Officer Col Antill'.[43] With a similar sense of expectancy John Bruce enlisted with his brother, 'Bob + I went to the Barracks to try for selection for F.A.'.[44] The masculine pressures of leaving work behind to enlist with mates on a great adventure, and the sense of comradeship and bonding that went along with enlisting in front of work colleagues spurred men on to the recruiting office.

This sense of adventure also gave rise to many of the diaries that can be found in the archives around Australia. The 'adventure' with the AIF was a journey, and much of the diaries that were written by soldiers of the AIF reflect the style of travel writing during the 1900s and 1910s. Janet Butler argues that 'Travel diaries were a traditional gift upon departure';[45] the gift would carry with it the expectation that the author would record tales to be re-told when they returned home.[46] This is also evidenced within diaries when authors directly addressed their readers. Edwin Rider thus began his first entry with, 'Diary of my first trip from Australia to fight…I did not get a chance to go ashore at Melbourne so I cannot tell you much about it'.[47] In a similar style Ernest Murray wrote several diaries during his service with the intention of keeping these as a record of his time in the military. At times he also directly addressed the people to whom he wrote, as a single page note inserted in his fourth diary written in 1916 and 1917 demonstrates,

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[43] Charles Lee, No. 100, Horse Driver, Newtown, ML MSS 1132, diary entry dated 14/8/14.
[44] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 20/11/16. 'F. A.' was the Field Artillery.
[45] J. Butler, 'Journey Into War: A Woman's Diary', Australian Historical Studies, Vol.37, No.127, April 2006, p. 203-217.
[46] Butler, 'Journey Into War', p. 203-217.
[47] Edwin Rider, No. 1812, Steel Engraver, Waterloo, ML MSS 1295, diary entry dated 20/3/15.

> This is a very scrappy Diary – written in all kinds of places and under all kinds of conditions. Some of the parts are written in pencil + are almost faded or rubbed out – you will notice that I have been trying to write it over in some of these places. But although it is very scrappy + dirty + untidy I will be able to tell you lots of things with it to refresh my memory that I might not otherwise be able to think of. I hope it will reach home safely.[48]

As this note makes clear, Murray wrote with the intention of retelling his war stories with the assistance of his diary as a reminder.

Other men even introduced their diaries to particular people, or dedicated them to a family member. The gift of the diary for an adventurous young recruit could in this way be 're-given' upon completion of the journey. Thus Hector Brewer wrote at the beginning of his 1918 diary,

> For my brother –
>
> Mr A. L. Brewer[49]

Similarly John Bruce dedicated his third diary from 16th July 1917 to 11th October 1917,

> To dear Mother
>
> With love from
>
> Jack

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[48] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, undated entry into Diary 4, c. 1916-1917.
[49] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, undated entry.

8th October 1917[50]

And along the same lines John Meads wrote 'This diary is to my mother from her son…Commencing from 20th January 1916 and to be kept up to date through the war'.[51] At times the intention may have been simply to send the diaries home in case something should happen to the author, as Hector Brewer notes in his 1917 diary,

> This book is the Property Of Lieut H. Brewer Signal Officer 50th Battalion…On the event of my death. Please send this book to my sister
>
> Miss C. Brewer
> c/o Nurse Quickenden Ludwell
> Minnesota Avenue
> Fivedock
> Sydney
> NSW[52]

With similar sentiments William Burrell wrote in the front cover of his diary,

> Please return this book to
> Mrs J Burrell
> 51 Dunblane St
> Camperdown
> Sydney

[50] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, undated entry.
[51] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, undated entry.
[52] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, undated entry.

NSW

Australia[53]

The motivations for these diaries were clear – they were to be a record kept both for the author, and importantly also for those at home.[54]

For some, the journey, and thus the diary, began upon their enlistment into the AIF, as several of the entries above have shown. For others, the journey, and the diary, began upon embarkation. Gammage argues that 'Most recruits considered that active service began on the day they left Australia. They embarked with the stamp of the soldier noticeably upon them, but they were still largely civilians'.[55] Men such as Cecil Monk and William Hennell began their diaries on, or the day before, their embarkation. Francis Addy began the first entry of his diary with the following, 'Left Liverpool Camp this morning + embarked on the "Runic" at Woolloomooloo + did not get outside of Harbour + away till the afternoon'.[56] Likewise Arthur Henry Freebody began his diary with 'Left Melbourne A.68 "SS Anchises" '.[57] In the minds of new recruits there were also important differences in the type of adventure they were setting out on. The adventure could be 'a journey with the military' or 'a journey away from Australia'. At its simplest the adventure was 'a journey away from the doldrums of work', or 'a journey away from home'. The beginning of the journey thus varied amongst working class individuals depending on their cultural understandings

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[53] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, undated entry.
[54] A. Hassam, *Sailing to Australia: Shipboard diaries by nineteenth-century British emigrants*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1995, p. 33.
[55] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 36.
[56] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 9/8/15.
[57] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 14/3/16.

of what type of adventure they were embarking upon, and when this adventure actually began.

The expectations of individual adventurers enlisting into the AIF also largely influenced the nature of their initial entries. Simon Ryan argues that the expectations and stereotypes formed within an individual shape the way they react to, and understand, unfamiliar locations. [58] As with working class individuals enlisting into the AIF, the traveller will 'read through the lens of expectation' when attempting to understand, and write about, particular experiences.[59] Some, such as William Camroux, expected to see many different parts of the world, and thus wrote a diary of locations. Individuals such as Camroux wrote scarcely anything of what they were thinking, or of what they were doing, but focused instead upon where they were, how far they had travelled, and where they were heading to next. A typical entry within Camroux's diary described, 'Marched to Flers 15 miles. On Light Railway Fatigues'.[60] Sometimes the entries were even simpler, such as this example dated 12th December 1915, 'Visited Pyramids'.[61] Upon returning to Australia Camroux expected to use his diary to tell friends and family of the many varied locations he visited, and then proceed to tell anecdotes on each location. His diary was not so much a detailed exploration of the locations he visited, but rather a simple reminder for later years. Other men wrote more detailed 'reminders' within their diaries and, like Camroux, their diaries were intended for posterity. In the years after the war they could bring out

[58] S. Ryan, 'The Holiday-Maker's Happy Hunting Ground: Travel Writing in Queensland, 1860-1950, *Queensland Review*, Vol 13, No. 1, 2006 , p. 65.
[59] Ryan, 'The Holiday-Maker's Happy Hunting Ground', p. 65.
[60] William Henry Camroux, No. 2889, Labourer, Rozelle, ML MSS 1236, diary entry dated 2/11/16.
[61] William Henry Camroux, No. 2889, Labourer, Rozelle, ML MSS 1236, diary entry dated 12/12/15.

their diaries and reflect upon ‘adventurous times’ in the military with family and friends.

Throughout the training camps of Australia, Egypt, and England, the adventurous expectations of Australian working class recruits rang clear in their diaries and letters home. Working class men expected excitement, they expected an adventure, and they expected a large part of military service to be enjoyable. These expectations largely influenced how they saw military service and how they approached daily life. Significantly, these expectations also largely shaped the nature of their reaction to war, as the following chapters will illustrate.

**Training**

Although scarcely recognised as such, soldiers of the Great War were amongst the most skilled workers of the world in their time. Their job revolved entirely around fighting the enemy, yet they spent the vast majority of their time, some 70-90% of their service career, preparing for this. There was no end to ‘training’ or ‘keeping ready’ for combat. A battalion spent their ‘rest’ time working or preparing for battle, maintaining fitness, reviewing their methods, or receiving instruction in the latest weapons, equipment, or infantry tactics. From the time an individual enlisted into the AIF their training began and it did not cease until the end of the war. As a core part of military service, adjusting to this training was an important part of adjusting to life in the military for working class men. Michael Molkentin argues that when the AIF’s Inspector General, Major-General J. W. McCay, introduced a new training scheme in early 1916,

> He structured the training syllabus over twelve-weeks and aimed it to achieve a consistent standard amongst new recruits. The intended outcome of this program it appears, was the transformation of the individualistic civilian man into a socialised component of a platoon.[62]

For days on end the men of the Australian Imperial Force learnt the military way of doing things, of order and structure, of duties and responsibilities. The military demanded of the recruit a change in his approach towards life.

A new life also meant a new skin, and in the AIF the uniform assisted in establishing a divide between civilian and soldier and conforming men to universal standards.[63] To make the design simple, yet practical, the brass buttons were oxidised to a dull black, the uniform coloured khaki only, the bands around the hats removed, and the tunic, designed from that of the Commonwealth Forces during peacetime, was loose and contained 'four useful roomy pockets'.[64] In all features its primary aim was practicality; as Bean argues, 'The Australian uniform, like everything else connected with the force, was designed entirely for work'.[65] The military uniform made clear to new recruits that they were no longer civilians; they had entered the new world of the military where the language, the laws, and the life, were very different. Camp life was intended to introduce men to the military with a regimented timetable and the constant supervision and instruction by officers.

Camp life was also an introduction to daily work in the military. Men who had expected an easy time in camp were surprised by the endless demands for work made

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[62] M. Molkentin, 'Training For War: The Third Division A.I.F. at Lark Hill, 1916', Australian War Memorial Summer Scholar Report, 2005.
[63] N. Joseph and N. Alex, 'The Uniform: A Sociological Perspective', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 77, No. 4, p. 719.
[64] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, pp. 60-61.
[65] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 61.

upon them by their officers. Ernest Murray, who began his diary as a record of his exciting adventure, thus revealed the repetitive patterns of work in a series of diary entries from October 1914,

| | |
|---|---|
| 8/10/14 | Usual routine |
| 9/10/14 | Usual drill + Field work |
| 10/10/14 | Usual work |
| 11/10/14 | On Guard today. Day Guard twenty four hours. 2 on 14 off |
| 12/10/14 | Usual Field work + drill. also constructing trenches by night |
| 13/10/14 | Field work and constructing trenches etc |
| 14/10/14 | Drill Field work. constructing Barrel Piers etc. |
| 15/10/14 | Field work + constructing suspension Bridge to carry 30 tons |
| 16/10/14 | Light duties. Leave in afternoon to 11 PM. Very wet. |
| 17/10/14 | Light duties no drill. Friend allowed in Barracks from 2P.M to 11P.M. Fare well concert + dance. Ruby brought my tea an she + Charlie Lette came in later + stayed till 11P.M.[66] |

These were the entire entries within his diary and nothing has been edited out. Already, merely six weeks into his military service, Murray felt that there was nothing to write within his diary but the 'Usual routine', the 'Usual drill', and the 'Usual work'. Little changed of daily life in the training camps, men learnt what it meant to be a 'soldier' as they worked throughout the day for their six shillings a day wage.

[66] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, diary entries as dated. The 'Fare well concert' was held because on 18 October 1914 Murray embarked from Australia on the HMAT *Afric*.

On the one hand whilst military life in the training camps of Australia was a shock to these men, on the other hand it was also a poor initiation to the seriousness of war and of military service, particularly for the recruits of 1914 and 1915. The rush to send a contingent off to the front resulted in inadequate preparations. Before the military camps could be organised recruits were dumped in showgrounds or open paddocks.[67] Uniforms were scarce, shelter was inadequate, and many only handled their first rifle after arriving in Egypt.[68] James Green introduced his diary with a brief summary of what this involved,

> …training was brief for one thing, not sufficient rifles, and equipment, On guard to day rifles sup[plied] being without bolt and bayonet being held on by a bit of string.[69]

Fears of insufficient training and supplies eventually led to a Royal Commission and the hearings gave frustrated recruits an opportunity to voice their complaints. Joseph Henry Taggett, a labourer from Newcastle before enlisting, stated at the hearing that after seven weeks of training he had yet to receive underclothes, pants, or socks, and had only received an overcoat five weeks after enlisting.[70] William Talbot, a labourer from Scone, reported a similar experience, receiving his overcoat, underclothes, and dungarees after 'four or five weeks' in the Liverpool Military Camp.[71] Other men

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[67] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 29.
[68] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 30.
[69] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, undated diary entry.
[70] G. E. Rich, *New South Wales Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Administration of the Liverpool Camp, Report of proceedings and minutes of evidence of Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Administration of the Liverpool Camp*, William Applegate Gullick, Government Printer, Sydney, 1915, p. 15.
[71] Rich, *Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Administration of the*

embarked with an incomplete kit after being told their remaining equipment would meet them when they arrived.[72]

Whilst the clothing supplies were bad, the shelters were much worse. Poorly designed huts led to health problems and in the early weeks of training many new recruits were sent to hospital with a range of easily preventable illnesses. Michael Kennedy stated to the Royal Commission that 'there is sickness all through the hut…I have had a cold on me ever since I came into camp, which I cannot get rid of'.[73] Meningitis was the greatest fear, reaching 'almost epidemic proportions' amongst the 15 000 recruits at Seymour Military Camp.[74] Butler additionally notes that,

> Up to 30th June, 1916, 603 cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis had occurred among the recruits (an incidence at least five times that among the civil population), with 256 deaths – a mortality of 42.4 per cent.[75]

Butler subsequently attributed the fear of these diseases to the subsequent drop in recruitment;[76] in any case, it certainly did not support the adventurous expectations of new recruits, nor foster any close bonds between officers and the men they were responsible for.

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*Liverpool Camp*, p. 17.
[72] Rich, *Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Administration of the Liverpool Camp*, see for example pp. 15-19.
[73] Rich, *Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Administration of the Liverpool Camp*, p. 17.
[74] A. G. Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918: Volume I*, Australian War Memorial, Melbourne, 1938, p. 528.
[75] Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918: Vol. I*, p. 529.
[76] Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918: Vol. I*, p. 528.

Although the AIF in Australia presented a serious and regimental outlook, the diaries and letters of working class men reveal experiences of poorly managed and inadequately maintained camps. The work was demanding, but the civilian outlook of the raw recruits and the poor standards of discipline led to the beginning of the patterns of resistance that are explored in later chapters. As Green's entry above demonstrates, 'guards' were posted with inadequate weapons, liquor was smuggled into camp, and men frequently 'jumped fences' to avoid punishment; John Bruce further explained in several entries,

25/11/16 I walked out at 2pm + went home by tram ... Went down to Violets after tea + up to the Exchange. Got back over the fence ok at 11.00.

8/12/16 Had a few practice tugs-of-war in the morning + afternoon. A mob of March quota got roared at for going in for a swim in their birthday costumes. Went home and brought back safe. Over the fence coming in.

1/3/17 Crowd very annoyed at new orders. 1 night off in five + 1 week-end in four. The whole crowd lined up + marched out. When the guard turned out, they all jumped the fence. Mine self among them.[77]

Jeffrey Williams identified other methods of evading capture from the guards, arguing that 'Men even vied for the job of picquet on pay night because of the lucrative bribes of alcohol they received from late returners and leave

[77] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entries as dated.

breakers'.[78] In these situations the AIF resembled a recalcitrant workforce struggling to live with their new and overbearing working conditions, at times even negotiating their way back into work after breaking these rules. In addition, there is an added dimension of men competing for certain tasks because of the political sway they can hold over others – and more importantly for the benefits they can gain from this power.[79] On the other hand, fence jumping and liquor smuggling, for many, was all part of the exciting adventure of the military and it countered the long and tiring days of work in the training camps.

Basic training in Australia scarcely built up any love for the military amongst new working class recruits, though one thing it did accomplish very effectively was to build up a desire amongst recruits to see service abroad. Training had served to build up not only a recruit's ability to fight, but also his eagerness to do so through the desire to escape boredom. The first to enlist in August and September 1914 were resigned to a long wait. But what many saw as a monotonous two to three months of camp life in Australia paled in comparison to the boredom experienced on the five to six week long journey through unknown waters. At the end of this the bewildered recruit would only be sent back to the training camps for more work, drill, and instruction in the deserts of Egypt, the fields of England, or the well-known 'bull ring' of France.

The training camps of Australia initiated working class men into the world of the military. It taught them the ways of the military: its language, laws, customs and culture. It taught men to salute their superior officers and address them as 'sir' or by

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[78] J. Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service: The 1st Brigade, First AIF 1914-1919', Litt. B., Deptartment of History, ANU, 1982, p. 6. 'Picquet' was the military term for guard duty on a post.

[79] These attitudes and the patterns of resistance within the AIF are further explored in chapter five.

their rank. It also introduced them to the demands of work within the military, of constant demands for manual labour and of training. Men thinking that these demands were only part of the camp experience faced a rude shock upon reaching Egypt, Gallipoli, England and France. Yet at the same time the poor quality of Australian military camps, the lax discipline, and the approach by working class men towards military service as a job of work all meant that the basic training received in Australia was often a poor introduction to the military. In particular during the early months of the war this introduction opened the doors for future recruits to adopt similar patterns of resistance and irreverence into their approaches towards military service. Training in Australia was not taken seriously by many who saw themselves as simply waiting for 'active service' and for the 'real work' to begin.

**The lack of a military tradition.**

Australian men enlisted into the Australian Imperial Force with few accurate preconceptions of what military service would entail. As explored earlier, working class men enlisted for an adventure, for the pay, for the chance to get away from the monotony of work, or for the chance to see the world. Working class men also enlisted into the Australian Imperial Force completely unaware of any military traditions that the Australian colonial military forces may have had. Previous conflict in Australia against the Indigenous population, participation in the Maori Wars and in Sudan, and wars against the Boxer Rebels in China, and against the Boers in South Africa had done little to establish any continuous sense of the unity, cohesion, or *esprit de corps* amongst the newly formed Australian units. In 1914, few working class men enlisted to maintain any standards of quality established by those who went

before them, nor to continue in any fine traditions set by the colonial forces in previous conflicts. These standards of quality and the fine traditions were yet to be established.

In 1914 the newly federated nation of Australia began its contribution of men and arms for the British war effort. Men who were proud of their new country and who saw themselves as Australians, with their own culture, their own national identity, and their own national history, enlisted in their hundreds of thousands to serve with the Australian Imperial Force. The majority saw themselves first and foremost as Australians; their British identity came a distant second. Although initially the rate of British-born enlistments into the AIF was high at around 20-35%, after the landings on Gallipoli and the well-lauded birth of the 'Australian identity' this dropped to a level of 5-10% that remained steady throughout the war as a steady stream of Australian men joined the national cause.[80]

Until the landings on Gallipoli, Australia had few military successes to boast of. The Boer War had seen Australian involvement in several confrontations, and whilst Australian newspapers regularly reported on these events, they did little to assist in the establishment of any concrete identity. *The Wagga Advertiser*, for example, reported more on the British army in South Africa than it did on the colonial contingents.[81] When Australian newspapers did report on the actions of the 'colonials'

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[80] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 34. In addition to this, many private school educated middle-class Australian men, men seeking a long-term career in the military, men seeking promotions, and men who identified themselves as British, sailed first to England to enlist with English Battalions. Here their prospects for promotion were believed to be higher, they would have the chance of serving in units with long established histories, and they would be serving alongside other British men.

[81] Reports within newspapers were regular and it is easy to see the attention given to British troops, though for several brief examples see *The Wagga Advertiser*, 10 November 1900, 27 November 1900, 1 January 1901, 12 January 1901. A primary reason for this is that the Australian newspapers took much of their news from the British press, additionally, the Australian contingent was estimated to be around 16

using British reports, the term 'colonial' could have meant New Zealand, Canada, South Africa or any one of the Australian colonies.[82] The contingents formed late in the war were also open to a broader section of the population; for example, skilled horsemen were encouraged to enlist as opposed to experienced militiamen.[83] These new units came to be seen more as 'citizen soldiers' than as a professional army, and, as Laurence Field argues, they bore no taint of militarism.[84]

The duties of the colonial contingents in South Africa strongly reflected the ideal of the Australian bushman and reinforced a sense of national identity, but their inability to participate in a large-scale confrontation would never see them rise to the heroic status of the AIF in 1915. Instead, Field argues that Australians 'never regarded their military representatives with any degree of certainty, moving from a highly exaggerated view of their prowess early in the war to disillusionment in the conflict'.[85] The court martial and subsequent execution of Lieutenant 'Breaker' Morant and Lieutenant Handcock did little to help this situation, and by 1901 the war had fallen out of favour with a large part of the Australian public.[86]

Such conditions were not favourable for the foundation of a military tradition. The colonial contingents were independently organised, operated and led,[87] and by

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000-20 000 strong, out of a total force of approximately 450 000. Estimates on these numbers vary, see for example L. M. Field, *The forgotten war: Australian involvement in the South African conflict of 1899-1902*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1979, p. 79.

[82] K. S. Inglis, 'Preface' in Field, *The forgotten* war, p. *v*.

[83] C. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: The War in South Africa 1899-1902*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2002, pp. 184-186, Field, *The forgotten war*, p. 129, and Welborn, *Bush Heroes*, pp. 30-31.

[84] Field, *The forgotten war*, p. 129.

[85] Field, *The forgotten war*, p. 180.

[86] Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, p. 311-320, and A. Henry, 'Australian nationalism and the lost lessons of the Boer War', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No. 34, June 2001.

[87] Field, *The forgotten war*, p. 82.

1914 the Boer War was already being forgotten.[88] It had largely been discredited in hindsight, with the men who participated in the fighting largely falling within this blame. Then, with the beginning of a new and greater war, the Australian nation looked away from the messy confusion of the Boer War and faced forward towards the prospect of new glory in Europe.[89]

The only tradition that the rank and file did carry over from the Boer War, if any, was a sense of irreverence and independence - characteristics that quickly formed part of the core culture of the Australian soldier, later identified as the 'digger culture' of the AIF. Whenever disciplinary problems occurred, officers quickly pointed the finger towards the 'old veterans' of the South African war. The South African veterans were in a minority and were much older than the average recruit; their previous military service with the colonial forces had come more than a decade before the beginning of the Great War. In Bean's mind, the disrespect and disregard of military laws shown by the rank and file, in particular during 1914 and 1915, was largely due to the attitudes these veterans brought to the AIF, and the sway they held over younger recruits.[90]

This continuity of characteristics was particularly identified during the Great War in the blame placed upon Boer War veterans for the evil 'influences' they had over other soldiers. Bean, for example, argued that the AIF had more things to worry about than the regular list of offences carried out by the regular rank and file soldier,

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[88] M.Chamberlain and R. Droogleever (eds.), *The War with Johnny Boer: Australians in the Boer War 1899-1902*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2003, p. *xvii*, and Inglis, 'Preface' in Field, *The forgotten war*, p. *v.*
[89] Field, *The forgotten war*, p. 186.
[90] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, pp. 128-9. Part of this blame may have stemmed from the disappointment in these old soldiers. They formed the first wave of recruits into the AIF and the Chiefs of Staff hoped that they would imbue the greener recruits with their experience of military life. Unfortunately for these officers, they were not the lessons they desired.

> A much graver class of crime was appearing – heavy drinking, desertion, attacks upon natives, in some instances robbery. In an extraordinary proportion of cases the serious trouble came from one class of man – the old soldier. A large number of these men were not Australians, though a set of Australian criminals and sharpers was added to them. The Australian name was suffering heavily from their drinking and slovenliness.[91]

The 'old soldier' copped the blame, whilst the vast majority of the rank and file were seen to be the innocent victims of peer pressure and influence. With an alarmingly high crime rate amongst Australian soldiers in Egypt,[92] Bean felt secure in blaming the South African war veterans for starting the troubles without great risk of retribution. To the Chiefs of Staff, this may have seemed the most prudent option available to keep a check on discipline without upsetting the entire force.

In early January 1915, the disciplinary problems with the AIF led Bridges, commanding the 1st Australian Division, to send home a number of 'dissenters'. In order to avoid criticism and to side-step 'the rasing of questions as to why the men were returned',[93] Bridge's asked Bean to write to the Australian press and outline the reasons for his action.[94] It was hoped Bean could win over the public with his explanation and warn the men in Egypt against further acts of indiscipline. It failed. Australians were shocked by the news of their soldiers being sent home in disgrace

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[91] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, pp. 128-9.
[92] On 26 December 1914 the 2nd Battalion's parade was cancelled because of a lack of men. Sixty were in prison and a large number were absent without leave. In addition to this, within three weeks of arriving in Egypt the 1st Battalion had committed over 220 offences. Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 11.
[93] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 129.
[94] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 129.

before seeing combat,[95] whilst the men of the AIF, seeing their name besmirched by an 'honorary captain' working for the press, resented the comments and fought back in their own style.

The rank and file crafted poems to criticise Bean and make him regret the letter he had sent home and the comments he had made. One poem, passed through hands and posted up for all to see, gave advice to Bean on how to ingratiate himself with the rank and file,

Aint yer got no blanky savvy
Have yer no better use,
Than to fling back home yer inky
Products of your pens abuse.

Do you think we've all gone dippy,
Since we landed over here,
Is a soldier less a soldier!
Cos he socks a pint of beer.

Let me ask you Mr Critic
Try and face things with a smile,
Don't be finding all the crook-uns,
Studying them blokes all the while.

Then write home nice and proper,

[95] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 129.

‘Bout the boys that all true blue,

And they’ll love yer better mister,

This is my advice to you.[96]

The poem made clear the men’s grievances against Bean. In the eyes of the rank and file, a man was no less of a soldier simply because he took advantage of his leisure time and occasionally ‘socks a pint of beer’. Clearly, the well-educated Bean’s understandings of what made a ‘soldier’ differed considerably to the understandings of the newly recruited working class man in the rank and file.

Working class men enlisting into the AIF thus formed their own understandings of what soldiering entailed, and they subsequently lived by these understandings. Eric Leed’s argument that ‘Those who marched onto European battlefields in 1914 had a highly specific and concrete image of what war meant, an image that was deeply rooted in the past and in their culture’, simply did not apply to the Australian soldier.[97] They had no ‘deeply rooted’ military history, nor military culture. There were few accurate assumptions of war, of drill, of the demands of officers, and of the general day to day running of the military regimen. Similarly when John Laffin identified the British tradition where ‘soldering meant service and sacrifice without complaint. The Victorian attitude of “Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die,” was strongly held’,[98] he wrote exclusively of commanders at battalion, brigade, and divisional level. The working class men of the rank and file held very different mentalities, and Bean argues that ‘Such men could not easily be

[96] Cited from Williams, ‘Discipline On Active Service’, p. 13.
[97] Leed, *No Man’s Land*, p. 69.
[98] J. Laffin, *British Butchers and Bunglers of World War One*, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1988, p. 177.

controlled by the traditional methods of the British Army',[99] the masculine standards of independence and irreverence prevalent in Australia at the time simply would not allow it.[100]

Instead, in their approach towards officers, towards daily work, and towards the military regimen, these working class men actively shaped the new traditions and culture of the AIF. Glenn Wahlert argues that 'the essentially civilian attitude of military trainees meant that they objected to the many restrictions placed on their freedom by the military and enforced by the military police'.[101] The AIF in 1914 was essentially a blank slate upon which the first contingent and these first recruits established patterns of living that were to be followed for over four years. The absence of any concrete Australian military tradition was a missing link that the armies of Europe highly valued, and, as Gallipoli was to prove, something that the Australian population highly desired. Bean notes for example that

> From the British Staff Officer's point of view the Australian troops were unlikely to be so efficiently organised or disciplined as those coming from the British army depots, where the tradition of the British regular army and the efficiency of the British regular non-commissioned officer served as the foundation on which to build the new army.[102]

The August 1914 recruits, men such as Thomas Goodwin and Henry Wyatt, were the first to inhabit the camps and to establish patterns of daily life, they were the first to

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[99] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 48.
[100] This is explored in further detail in chapter five.
[101] G. Wahlert, *The Other Enemy: Australian Soldiers and the Military Police*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 1999, p. 20.
[102] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, pp. 29-30.

put on the uniform and to receive the first rifles sent to Australian troops. They were the first to receive their training on what it meant to be a 'soldier' and the first to be crowded into a tent and taught the hardships of sleeping amongst other men. These first men laid the foundations of the Australian military tradition, of how service was to be approached and how the uniform was to be worn.

These initial recruits made an even greater contribution towards the broader culture of the AIF because they were also the first to establish the stubborn resistance and sense of masculine independence that was to be emulated by later members of the rank and file. In the first few months of the war, those first Australian recruits demonstrated that they would not simply take orders sitting down. Instead, they were the first to greet their officers with sly contempt, they were the first to complain about 'mad officers' and 'crank corporals', and they were the first to sneak out of camp after hours to head to the local public houses. Dale Blair argues that in the early months of the war the 'overburdened military infrastructure' had difficulty containing these ideals.[103] As a result, these 'first occasions' were critical in shaping the culture of the AIF,[104] whilst the reactions of the freshly recruited and immediately promoted officers straight from Australia's middle classes were pivotal in determining the way subsequent officers would, and could, handle their men throughout the rest of the war.

Although a large proportion of Australian recruits had experienced compulsory military training, and a small amount had seen previous military service,[105] the vast bulk of working class recruits simply did not know what to expect

[103] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers,* p. 39.
[104] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers,* p. 38.
[105] Men who had served in the Boer War were eagerly sought for the first contingent of the AIF, particularly as leaders in the officer class. Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 37 and p. 54.

of regular, daily life in the army under a military contract.[106] Bean observed of these initial recruits,

> The 1st Division contained 2,263 young trainee soldiers, 1,555 older militiamen, and 2.460 who had at one time served in the Australian militia; there were also 1,308 old British regulars and 1,009 old British territorials in its ranks. But 6,098 men had never served before.[107]

This was the result of a deliberate bias on the part of recruiting officers to find men with previous military experience.[108] Yet whilst 'previous military experience' was a high priority in recruiting men for the initial contingent, the result was that amongst later contingents the proportion of men who had never served before was much greater. Many working class men amongst these numbers enlisted for the duration of the war, or until their services were no longer needed, for a temporary term of employment. They would work, receive the pay, and, when necessary, fight. It was largely because of this attitude that Bean argued,

> The Australian then, and to the end of the war, was never at heart a regular soldier. Off parade he was a civilian bent upon seeing the world and upon drawing from it whatever experience he could, useful or otherwise, while the opportunity lasted.[109]

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[106] Indeed, the worth of compulsory military training was such that Bean explained these forces away as having 'consisted almost entirely of boys of from 19 to 21'. See Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 34.
[107] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 60.
[108] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 29.
[109] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 127.

For these men military life was a new opportunity. It was an occupation full of wonder, and for some this was part of the adventure. When their uniforms finally arrived it became an attention-grabber for the first few weeks, something that men could show off to their family and friends. With a similar mindset John Bruce described showing some friends and family around the camp shortly after his enlistment,

> 26/11/16 Nelda, Harry, Dan, Miss Joass, Blanche + Kath came up in the afternoon…Showed the mob round the camp had a drink + escorted them down to the tram. Watched the sun set. Absolutely the best I have ever seen.[110]

Two weeks later they returned again for another 'tour' of military life, 'Mouna, Nan, Nelda + Harry came out to the Sports. April won the tug-of-war on horse back'.[111] Early days in the military were still an adventure and there was still a sense of marvel about military life for Bruce. He wore the uniform with pride, avoided the work with glee, and casually relaxed away from the demanding eyes of officers.

The Australian men of the AIF were expected to adjust to the military regimen the hard way, through test of battle. The 'real thing', it was believed, would waken these men's senses and 'keep them on the straight and narrow'. Gallipoli proved that 'discipline' was a flexible term. As the following chapter makes clear, men worked till they dropped in the trenches, they carried water and supplies under deadly artillery and sniper fire, yet they also dodged work, swam in the beaches without permission,

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[110] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115 diary entry dated 26/11/16.
[111] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115 diary entry dated 9/12/16.

and constantly defied the demands of their officers. Ian Hamilton noted in a letter from the Dardanelles less than three weeks after the landing that

> The Australians are rather like the French - - tremendous dash at first; strong reaction afterwards. There never were finer men in the world but, of course, what they want is discipline. They have been fighting night and day in their part of the peninsula.[112]

Officers and the rank and file measured the term 'discipline' differently. To the working class individual, sticking by one's mate to the end was an example of stern discipline; occasionally following the seemingly pointless orders of an arrogant and demanding officer was merely part of the job.

As with the digger identity, when more men came into the AIF they followed these paths set by their predecessors, both in the training camps and in the front lines. Eric Leed and Dale Blair have both identified this as the expected 'transformation' of men from one identity to another.[113] New recruits expected a change in behaviour and in attitudes as they embarked on a new adventure into a new life with new co-workers. Men soon learnt that manual labour was to be avoided if able, humour incorporated into as many situations as it would fit, and officers ridiculed whenever possible. These early working class recruits fostered a unique approach, which was accompanied by unique attitudes and responses. As Jeffrey Williams argues,

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[112] Letter from Sir Ian Hamilton to GHQ, Mediterranean Expeditionary Force dated 13/5/15. Liddell Hart Archives (hereafter LHA), GB99 KCLMA Hamilton, 7/1/2-4.
[113] See Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 17 and Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 39.

> The Australians ... never fully unconsciously subjugated their wills to the usually mechanical army discipline. The initiative and individuality in battle for which they were feted arose not from blind adherence to the commands of superiors but rather from their determination to 'do the job' and only as long as they were free from pompous constraints and inflexible edicts.[114]

The job they were dedicated to was the job of fighting, all else was secondary to this role. Their refusal to 'subjugate their wills' complemented their approach towards service as work and contributed greatly towards the evolution of the 'digger' culture of the AIF.

**Egypt**

On 3 December 1914, the first ships in the Australian convoy reached Alexandria, Egypt. Initially intended as a stopover en route to England, it was later decided that Egypt would serve the greater purpose of accommodating the Australians during their overseas training.[115] Thus, from Alexandria the Australians were directed towards their temporary homes at Mena Camp, sixteen miles outside of Cairo. This settlement in the shade of the pyramids gave men the opportunity to pursue their sense of adventure; the pyramids were climbed, tombs explored, men posed for photos in front of the sphinx, and within a matter of weeks the official historian, C. E. W. Bean, had set to the task of preparing a guidebook for Australian soldiers in Egypt. Titled *What*

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[114] Williams, 'Discipline on Active Service', p. 117.

[115] Salisbury Plain in England was initially intended to be the training centre for Australians, but the recent entry of Turkey into the war and the poor quality of facilities in England led the Australian commanders to decide to stop in Egypt instead. S. Brugger, *Australians and Egypt, 1914-1919*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1980, pp. 20-21, see also Molkentin, 'Training for War'.

*to know in Egypt: a guide for Australian soldiers*, the booklet served as a tourist's guide to all the sights of the local area and contributed towards the adventurous ambitions of Australian soldiers.[116]

The dairies of Australian soldiers also continued to serve as records of these adventures throughout Egypt. In a series of entries John Meads described,

9/3/15 off all day went to see 4 mosques cannot remember the names of them

10/3/15 Went to zoo jolly fine place and is recognised as one of the best in the world

11/3/15 Went to the Museum wonderful place but was [not] well enough acquainted with my Biblical history to get very interested in it…Saw the embalmed bodies of Ramesis I + II and Pharoah and his mother also 2 or three others but I cannot think of their names.

13/3/15 Went to Pyramids nothing much to see.[117]

As Mead's brief entries suggest, for many working class men this may have been a reluctant adventure. With little else to do this sightseeing may have been the most

[116] C. E. W. Bean, *What to know in Egypt: a guide for Australian soldiers*, Societé Orientale de Publicité, Cairo, 1915. See also White, 'The Soldier as Tourist', p. 122.
[117] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entries as dated.

adventurous option available to men like Meads; or, as rates of venereal disease might suggest, the most adventurous option that they were willing to put down in diaries.[118]

Even in later years Egypt continued to bring out the tourist's instinct in the Australian soldiers. James Green wrote shortly after his arrival in Mena Camp in 1917, 'visited the Sultans Palace the accent Pyrmids a few miles from the City returned back to camp in time for tatoo'.[119] Similarly Frederick Blake described,

> 4/8/17 Visited Zoo at Cairo. Zoo situated about 3 or 4 miles out of Cairo. Very nice place to spend afternoon. Was surprised at extent of Gardens & collection of Animals & Birds.[120]

The adventure was good whilst it lasted, but leave was usually only for short periods, and in time training resumed once again.

Whilst the demands of work and of training in Australia had been a shock to the working class men of the AIF, they were still not prepared for the exhausting routines established by officers from the very beginning of their days in the deserts of Egypt. Bean argued that although it was not realised at the time, the intensity of this desert training was 'exceptional' when compared with the training other nations underwent.[121] Indeed, upon arrival at Mena Camp, the very first task set to the rank and file was the digging of dugouts to cover with waterproof sheets for shelter.[122]

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[118] See for example Brugger, *Australians and Egypt*, pp. 40-41 and J. Smart, 'Sex, the State and the "Scarlet Scourge": gender, citizenship and venereal diseases regulation in Australia during the Great War', *Women's History Review*, Vol.7, No.1, 1998.
[119] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, undated diary entry, c. -/12/15.
[120] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry as dated.
[121] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 125.
[122] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 116.

Extracts from Hector Brewer's diary present some further insight into these requirements over a three-month period,

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|---|---|
| 11/1/15 | Have been route marching infantry training + trench digging. |
| 20/1/15 | Hard days work. Skirmishing. |
| 21/1/15 | Skirmishing again. |
| 29/1/15 | Outpost duty. Camped out all all night + returned the next morning to camp. |
| 2/2/15 | Very cool weather. Long and fatiguing work. Men all knocked up. |
| 23/3/15 | Some Territorials Regiments just arrived from England have pitched their camp alongside of ours here. If they have the same training that we had to go through in this blighted sand then I pity them. |

In Egypt, the simple task of a route march was made all the more difficult by the sand, in later months by the heat, and increasingly by the fact that officers were anxious to prepare their men for combat and for the relatively unknown demands of the front line.

Despite the long demands of work in Egypt, Richard White's argument that the Australian soldiers were much like tourists still holds true in the experiences of working class men. Though, with John Mead's entries in mind, it must also be

considered that there was very little else to do with free time but go sightseeing. With the pyramids scaled and the tombs explored many found that the adventure was short lived as the monotony of training once again set in and the appeals to be sent to the front quickly grew again. Francis Addy wrote after only nine days in Egypt, 'Getting fed up with Egypt the Gyppos etc. Have had all the Cairo I want + most of us are anxious to get away from this everlasting drill'.[123] After months of training in Australia and Egypt, many simply could not wait to get into the lines, even if it meant an end to the sightseeing. On 31 March 1915 Hector Brewer wrote, 'The men are sick of this hanging around + have no enthusiasm whatever. They want "fight" what they volunteered for + I am with them'.[124] The day after this entry all leave was cancelled for Australians in preparation for their embarkation to Lemnos, the staging post for the landings on Gallipoli.

Whilst the Australian battalions boarded their transports and men prepared for the short voyage across the Mediterranean Sea, Henry Wyatt found himself left behind and ordered with a number of other men to return to camp in 'full march order'.[125] Perhaps typical of the attitudes of many Australian soldiers in Egypt at the time, Wyatt disobeyed orders and stowed away in the cargo hold of the transport ship. The conditions were cramped, with Wyatt writing, 'It is very dark down here. stinks',[126] yet the thought of an adventure with the AIF was far more attractive than additional training in the Egyptian desert. After two days in hiding Wyatt was discovered, yet as many officers were sympathetic to Wyatt's eagerness to fight and

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[123] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, 19/9/15.
[124] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 31/3/15.
[125] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 4/4/15.
[126] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 5/4/15.

to be involved in the excitement he was not charged. Instead, he 'Got a wigging from the sergeant + another from the officer',[127] and landed with the Australian Imperial Force at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915.

Training camps and troopships prepared the AIF for this moment. The months of restlessness and inactivity that frustrated men soon disappeared. Instead, the anticipation that had built up like a balloon within the Australian recruits reached near bursting point upon their first journey towards the enemy lines. The troopship literature read by many en route to the theatres of war suggested that now, at last, they were 'soldiers of the King'. Through a humorous anecdote *The Euripides Ensign* supported these claims,

> A young officer at Broady was crossing the parade ground one morning when he encountered a newly arrived recruit who failed to give the necessary salute. 'Halt, that man', snarled the officer, 'why don't you salute? Do you call yourself a soldier?'. 'No Sir', came the reply, 'not till I've been to France'.[128]

Similar thoughts were reflected in the diaries and letters of these men. Norman Silvester Hollis wrote from Egypt, 'We are all anxious to earn our pay which we are not doing at present'.[129] Here was a clear desire to see action, to experience combat, to have an adventure. They wanted more than the monotonous deserts of Egypt.

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[127] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 6/4/15.
[128] *The Euripides Ensign*, May 1915, p. 2, cited in D. Kent, 'Troopship literature: "A Life on the Ocean Wave", 1914-1919', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No. 10, 1987, p. 8. 'Broady' was Broadmeadows training camp near Melbourne, Australia.
[129] Norman Silvester Hollis, No. 186, Warehouseman, Newtown, AWM 2DRL/0412, letter to 'Ern' dated 26/2/15.

**Troopship**

The embarkation of the 330 000 Australian men and women to see active service abroad was a great achievement for the Australian Naval Board and the British Admiralty. With a fleet of requisitioned merchant ships, captured enemy vessels, Royal Mail Steamers, and chartered steam ships every Australian to see service abroad made a long, tiring, and frustrating journey on a 'troopship'. Journeys to Egypt took on average five weeks, whilst a voyage to England could take up to nine. Sleeping conditions were cramped and stuffy, the food was poor, seasickness was widespread, and the endless ocean waters gave little sense of progress. For many working class men, the excitement of an ocean cruise quickly diminished upon their first rush to the ships edge to 'feed the fish', and the hope for a break from the work and routine of military life disappeared upon receiving orders for their first 'physical exercise'. For many, the experience on an ocean liner and of leaving Australia's shores for the first time in their lives was an exciting moment. Cramped conditions and poor food were tolerated for the experience of seeing flying fish and great white sharks. For all men however, the troopship voyage marked the beginning of a journey, a physical journey from Australia to Europe, and a psychological journey from a civilian-soldier to a 'digger' on active service.

The moment of embarkation from Australia was also met with mixed feelings from the new recruits. As previously explored, many considered this as the beginning of their adventure,[130] some finally saw it as the start of their 'active service', whilst others were simply relieved to be finally heading off to do the 'real work' of war. Eric

[130] For similarities with nineteenth-century voyages see Hassam, *Sailing to Australia*, p. 49. See also D. Kent, *From Trench and Troopship: The Experience of the Australian Imperial Force, 1914-1919*, Hale & Iremonger, Alexandria, 1999, p. 17.

Leed argues that this moment of departure from home comes with wide ranging consequences, 'With separation from a context of recognitions, the social being of the traveller becomes ambiguous and malleable'.[131] For all men on board the troopship journey was distinctly different from their training in Australia and their active service in Europe. It was the link between 'home' and 'away', and the setting of the above-mentioned transformation of the individual from a civilian-soldier, to a soldier on active service. Those who had trained for months with little idea of their future finally believed that they were prepared and were heading somewhere important to contribute to the war effort, as James Green explained, 'embarked on board HMAS Euripides as trained soldiers for the front'.[132] In Andrew Hassam's study of diaries written during voyages in the nineteenth century he described embarkation and the departure of the ship from the shore as the typical beginning of the narrative.[133] Their 'active service' had technically begun with embarkation, yet at the same time they were resolved to a long wait at sea before receiving the opportunity to face their enemy. The 'journey to war' thus became an intermediate experience, giving men the opportunity to consider their motives for enlisting, their approaches towards military service, and their expectations of the war waiting for them upon arrival.[134]

For men who had already begun diaries of their experiences, the troopship journey also provided the opportunity to begin writing about the adventurous aspects of military life. Henry Wyatt thus explained,

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[131] E. J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism*, Basic Books, New York, 1991, pp. 44-45.
[132] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, diary entry dated 2/11/15.
[133] Hassam, *Sailing to Australia*, p. 49.
[134] David Kent argues that most outward bound troopship publications reflected on the reasons why Australia was at war. Similar reflections were thus also made within the diaries and letters of working class men. Kent, *From Trench and Troopship*, p. 13.

18/2/15 At quarter to four this morning the boat struck a reef up to the present they cant shift her the other troopship has been trying to pull her off but without success.

19/2/15 Had a good time to-day the skipper allowed us to use the life boats. we went on to the coral reef. we got allsorts of curious shells sponges + some coral.[135]

Similarly, several weeks later when his boat docked at Colombo Wyatt took advantage of situation to attempt some sight-seeing,

10/3/15 We were not given leave to-day so after dark we got over the side into boats did not last very long askou before we got caught by the picket. we will go before the court + be fined I expect. We put in most of the day swimming near the boat the day was very hot + we enjoyed it.

11/3/15 We were up before the court this morning + we were fined 10/-. The trip ashore was worth it.[136]

For Henry Wyatt military life was an adventure, and he was intent on taking advantage of whatever opportunities to pursue this that were available.

[135] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entries as dated.
[136] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entries as dated.

Other Australians aboard the troopships expressed similar sentiments. When the convoys crossed the equator 'King Neptune' appeared on a number of transports. Charles Lee, sailing on *HMAT Afric*, wrote,

> crossed the line at 8a.m. The usual ceremony of Father Neptune was gone through on board also buckets of water wet towels cloths etc was thrown about and hoses turned on anyone who happened to come near.[137]

Ernest Murray, on board the same ship as Lee similarly wrote, 'There was great excitement to-day on account of crossing the Line and a Neptune ceremony was kept up'.[138] Whilst Henry Wyatt, sailing on *HMAT Seang Bee*, described the following activities,

> 5/3/15 at 10AM king Neptune held his court + made the fellows on board pay their toll or be punished by taking pills + medicine + being shaved + ducked in a canvas filled with water.[139]

King Neptune's Court was one of many activities on board that were undertaken to occupy and entertain Australian soldiers. Away from the equator organised committees held 'sports days' and 'tournaments' to keep the men amused, but beyond this it came down to the individuals to find things to occupy the time with.

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[137] Charles Lee, No. 100, Horse Driver, Newtown, ML MSS 1132, diary entry dated 13/11/14.
[138] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892 , diary entry dated 13/11/14.
[139] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 5/3/15.

Adjustment to life aboard a troopship was not made easy for the men of the AIF. The apprehension of embarking on a journey continued as the unknown months ahead again played on men's minds. Arthur Miller described his first night sleeping below decks, 'We soon got settled down for the night but sleep was a bit elusive, owing, no doubt, to our new surroundings and strange noises. However revielle woke us at 6.30 o'clock and we were soon on deck'.[140] Much like a factory whistle would mark the beginning of the days work back in Australian civil society, so too reveille was a signal to all on board that the day's work within the military was about to begin;[141] reveille signalled the beginning of a day involving physical training, military drills, and the usual military work of guard, mess fatigue, and orderly fatigue.

The confines of the ship made the usual routines of the military difficult. Thus, whilst men were still required to work and train in accordance with a set military routine, they were also provided with more free time, as Lionel Elliott explained whilst aboard *HMAT Euripides*, 'There is not much to write about yet as we have had hardly anything to do, eating, sleeping, reading, and walking comprising our daily routine'.[142] Similarly Arthur Miller gave brief details of the daily routine on the journey,

> On Sat. 11th we had competitions and sports. It is the usual custom to hold sports on Wed. and Sat. afternoone. We are not worked too hard reveille goes

[140] Arthur William Miller, No. 5404, Groom, Cootamundra, AWM PR91/118, unpublished memoir.
[141] 'Reveille' was signalled by a bugle call and was intended to let soldiers know that it was time to wake up.
[142] Lionel Frank Elliott, Compositor, Newtown, AWM 2DRL/0213, Letter home dated 3/10/15.

> at 6.30, fall in 9 till 10.30 and from 10.45 till 11.45, after dinner fall in at 2 till 3 smoke till 3.15 and work till 4 Last Post 9.20 Lights out 10 min. later.[143]

Life aboard the troopships was thus regulated in the same way that training in Australia had been. Sleeping, eating, training and working were all undertaken in accordance with the military timetable, beyond this men could do as they wished, though the freedom given to the rank and file to 'do as they choose' meant very little when there were few choices available.[144]

This routine differed from ship to ship and depended upon the type of officers on board. In the routine orders of their ship working class men of the rank and file would learn of their duties for the day. Thus on 26 December 1914, 16th Battalion men aboard *HMAT Ceramic* learnt that 'A' and 'H' companies were on duty for the day, and that these companies 'will provide men to sweep the deck allotted to this Battalion'.[145] Similarly the men aboard *HMAT Orvietto* learnt on 30th October 1914 that

> A guard as under will be furnished by the Duty Company to mount at 6 p.m. tonight:-
>
> 3 Officers, 3 Sergeants, 1 Bugler, and 50 other ranks.[146]

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[143] Arthur William Miller, No. 5404, Groom, Cootamundra, AWM PR91/118, unpublished memoir.
[144] For the struggles in writing a continuous narrative of shipboard life see Hassam, *Sailing to Australia*, p. 97.
[145] Routine Orders, No. 32, dated 26/12/14, from Routine Orders, Troopship HMAS Ceramic A40. December 1914-February 1915, AWM25 707/20 PART 67.
[146] Routine Orders, dated 30/10/14, from Routine Orders, Troopship HMAT Orvieto A3. October-November 1914, AWM25 707/20 PART 2.

As in the training camps of Australia, daily life for working class men in the rank and file revolved around work, training, and an inescapable sense of boredom.[147]

The diaries and letters of working class men also reveal the typical demands of work made by the military aboard the troopships. In the absence of anything exciting to write about, these initially adventurous diaries described the duties allocated throughout the week. Edwin Rider thus explained 'I am ships orderly Sgt that means a busy day'.[148] Likewise William Burrel wrote, 'Lock, Alf + myself are to be mess orderlies for four days; this is, till Friday'.[149] The work was not as strenuous as that of the training camps, but it was monotonous, tiring, and added to the sense of tedium on board. Guards were posted at locations throughout the ship to keep watch, a task many working class men believed was a pointless waste of time given the absence of any enemy.

The sense of boredom was also coupled with the feeling that little progress was being made. Whilst land was in sight diary writers noted geographical locations they were passing, thus in the days following his embarkation from Sydney the following entries appear in Ernest Murray's diary,

| | |
|---|---|
| 20/10/14 | passed Eden "Two Fold Bay" about 3P.M. |
| 21/10/14 | Passed Wilsons Promontary about 7a.m. |
| 22/10/14 | Passed Port Phillip about 5.30 ... Passed Cape Ottway about 1P.M[150] |

[147] Kent, *From Trench and Troopship*, p. 12.
[148] Edwin Rider, No. 1812, Steel Engraver, Waterloo, ML MSS 1295, diary entry dated 26/3/15.
[149] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 4/1/16.
[150] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, diary entries as dated.

Denis Patrick Brock wrote of the initial stages of his adventure in a similar fashion,

| | |
|---|---|
| 16/8/16 | I retired for the night as we were passing through the heads 7P.M. |
| 17/8/16 | we were then off Cape Otway |
| 18/8/16 | We were just putting up alongside the pier 'Outer Harbour' Adelaide. |
| 19/8/16 | Where are we? In the 'Great Australian Bight'. |
| 20/8/16 | we are still in the bight |
| 21/8/16 | We sighted land at 4P.M. West Aust. |
| 22/8/16 | We saw the lights of Fremantle about 7 P.M, and arrived at the pier at 10 P.M.[151] |

Yet when the sight of land was lost the only sense of progress was in the occasional reports received from the ships crew. Thus after leaving Fremantle Murray's entries note the distance travelled, as the following entry reveals,

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25/10/14 | Travelled | 19th to 20th run | 192 miles |
| | | 20 " 21 | 303 |
| | | 21 " 22 | 284 |
| | | 22 " 23 | 281 |
| | | 23 " 24 | 283 |
| | | 24 " 25 | 168 [152] |

[151] Denis Patrick Brock, No. 1796, Motor driver and mechanic, Footscray, State Library of Victoria (hereafter SLVIC) MS 12974, diary entries as dated.
[152] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, diary entry dated 25/10/14.

Murray wrote of his service as a journey, and as with other travel writers he noted places of reference to put into perspective the geographical progress of his adventure.[153] Yet when the last glimpse of land disappeared and the troopship convoys were surrounded by the vast expanses of the oceans men struggled with the unknown. Few reference points were available to give evidence that they were actually moving and the same sights of the horizon day after day increased the sense of boredom on board.[154]

The reality of the troopship journey led many recruits to realise that this was not going to be 'The Chance of a Lifetime'. Gammage noted that upon embarkation 'One or two men, shrinking from an onerous duty and an uncertain future, deserted at the last, but the majority were convinced of the necessity of their task, and that consoled their unhappiness'.[155] Similarly Denis Brock noted within his diary that '8 Soldiers deserted at Cape Town and we have the honor of being the only complete unit on board now'.[156] It is of course possible that not all of these men deserted, the chance to go ashore and explore a different country may have led many to lose track of space and time. Others, having access to large supplies of alcohol after a relatively dry spell, may have found themselves physically unable to make it back to the ship on time. On the other hand, life aboard a troopship was not what working class men expected. The 'Free Tour' was cramped and stuffy, the food of poor quality, and the days tedious and tiring. Cecil Monk typically observed in one of his diary entries, 'Calm seas Church eat sleep days work noting exciting to record'.[157] After leaving

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[153] Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller,* and Hassam, *Sailing to Australia*, p. 94-97.
[154] See for example Hassam, *Sailing to Australia,* pp. 89-97.
[155] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 36.
[156] Denis Patrick Brock, No. 1796, Motor driver and mechanic, Footscray, SLVIC MS 12974, diary entry dated 11/9/16.
[157] Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, ML MSS 2884, diary entry dated 12/11/16.

several entries blank, William Hennell was reconciled to write, 'There isn't anything to put down for a week'.[158] The feature of these quotes that stand out is the fact that these men were writing diaries of their adventurous and exciting times. Their diaries were not merely records of experiences in the military - were that the case they would have described in greater detail what daily life was like on a troopship. Instead, these diaries were written to be a permanent record of one's adventures. Life on board a troopship was so contrary to these expectations that men such as Monk felt it natural to write 'nothing exciting to record', or for men such as Hennell to claim that there 'isn't anything to put down'.

For working class men the troopship journey epitomised their military service; it was one long, monotonous journey into the unknown, full of work and training, surrounded by an unfamiliar landscape, and interspersed with the dwindling hopes of an adventure. The initial feelings of anxiety and fear in embarking on a long journey gave way to long bouts of seasickness. Henry Dadswell was one of the first on board to feel sick and this lasted for six days, only receding when his transport docked in Fremantle.[159] When the seasickness passed men finally had the chance to experience a sense of wonder and amazement, but as daily life on board slipped into a dull monotony men soon realised that the most exciting part of their journey would be disembarking. Alfred Baker summed up his feelings at the end of the journey, 'We had been at sea now for about 9 weeks and were about fed up with the trip'.[160] Similarly Frederick Heming wrote in a letter home, 'I will be glad when we reach a

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[158] William Thomas Hennell, No. 5835, Painter, Petersham, ML MSS 1620, diary entry dated 3/11/16.
[159] Henry William Dadswell, No. 6868, Carpenter, Ararat, SLVIC MS 10011, 'Diary of a sapper', unpublished memoirs, p. 10.
[160] Alfred Stanley Baker, No. 2860, Dealer, Annandale, AWM PR02077, unpublished narrative.

port for the trip has got a bit tiresome we have very little to do but sleep and read'.[161] Denis Brock explained upon arriving in England at the end of his journey, 'after 6 weeks travelling and I must say I am not sorry it is over at last'.[162] Similar sentiments were expressed in the diaries of other working class men. The voyage was 'monotonous', 'boring', and 'tiring', but it was also necessary.

The fleet of troopships brought men to the various theatres of war, it gave them time to relax before heading to the front lines, but most importantly, it gave them time to question their expectations of an adventure and of what lay ahead. Eric Leed argues that 'The departure charters the journey, establishing its motives and first meanings. The departure also establishes the initial identity of the traveler'.[163] The diaries and letters of working class men written aboard the troopships echo their initial motivations for enlistment. But in the long and monotonous journey to Egypt, England or France men also realised that even life at sea revolved around work and training. These working class men were still soldiers, and they were still subject to the orders of their officers.

The embarkation of men from Australia's shores by means of the requisitioned fleet of troopships was clearly the beginning of active service for Australian soldiers, and the start of the great adventure for a large number of working class men. Hopes of seeing the world, of experiencing 'The Chance of a Lifetime', and of seeing sights many had only read about in the papers continued in the minds of many men right up to their first experience with combat. For several thousand of these men, the

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[161] Frederick Thomas Heming, No. 3650, Laundryman, Balmain, AWM PR03137, letter home dated 14/11/17.
[162] Denis Patrick Brock, No. 1796, Motor driver and mechanic, Footscray, SLVIC MS 12974, diary entry dated 2/10/16.
[163] Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller*, p. 25.

shattering of these adventurous illusions came in the early hours of 25 April 1915 on the shores of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

## Chapter Three: The Nature Of Work – Gallipoli

### The Theatres of Work

The unit individuals served in, and the location they served at, were two primary factors in determining the nature of work that men were required to undertake. In particular for men of the infantry, the greatest variations to the general nature of their work came through serving in different theatres of war. Thus whilst digging was a priority for Australian soldiers throughout the Gallipoli campaign, both in the front lines and behind the lines, when these men arrived in France they found the majority of this work had already been completed for them and thus their main task whilst in the line was to maintain these defences.

Service on Gallipoli brought a different type of life, a different environment, and different demands of work. Bean argued in the *Official history* that the manual labour and 'fatigues' demanded of men during the Gallipoli campaign was 'heavier and more continuous than in later years, there were rarely any periods of even nominal rest'.[1] To truly earn a 'rest', men had to be shipped off the peninsula to Lemnos, Alexandria, or Malta for recovery.[2] On the Western Front they were simply moved several kilometres behind the lines where they could take shelter in a nearby village.

Similarly the work routine varied between the different theatres of war. On the Western Front the Australians slotted into an already smoothly operating system of occupying the front line trenches. Battalions rotated between the front and the rear,

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[1] C. E. W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918: Volume II, The Story of Anzac: From 4 May, 1915 to the Evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941 [first published 1924], p. 50.
[2] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 381.

whilst companies rotated within these to occupy front line and support trenches. This was a significant contrast to the relatively cluttered situation on Gallipoli. Around Anzac the support and reserve trenches were placed very close to the front lines to provide faster support in the case of an attack and men slept wherever they could find room, sometimes crowding the narrow communications trenches to such an extent that men passing through had to walk over the sleeping bodies below.[3]

Time spent in the lines also differed greatly amongst the different theatres. Denis Winter notes that 'The Black Watch once served forty-eight days in the line unrelieved, whilst the 31st Queenslanders prided themselves on a fifty-three-day stint at Villers Bretonneux, but they were exceptional'.[4] By contrast Gallipoli must be seen as one continuous 'time in the line'. One British soldier from the 63rd Division contrasted 'the trenches of the peninsula' against 'the normal or "peace time" sectors of France'.[5] Trenches connected every position on Anzac and there were few places where men could escape artillery or sniper fire. Throughout the early months rifle and shellfire from around the peninsula provided the regular background noises that could not be escaped.

Additionally on the Western Front a line of trenches could be lost, or captured, and it would mean a few hundred metres difference and little more on the grand scale. On Gallipoli the loss or gain of a few hundred yards meant the difference between the success or failure of the entire campaign. Indeed, in certain places along the line, and around Quinn's Post in particular, the Ottoman forces only needed to capture a few yards of trench to threaten the entire allied position.[6] This precarious situation on

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[3] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 51.
[4] Winter, *Death's Men*, p. 81.
[5] T. Ashworth, *Trench Warfare 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System*, Macmillan Press, London, 1980, p. 213.
[6] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 50.

Gallipoli gave rise to what Bean described as a level of 'tension in the front line to be far greater than the A.I.F. experienced in any other theatre of war'.[7] Of course, it also led to different demands being placed upon soldiers occupying these lines.

This differing nature of work is also evident in the diaries of working class men who enlisted and worked with the Australian Imperial Force. The work-related issues that they raised on Gallipoli were different to those from the Western Front. In particular the ever-present theme of digging in the diaries of men written on Gallipoli becomes less important in the writings of men in France and Belgium. By contrast, no man's land played a greater role in the work of men on the Western Front. Wire needed to be set up, enemy wire taken down, and patrols sent out to explore. On Gallipoli, whilst such activities did occur, they were rarely reported within the diaries of men, suggesting that these were of a less frequent nature, and, when they were undertaken, the job was completed in a hastier fashion due to the close proximity of the enemy.

Because of these differences the examination of the nature of work has been divided into two chapters. This chapter largely focuses upon the Gallipoli campaign and the nature of work undertaken by working class men of the AIF. The following chapter follows on from this and pursues these men as they experienced a new type of warfare, and new demands of work, on the Western Front.

**The landing, and the legend…**

On 25 April 1915 the allied Mediterranean Expeditionary Force led by General Sir Ian Hamilton invaded the Ottoman Empire with a series of landings along the

[7] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 51.

Gallipoli Peninsula. The plan was to take the peninsula swiftly and then march on through to Constantinople. With the Ottoman capital captured Germany's new ally would be out of the war and a trade route re-opened to Russia through the Bosphorus and the Black Sea.

The Australian part in this invasion, as part of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps within the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, was to land north of Gaba Tepe, press inland, and secure the heights around Mal Tepe.[8] In doing so the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps would threaten and potentially cut the line of retreat of Ottoman forces from the south, whilst also preventing the Turkish forces from bringing up reinforcements from the north.[9] On paper this simply meant the movement of forces over a contoured map, in reality it led to a futile campaign that cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

At 4:30am the covering force, the 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade, landed ashore around a point known as Ari Burnu. Under rifle and machine gun fire many left their packs on the beaches before pressing over the hills and into the heights beyond.[10] Over the next five days some 20 000 Australians landed along the coast of this small stretch of land.[11] This was the first taste of battle for most of the men of the Australian Imperial Force. It was what many had signed up for: to fight for 'King and Country', to prove their worth, and to see some action. Though in this first week of the invasion all quickly learnt that war was not the glorious adventure that it had been made out to be.

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[8] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 219-220.
[9] D. Cameron, *25 April 1915: The day the Anzac legend was born*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2007, pp. 12-13, and Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 220.
[10] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, pp. 256-257.
[11] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 281.

Their illusions came at a cost. On Gallipoli the combat was real, the war was real, the bullets, the bayonets and the bombardments were all real, and as friends and work-mates fell to Turkish snipers the Australians realised that the threat of death was also real. The enthusiasm that had marked their entries prior to 25 April disappeared and was replaced by a profound sense of shock, bewilderment, and fear.[12] On the first day alone the Australian's lost some 2000 men.[13] By the time news of the invasion had reached Australia the casualties from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp were up over 7000.[14]

It was two weeks before the Australian people knew of the landings at Gallipoli. On 8 May 1915 the Australian newspapers printed a report on the Gallipoli landing written by the British war correspondent Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, parts of which highlight the heroism of the Australian men,

> …The boats had almost reached the shore when a party of Turks entrenched ashore opened a terrific fusillade with rifles and a Maxim. Fortunately most of the bullets went high. The Australians rose to the occasion. They did not wait for orders or for the boats to reach the beach, but sprang into the sea and formed a rough line. They rushed the enemy's trenches, although their magazines were uncharged. They just went in with cold steel.
>
> It was over in a minute. The Turks in the first trench either were bayoneted or ran away, and the Maxim was captured.
>
> Then the Australians found themselves facing an almost perpendicular cliff of loose sandstones, covered with thick shrubbery. Somewhere about

[12] Wise, 'Playing Soldiers'.
[13] David Cameron argues that over 20% of the total Anzac casualties from the campaign were from this first day. Cameron, *25 April 1915*, p. 2.
[14] Figures from Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. *xxii*.

> half-way up the enemy had a second trench, strongly held, from which poured a terrific fire on the troops below and the boats pulled back to the destroyers for a second landing party.
>
> …
>
> There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights, and, above all, the holding on whilst reinforcements were landing. These raw colonial troops in these desperate hours proved worthy to fight side by side with the heroes of Mons, the Aisne, Ypres, and Neuve Chapelle.[15]

This was the first news item the Australian public had of Australian soldiers in action. It was the first news the Australian people received of their husbands, brothers, sons, workmates, team mates, and neighbours fighting on a previously unheard of place, Gallipoli. The news of the invasion, focusing upon Australia's involvement, stretched throughout Australia. Every city suburb and country town learnt very quickly where Gallipoli was.

Ashmead-Bartlett's report focused upon the glory of the landing, the Australians were 'cheerful, quiet, and confident, showing no sign of nerves or excitement', they cheered as they captured enemy positions and they 'were happy because they knew they had been tried for the first time, and had not been found wanting'.[16] The landing was seen as a glorious moment in Australia's history as the 'Australian stock' had proved their worth on an international scale for the first time. The report was republished throughout Australian newspapers over the following

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[15] F. Brenchley and E. Brenchley, *Myth Maker: Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett: The Englishman Who Sparked Australia's Gallipoli Legend*, John Wiley & Sons Australia, Milton, 2005, pp. 261-265.
[16] Brenchley and Brenchley, *Myth Maker*, p. 67.

week and was eventually published as a specialised booklet for schools, giving Ashmead-Bartlett an enthusiastic nationwide audience.[17]

Ashmead-Bartlett's report thus laid the foundation stone for the Anzac Legend.[18] It told of 'raw colonial troops' worthy enough to fight alongside great British heroes. It told of Australians springing into the sea of their own initiative and charging the enemy with cold steel. This excited the readers at home who were finally happy to read something that they saw as 'positive' coming from the war. Prior to the Gallipoli invasion the Australian Imperial Force were involved in media controversies regarding the state of their training camps, their lack of discipline, and the high rates of venereal disease amongst men.[19] Yet in May 1915 many at home would have shook with exhilaration as they read of men scaling the 'almost perpendicular cliffs'. Most of all they would have felt a sense of national pride in reading of there being 'no finer feat in the war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights'.

The Official Historian, C. E. W. Bean, praised Ashmead-Bartlett's efforts in raising the status of the Australian soldier. Yet Bean was also wary of Ashmead-Bartlett's exaggerations. In the *Official history* Bean noted that 'A brilliant despatch from Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, published a few days after the Landing, brought the effort of these young nations before the world in such a manner that some speak to this day as if the landings were an affair of Australasian troops alone'.[20] Ashmead-

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[17] Brenchley and Brenchley, *Myth Maker*, p. 67.
[18] Although Bean too wrote a report on the landing he was not at the time recognised by General Headquarters as the Official War Correspondent, and thus his account was not printed in the Australian press until a week after Ashmead-Bartlett's. Brenchley and Brenchley, *Myth Maker*, p. 67.
[19] See for example Rich, *Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Administration of the Liverpool Camp*, and Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', pp. 12-13.
[20] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 605.

Bartlett created the image of the Australian soldier as a rugged, determined, and courageous fighter, and these characteristics have formed much of the image that stood the test of time. However, Bean's account in the *Official history* and the experiences that are gained from the letters and diaries of the men who served present a very different picture.

**The dominance of work**

As has already been argued, the traditional focus upon combat, trench warfare, the ebb and flow of military campaigns, and the 'reasons for victory or defeat' in battle has meant that the lives of soldiers behind the lines have largely been ignored.[21] Furthermore, the assumptions of daily life in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War, upon which a large part of the historical literature have been written and upon which many understandings of 'experiences of war' have been formed, are wrong. The dominance of work within the Australian soldier's daily life has been forgotten, and the approach towards military service as a job of work almost entirely ignored.

The historical literature has largely passed over the records of war that display the rank and files' complaints about boredom and a lack of adventure. Instead, traditional approaches towards military history have preferred the strategies, tactics, and battles of the Great War;[22] whilst the more publicly accessible and popularly

[21] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 15.
[22] One is not required to look far to find examples of this genre of writing. Most major battles and campaigns from the Great War have at least a dozen different books written on the course of events in the front line, again whilst largely neglecting events behind the lines. For a similar argument see Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 6, and Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 12.

promoted works have sought what one blurb termed 'the true story of war - not the dusty facts and figures of the history books, but the very real emotions of hope and fear, love and longing, life and death'.[23] The diaries of Henry Wyatt, John Bruce, and Frederick Blake are highly unlikely to be published in this field with its pursuit of 'very real emotions'; these men simply do not provide the type of insight people have wanted into their national icons. They speak little of 'love and longing' or of 'hope and fear'; their open and vocal form of patriotism somehow lost between the lines of graves in the cemeteries on the beach and the unburied others who wait for a burial in no man's land. Henry Wyatt's diary comprised of brief one-sentence entries, sometimes barely two words to an entire entry; John Bruce's diary was unique in its reportage on how he *hated* officers and *loved* avoiding work; whilst Frederick Blake's heroic adventures had to wait as he worked as a sanitary inspector with the Anzac Mounted Division and dedicated more 'real emotions' towards the problems with scorpions and sand than he did with any enemy.[24]

These aspects of war experiences, the real 'voices from the trenches', were experiences of work, and voices describing this work. Working class men serving in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War wrote regularly about the work they were doing, they wrote about how they felt about this work, the nature of this work, who was ordering them to perform this work, how long it took them to perform this work, their hours of work, and how difficult this work was. These were not

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[23] Cited from the blurb of N. Carthew, *Voices from the Trenches: Letters to Home*, New Holland, Sydney, 2002. A publisher's note at the beginning of the book also advises readers that 'Although certain descriptions are fictitious, this book is based entirely on fact'.

[24] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, and Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, see for example diary entry dated 24/6/18.

random, occasional entries about a day repairing a trench. They were often every day, regular patterns of reporting, and they filled page after page of these men's diaries.

Daily work within the military was also a primary source of complaint within diaries. William Burrell recorded in May 1916, 'a nice sketch has been put up on the door showing a swagman with a wooden leg + hook arm + these words: What did you do in the great war eh? The reply is "fatigue"'.[25] Men such as William Burrell were not told about the 'work' they would be ordered to perform. In enlistment posters and brochures the work of the military remained unseen. Their pay was advertised, the potential for adventure, a tour around the world, even the possibility of fighting, but few enlistment posters mentioned or suggested in any way that regular, daily 'fatigues' would be the core part of the work required of men serving with the Australian Imperial Force.

Francis Addy worked in the front lines, he worked in support, he worked in reserves, he worked whilst training, and he worked whilst 'resting'. The work of the front lines, support, and reserves has only partially been recorded in the historical literature because it overlaps with the combat-based experience of war. Bean's *Official histories* made note of the digging of trenches, observation posts, and dug-outs if they related to combat or the progress of the campaign. Bean notes for example that, 'On Pope's the 16th Battalion fired from the crest of the spur while it dug in along the edge',[26] or 'In the intervals between these attacks the Australians and New Zealanders dug as best they could. Picks and shovels were more precious than rifles, and far more scarce',[27] and, 'the 13th Battalion, though it lost 200 men during the night, managed to dig a system of support and communication trenches on the summit

[25] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 25/5/16.
[26] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 473.
[27] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 473.

and slope of Dead Man's Ridge'.[28] In these extracts the work of digging was primarily mentioned because it was supplementary to combat. It was noted since it shaped the course of battle, not because it filled the daily lives of men.

Whilst military historians focus upon these battles and how they shaped the course of the war, the diaries of working class men make clear that the men on Anzac were primarily focusing upon the work they were ordered to undertake. Hector Brewer's diary provides a key example. For four and a half months, until being taken from the peninsula to Mudros, Brewer described the regular work on Gallipoli, water fatigues, guard duty, digging trenches, carrying rations, building roads, and being mess orderly, all with a sense of regularity that the following entries reveal,

6/5/15 We were lined up to dig a trench or road to bring the guns up to their positions.

7/5/15 Our platoon on fatigue digging trenches + filling up holes. One of our comrades W. Bates killed by shrapnel + several chaps wounded whilst on fatigue. We have more casualties out of the firing line than in it.

8/5/15 Today we left the fire trench for a rest about 6PM having done 24 hours on watch. Had to haul up an 18 Pounder gun. It was hard work.

9/5/15 So far we have had plenty of hard work + little or no rest right from the word go ... On guard all night

[28] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 591.

10/5/15 Came off duty this morning about 5 AM ... Our platoon resting today. Fifteen of our plat. ordered to go out + make a road for guns. I missed that job.[29]

Brewer did not ignore the war in his diary. The presence of the enemy was made clear by the loss of a comrade and having to do '24 hours on watch'. Indeed within the first month of the campaign the ceaseless rifle fire was impossible to ignore. Though importantly it is clear that his focus was upon work. The mention of W. Bates' death follows the news that Brewer is 'on fatigue digging + filling up holes'. Work - daily, repetitive, and monotonous – was the primary theme of Brewer's diary.

Hector Brewer is only one example. The diaries of other working class men serving with the Australian Imperial Force on Gallipoli reveal similar patterns of daily life being dominated by work. Historians have often noted the sense of monotony that developed amongst men on the Gallipoli Peninsula as a stalemate developed between the two enemies,[30] though few have suggested that this monotony may have been caused by the endless demands of work and by its sense of futility – trenches were repaired on one day, only to be destroyed by the enemy on the following.[31] Hector Brewer wrote amid his reports of work on 10 June 1915, 'This life is getting very monotonous'.[32] Others shared similar sentiments though used different words. The reports of the 'usual work' and the 'same work again' suggest not only a lack of enthusiasm about the job, but also a sense of disillusionment in the nature of warfare,

[29] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entries as dated.
[30] See for example Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 91.
[31] Bean notes at one point that the 'men became jaded with heavy monotonous work', Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 378. The frustrations caused by the futility of work are explored further in the following chapter.
[32] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 10/6/15.

in the expectations of military service, and importantly also in the demands of manual labour placed upon the rank and file soldier.


**Figure 3: Map of the positions in the Anzac area of Gallipoli.**[33]

[33] Taken from P. Stanley, *Quinn's Post, Anzac, Gallipoli*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, p. 26.

**The Need To Dig**

'Digging' in Bean's writing, was something men did in order to face combat. It was secondary to the role of the soldier whose primary task was to fight. Though in the lives of men during the Gallipoli campaign 'digging' was one of the most common activities soldiers were ordered to carry out. In particular during the first three months, digging during the day often continued throughout the night and according to Bean involved 'a sum of labour which was never quite equalled in the later experience of the AIF'.[34] This 'sum of labour' is difficult to find in the historical literature, though it is clearly evident in the diaries of the working class men who were ordered to undertake this work.

The first Australians to land were given the most difficult task. They faced rugged hillsides, frequently leaning towards shear cliff faces, covered in dense shrub from which the relatively small body of Turkish soldiers picked off the invaders one at a time. The thousands of young Australian men landing on shore to face the overwhelming environment that day knew they had two things to do, press inland, then dig.

The first boats carrying Australian soldiers landed on Ari Burnu at 4:30am and by 7:00am men were already digging in around The Nek and Plugge's Plateau.[35] Similar situations arose around the Peninsula. The men of the AIF pressed inland to vital positions, dug a narrow trench, and where possible proceeded on again through the shrub. Digging provided a temporary cover and a secure point that could be returned to if something went wrong. The Australians would dig when the Turkish

[34] Bean also argued that the 'whole Anzac position was so narrow and so overlooked that the vital task of digging to improve it took on somewhat the aspect of a battle'. Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 254.
[35] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 275.

fire became too great, or where they felt a position would be important to hold. Under the command of Captain Joseph Lalor, grandson of Peter Lalor of Eureka fame, the Australians based along the narrow crest at The Nek gave priority to a valuable horse-shoe trench that faced up the ridge towards Baby 700 in the north-east. Bean argued that here on The Nek when Turkish soldiers pressed these positions the Australians simply 'drove the enemy back then went on digging'.[36] The trenches dug on this day would prove vital to the survival of the Anzac position. Along this narrow ridge the trenches that Lalor's men dug so early on that first day ensured the Turkish troops could not penetrate to the top of the Sphinx. Though at the same time the importance of the position from both an Australian and a Turkish point of view would lead hundreds of dismounted Light Horsemen to their deaths in the futile charges of the August offensive.

Throughout the day men sought similar positions to dig safely without risk of being cut off or shot at. Sometimes the fire was so great that men could not dig, they simply lay where they were and attempted to return fire.[37] On many occasions men could not stand up to dig, though in preparation for such situations they had been trained to scratch the surface with their shovel whilst lying prone to the ground.[38] Bean described the task that thousands of Australians were set to work at throughout the first two days,

> The practice was in the first place to scrape with the entrenching tool small separate coffin-shaped pits to shelter the head and body. When these were two feet in depth, with the excavated earth thrown up on their left front as a

[36] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I,* p. 319.
[37] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I,* p. 346.
[38] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I,* p. 428.

> parapet, a man would be under fair cover. He could then deepen his pit and connect it with those of the men on either side of him. Men were sometimes taught to lie in a slightly irregular line, so that the trench when connected would be "traversed." If it were dug straight, a rifle bullet or shrapnel from the flank would sweep directly down it, but in an irregular trench the bends or "traverses" stopped the enfilading pellets. When the conditions were such that the engineers could site it and mark it out with pegs, and when the men had proper tools - picks and shovels - to dig with, the rule was to design the fire trench straight, but with traverses at intervals to meet enfilading fire; during daylight, and in the heat of battle, this accuracy was not possible. The 3rd Brigade on the day of the landing carried only the 'entrenching tools', which formed part of each infantryman's equipment - miniature picks with one end flattened. With these they scratched themselves such holes as they could, waiting for picks and shovels to be brought after dark.[39]

As reinforcements arrived they would provide cover for those digging, firing upon any enemy they saw approaching.[40] During lulls these covering parties would assist in the digging to provide a more secure position from which to operate. At other times reinforcements would come across these lines of digging parties, then pass straight through, knowing that they would have somewhere to return to if their advances failed.[41] In the confusion of this first day battalions became entangled, men from Queensland dug with men from Victoria whilst New South Welshmen provided

[39] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I,* p. 428.
[40] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I,* p. 344.
[41] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I,* p. 353.

cover.[42] On the fringes as units lost their leaders and as communications broke down Australians and New Zealanders dug the same trenches together.[43]

Throughout this first day and into the night the men of the Australian Imperial Force dug for their lives wherever they ended up. The first wave of 1500 men had not reached their objectives in sufficient numbers and had been forced to dig in along the first and second ridges. As the situation unfolded it became clear that the 20 000 Australians that were to land in those first two days were destined for a difficult struggle. When Birdwood, commander of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, cabled Sir Ian Hamilton, commander of the Mediteranean Expeditionary Force, for advice and reassurance, the reply was remarkably simple, 'you have only to dig, dig, dig, until you are safe'.[44]'Dig, dig, dig' was all the Australians could do, and gradually the product of this digging came together.

Upon this confirmation from Hamilton that the landings at Anzac Cove would be defended, and not withdrawn from, Bean noted that 'The clink of shovels was everywhere on the hillside'.[45] Later, as more and more men walked ashore and pieces of artillery began to arrive, Bean similarly observed that 'The clink of shovels sounded over the whole face of the hill'.[46] Over the first three days individual coffin-shaped riflepits linked up to form small, shallow trenches, then these combined to form large trenches as the lines weaved their way along the narrow ridges and gullies in between. Over the coming months the hills all around became marked with

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[42] The Australian battalions were formed to represent the different military districts. Thus the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, making up the 1st Brigade, were mostly formed of men from New South Wales. The 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions, making up the 2nd Brigade, were mostly formed of men from Victoria, and so forth.
[43] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 317.
[44] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 460-461, see also R. R. James, *Gallipoli*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965, p. 130.
[45] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 461.
[46] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 476.

hundreds of small shelters and dug-outs constructed by all ranks of the Australian Imperial Force.[47]

In this first week in particular the rank and file of the AIF worked almost non-stop and the diary entries of working class men from April and May 1915 repeat the common statement - 'dug trenches'. The riflepits they dug on the first day deepened to form the same trenches that the Australian's occupied nearly eight months later. The need to dig would never come to an end. Positions were constantly improved both in the front lines, and behind them in the communications trenches. Bean argued that on Gallipoli the work of digging these trenches 'never ceased, night or day, until the Evacuation, and the strain of holding it against surprise resulted in the lines being crowded in a manner hardly ever practised after the troops had left Gallipoli'.[48] Along with the artillery and rifle fire, the flies and the disease, the work of digging was something that Australian men soon learnt to deal with.

**Settling in**

The first tumultuous week on Gallipoli established the foundations for the remainder of the campaign. The Australians had not managed to push the Turkish soldiers from the hills and were resolved to digging in opposite their enemy along a narrow line of ridges within easy rifle shot of the beaches on which they had landed. The Turkish forces occupying the heights around Baby 700 could see over, and directly fire upon, the activities of the Australians as they moved through Shrapnel Gully and Monash Gully. The only option for the Australians, aside from withdrawal, was to dig, to bury

[47] Bean notes that even General Bridges' dug-out was a 'ledge cut into the gully-side, with a few sand-bags, and a flap of canvas for roof'. Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 457.
[48] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 51.

themselves below ground and to hide from the prying eyes of the enemy. The need to 'dig' became evident to all from the moment Turkish rifles first fired upon the Australians in the light of early dawn; from then on it became a case of the Australians adjusting to the situation and settling into their precarious position.

The continuous threat of snipers meant that trenches needed to be deep enough to cover the entire body, and time spent in the open was, where possible, kept to a minimum. The day after the landing Henry Wyatt wrote, 'To-day we made our trenches more secure against fire. the snipers shot a few of the boys',[49] and several days later 'The snipers have knocked a lot of our fellows over to-day. The fire otherwise has been a lot easier to-day. The trenches are good now'.[50] Protection against sniper fire was an early priority. Turkish rifle fire had largely been responsible for halting the Australian advance on 25 April and the Australians needed to provide some physical and psychological protection against this unseen threat and ensure that Turkish snipers could not easily pick off their men.

Digging was always tiresome work; it constantly strained the muscles of men and the small entrenching tools supplied to individuals made the task of digging a hole deep enough, wide enough, and long enough to provide cover for an individual all the more difficult. Arthur Giles, arriving in Egypt late in the Gallipoli campaign and unable to find his way onto the peninsula, wrote from camp, 'Have been out trench digging this evening. The hands are a bit soft now for using the pick + shovel kit that will soon pass off'.[51] In a similar vein John Hartley Meads had earlier made subtle criticisms of the effectiveness of the Australian entrenching tools in his

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[49] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 26/4/15.
[50] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 28/4/15.
[51] Arthur Clyde Giles, No. 2837, Boundary Rider, Stanmore, ML MSS 1841, letter home dated 12/11/15.

description of a common tourist attraction in Egypt, 'Went to Cathedral saw Joseph's well went … way down and that was about 200 feet – I'll bet he did not dig it with one of our entrenching tools'.[52] The seemingly endless digging practice that men were subjected to in Egypt must have seemed light when compared with the demands made by officers and the threat posed by the enemy on Gallipoli.

Inefficient tools certainly made the job difficult, though artillery and sniper fire from the enemy made the job deadly. Henry Wyatt explained a close call on Gallipoli, 'To-day while I was digging in a trench a bullet out of the shrapnel hit me on the chest + made a bit of a bruise didn't hurt'.[53] Wyatt was taken back to the beach where he was kept in the 'hospital' for a week. The dangers posed to him whilst lying static on the beach led to a sense of relief at being allowed to return to the lines. Wyatt thus reported in his diary, 'To-day they let me go back to the battalion I was glad to get back it's a lot safer in the trenches'.[54] Even the officers supported Wyatt's belief, as Sir Ian Hamilton revealed in a letter written to Sir John French,

> Everyone here is under fire, and really and truly the front trenches are safer, or at least fully as safe, as the Corps Commander's dug-out. For if the former are nearer the infantry, the latter is near the big guns firing into our rear.[55]

Thus Wyatt's entry was not an attempt to assert his masculine bravery at wanting to be back where the action was; rather, it was a desire to escape the feeling of

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[52] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 17/3/16.
[53] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 3/5/15.
[54] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 11/5/15.
[55] Letter from Sir Ian Hamilton to Sir John French dated 17/6/15. LHA, GB99 KCLMA Hamilton, 7/1/2-4.

vulnerability and to find shelter in the trenches and dug-outs that were constantly being improved up the line.

The more trenches the men dug, the more cover they had when they moved about. The main route to the firing line from the beaches, through Monash Valley and Shrapnel Gully, was a death trap for men who too carelessly chanced their fate. Ion Idriess explained in some detail the potential risk involved in moving through these areas without cover,

> 22/5/15 A party of us volunteered for a sapping job last night. We left camp at eleven and followed the road, which is the gully bottom, meandering up to the firing-line. Across the gully are built sandbag barricades which shield a man just a little from the death-traps along the road. We would bend our heads and run to a big barricade, lean against the bags until we panted back our breath, then dive around the corner and rush for the next barricade. The bullets that flew in between each barricade did not lend wings to our feet for nothing could have made us run faster. A few hundred yards ahead of us and high up is the firing line, perched precariously on a circle of frowning cliffs. The Turks have an especial trench up there which commands our 'road'. The trench is filled with expert snipers, unerring shots who have killed God only knows how many of our men when coming along the road.
>
> …
>
> Our object was to cut a trench from a sap, through the little rise back towards the gully, and thus save the necessity of walking along that

> particular danger-spot of the tragic road…After our working shift, we lost no time hurrying down that 'zip-zipping' road to 'camp'.[56]

In a stark reflection of the nature of work on Gallipoli, the largest cemetery built during the campaign was in an uncontested location, Shrapnel Gully.[57] This was the route men took to travel to the front lines to work, or to cart material up to men in the trenches. It was along this valley system that the man with the donkey, John Simpson Kirkpatrick, lost his life to a Turkish sniper on 19 May. Kirkpatrick had been a well-known figure on the peninsula and his death in Monash Valley by sniper fire was noted in a number of men's diaries at the time. Ion Idriess noted, 'The infantry are quite cut up – not over their terrible losses, but because of one man, Simpson Kirkpatrick I think his name is'.[58] Through the construction of trenches around the peninsula the Australians provided a sense of psychological security against this threat of snipers.

These losses to snipers were demoralising to the men who had to continue their work. The dead and wounded would have to be removed from the job, taken down to the beach for treatment if possible, and the surviving colleagues left to return to the job at hand. Idriess explained in late May,

> 28/5/15 Snipers shot fifteen Aussies this morning and a shrapnel got four of our regimental A. M. C. men. It is heartbreaking to see so many men

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[56] Ion Llewellyn Idriess, No. 358, Miner, Grafton, I. L. Idriess, *The Desert Column: Leaves from the diary of an Austalian Trooper in Gallipoli, Sinai, and Palestine,* Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1951, diary entry dated 22/5/15, p. 12.

[57] The Lone Pine Cemetery is now the largest though this only became so in the post-war effort to reconcile the scattered graves.

[58] Idriess, No. 358, Miner, Grafton, from Idriess, *The Desert Column,* diary entry dated 22/5/15, p. 1.

killed and maimed when they are not in the actual firing-line. No matter on what peaceful errand we go, death goes too. We never know whether we will wake up alive'.[59]

The stress of working in a situation where a colleague had just been hit by a sniper played on these men's minds. For working class men this was like heading back down a mineshaft after an explosion, or returning to an unsafe production line after an accident. The threat of death was evident, but work had to continue as normal. In the 1910s these workers were well acquainted with accidental deaths in the workplace. In a case study of a Dungog and the Upper Williams Valley, in New South Wales, from 1856 to 1910, Glenda Strachan and Lindy Henderson argue that deaths in rural communities were almost twice as great as those in urban communities, and on average 12% of all rural deaths were caused by accident or negligence in the workplace.[60] Yet, whilst these men had some knowledge of this experience with death and the grieving process, this could not prepare them for the slaughter of trench warfare.[61] In Leonard and Alison's analysis of shooting incidents on the stress levels of police officers they argue that such experiences 'can easily overcome a person's

[59] Idriess, No. 358, Miner, Grafton, from Idriess, *The Desert Column*, diary entry dated 28/5/15, p. 16. The A. M. C. was the Army Medical Corps.
[60] G. Strachan and L. Henderson, 'Deaths in a rural community: Dungog and the Upper Williams Valley 1856-1910', in B. Bowden and J. Kellett (eds.), *Transforming Labour: Work, organisation, struggle; Proceedings of the eighth national labour history conference held at College of Art, Griffith University, South Bank, Brisbane, 3-5 October 2003*, Brisbane Labour History Association, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 295-301.
[61] For an Australian contrast between dealing with a workplace accident, and dealing with the loss of a soldier at war, see J. Hawksley, '"Days of Tears and Longing": War, Grief and Memory in the Illawarra 1914-1925', BA Hons Thesis, University of Wollongong, 2004.

normal ability to cope'.[62] Police officers received stress counselling and support; Australian soldiers on Gallipoli were simply expected to return to work and get on with the job.

In the AIF, men believed that death came whilst fighting. They expected war to have its risks, but they understood these risks to come with combat; soldiers were meant to die a heroic death in battle against the enemy. By contrast, being shot by a sniper whilst working on a road or a trench was not a true 'soldier's death'. Colleagues could not write home reporting how an individual 'died game, facing the enemy to the last'. The Australian's soon discovered that the threat of death was everywhere; it certainly did not end when men finished work, or when they left the lines. Death was present on every square inch of that dreaded peninsula. There was simply no escape, as Idriess explained in another experience involving Turkish snipers,

30/5/15 A man was just shot dead in front of me. He was a little infantry lad, quite a boy, with snowy hair that looked comical above his clean white singlet. I was going for water. He stepped out of a dugout and walked down the path ahead, whistling. I was puffing the old pipe, whilst carrying a dozen water-bottles. Just as we were crossing Shrapnel Gully he suddenly flung up his water-bottles, wheeled around, and stared for one startled second, even as he crumpled to my feet. In seconds his hair was scarlet, his clean white singlet all crimson.[63]

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[62] Leonard, R. and Alison, L., 'Critical incident stress debriefing and its effects on coping strategies and anger in a sample of Australian police officers involved in shooting incidents', *Work & Stress*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1999, pp. 144-161.
[63] Idriess, No. 358, Miner, Grafton, from Idriess, *The Desert Column*, diary entry dated 30/5/15, p. 19.

The thought of being hit by an unseen enemy whilst digging a trench or carrying water played on men's minds. Wherever men were sent to work on the peninsula they were ordered to carry their rifles with them against the possibility of an enemy breakthrough, and as a constant reminder of where they were.[64]

Different types of work in different locations around Anzac merely put men at different risks of death. John Booth learnt that in escaping the risk of death in one form, men simply put themselves at risk of death in another form,

> On the morning of Aug/26/15, I was put on water fatigue, and had to go a mile down to the well, near the seashore. There were three wells, called respectively, Turks well, French, and Australian well ... Whilst waiting my turn to get water, the Sea looked so inviting and the day was so hot, that I made up my mind to have a bathe I went to a place a little distance away, where there were few stones, and after undressing, dived in. The water was A.1. and a number of chaps came in with me, and we were disporting ourselves, when suddenly the water ahead was whipped up with bullets and the patter of a machine gun heard. I ran up the shore a bit and laid flat behind a hummock on the burning sand, staying there an hour, whilst the sun scorched my back. None of our party were hit, but a few men near the well were, and a number of tins riddled, which was aggravating as tins were very scarce. I got my eight gallons of water, and started back and when halfway the chap in

[64] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 52.

> front of me was shot in the leg; we eventually getting to our destination without further mishap.[65]

At leisure, and at work, men constantly placed their lives in danger. Though as trenches and tunnels expanded and men learnt the value of cover, the risks involved in walking between certain areas of the battlefield eased. In early May the scattered posts around Anzac were linked together by trenches and tunnels, some following paths down what Bean described as an 'almost sheer hillside'.[66] Whilst positions were made safer men soon learnt when and where they had to keep their heads down.

The task given to the Australians on Anzac was purely a defensive one. They were to hold the line, improve their position, harass the enemy, and impel the Turks to maintain a force in the Anzac area whilst the allied force at Helles tried to push through.[67] On 1st May Hamilton instructed Birdwood that 'Until you receive further orders, no general advance is to be initiated by you'.[68] The 'need to dig', as described above, provided the defensive position needed. Though once the defences had been adequately provided for, the purpose of digging began to turn to the offensive. Trenches that had been dug initially to defend the ground won were soon expanded to provide positions that threatened the Turkish line. Along the perimeter, the 'clink of shovels' that Bean had noted over the first few nights now rang to a different tune as men dug out towards the enemy, taking the front lines to the Turkish positions.

During the first three months on the peninsula the Australians gained ground not through heroic bayonet charges, terrific bombardments or effective machine gun

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[65] John Booth, No. 164, Shipwright, Balmain, ML MSS 1496, summary of diary entries, written on Feb 24, 1917 from No.3 Southern General Hospital in Oxford, England, p. 6.
[66] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 47.
[67] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 44.
[68] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 44.

fire, but through the labours of the AIF - their work with pick and shovel on the earth.[69] With no general advance, these months were largely characterised by a war of work, a battle to see which side could procure the best position and piece of ground through digging and tunnelling. In mid July Joseph Burgess described the ferocity of this digging, 'There is a lot of work going on out here on this right flank. its dig, dig, dig, day + night but it will help us when the time comes I suppose'.[70] Men worked in rotations both in the front lines and in the established paths down to the beaches. Throughout the trenches hands blistered and calloused as pick and shovel tore holes through the dusty earth. Backs and necks ached and strained through the pain as men, crouched in narrow trenches and tunnels, scraped away at walls. The limitations of space and the threat of snipers afforded little room to labour effectively. Nonetheless, it was vital work, and gradually the product of this labour came together as the trenches began to press forwards towards the Turkish lines and extend outwards.

The allied trenches and dug-outs cut into whatever ground was available on the barely held strips of terrain. Bean argued that the work of tunnelling, sapping, and digging was performed 'in every direction to extend their tenure'.[71] Much like the planting of a British flag established British claims to previously occupied land, so too the digging of a trench had the effect of laying Australian claims to the Turkish land they had invaded. The authoritative power of the musket around Sydney in 1788 was replaced by the authoritative power of rifle, bayonet, and naval bombardment around Gallipoli in 1915. And where the construction of settler's huts on the frontier hut sought to extend European tenure throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so too the digging of trenches, the confrontation of the soldier with the

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[69] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 267.
[70] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 2/7/15
[71] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 50.

ground, sought to extend Australian tenure on the peninsula. With the typical tools of their trade, the rifle, pick, and shovel, the Australians stretched out across the peninsula to settle their new home.

On 'Anzac' the Australians claimed the land, they mapped it, built upon it, buried their dead upon it, and to conclude formalities, they named it. Simon Ryan argues that the concept of Australia as a blank sheet upon which the Europeans explored and built was an attempt to erase previous Aboriginal ownership;[72] with similar motives, the mapping of Gallipoli and the allocation of 'allied' names to places was part of an effort to establish a sense of semi-permanent occupation, to provide a basis of understanding of the land within a familiar context, and to signify the transition of ownership of the land into allied hands.[73] On 29 April 1915, only four days after the landing, Birdwood requested to Sir Ian Hamilton that the beach near where the Australians had landed be named 'Anzac Cove'.[74] Thus within the diaries of working class men one can read of landing at 'Anzac', or of heading down to 'Anzac' for a swim. Francis Addy thus wrote, 'Landed at ANZAC + spent remainder of night sleeping in holes dug out in SHRAPNAL GULLY'.[75] Though additionally as the campaign wore on the invaded area around this beach also came to be known as the 'Anzac' area, or more commonly within the diaries of men simply as 'Anzac'.

The process of naming continued throughout the peninsula as locations were secured. The landing beach would forever be known as 'Anzac Cove'; the path leading up to the front lines was one of the first named, known as 'Shrapnel Gully'

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[72] S. Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne, 1996, p. 125.
[73] Similar objectives marked the approach of explorers towards land in Australia. Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*.
[74] Bean, *Official history: Vol I*, p. 545.
[75] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 2/11/15.

within a few days of the landing;[76] 'The Sphinx' was so titled as it reminded Australians of the Egyptian Sphinx from their recent training in the North African desert;[77] whilst all around the peninsula hills, plateaus, ridges, trenches, gullies, valleys and posts were named after the men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The second ridge was named MacLaurin's Hill after Colonel H. N. MacLaurin, commander of the 1st Australian Infantry Brigade who died there on the third day of the invasion,[78] General Monash named Quinn's Post after Major Hugh Quinn of the 15th Battalion on 1 May,[79] whilst Monash had the honour of having the valley in which his headquarters were located named after him in the weeks following the landing.[80] In similar ways Plugges Plateau, Courtney's Post, Steele's Post, Pope's Hill, Russell's Top, Walker's Ridge, Bridges' Road, Malone's Gully, Johnston's Jolly, Owen's Gully, Bolton's Ridge, Legge Valley were given names that helped Australians to understand their surroundings, to find their way around, and to claim the land that they had captured as their own.[81]

By extending their lines and moving their trenches forward, the Australians were also expanding their land and their room to move within the perimeter. This also provided a greater buffer of safety between the front lines and the beaches. Every yard gained was an extra yard the Turkish artillery had to fire over. Additionally, as the

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[76] Bean, *Official history: Vol I*, p. 278.
[77] Bean, *Official history: Vol I*, p. 268.
[78] Bean, *Official history: Vol I*, p. 521.
[79] Stanley, *Quinn's Post*, p. 34.
[80] G. Serle, *John Monash: A biography*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1982, p 216 and Bean, *Official history: Vol I*, p. 284.
[81] In the post-war years this attempt to claim the land continued as the Australian Government requested that the Anzac area be ceded to the Imperial War Graves Commission to care for the graves of the Australian dead. Scates, *Return To Gallipoli*, p. 38.

situation at Quinn's Post made clear, the more ground that the Australians held, the more ground they could afford to lose in the case of a Turkish attack.[82]

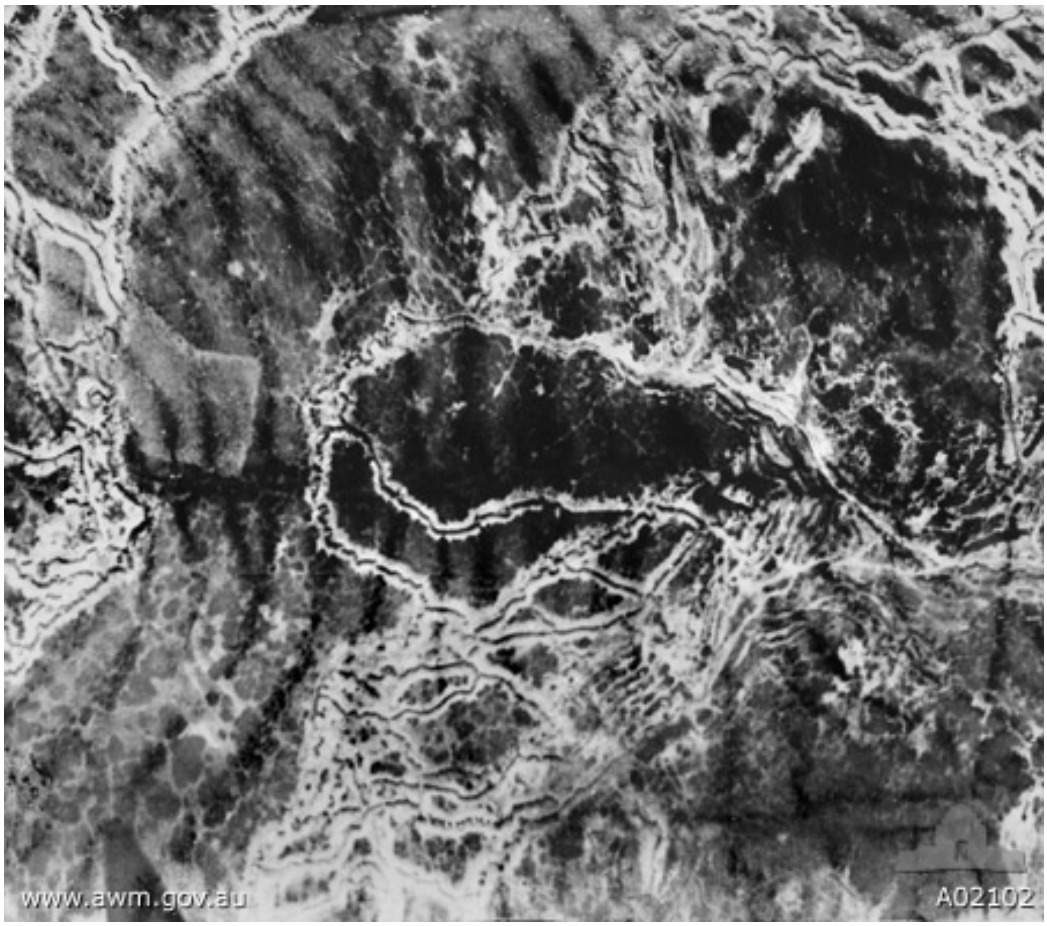


**Figure 4: Lone Pine, in the Anzac area of Gallipoli, was to be the site of furious digging in the early stages of the campaign, and the site of furious fighting in early August. This image shows Australian (far left) and Turkish (centre and right) trenches near Lone Pine.[83]**

[82] Quinn's Post is often seen as the pivotal point in the line. If Quinn's fell, the whole position around Anzac Beach would have become vulnerable. Stanley, *Quinn's Post*, pp. 22-27.
[83] Trenches near Lone Pine, AWM, A02102.

In spite of these constant improvements to the lines there were several locations that were never made 'safe'. Quinn's Post proved to be one of the deadliest places to dig throughout the campaign. Turkish snipers could fire down into parts of Quinn's from Deadman's Ridge, situated at a higher altitude to the north. The first men to occupy Quinn's lost exactly half their number within a week,[84] whilst a platoon of New Zealand engineers sent to work behind Quinn's lost half their number in only six days.[85] Ion Idriess, sent up to Quinn's Post to work on sapping, noted with some sense of surprise that 'None of my particular crowd were shot',[86] even so, 'The air was fetid with the smell of dead men'.[87] Around the peninsula dangerous positions were soon discovered; shallow trenches were passed in a hurry or crawled through and the deeper trenches followed where possible.

To many men and officers 'digging' often seemed the simple solution to many of the dangers of the war. If men were caught in the open, they should dig. If a position seemed precarious, they should dig. If snipers were hitting too many men, they should dig. On Gallipoli 'digging' seemed a synonym for 'finding safety'. When Major Rankine of the 14th Battalion requested to be withdrawn from Quinn's Post the reply from Monash was a carefully worded 'no', along with 'All you need to do is dig in securely'.[88] As these entries make clear, the trenches meant some form of cover, a small degree of safety from the seemingly ever-watchful eye of the sniper and a form of psychological protection against shellfire.

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[84] Stanley, *Quinn's Post*, p. 27.
[85] Stanley, *Quinn's Post*, p. 25.
[86] Idriess, No. 358, Miner, Grafton, from Idriess, *The Desert Column*, diary entry dated 22/5/15, p. 12.
[87] Idriess, No. 358, Miner, Grafton, from Idriess, *The Desert Column*, diary entry dated 22/5/15, p. 12.
[88] Stanley, *Quinn's Post*, p. 25.

Over the first few weeks on the peninsula the Australians learnt the value of this cover along with the importance of a deep trench and the risks involved in daily work. Turkish snipers and shrapnel shell threatened every position on the peninsula and developed into a daily part of the Australian's lives, threatening their brief leisure time, their short sleeping patterns, and their long hours at work. As men settled into their positions the nature of conditions, the nature of warfare, and the nature of work changed. Neither side could budge the other from their positions and thus the conflict went below ground.

**Below ground**

Gallipoli was the first experience of combat for most of the men of the AIF and it also came to be their first experience with tunnels. Whilst Engineers were often allocated to the construction of trenches and tunnels, the list of tasks to be undertaken was so great that the men of the infantry frequently found themselves being ordered to assist.[89] This work continued throughout the campaign and as late as November and December 1915 the infantry were still being ordered to assist, as Francis Addy notes, 'Worked on fatigue at hillside near a "Tommy" howitzer battery building a tunnel for Winter "possies"'.[90] Throughout the campaign Australians learned the skills of tunnelling, and the importance of tunnelling, the hard way. Tunnels had been established on the peninsula at an early stage so as to connect front line trenches to the rear. However the AIF had failed to take the initiative in effectively mining towards the Turkish lines.

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[89] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 50.
[90] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 8/11/15.

On 29 May 1915 the Turkish entered Quinn's Post after firing a mine in an underground tunnel below the Australian positions.[91] The value of Quinn's Post and its vulnerability to such attacks taught the Australians a valuable lesson. With this rude awakening the Australian levels of preparation and counter-mining rapidly improved. Immediately Birdwood made 'an urgent inquiry for men and officers experienced in mining'.[92] Men with specific pre-war occupations and experiences with mining work were called upon to utilise their civilian work experiences in the military. The response from the rank and file was swift and by nightfall on 29 May Australian mines had already begun to stretch out from Quinn's Post, Pope's Hill and Courtney's Post and by 8 June over 260 men were employed specifically as miners.[93] Ernest Murray, serving in the overworked engineers, found himself working regular shifts underground. He reported in his diary, 'I am still looking after work in tunnels driving toward enemys lines'.[94] Bean argued that from this time on it was the Turkish who had to defend their position, whilst the Australians returned to the offensive.[95]

Tunnelling provided an innovative way of attacking the enemy. Men could work towards the enemy lines for days on end without being seen or heard by the enemy. A group of men, working together, took turns: one or two digging at the face, one giving directions, whilst others rested. Joseph Burgess, serving with the Light Horse, recalled assisting in the early stages of these tunnelling operations,

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[91] The Australians, after hearing digging, had countermined and fired explosives collapsing some of the Turkish mines. However, the Turkish managed to get through to launch their own explosives in the head of one mine that they continued. Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 207.
[92] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 233.
[93] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 233.
[94] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, diary entry dated 2/6/15.
[95] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 233.

7/6/15 At present I am in charge of a little fatigue party on cutting out steps from a tunnel to the observation Post where poor old Sergeant Parkes was Shot, it is pretty safe now + it is not fixed up yet.[96]

Tunnels often seemed the safe way to dig, the earth above, sometimes only inches deep, provided cover from the enemy - if not necessarily from shells, then at least from sight.

By contrast, sapping, that is, extending a trench or line by digging from the inside of an already existing trench, was slightly more dangerous.[97] Bean argued that groups of eight men would usually work four-hour shifts on a hole. One man would dig, one man would pick, and six others filled sand bags and carried them away from the area.[98] At this rate a battalion could dig from around fifteen feet per day in difficult soil to around twenty-three feet a day in easy soil.[99] Though Bean notes that on 25 July men of 12 Battalion dug thirty-nine feet in just twelve hours, no doubt pressed on not by fear, but by a competitive edge to assert their superior workmanship.[100]

Gradually these tunnels formed great underground passages for the safe travel of troops between locations. Several weeks after writing the above entry Burgess wrote of a further experience with tunnels on the peninsula,

9/7/15 we marched up to the Brigade Headquarters we were each introduced to either a Pick or a shovel + then were marched off through a long

[96] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 7/6/15.
[97] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 254.
[98] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 270n.
[99] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 270n.
[100] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 270n.

> black tunnel, where the darkness was such a could be felt + also one had a feeling that the chap behind might be handling his rifle + bayonet carelessly + sort of expected a prod from behind: after bumping into walls + turnings for what seemed a long long time we eventually emerged into the gully on the other side of the hill + were marched to Holly ridge where we were started on digging of fresh trenches.[101]

On a chosen day these tunnels could break the surface and the Turkish soldiers would find themselves facing a new enemy front line in the middle of what had been no man's land. With the Turkish troops held to their side of the ridges and the Australians temporarily unable to press further, Bean argued that in 'the months of June and July the most important operations undertaken by the Anzac troops were probably those of tunnelling and sapping'.[102] With few other options, tunnelling became the chief mode of operations.

On Gallipoli tunnelling became the responsibility of every soldier; it was simply considered one of the many responsibilities an individual was required to undertake as part of his duty to King and Country. Yet for engineers such as Ernest Murray the dangerous job of tunnelling became an everyday task. He worked longer, he worked harder, and there was an enemy presence threatening his life. As an engineer, Murray worked many long, dark, and terrifying hours in these tunnels, trenches, and mines. The war, and the work, became regular, such that by the end of June his entries treat tunnel work as standard,

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[101] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 9/7/15.
[102] Bean, *Official history: Vol II*, p. 285.

25/6/15 Usual work in tunnels + fire trench + same old exchange of fire

26/6/15 Work in new firing line going well as is everything with us. Nothing fresh usual exchange shells + bullets.[103]

His days were spent doing the 'Usual work in tunnels', and with the exception of shells and bullets there was 'Nothing fresh' to write about. Murray's previous illusions of an adventure were shattered on Gallipoli, and his diary turned to focus on the work at hand.

Throughout the campaign the work of tunnellers continued to improve the living and fighting environment of Australians throughout the occupied area. Small caves dug into cliff walls provided both temporary homes and shrapnel shelters for soldiers whilst tunnels below ground eventually afforded a safer means of transport to different areas of the front. When in France the work of tunnelling fell almost entirely on the hands of the engineers and their branch of specially designed Tunnelling Companies.[104] The infantry focused upon protecting the trenches and the tunnelers, the tunnellers focused upon their own form of warfare and combat with German tunnellers in their deep mines stretching hundreds of yards out under no man's land. Thus upon leaving Gallipoli the average soldier left behind much of his tunnelling responsibilities, though this certainly did not mean an end to the task of digging.

[103] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, diary entries as dated.
[104] C. E. W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume III: The Australian Imperial Force in France, 1916*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941 [first published 1929], p. 119.

**A never ending job**

Following the work demanded in the first month, the Australians settled into their positions and the work took on a more regular pattern. The hours were long and demanding and the nature of work still difficult and strenuous, though men began to learn what was demanded of them. To say they fully 'adjusted' would be wrong, few actually became totally accustomed to their situation. Rather, they learnt how to live with their situation, and in a variety of ways they dealt with what they had to do. They grudgingly made their way up and down the paths from the beaches to the front lines to resupply those dug in around the front. They listened to officers as they directed them to new locations that needed digging, or repairing, or covering up, or tunnelling out. As the weeks wore on, then the months, these constant demands of work began to play on men's minds as the monotonous routine slowly filled up their daily lives.

Every day, over and over, the same work needed doing. Those working class men who had enlisted to escape from the monotony and regularity of civilian life and civilian work found that they were once more subjected to a repetitive routine. Joseph Burgess wrote in December,

> 9/12/15 Things are dead slow lately + life is monotonous. The other day I saw three shells get three men, one being killed + I felt nothing it just seemed to be all in a days work. now I have to get down + draw the water for the mob here.

Similarly Thomas Goodwin dedicated one entry to explaining the typical demands made upon him throughout the day,

2/8/15 Revallie: 6-30A.M. Water feed and muck out, groom etc. Breakfast, 7-30. After breakfast, fatigue draw rations, in the mean time 3 horses are sent up to the Battery, and orderly rides on and leads two, one for our QMS and another for the QMS of D Bty 66 Division, to proceed to ASC at beach to draw rations. They are issued to me at about 9 o'clock. The bread and jam is then issued to the men in wagon line. One man draws for four men. The water cart horses are then sent to the Battery, with two men. At 11-30 we water feed and etc again. Dinner is then served. The men are at liberty to go for a swim. 4.40 P.M. is evening stables this is when our work generally begins. The water cart is again filled, ammunition is drawn, and taken to the Battery. Many a night we have been out till after midnight. The next duty consists of taking cartridge cases back to the ordnance depot. This is roughly our daily routine, with perhaps a little more added.[105]

Day after day nothing changed, men worked, then slept, before waking up and returning to the usual work. Work and management theorists have argued that monotonous work routines place high levels of physiological and psychological stress upon workers.[106] Australian men on the Gallipoli Peninsula, being afforded no opportunity to escape, tied to their service contract, and surrounded by the threat of

[105] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 2/8/15. A QMS was a Quartermaster Sergeant, an individual responsible for the administrative and supply duties of a camp. The ASC was the Army Service Corps.
[106] See for example R. J. Thackray, 'The Stress of Boredom and Monotony: A Consideration of the Evidence', *Psychosomatic Medicine*, Vol. 43, No. 2, April 1981, pp. 165-176, C. D. Fisher, 'Boredom at Work: A Neglected Concept', *Human Relations*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1993, pp. 395-417.

death, felt this stress to a much higher degree. Bean argues that throughout June and July 'There was no change of life or of scenes and sounds or diet. The nearest area for such a rest was in the islands; but troops, if withdrawn thither, could not be rushed to the line in an emergency'.[107] Flies, dust and disease, coupled with the growing sense of disillusionment, began to make themselves known in the daily lives of the men on the peninsula causing, what Bean termed, 'the first signs of a psychological change'.[108] The first contingent of the AIF, what many at the time considered the cream of the crop of Australia's manhood, was slowly withering away to skin and bones.

Throughout the hot months of June, July, and August the various diseases that infected thousands of people across the peninsula made the work of the men of the AIF all the more difficult. This was first made evident towards the end of May when medical officers began noting the increase in illnesses amongst men, coupled with the arrival of large numbers of flies.[109] A. G. Butler argued that by mid-June 'In addition to a rapidly increasing prevalence of gastro-intestinal disease, the effects of restricted water, monotonous ration, fatigue, lack of rest and relief, together with the continuous strain of fighting, were becoming evident'.[110] Medical officers reported at the end of August that 'Men frequently faint at their posts'.[111] Many worked until they dropped, afraid of shirking their duty and letting their mates down. In a critical report on the situation in August the Assistant Director of Medical Services stated that the rate of illness was not helped by the fact that men were not 'evacuated unless absolutely unfit

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[107] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 381.
[108] Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 426.
[109] Butler argues that the intestinal diseases that afflicted the forces during May, June, and July were 'predominantly fly-borne'. Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, p. 235.
[110] Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, p. 238.
[111] Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, p. 348.

for duty', further adding that 'The men require a good long rest'.[112] In many cases men were taken from the lines too late and the graves on Lemnos testify to the demands of work and the inadequate services provided to men on Gallipoli.[113]

Dysentery began to hurt the men as much as the Turkish shrapnel. The endless swarms of flies, the stench of dead bodies, and the inadequate sanitary conditions throughout the peninsula made the work demanded of men all the more difficult.[114] Ion Idriess described the frustrations that 'new hands' had to contend with whilst working in the lines,

-/9/15 These flies are awful! It is comical seeing the new men trying to stick it out. Each old hand is given a new hand as a mate, to "break in". They are going to have a rough breaking in. I can hear one chap vomiting from the smell away down the trench already. They stick desperately to their firing-possies, trying to peer out through the periscopes and so keep their attention away from the crawly things about them. My little fair-skinned mate shivers every time a maggot falls on him.[115]

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[112] Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, p. 348.
[113] Bean notes that of the 8000 Australians killed in the campaign, 2000, or a quarter of these, were buried in Egypt, Malta, and Lemnos. C. E. W. Bean, *Gallipoli Mission*, Halstead Press, Sydney, 1948, p. 382.
[114] Butler argues that the intestinal diseases that afflicted the forces during May, June, and July were 'predominantly fly-borne'. Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, p. 228.
[115] Idriess, No. 358, Miner, Grafton, from Idriess, *The Desert Column*, diary entry dated -/9/15, p. 41.

Conditions in the trenches made them unfit for human habitation and throughout June and July the number of men being evacuated with illnesses was far greater than those being evacuated with wounds.[116]

'Rests' were rare, and even when men were finally given a rest from the trenches it did not mean a rest from 'work'. Hector Brewer explained, 'Our Plat. resting, or supposed to be. We had to go for water for the Coy. twice'.[117] At the same time the rare rests from work were usually only of a short duration, and there was no escape from the Turkish artillery or snipers. Thus, Brewer wrote in the third week of the campaign,

> The routine of our platoon is 36 hours in the fire trench, 12 hours out or vice versa. When out of the fire trench we are available for fatigue of which we get any amount. I with 5 others + an N.C.O. are for guard tonight at 7P.M.[118]

Rest was not a certainty; if it came, men were thankful, if it did not, men could claim they expected as much.

As Brewer's entry above demonstrates, work continued throughout the day, and if necessary, throughout the night. The bottom line was that if work needed doing, men would be ordered to do it, whether it was raining, whether it was night-time, or whether it was within sight of Turkish snipers. Thomas Goodwin penned an account of the demands of work mid-way through the campaign,

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[116] See 'The rate per cent on weekly average strength of men evacuated from Anzac for sickness and wounds' in Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, p. 347.
[117] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 1/6/15.
[118] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 14/5/15.

8/7/15 251 rounds of ammunition drawn at 11.P.M, making in all 631, for the day. It is one of the worst jobs here, cant get it, got to wait till it comes from Lemnos, It comes over in destroyers. Dozens of wagons waiting for it. Took us 3 hours to get 251 rounds last night.[119]

Supplies of food, ammunition, and water were always needed up the line, even, as Goodwin's entry suggests, at all hours of the night.

Given the constant demands for supplies, the task of carrying this material was also commonly reported throughout the diaries of men whilst on Gallipoli. In particular 'water fatigue' and the long walk down to the wells became a familiar experience for the rank and file. Thus Hector Brewer wrote on 28 May 1915, 'On fatigue carrying water for the company',[120] whilst John Booth described the process in some detail,

> There was plenty of fatigue work, making dugouts, bringing stores etc and the water was obtained from tanks a little distance down the hill. It was brought from the neighbouring islands in lighters and discharged into tanks at Anzac, then pumped to the tanks at the foot of Walker's Ridge. Mules carried it up the hill to our tanks, then we carried it in kerosene tins to the cook-house. A quart a day was issued to every man for a few weeks, also a pint and a half of tea.[121]

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[119] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 8/7/15.
[120] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 28/5/15.
[121] John Booth, No. 164, Shipwright, Balmain, ML MSS 1496, summary of diary entries, written on Feb 24, 1917 from No.3 Southern General Hospital in Oxford, England, p. 8.

The walk, whilst a tiring one, was also fraught with danger. Through the valleys up to the lines hundreds of Australian men lost their lives carrying supplies to and from the lines. Ion Idriess and John Booth's entries above both describe witnessing men being hit by a sniper whilst carrying water, whilst Hector Brewer explained that the seemingly simple task of water fatigue was 'rather a dangerous job as we are open to snipers + very much open to shrapnel which the Turks likely to trot along any time'.[122]

The threat of snipers and of shrapnel during the day led many to insist upon working at night. Darkness provided a cover over the Australian positions that allowed men to move about with relative freedom. Their minds were at ease, and in the summer months they could avoid the sweltering heat that the sun imposed on them throughout the day. Thus Thomas Goodwin, working with the horses on Cape Helles, insisted on the priority of night work after he was ordered to help a newly arrived battery move their guns from the beaches into position in July: 'Expected us to take wagons up to firing Battery in daylight, a thing we never do, all our work is done at night'.[123] By this stage Goodwin 'knew the ropes'. As an 'old hand' with three months of experience working on the peninsula he knew, and had some power to dictate, when the work was to be done, and how it was to be done.

This night work was seen as an important part of the maintenance of a good defensive position. One night off might mean the difference between a fixed wire and an opening for the enemy, or a unit at the front getting fed or going hungry. Thus, men were given little time to relax after landing on the peninsula. Upon returning to

[122] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 1/6/15.
[123] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 29/7/15.

Gallipoli on the evening of 6 November 1915 Ernest Murray was set straight to work unloading cargo,

> 7/11/15 We worked all night after arriving here + it was about 5am before we finished all of us being about done up having had to work very hard all night. During the night we unloaded 4,000 cases Ball Grenades a large quantity of 6" + 18 pounder shells beside a good quantity of other cargos.[124]

The Australians on Gallipoli soon learnt of the value of 'night work', and of staying behind cover. Later these lessons would prove even more valuable in the trenches of the Western Front. They also learnt that the military life was no longer adventurous. Day after day sitting in a trench dodging shrapnel was no adventure; as Wyatt succinctly explained, 'the trenches are a perfect hell'.[125] For working class men on Gallipoli, work had no end.

Whilst many working class men had enlisted in the military to escape from the doldrums of civilian work, they soon found that the monotonous routine of a working life followed them into the military. Life on Gallipoli for working class men seemed a never-ending job. The work was long and demanding, it was repetitive, there was little rest available, and as flies and disease became a constant presence on the peninsula the frustration with work, and the working environment, began to play heavily on men's minds. Their enthusiasm for the 'military life' changed as they

[124] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, diary entry dated 7/11/15.
[125] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 9/8/15.

experienced the harsh reality of war, and this was reflected in the changing nature of their diary entries.

**Understanding the nature of work.**

The changing nature of diary entries reveals the changing approaches towards military service amongst working class men of the AIF. For whilst King and Country motivated some, and whilst others pursued a sense of adventure, the reality of daily work within the AIF led many to approach military service as a job of work. It is important to understand that these approaches were not constant. Men did not set out with one motivation and maintain this throughout their service. Eric Leed highlights the importance of this change by arguing that the 'realisation' that military service was work was at the core of the soldier's disillusionment.[126] In the case of working class men serving for the first time the causes and motivations that led them to enlist were not the same motivations that kept them fighting.[127] At the same time their approaches towards military service upon enlisting did not remain concrete throughout their service. 'King and Country' became a myth to many men, a sense of fatalism took hold amongst many others, whilst the loss of a mate to an enemy shell was enough to inspire many to serve on to their own end. Amongst working class men the approach to service as a job led many to work on until the job was completed.

On the Gallipoli Peninsula 'war' and 'combat' initially shocked these men to their senses, though the monotony and the patterns of work that followed provided an additional surprise. Men, anticipating a tour of the world, simply did not expect to be working on the trenches every day without a rest. The 'travel writing' soon ended in

[126] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 90.
[127] Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', p. 70.

the diaries of these men. Their plans to read their diaries aloud to gathered family and friends at home needed revising, as did their motivations for continuing service within the military. The nature of military service, its boredom, repetition, and sense of servitude, directly contradicted the intended theme of these diaries. Thoughts of describing swift and glorious charges into enemy trenches were replaced with monotonous images of work.

Where many saw themselves as pseudo-travel writers upon enlistment, the reality of war may have led them to drop any pretence and simply fill their daily entries as a matter of course and 'duty' to fulfil the diary. Kate Blackmore notes Bernd Huppauf's argument that the war left an 'inability to communicate the experience of the front even to close friends, wives and relatives'.[128] The same inability to communicate may have applied to the writing of men's diaries. Letters home were often introduced with a warning not to convey the information to women in the family, as Leslie Martin demonstrated after passing through Pozieres,

> Dear Jack,
>
> I was in a bit of a fight the other day and as you know came off second best. I wrote Mother a bit about it but did not tell her very much of what happened, just a few of the milder happenings so will let you know a few of the other happenings. You can show this to father, & Harold but you will have to decide

[128] K. Blackmore, 'Aspects of the Australian Repatriation Process: War, health and responsibility for illness', in J. Smart and T. Woods, *An Anzac Muster: War and Society in Australia and New Zealand 1914-1918 and 1939-45*, Monash Publications in History, Clayton, 1992, p. 104.

> for yourself whether you show it to Ada, Connie or mother, of course Uncle Herbert, Mr. Hill can read it.[129]

The gory details were disguised from the women and children, who, it was believed, would have trouble coping with the grim reality. By contrast men were able to handle the truth and were to be the guardians of the more grisly pieces of information.

There were of course limits to this writing and others simply gave up trying to convey their combat experiences. Marshall Burrows explained after participating in an attack,

> 8/12/16 I cant describe it to anybody it was worse than terrible my mate got killed I got a fresh mate tomorrow he wasnt out half an hour and was wounded and I was carring most of the wounded down on my back[130]

Instead, the once public diaries of men became the personal way of dealing with war and work. Situations were sanitised and worked through with the written word. In time the waiting audience at home may have been too far away, the censored stories too numerous, and the 'adventure' no longer 'adventurous', that the purpose and nature of the diary simply changed.

Alternatively the process of writing down 'nothing unusual' may have helped convince these men of the normality of the sights they were seeing in spite of their

[129] Leslie James Martin, No. 1296, Warehouseman, Dulwich Hill, AWM 1DRL/0483, letter to Jack dated 31/7/16.
[130] Marshall Burrows, No.753, Train Driver, Enmore, AWM 2DRL/0303, letter home dated 8/12/16.

own inner doubts.[131] Paul Fussell explains this style of writing as 'sang-froid', where 'one speaks as if the war were entirely normal and matter-of-fact'.[132] Death was accepted simply as part of a soldier's life, and no further questions asked. Mark Johnston also suggests in his study of front line troops in the Second World War that in this world of the military, men became so immersed in the front line that it seemed natural.[133] This is further supported by the common traits of working class men's diaries. For example, Henry Wyatt's description of working in the trenches, followed by the brief mention of a fellow worker being shot, is a situation that has similar recurrences elsewhere within the diaries of men.[134] Death was everywhere; it could come at any time. Thus the death of a comrade was accepted, noted along with the daily work, and moved on from. By not describing in detail the horrors around them, men were also not thinking about the abnormality of their situation. Work, by contrast, was something that these men were accustomed to and was much easier to write about, to think about, and to explain later on to those at home.

More can be read from these diaries and their changes over time through understanding what was not written. In the midst of a war that cost millions of lives these men began describing daily work, and not the horrors around them. Even when out of the lines men were involved in the war, subjected to artillery bombardments, surrounded by graveyards, and haunted by the stench of war. The change in diaries from lengthy daily accounts to brief, single sentence entries on work immediately

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[131] To use the example of Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 3/6/15.
[132] P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1975, p. 181.
[133] M. Johnston, *At The Front Line: Experiences of Australian Soldiers in World War II*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1996, p. 66.
[134] This is shown above. See Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 26/4/15. An additional example is shown above from Hector Brewer's diaries. See Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 7/5/15.

suggests a concerted attempt to ignore the war, and to keep thoughts of combat far from the mind, and thus out of the daily writing.

Alternatively we can see these gaps not as 'missing material' from the soldier's diary, but as incorrect assumptions from the historian.[135] Military historians have used these diaries for nine decades to explain 'life in the military', and if references to combat and war have not been present they have searched elsewhere, using other diaries or other material altogether. Rarely has attention been paid to these absent references to combat,[136] whilst references to service as work have been, as was previously noted, largely ignored. The continuation of these approaches towards work from the civilian world into the military world may have eased the transition into the soldier's uniform, or it may have simply been a natural progression.[137] With civil lives that were made up of work, their attempts at 'adventurous diaries' simply drifted through the transition to descriptions of that which they were familiar with – work.

Katie Holmes argues that the subject matter of these daily writings allows historians to see the context within which the diary writer understood their lives.[138] This is clearly evident in the beginning of these diaries where adventurous expectations were met with tales of adventures in diary entries. Thus, in a similar vein, the transition to writing about work suggests that these men saw their lives in

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[135] Katie Holmes provides an insight into these assumptions in K. Holmes, 'This diary writing does not count as writing': Women's writing and the writing of history', *Voices* (Canberra), Vol. 7, No, 1 Autumn 1997, pp. 24-27.

[136] Fussell and Leed provide some notable exceptions. See Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* and Leed, *No Man's Land*.

[137] Fuller also suggests that the continuation of cultural values into the military may have assisted in the assimilation of the soldier back into post-war society. Fuller, *Troop Morale*, p. 176.

[138] Holmes demonstrates this in her analysis of Mabel Lincoln's diary. See Holmes, *This Diary Writing Does Not Count As Writing'*, p. 27 and K. Holmes, *'Spaces in Her Day: Australian Women's Diaries 1920s –1930s*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1995, pp. *ix-xxiv*.

the military within the context of work, and approached military service as a 'job of work', or a 'term of employment'.

Holmes elaborates that these entries also provide an insight into how the writers saw themselves, and how they wanted to be seen by others.[139] Though the nature of working class men's diary writing changed, the intention may still have been to use these entries to re-tell their experiences in the AIF to those at home. Writing of the harsh demands of work, the outrageous demands of the officers, and the difficult conditions under which they had to work, presents an image of the author as strong, resilient and masculine, and of being able to complete a job that no man should have to do. Thus, a dangerous job, if completed, left the individual with a sense of being 'manly' enough for the army. The tales of war and work within the diaries of these men combine extreme danger and difficult work with a nonchalant attitude suggesting that this was all part of the job.

[139] Holmes, 'This Diary Writing Does Not Count As Writing', p. 27 and Holmes, *Spaces in Her Day*, pp. *ix-xxiv*.

## Chapter Four: The Nature Of Work – The Western Front

### The 'real work' of war

The men of the Australian Imperial Force identified 'Europe' as their primary destination. For those who had enlisted for the adventure, or for a 'Free Trip To Europe', they had finally arrived.[1] The Pyramids of Cairo and the streets of London had simply been a sideshow to the 'real war' in France; the 'real adventure', many had convinced themselves, was about to begin. Others who had enlisted to 'do a job' were prepared to arrive where the 'real work' was being done. In all cases this was the end of time wasting and the beginning of the 'real thing'.[2] On the final boat to France and on the trains up to the front lines those fresh recruits who had not experienced combat on Gallipoli, known as the 'new chums', anxiously waited for their big chance to see some action and prove themselves as soldiers worthy of the AIF.

For all their excitement and anticipation the 'real thing' came as a terrible shock to these 'new chums'. As men on the Gallipoli Peninsula had previously discovered, life in the Australian Imperial Force quickly became one long monotonous job of work punctuated by brief adrenalin filled moments of absolute terror. These new recruits soon realised upon passing the mass graves of the war dead that their adventure had ended. If the reality of their situation had not been grasped through their military training, then it certainly was upon their first stint in the trenches.[3] Many working class Australian soldiers came to realise within weeks of

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[1] For example, John Simpson Kirkpatrick had enlisted in the AIF because he believed he could gain a free trip back to his family in England.
[2] Wise,'Playing Soldiers', p. 59.
[3] Welborn argues that beliefs of war changed the instant men hit the beach at Gallipoli and saw the dead and dying Australians. Similar sights in France and

their arrival in France that their daily duties revolved not around 'fighting', as they had expected, but around 'work', around 'manual labour', and around similar conditions of employment that they had experienced in civil society prior to enlistment.

Initially the Australians were sent to the line around Armentiéres in Flanders. Known as the 'nursery', it gave the Australians a relatively light introduction to the front line whereby they could learn the ways of trench life on the Western Front without experiencing the worst of the danger.[4] In this area of France the trenches could often not be dug more than one foot without striking water. Instead, defensive breastworks were constructed of sand bags and, as dug-outs could not be built into the grounds, sand bag 'cabins' were erected, providing only limited shelter.[5] Where trenches could be dug, the soaked ground required the use of duckboards (consisting of wooden planks nailed horizontally along two long beams of wood to form a walking board) and A-frames (duckboards nailed onto two pieces of timber shaped as a V, thus forming an inverted 'A' shape, so as to support the trench walls whilst providing a walking board several inches from the trench floor). These enabled the men to walk through the trenches without sinking into the mud.

The previous argument that the theatre of war an individual served in largely determined the nature of work also applied on the macro level with regards to the Western Front. Through France and Belgium the experiences of the men of the Australian Imperial Force depended on the unit they served in, and the location this unit served at. It is worth contrasting the situation in the nursery around Armentiéres in 1916 with the situation around Flers in 1917 to demonstrate these differences. The

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Belgium had like effects on the beliefs of new recruits. See Welborn, *Bush Heroes*, p. 89.

[4] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 93.

[5] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 104 and Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 165.

Australians based around Flers in winter 1917 could relatively easily walk over the frozen mud lining the floor of the trench and their feet no longer sank into the ground as it had around Armentiéres.[6] The area around Flers also had a number of deep dugouts that provided greater protection, and men were no longer left sleeping in sand-bag barricades above ground as at Armentiéres.[7] Around Armentiéres in 1916 provisions had to be carried to the front trenches through the manual labour of groups of men; when these men arrived in the trenches near Flers they found the light railways and trench tramways relieved much of this work. Though on the other hand, near Armentiéres this work, whilst tiring, could be undertaken without a great threat of being attacked by the enemy; near Flers, the German artillery was more precise, and more active, and whilst the work may have been greatly assisted by the material available, at the same time it was hampered by the aggressive attitude of the enemy.[8]

Armentiéres and Flers are only two examples, yet everywhere in France and Belgium that the Australian Imperial Force went the work was of a slightly different nature. At Pozieres in July and August 1916 the landscape became covered in shell-holes, the town was flattened, and men found themselves barely able to move for fear of being shot at or blown apart. By contrast the tall fresh fields around Villers-Bretonneux in March/April 1918 allowed a more mobile, open form of warfare and men were regularly on the move, sometimes barely having time to 'dig-in' before being moved off again.

The experiences of Australian soldiers on Gallipoli can be characterised by the constant demands of digging and the close proximity to the front lines. It is difficult to

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[6] C. E. W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume IV: The Australian Imperial Force in France, 1917*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941, [first published 1933], p. 20.
[7] Bean, *Official history: Vol. IV*, p. 22.
[8] Bean, *Official history: Vol. IV*, p. 22.

similarly summarise the experiences of men on the Western Front. Every move a battalion made meant a change in the nature of work. The type of work changed, the hours changed, the environment changed, and the enemy threat changed. Sometimes the conditions of the trenches would enable men to sleep comfortably in relative safety, at others men went without sleep for days in fear of enemy attacks. Men would rarely know where they were heading next, where their next sleep would be, or where their next job would be.

Though one thing was certain, wherever the men of the AIF went they were required to work, both in the lines and out, and this work was of a very diverse nature.[9] This chapter seeks to explore the diversity in the nature of work of the men of the Australian Imperial Force throughout the Western Front from 1916 to 1918.[10] The Western Front was a different environment to the other theatres of war and a highly developed military structure had already formed. Within this complex society the duties required of these men became too numerous to be able to analyse in detail. In line with the broader objectives of this dissertation, this chapter merely aims at providing a snapshot into the various types of work that working class men of the AIF encountered in their experiences during the Great War. It further seeks to highlight the primacy of work in the lives of men serving in the Australian Imperial Force through an additional focus upon the Western Front.

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[9] The trenches scarring the landscape were the clearest evidence of this work, though further indication could be found in the 2075 miles of broad and metre gauge railway tracks laid in France, 944 miles of which were reconstructed throughout the war following destruction from the enemy, or of a further 1904 miles of light 60cm railway. Combined these railways carried 1786 locomotives, 830 tractors and 55303 wagons, the entire system requiring maintenance and monitoring by soldiers. The War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War, 1914-1920*, The Naval and Military Press, Dallington, 1999 [first published 1922], p. 742.

[10] Many men remained stationed in Europe for months after the war and this is explored further in chapter six.

**Time in the line**

From 1916 to 1918 working class men of the AIF on the Western Front contributed their labour towards the war effort on an almost daily basis. Given the estimated 330 000 Australians who served in France and Belgium, not to mention the tens of millions of soldiers from other nations, it is surprising that so little attention has been accorded to the time they actually spent performing this daily manual labour. For example, J. G. Fuller argued that only two-fifths of the British and Dominion soldiers experience of military service was actually spent in the trenches, even less of this in the front lines.[11] Denis Winter similarly contended that at any given time, of the 20000 men in a division, only 2000 were in the front line.[12] The remainder formed part of the extensive support elements behind the lines.The arguments of J. G. Fuller and Denis Winter have passed with little indication of any change in approach toward the writing of military service.

It is important once again to clarify that this is not an attempt to downplay the significance of front line experiences in the lives of soldiers of the Great War. As noted in chapter one, it only took one very short stretch in the front line to experience a devastating artillery bombardment that could potentially change an individual, psychologically and physically, for the rest of his life. Instead, this focus on 'time in the line' is being brought to attention to demonstrate the aspects of military service that have been overlooked by historians. Certainly the front line experience was a *definitive experience*, but it was not the only definitive experience of military service,

[11] Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 6.
[12] Winter, *Death's Men*, p. 81.

and our understanding of the Great War would be well served by understanding the broader picture and the diversity of military service experienced by soldiers of the Great War. Winter provides a detailed analysis of the diversity of military experiences through observing the memoirs of several British servicemen,

> Noakes reckoned a typical month as four days in the front line, four in support, eight in reserve and the remainder in rest. Carrington gives us a detailed breakdown of a year from his diary of 1916. He was under fire for 101 days – sixty-five of these in the front line and thirty-six in support – with 120 in reserve and seventy-three in rest. This left two and a half months to account for, made up by ten days in hospital, seventeen on leave, twenty-three travelling and twenty-one on course. During that year Carrington was in action four times and was in no-man's-land six times with patrols or working parties.[13]

These examples suggest that much of the average British soldier's military service was spent behind the lines, and these are periods that are yet to be fully explored by historians. As noted in chapter one, the arguments of Fuller and Winter also hold true for the experiences of working class men employed in the Australian Imperial Force.

It is difficult to accurately determine the time spent in the lines for soldiers, for as Winter argues 'The section of front where a man served was crucial'.[14] Whilst men frequently recorded where they were or what they were doing, they rarely did so with any regularity. Men such as Arthur Henry Freebody would occasionally write where they went in a day; for example, 'Wet day again went up on fatigue to trenches work

[13] Winter, *Death's Men*, pp. 81-82.
[14] Winter, *Death's Men*, p. 82, see also Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, pp. 94-96.

in morning came back to billet afternoon'[15]. Similarly William Burrell wrote, 'in the trenches: patchy day raining on + off + cold: plenty of work + little shuteye: they dugouts were dripping from the roof + very wet. I worked my knut + got a dozen dry sand bags'.[16] Yet descriptions of locations and movements to and from the front line do not appear with any regularity and cannot be used to accurately determine the movements of individuals. Battalion war diaries assist to some extent, however smaller company, platoon, and section movements were reported to a lesser degree and no accurate account can be made of the time individuals spent in any area.

Francis Addy's diary provides one important exception. Addy was one of very few who kept a constant record of where he was serving. His diary recorded his company, battalion and division movements, being relieved from the front line, sent in as support, held in reserve, marching from location to location, or 'resting' in a camp or training school in France; for example,

> 6/7/16 Left firing line being relieved by the 46TH BN at 1.30 AM. Marched through FLEURBAIX + BACH ST. MAUR to our old billets at SAILLY. They are trying to kill us with route marches.[17]

Whereas the entries of men such as Freebody and Burrell provide momentary insights on particular days, and unit war diaries report the movement of large bodies of men, the entries of Addy reported almost every movement he made, and the ability to

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[15] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 19/8/16. A billet was the name given to housing for military personal, yet it could range from a warm and comfortable house, to a half-destroyed hut.
[16] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 20/4/16.
[17] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 6/7/16.

follow him, his company, and his battalion around is best demonstrated by reading a number of entries,

| | |
|---|---|
| 6/1/17 | Went back to GOODWIN'S POST again tonight [the front line] for another 24 hours. |
| 7/1/17 | Relieved tonight by 48TH BN" went to camp and billets |
| … | |
| 31/1/17 | Left huts + went into reserves in tunnel. |
| … | |
| 4/2/17 | Left tunnel + went to supports. |
| … | |
| 8/2/17 | Left EAUCOURT ABBEY + took over line from "B" Company |
| 9/2/17 | Went back to support tunnel for 24 hours |
| 10/2/17 | In line again + the raid came off tonight |
| 11/2/17 | Relieved from line tonight by the 12TH BN" moved to huts/camp away from lines.[18] |

Francis Addy's diary continues in this style throughout his service career. The regular accounts provide a close understanding of how he spent his time in the 4th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force over a twenty-seven month period.

[18] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entries as dated.

An analysis of this twenty seven month period, a total of eight hundred and forty five days from 10 June 1916, the day he first records going into the line, to 3 October 1918, the day he was transferred to become a signaller for the Battalion's Headquarters, reveals some interesting points. Francis Addy spent a total of 100 days, or 12 per cent of his service time, in the front lines. This very closely matches Winter's estimation that only 10 per cent of a division was in the line at any given time.[19] More than just 'percentages of time' or 'days in a year', this front line experience gave rise to unbearable suffering on the part of combatants, and it is understandable why this has been the focus of Great War literature. However, it is because of the importance placed upon this front line experience that much of the experience behind the lines has been ignored.

**Table 1: A breakdown of Francis Addy's time in the military[20]**

| | | **Days Spent** | **% of Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **IN THE LINES** | Front Lines | 100 | 12 |
| | Support | 95 | 11 |
| | Reserve | 127 | 15 |
| | **SUB-TOTAL** | ***322*** | ***38*** |
| **BEHIND THE LINES** | Billets | 79 | 9 |
| | Marching/Transport | 92 | 11 |
| | Leave | 35 | 4 |
| | Hospital | 11 | 1 |
| | Training/School | 46 | 5 |
| | Resting | 260 | 31 |
| | **SUB-TOTAL** | ***523*** | ***62*** |
| | **TOTAL** | **845** | **100** |

Francis Addy spent a further 95 days of his service in support. These were also very traumatic times for soldiers. Support lines were positioned close to the front lines, at times less than one hundred metres away, and thus they still came under the

[19] Winter, *Death's Men,* p. 81.
[20] Information calculated from the diary entries of Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607.

regular focus of enemy artillery.[21] Although the stress was not as great as it was in the front lines, men in supports still had to be on their guard and the amount of work required was much the same as in the front lines.

127 days were spent in 'reserves', and a further 79 days spent in billets. These parts of Addy's time in the military are the most unclear as he does not differentiate between the reserve line of trenches, company reserve, or battalion reserve.[22] Additionally reserves could be placed miles from the support line, or at times only several hundred metres directly behind it.[23] Further to this men were often placed in billets when on reserves, though they could also be placed in billets when 'resting'. Addy's entry of 31 January 1917, shown above, thus explains how he left his billets, or 'huts', to head into 'reserves'. Thus these 127 days in reserve lay in an ambiguous position between the front lines and 'behind the lines' whilst the 79 days in billets remain in undeclared positions between reserves and 'resting'. Nonetheless, by most accounts 'reserves' were generally considered to be in a position of *relative* safety, and billets more so. German artillery could, and at times did, target positions behind the lines, though this was not as often, nor was the danger as pronounced, as when men were in the front lines or in support.

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[21] Indeed, at times artillery would focus specifically upon support lines and these could prove as difficult to hold as the front lines. See for example Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 208.

[22] Throughout the war units followed a rotation system through the trenches. A broad overview of this system would see one division 'in action', whilst another rested well away from the front and held 'in reserve'. Within the division 'in action', several battalions would be sent to occupy the trenches whilst others were held back in reserve not far behind the lines. Then, within the battalions occupying the trenches, one company would occupy the front line, another company would occupy the support trenches, and another company would occupy the 'reserve' trenches even further back. This basic system changed throughout the war, and in later years only small units were sent to occupy the front lines with the majority of men being held in supports.

[23] Bean describes the front line systems up to 1916 in Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, pp. 109-112. These systems varied throughout the war and also depended on the section of the line the Australians served in.

Thus, over most of his active service career Francis Vincent Addy spent approximately 322 days, or about 38 per cent of his time, 'in the trenches'. This strongly reinforces J. G. Fuller's argument that two-fifths of British and Dominion soldiers' experiences of war were spent in the trenches - either in the front lines, in support, or in reserve.[24]

The other side of this time is also revealing. 92 days were spent marching or on the move, 35 days were spent on leave, 11 days were spent in hospital where he was being treated for an eye injury, 46 days were spent in training or at an instructional school, and 260 days were spent 'resting', in addition to the 79 days already identified as being spent in billets. Thus, a total of 523 days, or 62 per cent of his service time, a clear majority of his time, were spent far away from the lines with little or even no signs of combat.

The diary of Francis Addy and his record of time spent in the AIF merely serves as a single example to highlight some of the problems with the existing literature on the experiences in the Australian Imperial Force. When it is combined with the work of Fuller and Winter and the memoirs of British soldiers such as Noakes and Carrington it presents an even more convincing case for rethinking the writing of 'war experiences'. Focusing solely upon combat and the small amount of time in the front lines reveals little about the broader experiences of soldiers in the military, nor does it help to understand the impact of these experiences on soldiers' broader lives.[25]

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[24] Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 58.

[25] Fuller argued that 'Historical analyses of the British and Dominion soldiers' experience of the Great War have concentrated attention overwhelmingly on the world of the trenches. Little attention has been paid to the roughly three-fifths of the infantryman's service overseas spent in the rear of these lines'. See Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 6.


**Figure 5: A communication trench at La Basse Ville, near Messines in Belgium, is evidence of the different forms of labour required by the rank and file - of the men who initially constructed the trench, of the men who maintained the trench, and of the men who regularly carried supplies up and down the lines.**[26]

[26] A communication trench at La Basse Ville, AWM E01497.

**‘Diggers’ Dig**

The Australians arriving in France found the initial trench work already prepared for them. By 1916 thousands of miles of trenches cluttered and scarred the stretch of land from the Belgian coast to the Franco-Swiss border. Men using small, portable, picks and shovels laboured tirelessly at these trenches at all hours of the night and day. In environments such as that shown above in Figure 5, these men frustratingly struggled with the wet and slippery mud to maintain trench walls and provide both a walkway, and a place of temporary occupancy. The evidence for this work was in the clink of the shovels, it was in the sight of exhausted bodies, and over time it was confirmed in the marks that were left behind wherever soldiers had been.

Throughout France and Belgium the conditions of the trenches varied considerably. Although trenches were intended to be two metres deep, the nature of the environment meant that this was not always the case; heavy artillery could hinder the ability to dig a deep trench, wet ground could make it impossible to dig below a few feet, whilst frozen ground could make the work of digging highly strenuous. Trenches generally, though it must be clarified not always, provided protection for an individual standing upright and they were usually wide enough to sit down in and walk past men heading in the opposite direction.[27] Their main purpose was to provide protection for defenders; they were rarely comfortable, and daily life within these subterranean walls quickly became melancholic and depressing. They did not bring

[27] Though many diaries recall of having to walk over dead men as the trench was not wide enough, others even tell of companies having to lay down as men passing in the other direction walked over them. For example, Norman Silvester Hollis described the sight of ‘Strong men and good soldiers crying over the bodies of fallen comrades on and over whom they must walk in the narrow communication trenches’. See Norman Silvester Hollis, No. 186, Warehouseman, Newtown, AWM 2DRL/0412, letter dated 3/8/16.

the sense of safety that the trenches of Gallipoli had for some; instead, every journey up to the trenches was a journey closer into the unknown, into the greater possibility of danger bringing them ever closer to the risk of death.

These networks of trenches sometimes stretched back for several kilometres in the rear. They required communication trenches, support trenches, and reserve trenches, strong points, saps and listening posts. On top of this during the later stages of the war additional trench systems were established behind the lines in high priority locations to provide additional defence against breakthroughs. The trenches were almost always zigzagged or square-toothed to provide protection against enfilading fire and shrapnel. Along with this, firing bays, firing steps, parapets, and parados' were built into most trenches to protect the occupants. The temporary homes of the occupants, known as dug-outs, were also built into the rear of the trenches.

The size of dug-outs varied from barely being able to fit one man, to being large enough to house a number of sleeping or relaxing soldiers. On the Western Front the desire was to create dugouts deep enough to provide some form of protection from the artillery shells pounding the earth above. Occasionally beams, planks of wood, scraps of iron, or whatever material could be found supported this protection, though given the power of artillery, the protection in many cases was more psychological than physical.

That several thousand miles of these trenches stretched throughout France and Belgium has been well established. Aerial photography from the war, such as that shown below, provides more than enough evidence for this. The finer detail that every single square foot of dirt had to be dug out by the manual labour of soldiers with a pick and shovel has not yet received near enough attention. This factor is not as easily understood through aerial photography. To place this labour in perspective, were the

equivalent distance of these trenches dug vertically down, instead of horizontally across the landscape, these soldiers would have almost dug through the centre of the earth, such was the extent of their work.[28]

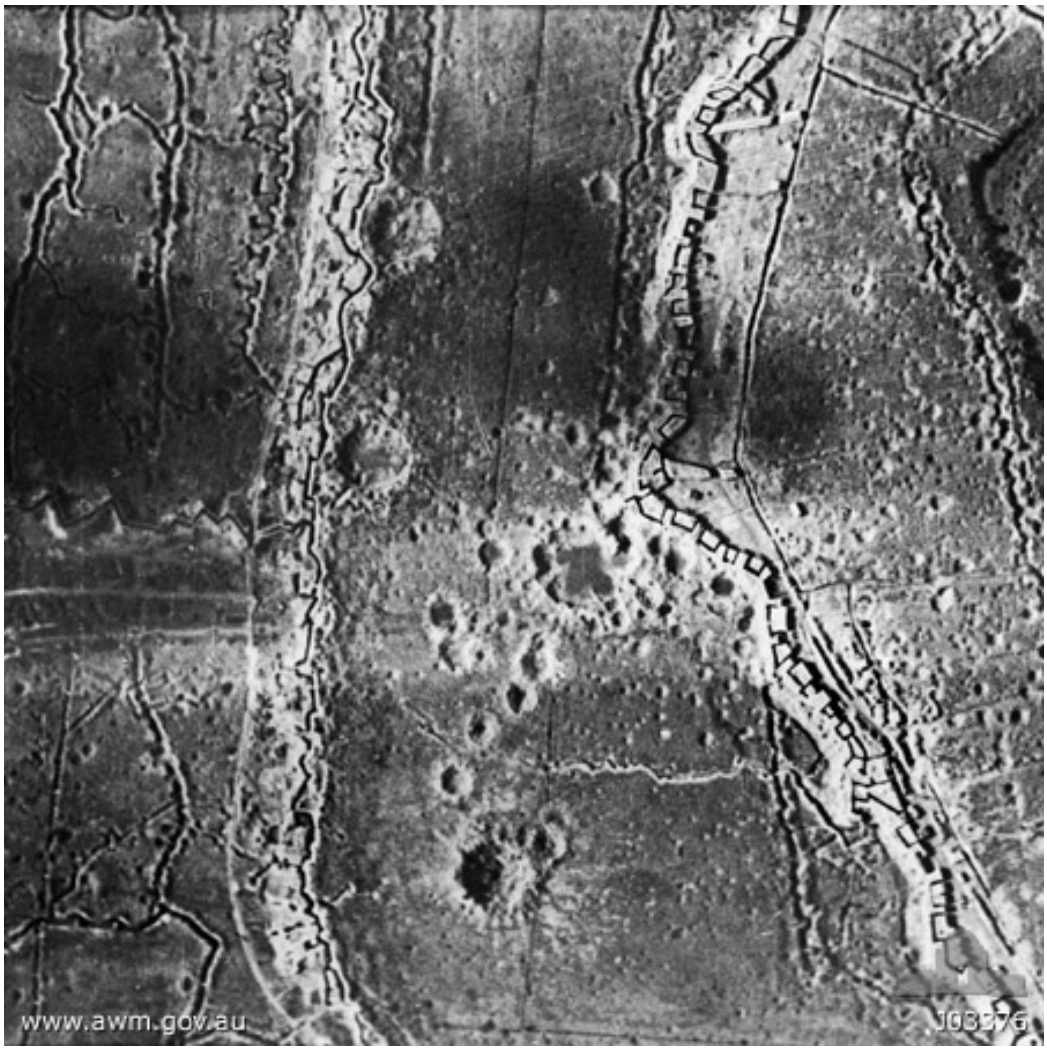


**Figure 6: Further evidence of the scale of digging and the demands of labour in maintaining these trenches on the Western Front can be seen in this aerial view of the mined and shelled trenches near Fromelles, France, taken on 10 October**

[28] That is, the total length of allied trenches in France and Belgium, some 7000 miles, is almost equal to the diameter of Earth, some 7900 miles.

**1916. At this time men of the 5th Australian Division occupied the trenches on the left.[29]**

Digging, being one of the most common types of work undertaken, was, as on Gallipoli, frequently reported in the diaries of these men. Francis Addy thus explained,

> My platoon (15) is going from a different part of the line to the rest of D company + we have to get as quickly as possible to some position + dig in before the rest of the company comes up ... Loaded up with sandbags, picks + shovels.[30]

This walk alone exhausted many as the mud soaked and partially collapsed paths through the maze of trenches towards the front line were not easily managed. The heavy loads and the hours of work waiting at the end ensured that this was not an enviable task.

Through their labour these men shaped their environment. For a short time this was their workplace and their home. For dinner they might lean back against the wall of the trench, perhaps resting against the product of their days work, and open a can of bully beef. To sleep they would do much the same, perhaps crouch against a firing step that they had built earlier. If space and time permitted they moulded small shelters into the trench walls and deep dugouts into the trench floors. Where such locations already existed they would add to them. Where they had been damaged they

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[29] Aerial view of trenches near Fromelles, France. AWM 103376.
[30] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 22/7/16.

would repair them. Whilst in any given area they would eat, sleep, drink, work, and rest within this setting; the facilities all being provided through digging. Thus in Ypres, Eric Moon described 'On fatigues up the line at night time digging dugouts to store biscuits and fresh water for the big stunts that were to come'.[31] Likewise latrines had to be dug in every location to ensure some form of sanitation, communication wires had to be buried underground for protection from shrapnel, and new lines of communication trenches, tunnels, and dug-outs were constantly being established. Digging, to many at times, seemed a daily chore, but it was simply one amongst the many duties demanded and expected of the Australian soldier.

**'At the going down of the sun'**

Sunset provided men with a respite. Artillery observers could not accurately identify locations and snipers found it more difficult to pick out targets. As Eric Moon and Joseph Burgess' entries above demonstrate, this gave men an opportunity to work with a greater sense of safety. As on Gallipoli, the risk posed to working in daylight meant that a lot of this work took place at night. Men could be woken at any hour of the night by their officers and be ordered to pick up a shovel and start digging. Thus Thomas Goodwin recorded, 'Gunners called out at 3.A.M, to pro-ceed to gun position, and dig gun pits'.[32] Working at night meant some form of protection against the eyes of the enemy. Men walking to the front in daylight would be at risk of being seen and fired upon. At night, food, mail, ammunition, and other supplies could all be

[31] Eric Moon, No. 6362, Fitter and Labourer, Redfern, ML MSS 2930, unpublished recollections and diary, undated, c. September/October 1917, p. 15.
[32] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 12/8/16.

brought up in relative safety.[33] William Burrell described spending restless nights 'carrying engineers gear to Jock's Joy till 2am sleep till 3.30am: stand to + ration fatigue till 5.30: sleep till 6.30'[34], and on another night, 'about 3am we marched out of the trenches up to the engineers dump + took tools down to the 20th [Battalion] then acted as their reserves for a while finally reaching our billet about 5.30am ... after my job was through I turned in about 6.30am + got up at dinner time'.[35] These orders were made with no sense of regularity. If there was little to do, these men may be allowed a few hours sleep. If work needed doing, they would be called up in an instant.

These random demands of work twisted men's sleeping patterns. Whilst 'resting' they would be ordered to drill, train, and work during the day and sleep at night. Whilst in the trenches sleep and rest were allowed during the day, and at night they would be ordered to work. The irregular movements of soldiers from the front line to supports, then to reserves or to 'rest', before marching to another part of the battlefield or being sent into the lines again made any form of regular sleep difficult. Rest was taken wherever it could be found. Men slept in small shelters, in holes cut into trench walls, in deeper dug-outs if available, else on the fire step or the trench floor if there were no other alternatives.[36]

Though being 'allowed' to sleep was different to being able to sleep. Rats, lice, mud, damp and uncomfortable conditions, coupled with the constant fear, meant

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[33] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 47, see also Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, pp. 127-128.
[34] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 28/4/16.
[35] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 6/5/16.
[36] C. E. W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume V: The Australian Imperial Force in France, During the Main German Offensive, 1918*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941, [first published 1937], p. 126.

that few slept well, or indeed for long. Francis Addy recorded, 'Had about 5 minutes sleep in four days + nights as everyone had to be on the alert'.[37] The constant strain of having enemy soldiers several hundred yards away coupled with the limitless demands of work in a bleak and hopeless environment did not make relaxation easy.

A few hours sleep at night would be a good night, as James Green's regular patterns of work in the lines demonstrate, 'fatiiges party from 730PM till 2AM',[38] 'Fatiige to trenches as usual from 7PM to 210AM'[39] and 'quiet up to 7PM [then] Fatiige all night from 730 to 230AM'.[40] There was little need to explain or write anymore. His entry indicated what he did; it was work, it was regular, it was tiring and it was from '730 to 230AM'. John Meads explained the long and tiring hours of work by writing of being 'up in the firing [line] on fatigue digging from 9pm to 4am this morning',[41] and the following day 'Went out digging again last night from 8pm to 4am'.[42]

The small hours of rest available would often be broken by officers' demands to work and to add to this there was also the sound of artillery and gunfire, both 'friendly' and 'unfriendly'. These made sleep all the more difficult, and it only meant more work. Bombardments during the day could cut the defensive wire, break communications and fill in trenches. At night patrols would be sent out again to take advantage of the cover of darkness to repair the damage done, make necessary

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[37] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 19/8/16.
[38] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, diary entry dated 3/5/16.
[39] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, diary entry dated 8/5/16.
[40] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, diary entry dated 24/5/16.
[41] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 24/8/16.
[42] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 25/8/16.

adjustments and prepare for another day of destruction. Paul Fussell argued that at night 'the real work began',[43] whilst Bean asserted that 'When daylight was fading, so that a man would be barely visible on the other side of No-Man's Land, the real activity of the front began'.[44] During the day both sides destroyed each other's structures; during the night, these were rebuilt in preparation for another day of destruction. This process continued on and off for up to four and a half years on the Western Front.

Like ants, men would get to work in all areas of the lines, supplies were brought up from behind whilst in the front the repair work was undertaken for as long as the darkness lasted. Thomas Goodwin described the sense of urgency in this night work as men, desperate to remain under cover of night, ensured the job was done before they could be seen again by the enemy, 'I was working up till 10-30P.M. making foot holds to be driven into a tree, used as an O.P., No excuse this work, must be done tonight'.[45] As the darkness faded men would be at increased risk of being spotted; night provided a physical and psychological barrier against the enemy as men felt 'safe' behind the cover of night.

Night work in no man's land was certainly not without its dangers. 'Star shells' and 'very lights' could illuminate large parts of the battlefield without warning. Those working in the open could quite suddenly find themselves the target of enemy fire. Relatively safe working conditions repairing a wire and seemingly out of sight could quickly change into very deadly situations. At the same time both sides randomly peppered the enemy lines with machine gun fire, whilst in some places the

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[43] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 47.
[44] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 127.
[45] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 16/6/18. An O. P. was an observation post.

opposing armies scanned no man's land with the aid of powerful searchlights.[46] For men out in the open, digging a hole or repairing wire could be a very anxious and scary night's work. Thus John Meads explained being 'out in "No Mans" Land working tonight till day break digging saps through dead fully crook work as we were under fire all the time'.[47] Men working in no man's land could encounter dead bodies that had not been recovered or buried, whilst digging could potentially uncover men whose bodies had been thought lost to the earth forever.

From a position of relative safety behind the lines men would work during the day to prepare equipment for those further towards the front. Thus Ernest Murray recorded whilst on Gallipoli in May 1915, "Making wire entanglements today',[48] whilst in June 1916 William Burrell's entries reveal how those closer to the front were given the work of putting this equipment to good use,

9/6/16 Went out working on the wire at 9.30PM: I put up two whole coils on my part + was working round a shell hole

10/6/16 Finished wire working 12:30am + made some cocoa when we came in.[49]

This night work also gave men an opportunity, wanted or not, to go over into no man's land. Here they could attain a more accurate understanding of their

[46] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 133.
[47] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 27/7/16.
[48] Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892, diary entry dated 26/6/15.
[49] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entries as dated.

position, of what lay between themselves and the unknown enemy, and of what lay just above the parapets in the no man's land; sights that were usually only visible through periscopes during the day.

Patrolling also gave men the opportunity to go over the top. The parapets would be crossed, patrols sent out to investigate no man's land, and listening posts established along the lines. With the exception of combat these were some of the most stressful types of work the men of the AIF were sent to do. It was dark, they were unprotected, they were in small numbers, they were in close proximity to the enemy, and they were ordered to wait for the sight or sound of enemy movement.[50] William Burrell wrote in June 1916, 'Went out "Listening" 9.30PM till 11.45PM + it was a wet + miserable job'.[51] Yet this 'miserable job' had to be undertaken almost every night. Arthur Freebody described with a sense of monotony the 'Usual trench business ... sent out to No Mans Land with two others on listening post duty for four hours',[52] whilst Francis Addy shared similar sentiments, 'We have been out in No Man's Land each night on "Listening Posts" while fatigue parties are digging a new fire-trench more advanced'.[53]

Patrolling was both physically and psychologically demanding. Groups of men would move beyond the listening posts at allocated times to explore no man's land, sometimes moving as close as the enemy's lines with any set number of tasks.[54] They could examine possible routes for an attack, determine the condition of the wire (both allied and enemy), try to capture prisoners, or, most commonly, simply keep a

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[50] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 130.
[51] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 13/6/16.
[52] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 3/8/16.
[53] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 10/9/16.
[54] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 130.

watch on the enemy, see if they were working, if they had sent out patrols, if they had listening posts, or if they were being kept within their lines.[55] In all of these cases the secondary job responsibilities of the AIF could easily cross over into their primary role as combatants. Whilst repairing wire in no man's land men or out in a listening post these men could easily encounter a German patrol turning what was intended as a simple task into a very deadly one. The diaries and letters of working class men suggest that this was a concern that played on their minds. Alfred Baker described being 'told off for patrol, I went out at 1 o'clock in the morning and it was snowing heavy I tell you it being my first time I felt a bit nervous on it. But after being out for a hour I felt myself again'.[56]

Front line service at night within close proximity to the enemy meant that men could be woken simply as a precaution against the possibility of an enemy attack. John Meads illustrated the frustration of these men in an entry in June 1916, 'Had to stand too allnight expecting an attack. but it did not come off'.[57] Even behind the lines these possibilities could not be discounted, gas canisters could cover a large area whilst bombardments would be heard for miles in the rear. Several days after a frustrating night in the lines Meads was kept awake again, 'On guard again at billets had to stand to from 1.30am till 2.30am as they were having a bit of strafe up the line'.[58] As Mead's final entry illustrates, an enemy bombardment could wake everybody up in fear, annoyance, or as a precaution, regardless of how close they

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[55] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 132.
[56] Alfred Stanley Baker, No. 2860, Dealer, Annandale, AWM PR02077, unpublished narrative of service written whilst recovering from a wound in hospital on 29/1/18. Date of event is probably February 1917.
[57] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 5/6/16.
[58] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 12/6/16.

were to the line. William Hennell explained, 'I woke up at 3a.m with the "wind-up" me. Fritz started bombarding . I got to sleep at about 5a.m and got up at 10a.m.'[59]

With the coming of dawn and the completion of work for another night those in the front lines would be woken one last time for 'stand-to' at sunlight. Exhausted bodies, eyes sunken with the effects of another sleepless night, would shake their senses awake to take up position on the fire-steps for up to an hour. Every morning they waited for the mere possibility of an enemy attack. This rarely came, but it was a precaution that had to be made.[60] Morning stand-to was a regular ritual expected of soldiers, the start of the day's work, or the end of the night's work, like clocking on or off. Bodies then slumped back into position in vain attempts at rest, or to begin the new work of the day.

Those further back were given a little more leniency, there was not the same sense of fear and close proximity to the enemy, and long hours of 'sleeping in' were often reported following strenuous nights. As William Burrell recorded in two entries in 1916, one in April, 'passed away the day sleeping + writing',[61] the other in June, 'Our mob was up at 4am on fatigue but yours humble slept in till 8am'.[62] Similarly, Lionel Elliott wrote 'The weather has been very cold lately especially at night and early morning, and all the boys like to sleep in, which of course is not allowed'.[63] Their ability to do so depended largely upon their officers and their situation. The further away from the lines the men travelled the more lenient many officers became.

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[59] William Thomas Hennell, No. 5835, Painter, Petersham, ML MSS 1620, diary entry dated 10/2/17.
[60] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 126. See also Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 46.
[61] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 29/4/16.
[62] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 5/5/16.
[63] Lionel Frank Elliott, Compositor, Newtown, AWM 2DRL/0213, diary entry dated 16/1/16.

The stress of enemy attack was reduced and some officers turned a blind eye to sleeping in after long stints in the line. Eventually, of course, work had to be done and individuals would have to fill their fair share of the day's duties.

**Behind the lines**

As covered earlier, the vast majority of Australian soldiers' time was spent behind the lines.[64] Francis Addy spent 523 out of 845 days, or 62 per cent of his time, behind the lines; a large part of this time was made up with work.[65] Whilst officers may have given some leniency immediately upon leaving the lines they did not allow men to rest for long. Soldiers were required to snap back into healthy mind and body as quickly as possible. In the absence of psychological care and the desire to field a fit and effective fighting force, sending these men immediately back to work seemed the best solution at the time.

Structures of work behind the lines did not follow the same patterns as those in the forward trenches, though by no means did this mean a relief from work. The artillery remained close to their guns, the infantry laboured on as usual, whilst supplies continued their steady path towards the various branches of the military, slowly winding their way towards the important men in the front lines. Those further back saw their jobs as either preparing for their own time in the line, or else assisting those currently in the line. In this way a sense of job responsibility based upon the

[64] As noted earlier, Fuller estimated that this time behind the lines consisted of three-fifths of the average British and Dominion soldier's service time, whilst Denis Winter argued that of the 20000 men in a division, on average only 2000 would be in the front line at any given time. See Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 6 and Winter, *Death's Men*, p. 81.
[65] Once again this comes close to Fuller's estimate that three-fifths of a soldier's time was spent behind the lines. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 6.

lives of others was indirectly instilled into the men of the AIF. The men in supports would struggle with bags of mail through miles of mud knowing it cheered the men up at the front, whilst the artillery would strive to work under bombardments knowing that thousands of allied infantry depended on them doing their job properly.[66]

These men of the artillery could be called upon at any time, night or day, to man their guns and begin firing. John Bruce recorded one occasion of 'Shooting from 9pm till 4am',[67] and another of being 'Up at 2am for a stunt. 5th 6th Bdge 2nd Divn going over the top. Shooting till 4.15am. 155 rounds each'.[68] As Bruce's entries demonstrate, when one field of the army were required to work, others would often be called upon to assist in their own unique way. Thomas Goodwin, serving with the artillery, thus explained 'Fighting from 2 till 5. terrific bombardment. This is supposed to be our rest'.[69] The infantry provided guards underground for the tunnelers, at times the tunnellers would return the favour and fight with the infantry;[70] so too the artillery supported infantry in the attacks, and in turn, the artillery expected the infantry to hold their lines and defend the big guns.[71]

Throughout all theatres the AIF were also required to post guards and picquets. Many saw this as pointless work, a waste of their time and a waste of their sleep, as at times the enemy were miles away and the only thing they were guarding against was other Australian troops, sources of water or in Reynold Potter's case, 'to

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[66] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 108.
[67] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 3/5/18.
[68] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 19/5/18.
[69] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 9/10/16.
[70] For example, see Bean, *Official history: Vol. V*, pp. 245-246.
[71] For example, see Bean, *Official history: Vol. V*, p. 285. The attitude of men towards their job requirements and the requirements of others is explored further in the following chapter.

prevent French children selling alcoholic liquor to the soldiers'.[72] In the egalitarian culture of the AIF not all rank and file soldiers enjoyed giving orders and they shirked away from the responsibility demanded of guards. The average Australian soldier also scorned military discipline, and being ordered to 'guard' and enforce this discipline upon others annoyed many men.

The nature of 'guard duty' was also lonely and tedious. John Bruce described day picquet as a 'Beautifully monotonous job'[73] and weekend picquet as the 'Rottenest job of any'.[74] Joseph Burgess also frequently complained about the pointless task of guard duty, 'I have been on guard all the afternoon, a beast of a job',[75] and 'I am on picquet to night it is not much of a job'.[76] Men would have to stand at a point alone, guarding a position or an area, and fight through boredom and heavy eyelids as fellow soldiers slept or relaxed. Having to be on guard at night presented the most concern, as Joseph Burgess explained 'I had to go on picquet + was pleased that I did not draw first shift so I could get a couple hours sleep'.[77] Similarly John Bruce voiced further complaint about being 'On Section Guard 4th shift. Got out at 5am, discovered the fire was out, so turned in again. Useless guard'.[78] Unless they were in the front line these men believed there was little to guard against.

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[72] Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944, transcription of diary, undated entry c. April/May 1917, p. 6.
[73] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 28/4/19 Bruce remained with the AIF in Europe for nine months after the armistice.
[74] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 28/4/17.
[75] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 22/6/15.
[76] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 13/1/16.
[77] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 9/5/16.
[78] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 25/2/18.

Guard duty could have its upsides however. Whilst Reynold Potter was guarding *against* French children selling alcoholic liquor to the soldiers, the other guards took advantage of their position and were having a lively time. Potter explained how 'on the trip up here the only two really drunken people on the train were two of the picquet, who, though they might have prevented others from imbibing, imposed no such restrictions on themselves'.[79]

Guard duty also relieved men of potentially more strenuous work. In the least, standing on guard meant no more digging. For some men it even meant they had time to write in their diaries; even Joseph Burgess changed his tune on some occasions, 'I am at present on Brigade guard, its a soft job they dont bother us much but its red hot',[80] and, 'I had to go on guard yesterday after noon on ammunition. it was a sweet job especially for me'.[81] Clearly, as with most aspects of work for soldiers, guard duty depended on the circumstances. In the middle of the Sinai Desert guard duty was hell, whilst, as has previously been shown, guard duty on Friday night in Broadmeadows camp could fetch the guard a considerable sum of money and alcohol in the form of bribes from latecomers.[82]

Throughout France, both in the trenches and near the front lines, S.O.S and gas guards had to be posted constantly by all arms of the military.[83] When gas alarms were raised they could keep men in their gas masks for hours. Sleep was near

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[79] Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944, transcription of diary, undated entry c. February/March 1917, p. 6.
[80] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 23/6/16.
[81] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry dated 14/9/16.
[82] Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 6.
[83] S.O.S. guard were required in the case of a section of front being attacked. On the launch of an S.O.S. signal the artillery could launch a response on a given section of the enemy line and thus assist the defending infantry. See Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, pp. 107-108.

impossible, not only through fear of gas, but through the difficult breathing and discomfort caused by the gas masks issued to them.[84] In addition, the artillery, upon receiving these alarms, could launch a precise response upon the desired section of the front.[85] The loud booming of these guns and the shaking of the ground though could make gas masks seem comfortable by comparison, and the enemy often launched an additional bombardment in reply.

The response was large given the fact that alarms would be raised at even the slightest concern, but many men on guard chose not to risk the possibility that an evening fog could be a deadly gas. At other times the artillery were advised not to retaliate to an alarm as the risk of a greater German response could disturb men working on important defences in the front lines.[86] Beyond this, an artillery response would mean a restless night for all. John Meads wrote of one such night with gas in June 1916,

> 16/6/16 10.45 Our artillery started a duel with Fritz so we had to stand to till midnight. at 1.10am they started to go again and up we had to get and after we had been up about an hour the gas alarms went and we had to don our gas helmets and stand to for another 1 hours but got no gas.

Similarly Arthur Freebody recalled duty as 'nightime gas guard midnight till half past two. Two gas alarms raised during night'.[87] Whilst evening fog was one cause of

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[84] Bean notes that the 'P.H.' type of gas masks rendered men virtually blind. See Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 506.
[85] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, pp. 107-108.
[86] Bean, *Official history: Vol. V*, p. 37.
[87] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 26/2/17.

paranoia, gas could also be mistaken for the smoke emitted by exploding shells or the dust that a bombardment could throw up.

Thus whilst the response could be great, the causes for the paranoia of the gas guards were not unfounded. Gas was deadly, and it infected the human body with rapid speed. Fred Heming, a laundryman from Balmain, was killed by a gas shell on his way to the front lines for the first time. He arrived in France on 1 April 1918, joined his battalion on 12 April 1918, was gassed on 19 April 1918 and died several days later on 24 April 1918.[88]

Men were instructed in the use of their gas masks, they went through gas drills and sat through tiresome gas lectures.[89] Near the lines they were required to have them on their person at all times. When working they were allowed to remove all their equipment with the single exception of their gas mask.[90] However, such security measures could not prevent a new recruit from panicking through the heart-pounding moments of their first real gas alarm, and in the seconds it took gas to infect the lungs anything could go wrong. Charles Granville Smith explained, 'We have our masks but the job [of gas related injuries] is often done before you get a chance to put you mask

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[88] 'Casualty Form – Active Service', contained in Service Records of Frederick Thomas Heming, No. 3650, Laundryman, Balmain, NAA B2455 HEMING F T 3650. About thirteen years earlier Fred Heming's parents had been killed in a boat accident on Sydney Harbour leaving Fred, aged only fifteen, and his two younger sisters and younger brother alone. Since then Fred had taken care of and supported his siblings through work; his last will and testament completed before embarkation left everything he owned to them. Extract from *The Balmain Observer* titled 'DEATH OF A BALMAIN HERO - Pte Fred Heming Answers The Call - A TRAGIC OCCURENCE RECALLED' circa June 1918, Frederick Thomas Heming, No. 3650, Laundryman, Balmain, AWM PR03137 and 'Last Will and Testament of Frederick Thomas Heming', contained in Service Records of Frederick Thomas Heming, No. 3650, Laundryman, Balmain, NAA B2455 HEMING F T 3650.

[89] See for example Robert Irvine Morris, No. 3577, Motor Mechanic, Newtown, ML MSS 2887, diary entry dated 19/4/16, and John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 25/9/17.

[90] Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 126.

on'.[91] Nothing stopped a battalion at work, not even gas. At the sound of an alarm men, working with their gas-helmets around them, would simply put the helmets over their heads and get back to work. This meant a slight discomfort to the soldiers, a considerable loss of vision, and made the task more tiring, but it rarely meant a respite from the job at hand.

Indeed, few things meant a respite from the job at hand. Behind the lines at 'rest' men's minds and bodies were kept occupied with more work. When soldiers were set to work all day they were given few chances to sit around thinking about the horrors of the front line or the anxiety of returning again. The environment out of the lines was a more welcome one to work in and the conditions were, with the possible exception of Gallipoli, much safer. It also meant a return to decent sleeping conditions, comparatively reliable supplies of food, and the possibility for a bath or a swim.

**'Fatigues' and 'civilian comfort in comparison to the infantry'**

When behind the lines and in an environment away from the miserable conditions of the front trenches the military operated much like a society within a society. Whilst the French and Belgian civilian populations tilled their fields and ran their shops the Australian Imperial Force maintained their own business alongside, supplying their soldiers with necessary equipment and operating their separate economy. For thousands of Australian working class men this world away from the front lines came in many ways to resemble their life as civilians. 'Fatigues' largely consisted of manual labour, so many working class men felt that they were doing similar work

[91] Charles Granville Smith, No. 1084, Carpenter, Cootamundra, AWM PR03066, letter dated 21/11/17.

with which they had earned a living back home in Australia. At other times the military sought out men with special skills and experiences to fill the range of occupations required to maintain the large military force.

As previously mentioned, Thomas Goodwin had worked as a farrier before his enlistment with the 1st Field Artillery Brigade of the Australian Imperial Force in August 1914. Because of Goodwin's civilian experience with horses he was also appointed a farrier within the artillery. He took care of the general health of the horses' feet, trimmed them when necessary, made shoes for the horses and fitted these when they were needed. In this position his military service very strongly resembled his civilian life. He spent all of his time behind the lines caring for horses and undertaking the same type of work that he had performed in pre-war Sydney.

Thomas Goodwin's life within the military focused primarily upon his work as a farrier. He wrote frequently about the condition of the horses, the work he had to undertake to maintain their health, and of his work environment within the military. War was of course an ever-present factor in these entries and even when he was not writing directly about front line combat its presence became evident through its impact on his work. For example, in a summary of several days on Gallipoli a single entry recorded,

> 7/5/1915 No 3814 Brown mare near fore arm Sharpnel bullet. this was the mare previously mentioned. 10/5/1915 2966 Blk Mare Shrapnel bullet wound, rear part of rear thigh 14/5/1915 Brown Geld wound forehead, Shrapnel Brown Geld died from the effects of pneumonia This horse contracted this disease on board the Indian. 18/5/1915. Brown Geld. Laminities, also shot in near front fetlock and back tendon 3814 wound near part of rump on the

> 19/5/1915 This is the mare that was wounded four times, she started to work on the 5/6/1915 19/5/1915 2236 Brown Gel. 3240 Bay Geld. These horses were the first to be killed by a 5 in shell. It went through the neck and chest of one, and the hips of another. The first one mentioned was killed outright. The other had to be destroyed. A third horse was knocked insensible for about 3 minutes.[92]

Much like the situation of a doctor, events at the front line had consequences in the rear and casualties amongst the horses meant more work for Goodwin.

As a farrier Goodwin was also one of the most highly skilled members of the Australian Imperial Force. He had blacksmithing skills with which he made shoes for the horses,[93] veterinarian skills to care for the horse's health, along with the unique skills of the farrier in maintaining the quality of the horse's feet. All of these abilities were frequently called upon throughout his service career and Goodwin often found himself working whilst others rested,

> 4/7/16 Some hard work in front of us. Myself and shoeing smith, working hard, getting all the horses new shod, almost finished.

> 26/1/17 I was working at 5A.M. with my shoeing smiths, putting frost coggs in shoes ready for the march. This is drivers work not mine. I have quite

[92] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, undated diary entry c. 20/5/15.
[93] When they were not machine manufactured. See for example Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 3/2/16.

> enough to do to keep the horses shod. Anyhow we got most of them done.[94]

The work of a farrier was demanding enough, but the added responsibility of being a soldier in the artillery meant that Goodwin also had to carry out the regular tasks demanded of the rank and file. He too was required to carry ammunition up to the guns, to dig gun pits, and to man the guns when called upon. Thus the above entry from 26 January 1917 demonstrates Goodwin's anger at having to do all this, his own duties, in addition to the work of the 'drivers'. Because Goodwin took great pride in his work, he did not appreciate being ordered to do the work of others.[95] This was not laziness, it was frustration in the limitless demands of the soldier and his belief that other men were evading their responsibilities.

William Burrell found himself in a similar situation to Thomas Goodwin. Burrell had worked as a railway signalman in Sydney before his enlistment in September 1915. Like Goodwin, Burrell's previous work experience was identified by the military and in January 1918 he was transferred to work on the railways.[96] The first two years of his military service were spent much like a regular soldier. Burrell still spent a large part of his service heading in and out of the front lines, he still worked much like the rest of the infantry and his diary reported the repetitive fatigues much the same as other soldiers,

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[94] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entries as dated.

[95] As a skilled worker, Goodwin may also have been conscious of the demarcation between himself as a skilled farrier, and other unskilled members of the AIF. This is explored further in the following chapter.

[96] Burrell was transferred to the 4th Australian Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company. William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, opening cover of third diary.

18/4/16 fell in + went to trenches in parties of six: we were on engineers fatigue + were demolishing a small bridge + filling in under a parapet: Lock + I were working + a sniper got our position + sent four shots before we made ourselves scarce"

19/4/16 off on fatigue to the trenches but found on arrival that we were too early for the engineers + had to cool our heels in rain for an hour [.] we were improving the support trench during the day"

20/4/16 in the trenches: patchy day raining on + off + cold: plenty of work + little shuteye: they dugouts were dripping from the roof + very wet. I worked my knut + got a dozen dry sand bags"

20/4/16 I was on fatigue 6am – 2PM + was just starting to get some shut-eye when they came over + my dugout used to tremble: one landed about 20 yds aways + the dirt came right into my humble home[97]

Though Burrell's transfer in 1918 saw the nature of his work change. Instead of filling sandbags and repairing trenches he found himself working at a relatively safe train yard in the town of Misery, in the Picardie region of France.

Burrell found the change to his liking. The work was regular and given his pre-war work experience he found it relatively easy. Thus he penned the following series of entries,

[97] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entries as dated. The repeat entry for 20/4/16 appears as in the original.

30/1/18 fatigue in morn + nice march in afternoon: we details get a very square deal here + don't do much work

3/2/18 usual fatigue

4/2/18 usual fatigue job

5/2/18 usual fatigues

6/2/18 usual fatigues

The ability to be able to write 'don't do much work' certainly seemed a priority for Burrell, whilst doing 'usual fatigues' in a relaxed environment was an advantage over soldiers who had to serve in the front lines. After several weeks in his new job Burrell described a typical day, 'poked about the yard + done a bit in the box: not a bad place here + civilian comfort in comparison to the infantry'.[98] Similar entries over the next few months explained his satisfaction with the work,

3/3/18 packed up and went to Misery: phones on at noon so I had to open up + start working: Gill came along in afternoon: when we get fixed up properly it ought to be a decent job

[98] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 22/2/18.

29/4/18 told off for duty as turntable attendand: 8 hour shift + not too bad of a job

20/9/18 twelve months ago today since I was hit so I am now a dinkum neutral: am in far more pleasing position now than I was then + this will do me for the duration.[99]

Burrell's work in the signal boxes and around the yard in Misery was the same as the nature of his work in New South Wales. In this area of the Somme the war seemed a far away place. Whereas at one stage he had written about the horrors of the front lines and of being 'In Hell',[100] in Misery he wrote about the easy nature of work, of being able to wander around the area freely, and of being comfortable with the work he was ordered to perform. [101]

This pre-war experience in similar occupations gave men such as Goodwin and Burrell an insightful perspective on the military way of doing things. Thomas Goodwin heavily criticised the French for the poor treatment of their horses whilst he praised the Indians, who, he argued, looked after their animals the best out of the allies.[102] In a similar fashion he criticised the materials the military gave him to work with,

[99] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entries as dated.
[100] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 26/7/16 to 1/8/16 (collective entry).
[101] See for example William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entries dated 3/3/18, 29/4/18 and 20/9/18.
[102] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 27/7/15.

> The shoes supplied are all machine made, some passable others awful; at the best of times machine shoes are no good…The tools supplied are of inferior make, consisting of 4 kits each containing nailing on hammer, 1 pair of pinchers, 1 rasp 1 Drawing knife 1 Searcher 1 rag stone 1 Pritchel, 1 apron, 1 pair of hoof cutters, all carried in leather valise.[103]

Other men may have accepted this material as part of the work, but more experienced and skilled farriers such as Goodwin recognised how the work should be performed and regularly pointed out military shortfalls.

The nature of pre-war work also gave men life experiences that enabled them to adjust to daily life within the military, or at least aspects thereof. As previously explored, Cecil Monk had worked as a farmhand and Henry Wyatt as a boundary rider in their pre-war lives. They had experienced an outdoors lifestyle with a relatively free mode of living and the adventurous images of military service may have encouraged the two men to enlist.[104] Whilst out of the lines their working life within the Australian Imperial Force very much reflected Cecil Monk's previous life as a farmhand, and Henry Wyatt's last occupation as a boundary rider; both were mobile, uncertain existences.

As soldiers, Monk and Wyatt would generally learn that they would be camped near one location for a week or two, but their next location and the nature of their next job would be largely unknown. By contrast the life of many itinerant

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[103] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 3/2/16.

[104] Cecil Monk initially faced some difficulties with the military and was discharged in April 1916 because he was declared 'Unlikely to become an efficient soldier'. Monk re-enlisted in October 1916 and went through the remainder of his military service without a blemish on his records. Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, NAA B2455 MONK CECIL GEORGE 3153, in particular memorandum dated 15/4/16.

workers consisted of comparable 'unknown' factors. In Australia if they had not earlier secured their next job then there would be a degree of uncertainty in deciding where to head to next.[105] The men of the AIF were regularly faced with the same predicament; rumours of battles in different areas of France and Belgium might suggest a movement, but rarely was there any advanced notification.

The AIF would frequently travel across the French countryside for miles before settling down for a job, undertaking the work required of them for a limited time before setting out for another long march across the country. Francis Addy for example spent 92 days out of 845, or 11% of his time, travelling from one job to another.[106] For men such as Monk and Wyatt this mobile working life was not unfamiliar. Prior to enlistment itinerant workers had roamed from location to location taking up any suitable work. Under similar circumstances in the AIF, Monk's battalion was ordered from location to location carrying out whatever work was required of them, and Monk, along with several hundred other men in his unit, performed whatever work was necessary in order to earn his pay.

For a farmhand the nature of work within the AIF was also similar in many ways to that of civil employment. 'Odd jobs' whilst resting in the AIF very much reflected 'odd jobs' as a farmhand in rural Australia. Constructing or repairing barbed wire defences and erecting structures in no man's land may have reflected many aspects of constructing and repairing barbed wire fences and erecting structures on a farm in rural Australia. Certainly whilst the environment was different and the danger was significantly higher, the nature of the work, the direct confrontation with labour, was almost identical. In April 1918 Cecil Monk, after being classified for 'three

[105] McQuilton for example argues that 'rural employment was uncertain, even at the best of times'. McQuilton 'A shire at war: Yackandanda, 1914-1918', p. 6.
[106] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607.

months no duty', experienced a more relaxing type of work and one resembling even further the typical work of farm hands when he was sent to a convalescent camp to recover from injuries where he was 'put on digging ground to grow potatoes'.[107] Thus in 1918 as the Australian Corps fought back Ludendorff's Spring Offensive around Villers-Brettoneux and Le Hamel, Cecil Monk, having travelled thousands of miles to get away from the monotony of civilian work to finally see the world and have an adventure, could be found working in a field in France as a farm hand for the Australian Imperial Force.

As these experiences illustrate, for working class men life within the Australian Imperial Force often reflected the civilian lives they had left behind, leading to similar approaches towards the work. J. G. Fuller suggests that such continuities in attitudes from civilian to military life 'is significant not only in its effects but also in what it says about the nature of the war experience. It suggests that for many men the war was not quite the chasm, cutting across individual and collective experience and sundering past from future, that it is sometimes depicted'.[108] For many working class men, military work was a continuation of civilian work. The work could be very similar to, and often exactly the same as, their pre-war occupations. Men could employ the same skills and abilities that they had learned in civil society, whilst others adopted similar approaches towards their working lives within the military, as was ideally demonstrated in 1918 with the Australian 'Peaceful Penetrations'.

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[107] Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, ML MSS 2884, diary entry dated 2/4/18.
[108] Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 154.

**‘Peaceful Penetration’**

By 1918 the patrolling that had been undertaken by both sides for four years quickly came to be one of the most powerful strategies yielded by the men of the Australian Imperial Force. In Volume VI of the *Official history* Bean allocated three entire chapters to what became known as ‘Peaceful Penetration’, this being the quiet and comparatively ‘peaceful’ capturing of enemy posts, personnel, and portions of the line.[109] In March 1918 the Germans had launched an offensive that had moved both German and allied front lines to a new location and as a result a different environment of no man’s land came to lie between the trenches. Tall crops, green fields, and trees replaced the once familiar pockmarked, stump-ridden, mud-soaked panorama of no man’s land. Within this new environment day patrols and ‘Peaceful Penetrations’ became more viable options and thus began to increase in number.[110]

Throughout the war the rank and file crossed no man’s land whenever they were ordered to. Officers would give a location, an objective, and a starting time, and with the blow of a whistle the infantry would leap from their trenches and head off towards the enemy to follow their orders. Yet in 1918, Australian men actively took control of their work, the times they worked, and the conditions they worked under through ‘Peaceful Penetrations’. They completely ignored the accepted standards and

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[109] See C. E. W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume VI: The Australian Imperial Force in France, During the Allied Offensive, 1918*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1942. See in particular chapter two, ‘“Peaceful Penetration” Begins’, pp. 32-61, chapter ten, ‘“Peaceful Penetration” – Its Climax On The Somme’, pp. 336-382, and chapter eleven, ‘”Peaceful Penetration” – Its Climax At Hazebrouck’, pp. 382-441. See also p. 42 for Bean’s definition of the term ‘Peaceful Penetration’. Whilst having its origins in Germany’s ‘peaceful penetration’ of their trade empire into British territory prior to the war, it now applied to the non-violent expanding of allied territory across no man’s land.

[110] C. E. W. Bean, *Anzac To Amiens*, The Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1983, [first published 1946], p. 455.

principles that they had worked under for up to four years and for the first time worked to their own rhythm and style.

Had these 'Peaceful Penetrations' gone wrong the Australian officers may well have reacted angrily against the rank and files' impertinent breaking of the rules. Instead, 'Peaceful Penetrations' worked, the soldiers' personal rhythm and style was a success, and where the 'accepted standards and principles' had failed causing tens of millions of casualties, the worker's own methods had succeeded and the Chiefs of Staff quietly commended their men for the initiative and resourcefulness they had shown.

The success of 'Peaceful Penetration' quickly became clear to both the rank and file and their officers and contributed towards the Australian reputation as 'shock troops' and 'speciality soldiers'.[111] In April 1918, with Australian forces defending Villers-Bretonneux, Generals Rawlinson and Haig ordered the Australian Corps to capture a portion of the plateau east of the town. Bean notes that such was the initiative of the Australian soldiers, and their confidence in their activities, that they had captured the required ground by 'Peaceful Penetration' before the day set for the attack.[112] Gammage too notes that 'On the Somme the activity [of 'Peaceful Penetration'] advanced the Australian line three-quarters of a mile by 6 May and a further two miles by 8 July, and took more than 1000 prisoners'.[113]

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[111] The Australian divisions had previously developed a reputation for their ill-discipline, their successful participation in offensives and trench raids, and, perhaps more notably, for their brutality against German soldiers. See for example D. Blair, *No Quarter: Unlawful Killing and Surrender in the Australian War Experience 1915-18,* Ginninderra Press, Charnwood, 2005, in particular pp. 1-10. For a discussion on the use of Australians as 'shock troops' see Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 23.
[112] Bean, *Anzac To Amiens,* pp. 455-456.
[113] Gammage, *The Broken Years,* p. 215.

For individuals this work was similar to regular patrolling, the primary difference being that in 'Peaceful Penetrations' aggressive moves were made to capture objectives under relative silence and with little violence, hence the term 'peaceful'. The principle theory was that men could attack small parties of the opposition without alerting the attentions of greater forces of the enemy.[114] Lieutenant-Colonel Wilder-Neligan, Commanding Officer of the 10th Battalion, instructed the men under his command that 'as far as possible buying into a fight must be avoided, it is infinitely better to take prisoners silently than to enter into a bomb-fight which invariably draws attention'.[115]

Wilder-Neligan's warning was a wise one as the costs of fighting, of aggressive bomb-fights, and of 'raids' became clearly evident in the casualty lists, in the mass graveyards, and in the diaries of those lucky enough to survive. John Bruce recalled a costly raid in September 1917 where 'about 30 of our chaps were pinched'.[116] Similarly Arthur Freebody recorded in May 1918, 'Went out on covering party in No Mans Land for raid on German outpost raid a failure three men killed seven wounded'.[117] Around the time of Freebody's entry 'Peaceful Penetration' was becoming more popular amongst the Australian units; given the danger, risk of death, and risk of failure in raids, it is not difficult to see why.

Perhaps the most remarkable point about 'Peaceful Penetration' was that on many occasions men were crossing no man's land on their own initiative to carry out

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[114] Bean argues that the first recorded incident of 'Peaceful Penetration' occurred on 5 April 1918 when an Australian corporal, on his own initiative, led a group of men across no man's land to cut off a German patrol. See Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 42.
[115] B. Clissold, 'Peaceful penetration: 1918', *Sabretache*, Vol. 43, December 2002, pp. 42-43.
[116] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 22/9/17.
[117] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 24/5/18.

patrols. Here was a way in which working class men of the Australian Imperial Force could change their routine, they could shake off the fear of 'waiting' or 'watching' and actually go out and see for themselves where the fear lay. Mike Noon and Paul Blyton argue that,

> One of the ways that employees can mitigate the effects of the temporal routine of their work is by being able to modify that routine, at least to some degree. The ability of employees to control their time has been found to have a considerable impact on their overall experience of work.[118]

Here, in 'Peaceful Penetration', was evidence of men actively modifying the mundane, monotonous routine of their working lives in the trenches.

Labour historians and theorists have long identified the links between job satisfaction and worker autonomy. Gordon Rose argued that 'Limitations upon satisfactions are often assessed partly in terms of independence of action, partly in terms of the general status of the craft in relation to others'.[119] Stanley Parker's analysis of work and leisure also asserts that autonomy, initiative, and responsibility have a positive influence on individual's work satisfaction.[120] Similarly within Australia, labour historians such as Charles Fox and Marilyn Lake have argued that 'the greater the autonomy of the worker – the greater his or her control over the task – the higher is the level of job satisfaction and self-esteem'.[121] Thus within the AIF, 'Peaceful Penetration' brought the opportunity for working class men to take on this initiative and responsibility, they in turn acted autonomously in patrolling no man's

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[118] M. Noon, and P. Blyton, *The Realities of Work*, Palgrave, Hampshire, 2002, p. 88.
[119] Rose, *The Working Class*, p. 25.
[120] S. Parker, *Leisure and Work*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1983, p. 23.
[121] Fox and Lake, *Australians at Work*, p. 11.

land and the enemy lines. They could avoid the problems with a prepared attack, and thus make their own decisions. .

For four years the men of the Australian Imperial Force had complained about preparations for battles. They distrusted civilians, new technologies, and the supposed infallibility of their officers and their 'flawless' battle plans. Thus the advantages of 'Peaceful Penetration' over a well-planned offensive became instantly clear to the men of the AIF. For example, artillery bombardments could be a mixed blessing for the infantry. On one hand men in the front lines would feel encouraged by witnessing the enemy trenches being blown apart, on the other hand these bombardments alerted the enemy of a potential attack. Bombardments would often be replied with a counter-bombardment that could potentially kill men lining up to attack whilst the alerted enemy could then take guard on the fire steps.[122] By contrast, silent patrols would alert nobody, as Gammage argues, they would occupy 'literally thousands of yards of front and even a town without the knowledge of their own or the German command'.[123]

Similarly, the enemy could see preparations for an attack, orders to advance on a certain day could be intercepted and prepared for, and enemy observers could spot large crowds of soldiers moving to the front lines. By contrast, 'Peaceful Penetration'

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[122] The worst example of this was at The Nek on 7 August 1915, where it has been argued that the artillery fire stopped too early, giving the Turkish defenders ample time to man the parapets and suitably prepare for the defence of the trenches, at a minimum only 20 metres away from the Australian lines, at a maximum only 65 metres away. See for example, J. Hamilton, *Goodbye Cobber, God Bless You: The fatal charge of the Light Horse, Gallipoli, August 7th 1915*, Macmillan Press, Sydney, 2004, pp. 270-276.

[123] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 214. In the more organised cases of 'Peaceful Penetration' tanks and artillery support were used. The purpose of this, as Bean records, was sometimes to destroy specific enemy posts, and at other times to distract the enemy or to drown out the noise from a raid in some other section of the line. For an example of artillery support see Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 46, and for evidence of the use of tanks in the larger raids see Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, pp. 338-364.

could spring from any point on the line, at any time day or night, and with any strength. The fear and anxiety of 'waiting' turned during this period from the Australians onto their German counterparts,[124] leaving General Monash to accredit 'the success of peaceful penetration as evidence of the serious demoralization which our aggressive attitude in the period had wrought among the German forces opposed to the Australians'.[125] Bean similarly observed that it was to 'Peaceful Penetration that 'the intimate histories of the German front-line troops chiefly attribute the extraordinary state of tension which now quickly arose on the supposedly quiet fronts at Hazebrouck and on the Somme'.[126]

'Peaceful Penetration' meant a reduction in violent and potentially deadly attacks. Whilst aggressive raids were often considered necessary to gather information, Bean described many of these as having 'presented prisoners to the Germans, threw away gallant lives and…materially depress the bouncing spirits of the Australian infantry'.[127] The alternative of 'Peaceful Penetration' meant that men could choose to leave their lines when they wanted, where they wanted, and how they wanted.

For many working class men, this was an exercise in self-management. Through 'Peaceful Penetration' they could demonstrate that by undertaking work on their own initiative, they could prove that they could get the work done without needing to be constantly watched and ordered about by officers. For example, by 'peacefully' capturing prisoners on their own initiative, they prevented officers launching potentially deadly raids with artillery support to achieve the same ends. At one stage in April 1918, the 3rd Division contrived to capture prisoners by 'Peaceful

[124] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 214.
[125] Clissold, 'Peaceful penetration: 1918', p. 42.
[126] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 39.
[127] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 41.

Penetration' on three days out of five,[128] thus ensuring that the officers were kept happy with the information given, and that the men would not have to follow orders that could potentially send them to their deaths.

Acting on their own initiative provided men with an escape from the hierarchy of the military and for brief moments allowed them to be their own masters. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries capitalism in Australia was portrayed by many labour and socialist literary figures as emasculating; it was seen to rob men of their independence through denying them the value of their labour, and forcing them to work on other men's terms.[129] At the same time socialist ideals were asserting a sense of 'manly independence'.[130] *The Worker* reported on 1 August 1890 that Capitalism 'crushes the manhood out of men'.[131] These same ideals held true within the military where subservience to officers was seen as emasculating; men were forced to serve their officers wherever and whenever they were needed. This hierarchical division was made perfectly clear during meals when the rank and file were allocated 'Officer's Mess' to serve the upper ranks their meals, then clean up afterwards.[132]

Independence, especially in the workplace, was considered a masculine virtue that was dearly valued. 'Peaceful Penetration' provided a work environment that allowed the expression of such virtues. Men could reassert the independent side of their masculine identity whilst carrying out the work required of them, but not directly

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[128] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 45.
[129] G. Stokes (ed.), *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1997, p. 65.
[130] M. Lake, 'Socialism and Manhood: The case of William Lane', *Labour History*, Vol. 50, 1986, p. 56.
[131] *The Worker*, 1 August 1890, cited in Stokes, *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, p. 73.
[132] See for example Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entries dated 6/6/16 to 10/6/16.

ordered of them. Such was the excitement with which the Australian men approached 'Peaceful Penetration' that Battalions began competing against each other. The 14th Brigade's war diary reported that 'There is great rivalry between the two line battalions and they are each out to secure as many [prisoners] as possible and establish a record',[133] whilst the 41st Battalion's war diary stated that the capturing of Germans developed 'into a sort of company competition'.[134] Such competitive spirits reflects the approach of Victorian bootmakers towards their trade in the late 1890s where 'Young men in particular engaged in record-breaking contests amongst themselves'.[135] Michael Burawoy argues that such games were motivated by factors relating to the labour process, such as the desire to reduce fatigue, pass time, and relieve boredom, whilst they simultaneously alleviated the adverse factors emerging from the labour process, such as the psychological frustration associated with alienation in the workplace.[136] Within the military the motivations and effects of such competitiveness were much the same. As a result, the winners could parade their competitive, courageous, and masculine superiority over their counterparts; they were the bravest, they were the stealthiest, and they were subsequently the manliest.

The increase in day patrols also afforded Australians in the front trenches the opportunity to view some of these 'Peaceful Penetrations' and the masculine feats of their comrades. Bean notes that a series of patrols by men of the 4th Battalion on 5 May 1918 was 'carried out in the full light of day, with the neighbouring posts of the 1st Brigade looking on'.[137] The viewing audience could encourage the participants on

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[133] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 43.
[134] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 47.
[135] Frances, *The Politics of Work*, p. 111.
[136] M. Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process under Monopoly Capitalism*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1979, p. 85, see also Frances, *The Politics of Work*, p. 111.
[137] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 50.

to more difficult and more masculine feats. The participants could feel the inspiration of being watched, of having a waiting audience eager to hear their tales on their return, and of notching up another captor for the battalion lists.

Military success aside, the use of 'Peaceful Penetration', particularly between April and August 1918, made trench life slightly more tolerable. It was work, but it was the type of work that suited working class men well. On many occasions they could avoid killing other human beings, they could even, given their relative autonomy, choose to avoid relatively dangerous positions altogether. On the other hand, the relative independence provided to the Australian men enabled them to act with a greater sense of freedom than they had previously experienced. Such freedom may have helped Australian soldiers avoid in 1918 much of what Eric Leed identified amongst Great War veterans when he wrote, 'The most lasting pathologies of war represented the consequences that result when the individual loses his sense of himself as an autonomous actor in a manipulable world'.[138] 'Peaceful Penetration' provided this autonomy, and the independence associated with it enabled working class men to partially relocate their sense of themselves through an autonomous working environment.

**The Horrible Nature Of Work**

The military successes resulting from 'Peaceful Penetration' left authorities happy for these activities to continue; the sense of autonomy resulting from this work was merely an added bonus for the rank and file that officers were content to ignore for the sake of success. A look at any Great War diary will support this by revealing little

[138] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 186.

evidence to suggest that 'job satisfaction' was a concern of the Australian Imperial Force commanders. There were few battlefield psychologists these men could talk to after experiencing a particularly violent battle, or after having sat through a dreadfully anxious bombardment. Instead, they were required to undertake work when required, whatever its nature. Night work may have meant sleepless nights, but it at least provided a cover of darkness over the horrors of no man's land. Daylight brightened the landscape, revealing a panorama of dirt, mud, shell holes, dismembered bodies, and bringing with it an anxiety over keeping one's head down and the fear of being seen again by the enemy.

Amidst this environment, men not only had to live, but they had to work; failure to do so would be termed a 'mutiny' and would likely result in a long prison term, or in the least a considerable loss of pay. Trenches were cleaned and every effort was made to bury the dead when possible. The 'fortunate' dead received a simple burial with a makeshift wooden cross. The 'unfortunate', those not within easy reach of the trenches, simply lay where they fell until buried by a shower of dirt from an explosion. Those left alive had to work around the remains, as Arthur Freebody explained of some of the more gruesome types of evening work, '[at] night [I] went out in No mans land putting lime on dead men and gathering their personnel effects',[139] and at another time, 'went out in No Mans Land looking for body of dead German for identification'.[140] This ghastly routine was work. It had been ordered from officers and it was what Freebody was required to do.

By its very nature soldiering in the Great War was 'horrible work'. Soldiers have for centuries been those who 'fight'. They are those who form the mass armies

[139] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 11/8/16.
[140] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 25/7/18.

of war that seek out and kill other human beings, those who destroy landscapes and communities, and those who by their very description are tasked with 'destroying' that which belongs to the 'enemy'. Working class men during the Great War did not completely understand this history and the demands of their job. It was certainly not described in any great detail upon enlisting and these men had trouble dealing with the conflict surrounding them. They were of a civilian mentality that promoted peace to fellow human beings, yet they were placed within an environment that promoted murder and violence.

People accustomed to living under certain rules, having been brought up in a world that promoted respect and understanding, enlisted and were sent to a place that promoted disrespect and intolerance. The enemy were to be killed, and their presence removed. The conflict within their minds between what they had been taught in civil society as human beings, and what they were doing as soldiers, scarred many for the rest of their lives. Those who served in the war and returned provide ample evidence that human beings are not born to live in both peace and war. The laws and morals that governed Australian civil society in the 1910s could not coexist with those governing military society whilst there was any realistic expectation that people could survive throughout with both their mind and body intact.

To many working class men their wartime situation simply seemed inhuman. John Meads described his battalion's action around Pozieres as 'absolute slaughter like a butchers shop been gassed and buried twice now'.[141] William Burrell, participating in the same action around Pozieres as John Meads, simply held off from writing whilst in the trenches, perhaps confused at how to explain the situation, perhaps too distraught to put his view into words, perhaps too busy in the struggle to

[141] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 28/7/16.

survive. Later, after being removed from the lines, he had time to clear his head and filled in the missing entries with 'In Hell + had no chance of writing up so will put down from memory: which is very vivid'.[142] Such were the obligations of the 'soldier'. This was what they were expected to do, and it was what they were paid six shillings a day for. With this thought in their minds, many were resigned to their fates. Others injured themselves in the hope of being sent away from this place, whilst some, desperate to escape, took their own lives.[143]

Mead's description of the action as 'slaughter like a butchers shop' was a common way to describe 'military actions' on the Western Front. It served to explain in rational terms the seemingly irrational nature of what they were doing; men falling in their dozens across muddy fields so far from home seemed, as much as Mead could determine, closer to a butcher's shop or a slaughterhouse, than to any other human activity that he was aware of. Under the command of the Chiefs of Staff and in the unlimited desire to 'win the war' these men felt they were treated more like animals, than human beings. After having captured German trenches around Pozieres Meads described the difficulty in holding the lines as murder, 'getting slaughtered like pigs there is about 8 of us and 2 officers left in our Company'.[144] Men simply had never been taught about slaughter like this, such unnatural scenes were not part of a natural education.

The imagery of a butcher's shop, the careless and thoughtless handling of animals as 'product', also partly explained the way these men believed they were treated by the military. Writing in a similar tone after enlisting and being transported

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[142] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 26/7/16 to 1/8/16 (collective entry).
[143] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 180.
[144] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 4/8/16.

to Sydney from Victoria, Frederick Blake described 'A very cold journey across. Was one change at Albury station from one train to other. Packed in like Rabbits for export. Have come to conclusion some people are of opinion that Soldiers are Cattle'.[145] His treatment at the hands of the military would only get worse, and following service in North Africa and the Middle East his conclusions were further supported.

Men were herded like cattle, and they were set to work like cattle. They were supplied with enough food, shelter, clothing, pay, rest, warmth, and care to keep them alive, and keep them fighting. The army cared little for 'comforts', they had far more important priorities. Rest could be given when men were not needed anymore, or when it appeared that they would soon collapse and not be able to fight anymore. The priority was on fielding an effective fighting force; all other activities supported this objective. If men were able, they would be ordered to work night and day. Cecil Monk once recalled 'I was on burying the dead through the day, + on gas duty at night'.[146] The work of the infantry would not stop when it was completed, they would simply be set at another task.

The front lines were the worst. The enemy was closest, attention had to be paid to defences and the work was more tiring and stressful. Thomas Goodwin wrote of one experience with the horrors of dead men in the trenches,

> 8/11/16 Some with legs off some with arms off, others with trench feet, and some doubled up, almost unable to walk, standing in mud and slush up to their hips, suffering untold agonies. In the Bty, particularly the

[145] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry dated 6/4/17.
[146] Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, ML MSS 2884, unpublished narrative of service, entry dated 26/9/17.

> wagon line men, we are having a hard fight. Last night at 10 o'clock we were turned out to draw-ammunition from a dump. Wet through all the time we have been here. This is hell upon earth.[147]

It was not just the dead, nor the environment, nor the presence of the enemy, nor the bombardments that made this place 'hell upon earth'. It was also, and significantly, the dehumanising and debilitating conditions of work. Many men were working in these conditions in order to survive, to earn their pay, to feed their families at home. They suffered these inhumane conditions simply in order to *live*.

At night the lack of sleep sent men's minds wondering, whilst the long hours and days of seemingly endless work in this despairing environment changed the attitude of many forever. John Meads wrote during one stint in the front lines, 'I believe we are getting relieved tonight and hightime too this is our 11th night without sleep some of the men have gone mad'.[148] They did their work not without complaint, but with a grudging acceptance and heartfelt sense of anguish that they had volunteered for it. They had left their families, friends, and their relatively safe and secure occupations to live in this environment, to be kept awake by the constant scratching of lice buried deep into the stitches of their clothing, the scurrying of rats across their exhausted and resigned bodies, the pouring of rain across their heads, and this was all before the presence of the enemy and the demands of their officers began to play on their minds.[149]

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[147] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 8/11/16. The 'Bty' was the artillery battery that Goodwin served with.
[148] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 5/8/16.
[149] On Gallipoli the proximity of the enemy resulted in the Front Lines being occupied by greater numbers of men per section than in any other theatre. The support lines were situated closer to the front, and reserve battalions usually slept near to the

During offensives these conditions worsened. The artillery would increase to an almost constant and deafening roar that shook the ground beneath them. It also led to more work, more wounded, and more dead bodies. At Pozieres Gammage argued that 'A wall of shells constantly confronted men passing to the front or the rear carrying wounded, messages, food and water, or ammunition'.[150] Amidst this 'wall of shells', amidst what Gammage argues was the most terrible bombardment endured by Australian soldiers,[151] work had to continue as normal.

John Meads recalled some of the difficulties with working during such a bombardment whilst in the trenches at Pozieres,

> …as I was carrying a chap down on a stretcher there were two stretcher bearers behind with a wounded man on it and a shell lobbed between the middle of them and blew them all to pieces Oh! I'll never forget this I am nearly mad now and so are the rest of in who have been in 11 days. the first division were only in 6 days and that was supposed to be very good.[152]

This entry again reiterates his stress at being in the line for too long, the stress of having to witness such horrible scenes, of having to work in these conditions, and of

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support lines, even utilising roads and tracks back down to the beach, in case they were needed during the night. See Bean, *Official history: Vol. II*, p. 51.

[150] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 176. Pozieres was allocated to the Australians as Haig had wanted 'to make sure that the Australians had only been given a simple task', as it was their first time in a big offensive. Douglas Haig diary entry dated 22/7/16 in R. Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig: 1914-1919: Being selections from the private diary and correspondence of Field-Marshal the Earl Haig of Bemersyde, K.T., G.C.B, O.M., etc.*, Eyre and Spottiswood, London, 1952, p. 155.

[151] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 177.

[152] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 5/8/16. The First Division took part in the initial phase of the attack, capturing Pozieres on 23/7/16 and being replaced by the Second Division, of which Meads was part, to hold the line for eleven days from the 26/7/16 to the 5/8/16 whereafter the Fourth Division took over. See Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 177.

straining to keep his sanity throughout. His eleventh day without rest, his eleventh day sustaining artillery that transformed a small village into a 'desert of brown earth',[153] and his eleventh day of having to work, to dig holes, to defend positions, to repair trenches, and to carry out wounded, all in an environment that was blowing men's bodies 'all to pieces'.

The stress of working was bad; the stress of working whilst those undertaking similar work alongside were being wiped out was an entirely different situation. Friends, comrades, and fellow workmates, undertaking exactly the same work as each other merely a few yards apart in one moment, were left unrecognisable the next. As Mead's entries above claim, this sent some men mad; some committed suicide, some simply crouched down and cried.[154] In a situation very similar to that of Meads, Francis Addy described losing a friend whilst working alongside him on the same job,

> 7/11/17 Fred Strickland – my mate on the lines – was killed while with me out on the Duckboards early this morning (about 12.30 AM). We were out in 'C' COY'S line for hours trying to restore communication + after dodging all the heavy shells of a bit of a bombardment returned to BN. HQRS + decided to wait till daybreak. Just going along track to an old pill-box to sleep when 3 "whizz-Bangs" happened along + the third one landed just about 10 yds behind us + as poor Fred was behind me he went down. Got him into BN. HQRS 'pill-box' where he expired in a few minutes. LT Leitch present. A small piece of shell we eventually discovered had penetrated his back + lungs. He was buried outside of 'pill-box' on left-hand side of road almost in a line with old

[153] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 176.
[154] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 180.

> ZONNEBEKE Gas-works. It was his turn to go back from WESTHOEK for a spell but refused to go so Middleton took his turn for a rest. That's what one gets for doing a bit of 'Baksheesh' time in line[155]

This 'time in line' could be deadly; it was rarely more evident than when the individual working alongside was killed.

Many men had initially felt a duty to enlist; they felt that joining the AIF was something that 'had to be done'. If any of these expectations survived the Gallipoli campaign then they were completely shattered on the Western Front. The once cheerful recruits in Broadmeadows and Liverpool training camps became angry and resentful at the reality of work in France. Upon reading extracts from Australian newspapers with headlines such as 'Merry Anzacs' and 'Anxious to get at 'em', Hector Brewer exclaimed,

> As for being anxious to get at them this 'may' possibly apply to men who are training away back in England Egypt or Australia and the other end of France but not so the men who are standing shivering in the icy mud and slush up to their knees and high explosives 5.9's flying about in the front line. Imagine a battalion of men marching through stinging rain or sleet, feet squelching in their boots packs stuck on their backs making the men bend like saplings in a

[155] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 7/11/17. During the Great War, Australians adopted a range of Arabic words from their time in Egypt. 'Baksheesh', meaning 'gift' or 'gratuity' was one such word. Addy's use of the word reflects his friend's 'gift' to Middleton to work whilst he took a rest out of the lines. 'HQRS' was Addy's abbreviation for headquarters.

> 70 mile wind force. Let the people get this in their mind's eye and they will see how Merry and Smiling the HANZACS are likely to be.[156]

Brewer wanted potential recruits to know the truth about military service. To think twice about what 'fighting' and being a 'soldier' actually meant before signing one's life away.

As has been covered, many of these men enlisted for a job of work. Yet their understandings of this 'work' were transformed upon experiencing the front line and confronting the horrible nature of work demanded of them by the military. Few men were prepared to carry the bloated and stench-ridden corpses of their comrades for miles through mud, few men were prepared to see their workmates being blown apart a few yards away from them. Work in civil society was difficult, but no occupation could prepare these working class men for the hell of work in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War.

In the environment of war the Australian Imperial Force was first and foremost a military organisation aimed at producing an effective fighting force for the front line. The work of every soldier in the Australian Imperial Force thus revolved around this objective. The focus of every soldier's work was contributing in some way towards the war effort. William Burrell operated a signal box in Misery, France, to enable supplies to reach the front by train; John Bruce laid wires connecting the front lines to the rear to enable communication between units; Thomas Goodwin cared for the horses that brought ammunition and supplies up to the artillery guns, whilst closer to the enemy Francis Addy worked on extending the front line.

[156] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, Undated entry.

Everywhere there was work to be done, and everywhere the Australians went they contributed their labour.

**The realisation of war and work.**

As explored earlier, working class men began their diaries with various motivations. Many wrote diaries as records of their great adventures around the world. Their diaries were written with the intention of being read by others, or to assist in story telling after the war. Some wrote to remind themselves of their experiences, using a personalised version of shorthand that would make reading by unwanted eyes difficult. Others simply kept up a diary as a matter of course, a continuation of their civilian regularity, as a record of their lives, or a memento of a change in lifestyles. Though whatever their motivation for writing, and whatever style their writing took, this all changed within a few weeks of their arrival in the front lines.

As the previous chapter has shown, the first taste of combat on Gallipoli came as a shock to the men of the Australian Imperial Force. Following the landings on Gallipoli men struggled to fit everything they wanted to say into the tiny spaces available in some diaries. Their eyes had been opened, their senses awakened, and they wanted to write about every minute detail. Diaries that had been limited to single line entries were suddenly full of vivid descriptions that filled every available piece of a page.

In the aftermath of these landings and the securing of positions around Anzac an even more surprising change occurred within the diaries of working class men. Many ceased writing about conflict and war, and instead began writing about work

and the labour going on around them. Their diaries that had begun as records of their great adventure, changed to become records of the work they were undertaking.

Henry Wyatt has previously been explored as an individual who initially began writing a diary as a record of his adventure in the military. The extracts provided in chapter two display the adventurous expectations of Wyatt throughout the early stages of his military service. Yet upon landing on Gallipoli Henry Wyatt's adventure came to an end. The fun and games were over and his diary entries had changed. From 25 April onwards Wyatt no longer wrote of his experiences as part of the adventure, nor did he write accounts of his 'exciting' times within the AIF. Instead, by mid May, after being on the peninsula for only three weeks, the constant demands of work and the restlessness caused by the long drain of inactivity around Anzac led Wyatt to describe his daily life as 'Nothing unusual'.[157] Wyatt had sailed half way around the world, had stowed away on a ship heading towards the conflict, and was serving on the Gallipoli Peninsula, yet his entire entry for 14 May 1915 was simply 'Nothing unusual'. Daily life had already become 'usual' in the military. The prospects for an adventure were disappearing, and the regularity of work was beginning to show itself. Wyatt penned the following series of entries towards the end of May,

| | |
|---|---|
| 29/5/15 | Nothing doing |
| 30/5/15 | Ditto |
| 31/5/15 | Ditto |
| 1/6/15 | Same |
| 2/6/15 | -------- |

[157] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 14/5/15.

3/6/15 Nothing unusual[158]

In Wyatt's opinion his daily life on Gallipoli was not worthy enough to put into detail. After a number of weeks, he settled into the routine of working life in the military. This involved heading down to the beach each day to collect water, carrying this water back up to the trenches, cleaning the rifles out, fixing up the trenches, cooking meals throughout the day, and performing tasks ordered of him by the higher ranks. Throughout his diary we can see his attitude towards service changing from the anticipation of an adventure, to the resignation with a monotonous working day.

Prior to enlisting Henry Wyatt had also worked. This work formed a large part of his life. When employed, this work was regular, and it provided the means with which he supported himself. As Charlie Fox argues, work forms the majority of people's waking hours, forming a large part of the way they approach life, the world they live in, and how they identify with themselves.[159] Before enlisting, Henry Wyatt had been accustomed to working, to being a worker, and having a daily life that was largely filled up with work. In 1915, whilst on Gallipoli, Henry Wyatt found that he was living a daily life that was once again largely filled up with work. Within Wyatt's diary entries it becomes evident that the adventure had disappeared, for the time being at least, and the reality of a working life for a regular pay had once more settled into his mindset.

Attention needs to be paid to this change in Wyatt's diary entries. This diary that had begun as a record of his adventure, reflecting his expectations of military

[158] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entries as dated. The entry on 2/6/15 was not left blank, rather Wyatt had actually written '- - - - - -', perhaps to suggest his irritation at the lack of an adventure and frustration at the perceived absence of anything of interest to write about.
[159] Fox, *Working Australia*, p. *x*.

service upon enlisting, had changed whilst he was on Gallipoli to become a record of his monotonous days. Within his diaries the attention to work increased as his service extended. After travelling with his unit to the Western Front his diary focuses even more upon work. In January 1917 an entire entry appeared simply as, 'I am Orderly Sgt'.[160] This short entry filled the entire space for a day. It explained what he was doing quite succinctly. On 20 January, the day of the entry, his job was to organise the orders of his company, ensure that everybody knew what they were doing. Another entire entry of 6 February 1917 stated 'We have been building stands for firing grenades'.[161] Again, this was all that he said for the day. By 1917 Wyatt's adventure had been forgotten, at least in his 'record of his adventure'. His motivations for writing and his motivations for continuing to serve in the Australian Imperial Force had changed. His daily summary was of the work performed, and his approach towards military service was that as a job of work.

The transition in working class men's mindsets from initially adventurous expectations to an approach towards military service as a job of work can also be seen in the diaries of John Hartley Meads. Like Wyatt, Meads enlisted for an adventure and his diary was meant to be a record of that adventure to be read by others. As noted in chapter two, Meads addressed his diary to his mother, writing 'This diary is to my mother from her son'.[162] In addition to limiting what Meads would write in his diary this introduction also suggests that his diary was intended to be a readable account for others of his exciting times in the military. His early entries read similarly to Wyatt's, reporting on his exciting and adventurous pursuits. Thus he wrote a lengthy entry on

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[160] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 20/1/17.
[161] Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608, diary entry dated 6/2/17.
[162] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackeroo, Wagga Wagga, AWM PR03005 undated.

his adventures as his troopship lay docked in the Colombo harbour nearly a year after Wyatt's had passed through,

> 11/2/16 Coming into Colombo, good sight to see the queer crafts in the water seems wonderful how they manage to keep afloat. We were not allowed ashore so got permission to go in swimming in the harbour and although it is full of sharks it did not deter our boys from going in. and I was one. There were at least 500 in the water. We swam out + chased the natives in the boats, tip them out get in ourselves then sink the boat. in the afternoon we got up one of the boats we had sunk in the morning and rowed over to a P.O mail boat which was there about … of a mile from us most of us had our dungaree trousers cut at the knees. I had pyjama trousers on – There were 70 of us in the boat. They gave us a good welcome and showed us all over the boat. Coming back we sunk the boat about 200 yards from our own boat, the Runic + had to swim for it.[163]

Similarly when Meads arrived in Egypt he followed the lead of the other Australian soldiers who had passed before him by visiting the tourist sites - the Pyramids, Joseph's Well, the silk bazaar, a museum and a number of mosques around Cairo, all the while reporting on these within his diary.

Upon arriving in France the real work of soldiering showed itself and Meads became irritated with the lack of adventure, and the demands of the work at all hours

[163] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 11/2/16.

of the day and night.[164] His entries ceased describing the sights, or the exciting adventures he experienced, and instead focused upon work, on its nature, and on how long and demanding it was. Increasingly, as the conflict wore on, Meads' exhaustion was reflected in the changing nature of his entries, they became briefer and conveyed a sense of monotony in the daily life. In early May 1917 Meads penned the following series of entries,

| | |
|---|---|
| 2/5/17 | Only work |
| 3/5/17 | Same thing |
| 4/5/17 | Monotony cannot be broken[165] |

Similar entries later in the same month show the deteriorating situation,

| | |
|---|---|
| 25/5/17 | Nothing exciting only work |
| 26-31/5/17 | In Camp nothing except work[166] |

Throughout this period Meads wrote of work as 'normal', as the regular thing that was done. There was nothing unusual to report, nothing exciting, nothing out of the ordinary, 'only work'. Meads' life within the military had slipped into a regular monotonous pattern that was ideally illustrated by two short and simple entries written in 1917,

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[164] Meads' entries are explored in further detail in the following chapter.
[165] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackeroo, Wagga Wagga, AWM PR03005, 2/5/17 to 4/5/17.
[166] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackeroo, Wagga Wagga, AWM PR0300525/5/17 to 31/5/17. Meads had scribbled a line to indicate the one entry from 26 May to 31 May should cover all six days.

28/11/17 Usual routine of work. went to Theatre to see 'By Pigeon Post' It was not too bad.

29/11/17 Work again[167]

Meads wrote of the 'Usual routine of work' on one day, with 'Work again' on the following day. By this stage, November 1917, the routine of work within the military was well established within Meads' mindset. Every day he would wake, work, rest, and sleep. It had become a usual routine, a monotony.

This style of writing was not unique to Wyatt and Meads. Many other soldiers began diaries of their adventures that gradually became single line records of their daily work. Robert Morris' diary began as a record of his adventurous times in the military. Whilst on the troopship heading to France Morris described pillow fights, bun eating competitions, tug-o-wars and boxing tournaments, noting that there was 'Plenty of fun a board'.[168] Yet upon arriving in France and being set to work the nature of his diary changes, recording less the 'adventurous' or 'fun' aspects of his days, and more the work he is ordered to perform, as these entries in May 1916 demonstrate,

18/5/16 Went to support trenches at 4.00AM - building dug outs

19/5/16 Fatigue to Front line

20/5/16 Fatigue to Front line

[167] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entries as dated.

[168] Robert Irvine Morris, No. 3577, Motor Mechanic, Newtown, ML MSS 2887, diary entry dated 29/12/15. See also entries dated 31/12/15, 1/1/16, and 5/1/16.

| | |
|---|---|
| 21/5/16 | innocculated no duties – Bombardment of Equingham – 2nd Cigarette issue |
| 22/5/16 | Quarter Guard 24 hours |
| 23/5/16 | Went to Equingham for bath – paid 20 francs – Fatigue all-night building parapets |
| 24/5/16 | Rest all day – mess orderly |
| 25/5/16 | Fatigue until 1 o'clock - Dug outs – Moved to supports 2 o'clock – Fatigue building parapets 8 o'clock till 2 o'clock[169] |

These were Morris' entire entries for these days and nothing has been edited out. With the two exceptions of inoculation on 21 May and a rather dubious 'Rest all day' on 24 May his days consisted of 'fatigues' and work of some variety.

Whilst Wyatt and Mead's diaries reveal a change in attitudes towards military service, the diaries of other men reveal approaches towards service as a job of work that began from the moment they enlisted into the AIF. Arthur Freebody's repetitive use of 'fatigue' in his diary testifies both to routines of work experienced by men in the rank and file, and towards his approach towards miliary service as a job of work. A series of entries from December 1916 makes clear the endless demands of work,

| | |
|---|---|
| 12/12/16 | Did fatigue work all day pushing up hut material |
| 13/12/16 | Fatigue work again |
| 14/12/16 | Fatigue work started five am. ceased 8 o'clock. received four letters |
| 15/12/16 | Same work hours |
| 16/12/16 | Same work again. started four o'clock knocked off ten o'clock |

[169] Robert Irvine Morris, No. 3577, Motor Mechanic, Newtown, ML MSS 2887, diary entries dated 18/5/16 to 25/5/16.

17/12/16 Fatigue cut out

18/12/16 Three hours fatigue @ night

19/12/16 A couple of hours fatigue nightime[170]

As with the above extracts from Morris' diary, these were Freebody's entire entries for these days and nothing has been edited out. Thus on 13 December 1916 his entire entry for the day, or his summary of the day's activities in the military, was simply 'Fatigue work again'. Freebody felt that nothing more was worth mentioning, there was nothing else significant happening in his day-to-day life. Work was everything. Work, or 'fatigue', was the most significant thing to happen during these days. The entry on 17 December stands out as being the one-day of the week without work; it was most likely because this day was a Sunday.[171]

Freebody's diary continues in this manner for a further two years. His diary of military service was very much a record of the daily work he performed for the Australian Imperial Force. His entries form long patterns of repetition, reporting on work both in the lines and out, thus suggesting either that his diary was intended as a record of his work, or that this work formed such a primary part of his life that there was little else of significance to write about.

Whilst the timing of 'work' was regular, in that it was performed every day, the nature of the work was very diverse. This was demonstrated first on Gallipoli and was further broadened by the experiences of working class men on the Western Front. The monotony came partly from the nature of the work, but also in the constant demands of work. For Meads, his experience with work in the military not only

[170] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entries as dated.
[171] See for example Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 130.

quashed his expectations of an adventure, it also led to a realisation that military service largely consisted of work, and this was reflected in his daily outlook. The disillusionment and sense of despair that developed amongst Australian soldiers throughout the Great War has largely been attributed to the horrific nature of warfare and the conditions of the front line. Yet, as this chapter has shown, the demands of work and the horrible nature of this work undoubtedly played some part in these changing attitudes. As the working class men of the AIF struggled to come to terms with the reality of military service they also began to look for ways to deal with their situation, some became fatalists, some lost their sense of humanity, whilst many resisted the military regimen using methods that they had employed in civil society.

## Chapter Five: Workplace Resistance and Protest in the Australian Imperial Force

### Mutiny in the workplace

Working class men's approach towards military service in the AIF as a job of work also directly resulted in responses to work-related problems in work-related language and through a work-related mindset. Far from being the excited and ambitious young men that sailed from Australia's shores in 1914 and early 1915, these working class men increasingly expressed complaints about the military, about their officers, about their daily life, and about the work they were regularly ordered to undertake. This chapter follows on from the previous examination of the approaches towards work by examining working class men's patterns of protest and resistance against work and against the military. Once again this relies largely upon the diaries and letters of those who served, though it also examines broader patterns of protest and discipline within the AIF as evidence of these reactions.

Understanding these reactions to work and the military is made difficult because of the way 'resistance' and 'protest' in the military was treated at the time, and also because of the way it has been treated since by the historical literature. During the Great War, soldiers were expected to be dutiful and subservient and any diversion away from this meant that an individual was failing in his duty. Similarly within much of the historical literature, 'heroes' were praised for their dedication to mates, their courage under fire, and their service to their people at home. Pride was placed upon soldiers who served nobly, who gave their lives for the King and Country, and who followed their school mates into battle to pursue the private

schoolboy ambition to 'Play up! Play up! And play the game!'.[1] One of Australia's greatest war heroes, John Simpson Kirkpatrick, is remembered most for his selfless dedication to others, and much less for his other indiscretions. Within this popular style of writing, refusals to work, or refusals to follow the orders of a domineering officer, have been portrayed as 'indiscipline', 'insubordination', or at its most extreme, 'mutiny'.[2] Those who dodged work, who complained about the military, or who were disrespectful to officers were portrayed as a shame to their King and Country, and unworthy of the uniform they wore. For this reason, much of the disciplinary problems of the AIF have been swept under the carpet. Glenn Wahlert argues that the lives of men who served during the Great War have been clouded by the digger mythology, and thus the historical literature tends to 'dismiss the numerous incidents of indiscipline as simply boisterous interludes in the fighting'.[3] The dismissal of these disciplinary problems also originates from the perceived shame this would bring upon returned soldiers. In the post-war years returned soldiers' organisations focused upon presenting a noble and heroic image of the Australian 'Anzac', and protest, resistance, and indiscipline did not fit within this remembered image.

However, working class men did not share the same sentiments as middle class men. John Bruce for example did not see dodging work within the military as a shameful thing to do. Working class men's motivations for serving, as has been well covered, were clearly different to those of middle class men, and they were not always content to sacrifice all for the sake of a demanding officer. Thus within the same mindset, protesting against the military was not something that working class men

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[1] For an example of these attitudes see Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', p. 41 and p. 67.
[2] For a further discussion on this see R. Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', *Overland*, No. 169, 2002.
[3] Wahlert, *The Other Enemy*, p. 2.

were ashamed of; in reality it was quite the contrary. When men from the Casula and Liverpool training camps led a strike against unfair working conditions, they proudly took their complaints to the centre of Sydney and marched down George Street in full uniform carrying their battalion colours alongside that of the Union Jack.

Within the historical literature, the failure to identify these crucial differences amongst the men of the rank and file has resulted in decades of misunderstanding. Twentieth century military historians, familiar with the course of the Great War and well familiar with the demands of soldiering, have penned their histories in the language of war. The cultural formation of their research has not provided consideration for the approaches by working class men towards their service. Thus, an individual ignoring an officer's order is written of strictly in the correct military terms as 'insubordination', and as a result motivations of the rank and file soldier are not understood. Similarly a protest against the military regimen is written of in accordance with military law as a 'mutiny', and as a result the perspective of the rank and file soldiers who may have merely wanted to hold a strike are not understood.

Additional problems exist in attempting to understand the reactions of men because of their treatment by the military at the time. During the war, officers in the AIF attempted to downplay the seriousness of these disciplinary problems in an attempt to present an image of a disciplined army. Mutinies would further stain the image of the AIF, and in the desire to demonstrate Australia's worthiness attempts were made to sweep ill-favoured behaviour under the carpet. Rowan Cahill argues that 'To minimise the number of actual mutinies, it seems the preferred Australian option has been, where possible, to treat alleged mutinous behaviour as something less legally controversial, thereby attracting less attention and scrutiny, and avoiding

political fallout'.[4] This is ideally demonstrated in Bean's short and shrift treatment of the First Wasser Riot and his complete neglect of the Second Wasser Riot in the *Official history*,[5] but also in the attitudes of the military officials at the time who let many 'crimes' go unpunished. Jeffrey Williams provides the details of one example in January 1915 when men of the 1st Brigade on a long route march through the Egyptian desert simply sat down in the sand as a protest against their inadequate rations, refusing to move until their complaints were listened to. The flustered commanding officer promised the men better treatment provided they end their protest and continue marching before their brigadier arrived.[6]

In the opinion of British observers this behaviour was not evidence of various cultural backgrounds, but basically 'failures of Australian leadership', or at its simplest 'insufficient training'.[7] Thus, in the above case, the commanding officer's decision to 'clean up' the men before the brigadier arrived reveals the pressures placed upon officers to keep their men in line, and reflects the belief at the time that poorly disciplined men was the result of poor quality officers.[8] In much kinder words Bean explained that 'the Australian soldier is exactly what his commanding officer makes him'.[9] The indiscipline of men was seen simply as a reflection on the poor leadership qualities of an officer. Throughout the war Australian officers were criticised by their British counterparts for failing to bring their men into line, and with

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[4] See Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', pp. 50-54.
[5] The First and Second Wasser Riots both involved Australians. The First Wasser Riot took place on 2 April 1915 before the first contingent of Australians was scheduled to leave Egypt. Bean's treatment of this event was restricted to a single footnote on a page. The Second Wasser Riot took place on 31 July 1915 before the second contingent of Australians was scheduled to leave Egypt and is noted within the same footnote. See Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 130n**.**
[6] Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 20.
[7] The belief in the importance of training in maintaining discipline can be seen in Bean, *Official history: Vol. III*, p. 164-168.
[8] See for example, Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 47.
[9] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*,, p. 95.

a crime rate in 1918 far surpassing that of the British, Canadian, and New Zealand armies combined, many of the time could claim that they had just cause for complaint.

The result of this mistreatment both from the military at the time, and in the historical literature to date, is that protests have either been hidden away, or mistreated strictly within military history guidelines. In all of this, the motivations for protest, for 'indiscipline' and 'insubordination', and for 'mutiny', are all largely ignored. Indiscipline is seen as the fault of the officer, not the fault of the poor quality food. A mutiny is seen as evidence of 'poor quality soldiers', not as evidence of 'poor quality treatment'. In this style of writing, the motivations of working class men are ignored. As Janet Watson argued in *Fighting Different Wars*, '

> Many working-class volunteers in the army, as well as vast numbers of conscript fellows, portrayed the war as the job that had to be done at the time, and therefore also brought with them into the military the languages and actions of industrial unrest'.[10]

This chapter thus seeks to build upon Watson's argument by exploring these protests in detail. It further hopes to see through the clouding of the military language of the historical literature and the contemporary records and thus provide an understanding of the motivations for protest and resistance amongst working class men who served in the AIF during the Great War.

[10] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 5.

**Industrial Action and the AIF**

In the minds of working class men in the AIF, refusals to follow orders, refusals to go into action, and absences from the military without leave were quite often simple methods of industrial action that they had utilised in their civilian workplaces before the war. The evidence for these attitudes is clear in the actions taken, and is made further evident in the diaries and letters of these working class men. Janet Watson argues that 'The idea of military service as work included the use of the language, and even techniques, of industrial action'.[11] Thus when several thousand men from the Casula and Liverpool training camps marched through George Street in Sydney in protest against the changes to their training routine that would increase their hours of work, they carried a placard at the front of the procession proclaiming 'STRIKE – WE WON'T DRILL 40 1/2 HOURS'.[12] Yet by almost all accounts this day is remembered as a riot, and as a mutiny. The same pattern has been followed with other instances of industrial action during the Great War. The intentions of the rank and file for industrial action were made clear on most occasions, yet in their treatment by officers, by the media, and by military historians, they are seen as mutinies.

The Liverpool-Casula protest is worth focusing upon in particular for what it reveals about working class approaches towards work in the military. Dale Blair, Rowan Cahill, and Michael Darby have made significant contributions to our understanding of the events of 14 February 1916 and this section follows on from

[11]Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 28.
[12] M. Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', M. A. Thesis, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, 1997, p. 48 and Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, facing p. 119.

their work in attempting to link this understanding with hitherto scarcely recognised approaches by working class men towards military service as a job of work.[13]

When a new training syllabus was introduced to the AIF in early 1916, the men of the Casula and Liverpool training camps, most relatively new recruits, refused to take the changes to their working conditions sitting down. Their main complaint about the new syllabus was that it would increase their training hours from 36 to 40.5 hours per week.[14] For working class men approaching military service as work, this was effectively an increase in their working week without any increase in pay. In an era where the Eight Hour Day movement was still publicly celebrated and revered in the mindsets of working class men this reversal of working hours would not go unchecked.[15]

By contrast, in the eyes of officers this was simply a change in the training schedule of soldiers, and part of the service they volunteered for when they signed their lives up to obediently serve in the military. The different understandings of these changes was a primary factor in what was to result in the largest incident of soldier-protest, and soldier-violence, on the Australian home front during the Great War.

On the morning of 14 February 1916, between 500 and 2500 of the 5600 men based at Casula training camp assembled and marched out of camp towards the nearby Liverpool training camp.[16] These men were united to protest against what they

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[13] See Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', and Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*.
[14] Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 40.
[15] For a series of discussions on the Eight Hour Day movement in Australia see J. Kimber and P. Love, *The Time of Their Lives: The Eight Hour Day and Working Life*, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History – Melbourne, Melbourne, 2007. For an analysis of the celebration of the movement in the 1910s see in particular B. Webster, 'Celebrating the "Great Boon": Eight hour day and early Labour Day in Rockhampton, 1909-1929', pp. 45-64.
[16] Estimates vary on how many men left the Casula camp. See for example Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 42 and Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 41.

saw as unfair changes to their working week.[17] Upon arrival at the Liverpool camp the men disrupted the drilling of the Liverpool recruits and allocated 32 representatives from amongst their numbers to explain their grievances to the Camp Commandant.[18] According to John James Brewster, a private serving with the 4th Battalion,

> The leaders of the men…had an interview with the Authorities and had come to a satisfactory understanding to continue as heretofore to enable the Military officials time to consult the proper Ministerial Authorities and after going through some Company drill on the 'outside' parade ground a start was made to return.[19]

To this point the behaviour of the men directly mirrored industrial action from civil society. They had 'downed tools' and 'walked out' of the job, before marching to the next camp to gain further supporters. Here, their appointed representatives formed a delegation to speak to the individual responsible for enforcing the new syllabus - the camp commandant Colonel Miller. The outcome of these discussions did not satisfy the strikers. There would be no immediate changes to the syllabus, and in the short term at least they would have to work under the new orders.[20]

At this stage the apparent failure of the action divided the intentions of the strikers. Their numbers at the Liverpool camp swelled to between 5000 and 10000,

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[17] Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 41.
[18] Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 42.
[19] J. J. Brewster, No. 4748, Commercial Traveller, Paddington, ML MSS 1294, 'A Glimpse pf War through a Private's Eyes: a retrospective account of experiences in World War 1', unpublished manuscript, cited from Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 42.
[20] Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 42 and Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 42.

though not all of these had the best interests of the rank and file in mind.[21] The group headed for the railway station to publicly take their complaint to the heart of Sydney, but from this point on the strike lost all momentum. The focus upon criticising the increase in working hours had been lost, and groups of men took it upon themselves to take advantage of the situation by raiding hotels in Liverpool, rolling barrels of beer into the street, and becoming heavily intoxicated. After catching trains into the city there were more raids on shops, 'windows smashed, and motor vehicles commandeered by mobs of soldiers'.[22] All the while a small group tried to maintain the integrity of the strike. In columns of four this main group marched down George Street in Sydney, headed by a standard bearer carrying the green and purple colours of the 2nd Battalion alongside two Union Jacks, one of which was topped with the red flag.[23] One journalist from the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that they 'made a really fine picture, and, keeping good time, the fours properly dressed, the men marched as if on parade'.[24] Their pride in their job was undiminished; they were proud soldiers of Australia, and they were dissatisfied with working conditions.

Throughout this main march the men maintained that this was an industrial action. They were protesting against unfair working conditions and they wanted to make it clear to all. Along the way the men shouted 'Are we downhearted?' with a unanimous reply of 'No', then, 'Are we going to drill 40 hours?', again with the unanimous reply of 'No'.[25] Their leading placard 'STRIKE - WE WON'T DRILL 40

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[21] For this estimate see for example Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 42.
[22] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 42.
[23] Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', p. 52 and Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 47.
[24] Cited from Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', p. 52.
[25] Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 47.

1/2 HOURS' clearly reinforced their intentions.[26] Similarly when the *Evening News* published a poster advising 'RIOT AT LIVERPOOL', the strikers took objection to the misinterpretation of their protest with Acting Staff Sergeant-Major Sydney E. Tanner allegedly telling the sub-editor of the newspaper, 'We want an apology for the poster. It was not a riot, it was only a strike'.[27] But by early evening the malicious intentions of some had marred the genuine desire for change by others.

The column of strikers and protesters wound their way down to the domain where they finished, and from here the men separated. With the protest made, and the strike effected, some continued on sightseeing tours around the city, some continued to drink, whilst others returned to camp in Liverpool and Casula. But before the day was over a confrontation with a military picket at central station would result in twenty rounds being fired against the soldiers, with one Light Horse trooper killed, and seven other men injured.[28]

There were clearly two sides to what has become known as the Liverpool-Sydney riot, or the 'Battle of Sydney'. Significantly this was intended as a strike, as a stoppage of work and a protest against changes to working conditions. Participants maintained this intention throughout the day and in subsequent court-martials. On the other hand as groups of disinterested soldiers broke away from the main body their boredom turned to drinking, and then to rioting. In the aftermath of the protest it was these more violent forms of resistance that would be remembered. Newspapers reported on the death of a soldier at Sydney's Central Station, of shops raided and of soldiers gone wild. In the historical literature the Liverpool-Sydney protest has been

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[26] Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 48 and Blair, *Dinkum Diggers,* facing p. 119.

[27] G. B. Guy, 'Court-Martial of Acting Sergeant-Major Sydney E. Tanner, AA A471/1 File 1444, cited in Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 52

[28] Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', p. 53

remembered as a catalyst for 'early closing' in public houses,[29] and as a preferably forgotten taint on the Anzac Legend. Yet in the context of this dissertation it assists in understanding that approaches towards military service as work also entailed approaches towards unfair working conditions through industrial action.


**Figure 7: The leaders of the February 1916 strike marching through Sydney.[30]**

[29] Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', p. 54, see also Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot'.
[30] The leaders of the strike/protest marching through Sydney, *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 February 1916.

The Liverpool-Sydney protest was not the first of its kind. The Liverpool training camp had seen a small scale riot in November 1915 where several tents had been burnt down. Before that in March 1915 the men of the 1st Battalion refused to go on parade because they had been denied a holiday that officers had promised them.[31] These were of course in addition to the countless small-scale confrontations that rank and file soldiers had with their officers and with military police. However, the failure of this strike did not destroy the belief amongst working class men that they could resist the military regimen. These patterns of resistance continued through other mediums, and on occasion these men resorted back to large-scale protest and industrial action.

In mid-September 1918 a number of separate events occurred which shocked the military command, and reinforced the unique approach by working class men towards military service as a job of work. Only six weeks after the 'black day' for the German army a number of Australian battalions stood their ground and refused to follow a series of different orders sent straight from the top of the chain of command. The first action, and the first officially recorded 'mutiny' in the AIF, occurred on 14 September 1918 when the 59th Battalion was first relieved from the line, then almost immediately ordered back into it.[32] Three platoons initially refused to move, believing that they had done their job and deserved a rest, yet after a short time their resistance was overcome and they returned to the lines.

A much more serious incident took place a week later on 21 September 1918 when part of the 1st Battalion refused to go into the line to carry out an attack. Dale

[31] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 50.
[32] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 875.

Blair argues that the men claimed they were 'overworked'.[33] Additionally, the men were once again promised a holiday that was then cancelled.[34] But in this case instead of simply being ordered to occupy the lines, they were ordered onto the offensive. The contrast between believing they were about to head out of the line for a break, and suddenly being told that were instead participating in an attack, broke the patience of the men of the rank and file. Their refusal to attack, by military law, was a mutiny, but significantly, in the minds of the working class men of the rank and file, this was simply another piece of industrial action.

As in the case of the Liverpool-Sydney protest, officers came down hard on those who mutinied. The 'delegates' of the strikers, selected from amongst the NCOs of the battalion, were charged with 'desertion' instead of mutiny, found guilty by court-martial, and sentenced to terms of five to ten years imprisonment.[35] The hundreds of other ranks participating in the action received sentences of three years imprisonment for their efforts,[36] and the message sent to the rank and file of the AIF was clear - the military was no place for industrial action.

At its core the 1st Battalion's mutiny was a protest against the battalion's working hours that was fuelled by the stressful situation of the trenches and made possible by the recent loss of officers.[37] Blair makes note of John Terraine's assessment that the 1st Battalion's action was 'a mutiny of exhaustion'.[38] Though in Blair's analysis of the occupational background of the mutineers he found that 'the social background of men was a factor in the decision to mutiny. Soldiers from

[33] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 157.
[34] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 158.
[35] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 159.
[36] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 159.
[37] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 159.
[38] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 160.

labour-intensive occupations were more disaffected than other groups'.[39] The revealing detail was that 62.89% of the mutineers were tradesmen, labourers, or from industrial and manufacturing occupations, whilst only 43.99% of the non-mutineers were from these groups.[40] By contrast, men with professional and clerical occupations made up only 4.03% of the mutineers, and 16.66 % of the non-mutineers.[41] Working class men who were previous members of a union, or who had some experience with industrial action, were the likely participants in the 1st Battalion's action. Fred Farrall, a farmhand serving with the 55th Battalion, observed that,

> …without an army of soldiers or workers, officers and employers alike are superfluous. This was the most militant action taken by the Diggers during that long struggle, though there were others. I think it should be noted here that the AIF was an army of a new type; firstly, it was a volunteer army, and secondly, within its ranks was a big percentage of trade unionists, and it was undoubtedly these influences that made it the most democratic body of men in the war.[42]

In their approach towards military service as work, the men of the 1st Battalion found the same complaints about the nature of work, the same motivations for industrial action, and thus resorted to the same type of industrial action to counter problems in the workplace.

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[39] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 161.
[40] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 161.
[41] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 161.
[42] L. Farrall, *The File on Fred: A Biography of Fred Farrall*, cited in Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 162.

September also saw what have become known as the ‘mutinies of disbandment’ within the AIF. With the withdrawal of an estimated 6000 ‘1914’ men from the line, Monash felt forced to disband a number of Australian battalions to maintain effective strengths amongst the remaining units. The news was not received well by either the rank and file or their officers. Men held sit down protests throughout the units set to be disbanded, whilst some simply refused to follow orders to march to their new battalions. According to military law this was another mutiny, the men were disobeying orders and refusing to follow the direct orders of their officers. Yet in the eyes of the men of the rank and file, this was simply a protest against the break up of their battalions. Reynold Potter, a carpenter from Haberfield, summed up the sentiments of thousands of Australian men in the midst of these protests,

> I didn’t know how much attached to the Battalion I was until ordered to report to another. I am glad to be able to say now, that, for the present at least, we are to remain of the 21st Batt. For one day we were officially in the 22nd but on that day we were all absentees. When it came to the official handing over; and the relinquishing of his command over the Battalion which he had lead and worked for almost since its inception, our grand Old Colonel (Duggin) broke up completely and had to leave the heart breaking business to Major Reid. So when we should have reported to our respective new O.C’s we refused to be disbanded; and remained and drilled under our Sergeant-Majors as a protest against the business. In military Parlance I suppose we were mutineers; but it

> seemed a little "over the odds" to keep us pegging away until we were nearly all killed, and then to join forces so that we could go in and get finished off.[43]

Hector Brewer, by this stage a lieutenant, likewise empathised with the men under his command,

> 22/9/18 The men are all standing together like good Australians and I admire their spirit but of course they are quite wrong in taking up such an attitude I am looking at it from an officers point of view of course…The men all held a meeting about 5PM to discuss the matter and decide what they should do. It rained heavily all the while but the meeting lasted a full hour out in the open near the Stadium. After the meeting a deputation of representatives of all Coys waited on the C.O. to put their case before him. I asked the C.O. what their case was and he told me that the men took a reasonable view of the whole affair but that they did not wish to be broken up without a making a protest.[44]

Two days later the men under Brewer's command were ordered to fall out and form up in their new battalions; they refused to move, instead forming a silent protest on the parade ground as commanding officers, brigadiers, and even division commanders came out to address them. Brewer wrote in his diary,

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[43] Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944, transcription of diary, originally written in shorthand, undated entry, c. September 1918, pp. 38-39.

[44] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry as dated. A 'Coy' was a company, and the 'C.O.' was the commanding officer.

24/9/18 The behaviour of the men throughout was extremely good. They are quietly determined to carry on with their present attitude. They say that they are willing to go into a fight tomorrow if they are allowed to go as the 54th Bn. but they absolutely refuse to fight with another unit.[45]

The protest lasted for six days. It was unlikely that they would ever have been allowed to keep their units, but they did manage to win a minor victory, as Brewer again elaborates,

27/9/18 The boys have had a win though we are assured that is only a temporary arrangement.…we are going into action as the 54th Bn. The good old 54th. Every body is delighted The men are taking it very solierly though.[46]

The 'win' that Brewer described was that the men of the 54th Battalion could fight one last battle in their battalion colours before being disbanded. It was a noble gesture in an otherwise ignoble war. Over four years these battalions had become home to the Australian soldiers and the thought of disbanding and leaving behind a sense of loyalty to the unit and to well-known comrades brought many to tears.

Similar protests and strikes occurred in the other battalions, with Bean arguing that 'one after the other, the other selected battalions, when ordered to disband (mostly on September 24th and 25th) took the same action'.[47] Some officers were initially removed from their units for sticking by their men, others even led the

[45] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry as dated.
[46] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry as dated.
[47] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 938.

protests, but by and large the empathetic commanding officers let the mass charges of 'mutiny' drop. Bean justifies this by arguing that in contrast to the 1st Battalion's action, 'the refusal was not treated as mutiny by any authority, Australian or British'.[48] It was a wise decision given that the pursuit of such measures would have overfilled the detention centres and deprived the Australian army of a significant part of their force.

It is doubtful if these protests would have succeeded were they attempted in 1916 or 1917. Small scale protests in the training camps of Australia during 1915 and 1916 had been crushed with serious punishments being handed down to participants. The situation on Gallipoli in 1915 afforded little room for significant protests. Likewise in Europe throughout both 1916 and 1917 the devastating casualties suffered by the Australians contributed towards a sense of fatalism amongst the rank and file that diminished their confidence. But by 1918 the new found sense of self-assurance saw the re-emergence of traditional methods of industrial relations into the AIF. Clearly the military successes of the AIF throughout 1918 gave the men of the rank and file the necessary confidence to be able to make these protests without fear of reprisal. Their role in stopping the Ludendorff's 'Spring Offensive', the initiative demonstrated through 'Peaceful Penetration', and their participation in the 'Black Day' of the German Army on 8 August 1918 may have contributed towards this belief and the feeling of having some bargaining power to use against the upper echelons of the military.

In addition, the stakes that were on offer varied considerably between 1915 and 1918. The protests made within the training camps of Australia were not seen by protesters to be placing any lives at risk; the enemy was still defending their trenches

[48] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI,* p. 939.

on the other side of the world. By contrast, these protests were seen by the men currently serving in France and Belgium as selfish acts; whilst the old hands were busy dealing with the conditions of the trenches, the new hands were still in Australia complaining about working hours. By the end of 1918 the situation may have been deemed secure enough to be able to warrant a return to these popular forms of protests. Once again, the 'mutineers' did not believe they were placing any lives at risk and thus the risks were not as great as they had been throughout 1916 and 1917. With the German army on the run, the working class men of the rank and file once again felt the opportunity was right to express their concerns.

Contrary to the ideals of the Anzac Legend, these men felt no shame in disobeying orders when it was done as a protest against working conditions, or in support of a comrade in trouble. 'Sit-downs', as explored below, or 'go-slows', in which men would simply decrease their rate of work, may have been more common occurrences given the high demands of work and the physical strains placed upon men. But protests such as these, or 'mutinies' in the strict military terminology, also brought a sense of pride in mateship and standing by one's mates and one's rights. It is also important to note that these were clear protests against the military regimen, and against working conditions in the military. The large number of working class men in the rank and file gave support to the possibility of using industrial action to protest again, and seek a solution to, perceived unfair working conditions.

**Attitudes towards officers**

Working class men's combined disrespect for, and ignorance of, the British military tradition and soldierly standards were most clearly elucidated in their attitudes

towards officers. Bill Gammage and Dale Blair have once again made the most significant contributions to our understanding of the relations between officers and the rank and file. In particular Blair's chapter ' "Class is everything": The officer-man relationship' from *Dinkum Diggers* focuses specifically upon the nature of these relations.[49] This section then largely builds upon Blair's work through focusing specifically upon the writings of working class men. It uses some of Blair's findings to further analyse how working class men's attitudes to their officers reflected their approach to military service as a job of work. In the historical literture these attitudes towards officers are often hidden away in favour of the more preferred characteristics of mateship and egalitarianism. Bean makes brief mention of attitudes towards officers in passing, arguing that men simply were not accustomed to following orders without question, and until the first trials at Gallipoli, 'there had lingered in most Australian battalions a vague resentment against the institution of officers'.[50] However, Bean suggests that this resentment soon disappeared when men entered the front line and confronted the 'real work' of the military.

In the diaries and letters of working class men it is clear that officers were identified as a distinctly different class. Their identity as 'officers' was always evident; they received different treatment, different rates of pay, different types of food, and different types of shelter. In November 1916, Thomas Goodwin observed,

[49] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, pp. 37-68.
[50] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I,* p. 549.

28/11/16 Some ghastly sights at dressing station in rear of our lines. The unfortunate fellows all over blood and mud. Officers and men all the same, no special treatment, no class distinction.[51]

The comment is telling not for what it reveals about class divisions in the dressing station, but for what it reveals about class distinctions outside the dressing station. Goodwin felt the need to comment about this lack of special treatment and lack of class distinction simply because by November 1916 he was so accustomed to life in the military being surrounded by 'special treatment' and 'class distinction' that its absence was noteworthy. Far from being 'individuals', officers were a clearly recognised part of the military system that was responsible for the imbalanced treatment of the rank and file soldier.

Much of this dislike for the officer class emanated from the class divisions that existed in pre-war civil society. Dale Blair suggests that the differences between officers and their men reflected the differences between the middle class and the working class in civil society, arguing that 'They viewed one another differently and this affected their behaviour and attitudes towards one another'.[52] Officers often spoke differently, they acted differently,[53] they enlisted for different reasons,[54] and they experienced a different type of war.[55] But it is important to note that beyond this initial barrier, day-to-day relations with officers varied considerably from unit to unit, and from officer to officer.

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[51] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 28/11/16.
[52] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 55.
[53] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 55.
[54] Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', see in particular Part II, pp. 16-37.
[55] Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', see in particular Part III, pp. 38-68.

On occasions an officer would treat his men well and earn their respect, at other times an officer's treatment of his men would be less than kind and the response less than favourable. Thus the understanding one reaches of relations between officers and the rank and file depends largely upon the diary one reads, and the nature of the officer commanding the diary writer. This can be emphasised in the contrasting diaries of Hector Brewer and Henry Dadswell. In April 1918 Brewer described the authority one officer had over his men,

> 11/4/18 I went round with the C.O to the Right Battalion HQrs ... and had a talk with the old josser of a colonel who didn't know a damn thing about his outposts although his officers and men always salute like machines and nearly faint when he speaks to them.[56]

By contrast, Henry William Dadswell frequently wrote of his commanding officer, Lieutenant Stevens, as though he were his best friend. He referred to him as 'Mr. Stevens' or simply 'Johnny', and explained his attitude towards this officer,

> Johnny trusted us all and we respected him for it and I think all gave their best. No other officer ever gave us that information in advance and I don't think any other officer had the unit to as high a degree of efficiency or such a closely knit unit.[57]

[56] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 11/4/18.
[57] Henry William Dadswell, No. 6868, Carpenter, Ararat, SLVIC MS 10011, 'Diary of a sapper', unpublished memoirs, p. 69.

William Hennell provides an additional example of the differences between relations with a good officer, and relations with a bad officer, in a diary entry written in July 1917,

> 3/7/17 We attended a memorial service to the late Major Gen. Holmes. The service was very good. If half of the officers I know followed this mans example there would not be so many damned snobs.[58]

Hennell's entry aptly summarises one primary cause for the division between officers and the rank and file. Conflict between Hennell and most of his officers was because of 'damned snobs': men who abused their rank superiority and attempted to stand over the common soldier. Hennell's entry also provides evidence that not all officers were despised. Many, such as Major General Holmes, were respected by their men and were willingly saluted and contentedly obeyed. Other officers were promoted from the ranks, as in Hector Brewer's case explored below, and thus treated their men as they had wanted to be treated themselves. Blair suggests that officers who were promoted as such were more likely to relate closely to their 'former intimates'.[59]

These entries also reinforce the above point that the rank and file did not necessarily hate all officers, rather, their attitude depended upon the nature of the officer, how this officer behaved, and how they treated the men under their command. This can be seen in two consecutive entries about non-commissioned officers written by Hector Brewer whilst in an instructional school in France,

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[58] William Thomas Hennell, No. 5835, Painter, Petersham, ML MSS 1620, diary entry dated 3/7/17.
[59] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 55.

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|---|---|
| 14/8/16 | Our Class Sergeant (French by name) has made himself very disagreeable by "bawling out" anyone who does not do exactly as he is told. |
| 15/8/16 | We have been placed under another Sergt a class further up. He is a very decent chap and a good instructor. We did a little compass work and some more flag work under the idiotic French.[60] |

The two entries reveal a significant contrast between the 'disagreeable' Sergeant French, and the new, yet 'very decent', unnamed sergeant. But these entries also suggest that a disagreeable leader could easily be targeted for criticism, whilst an agreeable leader was rarely recognised for praise. The unnamed sergeant is simply a 'decent chap and a good instructor', by contrast, Sergeant French stands out for his disagreeable nature and 'idiotic' behaviour. Both non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers had to work hard to achieve the respect of his men, yet err only slightly to receive their criticism.

An officer's responsibility was to care for his men and ensure that they were an effective fighting force. As individuals, officers took their responsibility in different ways and as a result their motives were frequently misconstrued. A demanding officer training his men in the desert in order to prepare them for the gruelling conditions of the trenches may have been seen by his men as a sadistic fool. Similarly an officer who demanded strict discipline from his men in preparation for combat situations may have been seen simply as unnecessarily arrogant and over-

[60] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entries as dated.

demanding. Contrary to the belief of many working class men, the higher ranks were not heartless beasts. Some officers were much loved by their men and were deeply missed when killed, injured, or sent elsewhere. Dale Blair retells the popular anecdote about an Australian colonel appealing to his men before an inspection by the brigadier, 'Here he comes! Now boys, no coughing, no spitting, and for Christ's sake don't call me Alf!'[61] The anecdote, whilst fictional, still reflects the ideal of familiar relations that did sometime exist between officers and their men.

It is this type of relationship that Bean pushes as the standard in the *Official history*, arguing that events on Gallipoli changed the way men spoke about their officers,

> …from the morning of the landing these evil whispers disappeared so utterly that those who lived among the troops never once heard from that day forth even the faintest breath of them.[62]

Supposedly the trials of combat quelled the estranged relations between the two classes. Officers were required to prove their worth both as 'leaders' and as 'men'. This belief was reinforced in a letter home written by Richard Graham in December 1916,

> 4/12/16 I suppose you have heard all about the fight at Romani which the Mounted troops had the officer that was in my troop at Gallipoli McQuiggan was his name and he was a real good man too.[63]

[61] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 37.
[62] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 549.

Lieutenant McQuiggan was mentioned in despatches for his actions at Romani and Graham's expression of pride is bound in his familiarity with the man and his experiences of serving under his command. An officer who was a good soldier in turn became a 'good man', and visa versa. In combat situations the rank and file were under greater pressures to listen, and to follow orders. As has been established, the real work of war had begun upon arrival at the front, and their lives largely depended upon the decisions of their officers.

It must also be understood that the men of the rank and file had working backgrounds, and in Australian workplaces during the 1910s workers were under few obligations to enjoy the company of their employers. As a result, their relationship with employers followed a fine line between common accord and fierce disagreement. Within civil society employers were on the look out for ways to reduce expenditure and increase profits. Scientific management techniques such as Taylorism and Fordism increased profit but ultimately reduced worker's job satisfaction and contributed little towards closer relations between employers and employees.[64] Indeed, in an Australian Workers Union convention in January 1913, W. G. Spence suggested that

> All talk about "the old good relations between employer and employee" was bunkum. Just as there could be no harmony between good and evil, so there

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[63] Richard Graham, No. 863, Station Hand, Wagga Wagga, AWM PR01914, letter home dated 4/12/16.
[64] Noon and Blyton, *The realities of work*, p. 146.

> could be no actual harmony between people whose interests were in conflict and who were therefore utterly opposed to one another.[65]

Many working class men enlisting into the AIF took such attitudes into the military. Their relations with employers were replicated in their relations with officers – both employers and officers were the men who ordered them to work, and then paid them.

Thus it must be understood when exploring these relations with officers that the disharmony between the two classes was nothing new. Working class men were not necessarily reacting against specific officers, rather, they were often just reacting against those who demanded hard work at inopportune times, and who were deemed to have shown inadequate levels of respect for working class men of an inferior rank. Their attitudes towards officers were simply typical of a workplace; men were free to dislike each other, and their employers. With an approach towards service as work, they saw nothing new or special in their relationship with officers.

The role of non-commissioned officers (NCOs) within the AIF further complicated these relations. NCOs occupied the ranks from lance corporal and staff sergeant and were responsible for the small scale management of the military, ensuring that the small numbers of men under their command knew their tasks and were prepared for whatever job they had ahead. In an effort to simplify the chain of command and the distribution of orders and tasks it generally came down to NCOs to educate and train their men on military issues. Bean thus provides the earliest example in August 1914 when 'five officers and five non-commissioned officers were sent to

[65] W. G. Spence speech at A. W. U. Convention, 22/1/13, cited from V. G. Childe, *How Labour Governs: A Study of Workers' Representation in Australia*, The Labour Publishing Company, London, 1998, [first published 1923], p. 135.

Randwick Rifle Range for instruction in musketry, so that they could teach the rest'.[66] Commissioned officers would give a general overview of instructions whilst NCOs were responsible for communicating the finer details to the men directly under their command; this applied both in the training grounds of Australia, and in the trenches of Europe.

Given their status as the communications link between the rank and file and the officer class these NCOs greatly reflected the role of foremen in civil society. Daniel Nelson argues in his analysis of the common role of foremen from 1880 to 1920 that 'First-line supervisors determined the manner and timing of production, had responsibility for the cost and quality of the work, and had virtually complete authority over the man or women in their departments or areas'.[67] The role of these individuals on the factory floor was exactly the same as that of NCOs in the military; corporals and sergeants determined the manner and timing of the fatigues undertaken by the men in their section or platoon, had responsibility for the quality of the work being undertaken on these fatigues, and had complete authority over the men of the rank and file.

NCOs thus provided an effective communications link between the privileged officer class and the over-worked rank and file. Their responsibilities, in addition to those of any other enlisted soldier, were to ensure that all other subordinate men were performing their predetermined tasks. Whether this was a case of training men in the use of a rifle on the Randwick Rifle Range, supervising men digging a trench on the Gallipoli Peninsula, or leading men into battle across the fields of France, the NCO

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[66] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 85.
[67] D. Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the Twentieth-Century Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1995, p. 37.

was directly responsible for the supervision of the rank and file. Joseph Burgess made his awareness of this link clear in the diary entry from June 1918,

> 15/6/18 Cpt Marks is in charge hes like an old woman + I believe he is going on leave, Dont know who will be in charge then Dont know where they'd be with out their NCOs.[68]

Burgess' suggestion is that the real work of supervision fell to NCOs, whilst commissioned officers such as Captain Marks had little idea as to how to practically lead their men.

Working class men of the rank and file also targeted NCOs for criticism and in many cases there was no distinction between 'non-commissioned' and 'commissioned' – they were all of a superior rank, they all enforced discipline, and thus they were all treated as 'officers', as is demonstrated below. The responsibility of NCOs in maintaining the discipline of the rank and file commonly found these ranks within the line of sight of disgruntled privates. Arthur Giles explained the situation whilst training in Australia,

> Don't know what kind of a crowd of non com's we have yet. Only sergeants in charge at present. I have had a couple of arguments with different ones. They have no more idea of system than well a rabbit.[69]

[68] Joseph George Burgess, No. 236, Train Conductor, Redfern, ML MSS 1596, diary entry as dated.
[69] Arthur Clyde Giles, No. 2837, Boundary Rider, Stanmore, ML MSS 1841, letter home dated 1/7/15.

Similarly in a diary entry from February 1917, Frederick Blake used humour to ridicule some of the non-commissioned officers within his training camp,

> 14/2/17 Stretcher drill to day. Remarkable different methods of NCOs giving commands. Our S.M. glares + yells. At-ten-shun. The pretty English Sgt (full of style) gives us a twant about it so At-ten-sheon. While the lusty youth also a Sgt shuts his eyes makes faces + yells shun.[70]

The striking feature of these entries is that they were all written whilst the authors were training in Australia. This most likely reflected the initial experiences these individuals had with the military and the harsh adjustment they faced in living under the command of higher ranks. Additionally, as these men were placed within their battalions they reserved their criticism increasingly for the higher ranks. The privilege and authority granted to commissioned officers was visibly superior to that granted to NCOs, and in the daily life of working class men in the rank and file, NCOs were more likely to assist with food and shelter and provide some form of comfort than a commissioned officer.

The diaries and letters of working class men suggest that the relationship between officers and the rank and file was often characterised by conflict. In terms of sources for complaint within working class men's diaries, officers were almost on a par with topics such as the horrible nature of warfare, the strenuous demands of work, and the hatred of the enemy. Certainly the anger directed towards officers was not of the same level as these other themes, but the frequency of complaints against officers suggests that this was a constant irritation for working class men of the rank and file.

[70] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry as dated.

Additionally the details provided in these descriptions of officers reveal broader patterns of resistance against both men of a superior rank, and the military regimen, whilst also reinforcing the significance of men's pre-war working class background and their unique approach to service as work.

As with NCOs, one of the primary roles of officers was to keep the men of the rank and file in line, to keep them disciplined, and to keep them working hard. The result upon other ranks was the type of sentiment expressed by Thomas Goodwin in an entry dated 11 July 1918,

> 11/7/18 We have a lot of these higher ranks inspecting, all they think about is, horses, wagons, and harness, Not a word about the men, they don't count. Never a mention about them.[71]

Clean wagons and harnesses and healthy horses were evidence of discipline and hard work, and this is what pleased the 'higher ranks'. Although Thomas Goodwin worked hard, he still resented having his work scrutinised by officers. In Goodwin's mind 'he' was the farrier, and only 'he' knew what a healthy horse looked like. In a similar vein Goodwin's entry expresses the oft-noted criticism of officers for their disregard of the rank and file. According to Goodwin the men simply 'don't count'.

In time these grievances felt by working class men of the rank and file built up. Small annoyances against officers recurred day after day. Arthur Freebody wrote of one pattern of working for officers,

6/6/16 Officers Mess

[71] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 11/7/18.

7/6/16 Officers Mess

8/6/16 Officers Mess attended Muster Roll in morning

9/6/16 Officers mess breakfast then shifted to the other end of camp

10/6/16 Morning fatigue work[72]

'Officers Mess' was regular, mundane work. Freebody would have to clean up for men of a superior rank, ensure that they were adequately supplied with their needs and content with conditions in their mess. Demands such as these made the divide between the rank and file and the officer class crystal clear to working class men - officers dined in the officer's mess, the working class men of the rank and file cleaned up afterwards.

The pressures of combat placed a greater sense of urgency upon men to obey their officers, though by no means did this mean an end to divisions and an end to what Bean terms 'evil whispers'.[73] After twenty five months in the military Marshall Burrows wrote a telling letter home summing up his feelings about officers quite succinctly,

> 19/12/16 well I suppose you wonder why the Australians voted against conscription well it is the rotten way we have been treated worse than dogs by those officers that had cold feet when I was in the trenches on the Peninsular there is some of them that would be just as bad as the Germans if they had the chance.[74]

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[72] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entries as dated.
[73] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 549.
[74] Marshall Burrows, No.753, Train Driver, Enmore, AWM 2DRL/0303, letter home dated 19/12/16.

At the time of writing Burrows had already experienced some of the worst aspects of trench warfare. He had seen service on Gallipoli, been buried twice during an artillery bombardment in France, lost countless comrades with whom he had embarked, and had recently spent time in hospital whilst recovering from wounds. Yet as his entry demonstrated, these pressures did not instil any deep sense of loyalty to, or respect for, his officers. Instead, as the above quote demonstrates, Burrows suggested that Prussian militarism was not too removed from the allied forces when he felt that some of his superior ranks 'would be just as bad as the Germans if they had the chance'. Far from the pressures of work silencing these dissensions, they instead gave strength and voice to the concerns of men like Marshall Burrows.

Daily life under the command of 'superior' officers frustrated and angered working class men of the rank and file, yet their avenues available to express their feelings were limited by the disciplinary standards of the military. Men could be 'crimed' on charges of 'absence, drunkenness, insubordination, neglect, riotous and disgraceful conduct, disobedience, striking or using violence to superiors, cowardice in the face of the enemy, self-inflicted wounds, desertion and mutiny'.[75] But perhaps the most dubious charge of all was 'conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline', which in the minds of officers could mean just about anything.[76] Physical violence, and threats of physical violence, were not unknown and although less freely written of there are ample court martial records to testify to the short temper of many rank and file soldiers.[77] William Henry Murray, for example, was

[75] Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 8.
[76] Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 8.
[77] Military Police in particular were targeted for violent attacks. Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 60.

discharged from the AIF for being 'unlikely to become [an] efficient soldier'.[78] His discharge came after two consecutive charges in two days, the first being 'Absent from Early Morning Parade without leave' and 'attempting to evade arrest', the second and more serious charge was 'Being in possession of intoxicating liquors in camp' and, in particular, 'Using threatening and subordinated language in speaking of an officer'.[79]

The power of law also lay firmly within the hands of officers. In the case of an offence, officers could lay any number of charges, often dividing single offences into multiple charges to further incriminate the offender. Thus Jeffrey Williams notes that on 16 February 1916 a private was charged with urinating on the seats in the Sergants latrine. However, the individual arresting him decided to add three additional charges to the crime.[80] Similarly on *HMAT Orvieto*, Michael McAuley, a marine fireman, was charged with 'Insolence to a N. C. O.', 'Breach of troopship regulations', 'Expectorating in the vicinity of mess table' and was sentenced to 14 days detention.[81] Whilst details of the crime are unavailable the case may have simply been that McAuley spat at the foot of an NCO, the later of whom then decided to press with as many charges as possible. This is further supported by the fact that there were rarely charges on solitary crimes. Rather, crimes of 'Insolence to an officer, 'Speaking disrespectfully of an officer', 'Threatening an officer, and 'Using obscene language to an officer' were almost always combined with one or two additional charges. In this style Arthur George Woodfine, a carpenter from Rutherglen, was charged with

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[78] Discharge Sheet, Service Records of William Henry Murray, N/A, Labourer, Coolamon, NAA B2455 MURRAY WILLIAM HENRY.
[79] Crime Form dated 18/3/15, Service Records of William Henry Murray, N/A, Labourer, Coolamon, NAA B2455 MURRAY WILLIAM HENRY.
[80] Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 19.
[81] 'Ship's Orders No. 16', 5/11/14, Routine Orders. Troopship A3 ORVIETO. October-November 1914, AWM 25 NAA 707/20 PART 2. An 'N. C. O.' was a non-commissioned officer.

‘Disorderly conduct at the Mess table’ and ‘Using obscene language at an N. C. O.’,[82] whilst Edward Alfred Richardson, a leather dresser from Preston, was charged with ‘Neglecting to obey an order of an N. C. O.’ and ‘Using obccene language to an N. C. O.’[83] The accumulation of charges such as this did not assist relations between officers and the rank and file.

Hector Brewer, a groom before the war, experienced the other side of these relations. When Brewer enlisted in the military in August 1914 he was given the rank of private, but throughout his service in the AIF he rose through the ranks, eventually receiving his commission and promoted to second lieutenant on 10 January 1917.[84] His promotion essentially gave him a new job description, new responsibilities in his daily life, new privileges hitherto only available to officers, and of course a new rate of pay. In July 1917, after being promoted again to lieutenant, Brewer experienced some aspects of this new ‘class privilege’,

> 8/7/17 I went for a short flight with a South African Pilot in a Morane Monoplane. It was simply ripping but the day being cloudy, windy and generally unfavourable we did not stay up long.[85]

Very few rank and file soldiers were provided with the opportunity for a joy flight, but it was a different case for officers. Even the language used in this entry, in describing a ‘simply ripping’ experience, suggests that Brewer was modifying his

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[82] ‘Ship’s Orders No. 38’, 24/11/14, Routine Orders. Troopship A3 ORVIETO. October-November 1914, AWM 25 NAA 707/20 PART 2.
[83] ‘Ship’s Orders No. 37’, 23/11/14, Routine Orders. Troopship A3 ORVIETO. October-November 1914, AWM 25 NAA 707/20 PART 2.
[84] Casualty Form Active Service, Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, NAA B2455 BREWER H.
[85] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 9/7/17.

identity to suit his new rank and responsibilities. Brewer may have seen military service as an opportunity to rise to greater heights, at least greater than that available to a groom in civil society, and his promotion to lieutenant placed him clearly above most other grooms and working class men in the rank and file. Aspirations of social mobility may have been difficult to pursue in civil society, but in the clear rank hierarchy of the military, and with high casualty rates amongst officers, promotion could potentially satisfy the ambitions of men like Brewer.

Hector Brewer's promotion also brought added responsibility. The most significant of which was his requirement to keep the men of the rank and file disciplined and fit for fighting; however, such demands of discipline and fitness were rarely well received. On 4 December 1918, Brewer experienced the anger that the rank and file directed towards the officer class,

> 4/12/18 I took over duties of Battalion Orderly Officer this morning from Lieut. Adams…Whilst inspecting the leave part I had occasion to send three men away for a shave before giving them their passes. These men however returned to their billets and got drunk + waited for an opportunity to 'chat' me and they were successful. I regret to say. They used up all the words in the Australian Vocabulary of slang and even invented a few more for my special benefit. In the midst of their wild harangue a number of their drunken cobbers joined them and yelled applause to each epithet which was hurled at me. As I hadn't a single witness to enable me to crime any of them and as I was not in the humour for engaging about 12 enraged men on my part with my firsts I decided to beat a retreat and did so, hoping for an opportunity to catch

> one of these rotters and the opportunity came, though even then I was extremely loath to "send him up" as the man's mind had been completely warped by drink and furthermore I have never before crimed any man since holding my commission.[86]

Brewer may have been disliked by his men, though it is more likely that their distrust of him emanated from his rank superiority, his demands of their discipline and cleanliness. Shortly after receiving his commission in January 1917 Brewer was sent to a different unit.[87] Here the men under his command knew little about his previous experiences, of how he had been a groom before the war, of how he had been one of the first to rush off to enlist in the excitement of August 1914, nor of how he was initially given the rank of private and slowly rose through the ranks over his service career. Instead, the drunken men that abused him in December 1918 saw him simply as another arrogant and demanding officer, and Brewer became the target of their built up tension, anguish, and desire to get home. It is important to note that this event came in December 1918, several weeks after the armistice. Many working class men of the rank and file felt as though their work had been done; they were now merely 'mopping up' and waiting for the army to discharge them so they could find another type of work. Certainly whilst this was no excuse for their behaviour, it does help to understand it.

As in both Brewer's case and Murray's case above, violence, and even threats of violence, were likely to result in a court martial, stoppage of pay, and potentially even discharge. Thus for most men, such threats and the dislike of officers were kept

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[86] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 4/12/18.
[87] Service Records of Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, NAA B2455 BREWER H.

private, spoken about strictly amongst the rank and file, and, of course, written down with private diaries. John Bruce provides an example of this subtle expression of anger,

> 15/2/18 mob had to be up early to get ready for General "Nuisance" Basil-Brown. Heads running round like silly-goats. Didn't turn up after all. Colonel Stevenson had a decco round. Would like to drop a Mills No.5 under his tail.[88]

Threats such as this were fine if whispered amongst comrades or written down in a diary, though if spoken aloud they were likely to result in severe punishment.

Bruce's use of the nickname 'Nuisance' Basil-Brown, as shown above, was also a common expression of frustration and anger within working class men's diaries that reflected their pre-war approach towards employers.[89] Anna Green argues that the adoption of nicknames on the New Zealand waterfront reflected a range of work-related behaviours and attitudes.[90] In particular, Green adds that the use of nicknames 'represents a particular aspect of masculine working class culture'.[91] Within the military nicknames were most commonly used to highlight an unfavourable characteristic about an officer, whilst simultaneously reflecting a sense of irreverence and, on most occasions, a sense of familiarity. Thus Thomas Goodwin's entry explaining 'One round Hogan away on leave' refers to a specific officer, Hogan, and

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[88] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 15/2/18.
[89] Blair, Dinkum Diggers, pp. 53-54.
[90] A. Green, 'The "Double-edged Sword": Nicknames on the Waterfront, 1915–1951',in J. E. Martin and K. Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1991, pp. 121-124.
[91] Green, 'The "Double-edged Sword" ', p. 125.

his inability to withstand rifle or shell fire.[92] A similar entry by Goodwin explains the motivations behind nicknames, 'General Coxon in lines; The horse Master was with him. The boys nicknamed him Colonel Headcollars, on account of always finding fault with head gear'.[93] Similarly General Basil-Brown's failure to 'turn up' earned him the title 'Nuisance', as the men of the rank and file were required to clean themselves up and prepare everything for his planned arrival.

Nicknames also reduced the 'superiority' surrounding officers in an attempt to bring this privileged class back down to the level of the rank and file. Dale Blair suggests that this was an attempt by the rank and file to assert the ideal of an egalitarian relationship between employee and employer.[94] Ridiculing officers behind their backs and referring to them by nicknames gave the rank and file soldier a sense of power, and, through the use of humour, a sense of masculine superiority over their officers. Susan Parman suggests in her study of the Scottish Outer Hebrides that the use of nicknames provided a source of amusement that was central in reinforcing group solidarity and cohesion in the workplace.[95] Blair also argues that workers addressing officers by their first name or by a nickname was part of the 'national idiom and highly symbolic of Australian egalitarianism'.[96] This is most aptly demonstrated in a number of entries by John Bruce,

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[92] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 29/2/17.
[93] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 9/7/17.
[94] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, pp. 53-54.
[95] S. Parman, 'General Properties of Naming, and a Specific Case of Nicknaming in the Scottish Outer Hebrides', *Ethnos*, 41, 1976, cited in A. Green, 'The "Double-edged Sword" ', p. 125.
[96] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 53.

23/2/17 Humpty-Dumpty, the dopey staff-officer, went crook on McKenzie because he lined up to detail the mess-orderlies, about 7.25am. McKenzie didn't take too much notice of him.

10/5/17 Gun work in morning. Chin-Strap went crook because "we weren't taking any interest in the damn thing".

30/5/17 Went up to gun-pits after and Chinny let us go for a swim. About 20 of us went in + had a bonzer time.

7/5/18 Colonel Dog's Body Stevenson bombed Ken Smith. Eoff Weinberg for playing 2 up. Put them under arrest.

30/5/18 Colonel Dog'sbody inspecting in afternoon.[97]

As Bruce's entries indicate, the use of a nickname for an officer was generally used to support the expression of dissatisfaction. This suggests that the use of nicknames may have been a small attempt by the rank and file to gain revenge on officers, even if such nicknames were only used within one's diary. It may have helped to vent frustration, and to have a private laugh at the officer's expense.

As has been seen, the rank and file's attitudes towards their officers were a combination of their dislike of the officer class, and a dislike of the individual. Working class men of the rank and file saw the officer class as an elitist and privileged class receiving unfair benefits. Additionally, officers, as superior ranks,

[97] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entries as dated.

held almost limitless power over the men of the rank and file. An individual could be 'crimed' on a range of charges that could leave the rank and file with few options available to complain about their treatment. As a response to these limited options, the rank and file formed a culture of irreverence, larrikinism, and passive resistance that came to be expressed through the use of humour in their daily life.

**The use of humour**

Humour also formed one of the core characteristics of the digger identity during the Great War. From the early stages of the war it was clear that if soldiers were to serve their country, and work to the limitless demands of officers, they would also need something light-hearted to occupy their free time with. Additionally, with the power of military law held by officers, the rank and file found an alternative source of power and of masculine superiority in their use of humour. Humour thus initially served to brighten the spirits, and ease the nerves, but it quickly became an avenue through which the rank and file could direct their complaints, vent their frustrations, and bring officers down to a level playing field.

The diaries of working class men reveal the use of humour in their daily interactions with officers. For many men, this was a way to reduce the seriousness often associated with military service and to gain some enjoyment out of their day's work. Thus John Bruce reported, 'Did some foot-slogging down in Park. Sgt Jock Young had us + acted the goat to some order. Did the same in afternoon',[98] and on another occasion when he was receiving gas instructions,

[98] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 29/12/16.

14/10/17 Stuck our gas-masks + tin-hats on + marched to a Gas-area for instruction. Sat in a dug-out with tear-gas in it. All round in a row like a lot of crows, and sang (?) "If you were the Only Girl in the World" with our masks on. Lovely!'[99]

Such use of humour distracted men whose minds may have otherwise been on the more serious and dangerous uses of their gas masks in the trenches. But this use of humour also assisted in uniting the men of the rank and file in a common identity. Acting 'the goat' irritated officers, but gave the rank and file some enjoyment and subsequently bound them together in opposition to their superiors.

In the daily life of men, organised forms of humour were also utilised to get a point across to officers and to air complaints. 'Play acting' was a common form of humourous protest whereby the rank and file put on a pre-planned humourous performance. Thus Cecil Monk recorded the following 'funeral service' from *HMAT Suevic*, an Australian Troop Transport, on 31 December 1916,

> …one fellow walked in front with an open book, a couple with a dish of sausages, and a party with brooms as reversed arms, the parade halted in front of the officers mess. The acting parson read with a loud solemn voice as they were dropped in the sea. Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust, the soldiers cant eat you, so the fishes must.[100]

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[99] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 14/10/17. The (?) was in the original, most likely to indicate the poor singing ability of the men.

[100] Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, Mitchell Library, MSS 2884, memoirs in diary form, entry dated 31 December 1916.

The ‘deceased’ on this occasion was the morning’s sausage breakfast, and the mock ‘funeral service’ was conducted in front of the officer’s mess for all to see. John Bruce describes another similar occasion,

> 30/12/16 Had stew for breakfast for about the umpteenth time. Had a funeral service. Paraded the stew all around the camp + then counted it out in front of the cookhouse.[101]

‘Stew’ was the ‘deceased’ in this case, and all around camp, and in particular those in the cookhouse, would know that the rank and file were dissatisfied with the quality of food they were provided with. Such forms of protest reflect what E. P. Thomson has described as ‘the theatre and counter theatre of plebeian demonstration’.[102] The ‘act’ was humourous, it was presented in a ‘light-hearted’ form, yet at the same time it incorporated a serious complaint about an issue that the rank and file were dissatisfied with.

The target of such humourous protests and criticisms ranged from the food to the general *modus operandi* of the military. Officers, whilst a primary target for criticism within men’s diaries, were more difficult to target in the open as they could react with the full force of military law. Even so, Frederick Blake explained some of the methods his unit used to counter the ‘crank’ of a sergeant major (S. M.),

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[101] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 30/12/16.

[102] E. P. Thomson, ‘Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture’, *Journal of Social History*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1974, p. 401. For further examples of such theatre in the pre-war working class culture in Australia see B. Scates ‘A Struggle for Survival: Unemployment and the Unemployed Agitation in late Nineteenth Century Melbourne, *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 94, May 1990, p. 57.

18/4/17 Guard duty to day. Our S. M. is considered a Military crank. Very amusing. Going through procedure changing guard. Everybody fed up. S. M. at his word. Jim. B supposed to be on duty at Guard room. Your humble expected to march up with guard, halt & proceed with Military manoevrues Jim B. supposed to challenge & call out guard. This is what happened. Marched up to Guard room. Jim B. instead of challenging said in a dramatic voice. (Who are these people) Little Ernie a Corporal appeared from nowhere & said I'm ---- if I know. Result collapse of Guard with laughter S. M. went mad & dismissed us with disgust.[103]

Blake's 'act' was a criticism primarily of his sergeant major, though it was also representative of the rank and file's general distaste of the rigid martial culture of the military. If men complained about the 'crank' of the sergeant major in a direct confrontation it would have been seen as insubordination and disobedience. They could be punished with a loss of pay or confinement to barracks. By contrast, presenting complaints through a humourous performance such as 'play acting' simply sent the sergeant major 'mad', and resulted in the men being dismissed with a greater sense of satisfaction and rank-cohesion.

These 'peaceful' protests did not always go according to plan, and in spite of the use of humour, not all officers got the joke, as John Bruce learned during an earlier 'funeral service',

[103] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, Mitchell Library MSS 784, diary entry dated 18/4/17.

6/4/16 Had a funeral service over the sea-pie we had for breakfast, + got roared up a treat for it. Old Bulldog Smith thought there was another riot on. All the quota got 1 day's C.B.[104]

In confrontational protests men risked reprimand from officers who could not 'take the joke'. In particular when individuals were targeted out in the open this confrontational form of humour could be dangerous. As a result, most of these forms of humourous protest were directed towards the general *modus operandi* of the military, rather than a particular officer. Protests similar to Cecil Monk's 'funeral service' for the day's meal, shown above, are explained within other men's diaries, suggesting that they were not rare; Monk even adds that this was 'a common occurence with most of the food we were given'.[105]

By targeting a specific officer the rank and file would not only anger that individual, but they would also place themselves out in the open and become vulnerable to retribution. Officers often let criticisms of the military, of their training, or of the quality of food, pass by without punishment.[106] However, direct abuse, however 'humourous' the intentions were, rarely eluded punishment. Humourous protests allowed men to vent their frustrations, bond with their comrades, and enjoy a light-hearted aspect of their military service, but as with all forms of protest, it had its limits.

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[104] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 6/4/16. 'C. B.' was a common form of low-level punishment in the AIF meaning 'Confined to Barracks'.
[105] Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, Mitchell Library MSS 2884, memoirs in diary form, entry dated 31 December 1916.
[106] Though, as above entries such as that by John Bruce have shown, this was not always the case.

**Passive Resistance**

To avoid direct confrontation, protests against individuals were more frequently conveyed in passive, written form, such as through a cartoon, a poem, and through trench and troopship newspapers. These indirect forms of protest were created through a range of mediums and reached their target audience of both officers and other ranks indirectly. Cartoons and poems were often pinned up where they could be visible to large numbers, whilst trench and troopship newspapers were widely circulated throughout the army. Through these media, humourous protests in the form of verse, short stories, cartoons, single line quips and humourous anecdotes could be published anonymously.

In this way a group of men, dissatisfied with the quality of their food, could avoid the personal risk of punishment that came with conducting a funeral service in front of the officer's mess, and instead resort to their trench or troopship newspapers. For example, the men on board the troop transport the *Aeneas* printed 'Fatal Food' in their troopship newspaper 'The Aeneasthetic',

Say, lad, was that a cricket ball
You were bouncing on troop-deck E?
"Nay 'twas but some of the pudding, sir,
They gave us in No. 3."

"Why is yon gunner upside-down?
Explain the thing to me."
"He's eaten some E deck pudding, sir,

It's the law of gravity."

Why do you hold your waist and moan?

Say lad, what aileth thee?

But the soldier answered never a word:

A poisoned corpse was he.[107]

On the troopships taking Australian men and women off to the war, or returning them home afterwards, small groups worked with the limited materials available on board to produce similar 'souvenirs' of the voyage that passengers could keep and take with them, or send home to friends and family for some insight into their experiences. The result was a range of troopship journals with titles such as 'The Euripidean', souvenir from *HMAT Euripides*, 'The Aeneasthetic', from *HMAT Aeneas*, 'The Kanowna Lament' from *HMAT Kanowna*, the 'Osteralia', from *RMS Osterley*, and 'The Ascanian', from *HMAT Ascanius*.[108] These journals, some simply 'published' on scrap pieces of paper, written in pencil, and pinned up on a board for all to read,[109] formed some of the first uses of humour and some of the first 'safe' avenues for the rank and file to vent their frustrations.[110]

Trench and troopships newspapers such as 'The Aeneasthetic' were circulated throughout the ship's decks where all men and officers would read about the poor

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[107] 'The Aeneasthetic', No.2 Edition, 21 October 1916, Australian War Memorail S18.

[108] For a detailed list of trench and troopship publications see Kent, *From Trench and Troopship*, Appendices I, II, and III, pp. 210-216.

[109] Kent suggests that some of the more basic forms were as simple as 'handwritten sheets written under fire'. See Kent, *From Trench and Troopship*, p. 8.

[110] 'The Kan-Karroo Kronikle', publication of *HMAT Karroo*, for example was published on the first convoy to leave Australia in 1914. Kent, 'Troopship Literature', p. 3.

quality of the food. The individual responsible for the poem would usually remain anonymous, but their anger about the food quality would become well known. Through such media all on deck would know what men were complaining about. Many of these newspapers were also designed specifically to be kept as souvenirs, for men to keep as a record of their voyage to war,[111] and so they were passed around to friends and family at home where they too would learn about the poor quality of food dished out by the military.[112] As a result, these humourous protests had a considerable degree of weight behind them. Criticisms of food could lead to accusations of poor treatment of the much-lauded 'diggers'. Thus, with the protest made, the complaint could be noted amongst officers and changes made to the food.

Printed forms of humour also helped soldiers to cope with their situation. On the long voyages to and from Europe trench and troopship newspapers gave some form of mild entertainment, whilst also carrying complaints on conditions. Kent suggests that the newspapers 'were first and foremost intended to amuse the men in a closed community…but in every case the publications were introspective and reflective'.[113] In the trenches the presence of a trench newspaper took men's minds off the reality of the situation, giving them a temporary escape.[114] The deadly sting was taken out of the German infantry through ridiculous caricatures,[115] inconvenient artillery bombardments chased English officers and spilled their cups of tea, and angry officers were constantly embarrassing themselves in awkward situations. Throughout these locations the depression of the trenches was portrayed as something

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[111] Kent, 'Troopship Literature', p. 4.
[112] Kent, *From Trench and Troopship*, p. 8.
[113] Kent, *From Trench and Troopship*, p. 8.
[114] In the same way that it was also used to escape from the monotony of working life. See W. J. Duncan, L. R. Smeltzer and T. L. Leap, 'Humor and Work: Applications of Joking Behaviour to Management', Journal of Management, No. 16, 1990, pp. 255.
[115] See for example 'Not Always Hun-Hunting', *Aussie*, No. 2, 16 February 1918, published together by Veritas Publishing Company, Bullsbrook, 1985, p. 3.

that all soldiers shared together, and thus, nobody was alone. The potential to entertain, and to give some sense of release from the stress of the wartime situation was evident in the fact that a number of newspapers were circulating among the 'dugouts' and 'possies' of Gallipoli within six weeks of the landing.[116]

The long troopship voyages and monotonous stints in the trenches also gave rise to a sense of boredom, which in turn became a chief motivating factor for humourous protests. Soldiers complained that officers restricted their opportunities for relaxation by banning popular working class activities such as 'two-up' and 'crown and anchor'.[117] Yet whilst banning these popular games, officers also contributed little in the form of replacement leisure pursuits.[118] 'Sports Committees' were set up from time to time in almost every battalion, and the occasional sports day gave men some respite from the monotony of work and the demands of the military. However, by and large the day to day boredom of the military led many to complain that this was not the life of adventure that they had signed up for. Soldiers on *HMAT Port Lincoln* expressed their frustration through verse,

> There's nought to do all day but sleep and eat
>
> And be latrine fatigue by way of change
>
> If 'twas not for the fact there's little meat
>
> Like lazy dogs we'd get the blinking mange[119]

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[116] G. Seal, 'Written in the trenches': Trench newspapers of the first world war', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 16 (1990), p. 30.
[117] Though Graham Seal notes that many officers turned a blind eye. Seal, *Inventing Anzac*, p. 140-142.
[118] See for example, Brugger, *Australians and Egypt*, p. 51.
[119] 'Port Lincoln Lyre', 9 November 1916, Australian War Memorial S472, cited from Kent, 'Troopship Literature', p. 7.

The primary complaint of these men was the monotony of military life aboard the transport ship. The deeper message was that officers should provide more social activities for men and relax their charges against men playing 'illegal' games such as 'two-up'.

Thus, these written forms of protest formed a core part of the trench and troopship literature and became an effective medium through which the rank and file could passively convey a complaint or protest to their comrades and commanding officers. David Kent further suggests that protests in the form of a humourous verse may have dignified and intensified the sentiments expressed.[120] By contrast, a soldier shouting abuse at an officer was likely to have his complaint ignored, and his actions repaid in tune with the loss of pay and a period of detention. Thus, on *HMAT Orvieto*, John Brennan, a sailor before the war, was charged with 'Speaking disrespectfully of an officer' and 'Insolence to, and threatening a N. C. O.' and was given 10 days detention.

Protests were also sometimes designed to point out grievances with the military system, without having any realistic hope of achieving any change. Thus men on board *HMAT Euripides* printed 'To the censor' in the troopship newspaper 'The Euripidean' as a protest against the harshness of the military censor.

> You cannot tell your best girl that you love her; if you do,
> The Censor marks it out and leaves a line that's blank and blue.
> You mustn't say your happy, or he'll make you feel quite sad
> By sending home your letter, which would make folks think you're mad.
> He simply dashes all your hopes, and makes each page a blot;

[120] Kent, 'Troopship Literature', p. 5.

I wonder what he writes himself to the best girl that he's got.[121]

Whilst their sentiments may have been shared by all on deck, there was little hope that the censor would stop working. Instead 'To the censor' simply expressed feelings that were felt by the majority of the rank and file.

The Australian use of verse in popular protest has origins in the penal settlements of the early colonial era. Bill Scott argues that convicts transported to Australia brought with them a ballad tradition that they had been acquainted with since childhood. In the harsh conditions of the penal settlements stories of tragedy, comical events, battles, and clan history were modified to represent the new struggle against a new authority.[122] Both Bill Scott and Russel Ward argue that with the expansion of British settlement this cultural tradition continued as ex-convicts and pioneers sought accessible forms of entertainment.[123] Teri Merlyn also argues that as late as the 1910s the ballad was still being utilised as a popular form of entertainment, protest, and adult education by working class organisations such as the Industrial Workers of the World.[124] It was only a short step for working class men from these cultural backgrounds to transfer their complaints, using a similar media, into the military.

'Passive resistance' could also be personal and direct, aimed at a particular individual, or a particular officer. Anonymous protests within trench and troopship

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[121] 'The Euripidean, Souvenir of Voyage', Australian War Memorial S77, p. 15.
[122] B. Scott, 'Traditional Ballad Verse in Australia', *Folklore*, Vol. 111, no.2, p. 309-10.
[123] Scott, 'Traditional Ballad Verse in Australia', p. 310, and Ward, *The Australian Legend*, pp. 22-28.
[124] T. Merlyn, 'Wobbly Words: The Industrial Workers of the World and their use of ballads and verse as radical adult education', *Communities of Learning, Communities of Practice, The 43rd Annual National Conference of Adult Learning Australia*, 27-30 November 2003, University of Technology, Sydney.

newspapers, whilst still humourous, could criticise the actions of an officer without the risk of confrontation. Thus, whilst men could not physically 'hit out' at an officer (though many did),[125] they could instead 'hit out' through the publication of a ridiculous poem, cartoon, or one-liner. The trench newspaper 'Aussie' thus reported a suggestion against a popular enemy of the rank and file, the Military Police, in an issue from February 1918,

> 'T. M. Gunner' makes a suggestion: The G. O. C. [General Officer Commanding] recently made a request for articles to be sent to the Australian War Museum, especially those illustrating the terrible weapons that have been used against the troops in the war. Why not get all the Military Police photographed for the Museum?[126]

Anonymity was in most cases secured, with many authors providing only their rank, or a humourous pseudonym, such as 'Acting Private', 'Ex-Private', or 'The Donks' Mess Orderly'.[127] In the above example the author, 'T. M. Gunner', made clear his rank status of 'gunner' without revealing any further details.

It must be noted that in many cases these newspapers were controlled, edited, and censored by officers. Graham Seal and David Kent have both examined the editorial process of these newspapers and they argue that, in most cases, anything men wanted to print had to first be approved by officers.[128] However, this did not necessarily mean the complete censorship of complaints against specific officers or

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[125] G. Barr, *Beyond The Myth: Australian Military Police, 1914-1920,* H. J. Publications, Weston, 2005, p. 20.
[126] 'Aussie', No. 2, 16 February 1918, p. 2.
[127] See for example, *Aussie,* No. 2, 16 February 1918, p. 3 and p. 10.
[128] Kent, 'Troopship Literature' and Seal, *Inventing Anzac*, pp. 67-75.

the military, as the above examples have shown. Instead it simply meant that any complaints about sensitive issues had to appear 'light-hearted' and in a humourous form with no overtly aggressive overtones. Of course any overly critical or demoralising complaints would not be printed; nonetheless, such complaints would still have some effect on the editors, who would make a personal note of the criticism before moving on. In this sense officers also had some knowledge as to what was bothering their men, and could make changes before frustrations grew too great.

As a means of countering this censorship some men of the rank and file initiated clandestine modes of distribution. As noted earlier, William Burrell recorded seeing a sketch pinned up on a door presenting a complaint about endless fatigues. [129] Likewise, as David Kent has argued, these protests could often be as simple as a piece of paper manually distributed from person-to-person throughout the trenches. With such personal control of the means of distribution it was difficult to trace the source of the complaint. Instead, such communal and 'in-house' forms of humour and protest only contributed further to the cohesion felt amongst the rank and file.

Trench and troopship newspapers, combined with the evidence available in the diaries and letters of working class men, provide an insight into the forms of passive resistance carried out by the rank and file in the AIF. Through the use of humour, and mediums such as cartoon, verse, and anecdotes, working class men of the rank and file could actively complain about their working and living conditions within the military without risking retribution from their officers. Throughout the trenches of Europe and on the troopships heading to and from the front, newspapers and souvenirs carried the complaints of small groups of men throughout the Australian army. Within hours of the publication of a troopship newspaper, everyone on board

[129] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 25/5/16.

would learn about an inflexible officer or an aggressive NCO. Throughout the war such forms of resistance were maintained because they were simple, relatively risk-free, easy to produce, and effective.

**Cooperative resistance and unit cohesion**

The sheer numbers of the rank and file relative to their officers, and the threat these numbers posed to the maintenance of law and order, was often enough by itself for complaints to be considered seriously. Thus, during the 'mutinies of disbandment' when several battalions of the AIF refused to disband and merge into other battalions late in 1918, Bean claims that rather than the entire battalion being charged with mutiny, their complaints were sympathetically listened to, and the men treated carefully.[130] Similarly before the Liverpool-Casula mutiny exploded into a riot, the men's initial demands were listened to by their commanding officers. At Liverpool camp 32 representatives from amongst the estimated 2500 protestors were initially allowed into the Camp Commandant's office to explain their grievances.[131] The site of such a great number of men was a significant deterrent against any attempts to bring down the full force of military law.

Because of the risks of further complaint from the rank and file, the potential escalation of events, or low level officers' fear of criticism from officers higher up in the chain of command, small scale resistance often succeeded. Thus in the example given above of the 1st Brigade's 'sit down' in the desert, the commanding officer complied with the demands of the men in fear of what the Brigadier would say about

[130] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, pp. 939-40.
[131] Darby, 'The Liverpool-Sydney Riot', p. 42.

his command and authority over his men.[132] Officers were thus often content to let minor infringements slide. At other times, such as in Hector Brewer's experience with confrontation shown above, the ratio of other ranks to officers was often too great to be able to do anything. Dale Blair additionally suggests that one of the reasons part of the 1st Battalion refused to go into the line on 21 September 1918 was because of the loss of a number of officers in the days prior to the event, arguing that 'The presence of more officers might have headed off the developing dissatisfaction'.[133]

In the absence of military police it came down to officers to enforce disciplinary measures. If an officer decided not to press the matter further, than an individual would simply be let off. Glenn Wahlert argues that 'Some officers were overly lenient and took a "blind eye" approach to breaches of discipline rather than risk confrontation with the men'.[134] As Brewer's above description of confrontation demonstrated, this 'blind eye' approach may have been the wisest as direct confrontation with large groups of drunken soldiers rarely ended up well for solitary officers.

On the other side of this coin, as Brewer's entry also reveals, even when officers attempted to pursue charges, the rank and file only had to walk away and there was little the officer could do to bring the men in. John Bruce provided an additional example of the simple ways in which men could resist the authority of an officer,

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[132] Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', pp. 20-21.
[133] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 159.
[134] Wahlert, *The Other Enemy*, p. 25.

13/4/17 Dopey A.M.C corporal wanted us to all sit in the one carriage like a lot of chooks in a roost. Nothing doing. Wanted to know our names. Nothing doing.

Without the assistance of more officers or military police there was little a single corporal could do to assert his authority.

The pressure placed upon individual officers thus explains much more about the effectiveness of rank and file protests. As a united force, the rank and file were strong and could resist their officers; individually they could have their names taken down, be arrested by the military police, and be charged under military law for offences as vague as 'conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline'.[135] As a united force, protests had the voice of hundreds, and potentially thousands, of soldiers, and with a large support base officers were more easily convinced that the complaints were genuine;[136] individually these protests were seen as insolence and indiscipline, and the complaints quickly dismissed.

The form of these protests also assisted in creating a sense of unity amongst soldiers.[137] As noted above, newspapers were distributed throughout the trenches and around troopships to reach an extensive readership, whilst the news of 'play acting' spread throughout similar areas by word of mouth. Even those who had not participated in the performance, or had not been responsible for the publication in a newspaper, could relate to the complaints being made. Thus in Frederick Blake's

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[135] Williams, 'Discipline On Active Service', p. 8.
[136] There were of course limits to this tolerance. The repercussions of the Liverpool-Casula protest in 1916, and of the 1st Battalion's mutiny in September 1918 are prime examples of the military's willingness to enforce the law in cases of protest.
[137] For example, Charles Gruner argues that the shared laughter that results from humour bonds people together. C. R. Gruner, *The Game of Humour: A comprehensive theory of why we laugh*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, 2000, p. 75.

account of 'play acting' on guard duty, only the guards and 'Little Ernie' witnessed the event, though around the Furphy water cart all men of the rank and file would have heard about what happened and shared a laugh at the sergeant major's expense.[138] This collective form of protest, with its incorporation of humour, assisted in creating an *esprit de corps* amongst the rank and file. All men experienced the 'crank' of an officer, the distaste of the morning's 'stew', and the frustration of the military regimen. As such, all felt a sense of communal justice and of rank and file retribution in these humourous acts.[139]

This sense of humour, the inherent expression of irreverence, and the principle of egalitarianism expressed throughout protests, all assisted in binding men to the common identity. As core characteristics of the digger identity the men of the rank and file shared the sentiments expressed through protests. In cartoons and verse they could understand frustrations with officers and irritation at the poor quality of food, in strikes and during industrial action they could understand complaints over working hours and the demands of the military.

Often trench and troopship newspapers represented the voice of the rank and file by directing criticisms at the officer class in general, as a wild swipe at a superior rank of man. Printed forms of humourous protest also served to reassert the masculine superiority of the working class rank and file soldier.[140] Officers were portrayed as

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[138] A 'furphy' was the name given to a rumour or false report. The origins of the name stem from the use of the Furphy brand of water cart, around which men would gather to talk and rumours would circulate.

[139] Kent argues that the creation of an *esprit de corps* was one of the main intentions of the troopship newspapers. Kent, 'Troopship Literature', p. 4. Additionally, humour has also been recognised as contributing towards a sense of belonging and a sense of cohesiveness amongst workers. See for example Smeltzer, Leap and Duncan, 'Humour and Work', pp. 255-278.

[140] Lefcourt argues that the results from the successful use of humour encourage and empower the 'joker'. H. M. Lefcourt, *Humour: The Psychology of Living Buoyantly*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York and London, 2001, p. 7.

feminine, weak, and poor soldiers, whilst by contrast the rank and file were masculine, strong, and ideal soldiers. In 1917 men aboard *HMAT Euripides* printed the correct safety procedures to be followed in the case of a rank and file soldier falling overboard. Directly below this they printed additional 'safety procedures',

> In the event of a sergeant or sergeant-major falling overboard, square the stokers to fire up, the only other precautions necessary being to observe strict silence for one hour and a half. If after that period the sergeant or sergeant-major should accidentally be saved the troops will endeavour to cheer.[141]

The article was not directed at any officer in particular, but was instead intended as a general laugh at the officer class for the humour of the rank and file and for any officers who could 'take the joke'. In a similar vein 'Ghutz', the trench newspaper of the 1st Field Ambulance, printed the following advice to men, and warnings to officers,

> Little words of anger
> Pretty words of praise
> Make an erring Sergeant
> Mend his naughty ways.[142]

Both extracts assert the irreverence, egalitarianism, and humour that were an integral part of the digger identity. They both targeted officers, subtly criticising their

[141] 'The Euripidean, Souvenir of Voyage', Australian War Memorial S77, pp. 6-7.
[142] 'Ghutz', Australian War Memorial S94, No. 3, February 1918.

behaviour and their rank superiority, whilst also delicately asserting the masculine superiority of the rank and file soldier, and all through a humourous format.[143]


**Figure 8: 'A Pair of Knuts'. Representations of the rank and file and officers contrasted the physical appearance of the different ranks.[144]**

[143] The assertion of a masculine identity through the use of humour in the workplace is further explored in D. L. Collinson, '"Engineering Humour": Masculinity, Joking and Conflict in Shop-floor Relations', *Organization Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1988, pp. 181-199.

Once again the continuation of this culture from civilian workplaces into the military can be identified with references to pre-war Australia. Bruce Scates argues that during the Great Strikes of the 1890s the masculine identity of workers was encoded in images. In particular, the worker was presented as the tall and strong masculine ideal, whilst employers and associated opposition in the strike were presented as confused and incompetent, dressed in top hats and monocles and a source of ridicule for the working classes. In the cartoon provided by Scates from *Boomerang*, a weekly labour newspaper, a special constable was 'dwarfed by the massive muscular frame of a unionist'.[145] In several cartoons Cecil Hartt presented similar contrasts, the small, monocled and feminine officer being dwarfed by the overbearing man of the rank and file. Such representations asserted the masculine superiority of the rank and file and united this class of men in their sense of humour.

In the historical literature this type of bonding between combat soldiers has been almost entirely attributed to the combat experience.[146] S. L. A. Marshall argued that 'On the field of fire it is the touch of human nature which gives men courage and enables them to make proper use of their weapons…By the same token, it is the loss of this touch which freezes men and impairs all action'.[147] Comradeship amongst soldiers was supposedly born on the field of battle, which, according to Marshall, was the 'epitome of war'.[148] These men shared the same challenges, the same fears, and the same terrifying experiences. Yet it is rarely noted that the bonding experience between soldiers began well before the combat experience. From the moment new

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[144] C. L. Hartt, *Humorosities: By an Australian Soldier*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1985, [first published 1917].
[145] B. Scates, 'Mobilising Manhood: Gender and the Great Strike in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand', Gender and History, Vol. 9, No. 2, August 1997, pp. 296-7.
[146] See for example S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass., 1978.
[147] Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, p. 41.
[148] Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, p. 26.

recruits entered camp they were welcomed to the world of the military, allocated a tent or a cabin with other recruits, put into a battalion and a company, and introduced to their comrades. The bonding experience began at this point. For many men the front line was months or even years away; others serving in the different arms of the military such as the supply corps would never even see the trenches, yet this did not mean they had trouble bonding with their co-workers.

In the protests of the AIF, whether large scale confrontations such as that which began at the Casula and Liverpool training camps in 1916, or anonymous cartoons pinned up on a door for all to see, the rank and file of the AIF developed a further sense of unity. Protests reinforced the core characteristics of their working identity as 'diggers' and so they embraced the desire to resist the military regimen. Additionally, the success of these early protests promoted their continued use. The clearest evidence of this lies in a number of separate events during September 1918, firstly in the belief amongst men of the 1st Battalion on 21 September that they could refuse to go into the lines, and not be punished; and additionally in the belief of men from the 19th, 21st, 25th, 29th, 37th, 42nd, 54th, and 60th battalions that they could simply refuse to disband their units, and that their wishes would be granted. It is also evident in the diaries of working class men. Their blatant disregard for the rules of the military, even at a point when they were well established in their jobs and knew the rules well, and their irreverence for officers and military police reveals a sense of confidence, and perhaps also a willingness to attempt, to get away with much more than any other army serving in the Great War.[149]

[149] Fuller argues that in March 1918, 9 out of every 1000 Australian solders were serving time in a military prison. This contrasts with 1 out of every 1000 British soldiers, and 1.6 out of every 1000 Canadian, New Zealander, and South African soldiers. See Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 169.

**‘The noblest men that live on earth’**

In the diaries and letters of working class men there were two different assertions of masculinity that could be attained in the working environment. One focused upon the belief that hard work was masculine and through performing hard work a man could assert his masculine authority. The other focused upon the belief that the rank and file were not merely the tools of the military and through acting autonomously a man could also assert his masculine authority. Officers may have been of a superior rank, but to many areas of the working class they were not superior men. Thus, within this ideal, the masculine soldier would follow orders, but work on his own terms when and where he decided. Although one belief highlighted the pride of masculine labour, and the other highlighted the shame of working under another’s will, they were not mutually exclusive. A man could work hard, take pride in their job, and still hate his seemingly arrogant officers. Similarly a man could relax on the job and take pleasure in dodging work, but when essential work was required he could set their minds to the job and take pride in this.

The idea that hard work was masculine, and that a job well done was a matter of pride for the worker, had origins well before the Great War. In the Australian working class culture of the 1910s men proved their manhood through work.[150] As ‘breadwinners’, many saw it as their responsibility as a man to find a job and support their families. Manual labour in particular demonstrated manhood through its physically demanding nature; it used up men’s strength and tired their bodies. Robert Connell argues that this destruction of the body, the wearing down of muscles, was

[150] Fox and Lake, *Australians at work*, p. 22, and Connell, *Masculinities*, pp. 32-33.

‘proof of the toughness of the work and the worker, [and] can be a method of demonstrating masculinity’.[151] Working class men carried similar sentiments with them when they enlisted into the AIF from civil society. The nature of their work in the AIF wore them down and tested their limits of strength and endurance. The manual labour of the rank and file was monotonous and boring, yet at the same time by enduring the harsh conditions and the endless demands of ‘inferior’ officers the men of the other ranks asserted their masculine superiority. They were overworked, they were exhausted, and they were of the lowest rank in the military hierarchy, yet on the scale of ‘men’ they were at the very top for enduring all that was thrown at them.

In many ways this was a continuation of the working class culture of Australian civil society where manual labour was masculine. Kay Saunders explains that masculine labour brought with it the potential for economic independence and elevated social status.[152] Saunders argues that the colonial rhetoric of the era stressed the superior nature of manual labour in Australia. For example, The *Progress* reported on 3 March 1900 that,

> The noblest men that live on earth
>
> Are men whose hands are brown with toil.
>
> The real Empire builders are men who work.[153]

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[151] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 36.
[152] K. Saunders, ‘A New Race, Bred Of The Soil And Sun: Conceptualising Race and Labour, 1890-1914’, in M. Hearn and G. Patmore, *Working the Nation: Working Life and Federation*, Pluto Press, Annandale, 2001, p. 83.
[153] Cited from Saunders, ‘A New Race, Bred Of The Soil And Sun’ in Hearn and Patmore, *Working the Nation*, p. 83.

Similarly, Charlie Fox and Marilyn Lake argue that manual labour had its own dignity, where 'it was the independence of the work which lent it its satisfaction'.[154] Within the AIF this independence was lost to some extent. Officers were everywhere, yet working class men of the rank and file generally found themselves working under the supervision of a Non-Commissioned Officer. As has been explored, the close supervision of the NCO, who reported back to higher officers of the work of the men under his command, reflected the promotional structure of many industries within Australia and supported the continuation of workplace cultures into the military.

This constant supervision led to constant demands of work; leave was scarce, and working class men woke each day to confront new tasks demanded of them by officers. Paul Willis argues in his analysis of an industrial shop floor that the worker's expression of manual labour power infused an 'assertive masculine style and meaning into the primitive, mythologized elements of confrontation with "the task" '.[155] The brutality of the work environment on the production line is reinterpreted into a 'heroic exercise of manly confrontation'.[156] The situation of the rank and file in the AIF made this confrontation all the more heroic. They were not only confronting 'the task', but confronting an enemy, the possibility of snipers, of a bombardment, and of injury and death.

Enlisting in the army had brought a degree of masculine status. This was increased by the nature of work and the demands of manual labour, and it was heightened even more by the presence of the enemy and the risk of death. Willis adds that 'Difficult, uncomfortable or dangerous conditions are seen, not for themselves,

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[154] Fox and Lake, *Australians at work*, p. 46.
[155] P. Willis, 'Shop floor culture, masculinity and the wage form', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher, and R. Johnson (eds.), *Working–Class Culture: Studies in history and theory*, Hutchinson, London, 1979, p. 196.
[156] Willis, 'Shop floor culture, masculinity and the wage form', in Clarke, Critcher, and Johnson , *Working–Class Culture*, p. 196.

but for their appropriateness to a masculine readiness and hardness. They are understood more through the toughness required to survive them, than through the nature of the imposition which asks them to be faced in the first place'.[157] Willis is referring specifically to the dangers of the shop floor, yet there are clear parallels with the work of the rank and file in the AIF.

The nature of the work increased this masculine pride. Bodies were used up and exhausted in civilian work also, but it did not bring the same risks as manual labour in the front lines whilst under an artillery bombardment, or with the near constant risk of snipers. In these conditions men's courage was tested, but so too were their masculinities.[158] Whilst working in the lines, or out in the open, men could run and hide if a bombardment came. It would be safer, provide some form of cover, but at the same time reveal their strained nerves. A man who could continue working under this bombardment as though nothing was wrong would surely attract the attention of his comrades as ranking amongst the bravest. To be 'shell-shocked' was, to some extent, seen to be feminine; the hysteria and panic associated with war neurosis were certainly not identified by Australian working class men as masculine traits.

It was this attitude that gave rise to a standard amongst the men on Gallipoli that Bean described as a 'complete indifference to shell fire'.[159] Bean elaborates on this masculine outlook,

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[157] Willis, 'Shop floor culture, masculinity and the wage form', in Clarke, Critcher, and Johnson , *Working–Class Culture*, p. 196.
[158] J. Damousi and M. Lake (eds.), (eds.), *Gender and War: Australians at war in the twentieth century*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 5.
[159] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 547.

> The attitude of complete indifference to all casual shell or rifle fire was simply the natural expression of the men's self-respect. No one liked shell fire, but public opinion demanded that, whatever men felt, not by the flicker of an eyelid must they show it. This attitude cost many casualties, and had to be modified by order from higher quarters. But it never died out in the A.I.F. That careless, easy manner and apparent indifference to shellfire marked the Australians on every battlefield.[160]

This attitude became an additional way to distance the masculine soldier from the feminine civilian and to reassert the masculine identity and one's masculine authority. Hard labour, the heavy lifting and carrying, the digging away at the earth with a sense of indifference to the immense danger around them reasserted Australian working class males' masculine identity and provided them with a sense of masculine superiority in place of their rank inferiority.[161]

Masculinities were also tested on an international scale. Australian working class men were not only intent on proving their individual superiority, they were also fiercely determined to prove the superiority of the national stock. Australians were led to believe that the natural Australian environment had created a superior man. This was a man, as Bean argued, who was already half a soldier before the war began.[162] Bean observed in the *Official history*,

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[160] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 548.
[161] Connell argues that 'hard labour in factories and mines literally uses up the workers' bodies; and that destruction, a proof of the toughness of the work and the worker, can be a method of demonstrating masculinity'. Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 36.
[162] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 47.

> It was a fact often observed, that in a ship-wreck or bush-fire one man of British stock could compass the work of several Germans; and this capacity the Australian possessed in an extreme degree. Because the conditions of his life were generous, he had within him a reservoir of lively energy on which he drew in critical times for almost unbelievable efforts.[163]

A large part of these 'natural qualities' were due to the nature of the work required within Australia. Bean showed no qualms in presenting bush workers as the 'ideal' type of men, the 'typical' Australians, and the archetype against which all Australians should aspire to be like.[164] These tests of masculinity then were also tests of a nation's manhood. In representing their country the men of the AIF were expected to prove the worth of Australia's manhood on an international scale and prove that the colonial environment had enhanced, as opposed to deteriorated, the great British stock.

Those who took their work within the AIF seriously were the fiercest of critics and were not afraid to scorn the 'wasters' who shirked their duty. Thomas Goodwin in particular scorned the inferior work of others whilst maintaining a dedication to his own work that appears unsurpassed amongst the diaries of working class men. On one occasion he noted, 'We have in the 2nd Battery some absolute wasters, men that are worth about 2/- per week, real rotters. Their only worry is how to get out of fatigue work'.[165] With similar sentiments Goodwin described a later occasion where he was reluctant to join other 'lead swingers' by writing, 'I was sent for by the C.O. wanted

[163] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 5.
[164] Bean, *Official history: Vol. I*, p. 46.
[165] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 7/9/15.

to know if I would like a trip to Paris, or a spell at sea side. I refused'.[166] Similar entries in Goodwin's diary span the four years of his service career. He maintained this strong belief in the masculine pride of a job well done throughout his time in the military, throughout the loss of friends, the loss of horses, and in spite of countless complaints about the nature of work, the demands of the military, and the ignorance of untrained officers.

Goodwin placed himself above other, weaker, less hard-working individuals. Perhaps because he served in the artillery and was far from the lines he felt the need to reassert his masculinity through work, rather than through war and combat. Though even with this in mind Goodwin places no extraordinary praise upon the infantry, and although serving in the artillery he still suffered greatly from the horrors of war. His diary, much like any other individual's who served in the Great War, was full of tales of loss and of ghastly sights beyond comprehension

Goodwin's pride in work may also have stemmed from the importance he placed upon it. As noted in chapter two, Goodwin expressed few sentiments to suggest he expected an adventure. He enlisted for the work, and he expected his co-workers to assist him as he assisted them. When they failed in their duty Goodwin expressed his anger through his diary entries,

2/12/15 The RHA and RFA on this boat are mostly all wasters, never saw such a lot of numskulls, no idea of their job, carelessness in my opinion was the cause of this horse dying.

[166] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 12/6/17.

15/4/17 Lost all of our guns; Captured by the enemy this morning at day break ... The whole trouble occurred through the Infantry patrols going to sleep, they ran through our guns, Germans following them. We got the orders to retire. Disgraceful, not a shot fired.[167]

From the outset it was clear that Goodwin felt a sense of duty, perhaps to his nation, to his King and Country, or his family. His diary entries also suggest that it was possible that this was a duty of care for the horses under the command of the AIF.

The daily entries within Goodwin's diary suggest that he valued his horses most; they were his 'pride and joy' and caring for them made him happy. With few qualms he mentioned several times within his diary that he cared more for his horses than he did for the 'wasters' around him,

17/11/16 The poor old horse is knocked up. I stood, and looked at him several times on the road, considering what I would do. Whether to shoot him or drag him along. Made up my mind to stick to him. I am dressing him myself. I think more of this horse than I do of a good many men.

15/8/17 My horse, poor old Dixie, was killed, shot through the lungs. The old chap died game, I had him almost three years. He was the right sort, I feel as if I lost a friend.[168]

[167] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entries as dated. The RHA were the Royal Horse Artillery, and the RFA were the Royal Field Artillery, both were British units.
[168] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entries as dated.

Whereas the men of the infantry commonly report the loss of a 'mate up the lines', Goodwin's diary commonly reports the loss of a 'good horse'. The diaries of other men detail how their friends were killed; Arthur Freebody's friends 'got pigeon bombed one man killed',[169] whilst Francis Addy's friend was 'killed while with me out on the Duckboards early this morning'.[170] By contrast as the entries on page 198 reveal, Goodwin focused more upon the death of his horses. Of course Goodwin noted the loss of friends also, but the nature of his work and his attachment to his horses led these themes to appear more commonly within his diary entries. Goodwin had invested his labour in these horses, he worked with them and cared for them on a daily basis. With this investment his horses became his life: taking care of them brought with it a sense of pride, a fulfilment of duty, and the feeling of a job well done.

Though the details provided in Goodwin's diary allow us to concentrate on him as an example of the pride working class men took in their work, it is clear from the diaries of other men and the accomplishments of the AIF that such beliefs were more widespread. Eric Leed argues that 'The values that held the army together were identical with the "pride of a man in his work", for in this war, as de Man [a Belgian soldier] pointed out, fighting as not just *like* work; "most of a soldier's duty *is* work" '.[171] In the diaries and letters of other men this sense of pride comes in the accomplishment of a task. The more difficult a task was, the greater the sense of pride and achievement when the job was complete.

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[169] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 3/10/16.
[170] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 7/11/17.
[171] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 93.

This belief applied to manual labour, as well as to combat. Upon being relieved from Pozieres after an inhumanely brutal bombardment Francis Addy wrote,

> 26/7/16 I wonder if our Mobile job is finished for a time at this portion of Line? Going over the top is alright but it is brutish to have to stop in a dug-in position for days after + get the soul-case belted out of you while you can do nothing in return. It's funny now to hear the fellows trying to give an impression of the way they felt while they had to sit still, take it all, + do nothing in return ... But we all hung on + saw it through + that means that someone else hasn't got to go + do it for us.[172]

The solemn pride in Addy's tone, particularly the last line, is in having done the dirty work himself, and without assistance. His job was holding the line, defending a position, and biting down hard as shells fell thicker than the rain. Sharing stories of 'the way they felt' helped men to deal with the situation. It gave voice to concerns that could be shared openly amongst comrades who had experienced similar situations. The sharing of stories also contributed towards the reaffirmation of their masculinities. They could admit they were scared, that they had soiled themselves and begged for it to end, for they had seen it through together. Officers who had sent comrades to their deaths from comfortable billets far from the action would not be forgotten, nor would they be bowed down to any longer. Gammage argues that following Pozierres, 'the AIF's severest penalty for indiscipline, repatriation to Australia in disgrace, became no longer effective, and wounded men, though usually

[172] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 26/7/16.

prepared to return when the time came, gladly accepted the fortune which had struck them down'.[173]

The masculine pride in a job well done clearly had its limits. Pride in work was a personal matter, men worked hard for themselves, and for those who mattered. Men would work hard to achieve a necessary task, but they would not work hard to satisfy the seemingly pointless demands of an irate and disrespectful officer. Working class men would exhaust their minds and bodies to dig a trench to protect their comrades, but they would not move a muscle to salute an officer who had failed his men and lost the trust of those under his command. The pride of a worker in his work came in a job well done, not in subservience to another man.

**Skill and satisfaction in the workplace**

This pride in work was also associated with the satisfaction in work. When workers enjoy their work, takes satisfaction from it, identify with the objective of their labour, then they also take pride in it. Thomas Goodwin once again provides an ideal example of the belief in the masculine pride of a job well done through his diary entries. It is also no coincidence that Goodwin worked in a highly skilled position throughout the war. A farrier's care for his horses is explained through Goodwin's writing as a precise art. Goodwin approaches his horses much like a doctor would approach a human patient. The wrong shoes on the wrong horse in the wrong conditions could result in pain and injury to the horse that, as is also shown in Goodwin's diary, could lead to the loss of a hard working animal. Though not all farriers were as dedicated to their job as Goodwin. In October 1917 Goodwin wrote, 'Vet Officer was telling me

[173] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 183.

that the 101st Bty had 20 horses on their lines that the farriers could not shoe. Bad feet caused by faulty shoeing'.[174] His anger was at the 101st Battery's farriers for their poor work. Men who did not do their job properly caused other men, and horses, to suffer.

Goodwin's complaint about the work of other men reveals a pride in his own work, his trade was a skill and a craft and each farrier's approach to their horses was unique. As a result these workers guarded their work, their methods, and their approach towards horses and the job. Goodwin thus complained within his diary when a farrier from another Brigade shod one of his horses,

> 12/3/18 An officers horse was sent to 2nd Brigade and shod in front. I was annoyed, and reported it to our Major, who happened to be in our lines. In no way whatever was I consulted, been shoeing the horse for years. Captain Patterson V.O. of 2nd Brigade was the man responsible.[175]

The reasons Captain Patterson gave the task to one of his own farriers is unclear, though from Goodwin's point of view an officer was giving away his work to someone else and interfering with the labour process. Horses were not merely 'tools of the military' to farriers; they were dearly loved animals, the focus of their work and their life.

A slight on the work of a skilled worker, such as a farrier, was a slight on their masculine pride, and a challenge to their working identity. Working within the army Goodwin had to follow the army methods, leading to many causes for complaint

[174] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 28/10/17.
[175] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 12/3/18.

within his diary. In April 1917 Goodwin became frustrated with the strict instructions farriers were given on how to shoe horses. The 'military way' of performing work did not sit well with a skilled tradesman like Goodwin, as an entry within his diary demonstrated, 'Instructions for shoeing horses ... This is the kind of rot a man has to put up with, too many so called Farriers in the army'.[176] As with doctors and veterinarians, farriers took their patients, and thus their jobs, very seriously and they resented anybody trying to tell them how to do their work.

Throughout his diaries Goodwin made repeated mention of arguments and conflict between the highly trained and skilled farriers, and their officers who tried to tell them how to do their job. Several entries within the space of two months reveal the causes of many of these quarrels,

28/10/15 The Vet Officer and Farrier of the 6th Battery are at logger heads. Had a real good row. The Vet threatened to get him reduced. All started over shoeing.

1/11/15 Terrific row between Vet and Farrier Sgt. The Farrier reported him to H.Q. and his O.C. It is almost impossible for him to carry on. 5 men and 47 horses. The Vet officer expected him to move the wagon line and shoe horses at the same time.[177]

[176] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 2/4/17. Goodwin included in his entry the lengthy and specific instructions handed down by the military.
[177] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entries as dated.

Goodwin gives the impression that veterinarians and farriers were at loggerheads often. Farriers such as Goodwin felt a duty to the horse and their job, though Goodwin gives the impression that veterinarians, as officers, also felt a higher responsibility to the military who paid their superior wages. Farriers brought with them unique tools and techniques from their civilian experiences with work, and whilst veterinarians also brought their own methods, they may also have felt a greater sense of duty to the military, bringing with greater pressure to work within the military guidelines. Veterinarians, being of a superior rank, may have also felt as though they had the final say; though on the job Goodwin also felt that he was of a superior skill level. Veterinarians knew horses, but farriers specialised specifically on horse's feet and men such as Goodwin fiercely defended their skills at work.

Whilst Goodwin hated other people telling him how to do his job, he also did not shirk away from criticising the work of other farriers. In December 1917 Goodwin complained about the work of the poorly trained novice farriers that the army was using, 'This horse was pricked in the shoeing, shod on the 14-11-17. This is the outcome of inexperienced shoeing smiths, Down at the school of instruction for shoeing smith, they teach men the trade in 6 weeks'.[178] His concern on one hand was for the horses. Poor shoeing was injuring the animals, damaging their feet, and taking much needed animals away from work. Yet at the same time his complaints about the hasty methods with which men learnt the trade in the army reflects a concern amongst skilled workers regarding the nobility of their profession.

Within Australia during the 1910s skilled workers fiercely protected the skill-based nature of their jobs and the conditions of their employment. 'Skills' were a tool

[178] Thomas Edwin Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 13/12/17.

that workers could bargain with,[179] and they were also one of the primary factors affecting the meaning of work. [180] In his analysis of the role of work in people's lives, Stanley Parker highlights the use of a skill as being a primary factor in contributing towards an individual's work satisfaction.[181] When workers controlled their skills and the uses towards which they were put, they could receive greater satisfaction from their work and could more effectively negotiate conditions in the workplace.

By contrast, the 'degradation' of the worker's skills through increased control by employers reduced job satisfaction and significantly weakened the bargaining power of workers who, as Raelene Frances argues, 'could no longer rely on their monopoly of skills as a lever in bargaining'.[182] The concept of 'bargaining', as it applied to men in civil society, was lost within the strict regimen of the military. Additionally through reducing the skill level of the trade and controlling the means with which 'skills' were implemented, the military, as employer, effectively stripped Goodwin, other farriers, and other skilled workers within the military, of any bargaining tools they may have had. As evidenced in Goodwin's diary, the military taught 'men the trade in 6 weeks', thus reducing the perceived 'skill' required in the job and subsequently lowering the status of farriers. The military also issued 'Instructions for shoeing horses', thus controlling the methods through which these skills were implemented. The reduction of the status and 'skill' of farriers in the military placed these men firmly within the military hierarchy. They were farriers, skilled tradesmen, but in the eyes of the military they were also soldiers who had enlisted to serve and to follow orders.

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[179] Frances, *The Politics of Work*, p. 2.
[180] R. Deem, *Work, Unemployment, And Leisure*, Routledge, London, 1988 p. 15.
[181] Parker, *Leisure and Work*, p. 23.
[182] Frances, *The Politics of Work*, p. 2.

It is important to highlight that the concept of 'skill' in the labour process is socially constructed.[183] Raelene Frances argued in her analysis of the work process in Victorian industries that 'skill is socially constructed in the workplace by the exercise of strategic power by particular groups of workers'.[184] Similarly Mike Noon and Paul Blyton observed that skill is socially constructed from a number of contributing factors – the amount of training required, the technical nature of the job, the 'socially closed' nature of the job, the gender requirements of the job, and the regulations required in the labour process.[185] The military broke down these factors amongst skilled workers in the military to reinforce the rank hierarchy of the military. All men in the military were soldiers, it was their primary occupation, their *raison d'etre*. By contrast, the job of farriers, veterinarians, cooks, railway workers, or sanitary inspectors came second. The only skills that truly mattered within the military were the skills of war – how effectively a man could kill his enemies and serve his officers, his battalion, his country, and his king.

By stripping these secondary occupations of their perceived 'skilled' status the military inadvertently reduced the job satisfaction of soldiers. The usual tool to combat this, what Frances calls the 'strategic power' of workers, was weakened by the strict control of the labour process by the military. The job satisfaction that the use of a skill often brought to a job – the sense of free will and of being one's own master – was temporarily lost as the limitless authority of the military controlled every aspect of the soldier's working lives. Stanley Parker argues that the loss of skill and the inability to enjoy and identify with one's work led workers 'to become frustrated by

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[183] See for example S. Wood (ed.), *The Degradation of Work? Skill, deskilling and the labour process*, Hutchinson, London, 1983, pp. 17-18.
[184] Frances, *The Politics of Work*, p. 3.
[185] For an elaboration on these points see Noon and Blyton, *The Realities of Work*, pp. 114-141.

the lack of meaning in the tasks allotted to them and by the impersonality of their role in the work organisation'.[186] Skilled workers, once masters of their own trade, became a rank and a number; to the military, Goodwin became merely another nameless faceless soldier amongst the armies of millions.

In time, the loss of skilled status amongst these traditional trades was made up by the gain of skilled status amongst the rank and file men of the infantryman. Bean argues that,

> Given any reasonable definition, the Diggers' increased effectiveness in 1918 was due, not to improved discipline, but to skill acquired through longer experience and training. Indeed in 1918 such an incident as the charge at The Nek could not have happened. Australian leaders knew, and British commanders above them came to know, that these troops had the habit of reasoning why and not merely of doing and dying.[187]

The skill acquired through years of experience resulted through an increase in effectiveness. The status thus applied to the Australian rank and file in 1918 resulted in a higher degree of bargaining power which, as Bean argues, increased their ability to 'reason why' and question the authority of their commanders.

The working class men of the rank and file continued to resist their officers, to complain about their treatment at the hands of the military, and to utilise humour in their protests for the simple reason that they achieved results. They resisted the regimental British culture and instead asserted their own ideas of what military life entailed. Their persistence throughout the war in resisting military laws and customs

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[186] Parker, *Leisure and Work*, p. 30.
[187] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1083.

resulted in significant changes to the nature of the AIF. Far from resistance being futile, the rank and file of the AIF actively changed their working environment through challenging the accepted norms and standards of behaviour in the military.[188] Through familiar methods of industrial action these 'soldiers' were the active agents in the changes that determined the nature of their daily working lives within the military.

The use of trench and troopship newspapers further supported the ability of the rank and file to express their concerns. In particular the use of humourous cartoons and verse within these mediums couched contemptuous criticisms in a humourous form. The ability to complain anonymously about officers and the military system also provided a forum through which men could communicate with each other and with their officers relatively freely.

All these forms of protest provided a vent through which the rank and file could air their grievances, but at the same time it also assisted in the creation of an *esprit de corps* amongst the rank and file. The core characteristics of the digger identity were reinforced through protests against the military system. Additionally, protests against common complaints united the rank and file in a common cause. Yet whilst protests formed an outstanding part of the experiences of working class men in the AIF during the Great War, they have all been swept under the carpet in the historical literature. The humour, irreverence, and egalitarian ideals of working class men were all swept aside in the post war years as returned soldiers attempted to adjust to post-war society. As units disbanded and men returned to their civilian lives, the strong bonds of camaraderie were weakened and the workplace cultures that had survived through four years of warfare slowly fragmented.

[188] For a civilian contrast to this see Frances, *The Politics of Work*.

## Chapter Six: Return Home: 'Perhaps tomorrow we will know exactly how the situation stands'

### Armistice

News that an armistice had been signed between Germany and the allied forces was met with a range of mixed reactions amongst working class men. For up to four and a half years they had worked as soldiers, they had received regular pay, and they had made their home in their battalion and the military. By November 1918 they were well accustomed to the demands of their officers and the regular demands of work. The previous months of 'Peaceful Penetration' and of overwhelming military success in the fields of France also demonstrated that they had competently learned how to do the 'real work' of war. Suddenly, and in some places without so much as a shout or a fuss, the war was over and their job was done. The diary entries from working class men on 11 November 1918 reveal a sense of shock and confusion more than anything else. Some celebrated wildly, as they were well expected to do, whilst others took the news calmly with a cautious sense of disbelief. Officers gave many men the afternoon off work as local French and Belgian towns and villages became a focal point for celebrations. Yet others, still recognising their role as soldiers, received the news, and then returned to their usual tasks.

This chapter explores the experiences of working class men following the signing of this armistice. As the final chapter in this dissertation it also seeks to cover the final moments of working class men's lives in the military, from the moment news was received of the armistice, through their post-war work with the military in Europe, to their final disembarkation and return to family in Australia. In doing so it

attempts to understand working class men's responses to the end of the war, and, effectively, to the loss of a job. Soldiers no more, these men were asked to return to civilian life and civilian employment and continue their duty and sacrifice to the nation by contributing to the post-war Australian economy.

In the Australian historical literature there are several stand-out works on the post-war lives of returned soldiers. Stephen Garton's *The Cost of War: Australians Return* is an ideal starting point alongside Marilyn Lake's *The Limits of Hope: soldier settlement in Victoria 1915-1938* and Bobbie Oliver's *War and peace in Western Australia: the social and political impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*.[1] Beyond these however the literature is narrow in scope. Focused studies on specific soldiers often explore the 'return home', giving some insight into the post-war lives of individuals.[2] Similarly studies of specific social cohorts extend into the post-war years to examine the repatriation of individuals to Australia. John McQuilton thus included in his study of north-eastern Victoria's experiences of the Great War an analysis of returned soldiers,[3] and in a similar vein Alistair Thomson reviewed the post-war lives of his interviewees in an attempt to place military service within broader cultural contexts.[4]

Beyond these however, there have been very few Australian studies focusing upon the period between the armistice and the discharge of soldiers in Australia. Bean briefly covered this period in Volume VI of the *Official history*, yet he avoids details

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[1] S. Garton, *The cost of war : Australians return*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1996, M. Lake, *The limits of hope : soldier settlement in Victoria, 1915-38*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987, and B. Oliver, *War and peace in Western Australia: the social and political impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995.
[2] See for example P. Wilson (ed.), *So Far From Home: the remarkable diaries of Eric Evans, an Australian soldier during World War I*, Kangaroo Press, East Roseville, 2002.
[3] McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, pp. 199-208.
[4] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*.

on the work undertaken by men during this period. Instead, Bean explores the educational facilities set up in Europe and explains the process of repatriation.[5] In addition to this, approximately two hundred Australians remained in Europe to continue their service with the British Army in the almost forgotten campaign against Soviet Russia,[6] whilst Australians continued to serve in a range of roles with the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission for years after the war.[7] For the members of the AIF stationed throughout Europe in the late 1910s and early 1920s, this could be several more years of service that has been almost entirely ignored.

The absence of any concentrated studies of this period is not without reason. As this dissertation has repeatedly shown, military histories are more focused upon the 'reasons for victory or defeat'.[8] With the armistice signed and victory assured the daily lives of Australians in the AIF became significantly less important for such studies. From the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, the armies began to wind themselves down, and no man's land ceased to exist. With the battles complete and the war over, the lives of soldiers slowly drifted back into the civilian world. From this point, studies of their lives are passed back into the hands of social and cultural historians of the post-war era.

The diary entries of working class men in response to the armistice once again demonstrate their different approaches towards military service. For some, the celebrations marked the end of their adventure, they could return home full of exciting

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[5] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, pp. 1074-1093.
[6] B. Muirden, *The Diggers who signed on for more*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 1990, and P. Burness, 'The Forgotten War in North Russia', *Defence Force Journal*, 22, May-June 1980.
[7] Bart Ziino provides an analysis of the work of Australians in the Imperial War Graves Commission in Ziino, *A Distant Grief*.
[8] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 15.

tales for all the family. For others, they would once again have to return to the civilian world, find some form of employment, and then readjust to the old monotonous routines. Reflecting this divergence, some diarists completed their diaries, along with their perceived adventures, on 11 November 1918. With hostilities at an end and their duty complete, these men signed off to the family and friends who would make the future readers of the tales they had written. Others, perceiving military service as a job, continued in the regular reporting of the day's work, as will be seen below.

These different approaches also resulted in different reactions to the news of an armistice. As explained above, some rejoiced at the end of the war and were excited about the prospects of returning home. John Meads, anxious to return home after more than three years of military service, wrote, '11am. Word just through Armistice signed. Hurray! I'll soon be home now God willing'.[9] Celebrations spread throughout the occupied areas, the French towns and villages that had kept so quiet for the past four and a half years suddenly erupted, their inhabitants opening their doors to step outside and bask in the reassuring warmth of peace. Arthur Giles explained,

> The day word came through that the Armistice was signed we were all allowed the afternoon off to go to Amiens. Of coarse there were some very wild scenes among the French people. I must add that Amiens isent overcrowded at present as you know this is where Fritz nearly cut our communications in his advance.[10]

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[9] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 11/11/18.
[10] Arthur Clyde Giles, No. 2837, Boundary Rider, Stanmore, ML MSS 1841, letter home dated 17/11/18.

Similarly Arthur Freebody wrote, 'Nothing in morning news of hostilities ceasing received night time went to concert @ Visement in honor of it'.[11] Men celebrated the end of the war, the end of the 'real work', and for some, the end of the adventure.

Yet whilst the Church bells sounded out the news and the French and Belgian people celebrated peace, other members of the AIF dealt with the situation in a more sombre manner. Over sixty thousand of their comrades had perished, over a hundred thousand more bore some physical scars, and none could say they had escaped psychologically untouched by the horrors of trench warfare. The graves of past friends and family members lay scattered across vast tracts of landscape, some unnamed, others unmarked. Fathers, sons, brothers, neighbours and workmates who had signed on together suddenly found themselves very much alone. The spirit of camaraderie and the sense of purpose that had held men together throughout the war showed small cracks as the prospects of returning to an unknown civilian life began to play on men's minds. Thomas Goodwin was returning home on '1914 Leave' aboard *HMAT Port Sydney* when news was received that the war was over. His work finally complete, Goodwin simply noted within his diary, 'Recieved news by wireless that the armistice was signed. No excitement on board, just read in a casual sort of way'.[12] Those on their way home, the 'originals' like Thomas Goodwin, had served over four years in the military and had seen some of the worst aspects of modern warfare. The numbers of men on the return journey were noticeably smaller than the numbers that had sailed out from Australia's ports. In the noticeable absence of old friends and comrades it is little surprise that men such as Goodwin found little to get excited about.

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[11] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 11/11/18. The @ symbol was in the original.
[12] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, ML MSS 1598, diary entry dated 11/11/18.

Furphies of potential armistices had also regularly circulated around the camps and trenches throughout the war. William Burrell noted as early as May 1916, 'plenty of peace "latrines" the latest being that peace would be declared in a week or two: It would do me'.[13] Further skepticism was raised by a false alarm several days earlier. On 7 November Paul von Hindenburg, as acting German commander, requested arrangements for a meeting with Ferdinand Foch to discuss a possible armistice. Reynold Potter explained his anticipation,

> 8/11/18 Last night the rumour was circulated that the armistice had been signed and that hostilities were to cease from 12 o'clock to-day. I was waiting down the road for the paper to-day an hour before it was due that I might be one of the first to read the joyful news for myself. However no such thing happened – yet. Perhaps tomorrow we will know exactly how the situation stands.[14]

When the news finally did break there were many who were still sceptical of its validity.[15] Francis Addy thus explained,

> 11/11/18 …it is announced that an armistice is signed. News taken without any demonstration. In fact the BN had its "muck-up" the week previous at

[13] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 31/5/16.
[14] Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944, diary entry as dated, p. 60.
[15] Fussell argues that a degree of scepticism usually surrounded anything official. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 115.

> BELLANCOURT on a false alarm so they don't take any interest now.[16]

Men who had already celebrated on 'false alarms' were no longer in the mood for celebrating; they had been fooled once, they would not risk it again. At the same time the German army had been on the back foot since 8 August 1918 and the signing of an armistice only confirmed that which many had purportedly foreseen for a number of months.

After four and a half years of warfare the meaning of peace also left many men floundering for a sense of understanding. After years of military service they had adapted to the routine and accustomed themselves to the daily life. Military life had become natural, their uniform had become their second skin, their battalion their home. It was by no means a comfortable existence, but it was one they were well versed in. Reynold Potter, deeply conscious of this loss, and perhaps slightly more cautious than he was three days earlier, again expressed his thoughts within his diary,

> 11/11/18 This morning at 11 word came through from headquarters to the effect that the Armistice had been signed by the German delegates; and that hostilities were to cease as from that hour. At the time I was instructing a class on the Lewis Gun; but as soon as the news was read they, with one accord, said they would do no more work, and went out to kick the football. It is truly remarkable how little demonstration was made by the boys on the reception of this, the intelligence for which they had longed, hoped, prayed and suffered for years. One would naturally

[16] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 11/11/18.

> expect them to go into ecstacies of delight and to make a great hubbub, but nothing of the Kind happened…Why is it? Is it that we don't yet realise what the whole thing signifies? Or is it that the vicissitudes through which we have passed have eradicated all emotionalism from our composition and taught us to accept victories, and reverses alike, mechanically + stoically?[17]

Other men expressed a similar sense of dismay at their own response. John Meads wrote, 'I can hardly believe the war is over but I am not at all excited over it'.[18] Henry William Dadswell seemed to sum up the thoughts of many in his memoirs,

> At eleven o'clock he [an officer] came out. "Boys you've lost your jobs. The wars over and you can all go back to your billets." The men just stood quiet and looked at one another, as though they couldn't take it in. One felt like crawling away on his own, the relief was so great. Some of the boys got drunk, but the majority just seemed stunned, as though they were afraid it might not be true.[19]

That which they had deeply hoped and prayed for throughout their military service had finally come. The war was over, peace had come, yet the expected sense of overwhelming joy failed to materialise. Bean argued that as the 1st and 4th Australian division moved on once again to a new part of France,

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[17] Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944, diary entry as dated, pp. 61-63.
[18] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 13/11/18.
[19] Henry William Dadswell, No. 6868, Carpenter, Ararat, SLVIC MS 10011, 'Diary of a Sapper', unpublished memoirs, pp. 129-130.

> Neither there nor at the front was there any general demonstration - the sound of guns ceased; the gates of the future silently opened. Wonder, hope, grief, too deep and uncertain for speech, revolved for days in almost every man's mind while, in the British zone at least, army life went on as usual pending the next decisions.[20]

Uncertainty seemed to permeate the thoughts of most men. Those who celebrated perhaps did so because they felt they should. Concerts were organised, and so they attended. Civilians cheered, and so they joined in. But away from the crowds the natural reaction of men was this sense of confusion. Was this just another furphy? If not, what did the peace mean? What work would they be doing next? Would they still have to go into the trenches? Would they have to march into Germany? And above all, when would they return home?

**Continued work in Europe**

The armistice meant an end to hostilities, the Treaty of Versailles followed several months later, and within twelve months most Australian men had returned home. Yet whilst the 'guns ceased', the work continued. Following the armistice officers retained their positions of authority above the working class men of the rank and file, the military uniform remained the working uniform, and the daily patterns of work for soldiers in the AIF continued. The war no longer required fighting, but four years of destruction had left a great mess to clean up. In addition to this, with around one

[20] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1053.

hundred and eighty thousand members of the AIF based around Europe in November 1918, there was suddenly a very large army with very little to do.[21]

With their 'real work' effectively completed, many members of the AIF felt that they had nothing left to do. The German threat had been removed, the civilian populations were safe from the threat of invasion, and the sight of soldiers in villages must have only reminded many local inhabitants of the loss of so many family and friends over the past few years. Reynold Potter thus summed up the sentiments of many soldiers in the weeks after the armistice,

> -/12/18 At 4.30 on the morning of Saturday we alight at Busigny. Nobody seemed to want us now; and nobody seemed to care where we were or to know where our Battalion was. We had no rations and there didn't seem to be any prospect of buying or begging any in that inhospitable region. I felt very gloomy and devoutly wished myself back in the Boulevard Voltaire; and would very much have appreciated a buttered roll or a cup of chocolate. But I know there was a more depressed and pessimistic soul than I there, for one poor chap, after trying to hunt up some breakfast solved the problem for himself by putting a bullet through his head.[22]

The sense of loss, confusion, and fear was clearly evident in this individual's suicide. For years, patterns of work, of fighting, of time in and out of the trenches alongside one's comrades had guided these working class men. It was an unusually random

[21] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1057.
[22] Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944, undated diary entry c. -/12/18, p. 74.

routine, but it was one that they were well accustomed to. Now, suddenly, the routine ended, the front lines were evacuated, and the work of war ceased. The feeling that 'Nobody seemed to want us now' expressed by Potter also supported the belief at the time that 'fighting' was the primary purpose of the soldier. Whilst most of their time was spent behind the lines, all recognised that their main role, their *raison d'etre*, was to fight the enemy. In the absence of this enemy, and the absence of a war, men struggled to readjust to their new objectives. Bean argued that this posed problems for officers who had to control men 'whose motive for existence had suddenly vanished, and whose antipathy to control when not engaged on that task had often caused anxiety and trouble to those who did not thoroughly understand it'.[23] These men now looked at the cost of the armistice, and failed to comprehend the benefits. Their main task had finally been completed, yet men such as Potter only looked towards the camaraderie that would be lost. The rank and file of the AIF were disciplined when they needed to be, but as Reynold Potter's entry above indicates, with the war over, there were many who just wanted to 'kick the football'.

To fill the hole created by the armistice and the cessation of hostilities the AIF tried to keep the rank and file at work. In keeping pace with the regular wartime demands of work whilst behind the lines and 'resting', this post-war work was most likely organised to keep individuals' minds and bodies busy. Working class men were still technically 'working' for the military, they still received their daily pay and the 'Usual routine of work' continued much the same. The primary difference in their daily work routine was that men were no longer preparing for combat, and were instead rebuilding, and reorganising supplies to prepare for the re-embarkation of people back to Australia. To suit these ends the AIF redistributed the men of the rank

[23] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1057.

and file to new positions. Arthur Freebody thus 'Started to work @ Earl Street Salvage Corps London',[24] whilst William Hennell provides a more detailed summary of his post-war work for the military,

| | |
|---|---|
| 14/1/19 | I was put on duty on one of the german wards. The huns do all the work while we see that it is done. I stayed here for a fortnight. |
| 28/1/19 | I was put on the telephone for a fortnight. Sweet job. |
| 11/2/19 | After a week in the Orderly Room I was put on Ward 3 night duty. I had 3 week here and then was put in the Q.M's office. |
| 4/3/19 | I only had 10 days here when I was put in the Ration Store owing to one of the men being sent home. Lucky beggar |
| 14/3/19 | I started in the Ration Store and although hard work it is more to my taste. I remained here until 22nd May when I said goodbye to the A.G.H and got to Novant.[25] |

This brief extract includes all of Hennell's entries over a two month period, nothing has been omitted and they appear in full. Hennell merely noted within his diary where he was sent to work, without mentioning anything more of his daily life during this period. These entries aptly demonstrate that in the absence of an enemy the rank and file were simply set to any task that would occupy their time and be of some use.

The diaries of some working class men continue to make clear the constant demands for work made by officers. Arthur Freebody penned the following series of entries whilst working in England with the AIF during the second half of 1919,

[24] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entry dated 18/1/19. Again, the @ symbol was used in the original.
[25] William Thomas Hennell, No. 5835, Painter, Petersham, ML MSS 1620, diary entries as dated. The A.G.H. was the Australian General Hospital.

| | |
|---|---|
| 14/7/19 | Work |
| 15/7/19 | Same again |
| 16/7/19 | Same again |
| 17/7/19 | Went to Kings Cross on lorry got paid |
| 18/7/19 | Work |
| 19/7/19 | Birthday Saw Victory March of Allied Troops through London. Park @ night. |
| | Sunday. Went to Southend went on board H.M.S Valiant saw rest of fleet |
| 21/7/19 | Work went to Victoria Palace @ night |
| 22/7/19 | Work |
| 23/7/19 | Same again |
| 24/7/19 | Ditto[26] |

Work continued as a regular occurrence throughout the week, whilst weekends gave members of the AIF time to see the sights and enjoy some time off. The repetitive yet brief references to 'Work' and 'Same again' reflect the entries of working class men before the armistice when the regular patterns of work grinded men's patience down into a monotonous approach towards service as a regular job of work. Reflecting a similar attitude John Meads wrote the following entries less than three weeks after the signing of the armistice,

[26] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entries as dated.

| | |
|---|---|
| 28/11/18 | Usual routine of work. went to Theatre to see 'By Pigeon Post' It was not too bad. |
| 29/11/18 | Work again |
| 30/11/18 | Played football this afternoon We won[27] |

Even after the armistice men still followed the 'Usual routine of work', little changed in this regard. The primary difference was that now they knew they would be heading home. They no longer had to hope for the end of the war; they simply had to work, and wait. Several days after the Ottoman Empire signed an armistice Frederick Blake wrote, 'We have now built an oven, kitchen, & mess hut so are living under decent conditions for this country. All hands are looking forward to the day when we start for Ausy'.[28]

The cessation of hostilities in France and Belgium relieved the pressure of the frontlines, and as the above entries show, this gave men more time to enjoy social activities in France and Belgium. Working class men's diary entries more frequently recorded concerts and social outings and for many men it must have seemed that adventurous prospects were reappearing. Some additional entries from Freebody's diary make this all the more clear,

| | |
|---|---|
| 15/10/19 | Work |
| 16/10/19 | Work |
| 17/10/19 | Work dancing nightime |
| 18/10/19 | Work morning afternoon and night park |

[27] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entries as dated.
[28] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry dated 10/11/18.

| | |
|---|---|
| | Sunday Park day and night very heavy fog |
| 20/10/19 | Work during day dancing @ night |
| 21/10/19 | Work Fulham nightime Victoria Palace |
| 22/10/19 | Work Fulham Kings Cross morning afternoon sight-seeing West End |
| 23/10/19 | Work got paid morning pictures Y.M.C.A |
| 24/10/19 | Work dance @ night |
| 25/10/19 | Work on lorry in morning afternoon St Martins theatre "The Very Idea" Barrel @ night Y.M.C.A |
| 26/10/19 | Park[29] |

This series of entries was written three months after the previous set and little had changed in Freebody's writing. Work was still regular, it was the focus of his daily entries and the first thing he put down in writing. Yet at the same time now that the war was over weekends were 'time off', and by October Meads was familiar with his environment and there were social events occurring almost every night.

As these above entries have shown, following the signing of an armistice between the allies and the central powers, the AIF continued to set demands of work for the rank and file. Regular daily work was continued, though with the planned repatriation of the AIF to Australia the nature of this work focused upon rebuilding and rehabilitation. Only a select group of men were sent into Germany - No. 4 Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps, No.3 Australian Casualty Clearing Station, and some men working on the railways. For all others the end of hostilities gave men some time off to enjoy some social activities and see the sights around France and England. But given they were still on 'active service' and were still being paid they

[29] Arthur Henry Freebody, No. 2930, Labourer, Drummoyne, ML MSS 1251, diary entries as dated. Again, the @ symbol was used in the original.

would still be subject to their officers' demands of daily work. At the top of the chain of command Monash, in consultation with the Australian government, was planning to reintegrate these men back into civilian society. They would need to return to civilian jobs and a civilian lifestyle, and after so many years of fighting there were large numbers of men who would need assistance in doing so.

**Rebuilding, rehabilitation and 'BON-MILITARY ENJOYMENT'**

The problem of occupying the time of the men of the AIF now that the war was over was partially solved through instructional classes and 'non-military employment' - known to most of the rank and file as 'non-military enjoyment',[30] or, as Francis Addy writes, 'BON-MILITARY ENJOYMENT'.[31] Several motivating factors were present in the establishment of these educational and employment schemes. With thoughts of post-war re-construction Monash had arranged with the Australian and British governments to re-educate members of the AIF in civilian occupations.[32] In an interview with Keith Murdoch, Monash asserted,

> I seek to give Australia a 'spiritual momentum'. I mean the influence of brave men, returned to their native country in good condition, equipped for a great future…If we can concert…the means and machinery to enable our men to equip themselves for their future industrial life…then we are going to render a service to our nation which cannot be measured.[33]

[30] Bean, *Anzac to Amiens*, p. 515.
[31] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 6/5/19, underlines in original.
[32] Bean, *Anzac to Amiens*, p. 516. See also Serle, *John Monash*, pp. 406-11.
[33] Cited in Serle, *John Monash*, p. 406.

In this way members of the AIF could gradually make the transition back to Australian society where they would be prepared for the demands of the civilian world. Additionally, with the well known disciplinary problems of the AIF whilst out of the lines, the chiefs of staff felt pressured to give these soldiers something to do,[34] lest the one hundred and eighty thousand Australian soldiers decided to vent their built up frustrations and anxieties upon their officers or the civilian population.

Post-war educational, employment, and repatriation schemes had been under consideration from as far back as 1916. Bean argues that Brudenell White, Chief of Staff of the AIF, began to work out the processes of rehabilitating men for return to Australia at the behest of the British government in December 1916.[35] In addition,

> It was recognised that the process involved several stages - the bringing home of the troops - "Repatriation"; the reduction of the army from its war footing - Demobilisation; and the reinstating of the soldiers in civil life, which the War Office called Rehabilitation or Reconstruction and Canadians Civil Re-establishment or Re-instatement. In Australia this phase was mistitled "Repatriation."[36]

The Australian government had been notified of the necessity of carefully organising the withdrawal of men to Australia, yet in spite of the well-advanced warning they only managed a definite reply on the day of the armistice, 11 November 1918, advising the Chiefs of Staff, 'Now decided demobilisation should be directed from

[34] Bean, *Anzac to Amiens*, p. 515.
[35] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1054.
[36] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1054.

London by Mr. Hughes, and you should take his direction on main principles'.[37] It was a case of better late than never, but as the process of repatriation would take well over a year this gave the AIF plenty of time to organise a workable scheme.

Monash, as Director-General of Repatriation and Demobilisation was responsible for heading up the repatriation efforts.[38] Morale needed maintaining, and in the eyes of officers this was most effectively achieved through work, and through providing men with additional goals and objectives towards which they could strive. Bean argues that

> Monash decided that the A.I.F. must be given a new motive. He told its assembled leaders that their men, in whom during the war they had successfully implanted and encouraged a "fighting morale," must now be instilled with a "reconstruction morale." They must be given a vision of the needs of Australia in the future days of peace, so that each one would be keen to reinstall himself as a useful member of his nation.[39]

The AIF had achieved one great victory, but with that out of the way they needed to be set another towards which they could strive. For Monash and the Chiefs of Staff, this was rehabilitation and repatriation to Australia. The emphasis on physical fitness that was present during the wartime work of the rank and file gave way following the armistice to the importance of mental well-being and stability. Victims of shell shock and war neurosis could no longer simply be sent back into the lines and into the fray

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[37] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1056. Serle argues that even after this decision was made the cooperation of the Australian government was lax. See Serle, *John Monash*, p. 405-407.
[38] Serle, *John Monash*, p. 373.
[39] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1057. See also Serle, *John Monash*, p. 405.

to ‘work through’ their problems. Instead, they would have to deal with their situation in preparation for reintegration to Australian society.

Educational courses and non-military employment not only prepared working class men of the rank and file for their return to civilian employment, it also gave them an alternative to the monotonous demands of the military. The diaries and letters of working class men repeat the desire to be accepted for a range of educational courses and employment positions. John Bruce thus wrote ‘Nothing to do all day. Harness sufficiently clean ... Put in an application for a six week’s school at Presles for Wireless Telegraphy. Only 4 from the Divvy to go’.[40] The monotonous and daily routine of having ‘Nothing to do’ could be alleviated with a six-week school in wireless telegraphy. Working class men would be given time away from the ‘Usual work’ and be provided with an opportunity to learn new skills in a fresh environment. Other men followed Bruce’s direction; Reynold Potter applied for a position as a stenographer in the army, whilst in May 1919 Francis Addy wrote ‘Started my motoring course’.[41]

The options made available to the AIF were broad enough to suit most people; they were open to both officers and the rank and file, included soldiers and nurses, and covered a range of civilian occupations through industrial, agricultural, commercial and professional educational courses. To provide a brief example, in the Technical Section 460 people studied architecture, town-planning, building and engineering, 571 studied motor engineering or driving, 661 took commercial courses, 307 studied postal telegraphy in the British Post Office, 124 studied tailoring, 100

[40] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 2/1/19.
[41] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 6/5/19.

music, and 65 art.[42] Bean argues that George Merrick Long, the individual chosen by Brudenell White to lead the educational scheme,

> …was immediately impressed by the fact that, of those who wanted technical training, more than a third wished to follow agriculture; not only men who had been farmers and pastoralists expressed this desire, but many others, who were reluctant to return to city life. About half the remainder wanted commercial and half mechanical training.[43]

Bean adds that officers were universally impressed with the rank and file's eagerness to get involved with the repatriation scheme. Men applied in their tens of thousands for whatever positions were available, whilst Bean notes of Long, 'Everywhere he found intense eagerness to know the details of the Australian Government's rehabilitation scheme'.[44] At Edinburgh University, where fifty students of the AIF were engaged in learning forestry, Professor Stebbing stated that 'They are the keenest men that I ever had to deal with'.[45] The evidence can also be seen in enrolments, totalling 47 000 in France, and 42 000 in England.[46]

The enthusiasm with which the rank and file approached the educational scheme can also be seen in the diaries of working class men. It was recognised by the rank and file, as Addy's entry again illustrates, as 'BON-MILITARY

[42] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1070.
[43] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1063.
[44] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1063.
[45] Cited from Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1071.
[46] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1069 and p. 1071. However, Bean also adds that the total number of individuals attending at any one time probably did not surpass 10 000.

ENJOYMENT'.[47] This was an opportunity to experience something else within ones military service and to add some depth to the 'war experience'. Hector Brewer explained,

> 7/3/19 Education classes have commenced on board under the supervision of the Educational Officer. The boys are taking a great deal of interest in many things, he tells me, and his classes are well attended daily.[48]

With any luck, an individual could find training in a desirable occupation and return home to equally interesting civilian employment. Bean thus notes that 'one man wanted experience as a deep sea diver, another in "training wild animals" '.[49] After several years defying death in the military there were clearly some men who wanted to continue in dangerous career paths.

Yet for most men, non-military employment and the educational scheme provided them with hope of making an easy return to their pre-war lives. The war created a great schism between the soldier and the civilian. Men were eager to return home, but they were also anxious about how they would fit back in. Loved ones would seem like strangers after a four and a half year absence, positions at work would have been filled during the war, and many friends and co-workers may not have returned to share their stories.

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[47] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 6/5/19, underlines in original.
[48] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 7/3/19.
[49] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1070.

The end of the 'great adventure' meant a return to a society that wanted to move forwards and put the war behind it.[50] Anticipating their return to this society, working class men of the rank and file identified the need to re-skill. Years of weapons training, of lectures in offensive tactics, and of living within the military system would be of small use in finding stable employment in post-war Australia. The eagerness on the part of many working class men to re-skill were summed up in a diary entry by Hector Brewer,

> 11/12/18 Mr McKenzie B.A is the Educational Officer attached to our Battalion and a very able and energetic officer he is too. He commenced his duties exactly nine days ago. He has been busy interviewing men in the Bn ever since, finding out what study they wish to take up and organising classes for them…The idea of the Educational Scheme is to fit a man, as far as it is possible, for his return to Civil life. As Mr. McKenzie has said many of the men have practically or completely lost their individuality and initiative in things concerning their individual affairs. Army life tends to cramp these two things and they will be cramped in a more or less degree according to the length of the man's service principally. The Scheme is also intended to help men regain touch with whatever trade or profession they were following prior to leaving their homes for the war.[51]

[50] McQuilton, 'A shire at war', p. 11.
[51] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 11/12/18.

As this entry demonstrates, men were aware of the disjunction between military life and civilian life, of the problems they would face upon finding civilian employment, and of the difficulties in readjusting to a civilian identity.

Non-military employment gave working class men of the AIF some sense of hope that they too could move forward in these areas and put the horrors of their war experience behind them.

For others, the motivation to pursue non-military employment and educational classes was more immediate. With the war over there was little to do on a day-by-day basis. When men were set to work it felt monotonous and pointless. They had enlisted to fight, and many felt their job was done. Thus applications for non-military employment were often made simply to alleviate the growing sense of boredom. Francis Addy explained his motivations in March 1919,

> 20/3/19 Made out an application for NON-MILITARY employment as it looks like never getting a boat home + these camps are "eyesores + earaches". All you can do is sit down + "mope".[52]

Similarly Frederick Blake echoed the sense of monotony surrounding post-war life in the military from a different theatre of war,

> 20/1/19 We have made ourselves comfortable at Rafa. It is getting monotonous waiting for the time to go home. There is very little doing. Three times a week we have lectures under the Educational scheme, We have Race meetings twice a weeks, football & Sports to fill in the time of waiting.

[52] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 20/3/19.

> The beach is about 3 miles from here & occasionally we ride over for a swim.[53]

Even with the educational scheme, race meetings, sports, and a beach, the members of the AIF still felt bored with daily life. Their main desire was simply to return home as quickly as possible.

Bean concluded that the educational scheme and non-military employment was not as effective as was planned. In a final analysis he contended that,

> The education scheme did not achieve all that was hoped. Despite the unselfish forethought of White its preparation began too late. To obtain instructors Long had to promise them that their repatriation should not be delayed by joining him, a provision that led to great difficulties. The full machinery was not ready by the Armistice, and after men had been promised Non-Military Employment, or even books and paper, months of delay occurred without fulfilment…After the Armistice inevitably a proportion of trainees used the system (as they said) for "Non-Military Enjoyment."[54]

Yet even in its unofficial role as 'non-military enjoyment', the educational scheme was beneficial to the working class men. After four years of warfare and of daily work in the military, such non-military employment gave many working class men a taste of civilian life and prepared them, even if only psychologically, for their return to Australia.

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[53] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry dated 20/1/19.
[54] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, pp. 1071-2.

In Francis Addy's case the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation organised for him to have two months of training in 'Motor Driving and Repairs' for which he was paid 10 shillings a day.[55] A Record of Non-Military Employment within Francis Addy's service records noted that a 'Report from the Motor Training Institute states that Corporal Addy made satisfactory progress on his course of Motor Driving, Mechanism and repairs. Conduct and attendance satisfactory'.[56] The final word on Francis Addy comes from a certified extract from a marriage certificate kept within his service records. Dated September 1919 the extract stated Francis Addy's occupation as a Mechanic. At this stage Addy was still stationed in England, forming one of the 150 Australians who, on average, were getting married each week. On his initial Attestation Form, Addy had given his occupation as an Iron Turner, thus motor mechanics would have taken him in a new direction. How he adjusted to this new type of work, how long he lasted in this occupation, and how his marriage fared, is difficult to determine given the absence of post-war records. The fact that Addy noted his occupation as 'Mechanic' instead of 'Iron Turner' or even 'Soldier' suggests that he held some hope that his training would lead to career opportunities in Australia. In this regard the educational schemes must be considered a success. Men could return home with the belief that they could continue lives as civilians. And at this stage this sense of hope and the boost to morale may have been more valuable to Australian soldiers than any form of educational training.

Although considered by many as a failure, the educational scheme initiated in the AIF following the armistice was of great value to working class men. The short time available may not have been enough to teach them to be effective mechanical engineers or wireless telegraphists, but it did enable them to prepare for their

[55] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, NAA B2455 ADDY F V
[56] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, NAA B2455 ADDY F V

reintegration back into civilian life. Geoffrey Serle additionally argues that at a time when riots in other armies were frequent, the men of the AIF dispersed relatively peacefully.[57] Perhaps even more importantly, it gave these men a respite from the monotonous patterns of daily work within the military. The opportunity for non-military employment was particularly favoured amongst the rank and file, who could experience some other form of work before returning home and attempting to 'contribute' further to the national cause. And finally, the educational scheme achieved one of Monash's primary objectives; it increased morale and gave the AIF hope that their military service had not caused irreparable damage to their civilities. It encouraged men to look forward to a return to Australia, a return to the workforce, and a return to the peaceful life of a civilian.

**From home to home.**

The transportation of around one hundred and eighty thousand members of the AIF from Europe back to Australia was one of the largest and lengthiest undertakings of the Chiefs of Staff following the armistice. Whilst planning for repatriation had begun in 1916, the armistice had come so unexpectedly that it still took over twelve months to transport the AIF back home.[58] Men who expected an end to work with the end of the war were resolved to a long and agonising wait in the training camps of France and England. In addition to this, the problem was raised amongst the AIF that recruits had only signed service contracts 'until the end of the war, and a further period of four months thereafter unless sooner lawfully discharged, dismissed, or removed

[57] Serle, *John Monash*, p. 411.
[58] Bean notes for example that on 21 August 1918 the Allies were still planning for the next summer's campaign, less than three months later the war was suddenly over. Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1053.

therefrom'.[59] Given the clear delays in sending so many men home, and the fact that this would take well over four months, the Australian Government was forced to extend the period of service through an Act of Parliament in order to legally keep members of the AIF under the command of their officers.[60]

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 there were already several thousand members of the AIF on their way home. They were the 'originals', the '1914 men', or those who had first enlisted in 1914, and they were being sent home on what was known as '1914 leave'. The Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes, was directly responsible for organising '1914 leave' for the original members of the AIF.[61] These men, estimated to be around 6 000, were amongst the first to arrive home following news of the armistice. In the weeks following their arrival Birdwood declared that these should be kept in Australia as the first returned men.[62] It was seen as appropriate by Prime Minister Hughes, by the federal government, by the Chiefs of Staff of the AIF, and by many of the soldiers serving, that those who had served the longest should also be the men who would return home first. Thus, in deciding how to transport the remaining people home, Hughes and Monash decided to follow the same pattern.[63] Of the men remaining in France and England, those who had served the longest would be the first to return home.[64]

Individuals were usually allocated to 'quotas' that would embark together, yet as John Bruce's diary makes clear this did not always go according to plan. Scheduled

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[59] Thomas Goodwin, No. 161, Farrier, Stanmore, NAA B2455 GOODWIN T E, Attestation Papers.
[60] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1054.
[61] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, pp. 878-9.
[62] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1060.
[63] Serle, *John Monash*, p. 408, and Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1060.
[64] The sole exception was that wives and children in England and France would be sent home first, their partners to follow on later boats. Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1058.

to sail on 4 July 1919, nearly eight months after the end of the war, Bruce had his Service and Casualty Form stamped as 'Return To Australia Per Boorara',[65] yet at the last minute he was held off the ship and did not embark, writing within his diary, 'Only 18 Sgts going from the Quota'.[66] Several days later on 8 July another opportunity opened on another boat, yet once again he was held back at the last minute and did not embark, this time writing, 'Won't feel safe now till I'm on the boat'.[67] Bruce's final entry from Europe reflected his continued disregard for officers, staff officers, and the bureaucracy of the military, undoubtedly fuelled further by the long wait in England, 'was detailed for the 2nd train to leave an hour after the 1st with 55 Quota. All spare bits Corps + Base Wallahs. Goats, most of them'.[68] The following day Bruce finally embarked on *HMAT Persic* to begin the long journey home.

By May 1919, the last 10 000 Australian soldiers in France were brought to the Australian camps on Salisbury Plain to bring the total there to around 70 000.[69] As men were allocated to quotas with which they would embark, or sent to educational schools for non-military employment, they began to leave behind that which had been their home for the past four years. Their eagerness to return home clouded close feelings of camaraderie with their co-workers until the very last moment. Men who had worked alongside each other for years took their close relations with each other for granted until they realised that they may never see each other again. In concluding his chapter 'The War Ends' Bean aptly referred to an extract from the history of the 40th Battalion,

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[65] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, NAA B2455 BRUCE J.
[66] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 4/7/19.
[67] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 8/7/19.
[68] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry dated 12/7/19.
[69] Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1061.

> The first draft left [France] on the 17th February 1919, and it was only then that we realised that this brotherhood of men existed no longer as a battalion of infantry. For quite two days before this draft departed there was a feeling of irresponsibility about all of us. We drank in fellowship together, pledged ourselves to meet again in Tasmania and … for once felt sorry that the war was over. Those of who remained stood in the rain and watched the draft move off. Farewells were shouted, mostly facetious, with reference to future meetings in favourite Tasmanian hostelries. But as the column moved beyond we stood watching them in silence as they plodded away from us through the mud and rain, till they passed out of sight…[70]

A sense of home was not only found in the battalion, but also in the familiar towns and villages that they had passed through and stayed in during their military service. From Egypt where he was still serving as a sanitary inspector, Frederick Blake wrote shortly after the armistice with the Ottoman Empire,

> 4/11/18 It hardly seems true that we will not be travelling over these well known roads again. One is glad to know it is true but I think I will always remember the night rides to & from the valley.[71]

As Blake's entry makes clear, these men not only left behind their comrades, they also left behind family and friends in France and England, they left the locations that they

[70] F. C. Green, *The Fortieth: a record of the 40th Battalion, AIF*, Government Printer, Hobart, 1922, cited in Bean, *Official history: Vol. VI*, p. 1073.
[71] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry dated 4/11/18.

had become well familiar with, and in some special cases, they left behind animals that they had dearly cared for and loved for several years. Thomas Goodwin continued working as a farrier in the military from his enlistment on 28 August 1914 to the day he was discharged on 3 February 1919. He worked in the same battery, with the same comrades, and with the same horses for over fifty-three months of military service. As his entries throughout this dissertation have shown he dedicated a great deal of time and effort towards these horses, often caring more for the animals under his care than he did for many of his fellow soldiers. Leaving these animals behind after so many years of dedication and care undoubtedly left Goodwin with a considerable sense of loss.

Frederick Blake was in a similar situation. As a sanitary inspector in the AIF he was provided with a horse that he took good care of. Yet leaving Egypt and returning to Australia also meant leaving his horse behind, as an entry from January 1919 makes clear,

> 30/1/19 We are all pleased that the time has at last come to leave for home although one will lose some good pals. I trust whoever gets my Horse will look well after him for he has been a good faithful pal to me during Active Service. Had I my choice in the matter I would have liked to bring him home to Ausy.[72]

With the AIF returning home the horses that they had lived with for up to four years were no longer seen to be of use. Amongst the Light Horse Regiments at the end of the war there were 13 000 surplus horses, yet the problems in shipping these back

[72] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry dated 30/1/19.

home coupled with quarantine fears meant that whilst the riders returned home, the horses would remain behind. Eventually, around 11 000 were sold to the British Army in India, with the remaining 2 000 cast for age or illness. In November 1918 Blake made note of what was done with some of these horses,

> 19/11/18 To day there were 800 horses shot out on the sandhills. They were all aged Animals or worn out. It seemed a pity that they should meet with this reward after faithful service but it is better so, for should they fall into the hands of the Bedouin or Jews they would have a rough spin. The Bedouins & Jews as a body are very cruel to Animals.[73]

As Goodwin's entries have shown in previous chapters, the loss of a horse could be devastating for men, and the loss of so many faithful animals was a sad conclusion to many Light Horsemen's relationships. Beyond these numbers it is difficult to find evidence that these horses were illegally shot by their owners; individuals who did so were unlikely to speak too loudly of it lest they face punishment, and this behaviour was certainly not condoned by the military. Instead, the diaries and letters of the working class men studied in this dissertation suggest that the bulk of the Light Horsemen simply said their goodbyes, before handing their animals back over to the army.

The experience of the troopship journey home was much the same as the troopship journey to Europe. Seasickness hit men quickly, and once sight of land was lost working class men of the AIF resolved themselves to a long voyage through the unknown. One notable difference on this return journey was that very few people

[73] Frederick Blake, No. 16886, Sanitary Inspector, Petersham, ML MSS 784, diary entry dated 19/11/18.

wrote of this as an adventure. Sightings of sharks, flying fish, and dolphins, abundant in the diaries of men on the outboard journey, are almost entirely absent in diary entries of men on the return journey. A contrast of these two voyages reveals some remarkable changes in the nature of diary entries and the tone taken to describe daily life. On the outward journey men filled daily entries with the happenings on board the troop transports, of boxing matches and pillow fights, of poor food and repetitive work. Yet on the return journey there was mostly silence.[74] Henry William Dadswell summarised his entire journey as, 'We took five weeks on the trip to reach Melbourne and I had four weeks sick. The only good thing about the trip was we were coming home'.[75] An entry by Edgar Davis written during the final days of his six week voyage suggests that the anxieties with returning home were still too great for some, 'Still rolling home. One poor chap jumped overboard + was never found'.[76] The change in the nature of these entries reinforces what Andrew Hassam identifies as the changing meaning of shipboard diaries.[77] On the outbound these diaries were records of an adventure, on the inbound journey they served a variety of different purposes, they normalised military life, continued daily patterns of writing, and they filled obligations to family members to record all experiences, but one this is certain, few continued to record the adventure.

For the AIF, the several months of waiting in France and England followed by a long and gruelling voyage around the world was immediately followed upon arrival in Australia by an additional week of waiting in quarantine as authorities tried to

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[74] There were several exceptions. John Bruce for example maintained his diary on a regular basis and still wrote of boxing matches and events of interest on board the troopship.
[75] Henry William Dadswell, No. 6868, Carpenter, Ararat, SLVIC MS 10011, 'Diary of a Sapper', unpublished memoirs, p. 136.
[76] Edgar Atheling Davis, No. 7842, Motor mechanic, Narromine, SLVIC MS 10137, diary entry dated 21/8/19.
[77] Hassam, *Sailing to Australia*, pp. 1-2.

ensure they had not brought any cases of influenza back with them. With this over, working class men were reunited with their families, discharged from the military, provided with a civilian outfit, and returned home to reflect upon their service time. Once again the responses by working class men at this stage are divergent. For some the war had been an adventure right up to the very end. Frederick Blake, working as a sanitary inspector, had seen very much of Egypt and very little of the enemy, and thus he looked back favourably upon his time with the Australian Imperial Force. The final entry of his diary concludes,

> 14/4/19 At 2pm I journeyed to the Barracks received my suit of Civvy's & discharge. Once more a Civvy and in the best country in the world. I hope never again to go through the same experiences but I must confess that now it is all over I would not have missed it under any circumstances. There is no need to write how pleased those at home were on my return. The house was gaily bedecked with flags & everybody was happy. I now close my Diary feeling a better man for my experiences in the Army & am fully convinced had Germany won life would not have been worth living.

Blake, serving in North Africa, had never faced a German soldier to put a human face to his myths; he had not experienced the fear of cowering twelve feet underground whilst an untouchable enemy unleashed a seemingly endless bombardment that echoed through the earth and shook one's body to its very core; nor had he experienced the terror of going over the top to face the rapid fire of enemy machine guns.

For those who had experienced the horrors of the western front, the conclusion to their military service was quite different. Hector Brewer finished his diary with a brief note, 'The day had arrived after over four years + a half of slush + slaughter. Here endeth the eventful period of my life I hope. Lt. Hector Brewer'.[78] Similarly William Burrell concluded, 'met my people + now I'm content to stay in "god's own Country" + let wars alone in future'.[79] Francis Addy, reflecting upon his initial motivations for enlistment, wrote, 'Discharge takes effect today ---- The finish of my 60 days furlough + the finish of any more "Form Tours" as far as I am concerned. Amen'.[80] Above all these entries reveal a deep sense of relief to be home. Long ago these men had realised that the war was not the great adventure that they had initially hoped for. The 'Form Tour' ended swiftly, and the 'eventful period' was one that they hoped would never be repeated again.

**Peace at last**

As the wartime experiences of working class men differed from individual to individual, so too did their experiences of repatriation to Australia differ accordingly. Stephen Garton opened the first paragraph of *The Cost of War* by arguing that 'Every return was different in its own way, and yet it was also something more general,

[78] Hector Brewer, No. 820, Groom, Petersham, ML MSS 1300, diary entry dated 24/4/19, underline in original.
[79] William Henry Burrell, No.3461, ML MSS 1375, Railway Signalman, Camperdown, ML MSS 1375, diary entry dated 1/7/19.
[80] Francis Vincent Addy, No. 2553, Iron Turner, Surry Hills, ML MSS 1607, diary entry dated 19/3/20.

shared, and universal'.[81] Individuals from different social backgrounds returned to different situations, and even amongst the diverse Australian working classes there were a range of options available for individuals to pursue. Yet throughout these experiences of repatriation the most common and widely recognised problem to face returned soldiers was the feeling that their military service had changed them, and in their absence, the society they had left had also changed.[82] Garton argues that 'Although they returned in joyous expectation of seeing loved ones again, they also returned to people and places that seemed at once familiar and yet strangely different'.[83]

The war had also left these men with a range of psychological and physical injuries. John Clark was discharged 'Wounded' from the AIF after a debilitating gun shot wound to his right thigh and a compound fracture in his right femur. Even when the wound healed it would leave Clark with a permanent limp that would make it difficult, although not entirely impossible, to continue his pre-war work as a labourer. Similarly, Charles Granville Smith, who had initially enlisted in the hope of finding some long-term gain through military service, was discharged 'Medically Unfit' after receiving wounds to his face and hands.[84] The extent of these wounds is unknown, the only indications of its severity are that Smith spent two months in hospital recovering and was ultimately discharged as 'Medically Unfit'. As a carpenter before the war who utilised his skills in crafting wood, the damage to his hands may have made a return to his pre-war occupation difficult.

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[81] Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 1.
[82] This argument forms the central focus of a number of historical works, the most notable of which are Garton, *The Cost of War*, and Leed, *No Man's Land*.
[83] Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 1.
[84] Smith had earlier recovered from a gun shot wound to his right knee. Charles Granville Smith, No. 1084, Carpenter, Cootamundra, NAA B2455 SMITH C G.

The reintegration of soldiers into Australian society was a difficult process for working class individuals. Whilst family and friends waited for their loved ones to return, employers were simply in no position to linger. Jobs needed filling, and after the myths of 1914 had passed the men of the AIF were never expected home anytime soon. The Educational Scheme and non-military employment sought to assist this repatriation, but there was only so much that the military could do. They could train individuals in new occupations and teach them useful skills, but finding post-war work was largely left up to the individual. Although 'preferential treatment' for returned soldiers was widely advocated, positions still needed to be vacant, and the mistrust and fear often felt towards returned soldiers in the post-war years was an entirely different burden for veterans.

Others were left with little choice. Debilitating war injuries left many in no state to continue their pre-war occupations. The service records of working class men reveal the problems men faced in the post-war years. Charles Granville Smith's injuries as explained above provide one prime example. Similarly Leslie James' military service was to result in permanent disability. James suffered 'multiple gunshot wounds' on 7 May 1918. After spending several months in hospital he had his right arm amputated in November 1918, before embarking for Australia on a hospital ship in August 1919. James' recovery was long; he had previously suffered 'multiple gunshot wounds' to his legs in July 1916 from which he had recovered, but the loss of an arm was a permanent disability and he spent years under the care of the AIF. He was finally discharged as 'Medically Unfit' on 30 May 1921, but the loss of an arm, and wounds to both his legs would not help his chances of returning to his pre-war occupation, or of finding some other form of appropriate work in post-war Australia.

In addition to war wounds the conditions of the trenches and the lack of attention to hygienic care throughout the military were both frequently conducive to illness. Alfred Stanley Baker was admitted to hospital three times with cases of influenza, laryngitis, and accidental burns to leg and foot. On a fourth occasion he received a shell wound to the head, but only managed to reach the advanced dressing station before dying of his wounds.[85] Similarly Colville Frederick Armstrong was admitted to hospital on five separate occasions with cases of influenza, pyrexia, scabies, pyrexia again, and finally influenza again, the last of which eventually took his life on 19 December 1918, barely one month after the end of the war.[86]

Like Baker and Armstrong, there were many who did not make the return journey home. James Anderson was reported 'WOUNDED & MISSING' in France on 2 September 1916. A Court of Inquiry found on 23 January 1917 that he was officially 'KILLED IN ACTION'. Similar revelations appear throughout the service records of working class men who served in the AIF during the Great War. John Lewis Crouch died of 'Enteric Fever' on 20 October 1915. Fred Heming 'DIED of WOUNDS received in Action (gas)' on 24 April 1918. John Booth was 'Killed in Action' on 9 October 1917. Roy Harold Bolton was 'KILLED IN ACTION' on 26 September 1917. Albert Murray Cross was 'Killed in Action' on 7 November 1917, and so the list goes on. Diaries suddenly end, letters stop being sent, and handwritten notes included within individuals' service records request more information on the missing body or on the location of a grave. But once again, the experiences of these men are only representative of the broader patterns of the AIF.

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[85] Alfred Stanley Baker, No. 2860, Dealer, Annandale, NAA B2455 BAKER A S.
[86] Colville Frederick Armstrong, No. 3683, Assistant Mechanic, Wagga Wagga, NAA B2455ARMSTRONG C F. On two occasions Armstrong was diagnosed with P.U.O. (Pyrexia of Unknown Origin), this was the medical term for a fever.

By the end of the Great War about 63 163 Australians, or around one in five, had died on active service, whilst an additional 152 422 were made casualties.[87] The war brought hundreds of thousands of Australians back home to their families and friends, but it also left tens of thousands abandoned in the fields of France and Belgium. Those who had survived the war did not escape untouched. Those who made it home without serious physical injury and without any recognisable psychological injury were still left with the memories of their war experience. Civilian minds did not easily cope with the mechanical slaughter of the Western Front, of the anonymous carnage dealt by an artillery bombardment, nor of the pure inhumanity of person-to-person killing throughout no-man's land. As the ex-soldiers, veterans, diggers, and Anzacs moved back into their old homes, they also attempted to readjust to another new way of working and of living in the post-war years.

Further evidence of these post-war problems can be seen in the records of the repatriation process. Stephen Garton notes that by 1938, 257 000 Australians were assisted by war pensions, whilst '1600 men were still in hostels and homes for the permanently incapacitated, and around 23 000 were outpatients in repatriation hospitals each year'.[88] The assistance given to men resulted in 21 000 homes being built, 4000 articificial limbs supplied, 133 000 jobs arranged through the Labour Bureaus, whilst 40 000 were supplied with properties through soldier settlement.[89] Debate still continues over the success of the repatriation scheme; the enormous economic expenditures are weighed up against promises made to soldiers on embarkation, whilst the wartime digger identity is contrasted with the post-war Anzac

[87] Estimates of casualties vary depending upon the source consulted. These figures are taken from Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 313.
[88] Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 83.
[89] Garton, *The Cost of War*, pp. 83-4.

legend.[90] The oft-noted failures of soldier settlement frequently cloud over the many successes, whilst the problems soldiers faced in finding post-war work take favour over the assistance provided by the Repatriation Department.

It cannot be doubted that the disjunction in social life caused by service in the Great War led working class men to face considerable difficulties in finding post-war work and resettling into their post-war lives. The bureaucracy of the Repatriation Department coupled with the thousands of returned men seeking assistance created as many headaches as it did solutions, but regardless of its problems, it was nonetheless providing solutions to many families. Soldier settlement gave working class families new homes and the opportunity to be their own master, and whilst this has been largely criticised for its rate of success, it nonetheless did succeed for many. Likewise, the figures provided by Garton above highlight the terrible costs of war that last well beyond the signing of the armistice. Yet they also highlight the extensive support provided to individuals in the post-war years. Readjusting to civil society after the horrors of the Great War was a difficult process for working class men, yet with the assistance of the Repatriation Department in retraining these men, of trade unions in finding suitable employment, and in returned soldiers organisations in providing a veteran community, many of these men found a new existence in post-war Australia.

For working class men, the experience of living four or five years of their life in the military, of feeling the close bonds of camaraderie with fellow workers, and of having an active and mobile daily life was one that they would have trouble replicating in the civilian world. If this were all that military service entailed it may have been a highly rewarding experience, and the focus upon this side of military life

[90] Wise, 'Fighting a Different Enemy: Social protests against authority in the Australian Imperial Force during the First World War', *International Review of Social History: Humour and Social Protest*, Publication due November 2007.

could easily convince one of the romantic notions of war and present a picture of military experience as an adventure. However, the other side of the coin reveals the true horrors of the front line and it is only through acknowledging this horror that historians can fully understand the impact of the Great War on its combatants. Whilst this dissertation has largely focused upon time 'out of the line', it is highly important to note that even short spells in the trenches could have devastating effects. It could take but one artillery bombardment to cause lifelong psychological injury, one bullet to paralyse an individual below the waist, and, as in Fred Heming's case, one gas shell miles behind the line to take an individual's life. Given the amount of time spent in the front lines during over four years of military service it is amazing that the post-war problems were not greater. Once again, whilst Garton, Oliver and Lake have covered this period to some extent, it is still a relatively unexplored area that requires more attention, yet lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Further investigation must also be made into the transition of these workplace cultures back into civilian employment. This dissertation has established that working class men carried their working beliefs and mentalities with them into the AIF. They approached work within the military as they approached work within civil society, they expected relations with their officers in the military to follow similar patterns as to their relations with employers in civil society, and when conditions were not to their liking, they resolved to a form of industrial relations within the military that reflected their knowledge of industrial relations from civilian employment. Without a doubt, there was a great deal of continuity in the lives of these working class men in the transition from civilian to soldier. Yet, with so much bloodshed and devastation, it would be careless to forget that a great deal had also changed within the minds of these men. Education and re-skilling could only provide limited preparation for the

return of these men back into post-war occupations. Beyond this, it is yet to be seen how successfully they reintegrated into workplace communities, and how they made the new transition in this environment from soldier to civilian.

## Conclusion

Several months before the signing of the armistice between the central powers and the allied forces, John Bruce wrote a brief entry within his diary, 'Working 4 hour shifts. On 10p till 2am. Hang the officers!'[1] Once again this short entry aptly summed up Bruce's broader approach towards military service. Instead of describing the course of the war, instead of mentioning the success of the Australian armies in the field, and instead of writing of the collapse of the German army several days earlier, Bruce chose to write about the short shift of work he was ordered to perform on that day. Beyond reflecting his approach towards service as work, the same entry also reveals his usual frustration with the men who ordered him to perform this work - his officers. Bruce's diary is remarkable not for these brief quips, and not for the fact that he continued this attitude throughout his military service. Rather, these entries are remarkable because they were typical of so many working class men serving in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. They are all the more remarkable because they have remained unnoticed on worn out pages in archives for over nine decades, not necessarily unseen, but perhaps unwanted, as histories of the military have looked directly beyond these references to work, and have instead sought out the combat experiences of Australian combatants.

The non-combat experiences of Australian men in the AIF have been left aside in favour of combat-based experiences. Attempts to understand the 'reasons for victory or defeat' have held priority over attempts to understand the workplace cultures of soldiers.[2] The focus of 'time in the line' and 'time in combat' has largely

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[1] John Bruce, No. 34710, Telephonist, Paddington, AWM PR87/115, diary entry date 16/8/18.
[2] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 15.

overlooked 'time out of the line' and 'time spent working'.[3] David Johnson Silbey argues that there is a 'historical obsession with carnage' driving these studies in Great Britain,[4] and a similar obsession with the Anzac legend drives combat-based studies in Australia. This obsession is not unwarranted, and there is a continued desire to understand why so many millions of people were sent to their deaths. Yet at the same time this obsession should not restrict the broad potential for inquiry on the Great War. Janet Watson in particular has demonstrated this potential by arguing that non-combatants 'were "soldiers" of a sort, helping to "fight" '.[5] At the same time we must recognise that soldiers were also 'workers' of a sort, contributing their labour towards the war effort both in and out of the front lines.

The potential for broader inquiry beyond simply 'combat experiences' in the Great War is wide open. Within Australia historians such as Melanie Oppenheimer, Patsy Adam-Smith, Jan Bassett, and Marianne Barker, amongst many others, have highlighted the work of Australian nurses in contributing towards the war effort.[6] Likewise, John McQuilton, Raelene Frances, Bruce Scates, Jenny Warburton and Melanie Oppenheimer again, amongst others, have explored the work of civilian men and women on the home front.[7] Yet when it comes to studies of soldiers in uniform,

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[3] Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 6.
[4] Silbey, 'Their Graves Like Beds', p. 314.
[5] Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 297.
[6] See for example, M. Oppenheimer, 'Gifts for France: Australian Red Cross Nurses in France', *Journal of Australian Studies*, No. 39, December 1993, pp65-78, M. Oppenheimer, *Oceans of Love: Narrelle – An Australian Nurse in World War I*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2006, P. Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1984, J. Bassett, *Guns and Brooches: Australian Army Nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992, J. Bassett, '"Ready to serve": Australian women in the Great War', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No. 2, April 1983, pp. 8-16. M. Barker, *Nightingales in the mud: the digger sisters of the Great War, 1914-1918*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989.
[7] McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, R. Frances, and B. Scates, *Women and the Great War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1997, J.

the focus immediately shifts to the trenches, and as a result the non-combat lives of these men, including much of this daily work, is entirely ignored.

A detailed examination of working class men's diaries and letters reveals that the historical literature over-represents this trench experience, and certainly whilst time in the line must always be considered as the most heightened experience, there is also much we can learn from the non-combat experience and of time out of the line. Most notably, working class men's approach towards military service as a job of work reinforces J. G. Fuller's argument, noted earlier, that the war 'was not quite the chasm, cutting across individual and collective experiences and sundering past from future'.[8] Instead, the continuation of these workplace cultures suggests a less disruptive transition from civilian to soldier than has often been posited. Combat experiences certainly introduced an otherworldly environment to these men's lives, but behind the lines and away from combat these men soon became accustomed to, if not entirely happy with, the demands of their officers, and the daily work required. In analysing this continuity Eric Leed argues that the civilian and the soldier should not be treated as though they were in two separate worlds; the pre-war civilian who enlisted as a soldier lived through one continuous reality,[9] and there was no disjuncture between the 'world of war' and the 'world of peace'. Leed asserts that 'In the trenches men learned that mechanized destruction and industrial production were mirror images of each other' - both were part of the same lived experience.[10] This continuity and the transition from the production line in Sydney to the front line in

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Warburton and M. Oppenheimer (eds.), *Volunteers and Volunteering*, Federation Press, Leichhardt, 2000.

[8] Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 154.

[9] Leed, *No Man's Land*, pp. 193-213.

[10] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 194.

Pozieres was made easier for working class men by the transference of their workplace cultures, and the continuity in the demands for work.

The diaries and letters of working class men make these links evident. In an environment of war these men did not adopt entirely new mentalities to approach the 'world of war', and they did not disconnect their civilian selves. Instead, they continued to exercise their civilian mentalities, in particular through the language of the workplace, to describe their daily lives. This was not so much, as Paul Fussell has argued, an inability to adequately explain the horrors of war;[11] indeed these horrors were still evident in their writings. Instead, descriptions of work reflect an authentic and spontaneous response to the conditions and demands of daily life in the military. This daily life largely consisted of work, thus, men wrote of this work within their daily diaries.

Descriptions of carrying supplies, repairing telegraphic wire, or digging trenches were simple ways of communicating daily thoughts whilst in the military. At times they were part of a broader narrative as individuals attempted to present what many diarists termed a 'truthful account' of their 'adventure to war' to send to friends and family at home. At other times, these entries were innocently scribbled within several seconds, reflecting the instinctive thoughts of the rank and file soldier in that specific moment when they chose to write within their daily diary. In these latter situations, individuals, sitting in a moment of silence in the mud of the trenches or in a cosy billet behind the lines, holding pencil and paper, thought back on their day and casually described the first significant thing that came into their head. On 15 April 1916 James Green penned the following entry,

[11] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, pp. 169-170.

> Our rest in billets outside the firing line consisted of plenty of fatiige to and fro from the firing line each night; carrying, duck boards, and A pieces etc, which were used in construction of better trenches. This work being carried out by infantrymen, but the engineers used to get the credit for it.[12]

On 1 October 1916 John Hartley Meads wrote, 'On fatigue in charge of a party of 50 men building dugout that have fallen in'.[13] On 19 December 1917, Eric Moon described 'On fatigues at night. carrying duckboard + rations up to the front line. We had a lovely time going over the frozen tracks. I dont think there was a man who did not have a fall'.[14] As this dissertation has shown, entries such as these abound in the diaries of working class men. They are certainly not difficult to find, but, as nine decades of historical inquiry has shown, they are very easy to overlook.

These men still described combat, and it must be acknowledged that the literary focus on trench warfare has a firm evidential basis within these diaries. But as has been shown, in terms of dedication of space within a diary, this combat was far overshadowed by descriptions of work. It was not that work was the more defining experience, rather, work was the more frequent experience, and it was the experience they were more suitably equipped to write about and comprehend. These men had worked in civil society, they had experienced difficult and demanding working conditions, they had shared relations with employers who dictated their day's work, and they had resorted to strikes and methods of protest to complain about working

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[12] James Green, No 2658, Labourer, Darlinghurst, ML MSS 1838, diary entry dated 15/4/16.
[13] John Hartley Meads, No. 3985, Jackaroo, Bingara, AWM PR03005, diary entry dated 1/10/16.
[14] Eric Moon, No. 6362, Fitter and Labourer, Redfern, ML MSS 2930, diary entry dated 19/12/17.

conditions. The very same aspects of this workplace culture were evident throughout the experiences of working class men who served in the AIF during the Great War.

There is certainly something to be made of the fact that it took a focus on working class men's experience in the AIF to draw this continuity out. As explored earlier, there has been a vast under-representation of working class experiences in the historical literature on the Great War, and, countering this, an over-representation of middle class experiences, and the experience of the officer class. It took this focus upon working class men to recognise that refusals to enter the front lines were partially protests against working conditions, that resistance against officers was a continuation of employee-employer relations, and that the pride displayed in the work of a soldier was a reflection of an individual's pride in a job well done.

It has been well established for a number of years that class differences were a basis for the different motivations for enlistment, and subsequently, the different approaches towards military service.[15] But in general histories of the AIF these men are typically grouped together as a homogenous whole, making their differences difficult to determine. Middle class men as a specific cohort have been the focus of previous studies of the AIF, and whilst there is little evidence to suggest that they carried workplace cultures with them into the military in the same ways as working class men, there is other evidence to suggest that they carried across other pre-war mentalities.[16] Here is an additional area of historical inquiry that can be explored deeper. Class and gender have been identified as the clearest points of difference, but what of the volatile religious divisions that plagued Australian civil society, or of differences in residential and educational backgrounds? Bean's 'bush legend' has

[15] White, 'Motives for joining up', and Wise, 'Playing Soldiers'.
[16] See for example the central arguments of Wise, 'Playing Soldiers', Parker, *The Old Lie*, and White, 'The soldier as tourist'.

been heavily challenged over the past four decades, but how deep do the differences between rural workers, such as Henry Wyatt, and urban workers, such as John Bruce, really run?

In addition to Janet Watson's work on Great Britain, historians could also observe Peter Way's research on the Seven Years' War in North America and consider the universal nature of this approach towards histories of the military. Way argues with regards to the Seven Years' War that 'labor history needs to be militarized and the soldier re-drafted as a worker within the army'.[17] The same argument applied to all conflicts would greatly broaden an important area of historical inquiry. In analyses of the Great War alone, Leed and Watson have both identified soldiers from several European nations who approached service as work;[18] this dissertation adds Australian soldiers to the phenomenon. The next line of questioning begins by asking how universal was this phenomenon, what were its similarities and differences across nations, and, as Way's research inclines, was it present in other wars also? Did the Australians who enlisted in the Second World War, the sons and brothers of those who fought in the Great War, approach military service with similar mentalities, and was there the same transference of workplace cultures into the Second Australian Imperial Force?[19]

Finally, we must consider the broader ramifications of this workplace culture in the military. Australian men served for up to four years in the AIF; this was a considerable slice of their life, and, for young men in particular, a dramatic life changing experience. From the environment of war, from close bonds of camaraderie, and from a mobile uncertain existence, these men returned to civilian lives, and

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[17] Way, 'Class and the common soldier in the seven years' war', pp. 457-8.
[18] Leed, *No Man's Land*, and Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*.
[19] The Australian forces in the Second World War were known as the Second Australian Imperial Force.

civilian jobs. Stephen Garton, Bobbie Oliver, and Marilyn Lake have explored these years in some detail within Australia, yet there is still much work to be done in understanding the problems veterans and their families faced in the post-war years. Understanding working class men's approach towards military service as a job of work may shed some light on the difficulties these men had in returning to steady employment and a civilian life.

Considering the non-combat experiences of Australian soldiers in histories of the Great War clearly opens up a number of avenues for further inquiry by historians. In terms of analyses of both the Great War and other conflicts historians can explore broader areas in an attempt to further understand the complete experience of military service, and not just the combat experience. In addition, these culturalist approaches to histories of the military reveal continuities and patterns that flow between civilian life and military life. Working class men's transference of workplace cultures from civilian life into the military was clearly reflected in their wartime experiences, subsequently shaped in nature of the AIF as a military force, and, as instances of peaceful penetration suggest, may have had further implications on their combat experiences. In the environment of war, these working class men filled their daily lives with work. From a civilian society described in the late nineteenth century as a 'working man's paradise',[20] these men enlisted to serve in a war that, by contrast, is better characterised as a 'working man's hell'.

[20] W. Lane, *The Workingman's paradise: an Australian labour novel*, Edwards, Dunlop & Co., Sydney, 1892.

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**Diaries, Letters and Memoirs**

The diaries, letters and memoirs of 74 Australian working class men were used for the research of this thesis. This is in addition to a number of published accounts, listed further below. For ease of reference, and to assist readers in finding details on individuals, they have been listed alphabetically. These include the archival files of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Some individuals have two files within a single archive, and some even have multiple files in different archives. In these cases both references have been listed below, whilst only the relevant reference was used in footnotes throughout the dissertation.

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William Benjamin Miller, No. 4713, Carpenter, St. Peters, AWM PR82/187

Cecil George Monk, No. 3153, Farmhand, Newtown, ML MSS 2884

Eric Moon, No. 6362, Fitter and Labourer, Redfern, ML MSS 2930

James Mooney, No. 217, Horse Driver, Balmain, AWM PR82/151

Robert Irvine Morris, No. 3577, Motor Mechanic, Newtown, ML MSS 2887

Frederick William Moulsdale, No.760, Draughtsman, Marrickville, AWM 2DRL/0413

Thomas Samuel Michael Murphy, No. 36, Carter, Camperdown, ML MSS 2891

Ernest Murray, No. 151, Mechanic, Surry Hills, ML MSS 2892

William Henry Murray, N/A , Labourer, Coolamon.

Martin Oliver Phillips, No. 1817, Baker, Wagga Wagga, AWM 3DRL/7697

Reynold Clive Potter, No. 6080, Carpenter, Haberfield, ML MSS 2944

Edwin Rider, No. 1812, Steel Engraver, Waterloo, ML MSS 1295

Charles Granville Smith, No. 1084, Carpenter, Cootamundra, AWM PR03066

Darcy Benedict Smith, No. 2740, Labourer, Newtown, AWM PR86/264

Cedric Leslie Smithwick, No. 3786, Cooper, Collingwood, SL VIC MS 10335

Richard Eric Smithwick, No. 3785, Cooper, Preston, SL VIC MS 10335

Vernon Eldred Smithwick, No. 3118, Labourer, Abbotsford, SL VIC MS 10335

Percy Frederick Staples, No. 112, Driver and General hand, Marrickville, AWM 3DRL/7231

John James Vial, No. 1034, Bricklayer, Marrickville, ML DOC 1297

John Laird Waddell, Toolmaker, South Sydney, AWM PR86/096

Percy William Woods, No. 85, Operator, Erskineville, AWM PR00050

Henry Ernest Wyatt, No. 1445, Boundary Rider, Surry Hills, AWM 1DRL/0608

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*Bran Mash*

*Ca Ne Fait Rien*

*Coo-ee*

*Digger*

*Dinkum Oil*

*Euripidean*

*Euripides Ensign*

*First Aid Post*

*Ghutz*

*Honk*

*Kan-Karroo Kronickle*

*Kanowna Lament*

*Koa Ora Coo-ee*

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