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Revisiting Anzac in the Wake of World War Two:

Memory and Identity in the Post-War Period, 1945-1960

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Abstract

This thesis explores how war remembrance—in the form of commemorative observance and the building of memorials—developed in Australia in the period that followed World War Two, from 1945 to 1960. It investigates three key questions. First, what was the nature of the interplay between post-World War Two memorialisation and commemoration and the remembrance traditions that had been established during World War One and the interwar period? Second, how was Australia's post-World War Two remembrance shaped by the particular social, political, and economic circumstances of the period? And finally, what influence did the process and practice of post-World War Two remembrance have on changing conceptions of the Anzac legend and Australian national identity?

In addressing these questions, this study contains five distinct case studies, each of which explores a different aspect of war remembrance between 1945 and 1960. These case studies examine the building of memorials, the efforts of veterans to enact remembrance projects, the observance of Anzac Day, the construction of cemeteries overseas, and interactions between Australian war remembrance and foreign diplomacy. In large part these case studies investigate the Australian state's efforts to enact control over memorialisation and commemoration. However, the thesis also explores various responses to these projects, analysing how resistance from people outside of government, particularly from veterans of both world wars, was an integral part of how war remembrance in the period took shape.

Between 1945 and 1960 there was significant change in the ways that Australians remembered war. During World War One and the interwar period, Australians commemorated the war by building around 1,500 memorials, erected in towns and cities across the country. It was also during World War One that Australians began to observe Anzac Day each year on 25 April. But with the advent of a second global conflict, a new range of perspectives, experiences, and memories were incorporated into this pre-existing

culture of war remembrance. Forms of commemoration also reflected the shifting circumstances of Australian society. In the post-World War Two period, communities grew rapidly through migration, industrialisation, and economic expansion. It was also a time in which a new generation of veterans returned and reintegrated into society. Finally, Australia was forging a series of new international partnerships during this period. These social, political and economic changes influenced the way that Australians imagined themselves, their place in the world, and the meaning of the Anzac legend. Post-World War Two remembrance was therefore distinguished by an enthusiasm for utilitarian memorials, by the inclusion of new veterans into the fold of war remembrance, and diplomatically, by the representation of new international relationships with the United States and other Pacific nations through commemoration and memorialisation.

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List of Abbreviations

ABMC Australian Battlefields Memorials Commission

AFDA Australian Funeral Directors Association

AIF Australian Imperial Force

ANZAC Australia and New Zealand Army Corps

ANZUS Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty

BCOF British Commonwealth Occupation Force

IWGC Imperial War Graves Commission

NCPDC National Capital Planning and Development Committee

POW Prisoner of War

RAAF Royal Australian Air Force

RFAC Royal Fine Arts Commission

ROTA Rats of Tobruk Association

RSL Returned and Services League of Australia

RSSAILA Returned Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia

SEATO South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty

Introduction

On 29 and 30 March 1960, a debate took place in Victoria's Legislative Assembly over the introduction of a bill that would amend the state's *Anzac Day Act, 1925* to permit the opening of hotels, wine saloons, theatres, and race meetings on Anzac Day. This debate was part of a broader conversation that had taken place in the post-World War Two period around the meaning and relevance of war memorialisation, commemoration and the Anzac legend.

For more than four decades Anzac Day had been firmly established as Australia's most important national day. It was a commemoration of the date that Australian and New Zealand troops landed at Gallipoli in Turkey during World War One, on 25 April 1915. On that day 16,000 volunteer troops, most of them young and inexperienced, landed at what is now called 'Anzac Cove' in a campaign that aimed to capture the Gallipoli Peninsula from Turkish forces entrenched there. It was the first time that Australians had taken part in a military campaign since the nation's federation in 1901. The fighting was bloody and brutal with more than 2,000 men killed on the first day alone. Over the next eight months the Anzacs, as they came to be known, were unable to advance further than they had on that first day, prompting an eventual evacuation of all forces stationed at Gallipoli on 20 January 1916. While the campaign was a military failure, back in Australia the troops were hailed as heroes, in large part due to the reporting of Charles Bean, the official war correspondent stationed at Gallipoli for the length of the campaign. Bean's reporting and subsequent writings on the campaign were instrumental in establishing what came to be known as the Anzac legend.[1] According to Bean, Australian soldiers in World War One embodied the virtues of bravery, endurance, comradeship, and egalitarianism that were said to be essential elements of the Australian national character.[2]

[1] Joan Beaumont, 'The Anzac legend,' in *Australia's war, 1914-18*, ed. Joan Beaumont (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 151-52.
[2] Ibid., 153.

Over the course of World War One and the interwar period the Anzac legend became a foundational story of national identity, held up as the moment when the nation had finally 'come of age' on the world stage, its troops having demonstrated loyalty in the trial of an imperial and international battle.[3] Since World War One, the legend's most prominent expression in Australian society has been the yearly ritual of Anzac Day. Each year on 25 April, Australians around the country have gathered at 'dawn services' usually held at a local memorial, followed by an Anzac Day march through their town or city. These rituals held in the first half of the day are then followed by informal veterans' reunions that have traditionally involved drinking.[4]

Interpretations of the Anzac legend and its associated rituals, however, have often been sharply contested. By 1960, the passage of the bill to amend Victoria's restriction of public drinking and entertainment on Anzac Day was the culmination of over 40 years of debate on the subject. At the core of this debate was the question of whether Anzac Day should be held solely as a day of mourning for the 58,000 men who died during World War One, or whether it should also be celebrated as a day of pride in Australian nationhood that could be shared by all Australians, and not just veterans of World War One. Many among those present at the Legislative Assembly debate were themselves veterans, some having served in World War One, and others in World War Two. All who spoke on the bill offered interpretation of Anzac Day's significance to Australian identity and the role it should play in life post-World War Two Australia.

Speaking to the assembly, Sir George Knox, the Liberal Party member for Scoresby and a veteran of the Gallipoli campaign, emphasised that Anzac Day was dedicated to the sacrifices made by the men of World War One. He asserted that when the restrictions had originally

[3] Richard White, *Inventing Australia: images and identity, 1688-1980* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), 136-37.
[4] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac memories: Living with the legend* (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2013), 157-58.

been legislated in 1924, 'Parliament entered into a solemn contract with the people of Victoria by legislative action to keep Anzac Day as a sacred day of remembrance of those who had fallen, and who thus set a pattern of human behaviour at Gallipoli and in France, Palestine and wherever Australian troops served.'[5] He argued that the proposed changes were:

> an insult to the memory of the men … all countries of the world have erected memorials to those who served and fell and, unfortunately, succeeding generations do not fully understand their significance.[6]

His most vocal opponent in the debate was Leo Fennessy, the Labor Party member for East Brunswick. Like Knox, Fennessy was also a veteran, but unlike Knox he had served in the World War Two theatres in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Fennessy advised his colleagues that Knox's opinion on the matter was that of 'First World War returned soldiers' but that Fennessy and other veterans of World War Two had:

> always understood Anzac Day as such, to be not only a day on which we commemorate the dead but also a day on which we commemorate the living. Moreover, it is a day which represented the birth of Australia as a nation.[7]

Both Knox and Fennessy's arguments were centred on how different generations of veterans understood the purpose and meaning of the Anzac Legend. For Knox, Anzac Day belonged to the men who had taken part in World War One and its solemnity was essential to maintaining its sacredness. For Fennessy, the post-World War Two period was a time for passing Anzac Day on to the next generation of veterans and for celebrating Australia's nationhood. To restrict the day to a sombre form of observance was to risk losing the day altogether. This

[5] Victorian Parliament, 'Legislative Assembly,' 30 March 1960, 2285.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 2287.

exchange was one of many debates that took place around the commemoration of World Wars One and Two and the Anzac legend in the post-World War Two period. This thesis investigates debates such as this one to uncover the ways in which memorialisation, commemoration and the Anzac legend were reconfigured in the wake of World War Two.

In the 1940s and 1950s, different groups in Australian society attempted to shape remembrance of the war to reflect their experiences and their aspirations for life in post-war Australia. World War Two veterans struggled to have their recent experiences adequately recognised, those previously in charge of existing memorials and commemorative events resisted attempts at change fearing a dilution of the traditions they had established, and government and military officials sought to increase their control over war remembrance by putting it to work in the service of new identity building projects both at home and overseas. In examining the work of these groups, this thesis argues that the meaning and purpose of memorialisation, commemoration, and the Anzac legend was broadened in the post-World War Two period; utilitarian memorials became a dominant form of remembrance, the Anzac legend was extended to encompass wars other than World War One, and the process of memorialisation and commemoration increasingly took on a new, outward facing, international dimension. All of this took place through debate and discussion centred on the question of who in Australia could claim the right to define these remembrance traditions, and by extension, what and whom they should honour.

In the post-World War Two period, attitudes towards the observance of commemorative rituals and the building of war memorials were deeply influenced by remembrance practices that had been established during and after World War One. Throughout the interwar period, Anzac Day had grown to become Australia's most important national commemorative day, eclipsing the imperial and Allied associations with Remembrance Day.[8] This period also saw

[8] Remembrance Day is held on 11 November each year throughout the Commonwealth. It commemorates the ending of World War One.

the mass proliferation of memorials dedicated to World War One, providing spaces for mourning in the absence of soldiers' gravesites that lay halfway around the world. In cities and towns across Australia these memorials were erected by local communities, most commonly in the form of obelisks, cenotaphs, and statues. More extravagant state memorials, such as Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, opened in 1934, and Canberra's Australian War Memorial (AWM), opened in 1941, were also built during this time.

World War Two had a profound impact on this established culture of war remembrance. With the advent of a second global conflict, a new range of perspectives, experiences, and memories were incorporated into this pre-existing culture of war remembrance. Just as impactful were the shifting circumstances of Australian society in the post-war period. The years between 1945 and 1960[9] were a time of great change as communities grew rapidly through migration, industrialisation, and economic expansion. It was also a period in which a new generation of veterans returned and reintegrated into society. Finally, it was a time in which Australia was forging a series of new international partnerships.

It is the purpose of this thesis to explore how and why war memorialisation and commemoration took shape during this period. Despite the vast historiography on national war memory in Australia, the immediate post-World War Two years have been largely overlooked by scholars or discussed only in passing. When we look more closely at archival records, however, we find that this was a time rich in debate and discussion of war remembrance. Veterans, politicians, journalists and interested members of the public passionately debated the purpose of commemoration and memorialisation in the context of a modernising post-war society. They were at odds over the question of who should dictate its

[9] I have chosen to end the thesis' exploration of memorialisation and commemoration in the post-war period in 1960, in acknowledgement of the increasing focus on the conflict in Vietnam that largely overshadowed discussions about the remembrance of war from that time. I recognise, however, that this date is to some degree arbitrary, and that the line that demarcates the end of the post-war period is blurred and not clearly fixed.

form and function, who had the right to define its meaning, and how war commemoration could express changing interpretations of the post-war international order.

In examining how war remembrance took shape in the post-war period in Australia, this thesis investigates three key questions. First, what was the nature of the interplay between post-World War Two memorialisation and commemoration and the remembrance traditions that had been established during World War One and the interwar period? Second, how were these memorials and commemorations shaped by the particular social and political circumstances of the post war period? And finally, what influence did this process have on changing conceptions of the Anzac legend and Australian identity?

In addressing these questions, this study contains five distinct case studies, each of which explores a different aspect of war remembrance between 1945 and 1960. These case studies examine the building of memorials, the efforts of veterans to enact remembrance projects, the observance of Anzac Day, the construction of cemeteries overseas, and interactions between Australian war remembrance and foreign diplomacy. In large part these case studies examine the Australian state's efforts to enact control over memorialisation and commemoration. However, the thesis also explores various responses to these projects, analysing how resistance, particularly from veterans of both world wars, was an integral part of how war remembrance in the period took shape.

Background

Given that this thesis examines Anzac remembrance in the post-war period from 1945 to 1960, it is important to provide a broad overview of Australia's experience of World War Two and the years that followed it up until 1960. The war years and the two decades that followed were a transformative period in terms of Australia's economy, demographics, and international relations.

Australia's World War Two

As noted by Kate Darian-Smith, the response to Australia's declaration of war on 3 September 1939 was far less enthusiastic than it had been 25 years earlier. Australians everywhere still mourned the dead of World War One and had endured the hardships of the Great Depression in the intervening years. The advent of another large-scale global conflict promised continuing instability and uncertainty.[10] Even at the war's outbreak, Australia was still dealing with the residual economic cost of World War One; more than a quarter of a million people were receiving war pensions and debt incurred for £300 million in wartime spending was still in the process of being repaid.[11]

Australian participation in World War Two was also geographically more spread out, occurring across two major chronological and military phases. From 1940, Australia's military efforts took place in Europe and North Africa, where Australians fought against German and Italian forces in support of the British.[12] Following the entry of Japan into the war in December 1941, Australian forces fought the Japanese alongside their American and Commonwealth allies in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia's fighting forces were split between the volunteer Second Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the conscripted Citizen Military Force (CMF),[13] which was initiated by Prime Minister Robert Menzies at the war's outbreak in 1939. Participation in the war by the Australian population was considerably higher than it had been during World War One. In World War One 416,000 men had served from a population of 5 million people. Sixty thousand lost their lives. In World War Two, from a population of just over 7 million people, more than 1 million men and women served

[10] Kate Darian-Smith, 'World War 2 and post-war reconstruction, 1939–49', in *The Cambridge history of Australia*, eds. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 88.
[11] Stuart Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment* (Sydney: Newsouth, 2015), 21.
[12] Australia declared war against Germany alongside Britain in 1939, but Australians did not take part in any fighting until France and Belgium were invaded in May 1940.
[13] The CMF was raised in response to the crisis of 1942. They were restricted to Australian territories, which meant as well as taking part in duties on the Australian mainland, they were also sent to take part in the fighting in Papua, most famously along the Kokoda Track.

in the military and auxiliary forces. Despite the fact that far more Australians took part in World War Two, the death toll was significantly lower. Just under 40,000 Australians died, 27,000 having been killed in action and a further 12,366 due to sickness, disease, or accidental death while training. The number of Australians made prisoner of war (POW), however, was much greater with more than 30,000 captured. Some of these were captured in Europe, but the large majority were captured in the Pacific theatre.[14]

In 1941, the women's auxiliary branches of the Australian armed services were formed, with women undertaking non-combat roles in the military to free male enlistees up to take part in the fighting. The first of these was the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, established in March 1941; followed by the Australian Women's Army Service and the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service. By 1944 just under 50,000 women had enlisted into the women's services and thousands more were working for volunteer organisations like the Australian Women's Land Army.[15]

Civilians' lives were also impacted to a much larger degree than they had been during World War One. For one, the industrial requirements of the war brought an end to the decade of high unemployment that had preceded it during the Depression, with the problem becoming labour shortage rather than surplus, a situation that resulted in a huge increase in women's take-up of war work, including some roles that had previously been undertaken by men.[16] Ethnic discrimination aimed at non-British people also saw a sharp increase. Of the 52,000 non-British 'aliens' living in Australia during the war, 22,000 were categorized as enemies (being either German, Italian or Japanese) and were subject to both official and unofficial discrimination.[17] Many of these enemy aliens were also placed into internment camps.

[14] Darian-Smith, 'World War 2 and post-war reconstruction,' 89.
[15] Kate Darian-Smith, 'War and Australian society,' in *Australia's war: 1939-45*, ed. Joan Beaumont (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 62.
[16] Darian-Smith, 'War and Australian society,' 63.
[17] Italians received the worst of this. Many Italians had taken up working class occupations and their low status in these jobs, combined with the perception that Italy's late entry into the war had been an act of betrayal, made them targets for discrimination

Official policy dictated that only those suspected of being fascist sympathisers would be placed in detention. However, many of these were detained simply because they had recently migrated from enemy regions. Japanese people were given the least leeway and were detained for no other reason than their ethnicity.[18] The war also resulted in the deaths of 735 Australian civilians, a large proportion of which occurred in the Japanese bombings of the northern port of Darwin, the first of which took place on 19 February 1942.[19] It was the first time that the Australian continent had been under outside attack since the British colonial invasion that began in 1788.

Australians undertook their first significant military actions in the war in 1941, during the evacuation of Crete in Greece in April and at the siege of Tobruk in Libya between April and October. In March 1941, the Australian 6th Division was diverted from North Africa to join other Commonwealth forces in the defence of Greece. Commonwealth forces were outnumbered and outgunned by stronger German and Italian forces. Having lost the Greek mainland by late April, Commonwealth troops attempted to consolidate a defence of Crete, which soon fell following a German paratrooper attack on 20 April. More than 5,000 Australians were taken prisoner during the campaign in Greece, making them the first of many Australian POWs to be captured over the course of the war.[20]

In the lead up to the Tobruk siege, which began in early April, Australian troops had taken part in a Commonwealth offensive on Italian forces stationed in Libya. By April, Commonwealth forces had been pushed back to Tobruk where the Allied forces, a large proportion of whom were Australian, successfully defended a siege for roughly six months.[21] This was the first major loss for Germany in the war. The besieged Allied forces were called

[18] Ibid., 57.
[19] 'Australian military statistics,' *Australian War Memorial web archive*, 27 May 2010. [https://web.archive.org/web/20100527221139/http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/statistics/ww2.asp]
[20] Beaumont, 'Europe and the Middle East,' 13.
[21] Joan Beaumont, 'Europe and the Middle East,' in *Australia's war: 1939-45*, ed. Joan Beaumont (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 15.

'rats in a trap' by German propagandists, a slur they proudly adopted, dubbing themselves the 'Rats of Tobruk'. They carried the title with them into the post-war period, creating a veterans' association by the same name. Contemporary reporting back in Australia also hailed the defenders as the inheritors of the Anzac legend.[22]

Australian airmen also played a significant role in Britain's aerial bombing campaign throughout the latter half of the war. These Royal Australian Air Force men took part in dangerous bombing runs of German civilian and military targets. They had been recruited through the Empire Air Training Scheme, which trained Australian airmen to fly with the British Royal Air Force in missions over Europe. From 1941 through to the end of the war more than 10,000 Australians flew with Britain's Bomber Command, and more than one-third of these died.[23]

For the most part, however, Australians spent the latter half of the war fighting Japanese forces in the Pacific theatre. The Japanese attack on the United States' territory of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii took place on 7 December 1941, a move that was the catalyst for the United States to enter the war. A day later Japanese forces also attacked the Philippines as well as Hong Kong and the northern part of Malaya, both British colonies at the time. Australia's defences were sorely lacking, the majority of the AIF being already deployed in the Middle East. The remaining 8th Division, consisting of three brigades, was split, with two brigades stationed in the northern part of Malaya, and the other split across Ambon, Timor, and New Britain. At sea, British defence of the region consisted of two recently deployed warships, the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales*. These were both sunk two days later, on 10 December 1942. Australia's situation was suddenly precarious. Outmanned and outgunned, British forces (including the aforementioned brigades of the 8th division) were steadily beaten into a

[22] 'Tobruk will rank before Anzac,' *The Mail*, 10 May 1941; 'Gains by Anzacs,' *The Mercury*, 19 May 1941; 'Men of Tobruk may rival Anzac's fame,' *Bowen Independent*, 12 August 1941; 'Anzacs outwit Germans at Tobruk,' *The Daily News*, 14 August 1941.
[23] Bruce Scates, *Anzac journeys: Returning to the battlefields of World War II* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 207.

retreat down the Malayan peninsula towards Singapore.[24] Responding to the Japanese advance, Prime Minister John Curtin delivered a radio address to the nation on 26 December 1941, stating:

> Without any inhibition of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom. We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces. We know the constant threat of Invasion. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength. But we know too that Australia can go, and Britain can still hold on.[25]

Both Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt were unimpressed with the statement. Churchill called Australians 'bad stock' in response and he exchanged a series of tense telegrams with Curtin in the weeks following, one of which warned Churchill that Curtin would regard any evacuation of Singapore as an 'inexcusable betrayal … we understood that it was to be made impregnable and in any event, it was to be capable of holding out for a prolonged period.'[26] At this point Curtin also insisted that the AIF's 6th and 7th Divisions be recalled home from the Middle East where they could better work in the defence of the Australian mainland. It was a move that further heightened tensions between Churchill and Curtin, as Churchill had previously instructed that the 7th Division be sent to reinforce Burma.[27]

Curtin's fears of a Japanese attack on Singapore were realised roughly two months later. Singapore was vulnerable to a land-based attack (its defences having been based on the assumption that any attack would likely come from the sea) and on 15 February 1942, Japanese forces, having advanced down the Malayan peninsula, attacked and occupied the

[24] Joan Beaumont, 'Australia's war: Asia and the Pacific,' in *Australia's war 1939-45* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 26-27.
[25] 'The task ahead,' *The Herald*, 27 December 1941.
[26] Beaumont, 'Australia's war: Asia and the Pacific,' 31.
[27] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 95.

city. In the process they captured 80,000 POWs, more than 15,000 of whom were Australians.[28] The Australian military leadership's anxieties about the limits of Britain's capability to come to Australia's defence had been made real. They were further realised when only four days later Japanese forces carried out their first bombing run on Darwin, the first of many in Australia's north over the next couple of years.[29]

In response to the outbreak of the Pacific War Churchill and Roosevelt had decided on their secret 'Europe First' policy and that General Douglas MacArthur would be appointed the Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific area with the United States commanding its operations from Australia. As part of this arrangement, MacArthur assumed overall command of Australia's fighting forces in the region. After his arrival to Australia in March 1942, American headquarters were established in Melbourne and then Brisbane, with airstrips and port facilities constructed across Australia. At this point Curtin and MacArthur formed the War Conference which excluded Australia's chiefs of staff and effectively left the job of devising strategy to MacArthur.[30] Significant tensions would eventually arise in response to the influx of US soldiers into Australia, with around a million passing through the continent during the war years, and in reaction to MacArthur's bullish direction of Australian troops.[31]

In the Pacific war, Australian forces played a significant role in certain operations. Through most of the second half of 1942 Australian battled advancing Japanese forces intent on capturing Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea along the narrow Kokoda Track. The fighting was immensely difficult, in jungle and mountainous terrain, extreme weather conditions, that were coupled with problems effectively commanding and supplying troops along the track**.**[32] Australian forces were eventually victorious, and the Kokoda campaign has arguably become

[28] Darian-Smith, 'World War 2 and post-war reconstruction,' 94-95.
[29] Gavin Long, *The six years war: a concise history of Australia in the 1939-45 war* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1973), 164.
[30] Beaumont, 'Australia's war: Asia and the Pacific,' 35.
[31] Macintyre, 'Australia's Boldest Experiment,' 135-136.
[32] Beaumont, 'Australia's war: Asia and the Pacific,' 39.

the most prominent symbol of Australia's participation in World War Two. In the final years of the war Australian forces were primarily engaged in what MacArthur called 'mopping up' operations, helping to drive retreating Japanese forces from New Guinea.[33] For his part, Curtin did not live to see the end of the war. He died of heart disease in July 1945, two months prior to the Japanese surrender, and was succeeded by Ben Chifley.[34] The end to Australia's war was more steady decline than triumphant crescendo. What had started as an expeditionary project, fighting in Europe and North Africa, became a much more local conflict for Australians, battling Japanese forces in the South Pacific. By 1945, Australians were ready to move on with their lives. The end of the war in Europe, in May 1945, was some months before the end of the war in the Pacific, in September 1945. The expected Allied victory had come slowly and this, coupled with long-endured austerity measures, meant that Australians eagerly awaited the process of rebuilding and renewal of their society in the post-war period.

The post-war period

In decade that followed the war, Australian society was reshaped in several significant ways. Policy makers in the post-war period were determined to avoid the problems with mass unemployment that had followed World War One and to mitigate the effects of potential recession like the one that had plagued Australian in the 1930s. To this end post-war planners instituted a series of reforms that transformed Australian society. War provided the catalyst for these reforms which included increased centralisation of government, the introduction of the welfare state, community building and urban expansion, and shifting foreign relations in terms of trade and security that were all facilitated to differing degrees by the pressures and possibilities afforded by the war.

[33] Darian-Smith, 'World War 2 and post-war reconstruction,' 103.
[34] Geoffrey Serle, 'John Curtin,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography.*

Almost as soon as he was elected in 1941, Curtin had begun planning for a program of post-war reconstruction designed to ease the transition from war to peace.[35] To this end, Curtin announced the creation of the Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction in 1942.[36] It sought to promote high levels of employment, improve social security, and raise living standards for Australians.[37] This was undertaken via a series of initiatives and policies. A major reform in this context, was the broadening of welfare to support widows, maternity, unemployment, and sickness benefits.[38] These far-reaching benefits were in large part funded by the introduction of Federal income tax in 1942, which was initially introduced as a wartime measure but continued into the post-war period.[39]

The Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction also placed a heavy emphasis on the goal of 'full employment.' In 1943, estimates put the number of Australians likely to need work at the end of the war at around 200,000.[40] By the war's end, however, the problem was not a surplus of labour but rather of jobs. While advantageous, if left unchecked this dynamic would drive currency inflation and inhibit economic growth. In May 1945, the government released its White Paper on full employment, which set out a stratagem for the maintenance of healthy employment conditions through the continued close cooperation of industry and government.[41]

Increasing the population was also of significant importance to post-war planners. In 1947 Australia's population sat at around 7.5 million people. By 1961, this figure had risen to 10.5 million. Just over half of this increase was due to the post-war baby boom that had taken

[35] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment,* 141.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ian Marsh, 'Setting the post war Australian policy agenda–causes and content,' *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 72 (2013): 474.
[39] Michael A. Jones, *The Australian welfare state: Growth, crisis and change* (Sydney: G. Allen & Unwin, 1983), 49.
[40] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment,* 237.
[41] Ibid.

hold, but the other half was made up of newly arrived migrants.[42] The crisis of 1942 had made it clear to those planning for post-war reconstruction that Australia's population should be dramatically enlarged to bolster Australia's national security in the event of any future military threat, and that this enlargement should be fed by the encouragement of new migrants to the country. [43] The government's preference was for British arrivals, and indeed a large proportion came from the United Kingdom, but it quickly became clear that migrants from other places would be required to make up the numbers.

As such, the program was quickly expanded to accept migrants from other parts of Europe. Initially the government gave preference migrants from the Nordic countries and was also willing to accept Displaced Persons from war ravaged eastern Europe. But as early as 1947, the government began to accept southern Europeans, notably from Italy and Greece, and these ended up comprising the bulk of post-war arrivals to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s.[44] John Rickard has argued that there was an expectation that arriving migrants would quickly and quietly adopt the Australian way of life, relinquishing the cultural norms of their home countries.[45] Although Australia's first Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, usually cited the country's defence in statements about the need for new migrants, in practice the program was justified by the contribution that these 'new Australians'[46] made to the post-war economy.[47] Indeed, post-war migrants became a useful source of labour for employers, taking up work in farms and factories.[48] A notable story of migrants' contribution to Australia's major post-war national infrastructure was the Snowy Mountain Hydro-Electric Scheme, where two-thirds of the 100,000 workers were migrants.[49]

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[42] John Murphy, *Imagining the fifties: Private sentiment and political culture in Menzies'* Australia (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2000), 156.
[43] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 226.
[44] John Rickard, *Australia: A cultural history* (New York: Longman, 1988), 225.
[45] Ibid.
[46] As they were dubbed in contemporary press and political discourse.
[47] Rickard, *Australia: A cultural history*, 225.
[48] Murphy, *Imagining the fifties*, 158.
[49] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 424.

Another factor that helped to drive high levels of employment in the period was the emphasis placed by government on revitalising public spaces and on building and improving local communities. The housing market in Australia struggled to keep up with the post-war population boom and many Australians were forced to live in shared accommodation or to stay with friends or relatives. The government placed a strong emphasis on meeting the housing shortage, aiming to build seven hundred thousand new homes by 1955, with half of these to be provided under a new federally funded public housing program.[50] With this boom in population and housing came the spread of suburbia. Modernist sensibilities informed the building of new communities; they were oriented around social improvement in terms of health, housing, hygiene and equality of access.[51] These manifested in the building of kindergartens, health and community centres, public libraries, parks and public schools. And while the construction of housing and community amenities was strongly supported by federal funding initiatives, equally as important was participation and activism on behalf of the people inhabiting these communities.[52] Kate Darian-Smith has argued that this participation was inspired by people's wartime experience undertaking voluntary work in aid of the war effort. Those involved in the design and building of these community centres and amenities strove to create spaces that were modern, functional, and secular, emphasising democratic and utilitarian ideals.[53]

The newly returned men and women of World War Two were reintegrating into Australian society, establishing and re-establishing family ties and looking for jobs, housing, and recognition. In 1945, the government faced the challenge of demobilising over half a million men and women, to be undertaken in stages over a year.[54] Compared to World War One, the

[50] Ibid., 334-36.
[51] Hannah Lewi et al., 'Making the modern community,' in *Community: Building modern Australia*, eds. Hannah Lewi and David Nichols (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010), 3.
[52] Lewi, 'Making the modern community,' 19-20.
[53] Kate Darian-Smith, David Nichols and Julie Willis, 'The community can do it! Planning for the new civic centre,' in *Community: Building modern Australia*, eds. Hannah Lewi and David Nichols (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010), 178.
[54] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 318.

homecomings from World War Two were somewhat muted. Although welcome home parades were celebrated with enthusiasm, the war had already ended in Europe in May 1945, and the end of the war in the Pacific, which came in September 1945, had been anticipated for a long time already. Moreover, Australian participation in the final stages of the Pacific War had been mostly relegated to rear guard actions as opposed to front line fighting.[55] These returning veterans also had a different relationship to the Anzac legend than veterans of World War One. While veterans of World War One were recognised as the originators of the legend, veterans of World War Two were instead framed as its inheritors in the contemporary discourse of the press and elsewhere. Adding to this was the fact that the experience of POWs had been reported on sombrely by the Australian press, and this story of capture and sublimation contradicted the narrative of the Anzac soldier as an indomitable masculine warrior.[56] This construction of the Anzac Legend as a cult of masculinity also continued to exclude women's contributions in the post-war period. Indeed, the case studies contained within this thesis demonstrate that in discourse about the meaning and purpose of war remembrance and the Anzac Legend in the post-war period, women's' role in the Australian war effort were largely ignored.

Returning men of World War Two also found somewhat limited acceptance into the powerful Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA).[57] Women who had served in the auxiliary branches of the military were barred from membership. Formed in 1916 as an advocacy group for veterans returning from World War One, the RSSAILA had risen to become the premier veterans' organisation in Australia over the course of the interwar period. They had organised into a national body, had proven successful in gaining government recognition as the most legitimate veterans' organisation in

[55] Stephen Garton, *The cost of war: Australians return* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6.
[56] Ibid., 7.
[57] The organisation has undergone several name changes throughout its lifespan. In this thesis I primarily refer to the organisation as the RSSAILA, as this was the title used from 1940 to 1965.

the country, and had amassed a significant membership (when World War Two broke out they numbered just over 80,000 members).[58] The RSSAILA had also proven itself to be a powerful and effective lobby group. As Martin Crotty has pointed out, from early in the organisation's life, the RSSAILA were able to extract significant concessions from the government of Prime Minister Billy Hughes (in power from 1915 to 1923) based on assurances that they would keep returned men in line.[59] This close relationship with the government has continued ever since. Upon returning from World War Two, some veterans found their local sub-branches of the RSSAILA resistant to the acceptance of new members. Instead, these returned men were encouraged to establish new sub-branches.[60] In some cases, they also went on the form new organisations. The Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women (formed in 1944), the Rats of Tobruk Association (1944) and the Thirty-Niners (1946) were the most prominent among these.

Arguably the biggest challenge in demobilisation was the question of how veterans should be repatriated. Much of the parliamentary discourse around repatriation centred on finding useful jobs for returned soldiers as swiftly as possible. This attitude was in large part fed by anxieties that returned soldiers might become idle and reliant on charity.[61] Under the Re-establishment and Employment Act 1945, employment preference was given to returned soldiers entering the public service, a move that pleased the RSSAILA but angered unions. Despite criticism, however, the provision had little effect given the state of full employment.[62] Of greater consequence was the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training

[58] Martin Crotty, 'The Anzac citizen: Towards a history of the RSL,' *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, 53 (2007), 189.
[59] Ibid., 185.
[60] Peter Sekuless and Jacqueline Rees, *Lest we forget: The history of the Returned Services League 1916, 1986* (Dee Why: Rigby, 1986), 111.
[61] Garton, *The cost of war*, 81.
[62] Ibid., 90-91.

Scheme (CRTS) through which 230,000 returned men and women undertook vocational training in industrial trades, and a further 38,000 commenced university studies.[63]

The post-World War Two period was also one of significant change in Australia's international relations. The United States' entry into the war in December 1941 and the fall of Singapore to the Japanese military in February 1942 had, for the first time, encouraged Australia's political leaders to pursue foreign policy aims that extended beyond the relationship with Britain and the Commonwealth. Australia's prioritisation of the Pacific theatre during the war was carried on in post-war politics, as the strengthened alliance with the United States was further galvanised and new connections were formed with other nations, such as Japan, in the Asia-Pacific. Federal Attorney General and Minister for External Affairs HV Evatt's contribution at the United Nations Charter Conference in 1945 was one of the earliest signals of Australia's changing international priorities. Evatt played a key role at the conference, campaigning to limit the veto rights of 'great' power nations, to raise the status of employment rights in the charter and to enlarge the role of the General Assembly as a check to the Security Council.[64] Evatt's approach at the conference demonstrated a new willingness on the part of Australian foreign policy makers to pursue policies that put Australia's vital interests before those of its more powerful allies.

Over the 1950s, Cold War politics greatly influenced Australian foreign policy making. Britain and the United States continued to be Australia's most important allies in the context of trade and security. But there was also a new focus on building up diplomatic relations with other nations throughout the Asia-Pacific region, in large part facilitated by Liberal ministers for External Affairs, Percy Spender (1949-1951) and Richard Casey (1951-1960). Introducing the Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) to

[63] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 327.
[64] Alan Watt, *The evolution of Australian foreign policy: 1938-1965* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 83-84.

parliament in 1950, Spender identified the dangers of communism's spread. And while acknowledging the importance of Australia's relationship with Great Britain and western Europe, he reminded his colleagues that the United States was 'the greatest Pacific power' and that, as such, Australia's Pacific policies should be made in alignment with it.[65] As the name suggests, the treaty was a security pact between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, formalising their agreement to mutual defence in the Pacific region.

Spender also played a pivotal role in the drafting of the Colombo Plan. Initially an agreement between Commonwealth nations but later extended to include non-Commonwealth partners, the plan's ostensible purpose was to provide aid from signatories to poorer nations in the region. However, according to David Lowe, its more important function was to help the spread of democracy in the region and inversely discourage the spread of communism.[66] In 1955, it was decided that Australia would begin to invite young elites from Asian signatories to come to Australia to study, the idea being that this would help to foster political contacts within the region.[67] For his part, Casey oversaw the closing of two key treaties in the period. The first of these was the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty (SEATO) signed in 1954. This treaty sought to fill the defence gap left by ANZAS and NATO in the South-East Asia region.[68] The second, was the Australia-Japan Commerce Agreement, signed in 1957, which opened up free trade between the two signatories but more broadly signalled an easing of tension in the relationship, which up until then had been limited to Australia's role in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF).[69]

The post-war period then was very different from the two decades that had followed World War One and this new context influenced remembrance of World War Two. The growth of

[65] *CPD,* Vol. 206, 9 March 1950, pp. 621-36.
[66] David Lowe, 'Canberra's Colombo plan: Public images of Australia's relations with post-colonial South and Southeast Asia in the 1950s,' *Journal of South Asian Studies* 25 (2002): 186.
[67] Ibid., 196-97.
[68] Watt, 'The evolution of Australian foreign policy,' 143-44.
[69] *Australian Treaty Series,* Treaty No. 15 of 1957.

communities, the reintegration of World War Two veterans, and the changing objectives of Australian foreign policy each had a significant effect on the way that commemoration and memorisation took shape in the period.

Literature review

The thesis draws upon and contributes to literature on nationalism, identity, remembrance, and most significantly, the history of the Anzac legend. The following review deals with each of these bodies of scholarly literature in turn.

Nationalism and national identity

In Australia, questions of national identity are key to any discussion of war commemoration and the Anzac legend. Throughout this thesis I work from the notion that national identity is socially constructed. In this way, national identities are constituted by sets of beliefs, ideas, and practices through which groups of people see themselves as connected to one another under the banner of the nation. Rather than being fixed in place, these national identities are always in a state of flux, being constantly adapted and reoriented in response to the social and political contexts in which they are invoked.[70] The nation state and national identity is constructed by the drawing together of shared symbols such as language, geography, cultural practices, and experiences.

Benedict Anderson is one of the most influential thinkers who has shaped this constructionist view on nationalism. Famously, he has argued that nations are socially constructed as

[70] For examples of this argument see the following works: Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Nationalism and social communication: An inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1953); Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its meaning and history* (Toronto: Van Nostrand, 1955); John Hutchinson, *Modern nationalism* (London: Fontana Press, 1994); Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: A quest for understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (New York: Verso books, 2006); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983); *The invention of tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

'imagined communities', wherein members of a nation state imagine themselves as bonded to one another despite being separated by economic status, geographical location and so on.[71] In making this argument, Anderson explored developments such as the rise of shared national languages and their relationship to print capitalism and the emergence of national systems of classification (the census, cartography, nationalised histories and so on).[72] His work demonstrates how symbols work to bind disparate groups and individuals together under the banner of a national identity. In Anderson's terms, the Anzac legend is one of the key symbols underpinning conceptions of Australian national identity. Over the course of the twentieth century in Australia, the Anzac legend and its commemoration has become a potent marker by which many Australians see themselves as linked to one another. As Graham Seal has asserted, the Anzac legend is characterised by 'a set of attitudes and values within which notions of honour, duty, bravery, sacrifice and salvation are central' and that these values are linked with 'an overpowering aura of nationalism, emphasising unity, sameness, heritage, patriotism and loyalty.'[73] These values and this sense of unity are often conveyed through acts of collective remembrance, through the building of memorials and the enactment of commemorative rituals.

Collective remembrance

Acts of collective remembrance give their participants a sense that they share a common history and a common identity with one another.[74] Much of the scholarship that examines

[71] Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 7.
[72] Ibid., 44, 184.
[73] Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The digger and national mythology* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2004), 4.
[74] For some of the most influential literature on this topic see the following: Maurice Halbwachs, 'The collective memory,' in *The collective memory reader*, eds. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, 139-49 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing traditions,' in *The invention of tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 1-14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Pierre Nora, 'The era of commemoration,' in *Realms of memory: The construction of the French past. Vol. 3, Symbols*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, 609-38 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Jay Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning: The Great War in European cultural history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Marianne Hirsch, *The generation of postmemory: Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

collective remembrance can be traced back to the ideas of Maurice Halbwachs. In 1925, Halbwachs argued that memory is an inherently social phenomenon, as something that is always formed and recalled by individuals in reference to the groups to which they belong.[75] Collective memory, according to Halbwachs, is an essential part of how a group defines its identity. By claiming ownership over a shared past, group members assure themselves of their connection to that past and its associated values, as well as a connection to one another.[76] Since Halbwachs, scholars such as Pierre Nora, Eric Hobsbawm and Jay Winter have come to apply these ideas to a range of contexts, and especially in drawing connections between history, remembrance, and identity. Nora, Hobsbawm and others have adopted a state-centric approach, examining how remembrance has been used as a tool to foster nationalism and national identity to emphasise the state's authority and to promote specific sets of values.[77]

Nora's work on the symbolism of *lieux de mémoire* or 'sites of memory' is one of the most influential among these state-centred approaches. According to Nora, the memory boom that began around the 1980s was a direct response to the fragmenting of historiography at that time. The term 'memory boom' refers to the proliferation of interest in memorials and commemoration that took hold in societies around the world and subsequently in academia in the late-twentieth century, from the 1980s onwards. Nora has argued that identity was previously strongly linked to the writing of official, national histories, in which certain

[75] Maurice Halbwachs, 'The collective memory [excerpt],' in *The collective memory reader*, eds. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 141.
[76] Ibid., 149.
[77] See the following: Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing traditions,' in *The invention of tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 9; Paul Connerton, *How societies remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 43; David McCrone and Gayle McPherson, 'Introduction,' in *National Days: Constructing and mobilising national identity*, eds. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4; James Wertsch, 'Deep Memory and Narrative Templates: Conservative Forces in Collective Memory,' in *Memory and political change*, eds. Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 174; Shanti Sumartojo, 'Memorials and state-sponsored history,' in *The Palgrave handbook of state-sponsored history after 1945*, eds. Berber Bevernage and Nico Wouters (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 470-71.

narratives, sites and rituals were clearly demarcated as defining the national identity.[78] With the emergence of more diverse and democratised histories that began to appear in the 1970s, however, this older form of national history was no longer a suitable guide to identity. History had now become fragmented and open to any number of interpretations and viewpoints from the perspective of class, gender, ethnic identity and so on. In response, there was a turn towards 'sites of memory' which could take the form of flags, memorials, buildings, museums, or indeed any artifact from the past around which different cultural, regional or social groups could now claim to draw their understanding of themselves and so assert their contribution to the national story.[79] The meanings attached to these sites, argued Nora, are inherently malleable, being subject to the whims of whichever group invokes them and as such 'are subject to continual change.'[80] In this way, national history was usurped by national memories as the only way to assure people's sense of continuity with the past.

British historian Eric Hobsbawm has also been highly influential in this context. Hobsbawm put greater emphasis on the role of the state in producing national identities. He argued that since the late nineteenth century, states and their agents have created what he terms 'invented traditions' that promote social cohesion, legitimise state institutions and authorities, and encourage certain values and behaviours among national populaces.[81] Importantly, these invented traditions are linked to collective remembrance. In late-nineteenth century France, for example, the invention of public ceremonies and commemorations centred on revolutionary anniversaries (Bastille Day most prominently), served the dual purpose of promoting cohesion among French people through shared memory of the revolution whilst simultaneously emphasising the state's power and authority.[82] For Hobsbawm, understanding

[78] Nora, 'The era of commemoration,' 626.
[79] Ibid., 616.
[80] Ibid., 636.
[81] Hobsbawm, 'Inventing traditions,' 9.
[82] Ibid., 14.

invented traditions is key to understanding how the idea of the nation is constructed and helps to demystify the notion that nation states are permanent, fixed, and rooted in history.[83]

The observations of Nora and Hobsbawm can also be applied to our understanding of memorials and commemorations in Australia after World War Two. This was a time in which tensions between individual and state-sponsored memory ran high, particularly in cases where veterans and government representatives were at odds over how World War Two should be remembered. These state-focused approaches to the understanding of remembrance help to better understand the motivations which underpinned the government's efforts to enact remembrance in the years immediately following the war. At several points this thesis explores the ways in which the Australian state worked to consolidate control over remembrance of World War Two and put that remembrance to work in the service of identity building projects both at home and overseas. It illustrates how the Australian state worked to shape public remembrance of the war, to influence public behaviour and to shape Australia's image on the international stage through war remembrance. Representatives of the Australian government did this explicitly through their efforts to limit the building of community-based memorials, in curtailing more recently formed veterans' groups' attempts to have their experiences recognised outside of the Anzac mould, in dictating the form and function of Anzac Day remembrance, and in their efforts to promote the international dimension to memorialisation, commemoration and the Anzac legend.

In response to the state-centric approaches, others such as Winter, Marianne Hirsch and Astrid Erll have argued for the importance of understanding how individuals remember the past, primarily in the framework of grief and mourning.[84] These scholars argue that overemphasis on national identity detracts from understanding collective remembrance as

[83] Ibid.
[84] Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning*; Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, *Death, memory and material culture* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Astrid Erll, *Memory in culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Hirsch, *The generation of postmemory*.

something that means different things to different people depending on their subjective experience. Winter is prominent here. Unlike Hobsbawm and (to a lesser degree) Nora, who focus on memory in terms of nationalism and political power, Winter uses a psychological framework to draw out the agency of groups and individuals in the maintenance of collective remembrance. While he acknowledges that states use remembrance to push political agendas, he argues for the importance of understanding how groups and individuals respond to that remembrance with an emphasis on how this process mediates grief.[85]

Taking these ideas into consideration, this thesis acknowledges that Anzac remembrance in the post-war period was not only directed by the state but was also shaped from the bottom upwards – as much as it is a story of efforts to remember the war in an official capacity, it is also the story of everyday people working to shape Anzac to reflect their individual experiences of the war and their post-war lives. Indeed, considerations of how groups and individuals subjectively engage with the past is important for prising apart the significance of Australian remembrance of World War Two in the post-war period. The building of memorials and the observance of commemorations was not only a top-down process in which the state prescribed remembrance onto a passive citizenry. Rather Australians were active in their engagement with the memory of World War Two, whether mediating grief through its remembrance, asserting their ownership over the Anzac legend, or using remembrance as a platform to express different and often conflicting ideas about what it meant to be Australian.

Since the 1990s, memory scholars have had much to say about how remembrance is shaped through dialogue and debate in this way. By examining negotiations between different groups, such as state and non-state actors, or between personal and broader narratives, they demonstrate how the meanings associated with collective remembrance shift in response to

[85] Jay Winter, 'Setting the Framework,' in *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*, eds. Jay Winter, and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18.

negotiation. [86] From this standpoint, collective remembrance should not solely be understood from the perspective of states and national identities, or conversely, as the subjective experience of groups or individuals. Rather, it should be understood as something produced by discourse between different groups and different people who, through these interactions, produce new meanings about the past and its relevance to the present. Michael Rothberg's work is important here. Rothberg argues that the public sphere, as the arena where remembrance is given shape in memorial and commemorative forms, is not a limited space in which already established identity groups compete for representation, but rather a discursive space in which new identities come into being.[87] In this way he defines collective remembrance as being 'multidirectional'. When these different groups discuss or debate what should or should not be remembered, they produce new understandings and perspectives on the past.[88]

In looking at the post-war period in Australia, each of these different approaches helps to unpack how remembrance of World War Two emerged, the way that this remembrance changed the shape of Anzac culture, and what these changes said about the state of Australian identity at the time. Remembrance of World War Two in the war's aftermath took shape as the result of dialogue and debate between different invested parties. While much of the impetus to construct memorials and to hold commemorations came from the Australian government, at every turn these initiatives were met by interested Australians who sought to mould the Anzac legend and remembrance of the war to align with their own changing interpretations of Australian identity. Indeed, whether it was Australian citizens agitating to build new utilitarian memorials instead of traditional monumental forms, the Rats of Tobruk

[86] James Edward Young, *The texture of memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the age of decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Alistair Thomson, *Anzac memories: Living with the legend* (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2013).
[87] Rothberg, *Multidirectional memory*, 5.
[88] Ibid., 3.

insisting on the uniqueness of their wartime experiences, or veteran resistance to former enemy nations taking part in Anzac Day wreath laying ceremonies, the post-World War Two period was one in which remembrance of the war was also shaped through activism and resistance from below. This thesis contends that through these debates between government actors and individuals and groups, new ways of remembering the war were produced that altered and expanded the established forms of remembrance that had preceded World War Two. The work of scholars such as Hobsbawm, Winter and Rothberg each, in their own way, inform the work of this thesis and help to better understand how the process of commemoration and memorialisation took shape.

The Anzac Legend

This thesis examines the changing nature of the Anzac legend in the post-war period, and as such, it builds upon the considerable body of literature that has already been written on the topic. Public fervour for the legend has risen and fallen over the last century. During the interwar and World War Two years it was embraced enthusiastically. Yet, during the Vietnam War, in response to the Australian anti-war movement, it saw its lowest levels of popularity throughout the century. However, in the 1980s and 1990s in response to the emergence of soldiers' memoirs from both world wars, representation of Australia's wartime history in film and television shows, and through the celebration of anniversary events dedicated to the two wars, the Anzac legend steadily became the subject of renewed interest. This interest was further amplified by endorsement from Prime Ministers Paul Keating (who was Prime Minister from 1991 to 1996) and John Howard (1996 to 2007), who both emphasised — albeit from different political perspectives — the importance of the legend during their terms in office.

The commemorative programme enacted by the Australian government around the centenary of World War One, from 2014 to 2018, arguably represents the high point of investment in

war remembrance in Australia over the last two decades. The centenary programme received enormous funding spread across a range of events, initiatives and memorial refurbishments.[89] As Carolyn Holbrook has pointed out, Australian spending on the centenary amounted to $552 million, which was more than the combined expenditure of Britain, France, Germany, Canada and New Zealand on their own centenary programmes.[90] This staggering level of funding demonstrates the degree of importance that the Australian government continues to place on war remembrance in Australia. Since 2015, attendance at Anzac Day rituals has lessened considerably, suggesting that the legend's relevance to the lives of modern-day Australians might be fading.[91] Yet, it remains to be seen whether this lull in interest is temporary, or whether the legacy of Anzac has entered into a state of decline after a more than a century at the forefront of Australian conceptions of national identity. Nevertheless, the Anzac legend still holds an immensely prominent place in Australian society and continues to dominate public discussion and debate around what it means to be Australian, especially around the observance of Anzac Day each year.

Given the importance of the Anzac legend to so many Australians, it is a topic that has become the subject of a great deal of scholarship. Scholarly writing on the legend has been produced since its earliest days, most notably by Charles Bean and Ernest Scott. Academic interest has grown substantially since the 1970s, however, in response to the resurgence of public interest and the boom in memory studies that were emerging in that period.[92] The earliest historian of Anzac is Bean. Bean is widely acknowledged as being responsible for the spread of the Anzac legend. An Australian foreign correspondent during World War One, he

[89] Joan Beaumont, 'Commemoration in Australia: A memory orgy?.' *Australian Journal of Political Science* 50 (2015): 538.

[90] Carolyn Holbrook, 'Consuming Anzac: some thoughts on the Anzac centenary,' Monash online, 9 November 2015. [https://www.monash.edu/arts/social-sciences/news-and-events/articles/2015/consuming-anzac-some-thoughts-on-the-anzac-centenary]

[91] Romain Fathi, 'Crowds at dawn services have plummeted in recent years. It's time to reinvent Anzac Day,' *The Conversation*, 21 April 2021.

[92] For more on the history of Anzac historiography, see Carolyn Holbrook's *Anzac, the unauthorized biography* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2014).

worked as an eye-witness reporter on the Gallipoli campaign, joining the men in trenches to better understand their experiences of the campaign.[93] In May 1919 he was appointed as Australia's official historian of World War One. Although the first volume of his official history was released in 1921, the final volume was not completed until 1942. In writing his official histories, Bean consciously put an emphasis on the experience of front-line soldiers rather than high level politics and strategy, a novel approach at the time.[94] As argued by Holbrook, this was not so much about writing a history from the bottom up as it was about helping to define the Australian national character through the story of the Anzacs at Gallipoli.[95]

Bean framed Australian national character as being different to that of the British, in which class stratification was so important. In contrast, he described the Australian soldier as distinctly egalitarian, a quality he traced to the pioneering nature of Australian rural life that had seeped into the national consciousness.[96] According to Joan Beaumont, however, it was the publishing of his *Anzac Book* in 1916, a collection of stories and poems written by the Gallipoli veterans themselves, that played a larger role in the legend's propagation in Australian society. Bean further promoted the legend over the interwar period through public lectures, journalistic articles, and letters to the editor.[97] He was also one of the founders of the AWM in Canberra, which was Australia's first national museum.[98] Bean was an integral part of defining the legend, of drawing the link between the experience and character of soldiers at Gallipoli with Australian national identity and of popularising the Anzac legend more broadly. Bean's conception of the Anzacs is one that has endured throughout the decades and continues to shape popular understanding of the legend.

[93] Beaumont, 'The Anzac legend,' 151.
[94] Holbrook, *Anzac: The unauthorised biography*, 45.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Charles Bean, *Anzac to Amien* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1983), 535, 537.
[97] Beaumont, 'The Anzac legend,' 152.
[98] Ibid.

Recently historians such as Holbrook have written much on the shortcomings of Bean's histories, for the most part critical of their celebration of militarism and of the conservatism inherent in the Anzac legend.[99] However, Bean's conception of the Anzacs and their relationship to Australian identity went mostly unchallenged until the latter years of the twentieth century. From the 1970s, a renewed interest in the Anzac legend began to take hold, and this interest has continued ever since. This resurgence took the form of both popular media, best exemplified by Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* (1981), and academic literature that was increasingly interested in histories of war focusing on soldiers' experiences, using diaries and letters as their primary sources.[100] Marilyn Lake argues that these new social histories of Anzac repositioned the Australian soldier from hard and masculine to more innocent and vulnerable; the victim of war rather than its agent.[101]

Since the 1990s, Anzac scholars have turned to the topic of war remembrance in Australia, looking at the development of memorials, pilgrimages, and commemorations.[102] This new focus on the remembrance of war followed a broader international trend towards the study of memory in the late-twentieth century. None was more in-depth than Ken Inglis' 1998 history of war memorial architecture and culture in Australia, from the Boer to the Vietnam War. His study is largely empirical, examining the planning, debates, and memorial structures themselves in minute detail, but the book's broad argument suggests that Anzac and its accompanying memorials have become akin to a civil religion in Australia, a country that had

[99] Holbrook, *Anzac: The unauthorised biography*, 46.
[100] Bill Gammage, *The broken years: Australian soldiers in the Great War* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974); Patsy Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of war: From Gallipoli to Korea* (New York: Penguin, 1992); Joan Beaumont, *Gull Force: Survival and leadership in captivity, 1941-1945* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988); Garton, *The cost of war*.
[101] Marilyn Lake, 'Introduction: What have you done for your country?,' in *What's wrong with Anzac,* eds. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010), 21.
[102] Michael McKernan, *Here is their spirit: A history of the Australian War Memorial, 1917-1990* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1991); Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the battlefields of the Great War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Thomson, *Anzac memories;* Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The digger and national mythology* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2004).

become increasingly secular over the twentieth century.[103] Graham Seal has also explored the sacralisation of the Anzac legend. He has pointed out that from the earliest days of the campaign in 1915, newspaper reporting referred to the story of the Anzacs at Gallipoli as being 'sacred' and that by 1916, the term was in common usage. He further notes how this notion of the legend's sacredness is strengthened by the use of terms such as 'ritual', 'pilgrimage', 'spirit' and 'legend.' These terms, he argues, encourage commentators to see criticism or misuse of the legend as a form of sacrilege.[104] Viewing Anzac through this lens of sacredness is important for the case studies in this thesis, in which challenges to Anzac's meaning and ownership arise in each chapter. Understanding how Anzac remembrance took on this sacred aspect is an important part of understanding what inspired these passionate debates around its meaning and ownership in the post-war period.

Much of the work on Anzac has adopted a critical lens, examining and problematising how the legend has impacted on issues such as race, gender, and politics in Australian society.[105] Holbrook, for example, notes that the Anzac legend's meaning has always been historically contingent, as a reflection of the politics and ideologies of the period in which it is invoked. This contingency, she has argued, means that the Anzac legend has different meanings depending on when it is called upon and who does the calling, pointing to examples like the relationship between Anzac and British race patriotism in the 1920s and widespread criticism of Anzac Day as racist and chauvinistic by the anti-war movement in the 1960s and 1970s.[106] For his part, Alistair Thomson has, through the lens of oral history, explored how World War One veterans' memories of war and their identities in their post-war lives had been influenced

[103] Ken Inglis and Jan Brazier, *Sacred places: War memorials in the Australian landscape* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 5-6.
[104] Graham Seal, 'ANZAC: The sacred in the secular,' *Journal of Australian Studies* 31 (2007): 137-39.
[105] Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake, eds. *Gender and War: Australians at war in the twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Joy Damousi, *Living with the aftermath: Trauma, nostalgia and grief in post-war Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, eds. *What's wrong with Anzac?: The militarisation of Australian history* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010); Peter Stanley, *Bad characters: Sex, crime, mutiny, murder and the Australian Imperial Force* (Sydney: Pier 9, 2010).
[106] Holbrook, *Anzac: the unauthorised biography*, 6-7.

by the Anzac legend. He argued that in many ways, soldiers' narratives about their wartime experiences had been shaped by homogenous and nationalist versions of Anzac proffered by mainstream social and political discourse around the legend.[107] Joy Damousi has come to similar conclusions, but argues that in recent decades politicians and media in Australia have fostered a sentimental discourse around the Anzac legend, encouraging a tendency among Australians to identify their connection to Anzac through family history.[108] The result of this turn, she asserts, has been to dissuade critical debate around its history and politics.[109]

Taking this body of literature as a whole, it becomes clear that studying the Anzac legend during different periods and in different contexts can produce valuable insights into changing ideas in Australia around national identity, remembrance, and history. The post-war period is no exception.

Remembering World War Two in Australia

There has been significantly less fervour for remembrance of World War Two among Australians than there has been for World War One. Beaumont asserts that with the passage of World War Two, only two decades after the end of World War One, remembrance of this new conflict was consciously integrated into the pre-established framework of the Anzac legend. She argues that Australian participation in World War Two made less fertile ground for post-war mythologising. For one, the death toll was much lower. But more importantly, when compared with World War One, Australia's part in World War Two was fractured; the story of Bomber Command, operations in the Middle East, subsequent withdrawal to the Pacific theatre, and the fall of Singapore made for a less cogent story of Australian heroism.[110] It is certainly the case that responses to World War Two were largely shaped by

[107] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, 251.
[108] Joy Damousi, 'Why do we get so emotional about Anzac?,' in *What's wrong with Anzac?: The militarisation of Australian history*, eds. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010), 102-03.
[109] Ibid., 95.
[110] Beaumont, 'The second war in every respect,' 4.

the remembrance frameworks that had been established during and after World War One. However, Beaumont's explorations of this period are somewhat limited, being contained to a couple of paragraphs. In contrast, the findings in this thesis demonstrate that this period was one in which memorial and commemorative practices in Australia were undergoing a period of intense re-examination and reconfiguration, as different groups worked to represent their experience of the post-war period through remembrance of World War Two.

It was not until the 1990s, Beaumont argues, that remembrance of World War Two rose to prominence, inspired by the emergence of both individual and state led memory projects that were primarily based around fifty-year anniversaries of the war.[111] This reinvigoration of interest was followed by an increase in scholarship examining remembrance of the war. For the most part, this work has examined three distinct but interrelated aspects of how Australians have remembered World War Two: POWs, the Kokoda Track, and the Japanese bombings of Darwin.

Scholarship examining the remembrance of the POW experience, particularly under the Japanese, first began to emerge in the 1980s, following the publishing of memoirs and diaries by former POWs. Scholarship on this topic covers a range of contexts. It examines the representation of Australian POWs in memorials and museums, family histories, and in television and film. These histories have grappled with the question of how traumatised POWs, who have been framed as passive captives rather than fighters, have been integrated into the Anzac legend.[112] Paula Hamilton, for instance, has argued that through the

[111] Ibid., 7.
[112] Hank Nelson, *POW, prisoners of war: Australians under Nippon* (Sydney: ABC Enterprises, 1985); Beaumont, *Gull Force: Survival and leadership in captivity*; Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of war*; Elizabeth Reed, *Bigger than Gallipoli: War, history and memory in Australia* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2004); Lachlan Grant, 'Monument and ceremony: The Australian ex-prisoners of war memorial and the Anzac legend,' in *Forgotten captives in Japanese occupied Asia*, eds. Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack (London: Routledge, 2007), 41-56; Christina Twomey, 'Remembering war and forgetting civilians: The place of civilian internees in Australian commemorations of the Pacific War,' in *Forgotten captives in Japanese-occupied Asia*, eds. Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack (London: Routledge, 2007), 210-23; Paula Hamilton, 'Contested memories of the Pacific War in Australia,' in *The Pacific War: Aftermaths, remembrance and culture*, eds. Christina Twomey and Ernest Koh (Melbourne: Routledge, 2014), 50-66.

publishing of their memoirs and diaries, POWs have been able to assert their contribution to the Anzac legend as a story of survival through 'irreverence, humour, male mateship, resourcefulness and camaraderie.'[113]

In the early 1990s, another aspect of Australia's part in World War Two rose to take a central place in the Anzac canon: the story of the Kokoda campaign. On 25 April 1992, Prime Minister Paul Keating made an official speech at Ela Beach in Port Moresby to mark the observance of Anzac Day.[114] It was an expert piece of political theatre, weaving Keating's republicanism, Australian identity, and the history of the Kokoda campaign neatly together. It also raised up Kokoda in the national imagination, helping to inspire memorials, pilgrimage, and of course, scholarship based around the story.[115] The late Hank Nelson has provided the most in-depth analysis of the campaign and its enduring memory and much of his work has been critical of how Kokoda's memory has been recruited for nationalistic and political purposes. He has critiqued, for example, how Prime Ministers Paul Keating and John Howard co-opted the memory of Kokoda for their own political benefits, arguing that by politicising the campaign's story, both men have actively distorted its history.

Keating and Howard, he argued, overestimated the military importance of the campaign, framing it as a vital turning point in the war. However, they did so with different intentions. Keating had emphasised Kokoda as a battle fought in defence of Australia as part of the Pacific region, linking the campaign's memory with his republican vision for Australian nationalism.[116] In contrast to Keating, Howard focused on the exceptionalism of the Australian troops in the campaign, emphasising that it was the qualities these men had

[113] Ibid., 53.
[114] 'Humility and that reverent kiss a hard act to follow,' *The Age*, 17 August 2002.
[115] Hank Nelson, 'Gallipoli, Kokoda and the making of national identity,' *Journal of Australian Studies* 21 (1997): 157-69; Hank Nelson, 'Kokoda: the track from history to politics,' *The Journal of Pacific History* 38 (2003): 109-27; Hank Nelson, 'Kokoda: Pushing the popular image,' *The Journal of Pacific History* 45 (2010): 89-104; Jo Hawkins, 'What better excuse for a real adventure': History, memory and tourism on the Kokoda trail,' *Public History Review* 20 (2013): 1-23; Joan Beaumont, 'The diplomacy of extra-territorial heritage: the Kokoda Track, Papua New Guinea.' *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 22 (2016): 355-67.
[116] Nelson, 'Gallipoli, Kokoda and the making of national identity,' 167.

inherited from their Anzac forebears that had helped them win the day.[117] Like Keating, Howard also framed Kokoda as a military action taken in defence of the Australian mainland, as an important part of what is sometimes called the 'battle for Australia.'

The 'battle for Australia', as it has been described in political speeches and at commemorative events, is a phrase that refers to the crisis events of 1942, but is sometimes extended to encompass any Australian military action in the Pacific theatre from 1942 to 1945.[118] Peter Stanley notes that despite the popularity of this idea, it is one that historians roundly refute.[119] In his own rejection of the idea, Stanley pointed out that proponents of the 'battle for Australia' thesis wrongly characterise Japan's disparate military engagements with Australian forces as part of a planned invasion. Yet, as he has demonstrated, Japan had neither the means nor the intention to carry out such an invasion.[120] In response to these claims, he argues that invocations of the 'battle for Australia' are part of an effort on the part of Australian nationalists to find meaning in Australia's contribution to World War Two and to assert the importance of that contribution to Australian identity.[121]

The bombing of Darwin has been drawn into this notion of a 'battle for Australia.' At the time, the Australian government and military's response to the bombings was widely seen as a failure.[122] But like Kokoda, the bombing of Darwin has seen a resurgence of interest in popular memory, in large part spurred on by Darwin Council and its efforts to make visible the history of the bombings. This has similarly become a point of interest for scholars and these, for the most part, have explored the ways that Darwin has embraced memorialisation and memory of the bombings as an attraction for battlefield tourists. They have also focused on how commemoration of the bombings has been adopted by its organisers as a symbol of

[117] Nelson, 'Kokoda: the track from history to politics,' 125.
[118] Peter Stanley, 'What is the Battle for Australia,' *Australian Army Journal* 4 (2007): 23, 27.
[119] Ibid., 28-9.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., 22.
[122] 'Darwin's day of shame, says Mr Hasluck,' *The Canberra Times*, 26 March 1955.

Australia's ongoing partnership with the United States.[123] Darian-Smith has commented on the importance of the Darwin bombings to this relationship, stating that in the twenty-first century 'more so than any other site in Australia' the Japanese raids on Darwin have become a symbol of the alliance between Australia and America.[124]

While these explorations of remembrance of World War Two say little about the post-war period, they are valuable for their insight into the way the war's memory is shaped and reshaped in response to changing social and cultural circumstances in Australia. Whether that memory is being invoked for the advancement of a political platform, for the fostering of changing understandings of national identity, or as a symbol of new or ongoing international relationships, the way that war is remembered is always a response to the context in which that remembering takes place. This was also true of the post-war period.

Remembering Anzac in post-war Australia

There have been significantly fewer histories that examine Anzac remembrance in the decades that immediately followed World War Two. What has been written has focused on three main areas. First, the ways in which remembrance of the war was folded into pre-existing memorials and commemorations that were dedicated to World War One. Second, the declining interest in Anzac that was taking place at the time. And finally, the growing interest among Australians towards the building of utilitarian memorials. These histories, for the most part, have examined the post-war period as part of broader stories of remembrance in

[123] Julie Roberts and Martin Young, 'Transience, memory and induced amnesia: The re-imagining of Darwin,' in *Journal of Australian Studies* 32 (2008): 51-62; Elspeth Frew, 'Dark tourism in the Top End: Commemorating the bombing of Darwin,' in *Dark tourism and place identity: Managing and interpreting dark places,* eds. Leanne White and Elspeth Frew, 246-63 (New York: Routledge, 2013); Mary Brooks, 'My brain is playing up with me: 'Reminiscing the home front: memory, story and fading scripts,' *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 35 (2013): 58-67; Scates, *Anzac journeys*; Valerie Bourke, 'Re-remembering the bombing of Darwin,' *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 36 (2014): 51-60; Laura James, 'Reading Darwin as a landscape of war,' in *Battlefield events: Landscape, commemoration and heritage,* eds. Keir Reeves et al., 164-75 (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[124] Kate Darian-Smith, 'Pearl Harbor and Australia's war in the Pacific,' in *Beyond Pearl Harbor: A Pacific history*, eds. Beth Bailey and David Farber (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019), 189.

Australia and as such have tended to be less in-depth than the case studies contained within this thesis.

Scholars such as Beaumont, Inglis and Bruce Scates agree that in the post-war years, rather than building new memorials, World War Two was largely represented by making additions to already existing memorials dedicated to World War One. They note that this either took the form of engraving the names of World War Two soldiers onto these monuments next to the names of their World War One counterparts, or in the building of memorial extensions.[125] In the case of state and national structures, like the AWM in Canberra and the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, this proved a challenging task. These grand memorials had only recently been completed by the outset of World War Two, and new additions to these structures necessitated renegotiation of their meaning as well as the raising of substantial funding related to extra administration and construction.[126]

While the building of new war memorials in the traditional style was limited at this time, there was a surge in interest in building utilitarian memorials. This interest in utilitarian memorials was part of a broader shift in Australian society towards the improvement of communities that was happening in the post-war period. Darian-Smith, David Nichols and Julie Willis have explored this turn, arguing that the impetus to improve and modernise Australian communities on the part of post-war planners was deeply influenced by a desire to avoid another post-war depression.[127] In response, post-war planners sought to encourage the growth of communities through the provision of health, housing and public infrastructure.[128] Several scholars have linked this turn towards community improvement with the interest in utilitarian memorials in the period, noting that in the context of Australia's already crowded memorial landscape, planners shifted their attention towards the building of public amenities

[125] Beaumont, 'The second war in every respect,' 6; Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 343; Scates, *Anzac journeys*, 8.
[126] McKernan, *Here is their spirit*, 162; Bruce Scates, *A place to remember: A history of the Shrine of remembrance* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 169-171; Inglis, *Sacred places*, 326.
[127] Darian-Smith, Nichols and Willis, 'The community can do it,' 170.
[128] Ibid., 171-72.

such as community centres, swimming pools and other similar public works that could be dedicated as memorials to World War Two.[129]

For the most part, however, this period has been characterised by historians, such as Inglis and Stephen Garton, as one of waning enthusiasm for the Anzac legend. For his part, Garton has argued that by the war's end, given the already established nature of the Anzac legend, there was little interest in the creation of a new mythology around World War Two. Adding to this was the fact that Australians were tired of the war, they were more cognisant of its horrors and had anticipated its end for some time.[130] Thomson has also commented on dwindling interest in Anzac Day during the 1950s, having argued that it was increasingly viewed as a drunken reunion for the socially and politically conservative RSSAILA. Like Inglis he has also argued that by the early 1960s, in light of the Vietnam War and the rise of the anti-war movement, Anzac felt outdated and even distasteful to many Australians.[131] Others, such as Carina Donaldson and Marilyn Lake, have also linked reduced interest in the period to the increasing belief, particularly in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, that Anzac was a jingoistic celebration of war.[132] Like Thomson they point to the growing anti-war and student activist movements, and the diminishing status of the RSSAILA in the period.[133]

In this context, interest in building new memorials and in staging new commemorative events was dampened. And yet, there were several attempts to create new memorials and commemorations dedicated to the war and the debates that accompanied these efforts reveal anxieties around the question of Anzac's ownership and who in the period had the right to

[129] Hannah Lewi and Caroline Jordan have provided the most in-depth exploration of this topic in their chapter 'Commemorating and Enhancing the Everyday,' found in the edited volume *Community: Building modern Australia* (2010). Ken Inglis has also given a detailed account of this utilitarian turn in his book *Sacred places,* 131-7.
[130] Garton, *The cost of war*, 6-7.
[131] Thomson, 'Anzac memories,' 220.
[132] Several other historians have commented on this topic: Jenny Macleod, 'The fall and rise of Anzac Day: 1965 and 1990 compared,' *War & Society* 20 (2002): 152; Carina Donaldson and Marilyn Lake, 'Whatever happened to the anti-war movement?,' in *What's Wrong With Anzac,* eds. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010), 81-2; Holbrook, *Anzac: the unauthorised biography*, 118; Beaumont, 'The second war in every respect,' 11.
[133] Ibid.

define its meaning. World War Two veterans struggled to have their experiences adequately recognised. Those previously in charge of existing memorials and commemorative events were resistant to change. Finally, the Australian government sought to take an active role in shaping the way the war was remembered; working to curtail the building of community memorials and commemorations and co-opting war remembrance towards the needs of foreign diplomacy. In this context, scholarly explorations which paint the post-war period as one of waning interest in the Anzac legend underestimate the passion and pride that accompanied these debates and the ways in which they changed how people thought about Anzac's meaning and purpose and how it could represent their experience of life in post-war Australia.

Australian identity in the post-war period

While the post-war period has generally been seen by historians as a time in which Anzac and war remembrance was waning in popularity, it has otherwise been characterized as a time in which Australia was broadening its international relationships beyond the traditional link with Britain, primarily with the United States.

Up to the advent of World War Two, Britishness was arguably the dominant identity among Australians. The former British colonies were federated into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 and Australia became an official dominion of the British Empire. Up until World War Two (at least) most Australians saw themselves as culturally and ethnically British. The question of whether Australians began to shift away from this British identity in the post-war period is one that scholars such as Neville Meaney and David Day have puzzled over. Meaney and others have argued that despite political tension between Australia and Britain during the war, the post-war period was a time of high enthusiasm for British identity among

Australians.[134] Meaney has asserted that prior to the rise of multiculturalism in the 1970s, 'Britishness was the dominant cultural myth in Australia.' In discussing the post-war period, he points to Australians' continued enthusiasm for Empire Day (calling Australia Day a 'secular picnic' in comparison) and the Queen's visit in 1954 as particular examples of Australians' enduring identification with Britishness. The appeal of British nationalism for Australians, Meaney argued, stemmed from the fact that migrants that moved from the British Isles to the Australian colonies were drawn to mix with one another to a much greater degree than they had in their homeland and as such were compelled to homogenize their traditions under the banner of Britishness as a common identity.[135]

Other historians, however, have pointed to the growing political link with the United States in this period. David Day has asserted that during World War Two, Britain's failure to make good on its promise to aid Australian forces during the fall of Singapore and John Curtin's notorious 'look to America' statement, led to decreasing faith in Australia's relationship with Britain on the part of foreign policy makers. In the post-war period, he has argued, this loss of faith encouraged policies of greater international self-reliance, resulting in a series of new alliances and treaties in the Asia-Pacific region with the United States and other local nations.[136] He has posited that while this shift was not an outright rejection of British identity, it did demonstrate how the events of World War Two had pushed Australia to formulate its own foreign policies independent of the Empire in the post-war period.[137]

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[134] Stephen Alomes, *A nation at last?: the changing character of Australian nationalism 1880-1988* (North Ryde: Angus & Robertson, 1988), 154-6; Rickard, *Australia: A cultural history*, 209; Peter Spearitt, 'The British Dominion of Australia,' in *Out of Empire: British Dominion of Australia*, eds. John Arnold, Peter Spearitt and David Walker (Port Melbourne: Mandarin, 1993), 9-10; Neville Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian identity: The problem of nationalism in Australian history and historiography,' *Australian Historical Studies* 32 (2001): 79-80; Stuart Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 24.
[135] Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian identity,' 79-82.
[136] David Day, *Reluctant nation: Australia and the allied defeat of Japan 1942-45* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992), vii.
[137] Ibid., 314.

For her part, Marilyn Lake has asserted that the cultural links between Australia and the United States can be traced further back than the post-war period. In an article responding to Meaney, Lake demonstrated that since the late nineteenth century, prominent Australian politicians, intellectuals, and feminists had taken a keen interest in American culture and society.[138] It was the rhetoric of British race patriotism that emerged during World War One, she argued, that had produced the mid-twentieth century enthusiasm for British identity that was so prevalent in Australia's post-war period.[139]

John Rickard has discussed other ways in which the links between Australia and the United States grew in the post-war period. He notes the formation of the ANZUS treaty, the arrival of Holden into the Australian market and the budding competition between Australian and American tennis players at the Davis Cup as the most prominent examples of political and cultural ties forming between the two nations in the 1950s.[140] However, he noted that this growing connection to the United States also inspired Australia to 'reaffirm the *sentiment* of the British connection', pointing to Menzies' self-styling as a British leader, the food for Britain campaign, the Royal Tour of 1954, and the push for British migrants as examples of this.[141] What these different observations make clear is that Australia's relationships with Britain and United States should not be characterized as a stark siding with one at the expense of the other. Australia's relationship to the United States was budding, as evidenced by the various connections formed between the two countries on both a political and cultural level. On the other hand, while the significance of Australia's political relationship with Britain was receding, this was still a time in which Australians along with Australia's leaders thought it important to reaffirm the strength of sentiment for Britain.

[138] Marilyn Lake, 'British world or new world? Anglo-Saxonism and Australian engagement with America,' *History Australia* 10 (2013): 44-7.
[139] Ibid., 48-9.
[140] Rickard, *Australia: A cultural history*, 206, 210-11.
[141] Ibid., 207-8.

The growing connection with the United States influenced Australians' sense of identity in other ways. Richard White has argued that in the post-war period, there emerged a discourse around the 'Australian way of life.' This new strain of Australian identity, White noted, was largely modeled on the 'American way of life' that had been popularized in American movies and, from the late 1950s, television programs.[142] Exactly what this way of life constituted in Australia was not well defined, but its description in books, advertisements, and government pamphlets, painted Australian citizens as consummate urban consumers living in nuclear families with their houses and cars, surrounded by appliances.[143] Less important, according to White, was what the Australian way of life was, and more important was what it stood in opposition to. For one, the concept was linked to Cold War anxiety. Australians enjoying this way of life were construed as living a lifestyle in opposition to the ideals of communism. It was also a standard by which incoming migrants to Australia were judged in terms of their ability to assimilate. Non-British migrants arriving in Australia were expected to quickly adapt to this Australian way of life or face discrimination.[144]

Responding to these assertions by White, John Murphy has argued that the Australian way of life should be understood as a form of national imagining as Benedict Anderson would describe the term. It was not, according to Murphy, an identity that had emerged from some essential national character, but rather from the 'outside inwards.'[145] Specifically, he described the discourse around the Australian Way of Life as a response to the influx of new migrants, to the influence of communism and, to a lesser extent, the impact of American culture. These factors, he argued, drew Australians to this ideal of national identity precisely because of its amorphousness. The Australian way of life was a concept that could be

[142] Richard White, *Inventing Australia: images and identity, 1688-1980* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), 163.
[143] Ibid., 162.
[144] Ibid., 159-60.
[145] Murphy, *Imagining the fifties*, 67.

reframed and redeployed to help rebuff whatever social or political anxieties arose in the period.[146]

While these interpretations of identity in the post-war period diverge, they all grapple with questions of how Australian identity was shifting after the war, and to what degree these shifts were a response to Australia's changing relationship with the wider world. The ensuing case studies that comprise this thesis are similarly oriented towards these questions. They each grapple with Australians' changing sense of identity in the post-war period and the ways in which remembrance of World War Two and the Anzac legend became a site for the articulation of contrasting ideas around what it meant to be an Australian in the war's wake.

Sources

My approach in undertaking primary research for the thesis was led by the availability of sources. The primary material used throughout this thesis comes predominantly from official sources. I acknowledge that these sources emphasise the top-down perspective of government. However, remembrance is typically aligned with the activities of the state, and this is certainly true of the post-war period, in which the Australian Government worked to instrumentalise commemoration in the service of its identity building projects. But this was also a period of struggle and negotiation over Anzac's meaning, and as such I have endeavoured wherever possible to also weave in narratives from below, particularly in respect of sources that illuminate the work of veterans' organisations, to help demonstrate how Anzac's meaning was also redefined through the work of non-government actors. For the most part the thesis is drawn from documents held in three repositories: The National Archives of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, and the National Library of Australia's online newspaper archive, Trove.

[146] Ibid.

The National Archives of Australia is primarily comprised of documents produced by the Australian government. As such, the material here provided an excellent foundation for the parts of the thesis that examine how commemoration was handled from an official perspective. At almost every stage and on every level, government had a hand in mediating and planning around the building of memorials and the planning of commemorative events. Particularly valuable among this material was correspondence with the Prime Minister's Department, meeting and planning documents produced by government committees involved in Anzac remembrance, and correspondence produced by the Department of External Affairs relating to commemoration in the international context. The majority of primary material used throughout this thesis is sourced from the National Archives of Australia.

The Australian War Memorial was deeply involved in projects relating to war remembrance in the post-war period. Different groups such as veterans' organisations, government officials, press and other interested members of the public consulted with the staff at the Australian War Memorial on the question of how to appropriately commemorate World War Two. The memorial's staff, particularly Charles Bean and inaugural Director John Treloar, were also active in several commemorative projects during the period. As such, the correspondence and planning documents produced by this institution provided an invaluable resource in seeking to understand how the Australian War Memorial worked to shape Anzac remembrance in the fifteen or so years that followed the war.

The National Library of Australia is the country's largest repository of printed materials. Like many scholars of Australian history, I found the library's online collection of newspapers, Trove, to be an invaluable resource. Each of the thesis' chapters utilises Trove to varying degrees. Newspaper sources were useful for filling gaps in stories that I had uncovered in archival sources found at the National Archives of Australia or at the Australian War Memorial. The National Library was also valuable for its holding of periodicals produced by the Rats of Tobruk Association. Often, reading through newspapers and periodicals helped

me to uncover new threads, leading me back to the archives to uncover new angles that had previously eluded me.

Thesis outline

The thesis is split into two parts. Part One, (comprised of three chapters) examines challenges to established ideas about commemoration, memorialisation, and the Anzac legend and how these challenges changed the way war was remembered in the period. Part Two (comprised of two chapters) examines how these same war remembrance practices increasingly came to represent Australia's identity and place in the changing international world. Each chapter focuses on a case study demonstrating how war remembrance was being reinterpreted in the period and how that reinterpretation helped to shape changing perspectives on Australian identity.

Part One

Chapter One examines the work of the Australian Battlefield Memorial Commission (ABMC), formed in 1945. In World War Two's immediate aftermath, the ABMC attempted to organise the building of a series of traditional, monumental, memorials to the war. Their proposals for these traditional memorials, however, were mostly met with indifference. Instead, people responding to the ABMC expressed an interest in utilitarian memorial forms. These useful or utilitarian memorials could address the material needs of Australians, while still serving the purpose of remembrance. Others expressed an interest in memorial forms that would symbolise Australia's changing relationship with the wider world, particularly with Britain and the United States. The chapter analyses these debates and discussions as a site where established norms around remembrance and mourning were challenged and where attempts were made to reframe Anzac to reflect an optimistic vision for Australia's future.

Chapter Two examines the Rats of Tobruk in the post-war period. Upon their return to civilian life in Australia, the men that had endured the siege of Tobruk in Libya in 1941 formed the Rats of Tobruk Association (ROTA), in 1944. Their goals were to maintain the bonds of friendship and support formed during the war and to keep the memory of their experience alive. In doing so, they forged an identity for themselves that was deeply inspired by the Anzac model. As such, they lobbied for the building of Tobruk memorials in the style of Anzac memorials. They also campaigned to have the word 'Tobruk' restricted from commercial usage as the word 'Anzac' day been in 1916, as well as requesting official recognition of a 'Tobruk Day'. The chapter analyses the tension that arose between the Rats' efforts to be recognised in this way and the resistance they met from government and military officials who saw their campaign as a potential threat to the potency of the Anzac legend.

Chapter Three explores a series of debates that took place from the end of the war through to 1960, over whether Anzac Day should be strictly observed as a day of mourning, or whether it should also be celebrated. During the war, the Federal Government mandated that around Australia, Anzac Day should be observed as a 'closed day' with restrictions on the sale of alcohol, public gatherings, and other forms of entertainment. These restrictions were carried over into the post-war years, where they ignited a heated debate between government, the RSSAILA, and newly emerging veterans' groups. The chapter specifically focuses on how these debates played out in New South Wales and Victoria. In doing so the chapter analyses how groups on different sides of these debates worked to stake their claim over the Anzac legend, and by extension, over who in Australia had the right to dictate the form, function and meaning of Anzac observance.

Part Two

Chapter Four examines the work of the Anzac Agency. As the war was ending, authorities in Australia and Britain began to tackle the problem of locating and burying war dead in the

Asia-Pacific region. In service of this task, the Anzac Agency was created in Australia, in 1946, as an auxiliary of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). While technically a British organisation, the Anzac Agency was mostly operated out of Australia by Australian officials. In carrying out their mission the Agency followed two principles. It worked to follow the IWGC's established guidelines and they ensured that the cemeteries it built would be long-lasting and accessible to pilgrims that might wish to visit in the future. This was a difficult task. The Agency had to grapple with the navigation of terrains and climates that its staff found both unfamiliar and challenging. It also had to consider the wishes of other nations who were attempting to locate and bury their war dead in the same regions. In examining the work of the Anzac Agency the chapter argues that it had to manage three competing goals: Building cemeteries that would stand as symbols of Britain, ensuring that these same sites would also be suitable as Australian sites of remembrance, and balancing these goals against the contradictory war graves policies of other nations in the region.

Chapter Five explores the incorporation of Anzac Day into Australia's diplomatic relations with other nations. This was a period of significant diplomatic expansion for Australia and in this context, Anzac Day rituals became a useful tool for the carrying out of soft diplomacy. At the newly opened Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Anzac Day organisers discussed how the diplomatic representatives of former enemies and allies should best be represented at the day's ceremonies. There was also a significant expansion of Anzac Day events across the world and these events were taken as opportunities to strengthen Australia's alliances in these regions. In examining these moments, the chapter analyses the discussions and planning that took place around how Australia and its diplomatic partners should be represented at Anzac rituals and how organisers sought to articulate and validate their interpretation of Australia's place within the post-war international order.

Part One

Chapter One.

‘A fitting memorial to the men and women who gave their lives’: The Australian Battlefields Memorials Commission

As World War Two was ending, people around the world began to plan for the how the war should be memorialised. Memorialisation happened at different levels. Some memorials were organised by local communities, some by military organisations, and others were organised at the state level, by government officials. This chapter examines how this process took place in Australia at the government level. Official discussions in the post-war period focused on three closely connected questions. First, what would be the most effective ways to encapsulate and honour Australians’ experience of World War Two through memorialisation? Second, how should these memorials be designed and constructed? And finally, to what degree should these memorials draw upon the pre-established model of Anzac commemoration, as opposed to establishing a new style of remembrance, particular to World War Two?

Certainly, memorials built in this period were often a response to, or a continuation of, memorials established during and after World War One. Yet Australia’s socio-economic and geo-political circumstances in the late 1940s also influenced these remembrance projects. Government representatives attempting to build memorials faced a society greatly fatigued by war. Australians were seeking to modernise and revitalise their communities in the aftermath of the Depression and the society-wide austerity of World War Two. This was also a period in which the Australian government was furthering ties with the United States and the Pacific region, while maintaining Australia’s existing connection with Britain.

This chapter investigates the work of the Australian Battlefields Memorials Commission (ABMC), formed in 1945, as one of the final acts of the War Cabinet.[1] The ABMC attempted to erect memorials at four key locations: in Darwin, Port Moresby, London and Canberra. In their efforts, the ABMC sought to consolidate and centralise Australian public memory of the war. These goals were partly a response to memorialisation that had followed World War One in the 1920s, when thousands of small-scale memorials, mostly obelisks and honour rolls, organised and erected by local communities, had proliferated throughout Australia. The ABMC's plan to build four centrally located monuments was a direct response to this proliferation of small-scale memorials, in particular those that were built by former military units. The commission argued that its plan would provide equality of access to the sites, but, it also meant that Government would have more control over Anzac remembrance following World War Two than it had following World War One. The ABMC also received several suggestions for government funded memorials from members of the public. Many of these were in support of local utilitarian-style memorials in the form of public buildings and local infrastructure. A few of these, however, also suggested the building of grander structures, such as a replica of the Statue of Liberty in Canberra and the interment of an unknown warrior at the Australian War Memorial (AWM). In making these suggestions, these correspondents of the ABMC were also staking their claim over war remembrance, reshaping that remembrance to fit with their respective visions for Australian society in the post-war period.

Each of the ABMC's projects failed. Yet, the story of their failure illuminates two significant changes occurring in Australian society during the immediate post-war period. First, it demonstrated a new enthusiasm for the development of public spaces and the fostering of

[1] The War Cabinet was formed in September 1939 and met over the course of the war to make key wartime decisions. Its membership consisted of Minsters chosen by the Prime Minister as well as the three Chiefs of Staff.

local communities that emerged after World War Two. Second, it showed an impetus on the part of the state to assert Australia's growing authority in the Pacific region while also emphasising traditional ties with the British Commonwealth.

The ABMC was equipped with a large budget and staffed by influential politicians and military officials. Yet, despite its prestige and powerful backing, it never managed to see a single memorial project through to completion. This chapter investigates how and why such a seemingly powerful organisation failed in these memorial endeavours. It finds that ultimately the ABMC was met with indifference by the Australian population who, after two decades of remembrance and mourning and six years of enduring the pressures of World War Two, were uninterested in continuing to build conventional memorials. Instead, Australians looked to new memorial forms that could serve some practical community purpose in the present. These utilitarian memorial projects, their proponents argued, encapsulated the contemporary spirit of optimism for building a new and better world in the post-war period while still paying homage to Australian wartime sacrifice. Their detractors argued that utilitarian memorials could never properly symbolise the solemn events to which they paid tribute. At the heart of this debate was the question of who had the social and cultural capital to define the purpose and meaning of memorials—and hence the values and priorities of the Australian nation—in the post-war period.

In many ways the ABMC's story is one of state-sponsored remembrance. James Young has argued that state-sponsored memorials are aimed at shaping people's understanding of the past. By recalling certain events, such as the martyrdom of past heroes or triumph over adversity, states attempt to naturalise and make concrete certain interpretations of history.[2] He notes, however, that this is not a one-sided process, pointing out that once memorials are

[2] James Young, *The texture of memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

built, they become subject to reinterpretation by the publics that receive them, and through this process, are invested with new meanings.[3]

The story of the ABMC is an example of this type of memorial exchange. Those responding to the proposals put forward by the ABMC did not receive them passively, but rather responded with their own ideas for how the war should be remembered. In this context, the following chapter argues that discussions and debate held between the ABMC and those they negotiated with (members of the general public, other Government organisations, veterans' associations, and other interest and lobby groups) became a site for the challenging of established norms around remembrance and mourning in the period. Groups working with the ABMC were attempting to reframe Anzac and remembrance in the post-war period to reflect their optimistic visions for Australia's future.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the memorial culture that arose in Australia in response to World War One, a culture that has exerted a dominant influence on how war has been remembered in Australia ever since. It then briefly outlines the Australian social context during the post-war period, and its influence on the process of memorialisation. These discussions contextualise the analysis that follows. The first part of the chapter traces the ABMC's efforts to build the four major memorials at Darwin, Port Moresby, London and Canberra. The second part examines approaches made to the ABMC by interested members of the public who sought to use the ABMC as a funding conduit for their memorial proposals, many of which were based on utilitarian principles. This analysis draws upon hitherto unexamined archival sources, primarily from the National Archives of Australia and the Australian War Memorial. When they were planning memorials, Australian officials spoke frankly about the value of war remembrance and its place in Australian culture. These records

[3] Ibid., 3.

then, provide a unique insight into how government and military officials saw the value and significance of memorials in the post-war period.

Memorialising World War One

By the advent of World War One, there was already an established practice of building memorials in Australian society. The earliest memorial in Australia was built in 1850, in Hobart, in recognition of the British colonial war against the Māori peoples of New Zealand.[4] It was Australian involvement in the Boer War (1899-1902), however, that established the foundations of Australian memorial. Ken Inglis has noted that in response to Australian soldiers' deaths in that war, memorials began to appear at various locations around Australia, built by local communities and usually in the form of obelisks or statues.[5] Yet it was the distinctive remembrance culture of the Anzac legend that took hold during World War One that most profoundly influenced all forms of war remembrance that have followed in Australia. During World War One and over the interwar period, memorials to those who had died and served spread across Australia. Jan Brazier and Ken Inglis counted 1,455 in their attempt to catalogue these memorials.[6] These memorials came in different shapes and sizes, but for the most part took the form of cenotaphs, obelisks, statues, and honour rolls.[7] While a few extravagant state-backed memorials were eventually built,[8] the vast majority were modest structures built by small communities. This proliferation of World War One memorials was intimately tied to the emerging culture of Anzac, which had quickly become a key part of Australian identity. War memorials were sites where returned soldiers and

[4] Inglis, *Sacred places*, 15.
[5] Ibid., 41-2.
[6] Ibid., 471.
[7] Ibid., 147-64.
[8] Most prominently, the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne (1934) and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (1941).

members of the public could, as a community, gather and pay their respects to the dead and surviving on Anzac Day.[9]

Community-based memorials, being of a small scale and simple to construct, were usually built quickly. But the more extravagant state-based memorials took much longer to complete.[10] Their building was necessitated by the need for appropriate spaces to carry out state-based rituals and commemorations linked to Anzac and Remembrance Day.[11] Small or large, these memorials had become vitally important spaces for Australian people as sites of remembrance and mourning. This was a powerful framework and one that would come to overshadow World War Two remembrance at every step.

Memorialising World War Two

The Australian experience of World War Two was very different from World War One. Given this, the difference between these experiences influenced the way that World War Two was remembered in its immediate aftermath. As we have seen, Australian participation was diffused over a much larger geographical area during World War Two, with Australians taking part in operations in Europe, Africa and the Pacific. Another important factor was that the war was being fought close to home. The perceived threat from Japanese forces in the Pacific gave Australians a sense they were fighting in defence of their home territory. Finally, Australians were much less enthusiastic about their involvement in World War Two than they had been regarding World War One. It was clear by the middle of 1943 that the Allies would be victorious. Yet, there was no climactic battle for Australians. Instead, they were confined to an auxiliary role in the final Pacific campaign.[12] Victory parades and celebrations were

[9] Ken Inglis, *Anzac remembered* (Melbourne: The University of Melbourne History Department, 1998), 116.
[10] Inglis, *Sacred places*, 266-68.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Paul Hasluck, *The government and the people 1942-1945* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1970), 624.

certainly held with much enthusiasm, but these were still muted in comparison to the celebrations that had followed World War One.[13]

Australia's economic circumstances in the post-war period also differed greatly to those experienced in the interwar period. In comparison to the unstable economy of the 1930s, Australia in the late-1940s was in a period of sustained economic growth, supported by a range of policies introduced by the Curtin (1941-1945) and Chifley (1945-1949) governments during and after the war.[14] Between these years the government enacted a broad program of national renewal that encompassed reforms in housing, health, hydro-electric power and infrastructure improvement.[15] A major aspect of this renewal was a focus on civic spaces. Town planners and architects worked to design civic spaces that would benefit local communities, resulting in public amenities such as community centres, swimming pools, kindergartens, and libraries.[16] This program of renewal was in large part inspired by people's experiences of the depression and their experience of the war. Kate Darian-Smith has argued that because people across the country had banded together to contribute to the war effort, often voluntarily, they were inspired to improve their communities through the development of public spaces and amenities in the post-war period.[17]

The turn towards community improvement would also come to inform remembrance of World War Two. This manifested in increasing demands to build utilitarian memorials in the form of public works and amenities that could be dedicated to the memory of the war. Calls for the building of utilitarian memorials had also been made in the interwar period. At that time, those in favour argued that utilitarian memorials could meet public needs while still

[13] Stephen Garton, *The cost of war: Australians return* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.
[14] Ibid., 65.
[15] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 420.
[16] Hannah Lewi, et al., 'Making the modern community,' in *Community: Building modern Australia*, eds. Hannah Lewi and David Nichols (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010), 13.
[17] Darian-Smith, Nichols and Willis, 'The community can do it,' 178.

paying homage to the sacrifices of war. Those in opposition responded that utilitarian memorials could not properly convey the symbolism that a more traditional memorial could and that as such, their meaning would fade over time.[18] It was a debate taking place in different parts of the western world. In the United States, for instance, monumental forms were less popular, being seen as an indulgence of emotion. Whereas in continental Europe in countries like France or Italy, the idea of building a hospital or a school as a memorial held very little regard, these types of amenities having been traditionally provided by the church and the state. [19] In Australia and in the United Kingdom, however, the debate was much more hotly contested.[20] Inglis has demonstrated that in Australia these debates were settled in many cases by the building of memorials that could fulfill both utilitarian and monumental roles such as carillons, fountains, memorials halls or archways and gates.[21] Ultimately, however, traditional forms were much more commonly built in the interwar period. Inglis has estimated, for example, that for every hundred World War One memorials, sixty are monuments, eighteen combine the monumental and the useful, twenty are halls and only two are hospitals, schools, or similar functional memorials.[22]

In the post-war period there was a much greater interest in memorials that would enable community improvement and renewal. These utilitarian memorials took many forms: bridges or roads, community centres, parks, hospitals and so on. The Tobruk Baths in Townsville, on which construction commenced in 1941 and was finally opened in 1950, is a prominent example of one of these utilitarian memorials. In this case, the local council named the baths after the siege of Tobruk in response to community criticism of the decision to build the

[18] Inglis, *Sacred places*, 132-3.
[19] Ibid., 131.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 137.
[22] Ibid., 138.

project during wartime.[23] Still, similar debates to those that had arisen in the interwar period re-emerged following World War Two. Again, Inglis has provided the most complete account of Australian debates concerning utilitarian memorials at this time. In particular, he has noted a Gallup Poll taken in 1944 which found that Australians overwhelmingly favoured utilitarian memorials as evidence of changing attitudes on the subject.[24] As in the interwar period, the debate over utilitarian memorials in the post-war period was an international one. In the United States, for example, traditional memorials were broadly criticised as backwards looking, whereas utilitarian forms were argued to reflect the will of the majority to move on from war and to build a better post-war world.[25]

Voices in favour of erecting utilitarian memorials were numerous in the Australian press. In 1947, for example, an impassioned plea was made in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by the then president of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. He insisted that both the public and returned soldiers wanted 'memorials of a practical nature – hospital wards, clinics, halls, service building, community centres, playing fields, and the like.'[26] However, despite strong sentiment towards the erection of utilitarian memorials, many in Australia still argued for the merits of non-utilitarian memorials. In early 1944 for example, *The Argus* questioned the value of utilitarian memorials, asking its readers: 'Would a hospital fulfil the requirements? Would a library express the emotion as well as a shrine?'[27] The implication was clear – although utilitarian memorials served a public good, they did little to capture the significance or provide symbolism for the events to which they paid tribute. For commentators like the author of the article in *The Argus*, memorials were sites for the expression of collective

[23] 'Tobruk memorial baths,' in *Queensland Heritage Register*, Queensland government website, 2016. [https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601575]
[24] Inglis, *Sacred places*, 334.
[25] Andrew Shanken, 'Planning memory: Living memorials in the United States during World War II,' *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 130.
[26] 'Our Memorials for World War II,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 March 1947.
[27] 'What memorials will this war produce?,' *The Argus*, 18 March 1944.

emotion and for the stirring of national sentiment, roles for which utilitarian memorials were deemed unfit. It was in the midst of these discussions that the ABMC emerged. In attempting to memorialise Australia's experience of World War Two they stood firmly on the side of monumental memorials, arguing that the erection traditional forms were the best way to memorialise the war. Responses to their work, however, were almost unanimously in favour of the utilitarian.

Figure 1-1: Glenelg, SA, Town Hall honour rolls. On the left: WW1 roll of honour, 1924 – On the right: WW2 roll of honour, 1955. RSL Virtual Memorial website.

Formation of the Australian Battlefields Memorials Commission

The ABMC had a precedent in Britain's Battle Exploits Memorial Committee, formed in London in 1919, on which representatives of each British dominion sat. Australia was represented by a sub-committee known as the Australian Battle Memorials Committee, made up of officers still stationed in London. Their task was to oversee the construction of memorials where Australian divisions had served during World War One.[28] Unlike this earlier committee, however, the ABMC was entirely an Australian operation, having been formed independently of Australia's association with Britain as one of the final acts of Chifley's War Cabinet. It was tasked with submitting 'recommendations to the Government on all questions affecting provision or erection of Australian memorials in Australia … and

[28] Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 247.

overseas'.[29] The ABMC drew government and military officials into collaboration to establish these memorial projects.[30] It also received requests for funding from the public for memorial projects. While no explicit level of funding was allocated, the ABMC suggested expenditure on a case-by-case basis for the Government's consideration.[31] Its creation was also evidently a response to the proliferation of community memorials built by military units during and after World War One. In recognition of this proliferation of memorials, the ABMC sought to centralise memorials to World War Two. While their stated purpose was an egalitarian one, based on the reasoning that centralised memorials would be accessible to more Australians, in practice the Government and military were also attempting to exert a greater degree of control over remembrance than they had after World War One.

Labor's Minister for the Interior, Herbert Johnson, was appointed the ABMC's chairman. But the Commission's files make clear that the project's real driver was its Executive Member and Secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel Athol E. Brown (also head of the Anzac Agency, discussed in Chapter Four). Having formerly been director of the Imperial War Graves Commission's (IWGC) War Grave Services in Australia from 1942 to 1946,[32] Brown was a natural choice to lead the ABMC – which he did from 1946 through to its disbandment in 1951. Over the lifespan of the committee, Brown chaired monthly meetings, toured memorials and cemeteries, met with various officials, and worked to publicise the efforts of the ABMC. Several other prominent public servants, mostly from the military, also contributed. Among these were the general editor of the official war histories, Gavin Long; Air Commodore George Mackinolty, representing the RSSAILA; Captain CW Bridge

[29] War Cabinet, 'Meeting minutes,' 18 December 1945, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 4.
[30] War Cabinet, 'Minute paper,' 16 December 1945, NAA: A2670, 524/1945.
[31] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 13 June 1946,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[32] Fabian Ware, 'Twenty-seventh annual report of the Imperial War Graves Commission,' (London: HM Stationary Office, 1947), NAA: A431, 1948/120.

(Navy); Major General Edward Milford (Army); and Air Vice Marshal George Jones (Airforce).[33]

At an ABMC meeting on 5 September 1946, Brown outlined the ABMC's policy for building memorials dedicated to World War Two. The report began by stating that 'There are strong conditions in favour of the erection of a small number of general memorials commemorating the principal exploits of the war … rather than the erection of individual memorials, by formations or units, to commemorate their own exploits.'[34] It further stated that the advantage of this policy was that:

> An impressive memorial on a well-known battlefield or in an Australian capital city regarding famous exploits will be of greater interest to posterity than a large number of insignificant monuments, perhaps difficult of access and hard to locate.[35]

Although it was never stated explicitly, the policy's endorsement of centralised memorials rather than 'a large number of insignificant monuments' was a response to the Australian memorial culture of World War One, in which smaller, community memorials built by returned military units, had proliferated throughout Australia. What the report failed to acknowledge, however, was the significance that these memorials held for the communities which erected them. As Bart Ziino has argued, these community-based memorials gave Australians the opportunity to commemorate local contributions to the war, while also claiming those contributions as part of a broader developing nationalism encapsulated by the Anzac legend.[36] In making these statements, Brown's report was arguing that ABMC's

[33] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 13 June 1946,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[34] Athol E. Brown, 'Submission to the ABMC,' 5 September 1946, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ziino, 'Claiming the dead,' 159.

directive to build centralised monuments at certain key locations was the best way to encapsulate the story of Australia's World War Two through the building of memorials, rather than leaving those stories to be told piecemeal by those units or associations who happened to have the financial and logistical power to erect their own individual memorials. Of course, the policy put forward by Brown would also have the effect of putting the power of memorialisation in the post-war period more firmly into the hands of government, giving the state a greater degree of control over where and what kind of memorials were built.

The ABMC's push to centralise World War Two memorials was also framed as being a more equal way to acknowledge the service of World War Two veterans. On this topic, the report noted that:

> A general memorial would commemorate the names of all units whereas the erection of memorials by those formations and units only who care to pay for them would permit the wealthy division, association etc. an advantage over other units which have no financial backing.[37]

Again, the report framed the ABMC's approach to memorialisation as one that would be more egalitarian, allowing all veterans the same access to memorialisation, and not just those with sufficient financial backing to build their own memorials. But again, it was a move that intended to take the power to memorialise out of these veterans' control and into the hands of government.

[37] Athol E. Brown, 'Submission to the ABMC,' 5 September 1946, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

The four failed memorials

The clearest expression of the ABMC's efforts to consolidate control over post-war memorials can be located in its failed attempt to build four national memorials. These attempts, however, were rebuffed by a disinterested public keen on utilitarian forms and, in the case of the AWM, an unwillingness to relinquish control over national remembrance of World War Two.

In November 1946, the ABMC met at Parliament House to discuss the erection of memorials to the war at Commonwealth expense. It was unanimously decided that state-funded memorials should be erected at Darwin, Port Moresby, London and Canberra.[38] While this was never stated explicitly, these sites appear to have been chosen based on their importance to the Australian experience of World War Two: Darwin was the place where Australian shores were first attacked by an enemy invader. Port Moresby was close to the Kokoda Track where Australians distinguished themselves in a protracted battle against the Japanese in 1942; perhaps more importantly, Port Moresby was also the settlement from which Australia had directed its political administration of Papua and New Guinea since the end of World War One. London represented the seat of Imperial power to which Australia was dominion and was also where the Commonwealth had directed its war in Europe. And finally, Canberra was Australia's national capital, where Australia's war had been waged politically since its outbreak.

The form these four memorials would take quickly became the subject of a wider debate over the relative merits of utilitarian memorials. Inglis was the first historian to identify what he called the 'utilitarian turn' in this period.[39] However, while Inglis makes note of the four never realised memorials discussed in this chapter, they are mentioned only in passing as part

[38] ABMC, 'Meeting Minutes, 25 November 1946,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[39] Inglis, *Sacred places*, 334-35.

of a brief narrative of the history of the AWM.[40] It is worth, then, taking a closer look at this hitherto neglected episode in the history of Australian war remembrance.

From the outset, the ABMC decreed that the proposed memorials should take a monumental form. In April 1947, the ABMC lodged a proposal with the Federal Cabinet outlining their plan to build the four memorials. Cabinet, however, was undecided on the matter, citing disagreement over the question of whether these memorials might take a utilitarian form.[41] After receiving Cabinet's response, ABMC members discussed the value of monumental forms over utilitarian ones. Air Marshall George Jones argued that 'the degree of usefulness of a war memorial is the sentiment expressed'.[42] The committee's engineer, Captain Bridge, agreed, arguing that the erection of a utilitarian memorial, such as a hospital, 'would end up completely submerging the idea that it was a memorial, In a few years' time it would be just a hospital.'[43] The ABMC's proposal was taken to Labor's next Caucus meeting on 8 May 1947, at which it was almost unanimously rejected. One member mused that 'it was very obvious at the meeting that the bulk of the rank and file were against the Cabinet decision'.[44] Leading this criticism was Labor Minister (and noted opponent of HV Evatt) Tom Burke, who advised the Australian press that 'memorials should have some utilitarian value, which need not detract from the aesthetic and memorial aspect'. Chiming in, playwright Leslie Haylen urged that the memorial slated for Canberra should take the form of a 'national theatre', where 'performances of Australian drama, music and dance, together with readings from the best of national literature and displays of national art' could be undertaken.[45]

[40] Ibid., 372.
[41] Federal Cabinet, 'Meeting minutes, 15 April 1947,' NAA: A2703, Volume 4.
[42] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 16 April 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[43] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 16 April 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[44] 'Govt. may switch on memorials,' *The Sun*, 8 May 1947.
[45] 'Memorial plan,' *The Age*, 9 May 1947.

Despite these criticisms, in late April Cabinet approved the ABMC's proposal to build the four non-utilitarian memorials. Following this, several critical responses were reported in the Australian press. Like the views of Labor's caucus, most of these reports were critical of the decision to build memorials that served no practical purpose beyond commemoration and urged the Government to reconsider.[46] Members of the public also weighed in. One letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* argued that to erect 'lifeless war memorials instead of … vital national works seems without vision and unworthy of those who gave their lives' and that memorials should take a utilitarian form that would 'benefit the country as a whole'.[47]

The plan to build these four memorials did find a supporter in Herbert Evatt, then Attorney General, who argued 'that utilitarian considerations should not become a factor in determining the form of memorials to the war dead'.[48] The RSSAILA backed Evatt, making a strong show of support for the proposed monuments. The League's Senior Victorian Vice President, ND Wilson, chided the Caucus for its rejection of the plan, arguing that 'returned servicemen did not want politicians to ride on the back of the subject of war memorials', that utilitarian memorials 'could evoke no depth of feeling', and that war memorials had 'the sole purpose of reminding people of the sacrifices of their fellow men'.[49] Of the overseas memorials he insisted that the value of these proposed memorials was that they would be 'national symbols in faraway places where there was a lesser need for utilitarianism.'[50] When questioned in Parliament, Prime Minister Chifley was quick to play down the debate. He advised that there was 'room for honest difference of opinion on the matter' but that, 'although utilitarian memorials have great value, there is a possibility that future generations may forget the purpose for which they were erected'.[51] Chifley was arguing that the value of

[46] 'Need for national war memorial,' *The Mercury*, 1 May 1947.
[47] 'Letters to the editor,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 1947.
[48] 'More useful memorials planned,' *The Advertiser*, 9 May 1947.
[49] 'Aesthetic war memorials favoured by RSL,' *The Age*, 10 May 1947.
[50] 'RSL May Act on War Memorials,' *News*, 9 May 1947.
[51] CDP, HoR, 9 May 1947, no.18, p. 2181.

memorials went beyond their immediate context and that their more important purpose was to promote national unity by enabling remembrance across generational divides.

Despite backing from influential figures like Evatt, Wilson, and Chifley, these memorials would never be built. Nevertheless, the planning procedures and the debates that took place around them, demonstrate how the ABMC attempted to shape remembrance of World War Two in the post-war period. This discussion now turns to a close examination of these four failed projects.

The Darwin memorial

The parameters for the proposed Darwin memorial were first discussed by the ABMC in February 1947. It was agreed that 'the form of the memorial be left to a designer' but that it should be distinctly 'non-utilitarian'. The budget for the structure was set at £30,000 and was to include 'inscriptions of battle honours … in the Pacific Zone'.[52] It was a considerable sum, being roughly equivalent to two million Australian dollars today.[53] At the committee's next meeting it was agreed by several members that 'some non-utilitarian memorial of great beauty would be most fitting and could be incorporated into the town planning for the new City of Darwin' (with a fountain being agreed upon by the ABMC's membership).[54] The proposal to build a memorial at Darwin was sent to the administrator of the Northern Territory and the city's Director of Works and Housing in August later that year.[55] The territory's Administrator, Mr AR Driver, responded in February 1948, 'expressing his view that the matter was desirable'.[56]

[52] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 5 February 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[53] This is according to the Reserve Bank of Australia's inflation calculator.
[54] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 5 March 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[55] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 26 August 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[56] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 25 February 1948,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

At this stage it appeared that the Darwin memorial would go ahead without protest. But the plans hit a snag when, travelling to Darwin in mid-1949, Johnson received a deputation from the city's Civic Committee registering its aversion to a 'non-utilitarian' memorial. Instead, it advised that 'it would be far preferable to use the money available for the construction of a playing area, a swimming pool, a memorial garden or something of a utilitarian nature'.[57] It is unsurprising that civic leaders in Darwin sought to push for a useful memorial, given the war's heavy toll on Darwin. Indeed, while Darwin's wartime military presence had brought the city improved infrastructure and amenities, much of the city had been left damaged and destroyed, prompting a slowly recuperating population to focus on rebuilding its civic spaces.[58]

Despite this, the ABMC was resolute. It responded that 'the subject had already been very fully discussed' and that the original decision that 'the proposed memorial at Darwin should be of a non-utilitarian nature' would be upheld.[59] The Civic Committee appeared to accept this. In June it advised Darwin's *Northern Standard* that plans were underway for the building of a 'non-utilitarian' memorial.[60] By the following year, however, the plan had not progressed. Speaking at a commemoration of the Darwin bombings in February, a representative of the Civic Committee recalled that 'the Federal Government had promised that a memorial … would be erected in Darwin to the memory of those who died in the raids'. He noted that although memorials were being planned in Canberra, 'nothing had been said regarding that for Darwin and it would be necessary for local people to "keep the

[57] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 30 September 1949,' NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.
[58] Alan Powell, *Far country: A short history of the Northern Territory* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 185.
[59] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 30 September 1949,' NAA: NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.
[60] 'Civic committee have big plans for future activity,' *Northern Standard*, 1 July 1949.

pressure on" to see that the Government's promise was kept'.[61] Judging from the written record, the ABMC remained silent on the matter. In the end, nothing was built.

Although the ABMC's records say nothing on the Darwin proposal from late-1949, it seems likely that with the change to the conservative Menzies government that year and the appointment of a new chairman of the ABMC (Minister for the Interior Phillip McBride) plans for the Darwin memorial were abandoned. Significantly, the newly formed Menzies government saw Labor as having poorly handled the Darwin bombings. In 1955, Paul Hasluck, then Minister for Territories, called the bombings a 'national shame' and apportioned blame to the incompetent response of the wartime Curtin government.[62] It is plausible, then, that the newly incumbent Liberal government was uninterested in giving the previous Labor government undeserved credit for their efforts to memorialise the bombings. Rather, Liberal politicians like Hasluck wanted to emphasise that Curtin's response was both neglectful and incompetent.

The Port Moresby memorial

The plan to build a memorial in Port Moresby was the most short-lived of the four projects. The ABMC decided on Port Moresby as a suitable site on the basis that 'it was from there that the first set back was organised' during the war—Port Moresby was the site from which the Australian counterattack against Japanese forces advancing down the Kokoda Track had been launched in late 1942.[63] Early plans for the memorial were ambitious and called for a 'prominent structure … visible from land, sea and air, floodlit by night and possibly surmounted by a beacon as a sea and air navigational aid.' Its budget, like the Darwin project, was set at £30,000. Its aim was to commemorate 'campaigns… in the general area of New

[61] 'Darwin remembers her dead,' *Northern Standard*, 24 February 1950.
[62] 'Darwin's day of shame, says Mr Hasluck,' *The Canberra Times*, 26 March 1955.
[63] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 25 November 1946,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

Guinea, New Britain and the seas about'.[64] While the ABMC had initially agreed that 'the memorial should not be one of a utilitarian nature,' it was eventually agreed that the structure should be 'surmounted by a light, perhaps in the form of an eternal flame,' and that 'some practical use might be made of it as aid to navigation for ships entering the harbour'. The structure was to be built on Paga Hill, a peninsula west of Port Moresby's town centre, so it 'would be viewed by all ships approaching Port Moresby.'[65]

This memorial never moved beyond the stage of initial discussions. Certainly, nothing more on the topic was recorded by the ABMC. Chapter Four of this thesis examines the work of the Anzac Agency, a subsidiary of the Imperial War Graves Commission, charting its work building and caretaking ceremonies in Thailand, Malaysia, Borneo and New Guinea in the late 1940s. Given the existence of these sites, it is plausible to speculate that the existence of these other sites of remembrance in the region made the proposal for the Paga Hill memorial seem unnecessary.

Notably, however, the Commission did work closely with the RAAF to erect a memorial (see image 1 below) to the late John Francis Jackson, a renowned Australian fighter-pilot shot down and killed in a dogfight with Japanese Zeros over New Guinea in April 1942, at the eponymous Jackson airfield in Port Moresby, now known as Jacksons International Airport.[66] In contrast to the ABMC's limited enthusiasm at the time, since the mid-1990s Port Moresby has become an important thoroughfare for Australian battlefield tourists and descendants of those who served. These come to reconnect with Australia's wartime history in the region, visiting the Bomana cemetery, where more than 3,000 Australian troops are buried, and on guided tours to walk the Kokoda Track.

[64] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 5 February 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[65] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 5 March 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[66] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 25 November 1946,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

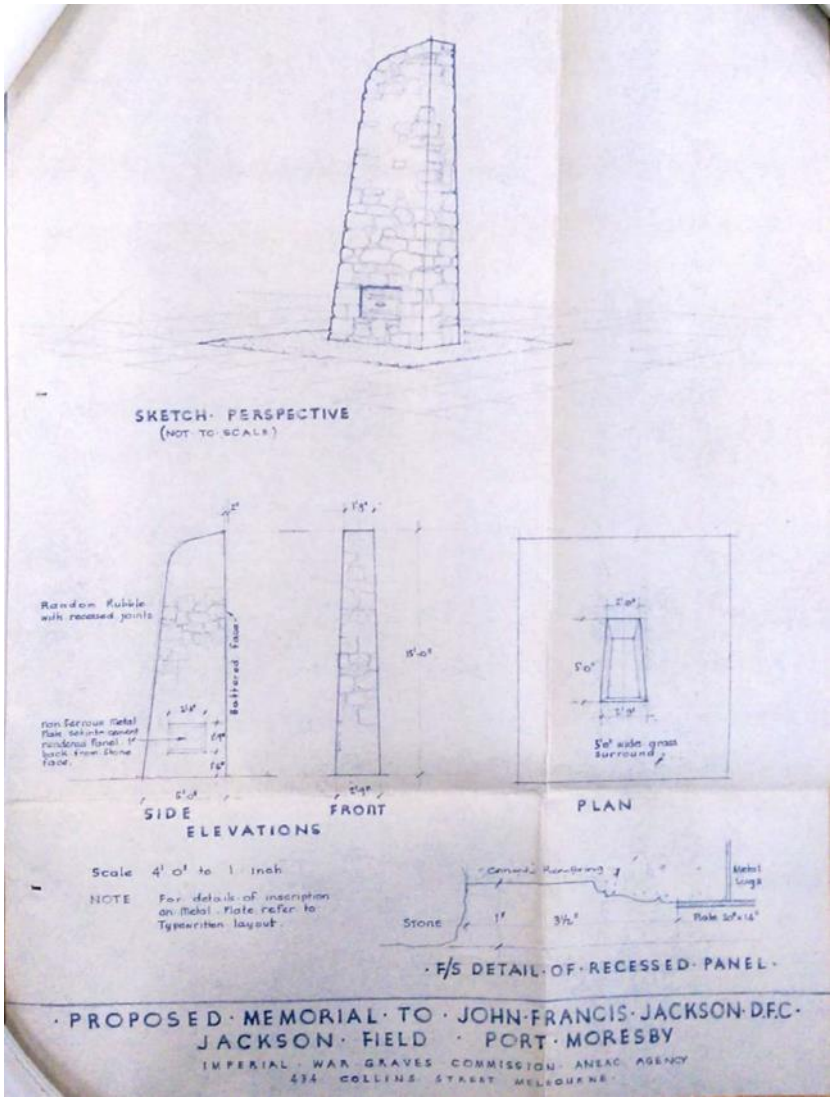

Figure 1-2: Design for the memorial to Squadron Leader Jackson, completed in 1951. NAA:MP742/1, 328/1/12.

The London memorial

While the proposed London memorial did not bear directly upon the debate around utilitarian memorials, it was another clear representation of the ABMC's inclination to produce monumental, rather than utilitarian, forms. In addition, this project represented the ABMC's drive to represent and reaffirm Australia's continued connection to Britain in the post-war world. It is little wonder that the ABMC saw London as an important site for this representation and reaffirmation of Australia's position as a member of the modern British

Commonwealth. The first Anzac Day in 1916 had been celebrated with great fanfare in London. Australian and New Zealand troops had marched through the streets there in front of thronging crowds to join a special Anzac Day service at Westminster Abbey,[67] attended by the King and Queen, that was held as a tribute to the sacrifices that Australian and New Zealand troops had made in the name of the British Empire.[68] Despite the thousands of Australian troops that had trained and been stationed in Britain in both World War One and World War Two, there was not yet an Anzac memorial in London at the time of the ABMC's proposal.

From the earliest meetings of the ABMC it was agreed that an Australian memorial should be erected in London. In 1947, the ABMC decided that a competition should be held to come up with its design and structure.[69] Planning for the competition did not commence until late 1948. Writing to Britain's Royal Fine Arts Commission (RFAC), the ABMC requested that the structure be located outside Australia House on the Strand, in London's centre. The RFAC was quick to impose limits, advising that the memorial should take the form of 'walling on the pavement outside Australia House' and that this walling should not 'obstruct the vision of passing motorists.' These restrictions were not appreciated by members of the Commission, who complained to one another that the RFAC's limitations would make for 'an unworthy form of Memorial and would possibly be used as a lounging-place by pedestrians.' Brown, however, sought to make the best of an unfortunate situation, arguing that 'it would be possible to erect there a magnificent memorial, perhaps a fine piece of sculpture set on a broad base, which would be no higher than the proposed walling'.[70] It is unsurprising that Commission members were frustrated by the response of the RFAC, especially given that a

[67] Anzac Day services at Westminster Abbey continue to the present day.
[68] 'Anzac remembered,' *The Weekly Times*, 29 April 1916.
[69] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 5 February 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[70] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 15 June 1949,' NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.

primary function of memorials is precisely to arrest the views of visitors and passers-by. Evidently the RFAC, in outlining this restriction, was tacitly registering its objection to the proposal.

Undeterred, the Commission went ahead with a competition for the memorial's design, commencing in December 1949. A figure of £25,000 pounds was allocated for the structure, with the competition restricted to 'British citizens domiciled within or without Australia.' A group of prominent architects from around Australia were picked to judge the winning entries, and prize money was set at £250 for the winner. Guidelines for the form of the memorial were left unspecified, the only instruction being that it should 'form a suitable commemoration of the deeds of all the Australian fighting services and the Merchant Navy in the 1939-45 war' and should accord 'with the architectural and sculptural treatment of Australia House and should not unduly obstruct the visibility of vehicular traffic.'[71]

By the competition's close, 59 entries 'from all over the world' had been received.[72] A design by a well-known British sculptor from London, George Henry Paulin, was picked as the winner.[73] Paulin was renowned for designing war memorials around Britain in the inter-war period.[74] The judges found that his submission was 'an excellent work of art … [that] satisfactorily symbolized remembrance' and was 'admirably designed to suit the site.' Air Marshall Jones commented that 'its symbolism represented the spirit of this modern age.'[75]

While the winning entry was well liked by judges, its design exceeded the RFAC's stipulated dimensions. This, argued ABMC members, could be rectified by simply shrinking the structure down by a fifth. But this was not enough for the RFAC, who rejected the design out

[71] ABMC, 'Conditions of competition,' December 1949, NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.
[72] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 24 November 1950,' NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.
[73] Athol Brown, 'Competition winners,' 6 August 1951, NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12. Unfortunately, much of the competition material, such as photos or design documents for the entries, has not survived.
[74] 'George Henry Paulin ARSA', *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951*, University of Glasgow History of Art, 2011 [website].
[75] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 24 November 1950,' NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.

of hand. The judges were livid. In his final report on the competition, Professor Joseph Burke from of the University of Melbourne, who had only recently emigrated to Australia from England, noted sardonically that it was 'impossible to contest the reasons of the Deputy Crown Solicitor … for he has not stated them.' Professor Burke continued that the 'allocation of space by the London City Council' was 'unnecessarily parsimonious' and that he and the other judges 'accepted the design exactly as it stood.' Despite these objections, the judges' final decision was that the verdict of the Crown Solicitor should be accepted, based on 'purely legal interpretation.'[76] Following this, no further discussions were held, and the matter was finally put to rest.

From the outset, the British authorities had shown a reluctance to support the construction of an Australian memorial in London. But rather than issue an outright refusal, they imposed strict limits on the proposed memorial's dimensions. Their eventual rejection of the proposal, on what was arguably a technicality, showed little regard for over two years of planning by the ABMC. For the memorial's proponents, however, the significance of a structure dedicated to Australia's contributions to the war, located at the symbolic centre of Britain was immense. This was demonstrated by the amount of work undertaken by the ABMC and the competition's judges. But the episode also reflected the broader relationship between Australia and Britain at the time. While they remained close political and cultural allies, the war had tested their relationship more seriously than ever before. Britain's broken promise to adequately support Australia during the fall of Singapore had resulted in public embarrassment for the leadership of both countries.[77] Conversely, Australia's successes in the Pacific (in New Guinea and elsewhere) had been won with the assistance of American rather than British support. These factors contributed to a weakening of ties between the two nations

[76] Prof. Joseph Bourke, 'Report on memorial in London,' 21 January 1951, NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.
[77] Beaumont, 'Australia's war: Asia and the Pacific,' 31.

that Australian leaders worked to reinforce in the post-war period. In this context the London memorial was to be a symbolic affirmation of Australia's contribution to the war effort and continuing importance as a member of the British Commonwealth. A memorial dedicated to Australian contributions to both World Wars was eventually opened in London, Hyde Park, not far from Australia House. The memorial was unveiled by the Queen on 12 November 2003, as part of the city's Armistice Day commemorations.[78] Coincidentally, the design is reminiscent of the ABMC's proposal, taking the form of a low sloping wall, engraved with the names and hometowns of Australian soldiers.[79]

The Canberra Carillon

While the first three memorial projects never made it past initial planning stages, a proposal to erect a Carillon in Canberra dedicated to World War Two very nearly did go ahead. Materials had been ordered, prime minister Menzies had given approval, and a preliminary agreement had been reached that the structure should be an adjunct to the existing AWM. At the final hour, however, it was scuttled by the AWM's board members, who viewed the Carillon as a competing remembrance space that would detract from the importance and solemnity of the AWM.

The earliest incarnations of the carillon began to appear in Belgium and the Netherlands, in the 16th century. These early carillons were incorporated into churches and performed the dual functions of bell tolling for marking time or special events and playing musical arrangements.[80] Over the next 400 years, the use of carillons was almost entirely restricted to European countries. In the interwar period, however, several carillons were built in the

[78] 'The Queen unveils tribute to Australia's fallen,' *The Telegraph*, 12 November 2003.
[79] Department of Veterans' Affairs, 'Australian War Memorial, London,' brochure, 2003. [https://www.dva.gov.au/documents-and-publications/australian-war-memorial-london]
[80] Luc Rombouts, *Singing bronze: A history of carillon music* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), 62-65.

United States as memorials to the Civil War and World War One.[81] The historiography examining carillons is limited, and what has been written has tended to focus on the development of carillons in Europe and their exportation to the United States in the early 20th century.[82] However, carillons were constructed outside of Europe and the United States. In Australia two carillons were also built during the interwar period as memorials to World War One. One was at the University of Sydney, in 1928.[83] The other was built in Bathurst in 1933.[84]

It is not clear whether the ABMC were directly influenced by these Australian-built carillons. Nevertheless, in February 1947, the commission decided that the Canberra memorial should take 'the form of a Carillon of bells in a tower' and be dedicated to 'Australian Fighting Services … in the 1939-45 war.'[85] Captain Bridge, believed it 'would not only prove a worthy war memorial,' but would also be of 'educational value' to the people of Canberra. It was unanimously agreed by the ABMC that the Carillon project be pursued.[86] The only member who foresaw difficulty in convincing the AWM of the proposal's value was Gavin Long, who advised that any submission to the Federal Cabinet should draw attention to Curtin's announcement, at the AWM's opening in 1941, that the 'existing War Memorial at Canberra would serve as the National Memorial for both the first and second World Wars'.[87] This notion, that the AWM was the only national memorial to represent the Australian

[81] Tiffany K. Ng, 'A new history of the carillon,' *Keyboard Perspectives* 8 (2015): 190-1.
[82] For other work examining carillons see Jessica Lambertz Witek, 'Creating Virginia's war memorial carillon,' *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 126 (2018): 44-81; Patrick Nickleson 'The message of the carillon: Bells as instruments of colonialism in twentieth-century Canada, *Canadian Journal of Music* 36 (2016); and Diederik Oostdijk, *Bells for America: The Cold War, modernism, and the Netherlands carillon in Arlington* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).
[83] 'Carillon,' *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate*, 31 July 1930.
[84] 'Carillon for Bathurst,' *The Mercury*, 7 November 1933.
[85] ABMC Sub-Committee, 'Meeting Minutes, 5 February 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[86] ABMC, 'Meeting Minutes, 5 March 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[87] ABMC, 'Meeting Minutes, 5 March 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

experience of both world wars, was to become a key point of contention between the ABMC and the AWM's board of directors.

Nevertheless, in May 1947 Cabinet gave their approval for the four memorials, allocating £70,000 for the Carillon's construction.[88] If the Carillon were to be situated as adjunct to the AWM, however, it would need to be approved by the latter's board. To convince them, Vic Johnson organised a meeting between the ABMC and AWM staff.[89] Over two days representatives of the two organisations debated the issue. The AWM's staff was resistant. In registering their disapproval, director John Treloar advised of plans to enlarge the AWM so that there would be 'sufficient space for the relics and pictures of the 1939/1945 war'.

As such, he argued that to erect a memorial unique to World War Two in Canberra would dilute the symbolism of the AWM as a space for the commemoration of *all* Australia's wartime sacrifice. He advised that 'fathers who fell in the last war should be commemorated in the same memorial as their sons who have fallen in this war, and in this one memorial there should be Australia's complete commemoration of the fallen'.[90] Treloar's statement encapsulated an emerging idea that the advent of World War Two had necessitated a broadening of the AWM purpose. Under this emerging model, the AWM was to stand for more than just remembrance of the Gallipoli landing and World War One; it was to stand for all Australian experiences of war.

The ABMC members, however, saw World War Two as an event that deserved its own unique memorial spaces for remembrance. In response to Treloar, they suggested that the Carillon might be put at some adjacent location rather than incorporated into the AWM grounds. George Jones noted that he did not feel the 'Carillon would create competition'.[91]

[88] 'Our Sydney letter,' *Portland Guardian*, 2 June 1947.
[89] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 7 July 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[90] John Treloar, 'Address to ABMC, 7 July 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[91] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 7 July 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

For his part, Brown attempted to frame the proposed Carillon as a utilitarian structure, claiming that 'the intention had never been to take away from the existing memorial, but to provide a utilitarian memorial' to complement the AWM. While he never stated what utility the memorial might provide, Brown likely saw the Carillon's musical function as providing a public entertainment. Further, it seems that Brown, recognising the AWM's resistance to the proposal, sought to link the Carillon with the growing public interest in utilitarian memorials to further emphasise its value.

The AWM board members eventually relented. Unanimous agreement was reached to submit a joint proposal to the Federal Cabinet on the matter, concluding that recognition of Australian involvement in World War Two would be 'perfected by the addition of the Carillon'.[92] Over the next two years bells and other necessary parts of the structure's mechanism were ordered, a competition was held for its design, and the question of a suitable site for the memorial was mulled over.[93] In the meantime, the Australian press reported widely that the Carillon's manufacture was to go ahead.[94] By July 1950, however, the AWM's board of directors had changed their minds. In a letter to the ABMC, they complained that funding and resources allocated for the proposed Carillon would be better put towards their project to extend the AWM to accommodate relics from the 1939-1945 war.[95]

[92] ABMC and AWM sub-committee, 'Meeting minutes, 12 August 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[93] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 9 February 1950,' NAA: MP742, 328/1/12.
[94] 'War memorials carillon for Canberra,' *National Advocate*, 11 February 1950; 'Canberra carillon national war memorial contract placed,' *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 28 April 1950; 'British firm to cast carillon,' *The Evening Advocate*, 28 April 1950; 'Carillon from UK for Canberra,' *The Central Queensland Herald*, 4 May 1950.
[95] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 24 July 1950,' NAA: MP742, 328/1/12.

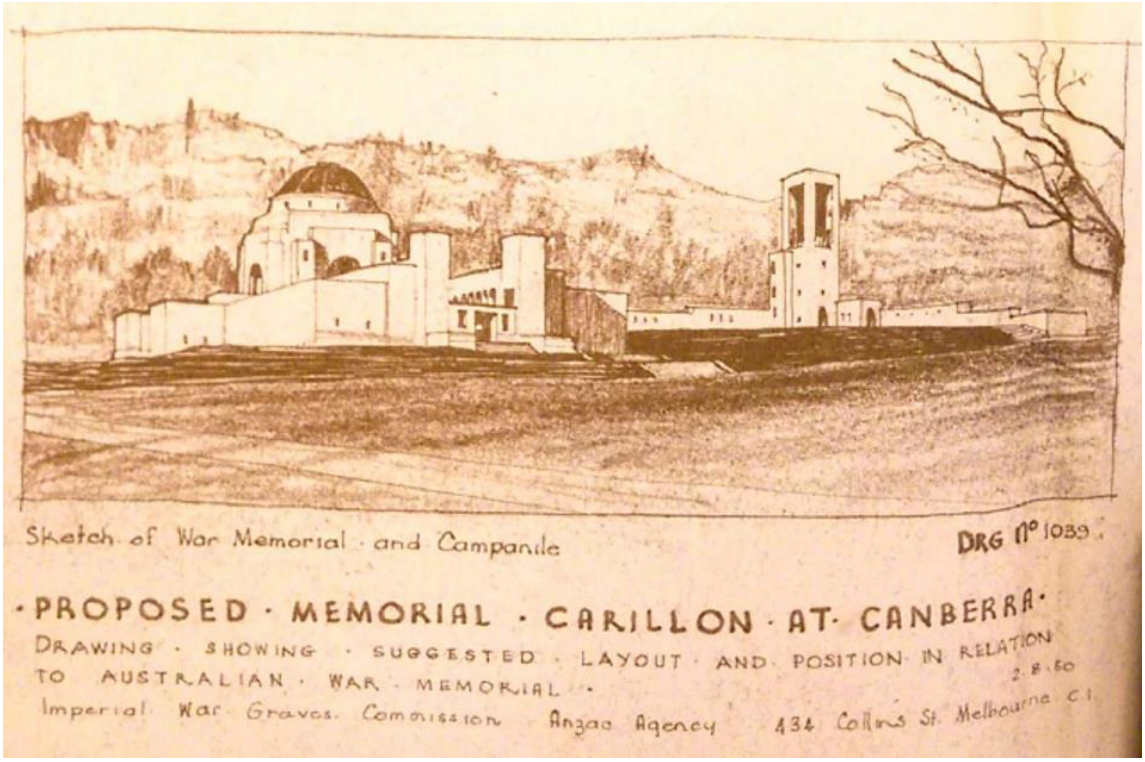

Figure 1-3: Proposal sketch portraying the Carillon as adjunct to the AWM, 2 August 1950, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 4.

To resolve the situation, a further meeting was proposed between the AWM's board and the ABMC, with the National Capital Planning and Development Committee (NCPDC) to act as arbitrator. The AWM's board of directors, represented by Bean, Treloar, and Sir Gilbert Dyett, having had two years to consider the proposal, were now vehement in their opposition. They argued that 'they did not regard the proposed Carillon as essential or necessary, or even desirable'.[96] To these men, the prospect of building a unique memorial to World War Two in Canberra was redundant. The AWM was a memorial to represent all Australian experiences of war. The ABMC's representatives reasoned as best they could for the value of the project, noting that it would 'perfect the existing Memorial' and become a 'cultural asset.' But these were arguments directed at an unsympathetic audience. The final decision by the NCPDC was that the Carillon was 'not a necessary element in the Memorial'; the enlargement of the

[96] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 24 July 1950,' NAA: MP742, 328/1/12.

present memorial was, on the other hand, a 'fundamental necessity' and that consequently, the proposal for the Carillon should be deferred indefinitely.[97] A Carillon was eventually opened in Canberra, though not for another twenty years and for a different memorial purpose. On 26 April 1970, to celebrate Canberra's fiftieth anniversary as the nation's capital (no association was made with World War Two), a Carillon was opened on Aspen Island on the northern side of Lake Burley Griffin, just out of sight of the AWM and Anzac Parade, by Queen Elizabeth — as a gift to the people of Australia.[98] While the structure was raised in honour of the city, rather than in memory of World War Two, it seems likely that the ABMC's mooted proposal was influential in the eventual decision to build a Carillon on the lake's shore.

In the wake of World War Two, the ABMC's plan to build four memorials was a resolute failure. It set out to build grand memorials, unique to the Australian experience of World War Two. However, the Commission gave too little consideration to the rising enthusiasm for utilitarian memorials and, in the case of the carillon, underestimated the AWM's reluctance to relinquish control over the remembrance of war in the nation's capital. Had the ABMC's membership been more willing to embrace emerging memorial trends they might have made a significant contribution to the reshaping of Anzac remembrance along utilitarian lines that was taking place. It is ironic then, that in attempting to create new memorials dedicated to World War Two, the ABMC's failure resulted from its unwillingness to look beyond traditional forms for inspiration.

[97] CS Daley, NCPDC, 'Carillon meeting outcome,' 16 August 1950, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 4.
[98] 'Sir Paul pleads for 'form of gift',' *The Canberra Times,* 16 August 1969; 'Crowds see royal family,' *The Canberra Times*, 27 April 1970.

Community approaches to the ABMC

The ABMC not only worked to erect its own memorial projects, it also received requests for memorial funding from interested groups around Australia. During its lifespan, the Commission received eleven petitions to fund memorial projects. These were received from communities and councils, local RSSAILA sub-branches, union bodies, the Australian-American Co-Operation Movement, and even a funeral directors association. Most of these sought funding and support to erect utilitarian memorials in the form of public works and community improvements in dedication to World War Two. A few, however, called for more traditional memorials. One of these suggested the entombment of an unknown soldier at the AWM. Two others sought to memorialise Australia's bond with the United States by the erection of a replica of the statue of liberty in Canberra and by the building of an American war cemetery in Ipswich, Queensland – both expressions of public enthusiasm for the links formed between Americans and Australians during the war and the developing post-war relationship between the two nations. Although these attempts at remembrance were made for diverse reasons, they shared the goal of leveraging the memory of World War Two to advance new ideas about what it meant to be Australian and Australia's changing place in the world.

Utilitarian suggestions

Most of the suggestions received by the ABMC were for utilitarian projects, such as the building of a dam in the town of Grass Patch, Western Australia, or the establishment of a medical school, also in Western Australia. These were usually framed as encapsulating a reverence for Australian exploits in war while simultaneously meeting community needs. As we have seen, calls for the building of utilitarian war memorials can be traced to the interwar period, and while these were certainly passionate, they were more often than not dismissed on

the grounds that utilitarian memorials would lose their meaning and significance over time.[99] In the aftermath of World War Two, however, support for utilitarian memorials was revived. The new focus on building up communities and neighbourhoods was in large part spurred by the Department of Post-War Reconstruction. The Department encouraged Australians (through advertising and education) to take an active role in the expansion of their local communities and provided funding in support of this encouragement.[100] Enthusiasm for utilitarian memorials was also driven by a federal ruling, made in the interwar period, that gifts for the construction of public war memorials would be tax deductible.[101] This made utilitarian memorials convenient, if indirect, tax avoidance mechanisms for the enactment and creation of new services and amenities in an economic environment where modernisation and social revitalisation was being emphasised.

A few of the suggestions for utilitarian memorials received by the ABMC stand out. In late 1945 a letter was forwarded to the ABMC from the Australian Nursing Federation requesting that a post-graduate nursing scholarship program be enacted as 'a National Memorial for members of the Australian Army Nursing Service who were killed or succumbed to illness or ill treatment'.[102] In the period there were many calls for the expansion of nursing education in Australia.[103] Often these calls noted that Australian nurses wishing to undertake post-graduate study were forced to travel overseas and bear the associated costs to increase their qualifications.[104] A follow-up letter from the nursing federation's secretary, EP Evans, advised the ABMC it was considered 'deplorable that our trained women should have to

[99] Lewi, 'Commemorating and enhancing the everyday,' 206.
[100] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 195-96.
[101] Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 335.
[102] EP Evans, Sec. Australian Nursing Federation, 'Letter to ABMC regarding memorial nursing scholarship proposal,' 3 December 1945, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[103] 'Reconstruction needed … in nursing world,' *The Age*, 28 September 1946; 'Nursing profession is in jeopardy,' *The Advertiser,* 26 February 1947; 'Nursing display tomorrow: Hope of attracting new trainees,' *The West Australian*, 6 May 1947; 'It's time for a show-down in nursing,' *The Courier-Mail*, 6 January 1947.
[104] 'Post graduate course as memorial to Australian nurses,' *The Farmer and Settler,* 8 February 1946.

travel overseas to further their nursing education' because of a lack of available programs in Australia.[105]

Others petitioned the ABMC to build public works as memorials. In 1946, the Wheat and Wool Growers' Union of Western Australia wrote to the committee to request the building of a water dam in Grass Patch (a small town in the southern goldfield region of Western Australia). The proposed dam was to honour the Victoria Cross winner Tom Starevich, who had distinguished himself in North-Borneo in late 1945.[106] In making this request, the union argued that to avoid forgetting 'this brave soldier … the erection of a modern water dam at "Grass Patch" as a natural monument of deep respect' should be undertaken. The petitioners described the proposal as 'a most natural and economical monument'. This letter not only emphasized the symbolic value of such a project; it also noted the potential to help the local community. Along these lines they argued that the current dam was 'too small for present requirements' and that 'water carting will soon be in full swing if the present weather keeps up'. Should the dam be built, they claimed, 'water shortages would be a thing of the past'.[107] While the ABMC promised to consider the proposal, it was swiftly dismissed. At the same meeting Vic Johnson, whose electorate encompassed Grass Patch, stated that 'he very much doubted if enough rain fell at Grass Patch to fill the dam envisaged by the Grass Patch branch of the Wheat and Wool Growers' Union'.[108]

In another letter received by the ABMC, in 1946, members of the University of Western Australia's Medical Students' Society requested the establishment of a medical school in the state as a memorial to the late John Curtin. In making this suggestion, they argued that a

[105] EP Evans, Sec. Australian Nursing Federation, 'Letter to ABMC regarding memorial nursing scholarship proposal,' 3 December 1945, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[106] Keith D. Howard, 'Starcevich, Leslie Thomislav (Thomas) (1918–1989)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University.
[107] WM Dean, 'Letter to ABMC regarding memorial dam proposal,' 5 February 1946, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[108] Department of the Army, 'Report on meeting of the ABMC at the Department of the Interior,' 13 June 1946, NAA: MP742/1, 328/1/12.

medical school would be 'very fitting, as John Curtin himself was a very practical man'. Yet the proposal was first and foremost aimed at removing a deficiency in medical training facilities in the state. The petition noted that 'over 70 first year students, many of whom are ex-servicemen', were unable to continue their studies in Western Australia and were compelled to find medical school placement in a university in one of the eastern states. It claimed that few medical students who went on study elsewhere 'have returned to this state'. Hence the proposed medical school would 'be invaluable to the health of both the public and the present overworked Medical Practitioners'.[109] Speaking to Perth's *West Australian*, the vice-president of the society asserted that should the Government fail to establish the school that there would continue to be 'no point of contact for West Australian practitioners with a centre of medical knowledge and research'. He argued that 'if we were to have a war memorial erected in this State, surely it could not assume a more fitting form than a medical school.'[110] Just two weeks later the request was rejected by the ABMC.[111] In its response the Commission stated that the request 'appears to visualize the Australian public being canvassed for subscriptions towards the memorial and the Commonwealth Government making a substantial financial contribution to the amount of money required'.[112]

For each of these requests, the ABMC offered more than just the chance to recognise some aspect of the war, whether it was the contribution of nurses, a Victoria Cross winner, or the work of John Curtin. It also provided an opportunity to address a deficiency in their communities – access to training in the case of the Australian Nursing Federation, improved

[109] Boyd Buttsworth, 'Memorial medical school,' 9 April 1946, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[110] 'Students' plea. "Situation is urgent" war memorial suggestion,' *The West Australian*, 4 April 1946.
[111] According to the University of Western Australia's website, their medical school was opened some ten years later, in 1957.
[112] F Strahan, ABMC, 'response to WA Medical Students Society memorial proposal,' 24 April 1946, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

water supply in the case of Grass Patch, and a school in the case of the Medical Students Society. The ABMC, however, were uninterested in approving these requests.

The Unknown Soldier

Not every community petition was for a utilitarian project. Others called for more traditional memorial forms and these calls reflected an interest in remembrance that symbolised Australia's changing place in the world. In 1945 the ABMC received a proposal from the Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) to entomb an unknown soldier at the AWM. Those in support of the AFDA's proposal were explicitly advocating for a national symbol in this style. Despite the difference in time, the principles behind the 1945 plan and the actual entombment in 1993 were the same — to create a space for the remembrance of Australia at war that was untethered from association with Britain and British identity.

In early 1944, a Fitzroy-based funeral director, Mr Robson, approached the Victorian Funeral Directors Association to propose that the government 'bring back to our land the body of an Australian Unknown Warrior' as the 'British Funeral Directors at the termination of the last War' had.[113] Robson was referring to the entombment of an unknown soldier at Westminster Abbey in London, which had taken place on Armistice Day in 1920.[114] On that occasion the body of an unidentified soldier from the western front was entombed at Westminster as a symbol for the millions of war-dead that had no known grave.[115] Jay Winter has argued that the memorial for this unknown warrior reflected a need to bring home the dead in a symbolic sense, given the impossibility of repatriating remains in so many cases.[116] In making his petition, Robson was seeking a distinctly Australian space for the remembrance of those with

[113] R Robson, 'Letter proposing Unknown Warrior,' 16 February 1944, NAA: A431, 1947/138.
[114] David Cannadine, 'War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain,' in *Mirrors of mortality*, ed. Joachim Whaley (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1981), 223.
[115] Winter, *Sites of memory*, 27.
[116] Ibid., 28.

no known grave. Moreover, given the impossibility of making pilgrimages to the often remote and inaccessible battlefields of World War Two, the unknown warrior memorial would provide a space for the collective outpouring of grief, as the Westminster tomb had done.

It would take more than a year for the AFDA to approach the Department of the Interior on the matter. In his letter to Vic Johnson, the association's secretary pitched a plan to inter an 'Unknown Warrior' at the Australian War Memorial. He opined that the memorial could become a distinctly Australian place of remembrance, as an 'embodiment of the national sacrifice' endured by Australia's military over the two world wars.[117] The ABMC responded enthusiastically. Athol Brown stated that the suggestion had 'much to commend it' and noted similar suggestions had been raised by the RSSAILA. Brown said that several factors, such as practicability, public sentiment, and the cooperation of religious and returned servicemen's organisations would need to be gauged but tendered his opinion that the initiative would likely 'be greatly favoured by the vast majority of Australians'.[118]

Speaking to the press in September, the Minister for the Army, Frank Forde, advised that the government would consider 'suggestions that remains of an unknown soldier should be brought … for burial in the Commonwealth'.[119] This drew mixed responses in the press. One letter to Brisbane's *Courier Mail* agreed that 'Australia should have an Unknown Warrior as Britain had after the last war', that 'he should be one from the Pacific battlefields', and 'should be laid to rest at Canberra.'[120] Hobart's *Mercury* noted the value of the proposal for grieving war widows, arguing it would 'probably be enthusiastically supported by many war

[117] HA Bussell, 'Letter proposing unknown soldier memorial,' 5 November 1945, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[118] AE Brown, Directorate of War Graves Services, 'Memo regarding Unknown Warrior proposal,' 19 December 1945, NAA: A431, 1947/138.
[119] 'Australia's unknown soldier,' *The Daily News*, 22 September 1945.
[120] 'Reader wants Unknown Soldier for 1939-45 War,' *The Courier-Mail*, 24 September 1945.

widows and bereaved mothers', as the Westminster Abbey tomb had provided to 'thousands of mothers, wives, and sweethearts throughout the world'.[121] There were also some criticisms of the suggestion. The *Sydney Telegraph* pointed out that as it would not 'be possible to select and entomb a soldier who had fought in both wars, selection would destroy the unknown warrior ideal.'[122] Similarly, a respondent to *Smith's Weekly* quipped that rather than entomb an unknown soldier in Canberra, it would be preferable 'to build homes for Known Soldiers'.[123] Responses here reflected a series of broader concerns about the purpose of Anzac remembrance in the post-war period. Most prominent among these were the tension between celebrating Australian nationalism and Australia's connection to Britain, the role of remembrance in grieving, the difficulty of remembering both wars simultaneously, and the importance of supporting returned servicemen.

The matter was not considered by the ABMC until June 1946. Brown advised that were the proposal to go ahead, the body 'should be taken from a fighting zone where all three Fighting Services fought' (suggesting New Guinea as a possibility in this respect). The initiative to inter an unknown soldier was also linked with bringing consolation to Australian families. It was asserted that the unknown warrior could give to bereaved parents the hope 'that perhaps the body may be that of their son'. His report also advised that the British Government had 'no objection to an Unknown Warrior's grave additional to the British one in Westminster Abbey'.[124]

Both the RSSAILA and the AWM were approached for their views. The RSSAILA was divided on the question. The New South Wales and Queensland branches supported the idea; the Victorian branch advised it was undecided, and the Western Australian branch advised

[121] 'Olivia looks at life,' *The Mercury*, 12 September 1946.
[122] 'Selection of Unknown Warrior,' *The Telegraph*¸ 9 September 1946.
[123] 'The leaderless legion,' *Smith's Weekly*, 24 November 1945.
[124] Department of the Army, 'Report on meeting of ABMC,' 13 June 1946, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

that 'the matter should be delayed until such time as the public … had made up their minds about whether they wanted a memorial for an unknown warrior or not'.[125] For its part, the AWM was characteristically resistant. It argued that the Hall of Memory was 'not a mausoleum but a great and noble cenotaph – a sepulchral monument to those buried elsewhere' and that it would be 'impossible to select an Unknown who can be accepted as truly representative of all the unknown dead of all three services'.[126] When the AWM finally replied to the ABMC, in January 1947, the response was not encouraging. Director John Treloar highlighted that similar proposals to inter an unknown warrior at the AWM had been made throughout the interwar period. He advised that the body buried at Westminster had been 'selected in such a way that he may have been a member of the forces of any part of the Empire' and hence was an appropriate symbol for Australia's wartime sacrifice as a dominion of the Britain.[127] Treloar had deployed similar arguments against the idea when it had been previously suggested. Privately, however, he confided to Charles Bean his anxiety that the unknown warrior tomb would end up competing with the national memorial in Canberra.[128]

The matter was finally put to rest at the next meeting of the ABMC. Brown informed fellow committee members that he had received advice from the Department of Treasury that 'the provision of a War Memorial and also the tomb of an Unknown Warrior would be an unnecessary duplication'.'[129] Treasury's opposition and the AWM's rejection of the proposal had dashed the proposal. Although there was a final push by the AFDA later that year to inter an unknown soldier in Australia, its call went unheeded by the Chifley government.[130] While the proposal never went ahead, its suggestion by the AFDA and the responses to that

[125] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 25 November 1946,' NAA: A431, 1947/138.
[126] 'AWM board meeting,' 5 December 1946, AWM315, 234/005/004.
[127] John Treloar, 'unknown warrior proposal,' 11 January 1947, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[128] Inglis, *Sacred places*, 322.
[129] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 16 April 1947,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[130] 'Burial of an unknown soldier offered,' *The Mercury*, 28 October 1947.

suggestion by the press, government and AWM, demonstrate broader tensions and contradictions around erecting memorials in the post-war period. The difficulty in trying to build memorials that provided an outlet for bereavement, that could be incorporated into Anzac and World War One remembrance, and that could encapsulate Australians' unique experience of the war while still paying homage to the British connection proved too difficult a task.

The proposal was a precursor to the eventual entombment of an unknown soldier that took place at the AWM in 1993. That year the Keating government brought the remains of a World War One soldier back to Australia from the western front to be interred in the AWM's Hall of Memory (a move that fitted neatly with Keating's republican leanings).[131] When Keating addressed the crowd at the tomb's unveiling in 1993, he stated that the unknown soldier 'is all of them and he is one of us.' Keating's statement was a neat summation of Benedict Anderson's assertions on the topic of unknown soldiers and how they function as national symbols. Anderson has argued that tombs of Unknown Soldiers are some of the most potent symbols of nationalism.[132] The anonymity of the Unknown Soldier, he argued, symbolises connection between members of the nation state as well a sense of continuity with the past; the entombed could be anyone and by virtue of this, stands for everyone.[133]

American memorial proposals

The ABMC also received proposals to memorialise American soldiers in Australia. These proposals reflected the new political alliance and growing cultural affinity between Australia and the United States that had been greatly bolstered during the war. Australia's wartime alliance with the United States had been mutually beneficial; Australia provided an ideal base

[131] Bart Ziino, 'Australia's unknown soldier: a powerful symbol of loss and faith,' *The Conversation,* 13 April 2015.
[132] Anderson, 'Imagined communities,' 9.
[133] Ibid., 10-11.

for staging the United States' campaign in the south Pacific and the Americans provided military support and security.[134] Over the course of the war close to one million American servicemen and women passed through Australian towns and cities.[135] While many Australians were enthusiastic about the American visitors, others saw their influence on Australians as corrupting, especially in case of sexual relationships forming between Australian women and American servicemen.[136] Nevertheless, for some Australians in the post-war period there was an urge to enshrine the memory of the American visitors through the erection of memorials and this urge was demonstrated in proposals received by the ABMC. There was a sense at this time that the Americans had been instrumental in obtaining victory in the Pacific and these calls to build remembrance spaces dedicated to the United States were expressions of gratitude for this contribution to the war.

The first of these came in September 1946, from Ernest White of the Australian-American Co-operation Movement (AACM). White had written to Prime Minister Chifley (with the proposal being forwarded to the ABMC) suggesting that something should be done 'to commemorate those members of the American forces who lost their lives in the Australian theatre'.[137] His ambitious suggestion was that 'a replica of the Statue of Liberty … be placed on the heights of Canberra overlooking that city' and that underneath should be 'interred the remains of unknown American Soldier'. Such a structure, noted White, would inspire 'undying gratitude to the Government and people of Australia for such a tribute' and 'would stand for the quality of 'Liberty … a philosophy to which all are devoted'. 'It is unthinkable' he argued, 'that the Australian government and people should not in some way commemorate

[134] Phillip Bell and Roger Bell, *Implicated: The United States in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), 89.
[135] Bell and Bell, *Implicated*, 107.
[136] Ibid., 100-01.
[137] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 5 September 1946,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

the comradeship in arms of American and Australian servicemen'.[138] Needless to state, his suggestion was not taken up by the Commission.

A more concrete proposal was received from Ipswich City Council, in early 1948. Here a gathering of local citizens, government representatives, and members of the RSSAILA agreed that a memorial should be built honouring the United States' contribution to the Australian war effort in the town's American military cemetery. Their unanimous opinion was that 'the Commonwealth Government should bear the cost'.[139] A strong link had been forged between the people of Ipswich and American servicemen in the area. In mid-1945 the remains of approximately 1,500 American soldiers, buried around Australia, were exhumed and reburied at Ipswich cemetery and at Rookwood cemetery in Sydney. Later that year, on a rainy October day, a large service was held at the Ipswich American military cemetery in tribute to the American dead.[140] Over the next few years this service would attract increasing numbers.[141]

The town council approached the ABMC via their local parliamentarian, Josiah Francis (a Liberal Party MP that had grown up in Ipswich). Their appeal argued that American soldiers formerly buried in Ipswich had given their lives for Australia' and that consequently the ground was 'hallowed and sacred and should remain a reserve in perpetuity as a sacred plot in remembrance of what the United States has done to aid Australia'.[142] When the ABMC considered the matter a month later, its response was not enthusiastic. Brown advised his colleagues that that he did not support the proposal, owing to the potential for similar requests 'from the Capital Cities and Townsville', where other temporary American cemeteries had

[138] Ernest White, AAMC, 'Letter re Canberran Statue of Liberty,' 26 July 1946, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[139] 'US memorial in Ipswich?,' *Queensland Times*, 18 March 1948.
[140] Eli Daniel Potts and Annette Potts, *Yanks down under, 1941-45: The American impact on Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), 396.
[141] 'Impressive tribute by 3000 at American memorial service,' *Queensland Times*, 3 June 1946; '2000 Present: Memorial service at US war cemetery at Ipswich,' *Warwick Daily News*, 2 June 1947.
[142] City of Ipswich, 'Letter re American memorial,' 25 March 1948, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.

been established during the war. Echoing Brown's sentiments, George Jones advised that the RSSAILA's position was to avoid setting a precedent by supporting the memorial. General WM Anderson of the Army did support the idea, however, stating that it was very important that the American and Australian people should 'co-operate wherever possible' but that in this instance the matter should 'be left with the Ipswich City Council'.'[143]

While these suggestions were never taken up by the ABMC, they demonstrate how interested political groups within Australian society were working to express a new enthusiasm for Australia's relationship with the United States through the conduit of memorialisation. Despite these unrealised projects, a fitting memorial to the American-Australian alliance was eventually opened in Canberra in 1954, taking the form of a towering column, standing two hundred and fifty feet high and topped by an American eagle.[144]

Conclusion

The story of the ABMC is one of much discussion and little action. For the six or so years that it was in operation, the Commission was unable to produce any meaningful memorial structures or enduring commemorative programs. This might seem surprising. After all, this was a federally established body that was headed by prominent officials drawn from political and military spheres. The Commission also had access to a substantial pool of funding and its aspirations for post-war memorialisation were grand, but not unachievable. The ABMC sought to respond to interwar memorial culture by enacting a remembrance program that attempted to avoid the proliferation of memorials built by veterans' groups that had sprung up over the last two decades. In doing so, they sought to centralise Anzac remembrance of

[143] ABMC, 'Meeting minutes, 1 July 1948,' NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[144] 'Memorial opened to Americans,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 February 1954.

World War Two at four key locations. Yet, over and again, the Commission's plans were scuttled.

The proposal to build four grand memorials at sites key to the Australian experience of war were met with disinterest by a public keen to enact utilitarian projects and with disdain from the AWM's board of directors, who were opposed to any remembrance project that might compete with their newly minted national memorial. Petitions to the ABMC were more varied, but predominantly sought to use the Commission as a resource to build utilitarian memorials. These approaches to the ABMC were also an attempt to reframe Anzac remembrance to reflect the post-war enthusiasm for community improvement and public works. An exception here was the suggestion to entomb an unknown warrior in Australia. This proposal was framed as an intermediary for the grief of bereaved Australians. It was to be a distinctly Australian space of mourning, but again was scuttled by John Treloar and the board of directors at the AWM for its potential to compete with the established national memorial. Finally, the Commission was party to some of the first attempts to symbolise Australia's newfound cultural and political relationship with the United States. While these petitions were also unsuccessful, they marked the start of a long and still enduring tradition of strengthening Australia's relationship with America through the memory of World War Two.

Jay Winter argues that political actors across a spectrum of ideologies turn to public memory-making as a powerful mode for expressing their objectives.[145] This was certainly true of the ABMC, which attempted to immortalise what it saw as the most significant Australian contributions to the war at four key sites. Yet without the support of an Australian public keen on modernisation, and in the face of obstruction from the ever-defensive AWM, its failure was ensured. For the time being monumental forms had fallen out of fashion and were

[145] Winter, 'Setting the framework,' 7-8.

seen by many as outdated. And where petitions to build memorials were received by the ABMC, they were oriented towards distinctly forward-looking subjects, centred on community improvement, Australian national identity, and a new relationship with the United States. On a broader level these findings suggest that remembrance of an event, and the memorials and commemorations that accompany that remembrance, do so as the result of negotiation between actors from a range of backgrounds, places, and positions.

Chapter Two.

‘We would like to leave some memorial of us behind’:

Remembering the Rats of Tobruk in the post-war period

On 16 October 1941 at sunset, a group of 30 Australian soldiers gathered at a military cemetery on the outskirts of Tobruk, on the coast of Libya, to unveil a memorial to the siege they had endured for the preceding seven months. The memorial was a simple three-tiered rectangular structure, made from rubble collected from the siege, and covered over with concrete. Despite its modest construction, the memorial was of great significance to veterans of Tobruk. The ceremony lasted only fifteen minutes, with a short statement made by Major-General Leslie Morshead and the remainder of the time dedicated to prayer reading by an army-chaplain.[1] At the memorial’s base was an inscription:

> This is hallowed ground for here lie those who died for their country ‘At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them’

These words are taken from the fourth stanza from Lawrence Binyon’s poem *For the fallen*, published in 1914. The inclusion of these words, so often quoted at Anzac Day ceremonies, illustrates that the men of Tobruk saw their part in the siege as a carrying on of the Anzac tradition and the familiar practices of Australian war commemoration into and beyond World War Two. In 1947, the original memorial was replaced by the Australian Government, with a sturdier structure, made from sandstone and redesigned in the form of an obelisk. Although this replacement memorial was built with government backing and was unveiled in front of a much larger and more distinguished group it was this original inscription taken from the 1941

[1] 9th Division headquarters, ‘Tobruk memorial unveiling attendance and schedule,’ 14 October 1941, AWM: PR83/159.

memorial that would be placed at the base of a new Tobruk memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra that was built in 1983. This chapter examines the efforts of veterans of the Tobruk siege, known as the Rats of Tobruk,[2] to have their story recognised as its own unique part of the Anzac legend.

Many of the veteran Rats saw their part in the Tobruk siege as a hugely imporant episode in the history of Australia's wartime accomplishments and often characterised Tobruk as being an event equivalent in significance to the Gallipoli campaign. In a speech given at a Tobruk Day event held in Bendigo in 1960, for example, Reverend Peter de Campo told his audience that the Rats of Tobruk 'proudly' took their place 'alongside the bravery of the Anzacs at Gallipoli.'[3] In line with this characterisation, at the end of World War Two the Rats lobbied for the building of Tobruk memorials and they campaigned to have the word 'Tobruk' restricted from commercial use and for the official recognition of a 'Tobruk Day' date. In each of these instances, however, the Rats were met with scepticism, resistance or refusal from government and military officials. This chapter argues that in their struggle for acknowledgement, the Rats were claiming that remembrance of the Tobruk siege should hold a similar place in Australian society as remembrance of the Gallipoli landing. The Rats saw the story of the Tobruk siege as continuing and complementing the legacy of the Anzacs at Gallipoli. The officials who resisted their efforts, however, saw the Rats' efforts at memory making as being in competition with remembrance of the Gallipoli campaign. Much of this work was channelled through the Rats of Tobruk Association (ROTA), first formed in 1944. ROTA's goals were to maintain the bonds of friendship and support formed during the war and to keep the memory of the Rats' experience alive.

[2] Hereafter referred to as 'the Rats'.
[3] *Tobruk Echo*, May 1960, AWM: C 369.2945 R236t.

In exploring the story of the Rats, this chapter first gives an overview of their experience during the siege, their return to post-war life, and the formation of ROTA. The chapter then explores the first memorial to the Rats of Tobruk, built in 1941 at the site of the siege, and the Australian Government's decision in 1948 to rebuild that memorial. The next section of the chapter examines ROTA's lobbying of the Government to give its backing to the official observance of a Tobruk Day and to have the name Tobruk restricted for commercial purposes. The final episode the chapter examines is a campaign to build a Tobruk memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra, in 1983.

The chapter draws upon a range of previously unexamined primary material gathered at the National Library, the National Archives of Australia, and the Australian War Memorial. These documents are comprised of papers and periodicals produced by ROTA, correspondence with government officials and other veterans' associations, and meeting records and minutes. The documents provide a range of perspectives on the Rats and their efforts to be remembered in the post-war period. They illustrate how the Rats worked from within their organisation to seek wider recognition of their experiences, the Government's response to those efforts, and the way that these exchanges were presented to the Australian public through the press.

The Siege of Tobruk

The siege of Tobruk, though generally not as well remembered today as Australia's contributions to the Pacific war, particularly along the Kokoda Track, was an important moment for Australia in World War Two. It has generated several histories intended for both general and academic audiences[4] and has inspired several popular representations in books and movies.[5] During World War Two, Tobruk held significance as a moment when Australian forces successfully distinguished themselves in a military campaign widely seen as crucial to Allied victory in North Africa and the Middle East. That Tobruk was one of the first major defeats suffered by German forces during the war was a fact proudly proclaimed in the Australian press and by the Rats themselves upon their return home. These contemporary reports conceived of the AIF forces garrisoned at Tobruk as the inheritors of the Anzac legend, a new set of Anzac fighters for a new war.[6]

The siege itself sat within the broader conflict for control of North Africa, the Middle East and Greece. In late 1940, British general Archibald Wavell, drawing upon the military strength of Britain's eastern forces from India, Australia and New Zealand, launched a series of successful surprise attacks on entrenched Italian forces along the Egyptian border. Following these attacks, Wavell proceeded to advance and capture over 400 miles of territory into eastern Libya.[7] The defence of this region was vital to the security of the Suez Canal,

[4] Barton Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein* (Maryborough: Australian Print Group, 1987); Frank Harrison, *Tobruk: the great siege reassessed* (London: Brockhampton Press, 1999); David Coombes, *Morshead: Hero of Tobruk and El Alamein* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001); William F. Buckingham, *Tobruk: The great siege 1941-2* (Stroud: The History Press, 2008); Peter Fitzsimons, *Tobruk* (Sydney: Harper Collins Australia, 2010); Robert Lyman, *The longest siege: Tobruk the battle that saved North Africa* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2011).
[5] Charles Chauvel, *The fighting Rats of Tobruk* (Sydney: Chamun Productions, 1944); Lawson Glassop, *We were the Rats* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1944); Eric Lambert, *The twenty thousand thieves* (Melbourne: Frederick Muller, 1951); Robert Wise, *The desert rats* (Los Angeles: Twentieth Century Fox, 1953).
[6] 'Tobruk will rank before Anzac,' *The Mail*, 10 May 1941; 'Gains by Anzacs,' *The Mercury*, 19 May 1941; 'Men of Tobruk may rival Anzacs fame,' *Bowen Independent*, 12 August 1941; 'Anzacs outwit Germans at Tobruk,' *The Daily News*, 14 August 1941.
[7] Evan Mawdsley, *World War II: a new history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 287.

which linked the west and east of the British Empire.[8] The Allies' strong position in North Africa was weakened when it was decided to divert a number of Wavell's best divisions towards the defence of Greece from Axis forces in early 1941.[9] These reinforcements, however, were unable to withstand the strength of German invading forces who, over the month of April, overran the Greek peninsula, forcing Allied forces to retreat and attempt evacuation from the southern island of Crete.[10] At the close of this campaign to defend Greece, over 5,000 Australian troops had been captured by the German army.[11]

Concurrently, in March of 1941, the Wehrmacht (General Erwin Rommel's mechanized Afrika Corps) launched a counterattack in North Africa, forcing the majority of Wavell's forces back to Egypt, losing the entirety of the territory they had gained. Left to hold the port town of Tobruk were four brigades from the Australian 7th and 9th Divisions, along with another 10,000 allied troops from the English (these included a number of exiled Polish soldiers), Indian and New Zealand armies.[12] On 11 April, the German forces encircled Tobruk and the 30,000 allied troops that comprised its garrison.[13] In charge of the town's defence was Australian commander, Lieutenant-General Leslie Morshead. Morshead assumed a decidedly aggressive approach to the defence of Tobruk.[14] Rather than undertaking a passive defence of the port and surrounding areas, throughout the siege Morshead ordered his forces to constantly press back against the attacking Germans and to gain territory where feasible.[15] The siege itself lasted around 240 days, from approximately

[8] Beaumont, 'Europe and the Middle East,' 9.
[9] Mawdsley, *World War II,* 291.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Beaumont, 'Europe and the Middle East,' 12.
[12] Ibid., 15.
[13] Mark Johnston, *Anzacs in the Middle East: Australian Soldiers, their allies and the local People in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 114-15.
[14] Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, 12.
[15] Long, *The six years war*, 98.

11 April until 7 December 1941,[16] Australian forces being relieved by British reinforcements between August and October.[17]

On the home front, the siege attracted a great deal of attention in the press and in film and literary representations that came soon after.[18] Early press reporting of the campaign was mostly descriptive, outlining the morale of the troops, geographic positioning, and access to resources and amenities. As the siege wore on, however, reports increasingly focused on the character of the Australian soldiers. In mid-May for instance, Adelaide's *The Advertiser* reported that 'the AIF has shown itself able to withstand the shocks of blitzkrieg attacks with unruffled resolution' and that an 'imperturbable strain, and the quality of the Australian initiative' had been demonstrated repeatedly by troops throughout the siege.[19] Queensland's *Bowen Independent* emphasised the 'larrikinism' of the besieged, stating that 'they carry on in the light-hearted and casual Australian way—they sunbake and play two-up and cards, and curse the shortage of beer.'[20] This image of the larrikin soldier, drinking beer and playing two-up was clearly drawn from already established tropes that had previously described the behaviour of the AIF at Gallipoli.

Indeed, the press increasingly described the soldiers at Tobruk in the language of the Anzac legend. In May, Adelaide's *The Mail* reported that 'Tobruk will rank in history far higher than Anzac' and further claimed that 'just as firmly as we barred the Turk will they bar the Hun.'[21] That same month northern NSW's *Tweed Daily* described the Tobruk garrison as 'the new body of Anzac'.[22] Perth's *Sunday Times* also linked the plight of the men at Tobruk to a broader national narrative, advising of the siege that 'the inspiration of Anzac and the

[16] Lyman, *The longest siege*, xxi.
[17] Long, *The six years war*, 99.
[18] The two most notable examples being Charles Chauvel's film, *The fighting Rats of Tobruk* (1944) and Lawson's Glassop's novel, *We were the Rats* (1944).
[19] 'Defence of Tobruk,' *The Advertiser,* May 15.
[20] 'Men of Tobruk,' *Bowen Independent*, August 12.
[21] 'Tobruk will rank before Anzac,' *The Mail,* May 10, 1941.
[22] 'The spirit of Anzac,' *Tweed Daily*, April 25, 1941.

spirit of the AIF have leapt to an intenser [sic] flame within the breasts of the nation's youngest sons.'[23]

Eva Kingsepp has argued that in British popular memory in the post-war period, the war in North Africa, as it is presented in books, documentaries and films, was generally easier to frame in a heroic light than other British campaigns in World War Two. These representations focused on battles such as Tobruk and El Alamein, emphasising these as British victories achieved without the help of the United States and fought against a 'civilised' European foe. Moreover, the North African campaigns were largely successful in comparison to those fought in Europe, where allied forces had, for the most part, been overwhelmed by superior German forces. Kingsepp also highlights how these representations frame the landscape of North Africa as a 'perfect battleground,' absent of indigenous people or infrastructure, a conception they argue is 'absurd,' given the very obvious presence of local people and towns throughout the region where fighting took place.[24]

It follows then that Australian troops at Tobruk were also represented in this heroic mould. Indeed, Robin Gerster has noted that contemporary literary representations of the Rats linked them with their Anzac forebears and painted them unambiguously as heroic figures – capable, brave, and masculine warriors.[25] Gerster is referring here to Lawson Glassop's novel *We Were the Rats* and Charles Chauvel's film *The Fighting Rats of Tobruk*, both of which were released in 1944. *We Were the Rats* repeatedly described the men of Tobruk in the language used to describe the AIF at Gallipoli during World War One. One passage described Australian soldiers 'with their battered slouch hats, unshaven faces and sunburnt chests … fit

[23] 'The inspiration of Anzac,' *Sunday Times*, 27 July 1941.
[24] Eva Kingsepp, 'The Second World War, imperial, and colonial nostalgia: The North Africa campaign and battlefields of memory,' *Humanities* 7 (2018): 7.
[25] Robin Gerster, *Big-noting: The heroic theme in Australian war writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992), 204-05, 209.

… and full of fight.'[26] Chauvel's film was even more overt, depicting his protagonists as honest hard-working rural men: quick to joke, but lethal in battle. In one scene the narrator recounted, 'With war upon us, I became an Anzac.' A later scene flashed a series of headlines that include 'Anzacs in Libya!' and 'Anzacs take Tobruk' above footage of the Australian army advancing across the desert.[27] Chester Wilmott's contemporary history of the siege, *Tobruk 1941: Capture, Siege, Relief*, released the following year, made similarly explicit connections between the men of Tobruk and the original Anzacs. In the book's epilogue he noted that 'There was much in common between these men and the original Anzacs' and that 'Tobruk and the spirit it typified became woven into the pattern of the Australian heritage, just as surely as Gallipoli was twenty-six years before.'[28]

James Wertsch has argued that remembrance, particularly state-supported remembrance, often develops within established narrative templates. By framing events within existing narratives, he has argued, people can interpret them as part of a developing national story. Through this linking of the old and new, the values of the past, of the existing narrative template, are transferred onto the present.[29] So it was with the siege at Tobruk. Onlookers instinctively sought to place the story of Tobruk within the existing narrative of Anzac and broader World War One commemoration. That they did is hardly surprising; here was a new set of Australian warriors distinguishing themselves in an internationally significant campaign that, in 1941, was one of the most substantial victories against German aggression so far. Framing the Rats' experience as a continuation of the Anzac legacy elevated it from its gruelling and unglamorous reality into a story about the enduring and exceptional Australian spirit marked by hardiness, stoicism, and irreverence in the face of adversity.

[26] Glassop, *We were the Rats*, 158.
[27] Chauvel, *The fighting Rats of Tobruk*, 1944.
[28] Chester Wilmott, *Tobruk 1941* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2017), 376.
[29] James Wertsch, 'Deep memory and narrative templates: conservative forces in collective memory,' Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, eds. *Memory and political change* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 174.

The Rats of Tobruk Association

As we have seen, several histories of the Tobruk siege, both academic and popular, have been published to date. So far, however, a history of the Rats of Tobruk Association and its activities in the post-war period has yet to be written — a gap this chapter works to address.[30]

Of the 14,000 Australians that served at Tobruk, 853 were killed during the siege. Of those that returned, just over 1,500 formed ROTA upon settling back into their lives in Australia.[31] By 1947, ROTA's federal secretary estimated that the organisation's membership had grown to 8,000.[32] The first branch emerged in Sydney in 1944, but was soon followed by the formation of state and sub-branches around Australia over the next few years.[33] The Tasmanian branch, for example, was formed in July of 1945, the Queensland branch in October, the Victorian branch in November, and the South Australian branch (the last to form) in March of 1947.[34] A number of ROTA sub-branches were also created in areas outside of the capital cities, mostly in New South Wales and Queensland.[35] These various arms of the Association held regular meetings, organised social events and produced publications. For the most part these activities were aimed at fostering cohesion amongst members of ROTA and providing support to one another in their post-war lives. They also worked together on certain remembrance projects (which this chapter examines in detail) that sought to impress the significance of the Rats of Tobruk. and the values they instilled, onto the wider Australian community.

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[30] There is very little in the way of histories of veterans' groups in Australia in general. Those that have been written have focused almost exclusively on the RSL.
[31] 'Tobruk Rats to form paper,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 August 1945.
[32] 'Rats of Tobruk meeting tonight,' *News,* 14 March 1947.
[33] 'Rats of Tobruk Association,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October 1944; 'Annual meeting of the Rats of Tobruk,' *The Sun,* 3 February 1945.
[34] 'Rats of Tobruk Association,' *The Mercury*, 26 July 1945; 'Rats of Tobruk Association,' *The Courier-Mail,* 26 October 1945; 'Rats of Tobruk Association,' *Smith's Weekly,* 3 November 1945; 'Rats of Tobruk meeting tonight,' *News,* 14 March 1947.
[35] 'Tobruk Association,' *Cairns Post,* 19 July 1948; 'Rats of Tobruk Association,' *The Dalby Herald,* 7 October 1947; 'Newcastle Tobruk Rats association,' *The Newcastle Sun,* 7 October 1947; 'Tobruk Rats meet,' *The Mercury,* 17 April 1950.

The post-war period was ripe for the formation of new veterans' associations, partly due to the stringent restrictions on RSSAILA membership at the time. Many in the RSSAILA were resistant to World War Two veterans joining their ranks and discouraged returning veterans from attempting to join pre-existing branches of its organisation, urging them to form new sub-branches instead.[36] The RSSAILA could afford to be selective. Over the interwar period, the organisation had positioned itself as the pre-eminent veterans' association in Australia. In the years immediately following World War One they had been successful in its efforts to lobby the Australian government to be recognised as the sole legitimate representative group for returned servicemen in Australia. Martin Crotty has argued that this arrangement was mutually beneficial. For the RSSAILA, official recognition meant the organisation had a direct line to government on issues it saw as important (veteran pensions and soldier settlement most prominently). For the Australian government, the RSSAILA's beliefs around civic order and civic values aligned with its own, and further, the RSSAILA were seen to keep veterans orderly in an environment where there was considerable fear around idleness and unruliness among returned men.[37]

The RSSAILA maintained this preeminent position over the interwar period and during World War Two. At the close of the war, however, it had to contend with a new wave of potential members returning from active duty — a development that sparked a debate around who could and could not be admitted to the organisation. Since the RSSAILA's creation, membership had been strictly limited to men that had voluntarily enlisted and undertaken active duty in an area of combat operations.[38] World War Two, however, had seen the introduction of an Australian militia, made up of both volunteers and conscripts, many of whom took part in the New Guinea campaigns. In 1944, sub-branches around the country

[36] Sekuless and Rees, *Lest We Forget*, 111.
[37] Crotty, 'The Anzac Citizen,' 189-90.
[38] Ibid., 188.

began debating the question of whether membership should be widened to include service members that had volunteered to serve overseas and militia members who had undertaken active service overseas, regardless of whether they had volunteered or been conscripted.[39] The matter ended up being decided via a federal referendum, with each sub-branch around Australia submitting a single vote. The vote was close, but those in favour maintaining existing restrictions to admit only volunteers won out (866 voted no to the proposed changes, while 699 voted yes).[40] While the RSSAILA restricted its members to those who had volunteered for active service, it did not preclude men who were members of other veterans' organisations from joining. Most prominent among these other veterans' organisations were the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women, the Rats of Tobruk Association and the Thirty-Niners.

In contrast to the RSSAILA, ROTA was a relatively inclusive organisation. Membership was open to any who had served during the siege, regardless of which Allied force they had belonged to (English, Indian and Polish veterans were all invited to join), along with Mercantile Marine personnel, war correspondents and official photographers who had been at the siege.[41] Calls to extend membership and inclusion to all who had been present at the siege come up repeatedly in materials produced by ROTA. A report on Tobruk Day in the Tasmanian association's newsletter the *Rats Review* in 1951, for example, noted that Tobruk Day commemorated 'the men who fought beside us' and that it was not 'race or creed, it was Tobruk' that had brought them together.[42] The organisation's insignia was based on an existing Anzac insignia which, according to Launceston's *Examiner,* had been adapted from

[39] 'States RSL favours wider membership,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 September 1944; 'RSL membership eligibility question,' *The West Australian*, 28 September 1944; 'RSL debates membership eligibility,' *The Herald*, 28 September 1944.
[40] Gerald Lawrence Kristianson, *The Politics of Patriotism: The pressure group activities of the Returned Serviceman's League*, (Canberra: ANU Press, 1966), 86.
[41] 'Rats of Tobruk, strong association formed,' *The West Wyalong Advocate*, 24 December 1945.
[42] 'Editorial,' *Rats Review*, May 1951.

one used by an 'association formed in New York to entertain Australian servicemen passing through.' The original insignia depicted a shield mounted on a crown on which was depicted an image of a kangaroo and a southern cross above the word 'Anzac.' In ROTA's adaptation, the word 'Tobruk' replaced 'Anzac' and, fittingly, a rat replaced the kangaroo.[43]

Figure 2-1: Mosaic of ROTA insignia at memorial corner in Brisbane, taken from Wikipedia.

ROTA provided a space for the encouragement of cohesion among former Rats and for remembrance of the siege. While the body of scholarship that examines veterans and their experiences is large, scholarship that specifically explores how veterans' organisations help their members is less extensive. However, some more recent work can shed some light on this topic. In her study of Iraq War veterans, Anne Demers has found that veterans'

[43] 'Rats of Tobruk Association,' *Examiner*, 3 November 1945.

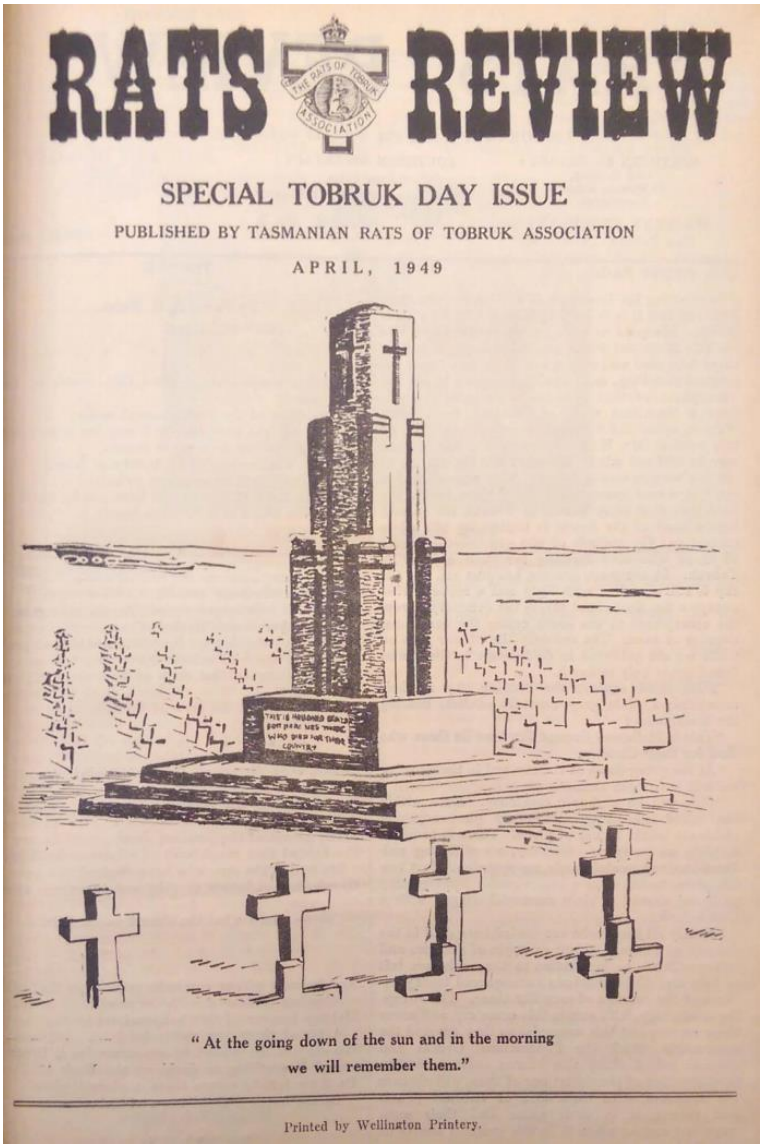
organisations provide their members with a sense of belonging that is missing after leaving the collective culture of the military.[44] She notes that veterans' organisations provide a space where veterans can reconnect with one another and discuss their experiences.[45] These organisations are also important sites for the proliferation of shared narratives and memories of war. Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins argue that veterans' groups provide their members with a safe space in which to develop these shared narratives without fear of judgement or misunderstanding from those who have not experienced the difficulties of war.[46] This was certainly true of ROTA which was fashioned as a site where veterans of Tobruk could share their stories and bond with one another over their shared experience of the siege.

The aim of promoting cohesion and support among members is something that came up repeatedly in material produced by ROTA. The federal constitution of ROTA, first ratified in 1946, demonstrated that the association was organised around two goals. The first was to promote remembrance of the siege and the second was the more practical goal of supporting its members in their post-war lives. The constitution emphasised the promotion of identity, cohesion, and support amongst ROTA members, stating that the Association should work to preserve the 'memory of those … who served in Tobruk,' and that it should 'unite members of the Association for their mutual benefit.' The constitution also expressed the egalitarian nature of the organisation, noting that it was open to 'any person' who served in Tobruk, military or otherwise, from April to December of 1941, and that 'all members shall be of equal status within the Association.'[47]

[44] Anne Demers, 'When veterans return: The role of community in reintegration,' *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 16 (2011): 171.
[45] Ibid., 172.
[46] Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins, 'World War II veterans, social support, and veterans' associations,' *Aging & Mental Health* 5 (2001): 178.
[47] ROTA Federal Council, 'Constitution and rules,' 31 January 1965, AWM: 369.294 R236c 1965.

Many of these ROTA branches around Australia also produced periodical magazines for their local members. In the immediate aftermath of the war, a number of the state-branches of ROTA produced periodical newspapers for distribution amongst local veterans of the siege.[48] Like ROTA's constitution, much of this material emphasised the two goals of keeping the memory of the siege alive and the importance of members supporting one another. For example, in Victoria's *Tobruk Echo,* the editor noted that 'far from losing strength, far from being forgotten, or far from not being a powerful voice in the community we're getting stronger!'[49] In a similar vein, the *Rats Review's* first issue implored its readers that 'In a world of false values, friendship alone stands the test of time and we cannot afford to lose friendship of the men who proved themselves real friends when the pressure is on.'[50] These quotes demonstrate an unease around the Rats' enduring legacy and the potential that it could fade over time. However, they also demonstrate that ROTA was a site where these anxieties could be addressed through calls to unity and remembrance of the siege.

[48] 'Tobruk echo: official organ of the Rats of Tobruk Association (Vic. Branch),' AWM: C369.2945 R236t; 'ROTA: Monthly magazine of the Rats of Tobruk Association, NSW Branch,' AWM: C369.2944 R842; 'Rats Review,' NLA: Nq 369.2946 RAT; 'Tobruk truth: The Rats of Tobruk Association (Queensland Branch),' AWM: C369.2943 T628; 'Tobruk times: Rats of Tobruk Association (ACT Branch),' AWM: C369.29405 T629t; The Tobruk reveille: Official organ of the Rats of Tobruk Association (South Australian Branch),' AWM: C369.29423 R236t.
[49] 'Tobruk echo: official organ of the Rats of Tobruk Association (Vic. Branch),' July 1958, AWM: C369.2945 R236t, p. 2.
[50] *The Rats Review*, August 1948, NLA: Nq 369.2946 RAT.


RATS REVIEW

SPECIAL TOBRUK DAY ISSUE

PUBLISHED BY TASMANIAN RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION

APRIL, 1949

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning
we will remember them."

Printed by Wellington Printery.

Figure 2-2: April 1949 issue of the Rats Review, NLA: Nq 369.2946 RAT.

Members not only saw their role as one of building solidarity and support amongst former Rats, they also worked to lobby government on issues they saw as important. In one petition, Roger Valier-Berther, the secretary of the Queensland branch, contacted Prime Minister Chifley to protest against the allowance of the opening of 'enemy alien Clubs, which, prior to the recent conflict, were known hot-beds of subversive pro-Fascist activity.' This letter further implored that no group 'who may develop into a subversive enemy alien minority in

this country' should be permitted to form.[51] Although the letter did not divulge the national sympathies of these 'enemy alien clubs,' it is clear Berther was referring to Italian and German migrants living in Australia. This was just one of a number of instances where ROTA members asserted what they saw as their right to define Australian identity by invoking their status as a veteran group. The views expressed by ROTA in this instance were in line with views held by the RSSAILA, who also had a history of lobbying government restrict the rights and privileges of migrants from former enemy states, a practice they continued in the post-war period.[52]

Not all petitions were so politically driven. In early 1946, ROTA's federal secretary wrote to the Minister for Customs, Richard Keane, requesting 'permission for a supply of beer to be consumed at the first Smoko' of ROTA.[53] The response from the Minister advised that 'while special supplies of liquor are made available for …. Annual reunions and meetings of returned soldiers' that they could not be made available for 'functions of a purely social nature.'[54] It appears that the federal secretary took this information on board as an identical request made four months later requested that the supplies were needed for the 'first Annual General Reunion' of the Association.[55] This time Minister obliged, advising that 'reasonable supplies of beer and cigarettes will be made available' ('reasonable' in this case amounting to 54 gallons of beer and 6,000 cigarettes).[56]

[51] RAV Berther, ROTA QLD Branch, 'Letter protesting the opening of 'enemy alien clubs' in North Queensland,' 15 January 1947, NAA: M1455, 157.
[52] Crotty, *The Anzac citizen,* 192; Kristianson, *The politics of patriotism,* 192.
[53] H Woodward, ROTA, 'Request to RV Keane for supply of cigarettes and beer for Rats of Tobruk reunion smoko,' 14 September 1945, NAA: A1539, 1946/W/245.
[54] RV Keane, Minister for Trade and Customs, 'refusal of liquor for ROTA smoko,' 25 September 1945, NAA: A1539, 1946/W/245.
[55] ME Stegman, ROTA, 'Request RV Keane for supply of cigarettes and beer for first annual Rats of Tobruk reunion,' 17 January 1946, NAA: A1539, 1946/W/245.
[56] RV Keane, Minister for Trade and Customs, 'Letter advising of approval of cigarettes and beer for first annual Rats of Tobruk reunion,' 22 January 1946, NAA: A1539, 1946/W/245.

ROTA's boldness in approaching government in these and other matters demonstrate that the Tobruk veterans saw themselves as what Mark Edele and Martin Crotty have called an 'entitlement group'. This term refers to the notion that veterans, upon returning from war, see themselves as deserving of rights and entitlements beyond other citizens on the basis of services rendered during war.[57] This was a recurrent theme in the post-war years, when the Rats' efforts to build memorials and to enact remembrance traditions in recognition of Tobruk were almost always accompanied by calls to their entitlements as war veterans.

ROTA was an important site for Tobruk veterans to stay connected to one another in the post-war period. It became a space where they could safely share memories of the siege with other men who had lived through the same experience. For many veterans of the siege, being a Rat of Tobruk became a central part of their post-war identity, and ROTA was a space where they could articulate that identity. They also saw their experience of Tobruk as something unique within the broader tradition of Anzac, and as such, used ROTA to campaign for remembrance of the siege to the broader Australian public. Indeed, in each of the remembrance projects examined throughout this chapter, those seeking to promote the siege's memory worked through ROTA.

Rebuilding the Tobruk Memorial

In 1947, the Australian government made the decision to rebuild the original memorial at Tobruk that had been erected by the troops garrisoned there in 1941. This original memorial had been constructed by Australian army engineers out of rubble from the siege that was then covered over with cement rendering. It was a three-tiered structure, with a cross inlaid on each of its four sides. The memorial sat next to the ad-hoc cemetery that had been built by the

[57] Martin Crotty and Mark Edele, 'Total war and entitlement: towards a global history of veteran privilege,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 59 (2013): 17.

garrison during the siege. This was a site that held great importance for veterans of Tobruk and the government's decision to demolish and rebuild the memorial was one that angered them, being seen as a violation of their ownership over remembrance of the siege.

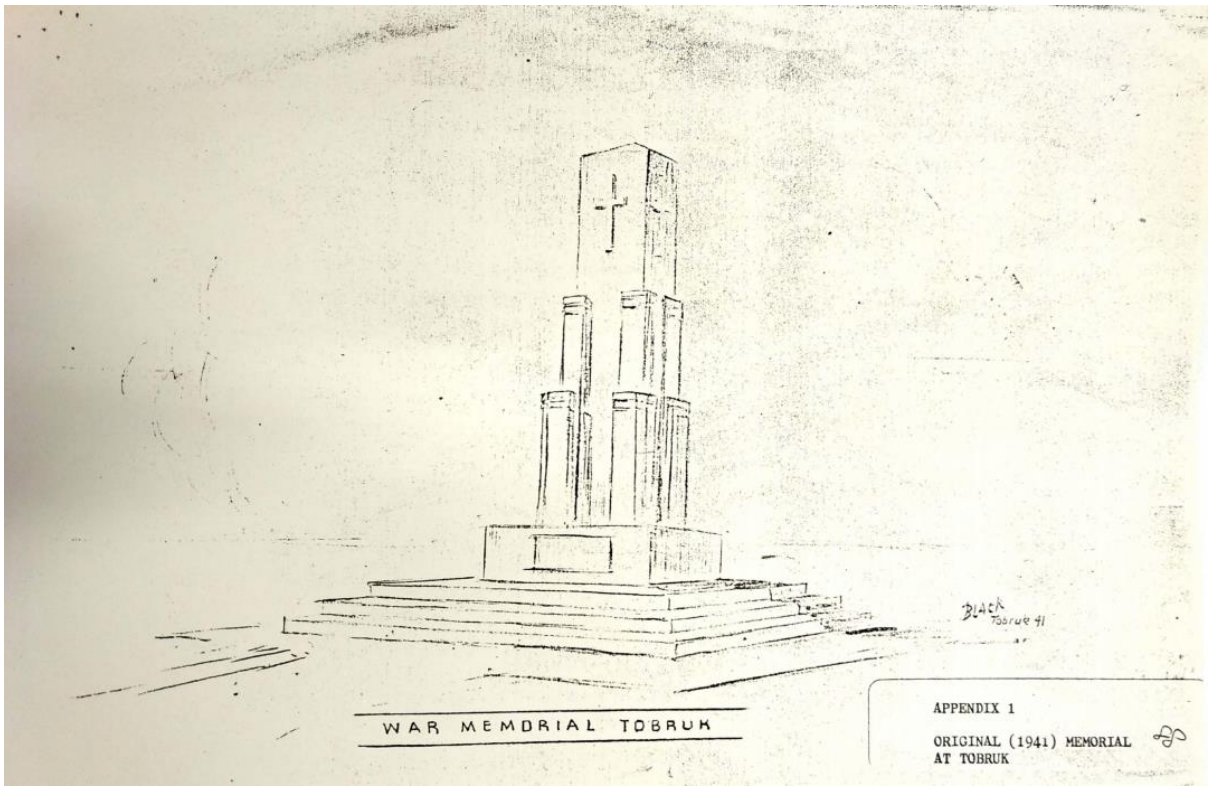


Figure 2-3: Sketch of original Tobruk memorial, AWM: PR83/159.

In November of 1945, the War Cabinet decided that this makeshift memorial needed replacement. The cabinet's minutes for that meeting note that 'the memorial … is of a temporary nature,' having been constructed out of rubble from the siege, and that were it to be 'allowed to remain in its present form it will deteriorate still further.'[58] Following an announcement by Chifley on 20 December that the memorial would be replaced the decision was reported widely in the press.[59]

[58] Department of the Interior, 'Memo describing War Cabinet's directive regarding headstone badges for Merchant Navy, replacement of memorial in Tobruk Cemetery, and establishment of Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee,' 15 November 1945, NAA: A663, O100/1/318.
[59] 'New Tobruk memorial,' *The Courier-Mail*, 20 December 1945, p. 4; 'New Australian memorial at Tobruk,' *Daily Advertiser,* 20 December 1945; 'AIF Memorial at Tobruk,' *The Age,* 20 December 1945.

Writing about the relationship between state and non-state actors in the creation of remembrance sites, Jay Winter argues that although the state is ever-present in memorialisation and commemoration, it is not omnipotent in these processes.[60] Rather, he argues that the creation of sites of remembrance relies on negotiations between actors and groups, whether state, civilian, military, or otherwise.[61] The debate around the government's decision to rebuild the vernacular memorial to Tobruk is illustrative of Winter's assertion. Veterans, politicians and the press all expressed different interpretations over how the siege memorial should be constructed, and in doing so, they were asserting who should have the power to dictate how the siege was remembered.

The government's decision to rebuild the memorial angered former Rats of Tobruk. In early February 1946, after getting notice of the decision, the secretary of the Federal branch of ROTA, Harold Woodward, wrote to Chifley protesting it. He complained that the report regarding the original memorial's demolition had caused members of the association 'considerable distress' and that the decision was regarded as 'tantamount to an act of sacrilege both against the men who lie there, and the sentiment of their mates who erected it.' In concluding, he requested that Chifley reject the proposal to rebuild the site and 'see that our Memorial stand for all time.'[62] Comments such as these demonstrate that for the Rats, the memory of the siege was sacred. The memorial at Tobruk was something that had been created by them and for them, and the government's decision to destroy and replace it was seen as a violation of consecrated ground.

Despite these protestations, the government pressed on with its plan. In August of 1947, the Australian Battlefields Memorial Commission (ABMC) recommended that there should be an

[60] Winter, 'Setting the framework,' 30.
[61] Ibid.
[62] H Woodward, Gen. Sec. ROTA, 'Letter advising against proposal to demolish Tobruk Memorial in Syria,' 9 February 1946, NAA: A461, N370/1/15.

official unveiling of the memorial and that 'after the performance of the Unveiling Ceremony at the Tobruk Memorial, the Delegation should proceed to Gallipoli' to inspect the site and to hold a commemorative ceremony there. In recommending that the party visit Gallipoli it was noted that 'no official party from Australia had visited Gallipoli for more than twenty years.' The ABMC advised that the delegation to attend these commemorations should consist of a member of the Commonwealth Government, two members of the ABMC and representatives of both the RSSAILA and ROTA.[63] The ABMC's recommendation was noteworthy for its explicit linking of the Tobruk Siege and the Gallipoli landings. The recommendation suggested that these two events were commensurate with one another across the two world wars. It was also significant for its vindication of ROTA members' repeated calls that remembrance of the siege should rank alongside the memory of Gallipoli.

Despite the ABMC's recommendation, Federal Cabinet rejected the proposal a month later, deciding instead that the party should consist of just three members, comprising High Commissioner John Beasley, a member of the ABMC, and a representative of ROTA. In addition, Cabinet noted that they 'did not favour the delegation visiting the 1915 war graves on Gallipoli.'[64] Cabinet never stated their reason for rejecting the Gallipoli pilgrimage but given their aversion to sending a larger party to attend the memorial unveiling at Tobruk, it is possible they felt the proposed trip to Gallipoli would encourage further calls to add more pomp and circumstance to the journey.

However, it was the decision to limit the unveiling party to three delegates that drew the greatest ire. In a letter to Chifley following the announcement a representative of ROTA wrote that the Association was 'deeply disappointed' by the decision. They protested that

[63] Australian Battlefields Memorial Commission, 'Minutes of Special Meeting of the Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee Held at 434 Collings Street, Melbourne on Tuesday, 26th August 1947.,' 26 August 1947, *Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee*, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[64] 'Rats memorial unveiling,' *The Advertiser*, 30 September 1947.

ROTA would completely boycott the pilgrimage, arguing they would not 'be a party to a ceremony which must by its very poverty of numbers lack the dignity necessary to the occasion.'[65] Speaking to the press, the vice president of the Victorian branch of ROTA stated that the Association would take no part in the 'procedure which Cabinet favoured' and that 'the Government's suggestion was a slight on the men whose sacrifices the memorial at Tobruk commemorated.'[66]

The veteran community's most intense criticism was aimed at the determination that Beasley should unveil the memorial. This was seen as a violation of veterans' entitlement to shape the remembrance of their experiences. In a letter to Chifley, the Liverpool sub-branch of the RSSAILA wrote to express their 'extreem [sic] resentment' at the decision and argued that it should be Sir Leslie Morshead leading the delegation rather than 'a man who is not a returned soldier.'[67] Similar sentiments were reported in the press. In a public statement, ROTA's federal secretary stated that 'Mr Beasley is a politician, he is not a returned soldier' and that as 'members of our association built the original memorial in Tobruk … we think it our sacred duty that one of our members should unveil this new memorial.'[68] The general secretary of the RSSAILA also made a public statement, calling the decision 'a farce' and further asserting that 'until something is done we will have nothing to do with it.'[69]

Cabinet's decision not to include a visit to Gallipoli on the trip also drew significant resistance. In a letter to Chifley, a federal representative of ROTA asserted that leaving out 'the proposed visit to Gallipoli is indicative of a disregard for the men whose lives and deaths were the foundation of one of Australia's proudest traditions.'[70] JC Neagle, general secretary

[65] F Norman, ROTA, 'Letter protesting Tobruk,' 8 October 1947, NAA: A461, N370/1/15.
[66] 'Tobruk Rats boycott threat,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 1947.
[67] HW Clark, Liverpool Sub-Branch of RSS and AILA, 'Letter protesting selection of John Beasley to unveil Tobruk memorial,' 8 October 1947, NAA: A461, N370/1/15.
[68] 'Tobruk Rats boycott threat,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 1947.
[69] 'War memorial at Tobruk,' *The Age*, 30 September 1947.
[70] F Norman, ROTA, 'Letter protesting Tobruk pilgrimage,' 8 October 1947, NAA: A461, N370/1/15.

of the RSSAILA's federal branch, also complained to Chifley, noting that 'no official delegation has visited Gallipoli since 1924' and that 'the forthcoming pilgrimage to Tobruk will be incomplete if Gallipoli is passed by.'[71] Clearly, these respondents saw Tobruk and Gallipoli as intimately and thematically linked. Moreover, they were insisting on that linkage and demanding that it be publicly recognised. This was also an assertion of the connection between their Australian veterans' experience of World War Two and the Anzac legend.

In the face of these complaints and the wave of negative press the Government quickly conceded. On 21 October, Herbert Johnson responded to questions in parliament regarding the makeup of the pilgrimage advising that Cabinet had endorsed the recommendations of the ABMC and that the unveiling contingent would 'comprise representatives of the Rats of Tobruk Association and the Returned Servicemen's League of Australia.'[72] On the same day, *The Sydney Morning Herald* relayed a statement by Chifley that the delegation would be exclusively comprised of returned servicemen, that it would be headed up by Morshead, and that 'the delegation would go to Gallipoli on a tour of Australian war memorials and war graves' following the visit to Tobruk.[73] In the end, ROTA and the RSSAILA's claims over the pilgrimage to Tobruk were validated, as was their claim remembrance of the siege should be linked with the Anzac legend via the trip to Gallipoli. For the Labor government of the day the trip clearly had not been a priority. But pressure from press reports and from direct communication with Chifley proved to be an effective strategy on the part of the two veterans' organisations.

The trip itself, which took place in April of 1948, passed largely without incident. The delegation visited a number of gravesites in and around the Tobruk and Anzac areas, laid

[71] JC Neagle, Federal branch RSSAILA, 'Letter to Chifley requesting Gallipoli inclusion on Tobruk pilgrimage,' 17 October 1947, NAA: A461, N370/1/15.
[72] CPD, HoR, 21 October 1947, no. 43, p. 977.
[73] 'Morshead for Tobruk,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 October 1947.

wreaths and listened to speeches, and enjoyed dinner and cocktail parties held by their various hosts.[74] *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported of the unveiling that the ceremony had been brief, Morshead made a speech and the Royal Hussars played the Last Post.[75] An interesting moment arose when German prisoners of war came forward to lay wreaths inscribed with the words 'A token of remembrance to a gallant foe from the German Army.'[76] While this detail received little attention in the mainstream Australian press, the *Rats Review* recorded with disdain that 'much of the restoration and all the chores in Tobruk fall to the lot of the 1300 German POWs still detained there.' The author of the report further expressed a 'personal disapproval of the system that keeps these men … in virtual slavery three years after the war has ended.'[77]

For the veterans of Tobruk, the Government's decision to rebuild their memorial was a transgression of the Rats' sense of ownership over the memory of the siege. But it was the attempt to exclude Tobruk veterans from the unveiling of the new memorial that drew the brunt of veterans' outrage. These responses demonstrate the importance that remembrance of the siege held for these returned men. In demanding that veterans lead the unveiling, and that the trip be extended to Gallipoli, ROTA and the RSSAILA were asserting their authority over how the siege should be remembered, who should dictate that remembrance, and over the Anzac legend more broadly.

[74] Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee, 'Minutes of meeting of the Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee held at Parliament House Canberra on Thursday 1st July, 1948 at 10.30 am.,' 1 July 1948, *Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee*, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[75] 'Tobruk Memorial unveiled,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 1948.
[76] Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee, 'Minutes of Meeting of the Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee held at Parliament House Canberra on Thursday 1st July, 1948 at 10.30 am.,' 1 July 1948, *Australian Battlefields Memorials Committee*, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[77] 'Father Steele's report,' *Rats Review*, November 1948, Vol. 1, No. 4.

Seeking official recognition for Tobruk

In the immediate post-war years, Tobruk veterans petitioned the Australian government to have Tobruk Day officially recognised on Australia's commemorative calendar, and to have the word 'Tobruk' legally protected from commercial usage. These two campaigns represent the Rats' most concerted efforts to have their identity officially recognised by the Australian government. They also demonstrate how the Rats looked to the model of Anzac remembrance as a framework for their own wartime and post-war identity.

Celebrated each year on the Sunday closest to 10 April, Tobruk Day, which marks the date that the siege began, (or 'Tobruk Sunday' as it was sometimes known) was a chance for Tobruk veterans and their families to catch up with old comrades, to commemorate and memorialise their experience, and more generally, to express their solidarity. The holding of Tobruk Day around Australia usually comprised a commemorative ritual at a local war memorial followed by an informal get-together of veterans. In these ways, Tobruk Day shares many features of Anzac Day. In line with this memorial practice, was an initiative by ROTA to have Tobruk Day become an officially recognised day of remembrance on the Australian commemorative calendar.

The first observances of the day were held just after the war, in April of 1946.[78] In the immediate post-war period, the commemorations on Tobruk Day received only minor attention in the press. Yet, for returned veterans of the siege, it was a date that held great importance. The Tobruk Day ceremony in Brisbane, in 1947, for example, attracted a crowd of 'more than 500 people,' 200 of whom were veterans of the siege. Attendants included representatives from state government, ROTA and the RSSAILA.[79] Similarly, in Adelaide, in

[78] 'Tobruk Day on Sunday,' *Examiner*, 10 April 1946; 'Tobruk Day,' 13 April 1946,; 'A forgotten epic,' *Maryborough Chronicle*, 22 April 1946, p. 7.
[79] '200 'Rats' at Tobruk Ceremony,' *The Courier-Mail,* 14 April 1947.

1949, over 150 veterans of the siege took part in Tobruk Day ceremonies.[80] In the same year, Tasmania's *Rats Review* remarked on the success of Tobruk Day, noting that 'it was particularly pleasing to see so many turning up for the Services on Tobruk Sunday' and that attendance had been 'an all-time record.' Again, here veterans were encouraged that it was their mandate to shed the 'present cloak of complacency … otherwise the things for which we fought and THEY died is in danger of being lost.'[81] While Tobruk Day then was a chance for veterans of the siege to reconnect with one another and to commemorate their experience, it was also seen as a place where these men could publicly reassert the values they associated with their time at Tobruk.

Indeed, the similarities between Tobruk Day and Anzac Day are obvious. Yet the geneses of these two days were very different. As recounted by Gareth Knapman, the earliest Anzac Day commemorations in Australia took place in 1915, while the war was still in full swing.[82] They were also enacted at the behest of Government officials, rather than by returned soldiers. These early Anzac Days were often fundraising pageants, held to support returned soldiers and their families. A keen public, enthusiastic to support the war effort, attended these events. Even when Anzac Day took a more solemn turn, in 1916, it was under the direction of the newly formed 'Anzac Day Commemoration Committee' – a body made up of local political and community leaders.[83] In contrast, Tobruk Day first took place after the war had ended (when public enthusiasm for commemoration was low) and it was organised by veterans and for veterans, rather than by Government officials for the public.

In 1950, ROTA made a concerted push to have Tobruk Day officially recognised. In August of 1950, Roger Valier-Berther, of the Brisbane branch of ROTA, wrote to Prime Minister

[80] 'Over 150 Tobruk Rats to march,' *The Mail*, 9 April 1949.
[81] *Rats Review*, May 1949, Vol. 1 No. 9, p. 1, NLA: Nq 369.2946 RAT.
[82] Gareth Knapman, 'Anzac: Celebration or commemoration?,' in *Anzac Day: then and now*, ed. Tom Frame (Sydney: Newsouth, 2016), 43, 45, 48-49.
[83] Ibid., 47.

Menzies to request that 'the first Sunday after Easter Sunday' should be 'allocated as "Tobruk Day".' Berther advised Menzies that the day took place each year 'on the nearest Sunday to April 10th.' This request, noted Berther, had followed a unanimous verdict at a recent federal meeting of the association's state delegates. His appeal to Menzies emphasised the historic importance of the siege of Tobruk. It noted that it was the campaign in which 'the victorious German troops received their first severe setback during World War II, and the Tobruk Garrison showed the world that Germans could be beaten by courage, enterprise and determination.' The appeal similarly emphasised the symbolic importance of the campaign, imploring that 'we, who remain, feel that something should be done in Australia to perpetuate the memory of our fallen comrades.'[84] In response to this request, the Prime Minister's Department sought advice from the various branches of the Australian defence forces. Responding on behalf of the Navy, TJ Hawkins advised that his department had 'no objections to the establishing of Tobruk Day' as long as 'this date should not clash with any Naval celebration or ceremony.'[85]

Others, however, were not amenable to the idea, arguing that the official establishment of a Tobruk Day would set an unwelcome precedent. In his response on behalf of the Army, Frank Sinclair advised that 'the granting of this request would create a precedent which other organisations might follow in an endeavour to secure similar recognition.'[86] The Minister for Air, Melville Langslow, responded similarly. He advised that while the importance of the defence of Tobruk was 'very fully appreciated,' the official observance of a Tobruk Day 'would detract from the importance of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.'[87]

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[84] RAV Berther, 'letter to Prime Minister Menzies regarding creation of 'Tobruk Day',' letter, August 16, 1950, NAA: MP150/1, 462/201/3677.
[85] TJ Hawkins, Department of the Navy, 'Memorandum regarding request to officially recognise Tobruk Day,' 12 October 1950, NAA: MP150/1, 462/201/3677.
[86] Frank Sinclair, Department of the Army, 'Memorandum to Department of Defence regarding request to officially recognise Tobruk Day,' 25 October 1950, NAA: MP742/1, 55/1/345.
[87] Melville Langslow, Department of Air, 'Memorandum regarding request to officially recognise Tobruk Day,' 31 October 1950, NAA: A663, O74/1/168.

Responses in parliament were more sympathetic. A copy of Berther's letter had been forwarded to Bruce Wight, then the Liberal member for the electorate of Lilley, in the Brisbane region. The letter was read by Wight in the House of Representatives, on 29 November. Wight connected the petition for official recognition for Tobruk Day with Australia's changing demographic. He advised that 'because of the influx of immigrants to Australia' attempts should be made 'to inculcate into their minds and hearts a feeling of national pride in their new country.' He also connected the petition with notions of post-war reconstruction and the encouragement of national identity, stating that ROTA 'realises the need for production and for the development of this country' but also that 'a spirit of patriotism and national pride should be engendered not only in the new Australians but also in the coming generation of native Australians.' This was a period in which the problem of how to ensure that the wave of migrants moving to Australia assimilated successfully was a often raised. Given that new migrants were expected to take on the 'Australian way of life', Wight's comment here is an example of how war remembrance was often seen as a valuable site for this fostering of national identity. [88] In this vein, he advised that commemoration of Anzac Day had 'contributed much to the advancement of Australia by instilling a sense of national pride in our people' but that 'one day a year is not enough for such a task.'[89]

The Liberal member for Oxley, Dr Donald Cameron (who had served in both the Middle East and the Pacific), also voiced his support, arguing that 'it would be appropriate to commemorate the occasion and thus help to impress upon the Australian people the value of the great contribution that the Australians made at Tobruk.'[90] These were impassioned pleas on the parts of Wight and Cameron, but they fell upon disinterested ears. Menzies finally responded to Berther's letter on 5 December. His response followed a similar refrain to the

[88] Rickard, *Australia: A cultural history*, 225.
[89] CPD. HoR, 29 November 1950, no.19, p. 3343.
[90] Ibid.

Army and Air departments. Like Langslow, Menzies advised that the observance of a Tobruk Day would establish 'a precedent for the creation of … national days for other epic events which occurred during the 1939-45 War.' [91] 'Anzac Day and Armistice Day … pay homage to those to who have made the supreme sacrifice in the defence of Australia' and to give official recognition to Tobruk Day would detract from their importance. [92]

In response to Menzies' rejection, the *Rats Review* reported that members of ROTA would be disappointed to learn of the rejection, lamenting that 'little indeed was asked for' and that 'nothing short of official recognition will satisfy this Association.'[93] This moment demonstrates a tension between official, government-backed commemorations, and commemorative practices organised by community and returned services groups. For ROTA and its members, the holding of Tobruk Day was a highly significant event on their yearly calendar, comparable in importance to Anzac Day. For Menzies and the Defence departments, observance of Tobruk Day would detract from the importance of other commemorative dates. There is an irony at work here. Namely, that in seeking to have official recognition of their commemorative day, the Rats of Tobruk looked to the model of Anzac and yet the existence of Anzac and Armistice days is precisely what led the Menzies government to reject their proposal.

The endorsement of 'Tobruk Day' was not the only way in which the Rats looked to the model of Anzac to enshrine their experience within collective memory at an official level, they also requested to have the word 'Tobruk' restricted from commercial usage. ROTA's request in this instance aimed to restrict 'Tobruk' in the same way that 'Anzac' was restricted during World War One. The conditions under which 'Anzac' had become restricted for

[91] Robert Menzies, 'Letter to R Valier-Berther rejecting official recognition of Torbuk Day,' 5 December 1950, A461, N370/1/15.
[92] Ibid.
[93] *Rats Review*, February 1951, Vol. 1 No. 23, p. 1, NLA: Nq 369.2946 RAT.

commercial use, however, were very different. As Catherine Bond has explored, during World War One, there had been a number of cases involving various goods and businesses branding their products with the word 'Anzac.' A number of press outlets decried this use of 'Anzac' in branding, pointing to its 'sacredness' and recommending that government intervention was appropriate.[94] In response, the Hughes Government of the period restricted the word from commercial usage unless under special decree by the Governor-General. This restriction was enacted under the powers of the *War Precautions Act* of 1914. [95]

In 1946, ROTA general secretary, H Woodward, approached Prime Minister Chifley to request that 'the name "'Tobruk" be protected from any attempt at commercialisation that may arise.'[96] He further asserted that to veterans of the siege, 'it is a sacred place, and a portion of this earth that shall be for ever Australian.'[97] Again, here was an example of a veteran of the siege insisting that remembrance of Tobruk was both sacred and intimately tied to Australian identity. The immediate response from the Prime Minister's department focused on the logistical aspects of the request, noting that Woodward was requesting 'similar protection of the use of the word "Tobruk" to that given to the use of the word 'Anzac'.' The response also requested whether ROTA 'could bring under notice any instances of the commercialisation of the name "Tobruk",' and that if so, 'consideration could be given to the question as to whether a like protection should be extended to that word.'[98]

In a letter sent a month later, he advised that ROTA 'feels that it does not want to wait until somebody uses the name' and that the name should protected regardless to 'forestall any such

[94] Catherine Bond, *Anzac: The landing, the legend, the law* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2016), 9.
[95] Ibid.
[96] This was a pre-emptive request, as no instance of the word being used for commercial purposes was actually cited in this request.
[97] H Woodward, Gen. Sec. ROTA, 'Letter advising against proposal to demolish Tobruk Memorial in Syria,' 9 February 1946, NAA: A461, N370/1/15.
[98] Frank Strahan, Prime Minister's Department, 'Letter to ROTA regarding request to restrict the word 'Tobruk' for commercial purposes,' 28 March 1946, NAA: A461, L378/1/2.

[attempt] by having all and sundry know that the name is protected.'[99] That the Association were not, at this stage, acting in response to any particular use of 'Tobruk,' but rather its commercial use in the future, indicates that ROTA saw the word 'Tobruk' as potentially taking on an important place in the Australian collective memory. It further illustrates ROTA's mandate that due to the sacred nature of the word it should be protected against any misuse that might occur in the future. Later in the year, in September, a representative of the Attorney General's Department weighed in on the issue. It noted that 'no one has apparently commercialised it during the five and one half years that have elapsed since the siege' but that the Association's request 'might be reconsidered at some future date if occasion should arise.'[100]

In parliament, the request was also linked with the commercial restriction of Anzac. In November of 1946, Leslie Haylen noted that ROTA were 'seeking a prohibition against the use of the word "Tobruk" in the same as the use of the word 'Anzac' is prohibited' and asked whether the Attorney General had 'yet made a decision on the matter.' In support Herbert Evatt noted that 'action was indeed taken in an analogous case and it seems to me that the word 'Tobruk' ought to be covered by the same principle.' Evatt further noted that he would 'look into the matter' in order to give a 'correct ruling.'[101]

Evatt did look into the matter further, but not with a favourable gaze. In February of 1947, in another memo from the Attorney General's Department sent directly to Chifley, it was advised that 'inquiries revealed that 'Tobruk Shoes' was registered as a trade name on 13th August, 1946' but that the business had been disposed of in November of the same year. It was further noted that the two owners of the Tobruk Shoes business were interviewed by the

[99] H Woodward, Gen. Sec. ROTA, 'Letter to Prime Minister's department regarding request to restrict 'Tobruk' for commercial purposes,' NAA: A461, N370/1/15.
[100] KH Bailey, Attorney Generals Department, 'Letter to Prime Minister's Department regarding request to restrict use of the word 'Tobruk' for commercial purposes,' 20 September 1946, NAA: A461, L378/1/2.
[101] CPD. HoR, 22 November 1946, no. 47, p. 948.

Department and had appreciated 'the national sentiment towards the word 'Tobruk' and accordingly will refrain from using the word as a trade name.' In summarising, it was established that 'in the event of any case occurring in the future, the matter could probably be dealt with satisfactorily by similar means.'[102]

ROTA was not satisfied with this response. Writing later that month, M Stegman, on the Association's behalf, advised that in forwarding the details of the Tobruk Shoes company, it was the Association's intention to provide 'the necessary evidence so that the name Tobruk met the earlier example set by "Anzac".' He argued that 'we feel that protection should be afforded to correspond with the protection granted to the word Anzac and gazetted as such.'[103] This explicit connection demonstrates, yet again, that ROTA was significantly influenced by the Anzac tradition, and saw Tobruk as its direct corollary following World War Two. What ROTA members like Stegman failed to take into consideration, is that restriction of the word 'Anzac' had the support of an enthusiastic public and a complicit government.

A final decision was eventually made later in 1947. Writing to Chifley in October, KH Baily of the Attorney General's Department advised that there was little point in giving the word legal protection, noting that ROTA's desire to 'prevent the use of the word 'Tobruk' for commercial purposes could probably be achieved without legal action.' It was further advised here that no statutory provision against the use of the word would be made 'unless and until the necessity therefore becomes clearly apparent.'[104] The final piece of correspondence relating to this matter came from Chifley himself, who contacted Stegman directly to reject

[102] Frank Strahan, Prime Minister's Department, 'Letter to ROTA regarding request to restrict the word 'Tobruk' for commercial purposes,' 4 February 1947, NAA: A461, L378/1/2.
[103] M Stegman, ROTA, 'Letter to Prime Minister Chifley regarding request to restrict the word 'Tobruk' for commercial purposes,' 26 February 1947, NAA: A461, L378/1/2.
[104] KH Bailey, Attorney Generals Department, 'Letter to Prime Minister Chifley regarding request to restrict use of the word 'Tobruk' for commercial purposes,' 22 October 1947, NAA: A461, L378/1/2.

the proposal. In doing so, Chifley referred to the 'Tobruk Shoes' case, noting that it had been settled with little impediment. He further noted the legal difficulty of enforcing the change, advising that 'since the repeal of the *National Security Act*, the Government has no power to act by Regulation' and that further he would be unwilling to introduce the necessary legislative instrument unless 'such a course were to become clearly necessary.'[105]

ROTA's failed campaigns in these two instances demonstrate how the Rats sought and failed to have the memory of their deeds recognised in an official capacity in the post-war period. It was not just through the establishment of symbolic commemorative rituals and the preservation of memorials, but also through official recognition and legal protection. In each of these matters, ROTA modelled their commemorative efforts on the example set by the Anzac tradition. Unlike Anzac however, ROTA did not have the support of government or widespread enthusiasm among the public that could have elevated their cause.

The Tobruk Memorial on Anzac Parade

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, ROTA continued its business with little fanfare. A number of reunions were held, further pilgrimages went to Tobruk in the 1960s, and the various ROTA newsletters continued to be published and circulated. In the early 1980s a drive was made by the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Branch of ROTA to erect a memorial to the Tobruk siege in sight of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, on Anzac Parade. Over a period of five years, the ACT Branch determinedly lobbied a range of political stakeholders, from other branches of ROTA, to the RSL, to a number of prominent politicians, both local and interstate. Although they found allies in their efforts to erect the memorial, ROTA also faced much resistance. This episode, in many ways, closes the circle

[105] John Chifley, 'Letter to M Stegman of ROTA rejecting request to restrict 'Tobruk' from commercial usage,' 24 October 1947, NAA: NAA: A461, L378/1/2.

that opened when sappers during the Tobruk siege built their memorial in Libya in October of 1941. The Anzac Parade memorial is a direct model of the original memorial in Tobruk and uses the very same inscription stone from the original memorial.[106]

The initiative to build a memorial to the Rats of Tobruk on Anzac Parade took some time to gain momentum. The first mention of this idea arose in a meeting of the Federal Council of ROTA, in 1968 where it was suggested that a 'request be sent to the Prime Minister asking that consideration be given to the erection … of a replica of the Australian Memorial in the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Tobruk' on Anzac Parade.[107]

While this motion gained little traction at the time, it was taken up in earnest ten years later, in 1978. In a long letter to Minister John Haslem (then the representative minister for Canberra), Roy Dexter, president of the ACT Branch of ROTA, outlined the Canberra Sub-Branch's idea for a memorial to the Rats on Anzac Parade. This letter emphasised the precariousness of the Rats' memory and identity. Dexter advised Haslem that 'our very exclusiveness renders us vulnerable to the passage of time' and that considering this position 'we would like to leave some memorial of us behind.' He implored that a 'lasting memorial' should be built to the Rats of Tobruk in Canberra and that this memorial should be a replica of the 'obelisk which stands in the War Cemetery in Tobruk.' Even close to thirty-seven years on, the original memorial in Tobruk cemetery still loomed large in the memory of siege veterans like Dexter. This proposal also sought to enshrine the Rats' memory within the broader canon of Anzac. Dexter advised that the memorial should be placed in the bay on

[106] This inscription stone was transported back to the Australian War Memorial in 1948 when the original memorial was rebuilt.
[107] ROTA Federal Council, 'Minutes of meeting of Federal Council of the Rats of Tobruk Association,' 28 January 1968, AWM, PR03225.

Anzac Parade 'opposite the replica of the memorial to the Australian and New Zealand mounted regiments who served in the Middle East in the 1914-1918 War.'[108]

In addition to John Haslem, the ACT Branch also corresponded with the Federal Council of ROTA and with the RSL. The Federal Council responded in the register of unequivocal support. Nord Hartley (then federal secretary of ROTA) advised that 'the Siege of Tobruk … was not just another campaign but an important history making event.' In this response, Hartley also emphasised the significance of the Tobruk siege to each of the armed services, noting that the proposed monument 'would be a Memorial to men of the three services … there were members of the army, navy and airforce taking part from many countries. It is not just a unit memorial.'[109] The RSL, however, was less enthusiastic. Bill Keys, then federal president of the RSL, responded that there was not 'a case for erecting a memorial in Anzac Parade because this was being reserved for memorials to services and very special monuments such as the Lighthorse Memorial'.[110]

This response drew an impassioned reply from Dexter, who complained that the initiative had the backing of ROTA organisations around Australia but to be successful would need the support of the RSL. Again, he pointed to the unique nature of the Tobruk siege, advising that 'the Memorial which we propose will be one to all the Services and to men of all nations, Australian, British, Indian, Canadian, New Zealanders, Poles, Czechs, Free French, Israelis who were concerned in any way with the defence of Tobruk.' He further implored that 'Tobruk was not just another campaign, but an important history making event' that marked the first victory 'achieved over German forces in World War Two.'[111] This response is

[108] Roy Dexter, ROTA ACT Branch, 'Letter to John Haslem MP regarding proposal to build Tobruk Memorial, Anzac Parade,' 1 April 1978, AWM, PR83/159.
[109] Nord Hartley, ROTA Federal Council, 'Letter to ROTA ACT Sub-Branch regarding petition to build Tobruk Memorial, Anzac Parade,' 11 January 1978, AWM, PR83/159.
[110] William Keys, RSL National President, 'Letter to John Haslem MP regarding proposed Tobruk memorial at Anzac Parade,' 18 December 1978, AWM, PR83/159.
[111] Roy Dexter, ROTA ACT Branch, 'Letter to Bill Keys regarding rejection of support for Tobruk Memorial on Anzac Parade,' 14 March 1979, AWM, PR83/159.

interesting for its emphasis on the multicultural identity of the siege. Whilst earlier calls to memorialise the experience of the Rats, this modern initiative reflects the growing identity of multiculturalism that had become part of the Australian identity by the 1980s.

ROTA's ACT Branch made a submission to the National Memorials Committee (NMC) in March of 1980.[112] Much of the submission was dedicated to a detailed retelling of the events of the siege, noting in particular the campaign's significance within the broader story of World War Two. It noted that 'The siege of Tobruk represented the first major reverse for the German forces on land during the war.' The submission also pointed to the exceptional nature of Australian soldiers, asserting that 'the defenders of Tobruk, by their lack of adherence to orthodox strategy, lived up to, and enhanced the tradition of the Australian soldier.' The place of the siege in the canon of notable Australian military events was also explicitly outlined in the submission. Here it was stated that 'Tobruk, along with Gallipoli and Kokoda, was one of the most significant events involving Australian troops and is therefore worthy of a place in Anzac Parade.'[113]

An important aspect of the Anzac Parade memorial is that it incorporated the original tablet used on the memorial built in the Tobruk War Cemetery near the end of the 1941 siege. In May 1946, staff at the Australian War Memorial responded to a request from Athol Brown, that the tablet which adorned the original memorial at Tobruk be preserved at the Australian War Memorial, pending the replacement of the Tobruk memorial. This idea had been inspired, according to Brown, by the removal and preservation of similar tablets from memorials in France following World War One.[114] In a memo following up this request, John

[112] Roy Dexter, ROTA ACT Branch, 'Letter to the Minister for the Capital Territory regarding proposed Tobruk Memorial in Anzac Parade,' 14 March 1980, AWM, PR83/159.
[113] National Memorials Committee, 'Proposal for a memorial to the Rats of Tobruk,' August 1981, AWM, PR83/159.
[114] Australian War Memorial Military History Section, 'Note for file preservation of Tobruk memorial tablet,' 6 May 1946, NAA: AWM93, 50/3/104.

Treloar noted that the War Memorial 'would be very pleased to have the tablet.'[115] The proposal for the Anzac Parade memorial noted that the AWM had given 'very favourable consideration to its [the original tablet's] incorporation' and indeed, the tablet is included in the final memorial.[116]

Figure 2-4: The Anzac Parade Tobruk memorial in 2014, taken from Wikipedia.

The memorial proposal was approved by the NMC and its unveiling took place on 13 April 1983, to coincide with the commemoration of Tobruk Day. ROTA also settled upon this date to coincide with the 'World Reunion of the Rats of Tobruk Association' to be held that year, in Gosford NSW.[117] The unveiling was performed by the Governor General, Sir Ninian Stephen, and was attended by a number of other dignitaries from both the political and

[115] John Treloar, Director Australian War Memorial, 'Internal memorandum regarding preservation of Tobruk memorial tablet,' 10 May 1946, AWM93, 50/3/104.
[116] National Memorials Committee, 'Proposal for a memorial to the Rats of Tobruk,' August 1981, AWM, PR83/159.
[117] EJ Wood, ROTA Federal President, 'Letter to National Memorials Committee regarding memorial fund and unveiling date,' 19 August 1982, AWM, PR83/159.

military spheres. Despite these arrangements, ROTA saw the memorial and its unveiling ceremony as something that distinctly belonged to Tobruk veterans. In a letter to ROTA state branches, President EJ Wood advised that it might 'seem strange' that dignitaries would be invited to the ceremony while Tobruk veterans were not. Yet, he noted, Tobruk veterans did not receive invitations because 'they are hosts and will attend the ceremony by right not by invitation.' The egalitarian nature of the unveiling was also noted where it was advised that there would be no 'special arrangements' for prominent former Rats; rather 'all Rats of Tobruk will be treated equally.'[118]

Sir Ninian Stephen, the Governor General, made the unveiling speech. He asserted that the unveiling was a moment in which Australian citizens were 'uniquely united in dedicating to future generations their shared remembrance of the past.' He further asserted that the men of Tobruk had become 'an Australian legend … taking its place beside Gallipoli and the Kokoda trail' and that 'close by, the Anzac spirit is commemorated in our great National War Memorial.' In his final words, the Governor General linked the unveiling back to the original Tobruk memorial, in 1941. In doing so, he quoted General Morshead's brief address:

> It is with a sense of deep remembrance and great pride that I unveil this monument and I do so in the name of all who have served and all who are now serving here.

These words suggest something beyond their intent at this ceremony. They are an affirmation that remembrance of war in Australia is characterised by continuity, by the carrying on of a tradition forged in World War One and carried on by Australian soldiers down the generations. The Tobruk memorial on Anzac parade was arguably a closing of the Rats'

[118] EJ Wood, ROTA Memorial Committee, ''Letter to state branch presidents regarding approval and unveiling of Tobruk memorial,' 13 December 1982, AWM, PR83/159.

commemorative journey. Yet, it was also a symbol of their inclusion into the broader tradition of the Anzac legend.

Conclusion

While the Rats of Tobruk's story is well known to those with an interest in Australia's wartime history, it does not hold a prominent place in the broader landscape of Australian remembrance of World War Two. That distinction has been given to the memory of POWs and the Kokoda soldiers. Yet, following the War, the Rats worked ardently to enshrine their memory in the wider Australian public consciousness. At the time of the siege, press and popular representations painted the Rats as the inheritors of the Anzac legend. And indeed, they appeared to fulfill many of the ideals that define that tradition. They distinguished themselves on the world-stage in a significant military campaign, they were characterised as having shown bravery and comradeship under adversity, and they had a recognisable identity, exemplified in their name the 'Rats of Tobruk.'

The formation of ROTA and the publishing of the Association's periodicals demonstrates that following the War, the Rats were a group dedicated to the project of keeping their memory relevant in wider Australian society. The heated dispute that took place around Cabinet's decision to rebuild and unveil the memorial at Tobruk illustrates the sense of ownership that the Rats felt over their story and their need for authentic representation. It also demonstrates the connections made by onlookers between the story of the Rats and the story of Gallipoli. The Rats' petition to have 'Tobruk Day' included on the national calendar, and their request to have 'Tobruk' protected for commercial purposes demonstrates how the Rats lobbied government to enshrine their memory, but also how they looked to the pre-existing tradition of Anzac remembrance as a model for their own remembrance endeavours. Finally, the eventual erection and unveiling of the Rats of Tobruk memorial on Anzac parade acted as a

symbolic closing of the circle on the story of the Rats in Australian society. This memorial was a design that mirrored the original vernacular memorial built during the siege itself, which symbolically returned ownership of the story back to the Rats. In placing this memorial along Anzac Parade, it was also an affirmation of the story's place within the Anzac tradition.

Chapter Three.

‘The younger men must have their say’:

The generational debate over celebration and mourning on Anzac Day

In 1958, Alan Seymour wrote a play titled *The One Day of the Year*. The play centres on the conflict between a father and son over Anzac Day observance. The father, Alf, is an alcoholic veteran who takes pride in Anzac Day and looks forward to its observance each year as a chance to catch up with old mates and to drink and reminisce. His son Hughie is a university student who disparages the Anzac legend and his father’s celebration of the day each year. The play explores several themes such as intergenerational communication, class, and the relationship between history and memory, but at its core is the question of the Anzac legend’s meaning and continuing relevance in the characters’ post-war lives. In one particularly dramatic outburst near the play’s end, Hughie lectures his father on his love of Anzac Day:

> I’ve been looking at what it is. And I’ll tell you what it is. The ritual is hollow. The myth is meaningless, all that’s left is the booze-up. That is what is, as far as I’m concerned. One great moronic booze-up. Nothing more.[1]

The passage encapsulates a common sentiment at the time that Anzac Day had been reduced to a meaningless excuse for veterans to get drunk with one another and had lost its relevance to younger Australians. In writing the play, Seymour claims that he was inspired by an article in the University of Sydney’s *Honi Soit* newspaper which had denounced Anzac Day along

[1] This excerpt is taken from Seymour’s novelisation of the play: Alan Seymour, *The one day of the year* (London: Souvenir Press, 1967), 186.

similar lines.[2] By this point, however, the debate over Anzac Day observance and especially drunkenness on Anzac Day, had already been going on for more than two decades.

This chapter examines these debates during the final period of World War Two and over the post-war period. The first section of the chapter examines the debate in NSW, from 1944 through to 1946. In New South Wales (NSW) veterans of both world wars aggressively lobbied the Federal Government to have national wartime restrictions over Anzac Day observance ended. A key issue for these veterans was a restriction on the public sale and consumption of alcohol on the day, which they sought to have lifted. NSW veterans argued that reuniting and reminiscing over a few beers on Anzac Day was central to the tradition and to restrict that practice was a violation of returned men's right to dictate their own form of Anzac observance. Their successful campaign to have the restrictions withdrawn, however, was followed by a much longer debate in Victoria, that took place from 1946 to 1960.

In Victoria veterans were split. On one side were leading members of the RSSAILA who, in opposition to their counterparts in NSW, insisted that Anzac Day should remain a 'closed'[3] day. This meant that Anzac Day observance would continue to be restricted to solemn remembrance in the form of the dawn service and the Anzac Day parade. Conversely, public drinking and other forms of frivolity would remain prohibited. On the other side were rank-and-file veterans, who argued that Anzac Day should be made 'brighter'[4] by the holding of sports meetings, the opening of cinemas and other commercial enterprises, and (as it was in NSW) by the sale and consumption of alcohol in public spaces. Those in favour of 'brighter' observance were ardently supported by younger veterans that had recently returned from

[2] 'One Day of the Year that changed writer Alan Seymour's life,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 March 2015.
[3] I have not been able to find an explicit definition of the term 'closed day', but it is likely this simply referred to the stipulation that commercial enterprises remain closed throughout the day.
[4] This term is used consistently in reference to the campaign by ex-servicemen to have Anzac Day restrictions lifted in Victoria.

World War Two, many of whom had formed their own organisations outside of the RSSAILA.

Throughout these debates two key themes emerge. The first of these relates to ownership of Anzac Day and of the Anzac legend more broadly. At almost every turn the question of who in Australia had the right to define and dictate Anzac Day observance drove the debate. Many veterans of World War One insisted that as they had been the creators of Anzac, it was a day that belonged to them and should be observed according to their wishes. In contrast, veterans of World War Two framed themselves as the next generation of Anzacs, carrying the torch. They argued that because they were the Anzac legend's inheritors, they should also have a say in its observance.

The second theme relates to meaning. In all this jostling for control over Anzac Day observance, veterans (along with other contributors to the debate) repeatedly circled back to the question of Anzac Day's meaning and what role it should play in Australia's post-war society. Those in favour of closed observance emphasised Anzac Day's emotional nature, as a sacred day of mourning and reverence for the sacrifices endured by men of World War One. Those in favour of a brighter day, on the other hand, claimed that Anzac Day should be a celebration of nationhood that served the living as well as the dead. They also saw the day as something that belonged to rank-and-file veterans, and that as such, they should be able to spend the day as they wished. To maintain Anzac Day as a day of mourning went against the wishes of ordinary veterans and would result in people losing interest in it over time. In their own way, those advocating for a 'brighter' observance were also making claims to the sanctity of Anzac Day. To them, observing Anzac Day against the wishes of everyday veterans was also an act of sacrilege. Ultimately both sides of this debate had the same essential goal. They both sought to save Anzac Day and war commemoration more generally

from losing its meaning in a changing post-war world. Their methods for doing so, however, sat in stark contrast to one another.

These conceptions of Anzac Day as sacred have been tied to the day since its earliest observances. As noted by Graham Seal, the sacred status of Anzac is something that was instilled in people's understanding of the day from its earliest observances on both a folkloric level, through the performance of its associated rituals and traditions, and through more formal processes, such as the commercial restriction on the use of the word Anzac.[5] A number of other scholars have taken this a step further, arguing that Anzac has become a form of secular religion in Australia, noting in particular that this has played a significant role in making criticism of Anzac and its rituals a taboo subject.[6]

In the post-war period there was almost universal agreement among veterans that Anzac Day was a sacred event that honoured the dead while celebrating the nation. However, there was significant difference of opinion as to what that meant – especially when it came to the question of whether public consumption of alcohol should take place on the day. These differences of opinion fell across overlapping and intersecting divides; between different veteran groups, across political lines, between interested members of the public, and from state to state. Those in favour of 'closed' observance saw Anzac Day as an occasion that should be undertaken with a solemnity appropriate to a day marked by reverence for the dead and for the nation. Those advocating for a 'brighter' day thought that the best way to honour the dead and the nation was to open the day up to celebrations and drinking. This, they argued, was more in keeping with the wishes of rank-and-file veterans and as such would be a more democratic form of Anzac Day observance. Yet, reverence and celebration could not be separated so easily. Veterans' drinking rituals had their own solemn significance as a form

[5] Seal, 'The sacred in the secular,' 213.
[6] Inglis, *Sacred places,* 434; Martin Crotty, 'Teaching Anzac: fraught territory, teachable moments and professional responsibility,' *Agora* 44 (2009): 15; Bond, *Anzac: the landing, the legend, the law*, 8.

of commemorating the dead and expressing shared emotions that were especially precious for being so rare in a culture where men were dissuaded from displaying emotion. This chapter's examination of these divergent attitudes towards Anzac Day reveals how different emotional responses to war and remembrance in the post-war period also tended to align with different visions for Australian identity.

The chapter also tests previously made historiographical claims, which argue that enthusiasm for Anzac Day was waning in this period. In response, the chapter demonstrates that debates around the importance of Anzac Day to Australian identity were both prevalent and passionate during this period, especially among veteran communities. The chapter begins with a short history of Anzac Day observance up to World War Two. It describes the earliest observances of the day and the debates around proper observance that took place over the interwar period. Most of the chapter is then spent in examination of the debates that took place in NSW and Victoria during and after World War Two. The NSW RSSAILA were united in their campaign to have the Federal restrictions on Anzac Day lifted. Their primary opposition came from the government, which was encouraged by church and temperance organisations to continue the restrictions. Their eventual success, however, inspired rank-and-file veterans, many of them recently returned from World War Two, to launch a long and drawn-out campaign to have the restrictions in their state lifted. In contrast to the preceding episode in NSW, the Victorian debate was primarily held between the different generational cohorts within the veteran community.

This chapter investigates this topic through a range of primary source materials. The debate in NSW is examined through correspondence between the Prime Minister's office and various NSW sub-branches of the RSSAILA and also through press sources, in the form of articles and letters to the editor. The debate in Victoria is primarily examined through newspaper sources as well as parliamentary records. Newspapers in particular were a site

where debates around the nature of Anzac Day, and the form its observance should take, played out. Pundits submitted letters giving their opinions, journalists published articles, and polls of readers were taken regularly.

Early observance: World War One and the interwar period

Debates over Anzac Day, which commemorates Australian troops' landing at Gallipoli on 25 April, reach back almost as far as its earliest observances and these debates have always reflected the context of their time and place. The earliest observances of the day were set up as fundraising pageants and were for the most part celebratory affairs. Gareth Knapman has written about these early Anzac Days, charting their shift from fundraisers to commemorations over World War One and the early-interwar period. The first in Australia was held in South Australia, in Adelaide, on 15 October 1915. The event was actually a Labour Day parade that had been relabelled as Anzac Day in support of the war effort. In line with this, the parade included participants from the First AIF, among them wounded Gallipoli veterans riding on parade floats adorned with depictions of the battle. The procession ended on Adelaide oval where a carnival was staged, with proceeds being directed towards various charities in support of the war.[7] Anzac remembrance days were also held at a few locations in Victoria that year. These too were carnival events and were also organised as fundraising drives to support troops both deployed and returning.[8] In these early days, the notion of celebrating Anzac Day was taken for granted. Most people saw Australia's part in the campaign in triumphal terms; Australians had participated in an important campaign where they had fought for what was widely perceived to be the greater good. In this context, the

[7] Knapman, 'Anzac: Celebration or commemoration?,' 42-45; In press reports the parade and celebrations were repeatedly referred to as 'Anzac Day'.
[8] Ibid., 46.

Anzacs' deeds at Gallipoli inspired celebrations and feelings of pride among Australians back home. They also played an important role in recruiting new volunteers into the AIF.[9]

This mood, however, did not last. After the evacuation of Australian troops from Gallipoli in January 1916, Australians began to debate how Anzac Day should be observed. The fact that more than 8,000 Australians had died at Gallipoli led many to question whether the day should be commemorated with more solemnity.[10] Different states now began to undertake Anzac observance in different ways. In Queensland in January 1916 a meeting of influential figures in the state (including the mayor of Brisbane, the state governor, and the premier of Queensland) decided that Anzac Day that year should be observed as a day of mourning and remembrance. To organise the day going forward they formed the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee. The most active member of this new committee was its secretary, Chaplain David Garland. Believing that Anzac Day should be coordinated between the states, Garland wrote to Australia's state governments to urge them that fundraising should be discouraged on Anzac Day on the grounds that it encouraged celebration. For Garland and the committee Anzac Day was a day for remembrance of the dead rather than celebration of the living.[11]

In Victoria, the carnival atmosphere continued. Although the state's Premier Alexander Peacock stated publicly that there would be 'no State celebration of Anzac Day' ultimately, he left it to local governments to make their own decisions on the matter.[12] Given the lack of restrictions, groups went ahead in continuing to fundraise via pageantry and carnivals and as a result, celebrations continued in Victoria.[13]

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[9] Martin Crotty and Craig Melrose, 'Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, mourning and politics in interwar commemoration,' *The Round Table* 96 (2007): 686.
[10] Knapman, 'Anzac: Celebration or commemoration?,' 47.
[11] Ibid., 49.
[12] 'Anzac Day,' *The Age*, 4 April 1916.
[13] Knapman, 'Anzac: Celebration or commemoration?,' 48.

Garland's recommendations were not taken on in Sydney. There the city's Lord Mayor recommended that town hall and the Queen Victoria Markets be illuminated, pledging £1,000 to the cause. This was in response to the NSW government's edict that public buildings be decorated to celebrate the occasion. The public reaction was instantaneous. Bereaved family members, for the most part wives and mothers, wrote to the local press disparaging the proposal, arguing that celebration of Anzac Day was inappropriate given that so many were in the process of grieving relatives lost at war.[14] These complaints were answered by young members of the Returned Soldiers Association who argued that returned men wished to enjoy themselves on Anzac Day and that it was not the place of the civilians to dictate its observance to them.[15] As these examples demonstrate, the question of whether Anzac Day should be celebrated or commemorated was handled according to local conditions and opinions around Australia. However, even at this early stage it was becoming clear that Anzac Day would need to accommodate a range of viewpoints that did not always agree on the day's meaning or purpose. This was a trend that would continue through the interwar period and into post-war Australia.

Over the following decades most of the States' form of observance underwent significant change. During the 1920s each RSSAILA executive body developed clear rules for the observance of Anzac Day in its state. In NSW the day was split between the dawn service and march in the first half of the day, followed by entertainments and frivolity in the afternoon; an arrangement that suited those wishing to remember as well as those wishing to celebrate. Alistair Thomson attributes this continuation of open observance to the fact that the temperance movement was not as strong there as it was elsewhere in Australia, and additionally that labour populism which asserted the right of working-class men to enjoy their

[14] Ibid., 49-50.
[15] Ibid., 51.

drink, had a strong following in NSW.[16] South Australia and Tasmania, like NSW, also held solemn remembrances in the morning followed by celebrations in the afternoon.[17] In Western Australia the RSSAILA state branches advised their members that Anzac Day should be observed as a day of mourning and remembrance. Although there was no legal impediment to the opening of hotels in these states, many closed their doors for the day in respect of the RSSAILA's wishes.[18] In Queensland and Victoria, however, restrictions were mandated by legislation. The case in Queensland was relatively straightforward. Following complaints from ex-servicemen who were unable to attend Anzac Day rituals due to working commitments, the *Anzac Day Holiday Act, 1921* was enacted, which encouraged the closure of drinking establishments and race meetings on the day, requiring that those businesses provide double pay to workers should they choose to remain open. This legislation, however, was amended in 1930 to formally make Anzac Day a closed holiday in the state.[19] The amendment was made following approaches made to the State Premier by Queensland's Anzac Day Commemoration Committee who had been inspired by the enactment of similar legislation in Victoria in 1925.[20]

The debate over restricting Anzac Day observance during the interwar period in Victoria was particularly impassioned. This early debate in Victoria deserves particular attention as it provides valuable context to the discussion of the post-war debate in Victoria that makes up the bulk of the second half of this chapter. Victoria's *Anzac Day Act 1925* was drafted and introduced by the state's chief secretary, Dr Stanley Argyle and was intended to make Anzac Day into a statutory holiday in the state, in a similar vein to Good Friday, with a ban on a

[16] Thomson, *Anzac memories,* 157.
[17] 'RSSAILA state conference,' *Advocate,* 6 June 1927.
[18] 'Anzac Day,' *The West Australian*, 12 May 1927.
[19] Mark Cryle, 'Holy day or holiday: on the origins of Anzac Day in Queensland,' Queensland State Archives website (2014). [https://blogs.archives.qld.gov.au/2016/04/19/holy-day-or-holiday-on-the-origins-of-anzac-day-in-queensland/]
[20] 'Anzac Day Commemoration Committee,' *The Longreach Leader*, 9 August 1929.

broad range of commercial activities, excepting essential industries and services.[21] Specifically, it stipulated that factories, shops and warehouses be closed on the day, and further, that liquor trading, horse racing, and theatre shows were all prohibited, with fines for those found to contravene the restrictions.[22] The introduction of this legislation sparked significant controversy. Initially this debate was centred on the effect that such restrictions would have on trade and other commercial activities. The restrictions, argued Dr Argyle, 'would provide for making Anzac Day a sacred day.'[23]

The strong push to ban drinking and other frivolities on Victoria's Anzac Day should be read within the broader context of Victorian peoples' attitudes towards drinking and legislation aimed at limiting alcohol consumption in the state. Elizabeth Taylor has pointed out that a legislated licensing system for alcohol sales has existed in Victoria since the establishment of the *Wines, Beers and Spirits Sale Act, 1864.* This legislation made provisions for local municipal bodies to limit the amount of alcohol licenses in their local area. With the introduction of the *Licensing Act, 1885,* plebiscites known as 'local option polls' were introduced allowing local male ratepayers to vote on the number of liquor licenses in their area. In 1920, under pressure from the temperance movement the first state-wide local option poll was held in Victoria under the direction of the License Restriction Board. Two districts, Boroondara and Nunawading, returned a vote for 'no license' and were changed to dry areas and a further 71 districts voted in a reduction in licences.[24] It was in this context that the *Anzac Day Act* was introduced, and the stronger push for a dry Anzac Day in Victoria reflected this local popular opposition to public alcohol consumption and drunkenness.

[21] 'Anzac Day,' *The Age*, 24 September 1925.
[22] 'Anzac Day in Victoria,' *The Australasian*, 16 April 1927.
[23] 'Anzac Day sacred,' *Weekly Times*, 2 May 1925.
[24] Elizabeth Jean Taylor, 'Maps made by temperance: the legacy of 'local option' controls on alcohol in Melbourne,' *14th Australasian Urban History Planning History Conference*, 31 January-2 February 2018.

In the interwar context the Victorian restrictions became increasingly wrapped up in conversations about what should constitute appropriate form of observance of Anzac Day. Responding to the restrictions, in a letter to *The Herald* in 1934, Founding member and former federal president of the RSSAILA, Brigadier-General William K Bolton, argued that an overemphasis on mourning on Anzac Day was detracting from its value as a celebration of Australia's birth as 'a nation in arms.' He noted that Anzac Day was for 'the whole of the people of this country' and that as such people should be given the 'liberty to celebrate and enjoy a national holiday.' The 'clamour for solemnity and sanctity on Anzac Day,' he asserted, was 'a lot of hysterical humbug and eyewash.' Although he acknowledged that 'sorrow and grief on such an occasion was natural and proper,' he argued that 'to perpetuate this atmosphere for all time is an offence to the common intelligence.'[25] For Bolton Anzac Day was primarily about encouraging Australian people's pride in the nation and celebrating the role of the Anzacs in helping to create that nation. To focus on bereavement detracted from the day's purpose as a yearly celebration of national pride.

This was a viewpoint expressed by many of the RSSAILA's rank and file, through letters to the press and in sub-branch meetings around the state. These shared the common sentiment that the day had become too sombre. The Victorian RSSAILA's leadership, however, was steadfast in its opposition to any calls for a change in observance. In response to calls to open the day up (such as Bolton's) the Victorian president of the RSSAILA, George Holland, remarked that closed observance 'gives the bereaved the comforting thought that the whole State is feeling with them in their loss.'[26] Holland's words here are telling. This reference to the bereaved feeling along with the state suggests his conception of Anzac as a form of 'emotional regime.' This is a concept coined by William Reddy who argues that certain

[25] 'Anzac Day should be a national holiday,' *The Herald*, 6 April 1934.
[26] 'Solemnity of Anzac Day,' *The Herald*, 5 March 1934.

displays of emotion are encouraged by states as a way of promoting social cohesion, particularly in the context of state rituals like Anzac Day.[27] In this instance, Holland and other senior RSSAILA members saw Anzac Day as encouraging proper reverence and respect for the men that took part in World War One (in which he and his fellow members occupied a prestigious place). Those on the other side of the debate, campaigning for 'brighter' observance, were in effect seeking to alter this emotional regime, so that it would be acceptable to move past the grief of war while still acknowledging the sacrifices of the dead.

It was in this period also that the first calls for the matter to be dealt with by a veteran plebiscite began to appear. At the Victorian RSSAILA's annual state meeting in July 1937 a motion was raised by WJ Coulson of Caulfield that a wide-ranging vote be taken by 'all returned sailors, soldiers, and nurses in Victoria to ascertain their views' on the possibility of opening Anzac Day and that 'a plebiscite was the fairest way of determining how the day should be celebrated.'[28] Opponents of the motion, who were supported by George Holland, argued that the suggested changes would allow commercial traders to profit from Anzac Day commemorations which would 'destroy the sacredness of the day.'[29] Holland's comments would be repeated many times in the post-war debate. In these instances, advocates for 'closed' observance were adamant that calls for a 'brighter' Anzac Day were nothing more than sacrilegious attempts to cash in on the day's popularity. While the motion to undertake a plebiscite was easily outvoted by opposing members, calls for a plebiscite on the issue of opening up Anzac Day would become numerous in the post-war period and each time the

[27] William Reddy, *The navigation of feeling: A framework for the history of emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129.
[28] The implication here was that a vote should be taken by all returned service people, not just those involved with the RSSAILA.
[29] 'Anzac Day form of observance,' *The Age*, 23 July 1937.

rationale was the same: that the observance of a closed day at the behest of the RSSAILA's leadership went against the wishes of the majority of rank-and-file of veterans.

The advent of World War Two put a temporary stop on debates around observance. But this new war also created the conditions, through the imposition of nationwide restrictions on Anzac Day and through the return of a new generation of veterans, for a renewed focus on the question of how Anzac Day should be observed.

World War Two

Soon after the commencement of the war in 1939, the government drafted and passed the *National Security Act* for 'the Safety and Defence of the Commonwealth and its Territories during the present state of War.'[30] The Act (which was not officially repealed until 1950) granted the Commonwealth government sweeping emergency wartime powers. Initially these were oriented towards economic matters, mainly related to trade and commercial activity, but these were significantly expanded over the course of the war to include controls aimed at moderating social behaviour.[31]

Just prior to Anzac Day in 1942, Prime Minister Curtin issued a new amendment to the Act that stipulated restrictions on the observance of Anzac Day across Australia. It determined that across Australia hotels should close, sporting events and other forms of entertainment should be cancelled and for reasons of public safety marches 'beyond the normal should not be organised.'[32] Reporting on the new restrictions Melbourne's *The Age* noted that it would 'be a day of solemn observance' and that with Australia 'menaced by the shadow of war, it is

[30] *National Security Act 1939* (Cth).
[31] Ronald Walker, *The Australian economy in war and reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 39-40.
[32] 'Anzac Day observance,' *The Age*, 23 April 1942.

fitting that this should be so.'[33] The Anzac Day restrictions were part of a broader crackdown on non-essential activities. Only a few months earlier in December 1941, for example, the government had issued a ban on the taking of holidays or annual leave outside of Christmas and New Year's Day along with a curfew on non-essential trading after six o'clock.[34]

These amendments were being made at the point of highest tension for Australia during the war. Only two months earlier Australia had suffered arguably its greatest military defeat in the fall of Singapore, on 15 February. Further, the first major attacks on Australian soil had taken place with the bombing of Darwin on 19 February. Australian forces were engaged in active fighting around the world, in Asia and the South Pacific, in North Africa, and over the European continent as members of Bomber Command.

Anzac Day ceremonies were appropriately modest that year. Certainly, no one complained of the national restrictions. In Sydney, the dawn service at Martin Place and the march through the city were both cancelled. The march and dawn service were also cancelled in Melbourne, although a subdued wreath laying ceremony was held at the Shrine, attended by Prime Minister Curtin and leading Australian and American military officials.[35] Anzac Day in 1943 was also subdued, but that year Anzac Day fell on a Sunday, so the usual restrictions on commercial activities and other entertainments already applied. In 1944, however, the situation changed, as a campaign to have the national restrictions lifted began in NSW.

The debate in NSW (1944–46)

In March 1944, Curtin issued a statement to the state governments, the press, and the RSSAILA, confirming the continued restriction of Anzac Day that year under the expanded

[33] Ibid.
[34] 'No annual holiday leave Christmas new year,' *The Telegraph*, 17 December 1941.
[35] 'Quietest Anzac Day,' *The Sun*, 26 April 1942.

federal powers granted him by the *National Security Act 1939*. Drawing on the well-worn tradition of describing Anzac Day in religious terms he called it 'an event that is sacred in the national life of Australia', and advised 'that hotels and wine saloons would be closed throughout the day, that all race meetings and organised sport would not be held, and that theatres, including picture theatres, would be closed until one pm.'[36] While most sections of the community accepted this proclamation without protest, veterans publicly voiced their opposition to these continuing restrictions.

This campaign protesting the restrictions ran from just prior to Anzac Day in 1944, through to March 1946. Veterans in NSW were all but unanimous in their opposition to the restrictions, calling for the day to be reopened to commercial activity and other entertainments in the afternoon. This protest was mainly undertaken by way of correspondence with local politicians and with Prime Minister Curtin directly, along with appeals to the press. Although the restrictions covered a range of activities and entertainments, for the most part veterans took specific umbrage with the ban on alcohol sale and consumption. They argued that drinking on Anzac Day was central to the tradition and that as veterans had created the day, they should be the ones to stipulate its observance. Politicians in favour of maintaining restrictions, however, continued to emphasise the sacredness of Anzac and argued that an easing of restrictions would corrupt Anzac and dilute its solemnity. Church and temperance organisations in support of the measures also focused exclusively on the alcohol ban, arguing that it reduced unpleasant public disturbances on the day. Restrictions on Anzac Day, which had sprung from a broader program aimed at managing Australian society during the crisis of the war, became a site where different groups (veterans, politicians, and temperance

[36] Francis Forde, Deputy Prime Minister, 'Circular regarding Anzac Day uniform observance,' 30 March 1944, NAA: A461, K317/1/2 PART 2.

organisations) could attempt to assert their authority to define Anzac Day's meaning and its relationship to Australian identity more broadly.

On 3 April 1944, at a meeting of the RSSAILA's Wickham-Carrington Sub-Branch, the group's secretary advised his fellow members that telegrams of protest from every sub-branch in the state of NSW should be sent to the Prime Minister protesting the restrictions. He advised that as 'the Diggers made Anzac Day … they should be allowed to say how they want it to be observed' and that it was 'a crying shame that anyone should dictate to us what we will do on a day which we have created for ourselves.'[37] Similarly, in August later that year, E Bockman, writing directly to Curtin on behalf of the 53rd Battalion AIF Association, advised that former members of the AIF 'understood how War security made such afternoon celebrations inadvisable' but noted that 'the tide of War has receded from these shores' and that ex-servicemen should again be 'permitted to celebrate "Our Day" in the traditional manner so dear to us all.'[38] Calls in the press were more forthright. Speaking to the *Lismore Star* just after Anzac Day, one World War One veteran lamented that ex-servicemen should be able to 'assemble and enjoy themselves' and that 'we should see in future that we hold Anzac Day as Diggers.'[39]

Veterans' sense of entitlement in calling for a return to the pre-war style of observance is unsurprising given the state of the war at the time. By early 1944 there was a widespread sense among Australians that the worst was over, and that the war would eventually be won by the Allies. By the time Anzac Day 1945 was nearing this feeling was even more pronounced and continued restrictions were met with an upsurge in veterans' protests. On 7 February, a brief on the matter was sent to Curtin, prepared by staff in the Prime Minister's Department, querying whether he would continue restrictions as he had in 1942 and 1944. In

[37] 'Closed Anzac Day: Flood of protests proposed,' *The Newcastle Sun*, 3 April 1944.
[38] E Bockman, 'Letter to Curtin regarding restrictions,' 8 August 1944, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[39] 'Ballina RSL protest,' *Lismore Star,* 29 April 1944.

the same memo was a reminder that strong protests had been made by RSSAILA members in the previous year. The memo also noted that the restrictions had been supported by 'Church organisations and Temperance bodies … reference being made to the absence of drunken persons and unhappy street incidents.'[40] In response it was decided that restrictions would continue, and a statement was released three weeks later in which Curtin asserted that the day should not be a 'carnival, but one of reverence for the men who have fought and paid sacrifice', a statement that reinforced the sacredness of Anzac as something that should not be desecrated by frivolity.[41]

Church and temperance organisations applauded the Government's decision to continue the ban on public sales and consumption of alcohol on Anzac Day. Historian Judith Smart has explored how throughout the interwar period temperance organisations in Australia, emboldened by their experience organising and advocating during World War One, extended their work beyond their local communities and into the broader economic, state, and national affairs. Much of this campaigning was focused on continuing regulations on alcohol consumption.[42] An event like Anzac Day represented a prime opportunity for this work. Indeed, the Prime Minister's Department received correspondence on this issue from various temperance advocacy groups. The Women's Christian Temperance Union of NSW wrote to express their thanks and appreciation for the closure of hotels and the assurance that Anzac 'shall be more fittingly observed as a Sacred Day.'[43] The NSW Temperance Alliance also wrote 'to express our keen appreciation of the action of yourself and Cabinet in deciding to close all liquor bars in Australia on Anzac Day' noting the 'splendid results following the same action last year'.[44] The Methodist Women's Federation also praised Curtin and noted

[40] Prime Minister's Department, 'Anzac Day 1945,' 7 February 1945, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[41] 'No Anzac Day sport,' *The Sun*, 27 February 1945.
[42] Judith Smart, 'A mission to the home: The housewives association, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and protestant Christianity, 1920-1940,' *Australian Feminist Studies* 13 (1998): 217.
[43] CB Segetin, 'Letter to Curtin supporting restrictions,' 8 March 1945, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[44] Francis Wilson, 'Letter to Curtin supporting restrictions,' 6 April 1945, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.

their ‘interest and appreciation … and congratulations’ on the government’s decision to close hotels on the day.[45]

Veterans, however, were not impressed. Following the announcement, letters of protest began to pour into the Prime Minister’s office from around the state. They were asserting what they saw as their right to dictate Anzac observance and they did so by asserting their right to drink alcohol on the day for commemorative purposes without the state’s interference. A letter in early March complained that the ‘majority of the Diggers … were men who usually commemorated any such outstanding occasions with a glass of liquor’ and that, as such, it could not be understood why veterans should ‘continue to be deprived of those facilities that have always been available.’[46] At an RSSAILA State Executive meeting on 7 March, one member implored that ‘people who talk of a solemn observance … will not be at our Anzac service’ and that ‘the pussyfoots are not going to take over … without my voice being raised in protest.’[47] Some of these responses criticised the continued restrictions as undemocratic. F Bingham from the Kandos Sub-Branch implored the prime minister that the restrictions were ‘interfering with the Democratic rights of the people’ and that returned servicemen should be able to ‘commemorate the fallen in their own way.’[48]

Evidence of the broader public’s response to the continued restrictions is limited. But on 8 March, a quiz of the *Daily Telegraph’s* readership demonstrated support for the call to lift restrictions. Mr Selby, of Leeton in the south-west of NSW argued that the day ‘should be spent as brightly as possible’ and that people should be allowed to ‘enjoy themselves … there is too much dreariness in the world.’ Mrs Spencer of Balmain agreed, noting that ‘the morgue is a cheerful place compared with Sydney on Anzac Day’ and that ‘as it is, people

[45] WE Medcalf, ‘Letter to Curtin supporting restrictions,’ 7 March 1945, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[46] Hugh Knight, ‘Letter to R James,’ 3 March 1945, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[47] ‘Beer sought on Anzac Day,’ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 March 1945.
[48] F Bingham, ‘Letter to Curtin regarding restrictions,’ 13 April 1945, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.

mooch about all day looking as if they are about to go down with the plague … I generally go to bed for the day.' Still, there were some voices of support for the continued restrictions. In the same article, Mrs R Harrison of Redfern opined that 'you don't sling a party at a funeral, at least not in countries which are supposed to be civilised' and that the day 'should be treated with the utmost decorum and seriousness.'[49] These debates demonstrate that in NSW, enthusiasm for Anzac Day and its meaning and purpose in Australia were not waning in the immediate post-war period. Rather, representatives of different groups, whether they were interested members of the public, government actors, veterans, or representatives of church and temperance groups, continued to see Anzac Day as a site where they could assert and project their values into Australian public life.

Despite the continuing debate around proper observance, Anzac Day was observed with typical fervour that year. In Sydney, a reported 80,000 people turned out to watch the march and around 27,000 ex-servicemen and women took part.[50] It would, however, be John Curtin's last Anzac Day having spent the final months of 1944 in hospital after suffering a coronary occlusion. He returned to prime ministerial duties in early-1945, but his health had deteriorated to the point that he was unable to properly fulfil these.[51] That year he spent Anzac Day resting at The Lodge in Canberra, with his soon-to-be successor Ben Chifley taking on commemorative duties in his stead.[52] He would die soon after, on 5 July.[53]

Following the end of the war in 1945, Chifley sought to gauge the RSSAILA's opinion on whether restrictions should continue. On 10 January 1946, he sent a letter to the RSSAILA's federal president, Sir Gilbert Dyett, requesting that he gauge the opinion of the RSSAILA's State Branches on the question of opening up Anzac Day that year to celebrations

[49] 'Appeal for brighter Anzac Day,' *Daily Telegraph*, 8 March 1945.
[50] 'Fervent Anzac Day commemoration,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1945.
[51] Geoffrey Serle, 'John Curtin,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.
[52] 'Curtin stays home,' *The Courier-Mail*, 26 April 1945.
[53] 'Curtin in hospital,' *The Daily News*, 30 April 1945.

(specifically, the opening of hotels and saloons, race meetings and organised sports, and theatres) 'with a view to securing uniformity throughout Australia in consonance with the national significance of the occasion.' This, Chifley advised, was in response to 'a number of protests' that had been made 'by returned soldier organisations … in relation to the closing of hotels throughout the day.'[54] While Chifley's request was intended to give the RSSAILA the opportunity to define a way of celebrating Anzac Day uniformly across Australia, it underestimated the degree to which the states and territories differed in their interpretations of proper observance.

The responses, which trickled in over the next month, were mixed. Most advocated for a continuation of the restrictions. The Victorian branch called the proposed lifting of the restrictions a potential 'desecration' and advised that those in favour of such a measure in Victoria were 'an almost negligible minority.' The Western Australian branch advised that local law already forbade the opening of hotels or the holding of organised sport on the day and further note that this closed form of observance was 'wholeheartedly endorsed' by 'the League and the general public of Western Australia.' The response from Queensland was in keeping with Victoria and WA. However, the NSW, Tasmanian and ACT branches all advised that they wished to revert to their respective states' pre-war arrangements.[55] That each State branch across the country advocated for a return to pre-war conditions for their respective state is unsurprising. These mixed responses demonstrate just how much the meaning of Anzac Day and its proper form of observance is contingent depending on who is observing the day and where it is being observed, even within the same organisation. Over the interwar period each state and territory had developed their own sanctioned ways of

[54] Ben Chifley, 'Letter to Gilbert Dyett regarding the opening of Anzac Day,' 10 January 1946, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[55] Prime Minister's Office, 'Letter to state Premiers regarding the lifting of Anzac Day restrictions,' 1 March 1946, Sir Gilbert Dyett, 'Letter regarding WA response,' 24 January 1946, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.

commemorating Anzac Day. To those state branches that advocated more open forms of observance the national restrictions represented an imposition on their established local traditions. To states advocating closed observance, the national restrictions made little difference in terms of their own observance of the day, but they did offer a chance to ensure that countrywide observance matched their own, which they saw as fitting the solemnity and sanctity of the occasion.

The nationwide restrictions were lifted soon after this poll. In a notice to state premiers, the Prime Minister's Office advised of the Federal Government's decision to lift the restrictions, noting that 'a strong inclination has been shown generally for a reversion to the pre-war conditions as controlled by State-law … particularly in the case of New South Wales and South Australia.'[56] This meant that there was no longer a Federal restriction on Anzac Day, and that each state was free to return to its pre-war form of observance. For the NSW veterans that had clamoured for abolished restrictions in the preceding two years this was a victory. They insisted that Anzac Day was something that should be shaped and celebrated by everyday veterans, rather than the government with its more sacralised interpretation of Anzac. It was an example that would be invoked regularly in the debate that ensued in Victoria, by proponents on both sides of the discussion.

Anzac Day in Sydney that year saw a record number of marchers and attendees. *The Sun* reported that the march of 50,000 servicemen from both world wars was attended by roughly 200,000 onlookers.[57] For the most part this was widely hailed as a record-breaking success (The *Daily Telegraph* dubbed it the 'greatest march ever organised in Australia'[58]). However, the worst fears of supporters of continued restrictions were confirmed by outbreaks of

[56] Prime Minister's Office, 'Letter to state Premiers regarding the lifting of Anzac Day restrictions,' 1 March 1946, Sir Gilbert Dyett, 'Letter regarding WA response,' 24 January 1946, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[57] 'Huge crowds cheer 50,000 in parade,' *The Sun*, 25 April 1946.
[58] '250,000 cheer marching Anzacs,' *Daily Telegraph*, 26 April 1946.

drunken violence on the day. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the celebrations following the morning's commemorations had deteriorated into a string of 'brawls' which 'occurred in nearly every part of the city.' The same article reported that 'though much latitude was extended to Servicemen celebrating their first Anzac Day since their discharge, it was necessary for police to use stern methods to disperse many drink-crazed young men.'[59]

Veteran responses to the violence played down its seriousness. The RSSAILA's state secretary in NSW, JR Lewis, stated that the League's 'policy is that hotels should be open … on Anzac Day,' adding that it was 'a pity that some men have to go and make fools of themselves, but that happens on plenty of other days besides Anzac Day.' President of NSW's Air Force Association John Bavin also voiced his support for the lifting of restrictions, stating 'I don't think hotels should be closed … we sympathise with the desire of the men to have a drink with their friends on Anzac Day.' Bavin did acknowledge that 'it is a very grave shame that the occasion should be used by the hooligan element.' For Bavin the problem lay with the fact that recently returned ex-servicemen did 'not understand the meaning of the day' noting that 'the only solution is to try and educate the chaps into what Anzac Day is all about.'[60] Bavin's comment here cuts to the heart of post-war debates over Anzac Day ownership and meaning. He was arguing that it should be the job of older veterans, who had been Anzac's stewards up until that moment, to pass the day on to the younger generation in a way that would faithfully preserve its meaning. These same questions ran throughout the ensuing debates in Victoria. There, however, older veterans in positions of power were much less willing to relinquish control to their younger counterparts.

[59] 'Many brawls mar Anzac Day,' *Sydney Morning Herald,* 26 April 1946.
[60] 'Drunkenness on Anzac Day deplored,' *Sydney Morning Herald,* 27 April 1946.

The debate in Victoria (1946-60)

Where the debate in NSW for the most part had been a disagreement between veterans and the government, in Victoria it was much more a dispute within the veteran community. Rather than veterans claiming a unified interpretation of Anzac Day (as was the case in NSW), the community was fractured over what should constitute the proper form of observance. The debate was intergenerational to a much greater degree than it had been in NSW. The upper echelons of the Victorian RSSAILA, who were generally of the older generation, were the most outspoken proponents for a closed day and used their influence liberally to retain this form of observance. To incorporate frivolity, they argued, was to risk commercialising the day, something they saw as violating the sacred nature of Anzac.[61] These proponents of closed observance argued that the will of the majority was irrelevant — Anzac belonged to those that had forged the original legend.

In contrast, newly minted veterans of World War Two (and soon after, of the Korean War) began to form their own ex-servicemen's clubs through which they contested the authority of the RSSAILA's leadership to dictate Anzac Day observance.[62] These World War Two veterans conceived of the day as both a celebration of Australian achievements in war and a commemoration to the dead. They saw their part in World War Two as contributing to the legacy of Anzac. But their interest in a celebratory form of remembrance was also a product of their place in society. These men and women were still young and were in the process of building new lives and new families in the aftermath of war. They were looking towards a bright future and their insistence on a 'bright' Anzac Day reflected this attitude. In this vein they also talked of Anzac as something intimately tied to community, to the benefit of all

[61] It is worth mentioning here that these older veterans were not against the consumption of alcohol on Anzac Day; rather, they thought it should be done at private reunions held at veterans' clubs. One of the problems with this approach is that many returned men did not have access to these venues.
[62] The most outspoken of these was the Thirty-Niners, formed in 1946, but they were also joined by the Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women (1944) and the Korean Veterans Association (1951).

Australians and their insistence that proceeds from commercial activity on Anzac Day be donated to charity reflected this belief.

At its core then this was a debate about ownership over Anzac Day, and through that, who in Victoria had the right to define its meaning. Those in favour of a closed day argued that Anzac Day was a day of reverence and respect for those that had created the Anzac legend that was such an important symbol for Australian identity. Those advocating a 'brighter' day also believed in the importance of Anzac Day to the Australian identity. But they argued that this was something that everyone should share through celebration.

The debate ran over fourteen years, from the lifting of nationwide restrictions in 1946, to the amendment of the *Anzac Day Act* in 1960. The following discussion focuses on key moments across this period: first, responses to the initial lifting of national restrictions in 1946; second, 1952 and the entry of new veterans' groups into the debate; and finally, the intensification of the debate from 1958 until its eventual resolution through legislative amendment in 1960.

The debate ignites (1946)

Debate around Anzac observance had simmered in Victoria over the interwar period, but in the post-war period it gained a renewed focus. This was especially the case in 1946, in response to Chifley's lifting of the nationwide Anzac Day restrictions. Once these federal limitations had been lifted, Victorians in favour of a 'brighter' Anzac Day began making their case for easing the local state restrictions. Almost immediately comparisons were made with NSW's more open form of observance. In March 1946, *The Argus'* 'Old Comrade' column published a piece arguing that it was 'absurd' that in Victoria 'Anzac Day is treated as a more solemn day than Good Friday instead of, as in NSW and other states as the day when Australia first demonstrated its nationhood.' The same column emphasised the RSSAILA leadership's control of the day's ceremonies, noting that men of World War Two had not

been invited to take part in the organisation.[63] But not everyone admired NSW's more open form of observance. In a letter to *The Herald*, one commentator (signed 'Bereaved, Camberwell') recounted their trip to Sydney for Anzac Day and the violent brawls that had taken place. 'Anzac Day' they argued, 'is a day of proud bereavement, not for reunions of returned men. Armistice Day is the day set apart for rejoicing, as rejoice we did after the end of the First World War. If people want to "rejoice" by getting drunk, let them do it on this day.'[64] For this commentator Anzac Day was strictly set aside for remembrance and mourning, and to engage in frivolity was to disrespect the dead and their families.

The RSSAILA state executive was quick to respond to these anxieties and did so by warning that opening the day up to celebration also opened it up to commercialisation. Speaking at the state conference later that year, State President George Holland (a Gallipoli veteran and future Federal President of the RSSAILA) made it clear that he was firmly opposed to the idea that Anzac Day should be 'celebrated as a holiday'. In doing so, he revealed that he had been offered 'a large sum of money' to give his support to opening the day up to celebrations, and in response advised fellow RSSAILA members that 'the only reason why people wanted to alter the present Anzac Day was to commercialise it.' An Anzac holiday, he argued, 'would be the greatest day in the history of publicans.'[65] Holland had the government's support in this respect. In May, Chief Secretary Bill Slater commented that 'commercialisation of Anzac Day is unthinkable' and that the present form of observance was 'the most convenient and appropriate.'[66] In making these statements, both Holland and Slater were contributing to a history of anti-commercialisation around Anzac Day that had been present in Australia since its earliest observances.[67] The argument that Anzac Day was

[63] 'Service queries,' *The Argus*, 19 March 1946.
[64] 'Not for rejoicing,' *The Herald*, 29 April 1946.
[65] 'Anzac holiday rejected,' *The Age*, 26 July 1946.
[66] 'Commercialisation unthinkable,' *The Age*, 11 May 1946.
[67] The word 'Anzac' has been restricted for commercial use under Australian law since 1915. See Catherine Bond's *Anzac: The landing, the legend, the law* (2016).

in danger of being commercialised, and that commercialisation amounted to sacrilege, was one to which proponents of a closed day would repeatedly turn over the course of the debate.

While these were effective rebuttals to proponents of an open day, they did not address the problem that, quite simply, many found Anzac Day to be dull. These complaints often came from travellers outside of Melbourne who had commuted into the city to attend the march and other ceremonies and subsequently found themselves with little to do in the afternoon. One article in *The Age* painted a bleak picture of Melbourne's streets in the aftermath of the day's ceremonies, summarising the arguments of those in favour of lifting Victoria's Anzac Day restrictions:

> Comments of the thousands of men who marched in the Anzac parade yesterday were not complimentary when they realised Melbourne had nothing for them to do — no picture theatres, where they could have seen specially selected films chosen in the spirit of Anzac. Few cafes and no hotels were open for them to continue reminiscing with comrades they had not seen for years … Many claimed that these men should have been able to do what they wanted to do, as Anzac Day must surely be 'their day.' A suggestion that this parade should be held in the morning and that recreation should be available later in the day met with approval when put to many of the men who, though quite damp physically, remained with true Digger spirit un-dampened by the weather or the prospects of a dull Melbourne.[68]

It was in this context that one of the earliest calls for a plebiscite in the post-war period was made. At a meeting of the Camperdown RSSAILA in July, members complained of travelling to Melbourne for the march and finding 'nothing to do' afterwards. One member

[68] 'News of the day,' *The Age,* 26 April 1946.

suggested that sporting events should be held, and with a proportion of the proceeds going to the RSSAILA.[69]

World War Two veterans have their say (1952-53)

Over the next four years, the debate remained relatively static with both sides rehashing similar arguments around commercialisation, the dullness of Anzac Day, and the potential merits and problems of holding a plebiscite.[70] From late 1952, however, there was increased scrutiny of the question of opening up Anzac Day, initially in response to increasing calls from RSSAILA sub-branches, but more significantly, as the result of a concerted campaign by World War Two veterans. It was at this point that the debate began to divide along generational lines with younger veterans, many of whom had formed their own new veterans' organisations, asserting their right to dictate how Anzac Day should be observed. Also noteworthy was the fact that Anzac Day was going to take place on a Saturday the following year. This meant that Victorians would be completely barred from drinking, sports and other forms of public entertainment on Anzac Day weekend in 1953.

In July 1952, as always, the RSSAILA State Executive held its yearly conference. The argument, so common in the earlier NSW debate, that the matter should be dealt with democratically was again raised. Several sub-branches registered their view that Anzac Day should not continue as a closed day. Led by the Mildura delegate, those in favour argued that 'the morning should be devoted to Anzac commemoration ceremonies and that the afternoon should be spent in celebration in keeping with the national character of the day.' In aid of this, they moved that a postal vote of Victorian RSSAILA members should be taken on the

[69] 'Anzac Day observance,' *The Age*, 12 July 1946.
[70] 'Anzac observance quiz,' *The Herald*, 27 April 1946; 'Dull Anzac Day,' *The Herald*, 26 April 1947; 'Brighter Anzac,' *The Herald*, 20 June 1949; 'Should Anzac Day be bright? They say: Keep it solemn,' *The Horsham Times*, 5 May 1950.

question.[71] Although the motion was soundly voted down, it inspired strong responses in the press.

One veteran of both world wars, in an article for *The Herald*, stressed the need for a change, arguing that celebrations in Sydney, Adelaide, and Hobart were more in keeping with the spirit of Anzac as Australia's 'greatest national day'. He advised that in these cities hotels and theatres were opened and sporting events were held in the afternoon once the morning's ceremonies had concluded and that Melbourne should follow suit. He also emphasised the detrimental effect that the focus on mourning had on recently returned veterans and their families, noting that 'the prolonged period of mourning had an ill-effect on some returned men suffering from nervous complaints'[72] and that 'those who suffered most from Melbourne's afternoon and night of gloom were the war widows and the mothers who had lost their sons.' The only veterans who would be able to escape this 'gloom' he noted, were the ones who 'know where to join reunion gaiety behind shutters after the march.'[73]

This confirms Patricia Jalland's assertions around Australians' changing relationship to grief in the period. She argues that the mass bereavement that had followed World War One had hardened attitudes towards grieving by World War Two, resulting in a decline in Australians' willingness to display their grief openly. Her study of letters of condolence and memorial notices in newspapers in the 1940s found that there was an increasing refrain that bereavement should be private, kept short, and in many cases be denied altogether.[74] She notes further that these changing attitudes to grief were generational. Older Australians, born

[71] 'Anzac vote move,' *The Herald*, 22 July 1952.
[72] The term 'nervous complaint' refers to what is now commonly known as post-traumatic stress disorder.
[73] 'Fair go Anzac Day, soldier,' *The Herald*, 7 August 1952.
[74] Patricia Jalland, *Changing ways of death in twentieth-century Australia: War, medicine, and the funeral business* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006), 172-4.

in the nineteenth century, felt more freedom to grieve publicly, whereas succeeding generations did not.[75]

Another response to *The Herald* article advised that a postal plebiscite was the only fair way to make a decision about observance and suggested further that if 'sporting fixtures and carnivals' were to be held on Anzac Day, the money raised could be used to 'run homes for aged returned servicemen and women without the present financial worry.'[76] This argument, that proceeds from entertainments could be used to support charities dedicated to assisting veterans and their dependents, was a popular one, and would endure throughout the debate. It was a similar argument to the one used by proponents of utilitarian memorials, in that opening the day up to celebration and frivolities was tied to a broader optimistic vision for society that framed Anzac Day as something that could help the living through charity while still entailing remembrance of the dead.

The response from senior RSSAILA men and others in opposition was always that commercial activity on the day would profit businesses at the expense of Anzac Day's sanctity. A register of support for the campaign to end restrictions later that year further stoked these anxieties. At a conference for the Federation of Victorian Chambers of Commerce in late 1952, the organisation's president, Mr WJ Allison, suggested that the holding of Anzac Day on 25 April should be abolished altogether and instead moved to the closest Sunday.[77] He argued that 'we can best honour those who lost their lives in Australia not by having a racing or sporting holiday, but by working on that day, and making the nearest Sunday a day of holiness.'[78] This was a clever statement on the part of Allison. His

[75] Ibid., 185.
[76] 'That Anzac Day vote,' *The Herald*, 12 August 1952.
[77] This was a popular suggested alternative at the time, with many arguing that to move Anzac Day to the nearest Sunday would nullify the debate around observance on the grounds that commercial trading would be unaffected by the day.
[78] 'Hands off this day!' *The Argus*, 30 December 1952.

suggestion that Anzac Day should be a day of work (and therefore commerce) rather than a holiday with sports or gambling, while retaining the solemnity appropriate for the occasion by moving Anzac ceremonies to the nearest Sunday was obviously self-serving. But it was framed in such a way as to counter the criticism that commerce and trading on Anzac Day was an act of sacrilege. This was reportedly agreed to by everyone present.[79]

The conference drew a strong response in Victoria's Legislative Assembly. Speaking to the assembly, the Liberal member for Caulfield, Colonel AH Dennett, asserted that many people in the service community 'will deplore this suggestion … to commercialise a sacred day' and urged his fellow members to stand by him in rejecting any similar suggestions in future.[80] Dennett's comment demonstrates what was at stake in the debate around commercialisation in the post-war period. Those fighting to maintain restrictions were arguing that Anzac Day belonged to them, and to allow commercial interests to profit from Anzac Day would dilute its significance.

By this stage, however, the idea that Anzac Day observance should be decided through a plebiscite had well and truly taken hold. Speaking to the press in January 1953, Labor member Joseph O'Carroll, himself an ex-serviceman and member of the RSSAILA, made the case, arguing that 'Anzac Day should not be a morbid day, but one of proud remembrance … Digger cobbers should be able to get together over a glass of beer in the afternoon and talk of old times.' He also noted that 'Milk bar reunions' were 'completely out of step with the wishes of the rank and file.'[81] O'Carroll was arguing that under the present conditions, veterans had little choice but to hold their reunions in alcohol-free spaces on Anzac Days and that as such, that they were being denied to the right to hold Anzac Day reunions in the style they preferred. As noted by Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins, reunions play an important role in

[79] Ibid.
[80] Victorian Parliament, 'Legislative Assembly,' 22 December 1952.
[81] 'Labor MP for Anzac Day sport,' *The Herald*, 15 January 1953.

veterans' post-war lives. Veterans often struggle to speak with their civilian friends and family about the trauma they experienced during war, and reunions offer a secure place to have these conversations with other returned soldiers.[82] It is also telling that O'Carroll linked the veterans' desire to reminisce over their wartime experiences while drinking beer. Diane Kirkby has argued that in the mid-twentieth century in Australia, the practice of beer drinking was intertwined with notions of masculinity. Beer, she noted, was an important part of the 'mateship' ritual and pubs were places where men got together to bond with one another.[83] In the post-war period, then, repeated calls to allow veterans the chance to get together for a drink were also calls to give veterans a rare chance to safely reminisce and bond with each other over their shared experiences of war.

Agreeing with O'Carroll, General William Locke made a public statement to *The Age* commenting on the RSSAILA's 'arrogance' and insisting that as it was 'no longer the only ex-servicemen's organisation … [it] cannot claim to speak for all returned soldiers.'[84] Locke's highlighting of other associations was pertinent as 1953 was the year that several other veterans' groups began to weigh in on the question of what should constitute proper Anzac Day observance. At the ends of both World War Two and the Korean War new veterans' groups separate from the RSSAILA emerged.[85] Up to this stage these had not yet contributed to the debate but from 1953 they began to take a more active role. These new veterans' groups called for a more open, optimistic form of observance and in doing so, they were staking their claim to share in Anzac Day's ownership. In January, the vice-president of the Korean Veterans' Association had argued that Anzac Day also had a 'special significance' for Australian veterans of the Korean War, given Australians' distinguished

[82] Hunt and Robbins, 'World War II veterans, social support and veterans' associations,' 178-79.
[83] Diane Kirkby, 'Drinking "the good life": Australia c. 1880-1980,' in *Alcohol: A social and cultural history*, ed. Mack P. Holt (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 207-8.
[84] 'General says: RSL wrong on observance,' *The Age*, 12 February 1953.
[85] Most notably the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women formed in 1944, the Thirty-Niners (1946) and the Korean Veterans Association (1953).

contributions to the Battle of Kapyong, which had taken place on Anzac eve 1951. Again, the vice-president was making the often-heard complaint that veterans deserved 'the chance for reunions and a yarn over a few beers.'[86] At this time the Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women, formed in 1944, also put their support behind the proposed changes. Responding to General Locke's call to open the day up, the Legion's secretary, Mr MJ Kelly, advised that his opinion and the opinion of 'many other members was that Anzac Day should be observed as a closed holiday only until midday' and from then 'sporting fixtures and other entertainments run in aid of former service personnel.'[87]

The most prominent of these new associations entering the debate, was a group known as the Thirty-Niners. Formed at the end of 1946, the Thirty-Niners' association had branches in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, their membership being open to those that had volunteered for service immediately after the declaration of war in 1939 (those who enlisted after 31 December 1939 were ineligible for membership). Although they never stated it explicitly the Thirty-Niners were an exclusive group, only allowing those that had answered the call of war in its earliest months to join their ranks. The organisation's constitution called for the preservation of memory of ex-servicemen, loyalty to nation and Empire and assistance of sick and wounded members.[88]

Over the first seven years of their existence the organisation was uncontroversial. The Thirty-Niners sought to increase their membership, took pilgrimages to the Shrine of Remembrance in early September each year and organised charity events for veterans and war widows.[89] In late 1952, however, the organisation turned its attentions towards the question of Anzac Day observance and over the next eight years would become a passionate voice, going toe to toe

[86] 'Many favor Anzac Day change,' *The Herald*, 16 January 1953.
[87] 'Legion head for Anzac Day change,' *The Age*, 13 February 1953.
[88] 'Thirty-niners' Association,' *Benalla Ensign*, 2 April 1948.
[89] 'Thirty-Niners to send hampers,' *Weekly* Times, 15 October 1947, 'Thirty-niners at the Shrine,' *The Age*, 7 September 1953.

with the RSSAILA's leadership, lobbying government, and rallying other veterans' associations. Their first entry into the debate, however, was relatively mild. At the state branch meeting that year, members resolved that Anzac Day in Victoria should include sports meetings after the march was finished 'with proceeds going to charity' and that 'every effort should be made to alter the system of celebrating Anzac Day in Victoria' to include sports and the opening of hotels, along with charity drives to 'assist war widows and totally and permanently incapacitated servicemen.' These efforts were to take the form of a letter writing campaign to the press, the RSSAILA and to State Parliamentarians.[90] Their position, that Anzac Day should help the living through charity, as well as remembering the dead, was a key point of argument for the Thirty-Niners, and one they pushed at every opportunity in their campaign for a 'brighter' Anzac Day.

The Thirty-Niners' first approaches to the RSSAILA were cordial. In January 1953, their president JP Byrne stated publicly that a vote should be taken on the matter and that 'if it were willing, the RSSAILA could quite easily arrange a postal … poll.'[91] The RSSAILA's president ND Wilson gave his response just under two weeks later, characteristically painting the suggestion as a move towards commercialisation. In doing so, he asserted that Anzac Day was 'too vital to national sentiment to be sacrificed to monetary gain' and that it should be observed in a way that would 'fix public attention on war sacrifices and deeds.'[92]

Having received a clear rejection from the RSSAILA, Byrne and the Thirty-Niners worked to co-opt other veterans' associations to their cause. Later that year in July, no doubt purposefully timed just before the yearly RSSAILA conference, the Thirty-Niners held their own conference, inviting other ex-servicemen's organisations (including the RSSAILA who declined to respond) to discuss opening Anzac Day. A total of thirteen associations attended

[90] 'Anzac Day sports wanted,' *The Age*,' 27 September 1952.
[91] 'Anzac Day verdict up to Diggers,' *The Argus*, 17 January 1953.
[92] 'RSL firm on Anzac observance,' *The Age*, 29 January 1953.

the meeting, voting unanimously in favour of a plebiscite on the matter. At the conference, several recent veterans of World War Two offered their opinion on the matter. One drew attention to the generational divide, arguing that 'the younger men must have their say … we can't wait until all the old ones are dead.' The importance of including families in the day's observance was also emphasised, with another attendee arguing that an altered form of observance would 'let the women join their menfolk after the morning service in a brighter celebration.' Agreeing, another veteran noted that 'it is a bit poor that I can go to a reunion after the service and enjoy myself while the rest of the family stays home.' Indeed, many of these men would have been recently married and as a result would have been focused on supporting and spending time with their families. This focus on families was also strongly encouraged by the Menzies government of the day. According to historian John Murphy, Prime Minister Menzies positioned membership in the nuclear family as a haven from the anxieties of the cold war and as a rejection of communism.[93] It is unsurprising then that some younger veterans bemoaned their families' exclusion from the day's rituals. In closing, the conference resolved to form a deputation to approach the Acting Victorian Premier Bill Galvin and urge him to go over the RSSAILA's heads and call a plebiscite.[94] Galvin responded positively to the deputation but was unwilling to take this extra step to call a plebiscite without RSSAILA approval. Instead, he attended their state conference later that month to advise that should they wish to hold a plebiscite, the full assistance of the Victorian electoral authority would be made available.[95]

The RSSAILA refused Galvin's offer, making no public statement in response. Yet while the RSSAILA had rejected the call from the Thirty-Niners and their associate organisations, their

[93] John Murphy, 'Shaping the Cold War family: Politics, domesticity and policy interventions in the 1950s,' *Australian Historical Studies* 26 (1995): 547.
[94] 'Ex-Servicemen to seek deputation,' *The Age*, 10 July 1953.
[95] 'State offer of Anzac poll,' *The Herald*, 29 July 1953.

conferences over the next few years demonstrated an increasing call from within the organisation to change Anzac observance. Compared with previous years, which had mostly seen unanimous voting in favour of closed observance, in 1953 sub-branch delegates were divided on the question. Speaking to the conference, the Brunswick delegate registered their 'uncompromising opposition' to any change in observance. But others were not so amenable to continued restrictions. The delegate for Shepparton suggested that the example of New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania should be followed, with the usual services and march in the morning and an 'as you were' atmosphere for the remainder of the day.[96] Other suggestions sought compromise. The Mildura representative suggested the Federal RSSAILA should dictate some 'uniform method of observance throughout Australia' while the delegate for Eltham argued that a plebiscite of all Victorian RSSAILA members would be the best way to settle the matter.[97] While these dissenting views did not represent outright mutiny on the question, they illustrate that the campaign of the Thirty-Niners and other public commentators may also have been building support within the RSSAILA.

Despite a concerted effort by newly formed veterans' associations that year, the RSSAILA successfully weathered the storm of an Anzac Day Saturday in 1953. Anzac Day fell on a Sunday the following year, and there subsequently was far less jostling in the press over the question of observance. Nevertheless, the RSSAILA's conference that year was the site of bitter infighting over the question. This time there was much greater support for a potential plebiscite. The question of opening Anzac Day was debated for just under an hour and a half, with delegates unable to come to agreement on the matter. The delegate for Watsonia was the first to raise the question with several others reportedly standing in support of the motion. One of these, the delegate for Yallourn, called his fellow members 'a bunch of hypocrites'

[96] 'Chance to alter Anzac Day,' *The Herald*, 22 July 1953.
[97] Ibid.

and argued that Anzac Day 'is not a "saints' day" or a holy day.' The delegate for Melbourne also called the decision to continue restrictions hypocritical, noting that 'it savours of class distinction – when only some can celebrate behind closed doors and windows.' Again, the notion that rank-and-file veterans were being denied their right to celebrate Anzac Day while select members of the RSSAILA were able to enjoy 'closed door' reunions was one that energised the debate. One delegate was so incensed by the president's unwillingness to budge on the issue that he handed in his RSSAILA badge before leaving the meeting. Despite these impassioned calls for a plebiscite, the motion did not achieve a majority at the conference and was denied by Wilson.[98]

The plebiscite (1956-60)

Over the next three years, the debate persisted. The RSSAILA continued to debate the matter fiercely at their yearly conferences and despite ongoing protests by sub-branches a majority of delegates repeatedly voted the proposed changes down.[99] The Thirty-Niners, led by JP Byrne, also carried on their campaign for a change, continuing to emphasise that the proceeds from an open Anzac Day could and should be used to generate charitable donations to help war widows and their children.[100] This was a line of argument that was still generating support. A former president of Camberwell RSSAILA also argued that the proceeds of opening the day up should be used for charity, noting that 'our soldiers' hospitals and institutions could benefit in the same way Sydney ones do.'[101] But not everyone was so supportive of the idea and those sceptical of this fundraising argument invariably pointed to the dangers of commercialisation. Writing to *The Herald* just after Anzac Day in 1957, a

[98] 'Uproar as RSL votes against Anzac Day change,' *The Age*, 23 July 1954.
[99] 'Watch for fakes with RSL badges,' *The Argus*, 23 July 1955; 'Austerity for Anzac Day,' *The Herald*, 19 July 1957.
[100] 'Proceeds for war widows, he says,' *The Argus*,' 23 April 1956.
[101] '"Make Anzac Day brighter" pleas,' *The Herald*, 26 April 1957.

veteran of World War One argued that 'commercial interests have consistently tried to cash in on the day' and that 'the men who made the day what it is' would not benefit in the long run.[102]

It was in 1958 and 1959, however, that these discussions would gather the necessary momentum to produce change. While the RSSAILA did not approve a plebiscite in 1958, the virulent debate and pressure of an Anzac Day Saturday the following year pushed the League's leadership to approve the holding of one in 1959.

Over the course of 1958, a flurry of letters and articles appeared in the Victorian press supporting the campaign for a change. It was becoming clear that the opinion was swinging in favour of observing a 'brighter' Anzac Day. To this end the same solution was proposed as always: a plebiscite. The Victorian government, however, had continued to give preference to the wishes of the RSSAILA. On 27 April, the Victorian Premier Henry Bolte made it clear that a referendum on the question would only be undertaken if it were requested by the RSSAILA.[103] Critical of this unwillingness to take responsibility, one columnist argued that the 'Government in allowing controversy to develop and running the risk of an unpleasant atmosphere … where none should be.' This, they went further, was out of step with the principles of democracy, asserting that the Government should ensure 'that the day is observed according to the wishes of the majority.'[104] Writing to *The Herald*, one Gallipoli veteran argued that 'a big majority of the 220,000 eligible to vote in such a poll favoured a brighter Anzac Day' and that such an action 'would settle the question once and for all and stop the continual bickering.'[105] In another letter to *The Herald,* a commentator emphasised

[102] 'Chance to cash in,' *The Herald*, 30 April 1957.
[103] 'Bolte says no Anzac change unless –,' *The Herald,* 27 April 1958.
[104] 'Government shuffling on Anzac observance,' *The Age*, 29 April 1958.
[105] 'RSL foundation member wants Anzac Poll,' *The Herald*, 3 May 1958.

the notion that Anzac Day was part of a national and military tradition in Australian society, and belonged as much to the men of World War One as it did to veterans of subsequent wars:

> Anzac Day, 1915, saw the birth of a nation – and the birth of an ideal. Who dares deny that those who served in 1939-45, in Korea and elsewhere, have maintained and strengthened that ideal? The denial of a referendum to provide these people with a voice in the observance of our national day … is a contemptuous refutation of the rights of those who were too young for Anzac but good enough for Tobruk, El Alamein and the Kokoda Track.[106]

The RSSAILA's conference was again held later that year in July and again the motion to hold a plebiscite was shot down by a majority of delegates but only by a small margin, with a total of 127 delegates voting in favour and 153 voting against.[107] Nevertheless, change was on the cusp of being made. Pressure to abolish Anzac Day restrictions had never been greater than in 1958 and though there was still significant resistance to the idea, it was slowly giving way.

In comparison with the fervour that had characterised the debate in 1958, public comment on the matter in 1959 was relatively subdued. Observance of the actual day was undertaken with enthusiasm in Melbourne. A reported 20,000 veterans came out to march, watched by around 80,000 onlookers. Notably, though, the ranks World War One veterans (it was now 44 years since the since the Gallipoli landings), were visibly frail, with some unable to complete the march.[108] Comments on the day's closed observance were limited, but these noted the usual

[106] 'Vote on Anzac,' *The Herald*, 6 May 1958.
[107] 'Stalemate on Anzac Day observance,' *The Herald*,' 21 July 1958.
[108] 'Australians honour Anzacs,' *The Age*, 1959.

problems with the RSSAILA's unwillingness to open the question to a plebiscite, the worries of commercialising the day, and comparisons to observance in other states.[109]

However, when the RSSAILA's July conference again rolled around, after an 'orderly two hour discussion' the 400 attending delegates 'voted heavily' in favour of a plebiscite (following a motion by the Caulfield Central sub-branch, the largest in the state) under which all Victorian RSSAILA members would take part with results scheduled to be released later in the year.[110] The results of the plebiscite, finally released on 11 December later that year confirmed the arguments that had been made for years by those in favour of a change. While only around 40% percent of the 70,000 eligible members voted in the plebiscite, those who did voted heavily in favour of change with 21,933 voting for, and 8,576 voting against. As a secondary vote, RSSAILA members were asked to pick from a range of possible options for opening the day. The majority opted for the march and ceremonies to be held until one o'clock in the afternoon with unrestricted 'holiday activities' afterwards. The proceeds from organised events, with the permission of their organisers, would go to the RSSAILA and other welfare funds if agreed upon.[111]

Yet, before this new-form Anzac Day could be celebrated, the necessary amendments to legislation had to be passed. The debate that followed was long and often contentious. The bill was drawn up to amend the *Anzac Day Act* 1925. Given that the Victorian Legislative Assembly had many sitting members that were also veterans, this debate was undertaken passionately. Many of those that were veterans of World War One and were respected members of the RSSAILA, were strong believers in the merits of a closed Anzac Day and subsequently staunchly in opposition to the principles of the amendment bill. Yet despite this

[109] 'The future of Anzac Day,' *The Age*, 1959.
[110] 'RSL plebiscite on Anzac Day,' *The Age*, 17 July 1959.
[111] 'Anzac vote: Morning shut, then what?' *The Herald*, 1959.

opposition, they also repeatedly professed a belief in democratic ideals and as such, were compelled to pass the bill.

The amendment bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 23 March 1960. After an initial reading, members were given a week to consider. The bill was debated over 29–30 March and was eventually passed late on 5 April, with just under three weeks till Anzac Day. Broadly, it dictated that from Anzac Day that year, 'Hotels, clubs and Australian wine license saloons may be opened at 1.p.m., that theatres may open at 1.30 p.m., and that race-meetings may begin at 1.55 p.m.'[112] Almost every speaker that commented on the Bill advised that they opposed it in principle but supported its passage on the grounds of the democratic process.

The Liberal member for Scoresby and Gallipoli veteran, Sir George Knox, spoke first in the debate. Despite acknowledging that he would vote in favour of the bill as a show of loyalty to his party and the RSSAILA, he registered a strong aversion to its passage. He emphasised the observance of Anzac Day as something sanctified, calling the 'proposed changes … a desecration of something we have held sacred.' Further, he asserted that the Anzac tradition was something that belonged to men of World War One, arguing that the change should not be made 'while the original creators of the Anzac tradition are still alive.[113]

Another veteran of the Gallipoli campaign, the Country Party member for Mildura, Nathaniel Barclay, also registered his opposition to the Bill. But, unlike Knox, he argued that the Bill should be passed on democratic grounds conceding that 'those who live in a democratic country are entitled to bring about a change … if it is the desired by the majority.' His main concern was that the promises of charity for returned men were kept. In this vein he asserted

[112] Victorian Parliament, 'Legislative Assembly,' 5 April 1960.
[113] Victorian Parliament, 'Legislative Assembly,' 30 March 1960.
[113] 'Service Queries,' *The Argus*, 19 March 1946.

that ‘as much money as possible’ should be ‘available to assist needy ex-servicemen and their dependents.’[114]

A few World War Two veterans also spoke up. Former navy man Vernon Wilcox (the Liberal member for Camberwell) argued that the press had tainted the debate, having ‘conducted a very determined campaign’ in support of those pushing for open observance. He refuted the notion that it had been World War Two men as the primary drivers of the change, asserting that these were ‘no less sincere and determined in their commemoration of Anzac Day.’ Finally, he asserted that the Anzac tradition was vital as a common set of values that could bond Australians in a rapidly changing modern world: ‘the emphasis on Anzac Day to me has always been that it is a time to pause and remember. In this modern world, we have little enough time in our daily lives to take stock of such things’, so it was vital, he argued, that ‘the Anzac tradition continues as a part of our Australian way of life.’[115]

The only member to register unqualified support for the bill was Leo Fennessy, the member for East Brunswick. Fennessy, a member of the RSSAILA, the Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women and the Thirty-Niners, made an impassioned defence of the changes. Emphasising that this was ‘the majority decision of the rank and file’ he asserted that Anzac Day was not just a day ‘on which we commemorate the dead but also a day on which we commemorate the living’ and ‘a day which represented the birth of Australia.’[116]

After so many years of tension and in-fighting, the first open Anzac Day in Victoria ended up being relatively benign. Around 22,500 veterans gathered to take part in the march, with a more modest crowd of 10,000 at The Shrine for the morning’s ceremony.[117] The crowd watching the march numbered only 70,000, the smallest since World War Two.[118] Hotels

[114] Victorian Parliament, ‘Legislative Assembly,’ 30 March 1960.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] ‘Governor: Anzac lesson is vital,’ *The Herald*, 25 April 1960.
[118] ‘Crowd small for first ‘New Anzac Day’ march,’ *The Age*, 26 April 1960.

opened across the city and saw a rush of business at the one o'clock opening time. But this died down as the afternoon wore on. Movies and stage shows were also reportedly very popular on the day.[119] In fact 1960 marked the beginning of a steady decline in public interest in Anzac Day that would not be reignited until the late 1980s. 1960 was also the year that Alan Seymour's play *The One Day of the Year*, which criticised the drunkenness and jingoism of Anzac Day, was first performed in Adelaide to significant controversy, but also significant acclaim.[120]

Conclusion

There is an irony here that despite so much energy spent in the struggle to save Anzac Day, the day ended up fading from the public's interest due to other reasons. And yet the debates that took place in the post-war period were as contentious and as driven by enthusiasm and passion as any in the history of Anzac Day. Those in favour of a 'brighter' Anzac Day had fought for the idea that Anzac Day should benefit the living as well as honouring the dead. In NSW this took shape in a campaign to abolish the Federal Government's nationwide restrictions on the day. Here there was a tradition stretching back to the earliest Anzac observances of commemorating the day with a glass of liquor. The notion that the government would dictate otherwise was seen as a usurpation of veterans' ownership of Anzac Day and their right to spend it in a manner of their own choosing. In comparison the Victorian debate was much fiercer and went on for much longer. There the RSSAILA's leadership held firmly in their position that Anzac Day was a sacred occasion that should not be marred by the inclusion of celebrations and public drinking. They were unwilling to accept the statements of those campaigning to have restrictions lifted, dismissing them as thinly

[119] 'Governor: Anzac lesson is vital,' *The Herald*, 25 April 1960.
[120] Donaldson and Lake, 'Whatever happened to the anti-war movement,' 85.

veiled attempts to commercialise the day, a move they argued would destroy its significance. Those in favour of a 'brighter' day in Victoria, however, were adamant that Anzac Day should be a celebration of nation, inclusive of all Australians, and not just the old guard of World War One veterans. To keep Anzac Day as a day of mourning, they argued, was to doom it to obscurity. The debate was also deeply influenced by generational change. The men of World War One who up until this point had, to a large degree, been the arbiters of Anzac Day observance, were now usurped by a generation of younger World War Two veterans who were less interested in retaining solemn observance. In the end the charge that closed observance went against the wishes of rank-and-file veterans won out. The plebiscite, which overwhelmingly found ex-servicemen in favour of open observance, was the factor that eventually swayed the hand of Victorian lawmakers. On a broader level the debates over Anzac Day observance in the post-war period demonstrate just how contingent the meaning of Anzac Day is on the time and place in which it is invoked. It is constantly being litigated in response to the changing shape of Australian society. As it was in true in 1946, so it is today, where each year in April fresh debates about the meaning of Anzac Day and who has the right to define that meaning arise.

Part Two

Chapter Four.

‘A message to future generations, as long as the stone endures’: The Anzac Agency and remembering the Pacific dead

In May 1945, about three months prior to the Pacific war’s ending, *Smith’s Weekly* published an article reporting on the difficulty of locating and burying war dead in the Pacific and of rescuing Australia’s remaining POWs.

> They are our men … and it is our final responsibility to bring home the living, and to record to the last sentence, the story of those who died – and to mark, wherever possible, the places where they lie. This isn’t an ordinary task of war. The terrain and geography of the Pacific War have created special problems for the Commonwealth Government, which must set up an organisation expressly to deal with these problems.[1]

The article was calling upon the Australian government to undertake this task. The job of bringing Australian POWs home from captivity was given a high priority by the Australian government. These rescue efforts began in August 1945, and by mid-October virtually all of the 14,340 surviving POWs[2] had been returned home to Australia.[3] The job of burying war dead and building cemeteries in the region, however, would take much longer, and was to be handled by Britain’s Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), through the creation and deployment of a subsidiary organisation, known as the Anzac Agency of the Imperial War Graves Commission in the Pacific area. The Anzac Agency was responsible for the war

[1] ‘Our lost Pacific,’ *Smith’s Weekly*, 26 May 1945.
[2] Over the course of the war more than 22,000 Australians had been captured by the Japanese, and of these around 8,000 died in captivity.
[3] Long, *The six years war*, 470.

graves of all British Commonwealth war dead in the Pacific region. It was mostly staffed by Australians, was operated out of Melbourne, and worked closely with the Australian government.

This chapter examines the activities of the Anzac Agency, between 1946 and 1957. The Anzac Agency's work entailed the building of cemeteries and accompanying memorials for British, Australian soldiers and other Commonwealth soldiers who had died in the Pacific theatre. The design and construction of these cemeteries was guided by two principles. The first dictated that Anzac Agency cemeteries should follow the guidelines established by the IWGC. The second was that the Agency's cemeteries should be constructed and made accessible to accommodate people who might wish to visit in the future. This was not always straightforward. The building of these cemeteries required navigation of tropical climates and terrain that Anzac Agency staff were unfamiliar with and found challenging. The Agency also had to negotiate with representatives of allied and former enemy nations around the location and burial of their own war dead.

In examining the Anzac Agency, the chapter investigates how the organisation worked to extend the IWGC's pre-established principles for building war cemeteries into the Pacific, what the impact of this work was on Australian remembrance of World War Two in the region, and finally, what effect the demands of post-war diplomacy had on this process. I argue that the Anzac Agency had to manage three intersecting and sometimes competing goals. The first was to build cemeteries and memorials that could stand as suitable symbols of the Commonwealth. At the same time, the Agency had to ensure that these cemeteries would also function at the national level within Australian remembrance of war. Finally, these goals needed to be balanced against the oftentimes contradictory war graves policies of other nations in the region, most prominently the United States and Japan.

This chapter draws upon archival documents produced by the Anzac Agency between 1946 and 1953 that are held at the National Archives of Australia. These are mostly comprised of meeting records, correspondence, and reports. These documents provide a record of the decision-making processes that drove the Anzac Agency's work. They offer intimate details of the challenges faced by the Agency's staff in attempting to establish cemeteries and memorials in environments they characterised as problematic. They also illustrate how these same staff managed the difficult job of navigating the competing demands of different stakeholders in the task of recovering and burying war-dead in and around the Pacific region.

Up until now the work of the Anzac Agency has received only passing mention by historians.[4] Yet their work was immensely significant. The IWGC, and by extension the Anzac Agency, followed a strict principle, established during World War One, that war dead be buried as close as possible to where they had fallen. During World War One 58,000 Australians had died in battle in North Africa, the Middle East and Europe and their bodies were buried in cemeteries across these continents. These became sites of great importance to grieving Australians back home. In the post-war period the Anzac Agency was responsible for this task in the Pacific area.

Commemorating war dead

At the heart of the Anzac Agency's work was the question of dead bodies. Several scholars have discussed the significance of dead bodies created by war at the individual, community, and national level.[5] These studies differ widely in their scope and focus, yet key themes

[4] My secondary research into this topic has only uncovered the following references to the Anzac Agency's work: Ai Kobayashi and Bart Ziino, 'Cowra Japanese war cemetery,' in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage*, eds. William Logan and Keir Reeves (London: Routledge, 2009), 105; Scates, *Anzac Journeys,* 267; Joan Beaumont, 'The Yokohama war cemetery, Japan: imperial, national and local remembrance,' in *Remembering the Second World War*, ed. Patrick Finney (New York: Routledge, 2018), 161.
[5] Katherine Verdery, *The political lives of dead bodies: reburial and postsocialist change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Luc Capdevila and Danile Voldman, *War dead: Western societies and the causalities of*

emerge throughout the literature. One, echoed by several scholars, is that the bodies of war dead can function as national memorials. Thomas Laqueur posits that as Western societies have become increasingly secularised since the nineteenth century, a new focus on the sacralisation of war dead as national symbols has emerged.[6] The importance of bodies in this context is their corporeality, their physical existence, and the sense that this existence can provide a symbolic, yet physical, link to the past.[7] These perceived links can then be recruited by cultural and political commentators seeking to advance nationalistic interpretations of that same past. In the case of the American Civil War, for example, Susan-Mary Grant argues that war dead became increasingly sacralised in response to the vast numbers killed and were incorporated into a broader national mythology which positioned soldiers as having died to preserve the nation. [8] It was also during the Civil War that the tradition of repatriating the bodies of American soldiers to their home soil began.[9]

Another common theme in this literature is the notion that war dead become a locus around which political discourse can be framed. In this context, Katherine Verdery has contended that in part because of the inability of dead bodies to speak for themselves, they provide political canvases upon which a multiplicity of political meanings can be painted.[10] According to Verdery, bodies evoke a sense of the religious and of the 'awe, uncertainty, and fear' associated with death. This invocation lends weight to political claims made upon the dead.[11] She posits that after war, bodies of dead soldiers become 'cultural treasures' and that in deciding the fate of these bodies, whether by repatriating them, burying them close to

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war (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Thomas W. Laquer, *The work of the dead: A cultural history of mortal remains* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015); Alexander Etkind et al., *Remembering Katyn* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012); Drew Gilpin Faust, *This republic of suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2008); Susan-Mary Grant, 'Raising the dead: war, memory and American national identity,' *Nations and Nationalism* 11 (2005): 509-529; Jalland, *Changing ways of death*.

[6] Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, 43.

[7] Ibid., 44.

[8] Grant, 'Raising the dead,' 521.

[9]Ibid.,' 518.

[10] Verdery, *The political lives of dead bodies*,' 29.

[11] Ibid., 31.

where they fell, or ignoring their graves, nation states are engaging in a form of symbolic property rights through which bodies are bestowed national significance because of their involvement with and sacrifice for a national cause.[12]

The scale of death during World War One fundamentally changed bereavement practices and the relationship between mourners and dead bodies. Deaths numbered in the millions, and a large percentage of these were unable to be properly identified, having been too badly mutilated or buried hastily in mass graves.[13] As Jay Winter has pointed out, this resulted in a 'universal preoccupation' with commemoration in the interwar period. Given that this was impossible for most families to bring their dead home on a physical level, commemoration was a way for them to achieve this on a symbolic level.[14]

In his influential work on this topic, George L. Mosse has posited that on a state level commemoration in the interwar period was a mechanism for the making meaning out of the death and destruction of World War One. In each of the participant countries this meaning was framed around the 'Cult of the Fallen Soldier' which positioned the dead as having sacrificed themselves to defend the nation. This, he argued, construed the war as a sacred event, but its effect was 'to mask … and legitimise the war experience.'[15] Central to this Cult of the Fallen Soldier was the construction of war cemeteries. British war cemeteries, Mosse asserted, were distinctly national spaces, designed to evoke Britain's pastoral history by using materials and vegetation native to England. This design was intended to conjure images of pre-industrial Britain, and in doing so give the impression of the British nation as a timeless and immutable entity.[16] The material used in gravestone production was particularly

[12] Verdery, *Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, 49.
[13] Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning*, 36.
[14] Ibid., 28.
[15] George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the world wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7.
[16]Ibid., 84.

important in this respect. During the busiest period of cemetery construction in the interwar period, between 1920 and 1923, the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) was shipping 4,000 gravestones hewn from English Portland stone per week to cemeteries in France and Belgium.[17]

Australians have a relationship to their war dead that is distinctive in certain ways. More than any other national group apart from New Zealanders, Australians' relationship to their war dead during the twentieth century has been defined by distance. After World War One, Europeans on both sides of the conflict were likely to live within a few hundred kilometres of the cemeteries where their war dead were buried. For Australians, however, these cemeteries lay half a world away. Bart Ziino has asserted that for Australians during and after World War One, this distance from their war dead shaped grief into an experience that was shared across society.[18] Ken Inglis has examined the way that Australian mourners dealt with grieving from a distance, noting that during the war memorial ceremonies held at local town halls or churches were common. At these memorial services the bereaved would dress in funeral clothing and adopt other funerary practices such as walking in processions and delivering eulogies.[19] During and after the war the site of mourners' loved ones' bodies was important, and so they attempted to make connections with these sites as best they could; by requesting that a flower or shrub be planted near their grave, the laying of wreaths by proxy, and in rare instances where money and logistics permitted, by the undertaking of travel to visit the graves themselves.[20] Memorials were also immensely important to the grieving process. As we have seen, during the war and interwar period memorials proliferated throughout the Australian landscape and became sites where local people could gather to

[17] Michael Heffernan, 'For ever England: the Western Front and the politics of remembrance in Britain,' *Ecumene* 2 (1995): 306.
[18] Bart Ziino, *A distant grief: Australians, war graves and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), 4.
[19] Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 96-98.
[20] Ziino, *A distant grief,* 4.

observe Anzac rituals and to mourn their loved ones. In this context, Inglis argues that due to the distance between Australians and their loved ones' resting places, these memorials acted as substitutes for their graves.[21]

Bruce Scates has undertaken in-depth work examining interwar pilgrimages. From the early 1920s, up to 20,000 Australians made journeys to battlefield sites and cemeteries each year. These journeys were facilitated by different cruise ship companies, who marketed the trips directly as pilgrimages.[22] Scates notes that these travellers were almost exclusively financially well-off, for the most part were elderly and recently retired, and almost all sought to visit the grave of a relative who had died in battle.[23] This was also a time in which travel was expensive and limited. To embark on one of these trips then entailed considerable privilege, both in terms of financial investment and in terms of time. As argued by Tony Walter, there were many reasons why war graves visitors undertook these journeys, whether dealing with loss, reconnection with comrades or family members, or as hobbyists with an interest in a particular campaign or battle.[24] On a broader level however, they were seeking to connect their individualised experiences and memories of the war with a wider, nationalised, public act of commemoration.[25] The IWGC's work in seeking to identify, bury and memorialise war dead was of great consequence to these travellers as the headstone and names engraved there carried great symbolic importance. They would kiss, take photos and some even would trace with pencil and paper, the names of their loved ones.[26]

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[21] Ken Inglis, 'World War One memorials in Australia,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167 (1992): 55.
[22] Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the battlefields of the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 67-68.
[23] Ibid., 70.
[24] Tony Walter, 'War grave pilgrimage,' in *Pilgrimage in popular culture*, eds. Ian Reader and Tony Walter (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1993), 72-3.
[25] David William Lloyd, *Battlefield tourism: Pilgrimage and the commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919-1939* (London: A&C Black, 2014), 177.
[26] Ibid., 135.

By the time World War Two had begun then, Australians already had a template for the process of grieving war dead in faraway places. The realities of collectively mourning the loss of thousands of young men from a great distance and the prospect of undertaking pilgrimages to attend their graves had already been made familiar. These were also concerns that underpinned the work of the Anzac Agency, who strove to ensure that the sites they were establishing would be both lasting and accessible for future visitors.

The Imperial War Graves Commission

When it was first established the IWGC was named the Graves Registration Commission, having been formed in 1914 as a unit of the Red Cross. The unit was founded by Fabian Ware, a newspaper editor who, with the outbreak of World War One, had enlisted as an officer in the Red Cross working with the French army. The organisation's aim was to find, identify and mark the graves of British war dead on the Western Front.[27] On 21 May 1917, the organisation was officially renamed under the banner of the IWGC, which by then had been severed from its connection to the Red Cross and had been made responsible for the identification and care of all British war dead as a British military unit. Beyond identification of the dead, the IWGC's duties were expanded to include the building of cemeteries, the erection of memorials and the keeping of records and registers of war dead and their resting places.[28] Ware's mission for the IWGC was to ensure that soldiers and officers alike were buried and accorded the same privileges in death, regardless of their rank or social standing, a principle he attributed to the egalitarian spirit of the British army.[29] The IWGC's task was colossal. According to Scates, around a million Commonwealth war dead were buried in

[27] Philip Longworth, *The unending vigil: A history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 1917-1967* (London: Constable, 1967), 6-7.
[28] Ibid., 27-28.
[29] Ibid., 14.

4,000 cemeteries, spread across more than a dozen countries. Ware referred to this system of cemeteries as 'a chain of remembrance' that stretched around the world.[30] Ziino has argued that Ware saw this chain of remembrance as a symbol, not only of the Empire's reach, but as a symbol of international and political cooperation.[31]

The work of the IWGC was largely defined by the policy that war-dead should be buried in cemeteries in the countries in which they had died. The policy was the result of both economic and logistical factors. In the first six months of World War One, British families able to afford the expense could arrange to have the remains of their loved ones returned home for reburial. From March 1915, however, this practice was banned. While many assumed that repatriation would resume once hostilities had ceased, by the war's end the sheer scale of bodies produced by fighting on the Western Front made it clear to Ware and those running the IWGC that this would no longer be a feasible proposition.[32] Their response was to propose a system in which Empire war-dead would be, without compromise, buried in a cemetery as close as possible to where they had died.[33] The rationale for this policy was that wide scale repatriation would be far too costly to enact and would disadvantage those whose relatives were missing and had no known grave.[34] But, as Michael Heffernan has pointed out, it was also a policy that reflected Ware's fervent belief that no preferential treatment should be given to the war-dead of wealthier families.[35]

This principle of equality extended to IWGC cemeteries which were built to a uniform standard. Soldiers' graves were marked with identical headstones in carefully placed rows. Each of these was marked by an engraving bearing the soldiers' name and rank along with a

[30] Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*, 43.
[31] Ziino, *A distant grief*, 129.
[32] Heffernan, 'For ever England,' 296-97.
[33] Ibid., 298.
[34] Julie Summers, *Remembered: the history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (London: Merrell, 2007), 25.
[35] Heffernan, 'For ever England,' 299.

badge denoting their regiment. The IWGC did not have a specific policy that headstones should be arranged into groups of nationalities and as such, soldiers of different armies and regiments were often buried alongside one another, usually according to the original layout of these cemeteries as they had been built during the war.[36]

Figure 4-1: This image illustrates how headstones of different nationalities were often placed side by side in IWGC cemeteries. Photo taken from a blog post on medium.com: John Bull, 'The Thousand Quiet Tragedies of Commonwealth War Graves,' 5 October 2018.

These cemeteries were intended to evoke the impression of a military formation and to embody the discipline and order of the army.[37] Each site was also marked with a standardised memorial, designed by British architect Reginald Blomfield, known as the Cross of Sacrifice. The basic design for this memorial features a standard cross, cut from stone with a bronze

[36] Sir Frederick Kenyon, *War graves: how the cemeteries abroad will be designed* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office: 1918).
[37] Heffernan, 'For ever England,' 299.

sword inlaid in its centre. According to Blomfield the memorial was deliberately designed to be ambiguous and to be left open to onlookers' interpretation.[38] Its Christian symbolism, however, is obvious. The other central feature of the IWGC's cemeteries was the Stone of Remembrance, a rectangular stone slab hewn in the shape of an altar, bearing the inscription, which had been added at the suggestion of Rudyard Kipling, 'Their name liveth forevermore.'[39]

Figure 4-2: The Cross of Sacrifice at the Bedford House cemetery in Belgium. Taken from the CWGC's website.

[38] Ibid., 301.
[39] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, 84.

Over the interwar period the IWGC was kept busy in the work of building memorials and tending to cemeteries, mostly situated in the Western Front but also in other former theatres of World War One.[40]

The work of the Anzac Agency

By the time that World War Two had commenced then the IWGC's system for burying and commemorating war dead was already well established. These practices and policies were carried over by the IWGC into the post-war period. World War Two, however, took place over a much larger and more geographically diverse area, among which was counted South-East Asia and the islands of the South Pacific. The Anzac Agency was created to extend the IWGC's work in this region, continuing the practice of establishing uniform cemeteries and memorials to mark the graves of fallen soldiers of the Commonwealth. At a meeting in July 1946 Agency members were advised that the organisation was to be responsible for 'all war graves of the British Commonwealth and Empire' in the area, and further, was granted the power to 'erect and maintain buildings and permanent memorials on or in any cemetery … in honours of any officers or men.'[41] Their task was to identify war graves and cemeteries within their area of operation, to draw up plans to beautify and improve these sites, and finally, (after approval from the IWGC's head office in London) to carry out tenders for their construction.[42]

This, for the most part, was a continuation of the IWGC's policies set after World War One.[43] It was also, however, part of a broader ideological mission on the part of the Anzac Agency that positioned their work in the Pacific as a mechanism by which the British Empire's legacy

[40] Heffernan, 'For ever England,' 311.
[41] Anzac Agency, 'Initial meeting minutes,' 30 July 1946, NAA: A431, 1946/2103.
[42] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 14 August 1947, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[43] Summers, *Remembered,* 15.

could be expressed through war cemeteries and memorials. In a promotional booklet released by the IWGC in 1948, it was advised that:

> These cemeteries and memorials, which have been or are now being built in honour of the dead, are at the same time monuments to the achievements of the British race and the British Commonwealth of Nations: They are in all parts of the old world, and in places unknown to ancient empires and conquerors; and they will bear a message to future generations as long as the stone endures.[44]

For its part the Australian government saw the Agency's work as being especially important to remembrance of Australia's participation in the war. Speaking to the IWGC in February 1947, then Australian High Commissioner in Britain, Jack Beasley, advised the Commission that the Pacific battlefield sites held an elevated significance for Australians: 'War was a little different … when fighting took place a long way away from one's own country. The Japanese war, however, was very close to Australia and very many Australian dead lay in the islands adjacent to the shores of their own country.' He asserted that the proximity of these sites to Australia raised up the importance of the Agency's work because these sites would become places of pilgrimage 'in the near future.' He framed the value of these pilgrimages as bolstering national sentiment, assuring the Commission members that 'relatives and friends' who undertook these journeys would be reminded of 'the great sacrifices which had been made in those distant regions … and would produce a deeper appreciation of the Australian part in the war and the Australian place in the British Commonwealth of Nations.'[45] In making these statement, Beazley was asserting the significance of the Pacific theatre to

[44] IWGC, 'War cemeteries and the care and marking of war graves,' 1948, NAA: M1455, 260.
[45] IWGC, 'Meeting minutes,' 20 February 1947, NAA: NAA: A431, 1948/120.

Australian remembrance of the war, but also, how Australia's role in the Pacific war stood as a testament to the importance of Australia's contributions to the Commonwealth.

The scope of the Agency's task was vast, stretching across a huge geographic area and while the number of dead was far less than other theatres of World War Two, it still entailed the burial and commemoration of many thousands. From a figure of roughly 260,000 British Commonwealth troops who died over the course of World War Two, 31,468 lost their lives in the Pacific theatre.[46] Australian troops accounted for just over half of this figure, at 17,501 dead.[47] Of course, for every soldier's grave there also had to be a grave marker and the task of producing and transporting these grave markers and ensuring they could withstand local conditions was another challenge faced by the Anzac Agency. In the aftermath of the war, the IWGC was tasked with creating more than 350,000 engraved headstones in war cemeteries located around the world.[48] In the Pacific theatre the difficulty this task was particularly pronounced, for the most part due to complications in shipping appropriate materials and negotiating with local authorities.[49] The Anzac Agency would not complete all its cemeteries and memorial sites until the late 1950s.

In an Anzac Day address in 1947, Sir Fabian Ware outlined the enormity of this task, advising that the Anzac Agency was 'operating in an area stretching from the South Pacific to Japan.'[50] This area was defined at an Agency meeting in July 1946 and comprised the majority of what is now referred to as South-East Asia, including Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The western Pacific nations were also a part of the Agency's mandate,

[46] Michael Clodfelter, *Warfare and armed conflicts: A statistical reference to casualty and other figures, 1500-2000* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2002), 583.
[47] Gavin Long, *The final campaigns: Australia in the war of 1939-1945* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1963), 633-34.
[48] Longworth, *The unending vigil*, 200-01.
[49] Ibid., 205.
[50] ADCC, 'Anzac Day 1947,' 1947, NAA: A461, K317/1/2 PART 3.

including Papua New Guinea, and the islands of Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa, as well as Australia.[51]

The Anzac Agency's approach to its work was to carry on the IWGC's policy that had been formulated during and after World War One. As we have seen, this framed the burial and commemoration of British war dead as an egalitarian process, in which no body was returned home while others were left behind, regardless of economic and social status. In Australia, the first discussions around the question of Empire dead in the Pacific occurred in mid-1945. In June of that year the IWGC wrote to then acting Prime Minister Chifley requesting his view on the matter. The memo advised that it was 'strongly' recommended that there be 'a continuation of the policy adopted in 1918' by the British Government.[52]

Sir Herbert Ellissen, one of the Commission's founding members, outlined this position when he advised colleagues at a meeting in 1948 that 'ever since its foundation it had been the Commission's policy, that no body be exhumed and reburied' except in cases where it was impossible to maintain a cemetery, where such bodies might be a danger to public health, or where Empire graves are being 'disaffected by order of a competent authority.'[53] The response from Australian authorities (specifically on the question of Australian war dead) was similar. Writing to Prime Minister Chifley in August 1945, the Minister for the Interior, Vic Johnson, advised that 'it would be quite impracticable to remove the remains of deceased servicemen to Australia … and if special cases were approved, applications would be received for hundreds of exhumations.' He further echoed the British government's position on the matter, stating that were remains of servicemen to be returned to Australia where possible, it 'would cause untold distress to the next-of-kin of whose [sic] have no known graves' and 'would entirely breakdown the basic principle of war graves whereby equality of

[51] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 25 November 1946, NAA: A431, 1946/2103.
[52] IWGC London, 'Memo to Chifley re burial policy in Pacific,' 1 June 1945, NAA: A461, B337/1/9 PART 2.
[53] IWGC London, 'Meeting minutes,' 16 December 1948, NAA: A431, 1948/120.

sacrifice is the established practice.'[54] After receipt of further advice from the defence departments, Chifley's War Cabinet advised that the policy adopted after World War One should again be followed by Australia.[55]

Memorials to the missing

The implementation of this policy in the Pacific was to prove difficult to enact in the case of those with no known grave. In the aftermath of World War One, the problem of how to effectively bury the dead and memorialise the missing and presumed dead proved a great challenge.[56] The IWGC's response to this problem had been to create several memorials to the missing at key sites around Europe, with a few of these being built further afield in places such as Gallipoli.[57] In the immediate aftermath of World War Two a similar strategy was adopted. However, it was complicated by a new factor, the number of dead and missing who had taken part in air operations. This dynamic was particularly pronounced in the Pacific as it was not clear where these men had died – whether over sea, in a jungle, or potentially as POWs and thus having died in captivity.

The difficulties were explained by Australian officials in a meeting with the Netherlands East Indies government in 1946. Here MC Langslow, an official from the Department of External Affairs, advised his Dutch counterparts that 'owing to the nature of air operations … it is impossible in a high percentage of cases to determine either the cause or the location of a casualty.' He further noted that if no information could be gleaned about an aircraft after take-off, it could not be ascertained 'whether the aircraft had been lost in the target area in the

[54] HV Johnson, 'Memo to Prime Minister Chifley regarding exhumation and reburial policy,' 20 August 1945, NAA: A461, B337/1/9 PART 2.
[55] 'War Cabinet meeting minutes,' 16 December 1945, NAA: A2670, 524/1945.
[56] Longworth, *The unending* vigil, 9-10; Winter, *Sites of memory*, 36; Capdevila and Voldman, *War dead: Western societies and the casualties of war*, 24; Ziino, *A distant grief*, 111; Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, 81-82; Heffernan, 'For ever England,' 296-97.
[57] Summers, *Remembered*, 22-23.

course of the operation or had crashed within Australian territorial limits.' Finally, he said that the victims of a crash might not have lost their lives in the actual crash but could also have been captured and 'subsequently died of illness or ill-treatment in enemy hands.' This problem, advised Langslow, would make it 'impossible to produce nominal rolls [of the dead] without extensive research.'[58]

For their part, the IWGC came to similar conclusions. At a meeting a few months later, it was agreed that 'every man shall be commemorated by name once, and only once … by the inclusion of a name on a memorial to those who have no known grave.' Yet, it was also agreed that this policy was difficult to carry out in the case of missing airmen due to several factors. Included among these were: an 'absence of information as to where the plane actually crashed … uncertainty as to whether any member of the crew had bailed out' and the need to 'establish the "nearest cemetery" and other relevant facts.' The answer, noted the IWGC spokesperson, was the creation of 'central memorials to those who have no known grave.' These centralised memorials would commemorate the dead over large geographic regions, thus negating the need for localised memorials with more specific honour rolls.[59] By mid-1948 it had been decided by the IWGC that these structures would be erected at various sites throughout Africa, Europe and Asia. Several of these were built in the Pacific region, situated within Anzac Agency cemeteries at the following locations: Labuan War Cemetery in Malaya; Taukyan War Cemetery in Burma; the Lae, Port Moresby and Rabaul cemeteries in Papua New Guinea; and the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore.

These memorials to the missing were designed to be interpreted in specific ways by their visitors. The memorial at Port Moresby's Bomana War Cemetery, for example, was built 'at the top of Memory Mount' giving it a view of 'the Mount Stanley Ranges and the … "Gap"

[58] MC Langslow, External Affairs, 'Proposed memorial in the Netherlands East Indies,' 9 January 1947, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 2.
[59] IWGC London, 'Meeting minutes,' 22 May 1947, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.

near Kokoda which was well-known to so many Australian Servicemen.' [60] There was some worry among Agency members that the importance of this site would be lost on some visitors, who noted that the memorial 'might provide a place for sight-seeing rather than a place for remembrance.' It was agreed, however, that 'the view from the Memorial which overlooked such historic ground was worth preserving, and visitors who passed through the Cemetery on their way to the Memorial would realise the sacredness of the area.'[61] Again, this notion of sacredness was brought up in connection to a site of Anzac remembrance. This moment demonstrates that for Agency officials it was important to guide visitors towards specific interpretations of their sites, and that conversely, engaging with these sites frivolously was an act that would violate their sacredness.

Forming the Anzac Agency

The Anzac Agency was formed just after the cessation of World War Two in 1946. It was in the final year of the war that the question of war dead in the Pacific began to be reported on in Australian newspapers. The notion of a regional arm of the IWGC, specifically formed to deal with the Pacific region, was first conceived in early 1945. At a meeting of the IWGC in January, a resolution was passed that a subsidiary agency should coordinate the building and maintenance of Empire war graves in the Pacific area.[62] A year later, on 12 April 1946, Australia's Federal Cabinet approved the organisation's creation. It was officially named 'the Anzac Agency of the Imperial War Graves Commission in the Pacific area' and was 'responsible to the Commission for the construction and maintenance of the graves of all war dead of both wars from every part of His Majesty's Dominions.' An IWGC representative noted he was confident that the Agency would do 'their duties to the relatives and public in

[60] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 6 April 1949, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/705.
[61] Ibid.
[62] IWGC London, 'Meeting minutes,' 21 March 1946, NAA: A431, 1948/120.

respect of the Commonwealth and Empire's Graves in the vast new area for which they have become responsible.'[63] In a letter to Chifley from Ware, it was advised that the Agency was modelled on the 'Agencies in Canada and South Africa' which had been established in the early 1920s to deal with British war dead buried on the American and African continents.[64] In Australia during the war years, there had been repeated calls for the creation of a distinctly Australian war graves service.[65] The Anzac Agency then was a mutually beneficial response to these requests. It allowed Australians to take charge of their war dead, as well as the war dead of other Dominion nations in the region, as an organisation formally reliant on IWGC funding for materials and labour but directed, for the most part, from Australia.

The Cabinet determined that Brigadier Athol Brown be appointed as the Secretary General of the organisation, having headed the AIF's War Graves Services branch during the war.[66] This is the same Athol Brown who oversaw the day-to-day running of the Australian Battlefields Memorials Commission, which is covered in the first chapter of this thesis. Apart from Brown, the Agency was staffed by various public officials. Acting as chairman in the immediate post-war period was Joseph Carrodus, a prominent career public servant, who in 1945 was serving as Secretary of the Department of the Interior.[67] Carrodus was joined by JC Barclay, New Zealand's High Commissioner in Australia, and DA Dodds, representing the Department of Treasury, along with rotating representatives from the Army, Navy and Air Force.[68]

[63] HV Johnson, 'Letter to Chifley outlining Anzac Agency creation,' 21 May 1946, NAA: AWM93, 50/9/2/4/2.
[64] Sir Fabian Ware, 'Letter to Chifley re Agency progress,' 18 April 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/120.
[65] Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, 199.
[66] HV Johnson, 'Letter to Chifley outlining Anzac Agency creation,' 21 May 1946, NAA: AWM93, 50/9/2/4/2.
[67] Lyn Anne Riddett, 'Carrodus, Joseph Aloysius (1885-1961),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University, 1993.
[68] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 2 October 1946, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.

Environment, accessibility, and pilgrimage

The task of the Anzac Agency was also complicated by the difficult environmental conditions of the Pacific region. Grave sites littered throughout the Pacific were usually located in hard to reach locations, beset by tropical weather, and plagued by environmental conditions that included seismic activity. The Anzac Agency's challenge in this respect was not only to create sites that lived up to the standard set by the IWGC after World War One, but also to make them accessible for anticipated battlefield pilgrims who might visit in the ensuing decades.

Building cemeteries in the jungle

In a report published in the Queensland's Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Anzac Day booklet in 1947, Ware informed readers of the Agency's difficulties in the Pacific. Ware advised that graves in the region were 'far more scattered and … much less accessible' than in Europe and 'ten years may be required to mark all World War Two graves with headstones.'[69] This estimate represented an increase over the time it took to accomplish the same task after World War One, which had been completed by the mid-1920s.[70] Indeed, much of the area where British and Australian war dead lay were environments that were difficult and unfamiliar to IWGC officials, being covered by jungle, beset by tropical climate, and in many cases, located in areas of seismic activity.

Following World War One, the IWGC's area of operation had primarily covered European theatres of battle, as well as sites around North Africa and the Middle East. Gravesites in Europe were mostly located in allied France, in environments that were familiar to IWGC staff. Those further afield, however, could prove more challenging, particularly when they lay

[69] ADCC, 'Anzac Day booklet,' 1947, NAA: A461, K317/1/2 PART 3.
[70] Ziino, *A distant grief*, 125.

in territory occupied by former enemies. In Turkey, for example, Australian authorities had made insistent pleas that the peace treaty with the Turkish government should include a clause that would reapportion Gallipoli as British territory, to ensure that the gravesites there would be cared for in perpetuity. In the end a compromise was reached, with the Turkish government agreeing that the gravesites would be under the ownership of the IWGC, but that Turkey would retain sovereignty over the area itself.[71] This moment was also an example of one of the typical issues faced by IWGC officials in in countries that were not under British rule. In these instances, IWGC (or in this instance, Anzac Agency) officials were required to negotiate with local authorities for the use of extraterritorial land rights in the building of their war cemeteries. There was no set policy in this regard, with IWGC officials securing land for these cemeteries on an ad hoc basis.

The goal of making Anzac Agency sites long-lasting meant that significant attention had to be paid to the problem of how to build cemeteries that could withstand local conditions. At a meeting in January 1947, Anzac Agency board member and former Air-Chief Marshall of Britain's Royal Air Force, Arthur Longmore, advised colleagues that 'with the exception of Labuan, all war cemeteries are located in areas where earthquakes or earth tremors are likely' and that 'special attention must be given to the foundations of all buildings and structures' in the region.[72] A few months later advice was sought from the Seismological Society of America who stated that 'the standard design of the Cross of Sacrifice, a memorial cross incorporated into all IWGC cemeteries, would be unlikely to resist severe earthquakes' and that further research should be invested into 'overcoming this disadvantage.'[73] Similarly, speaking to his colleagues in May 1948, Brown said that 'volcanic and earthquake areas … were proving a special problem' and that 'the normal type of headstone would not be suitable

[71] Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*, 38-39.
[72] Anzac Agency, 'Monthly report,' January 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/120.
[73] Anzac Agency, 'Monthly report,' June 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/120.

owning to earthquake tremors.'[74] These conversations were not idle speculation. In September 1949 it was reported that at the cemetery at Rabaul an 'earthquake completely wrecked the supervisor's temporary quarters.'[75] While this cottage was reportedly repaired, another powerful earthquake destroyed these repairs and the 'road from Rabaul to Kokopo and other critical roads were blocked by landslide.'[76]

Prior to the construction of the Anzac Agency's cemeteries, the bodies of fallen soldiers had been buried in temporary gravesites scattered throughout the region. Before moving on to the construction of permanent war cemeteries, the Anzac Agency faced significant difficulties in preserving these temporary gravesites. According to a report submitted to the Agency in October 1947, these graves, marked by wooden crosses 'were deteriorating rapidly' due to 'a constant fight with the jungle, white ants and other problems.' As it would be 'several years' before permanent cemeteries could be erected in these locations, it was decided that these wooden markers be replaced by concrete crosses to ensure that 'the cemeteries did not become dilapidated and cause distress to those relatives who visited them or received reports about them' in the meantime.[77]

The question remained, however, as to what materials should be used to construct the permanent gravestones that would replace these temporary markers. As the IWGC had utilised English stone in the construction of its cemeteries after World War One, so too did the Agency employ Australian stone in the building of its own cemeteries. Earlier in 1947, the Agency had settled on Ulam marble from Queensland. In a report submitted by Brown it was estimated that this would cost approximately £7 per gravestone and could be produced at the rate of 10,000 gravestones per year. Ulam marble had also been proven to be suitable for

[74] IWGC London, 'Meeting minutes,' 20 May 1948, NAA: A431, 1948/120.
[75] Anzac Agency, 'Monthly report,' November 1949, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[76] Anzac Agency, 'Monthly report,' October 1949, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[77] IWGC London, 'Meeting minutes,' 16 October 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/120.

use in the Agency's Pacific cemeteries 'both by laboratory tests and by inspection of marble headstones erected … in tropical areas to the north of Australia.'[78] Agency members never discussed the nationalistic implications of using Australian materials for the building of gravestones in the Pacific. However, when considered in the context of the IWGC's policy of using English materials and flora in its European cemeteries as a way of emphasising these cemeteries as national spaces, it seems likely that the Anzac Agency's choice to use Ulam marble was made for similar reasons.

The danger of seismic activity, however, meant that in some cases the Agency had to alter its practice of installing gravestones, and instead turned to the use of bronze grave markers. In a meeting in London with the IWGC, Brown reported that the 'volcanic and earthquake areas which covered the northern side of New Guinea, New Britain, Macassar and part of North Borneo were proving a special problem.' In these areas, he reported, the Cross of Sacrifice would need to be reinforced, and alternative means of marking graves would need to be employed. To this end he suggested that 'the Gallipoli type marker, in bronze instead of stone' should be used. This, he advised, could be produced more quickly, and would better withstand seismic activity.[79] By 'Gallipoli type marker' Brown was referring to the use of stone marble slabs, set into the ground on top of sunken concrete blocks which at Gallipoli had been used instead of the IWGC's standard upright gravestones.[80] The recommendation was accepted by the IWGC a few months later and a call for tenders was released.[81] The bid, which was for the production of 12,074 bronze plaques, was won by company known as Arrow Engraving.[82]

[78] Athol Brown, 'Anzac Agency report for March,' March 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/260.
[79] IWGC London, 'Meeting minutes,' 20 May 1948, NAA: A431, 1948/120.
[80] Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*, 40.
[81] IWGC London, 'Meeting minutes,' 16 September 1948, NAA: A431, 1948/120.
[82] Anzac Agency, 'Monthly report,' October 1949, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.

This goal of making cemeteries and memorials durable and long-lasting would have been mostly in vain were these sites not accessible. Throughout their assigned region the Agency oversaw eight main cemetery sites: At Kanchanaburi in Thailand; at Ambon and Jakarta in the Netherlands East Indies; at Yokohama in Japan;[83] at Labuan in British Malaya; and at Lae, Rabaul and Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. There was also a ninth site, at Sadakan in Malaya, but the bodies at this site were eventually moved into the cemetery at Labuan.

Figure 4-3: A map of the Anzac Agency's main cemetery sites in South-East Asia and the South-Pacific. Created by Anton Donohoe-Marques.

[83] For a detailed examination of the history of the IWGC cemetery at Yokohama, Japan, see: Joan Beaumont, 'The Yokohama war cemetery, Japan: imperial, national and local remembrance,' in *Remembering the Second World War*, ed. Patrick Finney (New York: Routledge, 2018).

The following tables provide breakdowns of war dead by nationality in each of these cemeteries.[84]

Kanchanaburi	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	1,362
Canadian	1
Indian	12
New Zealand	2
United Kingdom	3,585
Unidentified	0
Total	**4,962**

Ambon	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	786
Canadian	2
Indian	30
New Zealand	1
United Kingdom	785
Unidentified	357
Total	**1,961**

Port Moresby	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	3,115
Canadian	0
Indian	0
New Zealand	6
United Kingdom	16
Unidentified	699
Total	**3,836**

Rabaul	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	240
Canadian	0
Indian	333
New Zealand	1
United Kingdom	48
Unidentified	500
Total	**1,122**

Lae	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	2,353
Canadian	0
Indian	4
New Zealand	0
United Kingdom	23
Unidentified	444
Total	**2,824**

Labaun	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	892
Canadian	0
Indian	43
New Zealand	1
United Kingdom	852
Unidentified	2,118
Total	**3,906**

Yokohama	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	277
Canadian	137
Indian	46
New Zealand	13
United Kingdom	1,030
Unidentified	14
Total	**1,517**

Jakarta	
Nationality	**Number buried**
Australian	88
Canadian	4
Indian	161
New Zealand	2
United Kingdom	689
Unidentified	226
Total	**1,170**

Table 4-1: World War Two dead buried in CWGC cemeteries in Pacific region. Compiled by Anton Donohoe-Marques using data from the CWGC's website.

[84] The data that informs these tables was taken from the CWGC's website.

These were regions that were undergoing significant change in the post-war period. For example, from 1948, the British colonial government was dealing with an uprising in Malaya.[85] The uprising had been orchestrated by Communist rebels seeking to free Malaya from colonial rule and to institute their own government. Britain's incumbent Labour government struggled to quell the uprising, but with a change to a Tory government in 1952 and the appointment of a new Malayan High Commissioner, General Gerald Templer, the uprising was soon suppressed.[86] In Thailand the immediate post-war years were a period of political reorganisation: the country's first democratic elections were held in 1946, the king was assassinated and succeeded in same year, and a military coup took place in 1947.[87] Papua New Guinea at this time was still under the colonial administration of Australia. While the Australian government dedicated considerable attention and money on the development of Papua New Guinea in the post-war period, this was still a country slowly recovering from the devastation and disruption that had been caused by the war.[88]

Accessing the sites

Ease of access to the Anzac Agency's sites in these regions varied, but most were difficult for Anzac Agency officials to reach due to their remoteness and a lack of local accommodation for visitors.

[85] What is now commonly referred to as the 'Malayan Emergency.'
[86] Nicholas Tarling, 'Southeast Asia in war and peace: The end of European colonial empires,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 376.
[87] James Wise, *Thailand: History, politics and the rule of law* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2019), 26-28.
[88] James Griffin, Hank Nelson, and Stewart Firth, *Papua New Guinea, a political history* (Melbourne: Heinemann Educational, 2017), 102-03.

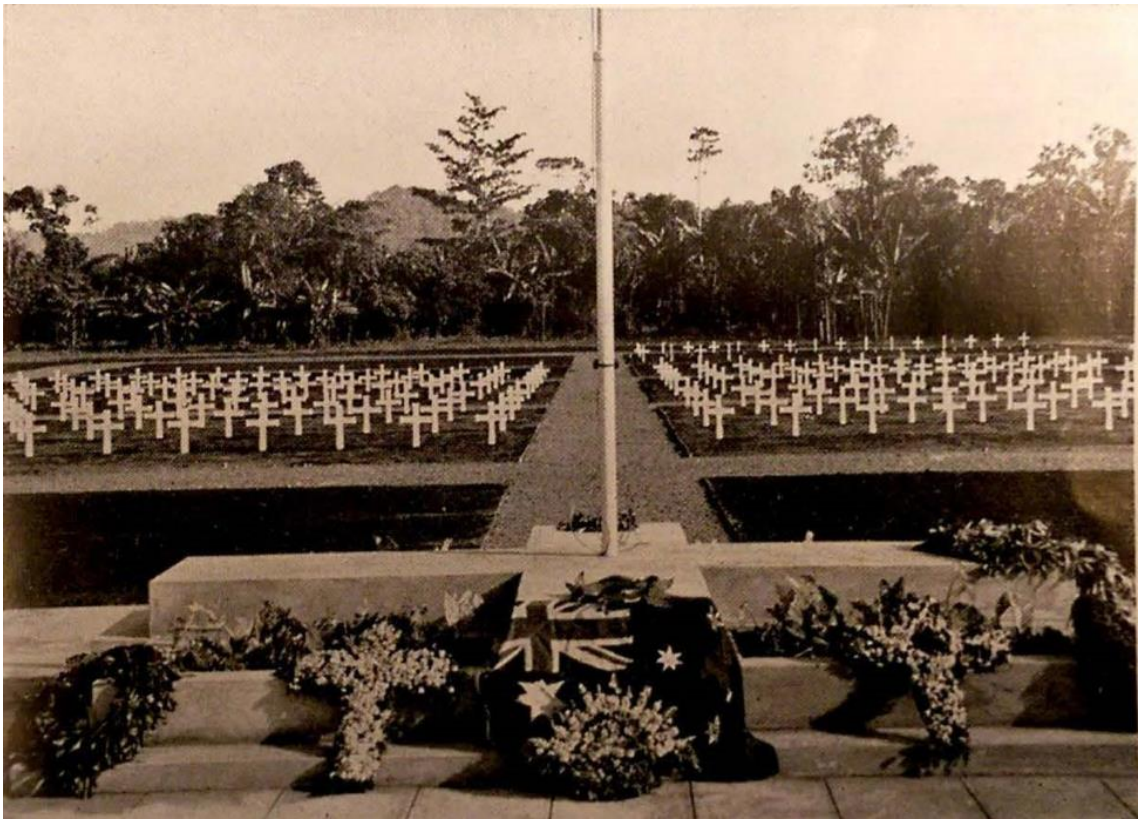


Figure 4-4: Lae War Cemetery in New Guinea (pictured here in 1947) was one of the easier sites to access in the Anzac Agency's area. NLA: S 940.468 IMP.

Following a tour of the Anzac Agency's temporary cemeteries in 1946, Brown advised of the difficulty in accessing the sites. Regarding the cemetery near Rabual, Brown stressed that it was '32 miles from Rabaul, and … isolated from any other habitation' and further that the site had no available water, electricity, or accommodation and that it was 'in an active seismic zone.' Similarly, he advised that conditions at Labuan 'leave very much to be desired and accommodation for visitors is, at present, non-existent.'[89] He also recorded that the cemetery at Kanchanaburi in Thailand was almost completely inaccessible.[90] Speaking to his superiors at the IWGC in London the following year, Brown advised that this site was 'at the

[89] Athol Brown, 'Report on visit to war cemeteries in the south-west Pacific area,' January 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/260.
[90] IWGC, 'Meeting minutes,' 20 March 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/120.

back of beyond' and 'along the worst road I have ever travelled on.'[91] Echoing these sentiments at an IWGC meeting in London a few months later, Sir Robert Gordon-Finlayson gave his opinion that 'relatives would never be able to visit these cemeteries' and that given the remoteness of these cemeteries bungalows should be built for visitors and Agency staff who might visit.[92]

The cemetery at Sandakan proved to be the most problematic of the nine sites and, in a decision that tested IWGC policy, would eventually be moved to be incorporated into the site at Labuan. Moving bodies in this way was a departure from the IWGC's stipulation that the dead be buried as close as possible to where they had fallen, but given the environmental difficulties of the site Agency officials appear to have had little alternative. The bodies buried at the Sandakan sites were those of soldiers that had been captured during the fall of Singapore and had spent the remainder of the war at the Sandakan POW camp. Of the 2,700[93] buried there, the majority had died taking part in the infamous Sandakan Death Marches, in which POWs were made to act as carriers for Japanese forces marching through dense jungle and mountainous terrain. Addressing colleagues in 1948, Brown painted a grim picture of the temporary cemetery, advising that it was 'badly sited, and the soil, impregnated with salt, made horticultural treatment very difficult.'[94] Brown's detailed report went further, advising that the cemetery was 'thickly pock marked by bomb craters' and that 'the whole area is most malarious and most unsatisfactory from a health point of view.' He added that 'venomous snakes, particularly cobras, abound in the area, seven having been killed … within the last ten days.'[95] For his part Carrodus called the site, 'a great disappointment' and noted further that

[91] Kanchanaburi is about 140 kilometres from Bangkok and is a heavily jungled region punctuated by rivers and other waterways.
[92] IWGC, 'Meeting minutes,' 20 March 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/120.
[93] The breakdown of war dead by nationality for those buried at Sandakan is unavailable as these bodies were moved to Labuan early in the stage of building the Anzac Agency cemeteries.
[94] IWGC, 'Meeting minutes,' 20 May 1948, NAA: A431, 1948/260.
[95] ABMC, 'Report on visit to British North Borneo, October 1948,' 3 November 1948, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 3.

'as the cemetery is surrounded by bomb craters, which held stagnant water, this would prove a very unhealthy place for next-of-kin to visit.'[96]

The Agency's answer to this dilemma was to exhume the deceased and move their remains to a more accessible site, at Labuan, a distance of more than 500 kilometres by road. After on-tour discussion with local authorities, and with the Australian Commissioner in Malaysia, Brown advised that there was 'much merit in the suggestion that the Sandakan War Cemetery should be transferred to Labuan.' Local British authorities at Labuan had also advised that that cemetery should be moved elsewhere as it 'was established on the site of a Japanese aerodrome' and was the only suitable site for development of further aerodromes needed 'for defence purposes' in the region.[97] Following a meeting of the IWGC in London in March 1949 it was decided that the cemetery should be transferred to Labuan where it was advised by Brown that 'future care and maintenance of war graves will be carried out to very much greater advantage.'[98] Sites located in New Guinea, where Australian colonial administration had been in place since World War One, proved a much less daunting task for Agency members. The cemetery at Lae, for example, had nearby accommodation, access to local labour, and was situated in the town itself.[99] Similarly, the Port Moresby war cemetery was only a short distance from town, also with easy access to local labour and accommodation.

[96] IWGC, 'Meeting minutes,' 10 November 1948, NAA: A431, 1948/260.
[97] ABMC, 'Report on visit to British North Borneo, October 1948,' 3 November 1948, NAA: A705, 129/1/31 PART 3.
[98] Anzac Agency, 'Monthly report,' March 1949, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[99] Athol Brown, 'Report on visit to war cemeteries in the south-west Pacific area,' January 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/260.

Commemorative signs in New Guinea

The Agency was not the first organisation to establish commemorative sites in the region at the war's end. In 1946, the Department of the Army established a series of commemorative signs and plaques in Papua New Guinea detailing the exploits of Australian militia forces fighting the Japanese in the later stages of the war. The department intended that future pilgrims to these sites would be able to explore battlefields around Papua New Guinea, while being guided by commemorative signs (and an accompanying guide book). The project not only demonstrates an early interest on the part of Australian authorities in making New Guinea a site for battlefield pilgrimage; in marking and describing Australian military exploits around the region it was also a spatial expression of Australia's authority in New Guinea.

A suggestion to erect these 'commemorative tablets' was first received by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Ogle,[100] in October 1944, in a letter to the Australian Army headquarters in Brisbane.[101] The idea, the suggestion noted, had been inspired by a memorial near Port Moresby, built by men of the Seventh Brigade which commemorated the 'the men who fell on the Kokoda Trail.'[102] In a separate letter the Chief of the General Staff, John Northcott, advised Lieutenant General Leslie Morshead of the proposal, noting that the inspiration for the commemorative signs came from Virginia, in the United States, where 'the principal events of the American Civil War are recorded by notices of this type.'[103] Following this communication, a memo was circulated from Land Army Headquarters to divisional commanders who had operated in PNG. The memo advised that the proposed

[100] Unfortunately, a record of the author of this suggestion has not survived in the primary record.
[101] Army HQ, 'Memo to operational reports section regarding PNG commemorative signs,' 21 October 1944, NAA: AWM54, 485/2/3.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Chief of General Staff, AMF, 'Letter to Morshead re commemorative signs in New Guinea,' 3 January 1945, NAA: AWM54, 485/2/3; for more on these markers see John S. Salmon, *A guidebook to Virginia's historical Markers* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994).

commemorative tablets would be placed at various 'sites of important actions fought against the Japanese by Allied land forces.'[104] These signs were explicitly intended to guide and educate anticipated battlefield tourists. On 3 January 1945, then Commander of the First Australian Army, Vernon Sturdee, sent a follow-up memo advising that the notices should be placed 'in suitable and accessible locations where they will be seen by visitors.' It was further noted that these should be located 'reasonably adjacent to (but not necessarily at) the site of the events.'[105]

Figure 4-5: Commemorative tablet at 'Fougasse Corner' in New Guinea. NAA: AWM54, 485/2/3.

While photos show that these signs were eventually erected, they received no attention in the Australian press, and it is not clear whether they were utilised at all by subsequent battlefield pilgrims or tourists. Despite this, they demonstrate an anticipation on the part of Australian authorities that battles in which Australians took part would become culturally significant to

[104] Brigadier, General Staff, 'Commemorative tablets on site of battlefields,' 31 October 1944, NAA: AMW54, 485/2/3.
[105] Vernon Sturdee, 'Memo regarding commemorative signs in PNG,' 3 January 1945, NAA: AMW54, 485/2/3.

future generations. They also demonstrate a keen interest on the part of authorities in ensuring that these sites would become spaces where Australian pilgrims would visit in future, a legacy that the Anzac Agency would carry on.

The cemetery at Ambon

Beyond anticipating pilgrims, it was also necessary for Agency authorities to secure locally owned land to ensure that established cemeteries could be used in perpetuity. There was a concern that cemeteries on privately owned land might one day be inaccessible for future visitors. This was the case on the island of Ambon, in the Netherlands East Indies, where several hundred Australian troops were buried.

In late 1941, Australia's 2/21st Battalion, known as Gull Force, were stationed at Ambon to assist Dutch forces there against an anticipated Japanese invasion. Japanese forces attacked on 30 January 1942 and Australian and Dutch forces were quickly overrun by the overpowering numbers of the Japanese attackers. Of the 1,131 members of Gull Force, 807 were taken as POWs. The rest were either killed in the initial attack or executed shortly after.[106] The captives were split between two camps. The majority were held at a camp on Ambon and the remainder were sent to a camp on the island of Hainan. What followed was perhaps the most brutal period of captivity endured by Australian soldiers during World War Two. More than two thirds of Australians captured at Ambon died during their captivity, for the most part due to a combination of malnutrition and overwork. They spent the remainder of the war as POWs, being eventually liberated in September 1945. Only 302 survived the experience.[107]

[106] Beaumont, *Gull Force*, 5.
[107] Ibid., 6.

The site presented a peculiar difficulty for the Anzac Agency's staff. Unlike most Agency cemetery sites, which were located on government land, the site at Ambon was owned by a local businessman, Mr TK Lim. Lim did not wish to sell the land but wanted to maintain the cemetery himself in honour of the bond he had made with the Australians during their captivity. In September 1946, the Anzac Agency was forwarded a letter from Lim who was, according to one newspaper, a 'wealthy Chinese merchant' prior to the war, who 'rapidly acquired command of virtually all civilian transport and thereby dominated practically every avenue of commercial activity' in Ambon. Lim had apparently developed an affinity for the Australian prisoners over the period of their captivity. The same report noted that when Australian forces made their final embarkation from Ambon, 'Mr Lim appeared under his own flag with his employees in military array' and advanced to the Australian party with 'bouquet of water lilies.'[108] In his letter Lim advised that over the course of their captivity he had 'made many relations and friends under the Australians stationed at Ambon' and had purchased the land that the Ambon cemetery was built on and provide it to the Australian government as 'a free gift and kind memory to my Australian friends who died there.'[109] He further advised that were the arrangement to go ahead he would ensure that the cemetery was cleaned five times a year, that 'the graves will be kept in good order … and when Australians come to Ambon to visit the graves of their sons, I will help to look after them.'[110]

Despite the seeming generosity of this offer, Agency representatives were wary of accepting it from a private individual. At their next meeting Brown advised that 'the general policy of the Commission is not to own lands anywhere in foreign countries.' The difficulty in accepting these kinds of gifts was that the donor might insist 'that his name should be put

[108] 'Mr Lim, of Ambon,' *Newcastle Morning Heald and Miners' Advocate*, 21 December 1946.
[109] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting agenda,' 5 September 1946, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[110] Ibid.

somewhere indicating that it had been given by him, and the Commission will not do that.'[111] In response, it was argued by Carrodus that were the gift accepted 'our difficulties would be solved.' The compromise put forward by Brown was that the Dutch government should be contacted to request access to the site 'in perpetuity.'[112] In the meantime, Lim's offer received moderate coverage in the Australian press. Melbourne's *Herald,* for example, called Lim's offer 'moving' and advised that it would give 'freehold of the beautiful Empire war cemetery overlooking Ambon harbour, where lie the 731 Australians … the Japanese killed by massacre or ill-treatment.'[113]

It would take another two and a half years for the matter to be settled. In May 1949, following a visit to the region, Brown reported to the Agency on the question of Ambon cemetery. He advised that during his trip he had discussed the question of the land with the Governor of South Moluccas. He advised further that 'a very satisfactory arrangement was concluded,' by which the Dutch colonial government would purchase the land from its owner to ensure 'that the magnificent view from the Cemetery would never be spoilt by the erection of unsightly buildings in the background.'[114] In this instance, rather than dealing with a hostile climate, or lack of local infrastructure, it was negotiation with locals and government that required navigation in order to ensure the proper burial of Australian war dead.

Pacific pilgrimages in the post-war period

Questions remained however, around how these sites would be utilised by future visitors. The Agency's anticipation of visitors to the sites had its precedent in the mass movement of battlefield pilgrims which had emerged during the interwar period. There is little evidence, however, that travel to Anzac Agency sites was popular in the 1950s. Agnieszka Sobocinska

[111] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 2 October 1946, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[112] Ibid.
[113] 'Chinese offers Ambon cemetery to Australia,' *The Herald,* 12 November 1946.
[114] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 18 May 1949, NAA: A431, 1948/260.

has demonstrated that the 1950s marked the beginning of a period of steady growth in Australians travelling overseas. She notes that in 1955, more than 15,000 Australians visited England and that similar numbers also travelled to New Zealand.[115] The numbers of Australians visiting Asia were substantially lower but were still in a state of slow yet steady growth. In 1955, for example, the number of Australians who travelled to Singapore amounted to fewer than 3,000 in the year but this figure grew to almost 6,000 by 1960. Where Australians did make the journey to an Asian country in the 1950s and 1960s, they predominantly visited Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong but there was also a slowly growing interest in visiting Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaya during this period.[116] For his part David Walker has researched Australian visitors to New Guinea in the 1950s. Walker has highlighted the exploits of a few 'adventurous' Australians who made the journey via air travel in the 1950s. He noted in particular artist William Dobell, who made the journey in 1950 to paint New Guinean landscape, writer Colin Simpson, who produced a number of travelogues based on his travels in New Guinea, and Miss Mosely[117] an ornithologist who made the journey for research purposes.[118] Neither Sobocinska nor Walker, however, make mention of Australians visiting the region for the purpose of visiting memorials or attending commemorative ceremonies.

In my own research I have found that there was limited engagement with Anzac Agency sites in the post-war period. Records in the Australian press show that only few pilgrimages, taken in the early 1950s, received publicity.[119] The first of these was undertaken to visit the Agency cemetery at Labuan and was to coincide with the unveiling of the Cross of Sacrifice

[115] Agnieszka Sobocinska, *Visiting the neighbours: Australians in Asia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2014), 91.
[116] Ibid., 92.
[117] Walker does not provide details of her first name.
[118] David Walker, *Stranded nation*: *White Australia in an Asian region* (Nedlands: UWA Publishing, 2019), 384-5.
[119] 'Pilgrimage to Labuan,' *Daily Mercury*, 8 June 1953; 'Pilgrimage to NG war graves,' *Daily Mercury*, 2 September 1953; 'Pilgrimage to war cemetery,' *Cairns Post*, 14 October 1954.

there. The pilgrimage was led by Army Minister Francis Ford and was only open to a select few individuals consisting of army officials, representatives of veterans' associations, and two war widows. The two war widows, Hazel Taylor and Myrtle Matthews whose husbands were both buried at the Labuan cemetery, had been chosen from a pool of more than 200 applicants from the War Widows' Guild. The quotes given by these war widows reveal the importance the two women placed on maintaining the privacy of their grief. One responded that she had 'very mixed feelings about visiting the cemetery' while the other advised that they 'would try to be brave, as we have to think of the other widows … we are determined not to break down.'[120] These comments are consistent with Patricia Jalland's assertion that in the post-war period there was an increasingly prevalent attitude that bereavement should be practiced privately, that it be kept short, and in many cases denied altogether.[121] Joy Damousi has come to similar conclusions in her study of war widows in the post-war period. She argues that one of the primary struggles for these women was navigating the tension between their identity as war widows and the societal expectation that they move on from their grief.[122]

In the 1950s, visitors also made pilgrimages to Anzac Agency sites as a part of their vacation itinerary. In 1953, an article in Rockhampton's *Morning Bulletin* encouraged readers that a trip to 'New Guinea, New Britain, and adjacent islands' would be of 'tremendous interest and educational value … the visitor is left with a very real appreciation of the hardship experienced there by our troops.' The article also highlighted the Bomana War cemetery and the Kokoda trail as particular sites where visitors might gain these insights.[123] The IWGC's annual report from 1957 also detailed tourist visits to Anzac Agency cemeteries and

[120] 'War widows fight tears in pilgrimage,' *The Sun*, 9 June 1953.
[121] Jalland, *Changing ways of death*, 173-74.
[122] Damousi, *Living with the aftermath*, 98.
[123] 'New Guinea: Wonderland for the tourist,' *Morning Bulletin*, 7 November 1953.

memorials. The report advised that 'the P&O Line and the Orient Line' were conducting tours of New Guinea, and that 'their itineraries often include visits to the war cemeteries which sometimes attract as many as three to four thousand people in a single day.'[124] Douglass Burgess has demonstrated that the history of cruise liner tourism was expressly linked with peoples' experience of empire. Those who took part in these tours were able to explore the colonial world while also being shielded from its discomforts.[125] Australian airlines were similarly said to be organising pilgrimages 'at such times as Remembrance Day and Anzac Day' and these had 'been well patronised.'[126] The following year it was similarly recorded that 'relatives and friends of the dead made pilgrimages to the cemeteries and memorials in increasing numbers' and that many 'letters in praise of the work' were being received. These pilgrimages were usually made on Anzac Day or Remembrance Day and had apparently become 'the centre of interest for the local communities.'[127] Unfortunately, the reports provide no specific details of these pilgrimages and there is no record of them in the Australian press beyond the limited information provided in these reports.

Unsurprisingly, veterans also undertook pilgrimages to Anzac Agency sites in the post-war period. For these men the pilgrimage was a chance to reunite with one another, to remember their lost comrades and to reconnect with the places where they had fought for their survival during the war years. Scates has explored the stories of three veterans of Japanese POW camps who each returned to the site of their captivity, albeit for very different reasons. Two of these took the journey in 1945 as surveyors, working to find the remains of Allied war

[124] IWGC, 'Thirty-sixth annual report,' 1956 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959), 42, NLA: S 940.468 IMP.
[125] Douglass R. Burgess, *Engines of empire: Steamships and Victorian imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 292.
[126] IWGC, 'Thirty-sixth annual report,' 1956 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959), 42, NLA: S 940.468 IMP.
[127] Ibid.

dead,[128] while another returned in 1947 to perform research for a radio docu-drama.[129] There were others, however, who returned to these sites for the express purpose of pilgrimage. In 1954, for example, John Laffin, a military historian and journalist who had served with the Australian militia in New Guinea, undertook a 'pilgrimage of nostalgia' writing a series of articles for Sydney's *The Sun* detailing his experience of returning to and travelling through New Guinea.[130] Laffin, however, made no mention of visits to Agency or other memorial sites. Rather his articles retraced campaigns he had taken part in and reported on efforts to rebuild the region. From the late-1960s former POWs of the Ambon prison camps also made regular pilgrimages to the site of their captivity. It was a trip they were unable to make until the political tension in Indonesia following Konfrontasi had settled (according to the Gull Force website these regular pilgrimages continued through to the 1990s with sporadic trips thereafter). The force's post-war association also contributed donations to the local hospital in thanks for the assistance of the Ambonese people during their captivity.[131]

In pursuing its broader goal of making cemeteries and memorials long-lasting and accessible, the Agency faced many challenges. These included tropical climates, remote and inaccessible grave sites, or local politics. In many cases, as with the cemeteries at Sandakan and Ambon, their work was difficult to carry out. Yet, where the Agency did succeed in setting up these cemeteries and memorial sites, they cleared a path for travellers, pilgrims, and battlefield tourists for years to come. Indeed, a few of the Agency's sites, such as the Bomana and Labuan cemeteries, have continued to be important sites of pilgrimage for Australians seeking to engage in remembrance of World War Two.

[128] Scates, *Anzac journeys*, 34-36.
[129] Ibid., 42.
[130] John Laffin, 'A pilgrimage of nostalgia,' *The Sun*, 10 March 1954; Laffin, 'New Guinea revisited,' *The Sun*, 23 March 1954; Laffin, 'A plane is missing,' *The Sun*, 27 April 1954.
[131] Beaumont, *Gull Force*, 219.

Dealing with the war dead of other nations

The Anzac Agency not only dealt with the bodies of British Dominion and Empire soldiers but was also compelled to negotiate with other former belligerents around the treatment of their own war dead. These included the United States and the Netherlands on the side of the Allies and Japan on the side of the Axis powers. In undertaking this task, the Agency was faced with the problem of how to observe competing cultural demands made by former belligerents while still contributing to Australian and British political goals in the region. For their part, the British government, and by extension the Dominion governments, were beholden to the World War One policy that bodies of Empire soldiers be buried in an established war cemetery close to where they fell. Yet this policy directly contravened that of the United States government, which demanded that all US war dead be exhumed and returned to their country of origin. Finally, despite prejudices, when dealing with war dead from Japan the Agency was compelled to observe Japanese cultural practices around the exhumation and burial of corpses.

Dealing with United States dead and the problem of intermingled remains

In most instances, the Agency chose to acquiesce to the cultural demands of these other nations to maintain broader political relationships that were being renegotiated in the post-war period. This was certainly the case in respect of the United States. On 16 May 1946, the United States Congress passed an Act for the 'evacuation and return of the remains of certain persons who died and are buried outside the continental limits of the United States.'[132] Though the Act refers to 'certain persons,' it was broadly a piece of legislation aimed at the repatriation of deceased American servicemen who had been killed during World War Two. The passage of this act reflected a cultural attitude that had emerged out of the American

[132] Return of Remains Act, US Congress, public law 383, Ch. 261 (1946).

Civil War, when the scale of the casualties (some 600,000) created an impetus for the repatriation of war dead as a way of dealing with collectivised grief.[133] This policy was continued throughout the First and Second World Wars and has been since.

Only a few months after the passing of this Act, communication was received by the IWGC from the United States embassy in London requesting that the ashes of American servicemen interred on former Japanese territory be returned for reburial in the United States.[134] In response, Sir Fabian Ware noted that the American government was obliged to return the remains of American soldiers killed during the war and that the American government had proposed to move 'not only the ashes of their own identified Service personnel, but also certain caskets containing intermingled ashes of American, British and Dutch dead.' A few members raised objections to this, noting that it could not be reconciled with Britain's policy that bodies should be buried in a cemetery as close as possible to where they died. One respondent advised that American grave authorities were, in many instances, faced with 'the difficulty of dealing with the ashes or fragmentary remains of Service personnel killed through air crashes' and then placed into a single coffin. In closing all agreed that 'the request … should be continuously refused, and at the same time the many difficulties involved should be pointed out.' If the United States authorities should press their request, then further diplomatic steps would be taken.[135]

Unsurprisingly, American authorities did press on. Only two months later communications were received by the IWGC demanding that the ashes from two mass cremations in Japan – containing the mixed ashes of Australian, American and Dutch soldiers – be transported back to the United States for reburial. In response, JK McNair said that 'the Foreign Office

[133] Susan-Mary Grant, 'Raising the dead,' 512, 518.
[134] JK McNair, IWGC, 'Letter to London Foreign Office regarding repatriation of American remains in the Pacific zone,' 31 January 1947, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[135] IWGC, 'Meeting minutes,' 16 January 1947, NAA: A431, 1948/120.

considered that they could not meet this request by the flat refusal which we should have liked' and that some sort of compromise should be sought.[136]

The American War Graves Service was uninterested in negotiating the point. A memo from the Foreign Office noted their suggested compromise that mixed ashes should be divided 'in proportion to the number of the dead of each country' had been 'categorically refused.' The alternative preferred by the Americans was that mixed remains should be 'interred in the nearest permanent United States cemetery' unless British remains predominated, in which case they should be interred in a cemetery 'selected by the British.'[137] One respondent argued that were this policy adopted 'the Commission would find it almost impossible' to inform British next-of-kin that their relatives' ashes had been moved from one from one foreign country to another and that this removal 'was consistent with a policy denying repatriation to the home country [meaning Britain].'[138]

Nevertheless, the Anzac Agency began to relent under the strain of these requests. Writing to the High Commissioner in London in September, Carrodus advised that after careful consideration the Agency had decided the following:

> where the intermingled ashes of British Empire dead predominate they be interred in a cemetery selected by the British Government and the same privilege be accorded to the United States in respect of massed ashes in which American war dead predominate.[139]

[136] JK McNair, IWGC London, 'Letter to High Commission re mixed remains in Japan,' 19 March 1947, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[137] IWGC, 'Informal discussion held at Grosvenor Gardens,' 17 June 1947, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[138] JK McNair, IWGC, 'Letter to London Foreign Office regarding repatriation of American remains in the Pacific zone,' 31 January 1947, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[139] JA Carrodus, Dept. of the Interior, 'Letter to High Commission regarding exhumation policy,' 4 September 1947, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.

A few years would pass before this policy would be tested. Yet, when it did, it became the source of significant diplomatic tension. In 1949, the mixed ashes of American and Australian servicemen, (who had died in a plane crash) buried in a mass grave at Ambon in the Netherlands East Indies, were exhumed by the Anzac Agency. This was not an unusual story. In the five or so years following the war's end, Australian air force units scoured the south-west Pacific searching for plane wreckage to locate bodies and possible survivors.[140] On this occasion, a mass grave containing the bodies of six Australians and nine Americans was disinterred from the Ambon cemetery following advice from the American embassy in Canberra.[141]

The initial discovery of the crash had been made in early 1946 by a party of Papuan labourers and a local doctor. The party recovered various remains from the site, including 'a headless torso … one complete skeleton' and 'a jumbled heap of bones … which were fractured and burned' along with 'six upper and nine lower jaws.' Corresponding dental records were forwarded to American military authorities in Manilla.[142] According to Brown the American party eventually arrived at the site but 'without prior advice.' The graveyard supervisor, having had no instruction to permit exhumations, 'declined to permit the American party to open the graves.' Following advice of this an RAAF party was swiftly dispatched to mediate 'but on arrival found that they [the Americans] had declined to wait and had proceeded back to Manila.'[143] Despite their absence, the RAAF authorities exhumed the remains and

[140] 'Scours islands for wreckage,' *Daily News*, 28 February 1948; 'Search for missing in New Guinea,' *Daily Mercury*, 25 August 1947; 'Reported missing,' *West Australian*, 23 November 1946.
[141] Athol Brown, Anzac Agency, 'Letter to OE Holt, IWGC, re exhumation of mixed remains at Ambon,' 21 December 1949, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[142] Athol Brown, 'IWGC report regarding exhumation of mixed American-Australian remains at Ambon,' 8 November 1950, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[143] Athol Brown, 'Letter to OD Holt regarding American exhumation party,' 19 September 1950, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.

identified ‘six Australian members’ among the dead and the rest of the remains were kept for handing over to American authorities later.[144]

This narrative, however, was contradicted by earlier reports. A year prior, Brown had advised the IWGC that ‘identification of individual remains was completely impossible’ as the aircraft had burned for a full day following the crash. Brown also misinformed American authorities that because the aircraft had burned for so long, ‘further attempts at identification would prove quite fruitless’ as the corpses of the crew and passengers had been incinerated beyond the point at which identification was still possible. [145] Brown’s defence of his decision to deny access continued (though the reason given for this denial shifted). In a letter to IWGC colleagues in July 1950, he advised that the American authorities were denied the chance to identify the remains due to political unrest in the region. Nevertheless, he did note (contradictorily) that identification of the Australian remains had been carried out by Australian authorities and that the American remains had now been handed over to the Americans ‘for possible identification.’[146]

Brown’s IWGC colleagues were unsatisfied. Writing in August, OD Holt advised that the decision to deny the Americans access to the mixed remains had made communications ‘very awkward’ given that the Anzac Agency had previously given permission to permit exhumations ‘requested by the Americans to be carried out.’ Holt advised further that he felt ‘the group should have been handed over as a whole for reburial in the United States’ and that the Anzac Agency would be criticised for carrying out the exhumations without an American official present. Finally, he noted that due to the difficulties already encountered, it

[144] Athol Brown, ‘IWGC report regarding exhumation of mixed American-Australian remains at Ambon,’ 8 November 1950, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[145] Athol Brown, Anzac Agency, ‘Letter to OE Holt, IWGC, re exhumation of mixed remains at Ambon,’ 21 December 1949, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[146] Athol Brown, Anzac Agency, ‘Letter to IWGC regarding exhumation of mixed remains,’ 28 July 1950, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.

should 'be made clear to the Americans that the remnants of bones handed over to them more than represented the American remains.'[147]

In the incident's aftermath, the British government was forced to apologise to American officials and accede to any further requests to recover the remains of American soldiers from grave sites bearing mixed remains. In October, the Foreign Office gave orders 'to convey to the United States authorities the Commission's consent for the final burial place of this predominantly American group to be decided by the United States authorities.' It also wanted assurance that 'the Anzac Agency would be instructed [in future] to permit the exhumation by the Americans to take place.' [148] Writing to the Australian High Commission in London, Frank Sillar of the IWGC advised that because Americans had been refused the right to 'remove contents of this grave' the Foreign Office had been 'constrained to apologise to the Americans' and to 'give instructions to the Anzac Agency to permit the American to remove the contents of the grave.'[149]

This episode demonstrates how the problem of burying (and sometimes exhuming) the dead in the post-war period became a site where the competing cultural and political demands of different nations came into conflict. Where Agency authorities worked to preserve the Empire policy of interring bodies in the region where they fell, American authorities worked to preserve their own policy of exhumation and reburial on American soil. In the end, as demonstrated in the episode at Ambon, the pressure for the Anzac Agency to appease Britain's political relationship with the United States came before observance of its own cultural practices. On a broader level, this begrudging appeasement of American demands

[147] OD Holt, 'American majority group in Ambon war cemetery,' 23 August 1950, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[148] [author unknown], IWGC, 'American majority group – Ambon,' 7 October 1950, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[149] Frank Sillar, IWGC, 'Letter to High Commission re mixed remains at Ambon,' 9 October 1950, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.

illustrates the degree to which Australian deference to the United States in the post-war period influenced matters of international relations. In this instance, even in the face of the IWGC's insistence that the remains of war dead be buried as close as possible to where they fell, regardless of their rank or status.

Dealing with Japanese dead

The Anzac Agency's work was not only concerned with the proper burial of Allied soldiers, but of Japanese forces as well. Unlike their dealings with American authorities however, in their dealings with Japanese bodies Agency representatives initially limited themselves to meeting the rules of the Geneva Convention and no more. Despite this, and despite their recent defeat, Japanese authorities continually requested that the remains of their dead be made available for recovery – a request that Agency authorities were compelled to acquiesce to in the face of mounting political pressure around the imminent drawing of a peace treaty with Japan, which was finalised in 1952.

Australia's relationship with Japan had a complicated history. Australians had long been indoctrinated towards anti-Asian sentiments. This was most prominently expressed through the White Australia Policy, introduced in 1901, which severely restricted the migration of non-white people into Australia. In particular, the policy was intended to keep Asian people out of Australia, based upon the idea that they would interfere with the project of maintaining Australia as a white working man's paradise. Much of this anti-Asian sentiment was directed at Japan and Japanese people. These attitudes were especially exacerbated by Japan's imperial aspirations throughout the first half of the twentieth century, reaching their peak in response to the events of World War Two.[150]

[150] Neville Meaney, 'Australia and Japan: The historical perspective,' in *The Japanese connection*, eds. Neville Meaney, Trevor Matthews and Sol Encel (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1988), 18-9.

In the war's immediate aftermath, the government maintained its anti-Japanese stance. In 1947, Australia's Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, stated that considering Japanese atrocities enacted upon Australian POWs during the war, Japanese people would not be welcome in Australia.[151] From the early 1950s, however, Australian foreign policy towards Japan began to take a turn. This shift was deeply influenced by Australia's growing relationship with the United States. The first major point in this shift was the signing of a peace treaty with Japan, in 1952. Alan Watt has asserted that Australian motivation for the treaty was strongly influenced by United States' foreign policy making in the Pacific, which saw Japan as a valuable ally in terms of defence and trade in the region. According to Watt, the peace treaty with Japan placated the United States on this point and in turn strengthened Australia's relationship with the United States.[152] Japan also became an important trading partner for Australia in the 1950s. Neville Meaney has contended that the United States' policy of encouraging Japan's economic growth in the period created a new market for Australian agricultural and mineral exports. It was this demand, Meaney argued, that motivated the negotiation of Australia's free trade agreement with Japan, which was finalised in 1957.[153]

The question of enemy war graves was first raised by the Anzac Agency in February 1947. It was noted here that there was 'no obligation on the Commission to accept the charge of maintaining enemy graves,' but that despite this, the recently revised Geneva Conventions should still be observed.[154] In 1929, the Geneva Conventions had been revised to stipulate that signatories should make every effort to find, identify, and bury enemy war dead.[155] Prior

[151] Yuriko Nagata, 'Certain types of aliens': The Japanese in Australia, 1941-1952,' in *Relationships: Japan and Australia 1870s -1950s,* eds. Paul Jones and Vera Mackie (Parkville: University of Melbourne History Department, 2001), 233.
[152] Watt, *Evolution of Australian foreign policy*, 121-2.
[153] Meaney, 'Australia and Japan: The historical perspective,' 21.
[154] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting agenda,' 6 February 1947, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[155] Capdevila and Voldman, *War dead*, 78.

to these revisions the Geneva Conventions had only compelled belligerents to keep each other informed of the death of prisoners and enemy grave locations.[156] In ensuing discussions Arthur Longmore advised that Japanese graves were scattered liberally throughout the Agency's area, throughout Burma, Malaya, New Guinea, and elsewhere.[157]

Speaking to colleagues in February 1947, Carrodus advised of the need to devise a strategy that would solve the problem of 'who would accept responsibility' for Japanese war graves in the Pacific. He also advised that the 'the maintenance of these enemy cemeteries is not covered by the … Commission [Referring to the Anzac Agency]' but that responsibility for these sites on behalf of the Japanese government might be considered 'on a basis of repayment of the costs involved.' He advised further that after having spent 'considerable time New Guinea … he had never seen a cemetery established by the Japanese.' In response to this, Major M Langslow of the Department of the Air argued that 'there seemed to be a moral obligation to do something more than this' and that 'belligerents should ensure that dead are honourably interred and that their graves are marked.' In concluding, it was agreed that the Agency would forward information summarising the state of Japanese graves on imperial territory to the relevant Japanese authorities, so that they could state their preference on the matter.[158]

Following this meeting, Japanese authorities were queried on the subject. Their response came a few months later, stipulating:

> The Japanese war graves be exhumed; each corpse be cremated on the site; and each of the remains (bones or ashes) be put in a small urn to which the name of the dead (in case the name is unknown, an indication as may serve in the

[156] Ibid., 79.
[157] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 13 February 1947,' NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[158] Anzac Agency, 'Meeting minutes,' 20 March 1947,' NAA: A431, 1948/120.

> identification of the dead) and the name of the place of death be attached. This urn, together with other available data, be forwarded to Japan. For these purposes the Japanese Government is prepared to send the necessary personnel to the spot subject to the approval of the General Headquarters.[159]

As noted by Susan Long, there is a widespread belief in Japan (that has its roots in Shinto Buddhist practice) that the spirits of the dead keep their personalities after death and live on in the social world of their families.[160] Part of this belief is an emphasis on ensuring that the bodies of the deceased are respected and cared for to ensure that the spirit does not suffer in the afterlife and become malevolent.[161] Japanese authorities were thus adamant about the return and respectful care of their war dead, despite the country's recent defeat.

Following these requests, Anzac Agency representatives queried the federal Department of Treasury to see whether they could be appropriately funded by the Australian government. Treasury's response was decidedly unsympathetic. As in earlier discussions, it was advised that 'no more than the minimum requirements of the Geneva Convention should be provided' and that to do otherwise would 'be inappropriate … owing to the declared policy of Empire Governments that the remains of deceased Empire Servicemen should be buried in war cemeteries in the countries in which they died.' Others argued for a more careful approach. The Agency's representative from New Zealand, for example, argued that 'every effort was being made to make Japan a democratic nation' and that concessions would have to be made to advance this process. Despite these protestations, it was eventually decided that Japanese remains would not be repatriated by the Anzac Agency and would only be maintained if they

[159] IWGC Advisory Committee, 'Meeting agenda,' 6 May 1947, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[160] Susan Orpett Long, 'Cultural scripts for a good death in Japan and the United States: similarities and differences,' *Social Science and Medicine* 58 (2004): 917.
[161] Margaret Lock, 'Displacing suffering: The reconstruction of death in North America and Japan,' *Daedalus* 125 (1996): 232.

were ‘within reasonable distance of established British War cemeteries’ and then only at the expense of the Japanese government.[162] The matter seemed resolved – the IWGC was prepared to let the Australian government bear the cost of maintaining Japanese graves, and then pass that expense on to Japanese authorities.

Anzac Agency authorities, however, were compelled to rethink this policy in consideration of the emerging peace treaty between Japan and the Allied powers. As early as 1946, the Agency was considering how to ensure that ‘necessary safeguards in the Treaty of Peace with Japan’ were made in consideration of Allied war graves and cremations on Japanese soil. At this stage, concerns centred on ensuring the upkeep and safety of Allied graves on Japanese territory.[163] These concerns became more pronounced as the treaty agreement came close to completion. In July 1951, advice was received from Washington that Japanese authorities had stipulated that ‘graves and cemeteries of Japanese war dead in the territories of the allied powers’ should be maintained. This stipulation, the American memo stated, ‘was suggested by the Japanese Government so that they could point to a measure of reciprocity’ in the context of treaty negotiations. The IWGC rejected this response and advised that the wording should indicate that IWGC authorities would ‘enter into discussions with Japanese Government’ on a case-by-case basis.[164]

In the end, however, it would be the question of British graves on Japanese soil that would soften the Anzac Agency’s resolve. In the post-war period, the Agency underwent extensive negotiations with the Japanese government to gain ‘rights of use in perpetuity … to the British War Cemetery near Yokohama.’[165] The Yokohama cemetery, which was established in 1945, holds 1,555 graves from World War Two (predominantly those of POWs). In the

[162] IWGC, ‘Meeting minutes,’ 2 July 1947, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[163] IWGC London, ‘Meeting minutes,’ 21 February 1946, NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.
[164] IWGC London, ‘Memo to Athol Brown regarding war graves clause,’ 25 July 1951, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[165] Anzac Agency, ‘Meeting minutes,’ 13 February 1947,’ NAA: MP742/1, 132/1/636.

late 1940s and early 1950s, however, Anzac Agency representatives were still in the process of negotiating access to this land and were nervous that the question of Allied care (or lack thereof) of Japanese grave sites would compromise these negotiations. Certainly, the Japanese government was actively searching out the remains of their dead in this period. In February 1953, a British embassy official in Tokyo advised the Pacific Foreign Department in London as much, making explicit reference to 'the Geneva Convention of 1929.'[166] Word from Downing Street also advised of this development and noted that 'nothing should be done to hamper the Japanese in tracing their war dead,' and that this course of action (or non-action) would 'deeply' stir Japanese sentiment 'in the same way as would opinion here if the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission were obstructed.'[167]

As with their dealings with American grave authorities, in dealing with Japanese authorities the Anzac Agency was eventually compelled to reformulate its policy around war graves to accommodate an emerging post-war international hierarchy. In the end, the political need to secure a peace treaty with Japan, and to ensure continued access to the British cemetery at Yokohama, won out over the Anzac Agency's inclination to indirectly punish Japan over the treatment of their war dead by doing the bare minimum in respect of their dead.

The Anzac Agency's negotiation of Japanese war graves then did little to reconcile Japanese and Australian people in the post-war period. However, the war cemetery in the town of Cowra, in NSW, has become an important site for the building of this relationship. During the war, Cowra was the site of a POW camp housing Italian, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese and Indonesian detainees. On 5 August 1944, around 1,100 Japanese prisoners attempted a breakout from the prison compound, using improvised weapons to attack their guards. 378

[166] AJ de la Mare, British Embassy Tokyo, 'Letter to Japan and Pacific Foreign Office, London, regarding Japanese war graves service,' 11 February 1953, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.
[167] Commonwealth Relations Office, 'Letter to Australian High Commission regarding Japanese War Graves Services,' 31 March 1953, NAA: A3211, 1962/1746 PART 1.

managed to escape to the surrounding countryside but were recaptured over the next ten days. 234 were killed in the attempt, in the initial breakout attempt and later by suicide. A further 108 were wounded. Four Australian guards were also killed.[168]

In the war's immediate aftermath, Cowra's RSSAILA sub-branch took on the task of caring for local war graves, including those of former enemy POWs.[169] There was some discussion between the Japanese and Australian governments and the IWGC on the question of whether the Japanese remains at Cowra should be repatriated, but these were never finalised, being overlooked, or delayed over the larger diplomatic concerns of the peace and trade treaties being negotiated during that period.[170] In 1964, after some debate, it was decided that the cemetery would be made permanent, and the remains of Japanese POWs in other parts of Australia would be reburied there.[171] Since then the site and the town of Cowra has become a unique site for the building of cross-cultural connections between Japan and Australia. Several members of the Japanese royal family visited in the 1970s, a Japanese garden has been built nearby, and a Japanese school exchange program has been established.[172] The cemetery has also provided a place for bereavement for Japanese POWs and their families who were never given recognition by their government due the shame attached to capture present in Japanese culture.[173] This Cowra war cemetery then has become a space through which Japanese and Australian people have increased their understanding and empathy with one another and has provided opportunities for cultural exchange and reconciliation.

[168] Long, *The six years war*, 404.
[169] Ai Kobayashi and Bart Ziino, 'Cowra Japanese war cemetery,' in *Places of pain and shame: Dealing with 'difficult heritage,'* eds. William Logan and Keir Reeves (New York: Routledge, 2009), 100.
[170] Ibid., 104.
[171] Ibid., 105.
[172] Ibid., 110.
[173] Ibid., 111.

Conclusion

The burial and commemoration of Australian war dead in the Pacific after World War Two was a complicated and difficult process. Those tasked with the establishment and management of war graves had to contend with a range of intersecting challenges that were at once politically and culturally charged. Moreover, their work dealt with the remains of real people with real families rather than more abstract national signs or symbols. This dynamic was particularly pronounced in the Pacific in the aftermath of World War Two. As a predominantly Australian organisation working on behalf of the IWGC, the Anzac Agency was compelled to contend with a harsh and varied tropical environment, with a range of national governments and with local people themselves. In meeting these challenges the Agency had three goals: to build lasting cemetery and memorial sites for the Empire's dead in the region, to make these sites long-lasting and accessible for future visitors, and finally to appease the wishes of other former belligerents whose dead also proliferated the region.

The Agency grappled with a range of factors that were at once environmental, political, and cultural. Firstly, the environment of the Pacific was often challenging, being inundated by tropical weather and seismic activity, and the locations of war cemeteries were often in difficult to access and remote regions. They envisioned these cemeteries as sites for future pilgrimages, and so sought to make them both long lasting and accessible. While the post-war period saw only limited pilgrimages in the region, since the 1990s, many of the Agency's cemeteries and memorials have become popular sites of pilgrimage for relatives of men buried in these cemeteries, battlefield tourists, and those seeking to gain a deeper connection with the Anzac legend.

Inherent to this work was the question of soldiers' remains. The Agency's area of operation encompassed the war dead of several different nations and their efforts to bury and memorialise British and Australian war dead at times ran counter to the wishes of other

nations seeking to do the same with their own war dead. In this regard Agency representatives were compelled to negotiate with both the United States and Japan over the question of their war dead, and in some cases were forced to abandon the strict principles set out by Fabian Ware and the IWGC. In these cases, the Agency was compelled to decide whether acquiescence to the cultural demands of these nations was necessary to appease them politically. In both cases the answer was yes, albeit for very different reasons.

On a broader level, these episodes reveal just how fraught and complex the process of burying dead after war can be. Post-war burial sits at a junction between geography and environment, specific cultural scripts around death and dying, international political jostling, and the proliferation of national imagining. While dead bodies may no longer think, feel, or act in the world, their significance lies in their power as ambiguous symbols upon which any multitude of meanings might be laden, whether political, cultural, or otherwise.

Chapter Five.

‘Prestige and influence in the eyes of our allies’:

Diplomacy and the international observance of Anzac Day

In the post-war period Australia’s relationship with the rest of the world was changing. The emergence of Cold War politics, the spectre of Communism, and the ascendancy of the United States were factors that Australian foreign policy makers worked to navigate at this time. While Australia’s association with Britain remained strong, there was an increasing focus on the task of strengthening political and cultural links with the United States and other nations in the Asia-Pacific. Broadly the goal was to help ensure Australia’s national security and to increase trading opportunities by forming and maintaining strong political relationships throughout the region. Much of this work was done through the drawing up of security pacts and trade deals. However, this process also took shape through and was reflected in Anzac Day rituals, which became useful sites for the representation of Australia’s evolving international relationships. Remembrance was, and still is, a powerful diplomatic tool. When diplomatic relationships are represented in commemorations and memorials, they are imbued with a sense of cultural and historical legitimacy beyond what is possible in the drawing up of formal agreements and pacts between nation states.

This chapter explores how Anzac Day in the late 1940s and 1950s was internationalised and used to complement Australia’s post-war diplomatic objectives. In Australia, diplomatic representatives stationed in Canberra were invited to take part in Anzac Day ceremonies at the Australian War Memorial (AWM), which opened in 1942, providing a new forum for the strengthening of relations with these countries. With the expansion of Australia’s consular presence around the world, there was also an increase in Anzac Day ceremonies being held internationally (usually organised by local consular officials). These provided opportunities

for expressions of good will and friendship between Australia and the host countries they were held in. In examining these developments, the chapter explores how in the post-war period, international Anzac Day ceremonies became an important site for the carrying out of diplomatic work, promoting trade, strengthening existing alliances, and reconciling with former enemies. This was not always a smooth process and in many cases the aims of remembrance and diplomacy contradicted one another. Tensions arose where the demands of diplomacy were prioritised over acts of remembrance. Veterans especially expressed sharply divergent views to Anzac Day organisers on the topic of which diplomatic representatives should be represented in the day's ceremonies.

This was also a period in which Australia was increasingly seeking to define itself internationally as an entity separate from Britain. In this context, Anzac provided a useful alternative to British identity in moments where Australian diplomacy operated outside of the British Commonwealth framework. In diplomatic dealings with the United States, for example. This model of Anzac Day diplomacy has continued to the present day.

Joseph Nye has famously characterised this type of diplomacy as 'soft power.' The use of 'hard power' in international relations involves the leveraging of military or economic resources by a nation state to coerce other nation states to follow their objectives. Soft power, on the other hand, is the leveraging of cultural and ideological resources to convince other nation states towards a desired diplomatic outcome without resorting to military or economic means.[1] Matthew Graves has explored this process through the lens of remembrance. He has argued that nation states use what he terms 'memorial diplomacy' to advance their diplomatic goals by emphasising shared histories, and by extension, shared identities with other nations.[2] This process, however, is often fraught. Jenny Macleod and Gizem Tongo, in their study of

[1] Joseph Nye, *Bound to lead: The changing nature of American power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 32-33.
[2] Matthew Graves, 'Memorial diplomacy in Franco-Australian relations,' in *Nation, memory and Great War commemorations*, eds. Shanti Sumartojo and Ben Wellings (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), 170.

Australian-Turkish relations, commemoration of the Anzac landings, and the history of the Armenian genocide argue that memorial diplomacy is as much about forgetting certain histories as it is about remembering others.[3] While these studies are focused on more recent instances of memorial diplomacy, this chapter employs these ideas to examine memorial diplomacy in the post-war period.

The chapter begins with an examination of Australia's broad diplomatic program in the post-war period. In particular, it focuses on how Australia forged connections with nations in the Asia-Pacific region through a series of treaties and trade pacts to provide context for why organisers sought to incorporate elements into Anzac Day. It then moves into an examination of Anzac Day observance at the AWM, exploring two key difficulties that arose in the course of planning the international dimensions of these ceremonies. First, it examines the composition of Charles Bean's Anzac Day Requiem. Bean wrote the Requiem in 1944, with the idea that it would be read prior to a two-minute silence at Anzac Day observances around the country. The Requiem's expressed purpose was to remind listeners that Anzac Day was a tradition that had its roots in engagement with the wider world. Its wording, however, proved contentious and drew complaints from other staff at the memorial as well as diplomatic figures who thought it insensitive to international political conditions at the time. Second, it examines the Anzac Day wreath laying ceremony. The wreath laying ceremony was another event in which the question of representing other nations proved difficult. Organisers agonized over what order diplomatic representatives should take in laying a wreath during the ceremonies. Of particular difficulty here was the question of where representatives of the United Kingdom and other members of the Commonwealth should rank in relation to representatives of other nations. Not all international representation was so contentious,

[3] Jenny Macleod and Gizem Tongo, 'Between memory and history: Remembering Johnnies, Mehmets and the Armenians,' in *Beyond Gallipoli: New perspectives on Anzac*, eds. Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2016), 32.

however; a Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony that took place at the AWM in 1950 was an instance of solidarity between Greece and Australia, one which acknowledged Australia's historical links with Greece and aimed to give the fast-growing Greek community in Australia a sense of inclusion through participation in Anzac Day. Anzac Day then provided a convenient site for the symbolic representation of Greek-Australians' inclusion into Australian society.

The latter half of the chapter examines Anzac Day outside of Australia in the post-war period. It demonstrates that Anzac Day was observed by Australians on almost every continent. In most cases these Anzac Day ceremonies were organised by local consular officials and were a chance for Australians in these regions to get together and celebrate the occasion with one another. These Anzac Day celebrations were also opportunities for Australians overseas to express solidarity on behalf of Australia with their local communities. A particularly striking example can be found in the work of Nola Luxford, a woman from New Zealand who organised an Anzac Day ceremony in New York that remains a yearly tradition to this day. Yet these ceremonies were not always unproblematic. An attempt to hold Anzac Day in Japan in 1947 drew widespread complaints in the press and among members of the veteran community in Australia, on the basis that Australian authorities had attempted to play down Anzac Day observance there so as not to upset the local population.

The chapter draws on primary material examined at the archives of the Australian War Memorial and the National Archives of Australia. Material from the Australian War Memorial is taken from the private papers of Charles Bean and from organisational documents and correspondence produced by the memorial's board of directors. Material from the National Archives of Australia is mostly comprised of documents and correspondence produced by the Department of External Affairs and the Prime Minister's office concerning observance of Anzac Day at various sites around the world over the 1940s and 1950s.

Historical context

The 1940s and 1950s was a period of increased international engagement for the Australian government. In the wake of the Depression and the expanded productive capacity that had been enabled by war, there was a renewed push to revitalise Australia's economy. There was also, as a result of Australia's experience fighting Japan, a strong impetus to increase Australia's national security. In both instances, Australian officials looked to foreign diplomacy and the development of international relationships as a way of meeting these needs. Prior to World War Two, Australian foreign policy had largely been conducted as part of the Commonwealth. In the aftermath of the war, however, Australian foreign policymakers worked to make a series of new alliances with Asian and Pacific nations. These alliances were geared towards increasing Australia's national security and strengthening economic ties in the region.

Arguably, this shift began in response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and Japan's entry into World War Two, and John Curtin's subsequent address to the nation on 27 December. In that speech Curtin declared that Australia 'looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.' The speech emphasised the importance of prioritising the Pacific war and the threat that Japan represented to Australia and the region. As Stuart Macintyre has argued, Curtin was making a statement about Australia's immediate circumstances in the Pacific and the importance of America as a wartime ally, rather than prophesising about Australia's long-term geopolitical intentions.[4]

As the war was coming to its close, one of the first concrete indications of Australia's altered orientation in foreign policymaking came at the United Nations San Francisco Conference, in

[4] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 94.

early 1945. Both the Deputy Prime Minister, Francis Forde, and the Minister for External Affairs, HV Evatt, were sent to lead the Australian delegation to the conference but it was Evatt who would end up dominating Australia's contributions.[5] This included campaigning to limit the vetoing privileges of powerful UN signatories and to enlarge the powers of the General Assembly against the Security Council.[6] Arguably this position weakened both British and US power in the UN. As noted by Alan Watt, Evatt's approach at the conference was significant because it demonstrated a new emphasis in Australian foreign policymaking in serving the vital interests of Australia before the wishes of powerful allies like Britain and the United States.[7]

Over the next decade or so, Australian diplomats entered a series of treaties with neighbouring countries in the Asia-Pacific in an effort to shore up both national and economic security in the region. While Evatt had placed great faith in the UN and the opportunities it might offer for middle powers like Australia to influence the ebb and flow of world politics, the succeeding Liberal-Country Party government, led by Robert Menzies (elected in December 1949), believed relationships with Asia-Pacific nations to be far more vital to Australia's continued economic and military security.

In March 1950, Percy Spender, the new Minister for External Affairs, outlined the government's foreign policy turn, advising that Australia's 'constant interest must be the security of our own homeland and the maintenance of peace in the area in which our country is geographically placed.' Vital to this security, he argued, was maintaining 'closest and best possible relations' with the US with which 'we have a common tradition, heritage and way of life.'[8] He did much to pursue this relationship, deeming that the best way to prevent the

[5] Watt, *The evolution of Australian foreign policy 1938-1965*, 78.
[6] Ibid., 84.
[7] Ibid., 102.
[8] CPD, *Vol. 206*, 9 March 1950, p. 557.

potential spread of communism in Asia, was through supporting the establishment of stable democratic governments in the region. The resulting increase in general welfare, he believed, would lessen the likelihood of those nations aligning themselves with Communist states.[9]

Spender advanced these ideas at a joint meeting of the Commonwealth's foreign ministers in January 1950 which resulted in the drafting of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific. Under the plan, the signatories[10] agreed to provide aid in the form of infrastructure and education to Commonwealth countries (the plan would eventually extend to non-Commonwealth countries as well) around Asia.[11] Australia's contribution to the program also had a training element, setting up a program of student exchange wherein Asian students were invited to study in Australia and Australian students travelled abroad to study in Asia.[12]

Spender also played a key role in the drafting of the ANZUS treaty, signed in 1951. The treaty was a joint agreement in which the United States, Australia and New Zealand declared 'publicly and formally their sense of unity' and agreed to 'coordinate their efforts for collective defence for the preservation of peace and security … in the Pacific Area.'[13] While this was formally a defence treaty, it was also a reflection of a cultural connection between the three signatories. In 1954, Australia also became a signatory to the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) which drew together Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States in a joint defence pact aimed at deterring communist expansion in the region.[14]

[9] Ian Cumpston, *History of Australian foreign policy 1901—1991, Vol. 2* (Canberra: IM Cumpston, 1995), 274.
[10] Initially comprised of Australia, Britain, Canada, Ceylon, India, New Zealand and Pakistan.
[11] Lowe, 'Canberra's Colombo plan,' 186.
[12] Ibid., 202.
[13] *CNIA*, Vol. 22, September 1951, p. 499.
[14] Watt, *The evolution of Australian foreign policy*, 144.

The last major treaty entered by Australia during the period was the Australia-Japan Commerce Agreement, in 1957, which opened free trade between the two countries.[15] This trade agreement was the culmination of concerted efforts by the Menzies government over the 1950s to reopen diplomatic ties with Japan. This process had started with a peace treaty in 1952 and was followed by a series of cultural and political exchanges that continued over the decade.[16] Menzies saw relations with Japan as a crucial part of Australia's foreign policy in the Pacific. He and Spender believed that a friendly Japan could play an important role in stemming the spread of Communism throughout Asia.[17] Their position mirrored that of the American post-war planners, who believed that Japan should be positioned as an industrial trading hub, friendly to the West, that would influence other less powerful nations in South-East Asia to reject the spread of Chinese communism.[18]

The post-war period then was one in which Australian diplomacy was greatly expanded in the Pacific region. However, while these relationships were forged by formal treaties and agreements, they were often maintained and strengthened through acts of cultural diplomacy. This chapter asserts that Anzac Day was one of the most important sites for the carrying out of this cultural diplomacy. It investigates how Anzac Day, in the decade or so that followed the war, became a convenient site where Australian officials could strengthen their international ties, whether with new and emerging allies in the Pacific or with traditional allies in Europe.

[15] *Australian Treaty Series*, Treaty No. 15 of 1957.
[16] Alan Rix, *The Australia-Japan political alignment: 1952 to the present* (London: Routledge, 2013), 10-15.
[17] Ibid., 9-10.
[18] Michael Schaller, 'Securing the Great Crescent: Occupied Japan and the origins of containment in Southeast Asia,' *Journal of American History* 69 (1982): 393.

Diplomacy at the Australian War Memorial

One of the most prominent sites where this process played out was at the AWM in Canberra. The AWM had first been conceived of by Charles Bean during World War One, as a museum where Australian relics from that war could be displayed for the public. The idea quickly grew, however, to accommodate a space that would be both a museum, that would educate and inform visitors, and a memorial paying homage to the Anzac legend and the sacrifices of Australia's war dead.[19] The idea was approved and funded by the Australian government in the early 1920s, and a competition for its design was held soon afterward.[20] Although the initial plan had been to open the AWM at some point in the early 1930s, the economic downturn of that decade meant that funding was delayed and the building was not officially opened until 1941, already more than a year into World War Two.[21]

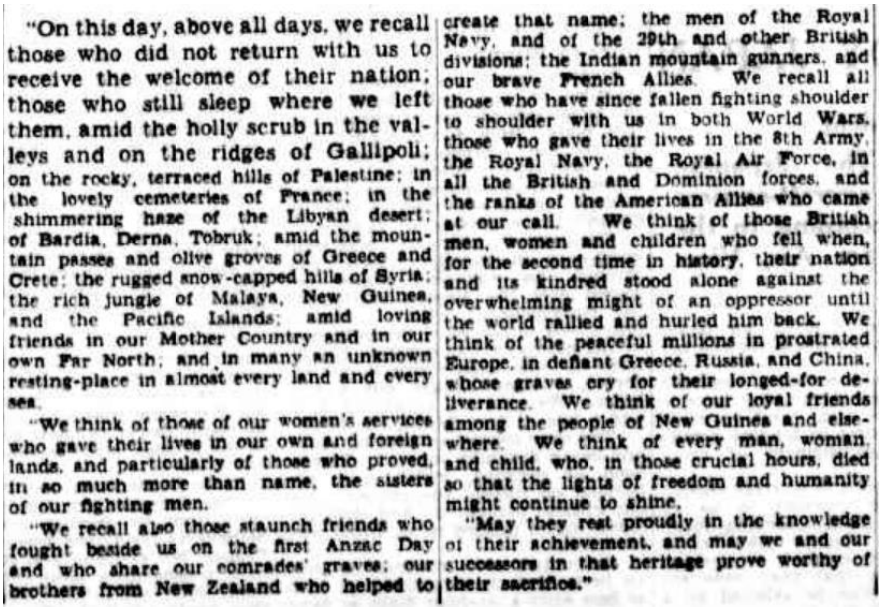
While the AWM is one of Australia's most important sites for remembrance of war and the Anzac legend, it has also become a space for the carrying out of diplomatic relations. Each year since 1947, international figures, comprised mostly of ambassadors and diplomats based in Canberra, have been invited to attend Anzac Day and to take part in official ceremonies which included acknowledgement of Anzac Day as a symbol of international cooperation, with emphasis placed on remembrance of Australia's wartime allies and enemies.[22]

Anzac Day at the AWM became a space where officials were able to express, embody and perform Australia's diplomatic relationships and this contributed to the cultural legitimisation of these relationships. In exploring this process, I examine three ceremonial procedures that were undertaken at the AMW's Anzac Day in the post-war period. The first of these, was Bean's yearly Anzac Day Requiem, an important speech in the day's proceedings, that in the

[19] Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 317-19.
[20] Ibid., 320-22.
[21] Ibid., 327.
[22] During the war Anzac Day at the AWM had been an appropriately subdued affair. It was only in the post-war period that its observance there grew more ostentatious.

post-war period was written and then rewritten to accommodate Australia's changing geopolitical outlook. The second was the AWM's wreath laying ceremony, in which foreign diplomats (among other important figures), were invited to lay a wreath at the Memorial's Stone of Remembrance. The third was the Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony, which took place in 1950 and celebrated the relationship between Greece and Australia that had been reinforced during World War Two. These ceremonies presented significant difficulties for Anzac Day organisers who puzzled over the order of precedence that Australia's allies should be given in wreath laying, how Australia's former enemies should be represented, and how to communicate these choices to foreign diplomats and to the Australian public. The development of these ceremonies also marked the establishment of three traditions that have continued into the twenty first century: inviting foreign diplomatic figures to take part in Anzac Day ceremonies at the AWM, the proliferation of the Anzac Day Requiem, and the celebration of Australia's shared wartime history with other nations at the AWM.

These examinations of diplomacy at the AWM are largely drawn from correspondence between members of the AWM's board of directors and staff and the Department of External affairs. These documents show discussions between figures at the highest levels of their organisations deliberating over how diplomacy should be effectively undertaken at Anzac Day ceremonies. They demonstrate that these officials saw the work of memorial diplomacy at the AWM as a vital part of Australia's program of foreign relations in Canberra. They also reveal some of the aims and challenges faced by those undertaking diplomatic work in the period, especially in terms of recalibrating international relationships, identities, and hierarchies.



"On this day, above all days, we recall those who did not return with us to receive the welcome of their nation; those who still sleep where we left them, amid the holly scrub in the valleys and on the ridges of Gallipoli; on the rocky, terraced hills of Palestine; in the lovely cemeteries of France; in the shimmering haze of the Libyan desert; of Bardia, Derna, Tobruk; amid the mountain passes and olive groves of Greece and Crete; the rugged snow-capped hills of Syria; the rich jungle of Malaya, New Guinea, and the Pacific Islands; amid loving friends in our Mother Country and in our own Far North; and in many an unknown resting-place in almost every land and every sea.

"We think of those of our women's services who gave their lives in our own and foreign lands, and particularly of those who proved, in so much more than name, the sisters of our fighting men.

"We recall also those staunch friends who fought beside us on the first Anzac Day and who share our comrades' graves; our brothers from New Zealand who helped to create that name; the men of the Royal Navy, and of the 29th and other British divisions; the Indian mountain gunners, and our brave French Allies. We recall all those who have since fallen fighting shoulder to shoulder with us in both World Wars, those who gave their lives in the 8th Army, the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force, in all the British and Dominion forces, and the ranks of the American Allies who came at our call. We think of those British men, women and children who fell when, for the second time in history, their nation and its kindred stood alone against the overwhelming might of an oppressor until the world rallied and hurled him back. We think of the peaceful millions in prostrated Europe, in defiant Greece, Russia, and China, whose graves cry for their longed-for deliverance. We think of our loyal friends among the people of New Guinea and elsewhere. We think of every man, woman, and child, who, in those crucial hours, died so that the lights of freedom and humanity might continue to shine.

"May they rest proudly in the knowledge of their achievement, and may we and our successors in that heritage prove worthy of their sacrifice."

Figure 5-1: Bean's Anzac Day Requiem, in its first incarnation, as it appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on 25 April 1944.

The process of composing the Anzac Day Requiem illustrates the importance that Charles Bean and his colleagues placed on recognising Australia's place in the international community on Anzac Day ceremonies. The Requiem was first circulated by Bean on Anzac Day 1944, to newspapers and to RSSAILA sub-branches with a 'request that it should, wherever possible, be read before the two minutes' silence.'[23] Bean's request was taken up, and the Anzac Day Requiem became a central feature of Anzac Day ceremonies around Australia in the late-1940s and through the 1950s.[24] It was intended by Bean to highlight Anzac Day as a national tradition that was also symbolic of Australia's place in the wider international community.

While Bean's early career enthusiasm for British imperial identity has been well documented,[25] his later developed passion for internationalism is less well known. As noted

[23] 'Famous comrades,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1944.
[24] From the late 1950s its usage appears to have dropped off considerably. It did survive, however, and is still sometimes spoken at Anzac Day ceremonies around Australia.
[25] Carolyn Holbrook, 'Marxism for beginner nations,' 124.

by Ken Inglis, during the interwar period Bean signed on as an active member of the League of Nations, believing it to be a force for maintaining peace in the world. It was this belief in the pursuit of continuing peace that also led him to be a vocal supporter of Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement towards Germany.[26] He only recanted his support of appeasement on the cusp of war in an article written for the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 March 1939, in response to Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. The letter was a call to abandon appeasement but its references to the importance of building solidarity among the international community are striking. In the letter Bean advised readers that the world should join in defiance of German aggression as a 'union of States that can stand together with the unshakable determination that who touches one touches all; with the ultimate hope that of someday including in that organisation every nation of earth.'[27] While Bean's article was written in anticipation of a new global war, they also demonstrate a keen interest in the values of international cooperation. These were also values that Bean sought to connect to the Anzac legend through the Requiem.

Writing to John McGrath in 1952, Bean noted that 'The Requiem was originally written because of the repeated omission in Anzac Day celebrations – almost everywhere – to refer to any except Australian troops or sacrifices.'[28] This statement indicates that Bean's interpretation of the Anzac legend was shifting and that beyond its role as a symbol of Australian identity, he wished also to highlight it as a symbol of Australia's relationship to the wider world.

To date, very little has been written about the Requiem. In recounting Laurence Olivier's reading of it at the AWM's Anzac Day ceremony in 1948, historian Mark McKenna called

[26] Ken Inglis, 'Bean, Charles Edwin (1879–1968),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1979).
[27] Charles Bean, 'Recantation,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 March 1939.
[28] Charles Bean, 'Letter to John McGrath,' 8 May 1952, NAA: AWM127, 49.

the poem 'at once Australian, imperial and remarkably internationalist.'[29] Indeed, internationalism was at the heart of the original composition. The first version of the Requiem, published in 1944, made several references to Anzac as a symbol of the international community. It also recognised this community in the context of both World War One and World War Two. The text paid homage to Australia's allies, acknowledging New Zealander, British, Indian, French and American soldiers both living and dead. It called upon its audience to remember that Australian war dead of both wars were buried in cemeteries around the world, in Gallipoli, Palestine, Libya, Greece, Malaya and New Guinea. Finally, the poem asked its audience to 'think of the peaceful millions in prostrated Europe, in defiant Greece, Russia, and China' and 'our loyal friends among the people of New Guinea.' However, Bean did not place these different nations on equal footing. He asked his readers to remember 'especially the forces and merchant services of our wider Commonwealth and Empire and the American allies who came to our call.'[30] In its original incarnation then, Bean's Requiem emphasised the importance of Australians' engagement and integration with the world through the experience of war. Although Anzac was and is usually talked about in terms of its significance to Australian identity, in the Requiem the Anzac legend was also about defining Australia's place in an international community.

The Requiem not only reflected Bean's internationalism; it also had to be amended to accommodate changing relations within the Commonwealth. While making these revisions, Bean and his colleagues effectively worked to revise the narrative of the Anzac legend as it was presented in the Requiem in order to preserve healthy relations with the different nations that were represented in its text. On 4 February 1949, he wrote to his friend and colleague

[29] In 1948, Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh toured Australia with the Old Vic Theatre Company, under the sponsorship of the British government. During the tour Olivier appeared at several official events such as Anzac Day at the AWM. Mark McKenna, 'Friday Essay: King, Queen and country – will Anzac thwart republicanism?' *The Conversation*, 21 April 2017.
[30] 'Famous comrades,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1944.

John Treloar, then director of the AWM, for comment on an updated version of the Requiem and, considering the growing rift between the United States and the Soviet Union, whether mention of 'Russia' should be dropped from the script. Treloar was troubled by the suggestion. In his response, he questioned whether it would be 'fair to name the United States and not other allies of the recent war,' pointing out that 'Russia was in the war six months before the United States … I realise that it may be policy to cultivate relations with the United States, but I should think that the Russians and others who played their full part in defeating Germany might be left wondering if we acknowledge less adequately the part they played.'[31] Bean wrote back just under a month later. In response to Treloar's doubts about excluding Russia from the Requiem he remained steadfast, emphasising the special importance of the United States to Australian national security. He noted that he would 'feel rather mean' if the United States was not acknowledged, pointing out that 'we did make a special call to her and she answered it very amply and decisively and we very much rely on her now.'

Arguing for mention of Russia to be excluded, Bean advised that given the Requiem's reference to preserving 'humanity and freedom' in the world, to acknowledge Russia 'would raise controversy' with diplomatic representatives from other parts of Europe and as such was 'better sidestepped.'[32] In the end, all mention of Russia was dropped from the Requiem's script. That year Bean also decided to omit reference to China. Although its omission was not mentioned in correspondence between the two men, a copy of Bean's revisions of the Requiem shows the word having been crossed out:[33]

[31] John Treloar, 'Anzac Day Requiem,' 18 February 1949, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.
[32] Charles Bean, 'Anzac Day Requiem,' 9 March 1949, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.
[33] Previous years included reference to 'Russia and China'. See 'Anzac Day Requiem 1947' recording at the AWM's website.

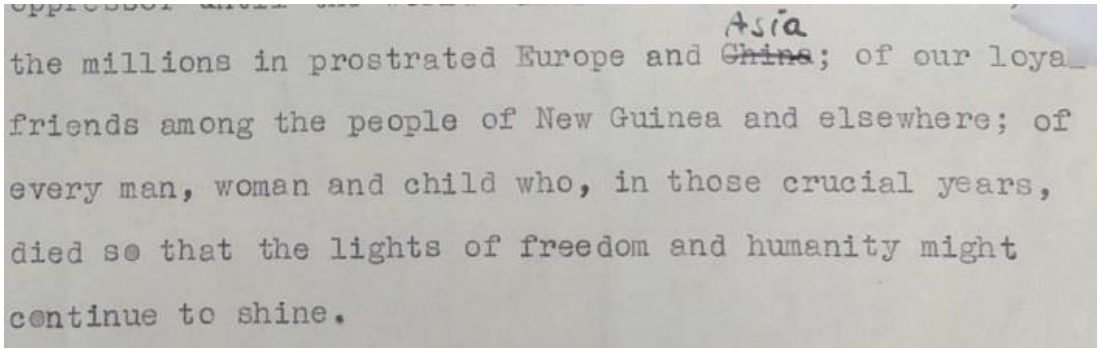


Figure 5-2: Anzac Requiem draft, 9 March 1949, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.

Bean and Treloar's trepidation here was understandable. The Cold War was already in its early stages. The Soviet Union had enveloped much of Eastern Europe and was beginning to develop nuclear weapons, Mao Zedong was on the verge of founding the People's Republic of China, and communists were taking leading roles in struggles for independence throughout Asia.[34] Australian authorities were particularly concerned about support from China and the Soviet Union being given to these communist revolutionaries.[35]

The Requiem attracted little controversy over the next three years. In 1952, however, Bean and Treloar were again compelled to consider the Requiem's wording, this time in response to changes in the makeup of the Commonwealth of Nations. In May, the High Commissioner for Pakistan wrote to the AWM's board of directors objecting to the use of the phrase 'our Indian friends' in the Requiem. This quote comes from the section of the Requiem that acknowledged Australia's allies who fought at Gallipoli. Namely, New Zealand, Britain, India, and France. The phrase 'Indian friends', he was arguing, did not account for the newly partitioned Dominion of Pakistan that had, up until August 1947, been part of India.[36] In a letter to Bean, acting director of the Australian War Memorial at that time, John McGrath,

[34] Judith Brett, 'The Menzies era, 1950—66,' in *The Cambridge history of Australia*, eds. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 115.
[35] Geoff Wade, 'The beginnings of a 'Cold War' in Southeast Asia: British and Australian perceptions,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40 (2009), 558.
[36] John McGrath, 'Pakistan High Commissioner's Anzac Day Requiem complaint,' 6 May 1952, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.

noted that the Pakistani representative had pointed out that some of those referred to as Indian 'were Pakistans and Muslims' and registered his sincere hope that this would be 'remembered in any future reference to the men'.[37] Bean responded that he had 'expected the note from the Pakistan office'. Rather than referring to Indian and Pakistani people in the Requiem, as McGrath had suggested, Bean advised that the phrase should be changed to 'our friends of the old Indian army'.[38] The idea was that as Pakistani people had been part of the Indian army prior to the partitioning and that this new and more ambiguous phrasing would acknowledge their contributions at Gallipoli without giving offense to Indian officials present at the ceremony.

It is interesting to note that concerns around the Requiem's wording were not limited to Bean and his colleagues, and that diplomatic figures like the High Commissioner of Pakistan took an active interest in their representation at Anzac ceremonies. His response illustrates an understanding that the legitimisation of the newly created state of Pakistan was not just a question of being recognised legally by other nations but was also about being recognised on a cultural level through traditions such as Anzac Day. These moments demonstrate how keenly aware staff at the memorial were about the importance of representation of foreign relationships in Anzac ceremonies. In making the decision to exclude Russia, in stressing the importance of the American alliance, and by recognising the newly emerged state of Pakistan, Bean was also deciding whether Australia's relationship with those nations should be legitimised by inclusion in the Anzac canon.

Nowadays, the Anzac Day Requiem is no longer part of the AWM's official ceremony. It is not clear when it was dropped from the official ceremony at the AWM.[39] Yet the Requiem

[37] Ibid.
[38] Charles Bean, 'Pakistan High Commissioner's Anzac Day Requiem complaint,' 8 May 1952, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.
[39] The last reference to it I have found in my research is in 1952, in the correspondence around the Pakistani High Commissioner's complaint.

has endured and is still spoken sometimes on Anzac Day at different locations around the country. The modern script for the Requiem is on the website of a few organisations (notably the NSW and Victorian RSL websites, the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee's website, and the Victorian Government's Anzac Centenary website) with the suggestion that it might be read at locally organised Anzac Day ceremonies. This modern version of the Requiem, however, has been shorn of its references to internationalism. It says nothing of the contributions of other nations to Anzac, only mentioning places where Australian troops 'fell' in battle.[40] While the Requiem has persisted through the years, its original intended purpose to frame the Anzac legend as a symbol of Australia's international cooperation has been long forgotten.

The wreath laying ceremony

While the Requiem caused its author some considerable difficulties, staff at the AWM faced a much greater challenge in their efforts to include other nations into (or sometimes exclude them from) Anzac Day ceremonies. Each year on Anzac Day at the AWM dignitaries, including politicians, military figures, diplomats, and other important officials were invited to lay a wreath on the Stone of Remembrance in the AWM's forecourt. In the decade or so that followed the end of World War Two, and in the context of Australia's foreign relations during this period, this was a contentious process. Anzac Day organisers debated the order that different international representatives should take, whether allegiance to the Commonwealth or to newer alliances should be given precedence, and whether former enemy nations should be allowed to take part in the ceremony.

[40] Victorian State Government website, 'Plan and deliver and event,' 2018. [http://anzaccentenary.archive.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ANZAC-Day-Planning-a-Commemorative-Service.pdf]

Wartime observance of Anzac Day at the AWM was limited. The first Anzac Day there was in 1942, and according to *The Canberra Times* was 'brief and without speeches or parades.'[41] As the exigencies of the war lessened, however, ceremonies at the AWM grew larger. The following year was reportedly 'one of the largest on record in Canberra.'[42] By 1944 the ceremony had an attendance of over 2,000[43] and 1945 and 1946 each saw crowds of around 3,000 attendees.[44] These were significant numbers given Canberra's population of around 13,000 people at the time.[45]

As the ceremonies grew so too did the number of foreign representatives. At the first AWM Anzac Day in 1942, diplomatic representation was limited to the British and Canadian High Commissioners along with legations from China and the Netherlands.[46] By 1947 this number had grown to include the Soviet Union, Brazil, Denmark, Chile, the United States, and France.[47] Diplomatic representatives at the AWM's Anzac Day ceremonies comprised High Commissioners, representing member-nations of the British Commonwealth, ambassadors, and other diplomats who were acting as representatives of foreign governments that had not yet established embassies in Canberra. Prior to 1947, High Commissioners played a limited role in diplomatic relations between Britain and the dominions. Primarily, they worked to promote Commonwealth trade and migration but high-level negotiations between Britain and the Commonwealth nations were still undertaken by the Prime Ministers' offices.[48] In 1947 the role of high commissioners was expanded, following India's gaining of independence.

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[41] 'Canberra commemoration at War Memorial,' *The Canberra Times*, 25 April 1942.
[42] 'Record attendances at ceremonies,' *The Canberra Times*, 26 April 1943.
[43] 'Commemoration of Anzac Day,' *The Canberra Times*, 26 April 1944.
[44] 'Record attendances at Anzac Day Services at Canberra,' *The Canberra Times*, 26 April 1945; 'Record attendances at Anzac Day commemorations,' *The Canberra Times*, 26 April 1946.
[45] This figure is taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 'Historical Population' webpage. [https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/historical-population/latest-release]
[46] 'Canberra commemoration at War Memorial,' *The Canberra Times*, 25 April 1942.
[47] 'Notes on Anzac Day commemoration ceremony, 1947,' 25 April 1947, NAA: AMW315, 275/003/001.
[48] Kent Fedorowich, 'When is a diplomat not a diplomat? The office of high commissioner,' *The high commissioners: Australia's representatives in the United Kingdom, 1910-2010*, eds. Carl Bridge, Frank Bongiorno and David Lee (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010), 13.

The title of dominion was dropped, and high commissioners' statuses were raised to match the privileges and immunities afforded to foreign diplomats.[49]

Up until 1947, representatives of foreign governments had been some of the first to lay a wreath, coming only after the Governor General of Australia, the Prime Minister and the AWM's Chairman (at that point Minister for the Interior, Vic Johnson).[50] Notably, these foreign representatives ranked higher in the wreath laying order than the Commonwealth High Commissioners. At that point in time the order of wreath laying at the AWM was taken from the Department of External Affairs' designated order of precedence for ceremonies as set out in the Commonwealth Gazette, which stipulated that foreign representatives should present themselves at diplomatic occasions based on the order they had arrived at their posting in Canberra.

In the wake of the 1948 ceremony, however, the AWM began to receive complaints from veterans' associations and from foreign diplomats, who argued for an alternative order of precedence. The first complaint came from Archie Cameron (at that time the Country Party Member for Barker), who wrote to Chifley on behalf of the Soldiers' Committee of the Opposition on 5 May to protest the AWM's decision to have the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom lay his wreath after representatives of 'foreign governments.' He argued that the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom 'should not rank in precedence below the representatives of the foreign powers.' In support of his plea, Cameron argued that as 'the United Kingdom provided some sixty percent of all troops engaged' at Gallipoli, 'the order of precedence is hardly in keeping with good taste or the historical facts.'[51] Cameron's complaint, however, while understandable for a veteran of World War One, failed to acknowledge the difficulty that ordering the wreath laying ceremony posed for the AWM's

[49] Ibid.
[50] 'Notes on Anzac Day commemoration ceremony, 1947,' 25 April 1947, NAA: AMW315, 275/003/001.
[51] Archie Cameron, 'Anzac Day order of precedence,' 5 May 1948, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.

board of directors. A similar suggestion was submitted by the RSSAILA branch of the ACT. On 5 August, in a letter to Vic Johnson, their president also suggested that the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps should act on behalf of other foreign representatives in laying a wreath but gave no reason for the suggestion.[52] In Australia, as in most countries, the dean or 'doyen' of the diplomatic corps is the longest serving ambassador stationed in that country.

Following these approaches, Chifley contacted Vic Johnson to ask his advice on the matter. In his response, Johnson reported that the order for wreath laying had been taken from the Table of Precedence published in the Commonwealth Gazette. He noted further that though he sympathised with Cameron's opinion on the matter, if the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom were to be given special precedence, then 'it would be necessary for us to extend this decision … to India, to Pakistan, to France and perhaps to Eire' given that they had also contributed to the Gallipoli campaign. Such an upset of the established order of precedence, he argued, would likely 'introduce unforeseen complications and difficulties.' While Johnson did not expand on what these might amount to, it is possible that he also anticipated offence being taken by powerful allies like the United States who were currently higher up the order of precedence. In closing, Johnson noted that a suggestion had been received from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) branch of the RSSAILA suggesting the laying of wreaths by foreign representatives might be replaced by the laying of a single wreath by the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. Such a change, he added, 'would bring the British Commonwealth representatives nearer to the top than they are at present.'[53] Johnson's recommendation in this case would result in the dean laying a single wreath on behalf of all foreign representatives, meaning that the Commonwealth High Commissioners would not be placed as far down the list of wreath layers.

[52] It is unclear whether the ACT branch had been in contact with Cameron: R Rowe, 'Letter to Minister for the Interior,' 5 August 1948, AWM315, 275/001/002 01.
[53] Victor Johnson, 'Anzac Day order of precedence,' 21 June 1948, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.

The suggestion had certain benefits. Discussing the matter at their next meeting in October, the AWM's board of directors agreed that if the Dean of Diplomatic Corps were to replace individual foreign representatives it would have the advantage of excluding 'representatives of foreign governments who are at the time acting in an unfriendly way', noting that this would be especially advantageous 'when enemy countries are again represented at Canberra.' The problem, they agreed, was that if it turned out that the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps were from 'an unfriendly government' they would be the only representative taking part in the ceremony. In conclusion it was decided that the Dean should act on behalf of the diplomatic cohort in laying a wreath, but that External Affairs should be contacted 'with a view to deciding whether or not this would be an opportune time to make such an alteration.'[54] It was clearly a sensitive issue. The moment demonstrates the degree to which officials were willing to manipulate the rules and conventions of diplomacy to smooth over diplomatic tensions with former enemies and to ensure that representatives of friendly nations were not left feeling offended. That the final decision lay with External Affairs only emphasises the degree to which Anzac Day at the AWM was taken seriously as a site for the carrying out of cultural diplomacy.

Organisers also had to consider the matter of Australia's role in Cold War politics, particularly in the case of the Chinese participation in Anzac Day ceremonies at the AWM. The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps at that time was the recently appointed Chinese ambassador to Australia, Dr Kan Nai-Kuang (a member of the Chinese Nationalist government), who had taken on the position in August 1948.[55] In a letter to Johnson in January 1949, Treloar advised that the current 'order of precedence at present is China, United States, and Russia' and that given 'events which are now rapidly developing in China' such an arrangement might not be suitable. Indeed, the Republic of China was then on the

[54] AWM Board, '39th Meeting of Board – Minutes,' 26 October 1948, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.
[55] 'Chinese as dean of diplomatic corps in Canberra,' *The Canberra Times*, 17 August 1948.

verge of capitulation to Communist party forces. News of the situation in China reached External Affairs through the Australian ambassador stationed there, Keith Officer, in late 1948. While Officer advised that Australia should seek to open communication with the Communists, Evatt was hesitant, preferring to adopt a wait-and-see approach to the situation.[56] By mid-1949 both the US and British governments had made it clear to the Australian government that they were unwilling to open negotiations with the communists until it was clear what the conflict's outcome would be. Australia followed suit.[57] Given the developing situation in early 1949, it is likely that Treloar was considering whether a representative of the Chinese Nationalists would be a suitable representative should a change in government occur in China.

To unravel this diplomatic knot, Treloar requested the guidance of External Affairs' recently appointed secretary, Dr. John Burton. Burton advised that the laying of a single wreath by the Dean 'would not be well received by the Diplomatic Corps.' He pointed out that 'The ceremony is the only occasion in the year when foreign representatives may by a public act express the goodwill of their country towards Australia, and they would be sorry to be deprived of it.'[58] In the end a compromise was made. An official decision was handed down by Chifley, in March 1949. Writing to Herbert Johnson, the Prime Minister advised that after consultation 'between Governments of the British Commonwealth' and 'as approved by His Majesty The King … High Commissioners will in future rank with Foreign Ambassadors' in respect of the wreath laying ceremony.[59] The upshot of this change in the High Commissioners' rank was that they were now interspersed in the order of precedence, where previously they had been permitted to lay their wreaths only once ambassadors of non-

[56] Eric Andrews, 'Australia and China, 1949: The failure to recognise the PRC,' *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 13 (1985): 29.
[57] Andrews, 'Australia and China, 1949,' 31.
[58] John Treloar, 'Interview with John Burton,' 5 February 1949, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 01.
[59] Ben Chifley, 'Anzac Day order of precedence,' 24 March 1949, NAA: AMW315, 275/001/003.

Commonwealth nations had laid theirs. The wreath laying ceremony that year and three years that followed, went ahead without controversy.

In 1953, however, fresh controversy arose over the question of whether a former enemy should be allowed to take part in the wreath laying ceremony. On 6 January that year, the new Japanese ambassador to Australia, Haruhiko Nishi, arrived in Australia with his wife and two children.[60] This was an important moment in Australia's post-war relationship with Japan. Australia's first ambassador to Japan had been sent a year earlier, in 1952, and likewise, Nishi was the first Japanese ambassador to come to Australia. Nishi's stated intention was to build good will in Australia in the war's aftermath with a view to expanding trade between the two nations. In early press interviews Nishi stressed that his main goal was 'to revive and promote the traditionally friendly relations between his country and Australia … by an expansion of trade.'[61]

It was important then, given Menzies' goal of building strong relations with Japan, that Nishi be made to feel welcome. This exchange, however, had to be tempered against the attitudes of the Australian public, among whom anti-Japanese sentiment was prevalent, especially amongst veterans.[62] Again, this moment highlights the ongoing tension between developing and maintaining healthy diplomatic relations with former enemies and meeting the public's expectations around Anzac commemoration. In the case of maintaining friendly relations with Japan, this was no easy task. Gallup Polls from the period, while far from an in-depth picture of Australian attitudes towards the Japanese, illustrate that a large proportion of Australians were wary about the relationship. In 1947, over 80 percent of respondents supported a long occupation of Japan, in 1951, 63 percent reported that they opposed the

[60] 'Jap ambassador arrives in Darwin,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 7 January 1953.
[61] 'Japan "Seeks only friendship", says new envoy,' *The Advertiser*, 8 January 1953.
[62] Rix, *The Australia-Japan political alignment*, 10.

impending peace treaty, and in 1952, 60 percent responded that they believed Japan would threaten Australia in the next two decades.[63]

The ambassador's arrival received extensive attention from the press, but this coverage was mostly uncontroversial, focusing Nishi's message of goodwill and assurances that Japan no longer fostered aims for territorial expansion. The posting did, however, attract the attention of veterans' associations who were vocal in their criticism. These complained that to accept an ambassador from the Japanese government, so soon after the recent war and considering what Australian POWs had suffered at the hands of their captors, was an insult to the ex-servicemen's service to Australia. In one response to a suggestion by Nishi that Japanese farmers might be enticed to emigrate to Australia to help develop the Northern Territory, for example, the State President of the RSSAILA in Victoria, ND Wilson, stated that 'there would be marked hostility to them [Japanese people], at least in this generation … we haven't started to scrape the bottom of the migrant pool yet.'[64]

More dramatic were veteran responses to the AWM's decision in 1952 to display several Japanese relics that had been seized during World War Two. These were comprised of implements used to torture prisoners of war, swords surrendered by Japanese generals, and the table upon which the surrender of Singapore to the Japanese was signed in 1942.[65] The relics were on display for a short period but were taken down just prior to Anzac Day 1953 after the AWM's board decided that they might cause offence to veterans visiting the museum who would be reminded of the harsh treatment suffered by Australian troops at the hands of the Japanese military.[66] Ironically, this decision to remove the objects ended up drawing complaints from veterans who, in March 1953, accused the memorial of pandering

[63] Rix, *The Australia-Japan political alignment*, 98.
[64] 'Japs not wanted as migrants,' *Examiner*, 2 April 1953.
[65] Today the table is prominently displayed in the memorial's public collection.
[66] McKernan, *Here is their spirit*, 220-22.

to the newly arrived Japanese ambassador.[67] While the AWM's board had withdrawn the display to avoid giving offense to veterans, it was reports in the press which framed the decision as having been made to appease the visiting Japanese ambassador that drew the ire of veterans.[68] Had the AWM board been more forthcoming about its reasons for taking down the Japanese relics they may have avoided much of the criticism that ended up being levelled at their decision. In an article titled 'Lest we remember!' in *The Argus*, former war correspondent John Hetheringon advised readers of as much, noting that the 'Japanese diplomatic mission in Canberra will now be able to stroll through the War Memorial museum without a blush for the atrocities committed … against helpless captives.'[69] Similarly, JP Byrne, of the Thirty-Niners Association remarked that 'there might as well be no National War Museum if some relics had to be removed each time an ambassador from a former enemy country appeared.'[70] Despite these complaints, the Board's original decision to withdraw the relics was upheld. However, the decision to remove the relics, and the public's response to that decision, highlight the difficulties of undertaking diplomatic work at the AWM and of memorial diplomacy more broadly. The decision also demonstrates how displays such as the Japanese relics do not lend themselves easily to a single interpretation and are usually understood by different people in different ways.

Veterans were even more outraged at the possibility that the Japanese ambassador would take part in the wreath laying ceremony that year. In mid-February representatives of the RSSAILA advised the press that some members would boycott Anzac Day ceremonies in Canberra that year if Nishi was invited to take part.[71] The Thirty-niners reacted similarly. Later that month, the head of their South Australian branch wrote to Prime Minister Menzies

[67] Ibid.
[68] 'Jap relics withdrawn; Liberal seeks reason,' *The Sun*, 26 March 1953.
[69] 'Lest we remember,' *The Argus*, 27 March 1953.
[70] 'Hiding of Jap war relics stirs soldiers,' *The Argus*, 27 March 1953.
[71] 'Anzac Day boycott threatened,' *The Argus*, 12 February 1953.

to protest Nishi's inclusion, reminding him that returned men 'have had the experience of Japanese brutality' and that 'no diplomatic niceties can explain this invitation to those who on this day remember their dead friends.'[72]

This was a difficult conundrum for Anzac Day organisers who had to ensure that Nishi was accorded the same privileges as other diplomatic representatives but were also compelled to respect the wishes of veterans whose legacy the AWM embodied. While anti-Japanese sentiment had been strong in Australia during and prior to the war, in the post-war period these sentiments were heightened. In large part this heightening was a response to widespread reporting on the brutality experienced by Australian captives at the hands of the Japanese army. These reports were consistent with wartime propaganda that had portrayed the Japanese as animalistic and cruel. They also played into the longer history of fear of the Asian other and the threat of invasion that had underpinned the White Australia policy.[73] Significantly, neither the RSSAILA or the Thirty-niners lodged a protest in respect of the West German or Italian ambassadors' potential inclusion in the ceremony. In contrast to public perception of the Japanese, the treatment of captives in Italian and German POW camps had received almost no attention in the Australian press.[74] Given this context, organisers at the AWM were compelled to walk the tightrope of avoiding offence to the Japanese ambassador, while at the same time respecting the wishes of veterans and the broader Australian public.

Their answer was to revert to the original plan of representing all non-Commonwealth wreath layers through the Dean of Diplomatic Corps. By 1953 the role of Dean of Diplomatic Corps had been passed onto to the Soviet ambassador, Andrei Lifanov, following Dr Nai-Kuang's

[72] HW Piper, 'Protest to Japanese wreath laying,' 23 February 1953, NAA: A462, 831/62.
[73] Agnieszka Sobocinska, 'Prisoners of opinion: Australians in Asian captivity, 1942-2005,' *Australian Studies* 1 (2009): 4-5.
[74] Ibid.

return to Formosa. Given Australia's relationship with the Soviet Union at the time, as steadfast ally of the United States, Lifanov was equally as inconvenient a man to hold the position as Dr Nai-Kuang had been. Their stated reason for the change, however, was a misdirection. At a private meeting of the Board later that year it was acknowledged that the 'excuse given' was that 'the number of diplomatic missions had increased from twelve in 1946 to twenty-eight in 1953 … doubling the length of this part of the ceremony.'[75] The real reasons, however, appear to have been clear to most onlookers, with several press outlets having reported that the change had been made to appease veterans by excluding the Japanese ambassador.[76] Again, the AWM's board were exploiting the formalities of diplomacy at the Anzac Day ceremony. In this case to find a solution to the delicate issue of courting an unpopular foreign representative while appeasing the veteran community and the public's wishes around Anzac Day observance at the AWM.

Other diplomatic representatives, however, were upset by the change in procedure. An internal brief prepared for Menzies noted that both the French Ambassador and the Belgian diplomatic representative had lodged complaints.[77] Writing to the Prime Minister's Department after the conclusion of the ceremony, Liberal member for Henty, Jo Gullett, also a veteran of World War Two, advised that the decision had resulted in 'a great deal of hard feeling among Foreign representatives.' He criticised the decision to 'placate the Japanese at the expense of our allies' and suggested that 'it would have been better to advise Mr Nishi not to lay a wreath and let the others do so.'[78] Despite these protests, the decision to have one representative for all diplomats has stuck. Over the years since, the national Anzac Day ceremony has undergone many permutations but the practice of the Dean of the Diplomatic

[75] AWM, 'Minutes: 45th Board meeting,' 4 December 1953, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 02.
[76] 'No Jap Anzac wreath,' *News*, 21 April 1943; 'Japanese ambassador at service,' *The Sun*, 25 April 1953.
[77] Prime Minister's Department, 'Internal memo,' 13 October 1953, NAA: AWM315, 275/001/002 02.
[78] Ibid.

Corps representing foreign diplomats at the wreath laying ceremony has continued to this day.[79]

In managing the participation of foreign diplomats at the wreath laying ceremony, the AWM's board were forced to juggle several challenges. For one, they had to manage Australia's representation as a prominent member of the British Commonwealth, while at the same time acknowledging the importance of Australia's developing relationship with other nations in the Asia-Pacific region. They also had to manage this diplomatic work while respecting the wishes of veterans who saw the ceremonies as first and foremost a dedication to the sacrifices of Australian soldiers at war. Finally, they had to work out how to effectively represent Japan at the ceremony in a way that would avoid offending the Japanese ambassador while also appeasing the veteran community. In most of these instances there was no easy answer. These were significant challenges, discussed in the Prime Minister's office, in press rooms around the country and in the offices of veterans' associations. That the AWM's board was willing to compromise in repeated changes to the order of precedence, lobbying for a change in the status of Commonwealth High Commissioners and in the replacement of the entire diplomatic corps by a single representative, illustrates how important Anzac and its associated ceremonies were to Australia's domestic diplomacy at the time. But it was not solely a matter of appeasing different diplomatic stakeholders; this was also part of the complicated process of defining Australia's changing place in the international community.

Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony

Not all instances of Anzac Day diplomacy presented such difficulties. In 1950 the AWM held a special Anzac Day 'Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony' in honour of the bond between

[79] AWM, 'Anzac Day National Ceremony,' 2020.

the two countries that had formed during their shared defence of Greece in 1941. Early in 1941, Australia's 6th Division, along with British and New Zealand forces, had been sent to help defend Greece from an Italian army that had invaded in late 1940. The Italian invasion was unsuccessful. They were, however, reinforced by the German Wehrmacht in April 1941. Allied forces were outnumbered and outgunned by the superior German force and by May the defenders had been pushed to the island of Crete, where they were eventually forced to evacuate after an assault by German paratroopers.[80]

The two decades that followed the war were a period of extensive Greek migration to Australia. From 1947 to 1972, over 200,000 Greeks made the journey.[81] Greece had been devastated by the war, hunger and poverty were widespread and employment opportunities were severely diminished. Australia, on the other hand, had an abundance of work and the Government was hungry for new migrants. The migration scheme, which began in 1947, was aimed at boosting the Australian economy. The Minister for Immigration at the time, Arthur Calwell, aimed to bring 70,000 new migrants a year into the country. It had been intended that these migrants would be predominantly British, but this did not end up being the case. Instead, the majority of migrants came from southern and eastern Europe.[82] For Greek migrants Australia represented a chance to find work and to build a better life.[83] Upon reaching Australia, however, they were expected to assimilate into local life and to relinquish their identity and personal histories.[84] This of course was an impossible task, and newly arrived Greeks held onto their memories of their home in their post-war lives in Australia. Central for many of these women and men were memories of their wartime experiences.

[80] Beaumont, 'Europe and the Middle East,' 13-14.
[81] Joy Damousi, *Memory and migration in the shadow of war: Australia's Greek immigrants after World War II and the Greek Civil War* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 73.
[82] Macintyre, *Australia's boldest experiment*, 404-06.
[83] Damousi, *Memory and migration in the shadow of war*, 74.
[84] Ibid., 53.

In recognition of Australia's contributions during the war, the Greek-Australian League sent a delegate to Australia in 1946 to present an ancient (2,500 years old) Corinthian urn filled with soil from a cemetery in Greece where Australian soldiers had been buried. The urn had since been on display in the AWM's museum collection. In a letter to Keith Hooper from Adelaide's *Advertiser*, John Treloar advised that the urn had been intended as 'a grand gesture as the gift of the soil of Greece is to them symbolical of the surrender of their country.' He noted further that at the time the gift had not received enough attention, and that upon learning that the Greeks were planning to erect a new memorial to British, Australian and New Zealand soldiers in Athens (and were sending on a miniature replica of this memorial to the AWM) he and his colleagues had arranged for the goodwill ceremony to take place at the AWM to reciprocate their gesture.[85]

Bruce Scates has made a close investigation of this memorial in Athens. Its chief organiser was Dr Nick Theologos, who was head of the Greek-Australian League. According to Scates, little is known about Theologos or his organisation. In a memo to the Prime Minister, External Affairs warned that he was not an official representative of the Greek government, that his methods were 'rather unorthodox' and that he was 'sometimes an embarrassment to the Greek Diplomatic Service.' In light of this advice, Menzies chose not to meet the envoy sent to Australia by Theologos to raise funds for the memorial.[86]

More worrying for Menzies was the fact that Theologos envisioned the Athens memorial as a statue of a sword-bearing Athena, under which would be interred the remains of three unknown soldiers, from Britain, New Zealand and Australia, respectively. The suggestion to inter these remains was rejected outright by the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) which had strict rules about how the remains of Commonwealth soldiers should be dealt

[85] John Treloar, 'Letter to Keith Hooper regarding Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony,' 18 March 1951, NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001.
[86] Scates, *Anzac journeys,* 151.

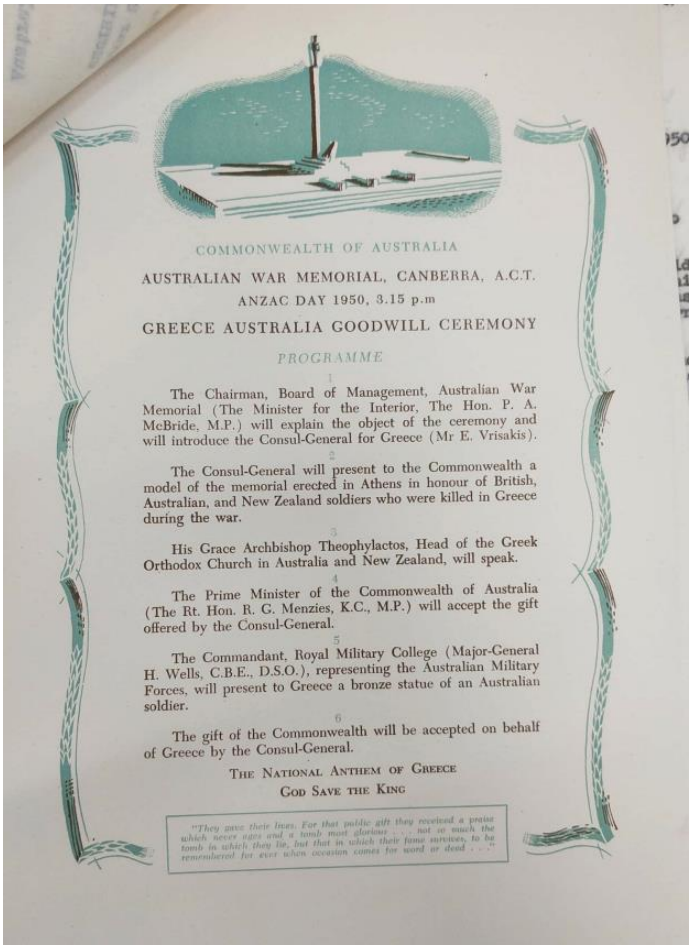
with.[87] In a memo to the Prime Minister's Department the IWGC warned that the proposed memorial could set a dangerous precedent whereby any foreign government might erect their own version of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior and in doing so would cheapen the one in London that was intended to stand for *all* British war dead.[88] Despite these setbacks, Dr Theologos went ahead with his project, which was unveiled on Anzac Day in 1953. Delegations were sent from Britain, Australia and New Zealand, though Scates notes that these were primarily sent to avoid causing offence to the Greek government.[89]

While the government and the IWGC might have been apathetic about the Athens memorial, back home at the AWM plans for the Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony were undertaken with more enthusiasm. The ceremony was headed up by the Minister for the Interior, Phillip McBride, and included several distinguished guests, including Prime Minister Menzies, the Greek Consul-General Emilios Vrisakis, the Commonwealth High Commissioners, the Archbishop of Australia's Greek Orthodox Church, representatives of Greek organisations from around the country, senior members of the federal RSSAILA, and representatives from the Greek and Australian press.[90] The ceremony included an exchange of gifts. The Consul-General presented the Prime Minister with a 'Pentellic marble … triangular monolith surmounted by the goddess Minerva' (the Roman name for Athena). In turn, Major-General Henry Well, who had served in the Greek campaign in 1941, presented the Consul-General with 'a bronze statue of an Australian soldier uniformed and equipped as were the Australians who fought in Greece.'[91]

[87] These rules stipulated that British and Commonwealth soldiers should be buried as closely as possible to where they died and should not be repatriated to their home country. They are explained in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.
[88] Scates, *Anzac Journeys*, 152.
[89] Ibid., 152.
[90] AWM, 'Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony invite list,' [undated], NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001.
[91] AWM, 'Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony proceedings plan,' [undated], NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001

McBride made an introductory speech for the ceremony, calling attention to the bond of friendship that had been formed between Greece and Australia during the war. Here he noted that Australian troops at Gallipoli 'fought on a battlefield where Greek warriors had fought two thousand five hundred years before' and that 'On Anzac Day twenty-six years later sons of the men who had fought at Anzac were fighting in Greece itself, side by side with the Hellenic troops.' He also drew attention to the legacy of that bond in the post-war period, stating that 'the feelings of mutual regard which had their beginnings in those days of crisis and battle have grown with the years. It pleases us that since the war many Greek citizens have come to Australia to make their homes with us.'[92] It is little wonder then that the Greek community responded positively to the event. Recognition of shared history between Greece and Australia at the AWM, one of Australia's most sacred sites, was also a recognition of the connection between the two peoples.

[92] AWM, 'Philip McBride speech transcript,' 25 April 1950, NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, CANBERRA, A.C.T.

ANZAC DAY 1950, 3.15 p.m

GREECE AUSTRALIA GOODWILL CEREMONY

PROGRAMME

1

The Chairman, Board of Management, Australian War Memorial (The Minister for the Interior, The Hon. P. A. McBride, M.P.) will explain the object of the ceremony and will introduce the Consul-General for Greece (Mr E. Vrisakis).

2

The Consul-General will present to the Commonwealth a model of the memorial erected in Athens in honour of British, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers who were killed in Greece during the war.

3

His Grace Archbishop Theophylactos, Head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand, will speak.

4

The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia (The Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, K.C., M.P.) will accept the gift offered by the Consul-General.

5

The Commandant, Royal Military College (Major-General H. Wells, C.B.E., D.S.O.), representing the Australian Military Forces, will present to Greece a bronze statue of an Australian soldier.

6

The gift of the Commonwealth will be accepted on behalf of Greece by the Consul-General.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF GREECE

GOD SAVE THE KING

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

Figure 5-3: Greece Australia Goodwill Ceremony programme, NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001.

In the days following the ceremony, members of Australia's Greek community wrote to express their appreciation. The president of the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW, in a letter to Treloar, expressed his 'sincerest appreciation … for your kind hospitality.'[93] Also writing to Treloar, the Consul-General, Emilios Vrisakis relayed that the ceremony had been an expression of 'the undying friendship … between our people.[94] Similarly, the Archbishop Theophylactos wrote to express his 'sincere appreciation' and advised that 'for years to come

[93] A Castrissos, 'Letter of thanks,' 8 May 1950, NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001.
[94] Emilios Vrisakis, 'Letter of thanks,' 27 April 1950, NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001.

I will remember this splendid demonstration of mutual esteem and love between our people who fought side by side in the war.'[95]

Where other instances of inviting foreign representatives to take part in Anzac Day ceremonies at the AWM had caused organisers significant difficulties, the Greece-Australia Goodwill Ceremony turned out to be relatively uncomplicated. While Dr Theologos' plan to erect an Anzac memorial in Athens had found little support from the Australian government, the corresponding ceremony at the AWM was an opportunity for new members of the Greek community in Australia to receive official recognition within the Anzac canon. It was an event they clearly appreciated. Some decades later, in 1988, a 'Hellenic Memorial' dedicated to the cooperation of Greek and Australian forces during World War Two was built on Anzac Parade, almost directly in front of the AWM.[96]

Anzac Day overseas

Diplomacy on Anzac Day took place not only on Australian soil, but at numerous locations around the world. Prior to the post-war period, this observance had been limited to yearly services in London, at the St Clement Dane church in Westminster.[97] It was attended by Australian, New Zealand and British officials and veterans, and included a wreath laying ceremony along with religious services.[98] Regular services were also held in Paris, at the Arc de Triomphe.[99] These also included foreign guests. In 1935, for example, representatives from Australia, New Zealand, France, and Turkey joined together in laying wreaths at the

[95] Archbishop Theophylactos, 'Letter of thanks,' 28 April 1950, NAA: AWM315, 275/09A/001.
[96] Beaumont, 'The Second War in every respect,' 11.
[97] 'Anzac Day London celebrations,' *National Advocate*, 27 April 1923; 'Anzac Day in London,' *The Telegraph*,' 1 June 1927; 'Anzac Day in London,' *The Evening News*, 13 June 1930; 'Anzac Day, London observance,' *The West Australian,* 27 April 1935.
[98] Who attended the ceremony depended on which political figures were stationed in or were visiting London at the time.
[99] 'A trip to Europe,' *The Gloucester Advocate*, 8 November 1929.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier there.[100] Elsewhere observance was more sporadic. Also in 1935, Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, accompanied by other Australian visitors, attended an Anzac Day ceremony at Belfast's Cenotaph to lay a wreath while on a diplomatic mission to the city.[101] Throughout the 1930s, regular pilgrimages to Gallipoli also took place.[102] These were usually timed so that visitors would spend Anzac Day at Gallipoli, but they also included a tour of other sites from World War One.[103] For the most part, however, these were undertaken by veterans reuniting with old comrades or family members visiting their loved ones' graves and were not tied in with Australian diplomatic affairs.

In the post-war period, however, there was a marked increase in the holding of Anzac Day ceremonies overseas. For the most part these were organised by officials stationed in Australian consulates at different locations around the world. These Anzac Day observances offered a chance for Australians stationed overseas to get together and celebrate the day and for local officials from the host countries to show solidarity with Australia in an official capacity. In some cases, however, Anzac Day observances overseas were seen by diplomatic and military officials as valuable opportunities to remind locals of Australia's ongoing military presence in the region. This was a period in which Australia's overseas diplomatic missions were greatly expanded. Carl Ungerer contends that this expansion resulted from a new focus on middle power diplomacy that had been set in motion by Evatt during his time as head of External Affairs. As demonstrated by his assertiveness at the UN conference in San Francisco and in his work helping to initiate the Anzac Agreement[104] and the South

[100] 'Anzac Day in Paris,' *The Herald*, 10 May 1935; 'Foes no longer,' *The Telegraph*, 14 May 1935.
[101] 'Anzac Day abroad,' *The Mercury*, 27 April 1935.
[102] The first of these actually took place in 1929. See David William Lloyd's *Battlefield tourism: Pilgrimage and the commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 2014) for more on this.
[103] 'Second pilgrimage of Australians,' *The Advertiser*, 17 February 1930; 'Spending Anzac Day on Gallipoli,' *The Herald*, 31 December 1932; 'Pilgrimage to Gallipoli,' *The Age*, 25 April 1934.
[104] The Anzac Agreement was signed between Australia and New Zealand as an expression of cooperation between the two nations. It was established in 1944.

Pacific Commission,[105] Evatt was determined that Australia's economic and national security would rely on the leveraging of soft power diplomacy in its international relationships, rather than depending on its association with the great powers of Britain and the US.[106] In service of this goal, the Chifley government set up diplomatic missions in several new locations around the world in the latter half of the 1940s.

In the post-war period these newly established diplomatic posts began to host Anzac Day ceremonies, in cities as varied as Berlin, Shanghai, Rio di Janeiro, Singapore, New Delhi, Dublin, Athens, Cairo, Accra, Karachi, Jerusalem, Rome, among several others.[107] Representatives of local host governments attending these ceremonies used them as an opportunity to express solidarity with Australia. They also, where appropriate, emphasised their country's shared history with Australia and how that shared history helped to contribute to the ongoing alliance. In many cases these ceremonies called to Australia's association with the host country through the Commonwealth. In Singapore in 1949, for example, the Malayan Commissioner reported that 'over 900 people' attended Anzac Day there. The Singapore Commissioner of Police forwarded a statement with the Commissioner's report that without 'the supreme sacrifice of the British Commonwealth, not least the men of Anzac … we would never have obtained our way of life, and personal liberty might have been lost for a hundred years.'[108] Following the 1950 Anzac Day service in New Delhi the Secretary of the Indian Ex-Services Association sent his 'heartiest greetings,' and wrote that 'the bond of friendship and the ties forged so firmly on field of battle in the last two world wars will be cemented more solidly between the Ex-Servicemen of Australia and the Republic of India as the years

[105] This was similarly a pact of cooperation made between Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It was established in 1947.
[106] Carl Ungerer, 'The "middle power" concept in Australian foreign policy,' *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 53 (2007): 542.
[107] Department of External Affairs, 'Anzac Day reports,' 1947-1960, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[108] Australian High Commission in Malaya, 'Anzac Day,' 15 July 1949, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.

roll on.'[109] The year 1954 saw the first ever Anzac observance in Suva, Fiji. The Governor's deputy addressed the crowd there, noting that it was 'very fitting' that 'Australians and New Zealanders … should assemble here and honour their fallen comrades, and that the men and women of Fiji who have also served their motherland should join with them.'[110]

Anzac Day celebrations also took place in many non-Commonwealth nations. Following the formal reopening of diplomatic relations between Australia and Thailand in 1952, the first Anzac Day was held in Bangkok, in 1955.[111] It was a short ceremony, attended by about 60 Australians and New Zealanders living in the city at the time.[112] This paved the way for some of the first Anzac Day pilgrimages to the Imperial War Graves cemeteries at Kanchanaburi and Chungkai, which began in 1959.[113] These ceremonies were not immune to local political unrest, of course. In 1948, in Shanghai, for instance Anzac observance was restrained. Reporting to External Affairs, the Consul-General there advised that due to 'present unrest and violent anti-foreign feeling … an undenominational out-door religious service was impracticable.' It was further reported by the Consul-General that 'social gatherings of any size held on Sundays by foreigners … provoke disapproval' from local authorities. Instead, a joint St George's Day and Anzac Day service was arranged indoors at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, followed by a modest lunch and dinner party at the Consul-General's hotel lodgings.[114] This was a point of high tension in the Chinese Civil War. Communist forces were making dramatic advances in Manchuria and Northern China, and Shanghai itself would fall just over a year later.[115] It is unsurprising then that local authorities had little patience for ostentatious Anzac Day gatherings.

[109] FB Hall, 'Anzac Day in New Delhi,' 3 May 1950, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[110] 'Background to commemoration of Anzac Day,' *Fiji Times*, 27 April 1954.
[111] 'Thailand country brief,' *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Website*, accessed 5 February 2021.
[112] 'Anzac Day 1955,' 26 April 1955, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[113] EF Aitken, 'Anzac Day 1959,' NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[114] OCW Fuhrman, 'Anzac Day Shanghai,' 28 April 1948, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[115] Suzanne Pepper, 'The KMTY-CCP conflict, 1945-1949,' in *The Cambridge History of China*, eds. John K. Fairbank and Albert Feuerwerker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 773-75.

Anzac Day in New York

In most cases, Anzac Day ceremonies overseas were organised by Australian diplomatic representatives in those regions. However, in New York in 1940, a group of enthusiastic women from New Zealand and Australia initiated their own Anzac Day service that is still being observed to the present day.

The beginnings of New York's Anzac Day tradition came at a time when Australian and American people were being brought closer together, in large part due to the events of the war. Prior to the war most Australians' knowledge of American culture was limited to what they had seen in Hollywood films. Americans knew even less of Australia. Most were unable to locate the country on a map, much less understand the local customs and culture.[116] This changed, however, with the stationing of American troops on Australian soil, which began in 1942. Around one million Americans were stationed in Australia over the course of World War Two, bringing Australians and Americans into close and sustained contact with one another. This provided Americans in the United States with a picture of Australia. Eli and Annette Potts note that the Japanese advance through Malaya resulted in several high-profile American journalists fleeing their posts in Asia and seeking refuge in Australia and that these ended up publishing stories on American troops' experience of their Australian posting and on life in Australia.[117] Many American troops stationed in Australia also ended up forming relationships with Australian women. These relationships were frowned upon by many Australians, with a common refrain in the press being that Australian women were morally and sexually corrupting themselves by associating with American servicemen.[118] Nevertheless, almost 15,000 Australian women ended up marrying an American serviceman

[116] Potts and Potts, *Yanks down under*, 35.
[117] Ibid., 9.
[118] Marilyn Lake, 'The desire for a Yank: Sexual relations between Australian women and American servicemen during World War II,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2 (1992): 623.

and migrating back to the United States with him.[119] The establishment and subsequent popularity of Anzac Day in New York then can be read in the context of this developing understanding between Americans and Australians and the enthusiasm with which the commemorations were received reflected this increasing affinity.

The primary organiser was a woman named Nola Luxford. Originally from Hawke's Bay on the north island of New Zealand, Luxford's journey to New York was a remarkable one. Having eloped to Los Angeles in 1919 with her young husband, a World War One veteran, she became an actress in silent movies and worked steadily over the 1920s, though never finding the break that would lead her to established stardom.[120] After the break-up of her first marriage in 1925, Luxford moved to New York and switched careers to begin work as a radio journalist for the National Broadcasting Corporation.[121] In response to the outbreak of World War Two, she became heavily involved in fundraising in support for the war effort. She also worked tirelessly to support New Zealander and Australian soldiers who were in New York, establishing and running a billeting program along with the newly formed Anzac Club, where they could rest, relax and find accommodation and entertainment. The club's management was mostly run by women, who made up 23 of the 36 people on staff. Of these, the club's senior positions were all filled by women with Luxford at the head.[122]

During this time, Luxford came up with the idea of establishing an Anzac Garden for the purpose of providing 'a commemorative centre in New York in honour of the Anzacs'. First conceived in 1940, it was (and still is) located on the roof of the British Empire Building at Rockefeller Centre.[123] Designed by Luxford in cooperation with the building's

[119] Robyn Arrowsmith, *All the way to the USA: Australian WW2 war brides* (Mittagong: Robyn Arrowsmith, 2013), vii.
[120] Carole Von Grondelle, 'An elegant and intelligent beauty: the Hollywood film career of Nola Luxford,' *The Journal of New Zealand Studies* 5 (1995): 4-7.
[121] Carole Von Grondelle, *Angel of the Anzacs: The life of Nola Luxford* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2000), 113.
[122] Ibid., 157.
[123] Nola Luxford, 'Letter to Australian Consul in New York,' 1 May 1955, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.

horticulturalist, the garden features a central pool, representing the Pacific Ocean, and flower gardens on three sides representing Australia, New Zealand and the United States.[124] Likely due to its view of St Patrick's Cathedral, and its picturesque gardens, the site has also featured in a few Hollywood movies.[125]

Figure 5-4: The Rockefeller Centre rooftop garden in 2015 (taken from CNNTravel.com).

A plaque added to the garden in 1950 reads:

ANZAC GARDEN

A Garden of Friendship

Between Australia, New Zealand

And the United States

[124] Von Grondelle, *Angel of the Anzacs*, 143.
[125] Among them *Spiderman* (2002) and *John Wick 2* (2017).

Dedicated in 1940

To Honor the Fighting Anzacs

Of Two World Wars[126]

In its early years Anzac ceremonies at the garden hosted some influential figures. The 1941 opening was presided over by then New Zealand Prime Minister, Peter Fraser. In 1942 the ceremony was opened by the 'Consuls of the United Nations' and in 1943 by the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.[127] Roosevelt and Luxford had met a year earlier, when Luxford interviewed her for an article published in *Free Lance* magazine.[128] In her address, Roosevelt emphasised the importance of the relationship between Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and American 'boys' and noted her 'hope' that these young men would 'impress on their elders the necessity to build for peace' once the war was over.[129] In response, Evatt who was then in America for the UN Conference, expressed his hope that 'Mrs Roosevelt will visit the Pacific democracies in the near future.'[130] It was a suggestion that may well have influenced Roosevelt, who visited both New Zealand and Australia on a diplomatic mission later that year.[131]

[126] Nola Luxford, 'Letter to Australian Consul in New York,' 1 May 1955, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[127] Nola Luxford, 'Letter to American RAAF Headquarters,' 16 May 1944, NAA: A1695, 17/7/AIR.
[128] Von Grondelle, *Angel of the Anzacs*, 165.
[129] 'Confidence in Dominions,' *The Age*, 12 June 1943.
[130] Ibid.
[131] 'Mrs Roosevelt on way to Australia,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 August 1943.

Figure 5-5: Nola Luxford at the Anzac Garden with Eleanor Roosevelt in 1943. AWM collection, 042504.

In 1955, Luxford wrote to the Australian consular office in New York suggesting that the 'Consulates of Australia and New Zealand, from here on, carry on the Anzac Garden ceremonies – if that is possible and permissible.' Given that she and her committee might not always be around, she advised, the ceremony 'could eventually be lost.'[132] Her suggestion was eventually agreed to by the Department of External Affairs, in November, along with the New Zealand Government Office, and from that point onwards the Anzac Day ceremony has been handled by the relevant consulate authorities in New York.[133] The rooftop Anzac ceremony is still held every year and it continues to be booked to capacity.[134]

The story of Luxford and the creation of the Anzac Garden is an example of how international observances of Anzac Day were also created at the grassroots level before they eventually became official events. Luxford and her companions had taken on the broader

[132] Nola Luxford, 'Letter to Australian Consul in New York,' 1 May 1955, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[133] Consul-General Stewart Jameson, 'Anzac Day New York,' 2 November 1955, NAA: A1838, 562/1 PART 1.
[134] 'Full capacity for New York Anzac service,' *Stuff*, 12 April 2012.

optimism for the post-war relationship between New Zealand, Australia and the United States, and channelled that enthusiasm into creating the Anzac Day ceremony in New York.

Anzac Day in Borneo

Not all Anzac Day observances overseas were held for the benefit of Australians living overseas or facilitating expressions of solidarity between Australia and the host nation. In British North Borneo, in 1957, Anzac Day was held with the express purpose of reminding locals of their wartime debt to Australia, and of Australia's continuing military presence in their region. That British authorities were anxious to remind locals of the 'debt' owed to the Commonwealth is not surprising. This was a period of rapid decolonisation in the region. Indonesia had recently gained independence after the defeat of Japan and the subsequent purging of the remaining Dutch colonial administration in the immediate post-war period.[135] By the late 1950s Indonesia's president Sukarno was cultivating friendly relations with the Communist People's Republic of China and his condemnation of British colonial rule in Malaysia (which included North Borneo) was well known.[136] This was also a period in which the Australian government was being careful not to upset its Indonesian neighbour. At that time Indonesia was in dispute with the Dutch government over the territory of West New Guinea. While the Australian government supported the Dutch position, it was unwilling to take a strong stand on the matter, preferring to remain on friendly terms with Sukarno.[137]

In December 1957, Australia's High Commissioner in Singapore, David McNicol, contacted External Affairs to suggest that an Anzac Day 'official visit' be organised to the British War Cemetery in Labuan by an Australian military contingent.[138] This visit, he advised, would be

[135] Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, *Modern Indonesia: A history since 1945* (Harlow: Longman Publishing Group, 1995), 15-8.
[136] Geoff Simmons, *Indonesia: The long* oppression (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 155-6.
[137] Watt, *The evolution of Australian foreign policy*, 253.
[138] The construction of this cemetery is covered in Chapter Four, which examines the work of the Anzac Agency.

appropriate given 'the history of our POWs in North Borneo' and 'their destruction in the last months of the war on the march to Sandakan.'[139] External Affairs approved the suggestion in February, commenting that if an Australian military detachment were to visit North Borneo, it would be 'desirable for the visit to be associated with some ceremonial occasion … this would provide an obvious public explanation' and that otherwise there might be 'press and other speculation that the visit had military or political significance … which should obviously be avoided.'[140] Yet the sending of a detachment to Labuan was expressly a military and political exercise. In a follow up communication, a memo from the Army's Chief of General Staff advised the Department of Defence that that the Anzac Day trip should be 'associated with a training exercise by the … RAAF.'[141] Similarly, in a communication sent to External Affairs from McNicol the following year, considering whether the Anzac Day trip should be annualised, he advised that 'I regard such visits as an effective means of demonstrating Australia's interest in North Borneo, and in particular of reminding the indigenous people of their liberation by the 9th Division.'[142] In this instance then, observance of Anzac Day overseas was about more than strengthening diplomatic ties, or providing a space for Australian nationals overseas to get together and celebrate, it was about reminding the local population of Australia's military strength, and the debt that population owed to Australia's actions during the war.

Anzac Day in Japan

Anzac Day was also held in Japan in the post-war period, as part of the operations of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF). A substantial proportion of the BCOF was made up of Australian troops (11,500 or the contingent of 40,000). Their work was

[139] AM Borthwick, 'Anzac Day in North Borneo,' 11 December 1957, NAA: A6059, 69/441/50.
[140] HM Loveday, 'Anzac Day in North Borneo,' 26 February 1958, NAA: A6059, 69/441/50.
[141] B White, 'Anzac Day North Borneo,' 12 November 1958, NAA: A6059, 69/441/50.
[142] DW McNicol, 'Anzac Day in North Borneo,' 12 February 1960, NAA: A6059, 69/441/50.

primarily focused on demilitarisation, disposing of Japanese armaments and instillations.[143] Over the course of their tenure in Japan, the Australian portion of the BCOF were the subject of significant criticism in the Australian press. For the most part this coverage focused on the alleged immoral conduct of Australian troops. In particular, the reportedly high rates of venereal disease among the men.[144] In 1947, the Australian contingent of the BCOF also came under heavy criticism for their observance of Anzac Day in Tokyo, with veterans' associations and the press accusing organisers of limiting the ceremony to avoid upsetting the Japanese elections being held at the same time.

The first Anzac Day held in Japan took place in 1946, in Kure, in the Hiroshima Prefecture, where the BCOF was based. It was a successful event with all the national contingents of the BCOF taking part, though proceedings were marred somewhat by rain and a Japanese ammunition dump unexpectedly exploding during its course.[145] In 1947, however, controversy arose when an Anzac Day parade was organised in Tokyo, falling on the same day as the Japanese general election. In early April it was reported widely in the press that Anzac Day would be substantially restricted by the BCOF to avoid offending local Japanese people and to limit interference with the general election. Sydney's *The Sun* advised readers that troops in Tokyo had been ordered that 'the BCOF area bans any public ceremonial, mass assembly, march past … or other demonstration which may offend or distress the Japanese.'[146] Only a day later, Adelaide's *The Advertiser* reported that BCOF leaders feared that Anzac Day celebrations 'might be construed by the touchy Japanese as a show of force calculated to influence the voting.'[147]

[143] Prue Torney, 'Renegades to their country:' The Australian press and the Allied occupation of Japan, 1946-1950,' *War & Society* 25 (2006): 90.
[144] Ibid.
[145] 'First Anzac Day in Japan,' *The Age*, 27 April 1946.
[146] 'Stir in Japan at Anzac ban,' *The Sun*, 9 April 1947.
[147] 'Tokio ban on Anzac Day,' *The Advertiser*, 10 April 1947.

In response to these early reports, the Federal Branch of the RSSAILA contacted Prime Minister Chifley, politely requesting that his permission 'be granted to Australian personnel in BCOF areas to conduct Anzac Day Marches.'[148] Many of these reports suggested that the alleged ban had resulted from pressure by the American Army stationed in Japan. General MacArthur vehemently denied these accusations, releasing a statement that 'Americans would just as soon think of putting off the Japanese elections' if it meant compromising relations with Australia by cancelling the Anzac Day parade.'[149]

The real problem was that the Anzac Day parade was intended to be held on Imperial Palace Plaza and so would conflict with anticipated election demonstrations on the day.[150] Agnieszka Sobocinska has asserted that Australia's military leadership saw Australia's role in the BCOF as a chance to build the prestige of both Australia and the British Commonwealth in Asia after the humiliations of the Pacific War and that BCOF troops were reminded of this when arriving in Japan. There was also a conscious effort on the part of the Australian contingent of the BCOF to be as visible as possible to the Japanese public through the holding of parades and ceremonies in which the Australian flag was displayed as often as possible.[151] Taking these observations into consideration, it is unsurprising that Australian authorities responded so strongly to suggestions that Anzac Day would be curtailed in Japan. Just over a week prior to Anzac Day that year, the Minister for the Army, Cyril Chambers, released a statement advising that elections would 'not be allowed to prevent the observance of Anzac Day on the Plaza' and that arrangements for the parade were 'already in progress.'[152] Regardless, the next week saw a number of conflicting reports in the Australian press, and it was not until 23 April that official confirmation was handed down that the

[148] RSL Federal Branch, 'Anzac Day in Japan,' 10 April 1947, NAA: A461, A317/1/2 PART 5.
[149] 'BCOF resent ban on Anzac Day,' *The Canberra Times,* 11 April 1947.
[150] 'Anzac Day parade in Tokyo to be held on Palace Plaza,' *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate,* 14 April 1947.
[151] Sobocinska, *Visiting the neighbours,* 72-3.
[152] 'Australians to hold Anzac Day service,' *The Canberra Times,* 14 April 1947.

parade would go ahead.[153] The controversy, however, was far from over. On 26 April, it was reported that the parade had not taken place on the Palace Plaza, but instead had been carried out 'in a driveway outside the palace … completely screened by trees' from onlookers. It was further reported that 'none of Tokio's corps of foreign correspondents, comprising over 50 British, Australian, Americans, French, Chinese and Russians, was officially invited.'[154]

Less than a week after the Tokyo ceremony, a representative of the BCOF wrote to the Australian Army headquarters in Melbourne, refuting the press' claims. The letter argued that the press reporting was 'a deliberate mis-statement of facts' and that the 'parade … was ordered for the plaza and took place there' and that it 'included political representatives of British countries, the heads of military missions of Russia, Holland and Belgium and senior generals of the United States forces in Tokio.' Anzac Day in Tokyo, it was asserted, had satisfied the BCOF's policy of enhancing 'prestige and influence in the eyes of the Japanese and our Allies.'[155] While this telegram received a small amount of attention in the Australian press, it was in no way comparable to the wave of criticism that had accompanied earlier reports of a curtailed Anzac Day. The message was clear: Australia's most important national ceremony had been downplayed in the Japanese capital to appease locals and organisers had attempted to cover it up.

Conclusion

The practice of Anzac diplomacy developed in the post-war period is still going on today. Officials and heads of state still use Anzac Day as an opportunity to highlight the historical links between Australia and its international partners. Just recently, for example, at the Port

[153] 'Anzac Day march in Tokio,' *The Sun*, 23 April 1947.
[154] 'Parade near palace,' *The Age*, 26 April 1947.
[155] Air Vice-Marshall Bladin, 'Telegram to Australian Army Headquarters,' 30 April 1947; NAA: A5954, 1883/3.

Moresby Anzac Day ceremony in 2019 Australian and Papuan New Guinean representatives emphasised the connection between the two nations and characterised this relationship as having been tempered through their shared wartime history. Speaking about the relationship between local carriers and Australian soldiers, army chief Rick Burr reflected that 'Australia and Papua New Guinea are forever connected through the service and sacrifice of these soldiers and civilians on battlefields … such a bond cannot be broken.' Similar sentiments were expressed in response by Papua New Guinea's defence force chief, Gilbert Toropo. Toropo, however, more openly referred to the enduring political and economic benefits of the partnership. In doing so, he stated that Australia and Papua New Guinea's shared experience of World War Two 'helped shape our enduring regional partnership today' and that 'this is a history which reflects a deep and enduring commitment greatly valued by those of us of the region … whether both nations are working in response to disasters in our region or alongside us in regional security challenges.'[156] This moment well encapsulates how the Anzac legend continues to play a significant role in the forging and maintenance of diplomatic relations.

It is a process that was in many ways refined in the post-war period. At home, Charles Bean's Anzac Day Requiem sought to broaden Anzac's symbolism, giving it a more international flavour. It was a turn that reflected his changing views on the meaning of Anzac that were in line with his developing enthusiasm for internationalism. The AWM also played host to Canberra's growing diplomatic community, inviting them to take part in the nation's most sacred of ceremonies. Through this ceremony, organisers worked to express Australia's changing relationship to the rest of the world in the context of the early stages of the Cold War. The AWM was also a space where the Greek community, many of whom had recently migrated to Australia, were symbolically incorporated into the broader Australian community through participation in an Anzac ritual.

[156] 'Unbreakable bonds with PNG remembered,' *Defence News*, 26 April 2019.

During this period there was also a significant increase in observance of Anzac Day overseas. This coincided with an expansion of Australia's diplomatic missions around the world. These overseas Anzac Days were an opportunity for expressions of goodwill between Australia and other nations. They were not only organised by officials, but also, as in the example of Nola Luxford's Anzac Garden, by enthusiastic civilians driven by a fervour for connection between the Anzac nations and the rest of the world. However, these ceremonies were not always positive undertakings. In Borneo, Australian officials staged Anzac Day ceremonies as an effective reminder that locals owed their sovereignty to the Australian troops that had liberated them. Likewise, in Japan Anzac Day organisers were accused by veterans' associations and the press of limiting the Anzac legend's glory, to avoid offending their Japanese host.

Whether at the AWM or overseas at consular postings, the Anzac legend had become a site where Australia's international relationships could be embodied and performed. By incorporating these relationships into Anzac rituals, organisers of these events were able to emphasise these connections and figure them as more than just bonds formed for political expediency, but rather, as bonds formed through historical and cultural circumstances. For the most part this suited Anzac Day organisers. Responses from the press and from veterans' associations, however, were often critical of the use of Anzac Day in diplomatic exchanges, taking umbrage at the idea that diplomacy with former enemy nations could influence how Anzac Day rituals were carried out. These responses demonstrate the difficulty that can arise in acts of memorial diplomacy, wherein the public's expectations around remembrance are at odds with the exigencies of international relations.

The use of Anzac Day as a tool of diplomacy represented a break from earlier forms of observance. Prior to World War Two, Anzac Day had played a limited role in Australia's diplomatic relationships. It was in the post-war period, however, that this practice was greatly

expanded, and this expansion reflected a growth in Australia's diplomatic work both at home and overseas. This expansion of Anzac diplomacy also represented a break from domestic observance of the day, which up until that point had been largely focused inwards as a commemoration of Australian wartime sacrifice and a celebration of Australian national identity. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Bean's Anzac Day Requiem, which attempted to expand the Anzac Legend as a story of Australia's integration into and cooperation with the wider world. That surviving incarnations of the requiem have been shorn of this internationalist element demonstrates the disconnection between domestic sentiment for Anzac Day and the uses to which figures like Bean and others sought to apply it for the purposes of diplomacy.

Conclusion

In September 2021, as I was coming to the end of writing this thesis, hundreds of protestors gathered at Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne's most prominent war memorial site. They had assembled there to express their anger at the Victorian government's COVID-19 lockdown measures and accompanying vaccine mandate. Protestors held aloft Australian flags, sang the national anthem, and chanted 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie' as a ring of police watched on.[1] Their actions were widely rejected by the media, by politicians, and by veterans and the RSL, who uniformly condemned the protestors' decision to align their cause with Australian war memory. Speaking to SBS News, the national president of the RSL, Greg Melick, described the demonstrators as 'a disgrace to the nation' and called their choice to protest at the Shrine a 'desecration of this site.'[2] The demonstration was yet another chapter in the ever-evolving story of ideological groups attaching their identities and their beliefs to war remembrance in Australia. In this instance, the protestors were laying claim to the Anzac legend as a way of legitimising their anti-lockdown, anti-vaccine stance. They were drawing a tenuous link between their self-declared fight for liberty and the established traditions of Australian war remembrance. The protest represented a new turn in the ongoing history of the Anzac legend's political invocation, in this case in the service of an emerging populist movement fuelled by conspiracy theories. On a broader level, however, the moment demonstrated how the legend continues to be a vital site for understanding how Australians articulate their identity through the conduit of war remembrance. Indeed, by examining the discourse around war remembrance at any point since the Gallipoli landing, we can better

[1] 'As it happened: Police disperse protesters at Shrine of Remembrance; Daniel Andrews condemns demonstrations,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September 2021.
[2] "Disgrace to the nation": Veterans slam protesters at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance,' *SBS News*, 22 September 2021.

understand this process, and inversely, how these conversations have continued to shape war remembrance in Australia.

Ever since the first reports of the Gallipoli landing reached Australian shores in 1915, Australians have consistently re-examined their identities and their relationships to one another through remembrance of war and the Anzac legend. These re-examinations are almost always centred on memorial sites or commemorative events, arising in times of change and challenge in the Australian community, and taking the form of discussions about the meaning of the Anzac legend and its continuing relevance to life in Australia. In these conversations, different groups in Australia insist that their principles, their way of life and their identities have been shaped by the example set by the young soldiers who fought at Gallipoli. Associating their contemporary identities with the Anzac legend in this way has a legitimising effect, as the legend is seen by many as being at the core of what it means to be Australian.

This thesis has investigated Australians' re-examination and reframing of commemoration and memorialisation in the post-World War Two period. It explored this process from 1945 to 1960, taking the form of five distinct case studies which uncover some of the different ways that Australians sought to understand their experience of World War Two in its immediate aftermath and how that experience fit alongside the pre-established practice of Anzac remembrance. Each of these case studies has drawn on a range of hitherto unexamined sources, primarily drawn from the National Archives of Australia and the Australian War Memorial and largely comprised of planning documents, reports, and meeting minutes. These documents have provided a unique insight into the debates and decision-making processes that underpinned the efforts of government, military, and veterans to enact remembrance projects centred on the Australian experience of World War Two in the post-war period. I have also drawn upon a range of sources from the Australian press through the National

Library of Australia's online newspaper archive, Trove. These have been especially valuable for gauging public responses to these remembrance projects.

Building upon literatures of memory, national identity, and the Anzac legend, I have argued that remembrance of World War Two in the post-war period redefined Australians' relationship to commemoration, memorialisation, and the Anzac legend. War remembrance in the period invested these traditions with new meanings that reflected the changing circumstances of Australia and Australians at this time. Where memorialisation and commemoration had previously been almost exclusively focused on the sacrifices of World War One and the emergence of the Australian nation, they now also came to symbolise new developments in Australia: the growth of communities, the integration of new veterans into these communities, and Australia's changing relationship to the rest of the world. I explored how changing interpretations of commemoration and memorialisation were expressed and given shape through a series of debates over who could be said to hold ownership and exert control over war remembrance. I also examined how these changing interpretations were expressed through the creation of new practices and programs, particularly in the sphere of Australian diplomacy, which recruited the rhetoric and symbolism of war remembrance in the work of identity building projects both at home and overseas.

In Chapter One I presented a case study of the Australian Battlefields Memorials Commission and their efforts to build a series of four state-funded memorials at sites deemed key to the Australian experience of World War Two. The chapter also examined the response to these proposals, and how they reflected a wave of enthusiasm for utilitarian memorials in the period. The chapter demonstrated that the government's push to consolidate memorials into four key sites had failed in the face of growing disinterest in traditional memorial forms that had proven so popular in the wake of World War One. Instead, people looked to new utilitarian memorials that reflected the widespread enthusiasm for community building and

modernisation that had taken hold in the period. On a broader level the chapter highlighted Australians' inclination in the period to express new and changing ideas about their society and what was important to them through the medium of memorialisation.

It was not only the public that contested ownership over war remembrance in this period, but also the thousands of veterans who had recently returned from World War Two. In this context, Chapter Two examined the experiences of veterans of the siege of Tobruk in the post-war period, the formation of the Rats of Tobruk Association, and their efforts to memorialise their experience alongside the Anzac legend. The chapter argued that the Rats saw their experience at Tobruk as being something that should be acknowledged as complimenting and continuing the Anzac legacy. Their insistence on this point was also a broader claim to ownership over the war's remembrance and their place within that system of remembrance. That they were unable to cement their place in that system of remembrance was in large part due to a belief on the part of the government and RSSAILA that Tobruk's memory would come in competition with remembrance of Gallipoli.

Beyond the Rats' efforts to better enshrine the memory of their campaign, much of the veteran community remained at odds over how the Anzac legend should be observed in Australia. Chapter Three focused on this tension, examining the debate that took place in the post-war period over whether Anzac Day should be restricted to observance as a day of mourning, or whether it should also include celebratory elements. Much of this debate focused on the public consumption of alcohol and tied into bigger conversations taking place at the time around drinking in Australia. The chapter argued that while this was ostensibly a debate around how Anzac Day should be observed, it was also a debate over whether veterans of World War One or veterans of all Australian involvements in war could claim ownership over the Anzac legend.

The second part of the thesis, comprising Chapters Four and Five, examined war remembrance and Australia's increased international visibility. In this vein, Chapter Four examined the work of the Anzac Agency, which established cemeteries and memorials in the Pacific region as a subsidiary organisation of the Imperial War Graves Commission. Its goals were to build cemeteries that would live up to the principles established by the IWGC, and to make these sites accessible for future pilgrims. The chapter argued that the Anzac Agency had to manage three oftentimes competing goals in carrying out its mission; building sites that would adequately symbolise the Commonwealth, ensuring that these sites would also function as places of Australian remembrance of war, and weighing these obligations against the wishes of the United States and Japan around management and burial of their own war dead.

The 1940s and 1950s was also a period in which Anzac Day was increasingly used as a platform for the carrying out of Australia's international diplomacy. In Chapter Five I examined the relationship between Australia's expanding diplomacy in the post-war period and the holding of Anzac Day ceremonies at home and overseas. I explored how the process of Anzac Day diplomacy was refined at this time, setting a template for how Australia's international partners would be included in Anzac Day ceremonies well into the future. In doing so, I argued that Anzac Day provided a useful site for the embodiment and performance of Australia's international relationships. It was a conduit through which Anzac Day organisers were able to emphasise Australia's connection to its diplomatic allies by appealing to a sense of shared history through war remembrance.

The notion that the post-war period was one of waning enthusiasm for war remembrance and the Anzac legend is in many ways true. As we have seen there was an increasing perception among many Australians that Anzac Day had been reduced to a boozy reunion for returned men, and this perception was strengthened by the vehement claims to ownership and control

exercised by the RSSAILA. This was also a period in which Australians were increasingly focused on their futures. They had put two world wars behind them and rather than lamenting on the sacrifices of war, they sought to build their communities, to grow the economy and to integrate a rapidly expanding population. Finally, by the end of the 1950s, in light of the emerging conflict in Vietnam and the rise of the anti-war movement, Anzac Day had begun to feel outdated and distasteful to many Australians. And yet, despite this dwindling interest, this was still a time of intense debate and discussion around the Anzac legend and its relevancy to contemporary Australian life. As this thesis has demonstrated, Australians in many instances still sought to make sense of their changing world by examining these changes through the lens of commemoration and memorialisation.

In the decades that followed the post-war period, in the 1960s and 1970s, many people believed that interest in war remembrance and the Anzac legend might die out altogether. However, a resurgence of interest in the 1990s that continued through the 2000s demonstrates its resilience as a story about national beginnings and the values that draw Australians together. Since the fervour that accompanied the Anzac Day centenary in 2015, Australia has arguably entered another period of lowering interest in the Anzac legend and commemoration and memorialisation. A recent article by Roman Fathi has demonstrated that attendances at Anzac Day services since 2015 have been in steady decline, despite the government's continued investment in the Australian War Memorial and Anzac Day. Fathi suggests a number of possible reasons for this decline, positing that Anzac Day organisers may be failing to engage younger Australians who are passionate about other issues such as Indigenous sovereignty, climate change, women's rights, and the Black Lives Matter movement.[3] Whether this trend continues is yet to be seen. But even with recent downtrend in Anzac Day observance, the legend continues to be one of the most important sites for

[3] 'Crowds at dawn services have plummeted in recent years. It's time to reinvent Anzac Day,' *The Conversation*, 21 April 2021.

understanding how Australians define themselves. By examining peoples' responses to war remembrance, and the way they filter their contemporary interpretations of Australian society through its rituals and memorial sites, we can continue to better understand the changing nature of Australian identity.

Memorials and commemorations are as significant to the negotiation of Australian identity now as they were in the post-war period. In the years from 1945 to 1960, the form and function of memorialisation, commemoration, and the Anzac legend were all deeply influenced by the changing shape of Australian society. The findings in this thesis emphasise the importance of continuing to maintain a critical gaze on the role of memorialisation and commemoration in Australia. By doing so we reach greater understandings of how and why Australian society has changed over the course of its history, but also, how Australians have imagined their identities and their place in the world around them.

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