

In conjunction with

# *This company of brave men* THE GALLIPOLI VCS

**South Australians and World War One**  
**Treasures Wall exhibition 25 June to 8 August 2010**

## Tin of hope



The Ashenden family of Bridgewater used a boot polish tin to store telegrams concerning their four sons serving in World War One. The lid has a label which reads, 'War Time'. One of many community donations of wartime memorabilia to the State Library for safekeeping. PRG 1457-5

## On the ground

Every original letter or image from Gallipoli reflects a unique experience. A hand-drawn postcard of Suvla Bay was made by a medical orderly with materials he had in his medical kit. A letter by Dr Alexander Meikle of the Field Ambulance says 'the first ten days at Gallipoli were perfect hell'.

## In the air



Flying ace Ross Smith, later Captain Sir Ross Smith, wrote to his mother from the Middle East about his experiences in 1917. Ross Smith provided air transport for TE Lawrence, 'Lawrence of Arabia' in 1918. PRG 18-4-18

## At sea

A Commonwealth Navy board game features warships such as HMAS Sydney and Warrego. The SS Borda was requisitioned from the P&O line as His Majesty's Australian Transport between 1914 and 1917. A shipboard diary, menu and newsletter glimpses the life of the troops on board.

## A mother's son



Private Alf Duncan sent to his beloved mother in Adelaide postcards embroidered by women of the French villages where the soldiers were billeted. Alf was wounded in action at Dernancourt and later died of his wounds. His mother received a telegram reporting him missing, a letter from the Australian Red Cross with details of his wounding as witnessed by another soldier and a condolence letter from Premier Peake. As part of the efforts to rebuild France, the devastated French village of Dernancourt was adopted by Adelaide and money was raised to rebuild the school, now known as the 'Adelaide School'. PRG 544-10

## Books for prisoners of war

South Australians overseas contributed to the war effort. Miss Kilmeny Symon was in charge of The Camps Library in London, providing reading for prisoners of war mainly in Germany. Requests arrived for books that were 'helpful and amusing' or on specific topics such as pig breeding.

## Trench art

Philip Walter Groves was wounded in action in Boulogne, France, in May 1917 and died soon after from his wounds. Groves' comrades made this piece of 'trench art' to commemorate him. 'In loving memory of Pte P. W. Groves. 10th Btn, A.I.F. Died of Wounds 18.5.17' is etched on a rolled out brass shell casing. His uniform insignia and two olive branch lapel pins are attached.

## A soldier's effects

Discharge certificates, pay books, ration books and a tiny diary are part of a soldier's effects. *Aussie the Australian soldiers' magazine* was written, illustrated and printed in the field by members of the A.I.F. in France between 1914 and 1918. Its droll advertisements reflect the good humour and camaraderie of the A.I.F.

## Trench comforts



Students from Uleybury School north of One Tree Hill in 1916 were among the community which mobilised to knit socks and make other 'comforts' for the troops, resulting in Australian troops suffering the least from 'trench foot' conditions. The Exhibition Sewing Circle and its long time Honorary Organiser Miss Racey Beaver, also organised veils to fit on horses' bridles to keep the flies out of their eyes in the desert. B35688

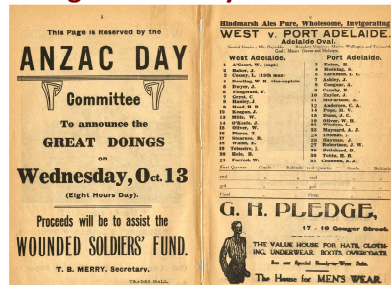
## Cheering up the troops

The 75 branches of the uniquely South Australian Cheer Up Society provided entertainment and free meals to servicemen, notably at the Cheer Up Hut. Lottie Michell's World War One badges show the causes these badges supported.

## Music to raise the spirits

Concert going and music making helped to keep up the community's spirits. Hooper Brewster-Jones wrote *Song of the Australian flying corps* with words by some of the boys.

## Going to the footy



This is one of the last SA Footy Budgets produced in 1915, when the League was suspended until 1919. A match in 1918 on Jubilee Oval between young women, wearing dresses, raised funds 'to provide comforts for the ANZACs'.

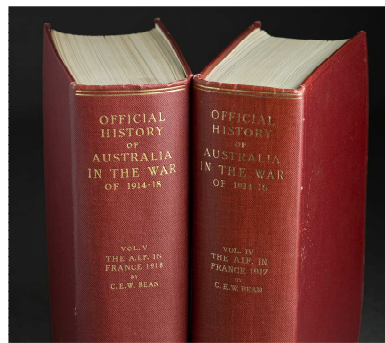
## Torrens Island internees

German people living in South Australia experienced the backlash of the war. More than sixty German place names were officially changed, while in the community Berliner Pfannkuchen became Kitchener Buns and Fritz became Austral. The *War Precautions Act* saw 355 Germans interned on Torrens Island in the Port River. They organised cultural events, and made handmade postcards and newsletters.

## Creative responses

H. Septimus Power was an official war artist in 1917 and is considered Australia's finest painter of horses. *The ANZAC book* is a record of the Gallipoli experience in the field. *In Flanders fields* has become a classic war poem. The German novel *All quiet on the western front* was first published in 1929 and has also become a classic anti-war film.

## Writing the official history



Charles Bean was a rural journalist when he was appointed Australia's official war correspondent, landing with the troops in Egypt, Gallipoli, and the Western Front. He also wrote six of the 12 volumes of *The official history of Australia in the war of 1914-1918*. His vivid descriptions helped create the ANZAC legend. The books, with their covers 'the colour of dried blood', can be read online at [www.awm.gov.au/histories](http://www.awm.gov.au/histories)

## Telling the stories

Regimental histories such as *The blue and brown diamond* and books such as *Ngarrindjeri ANZACs* tell the absorbing stories of the South Australians serving in World War One. Frances de la Motte's oral history tells her story of wartime nursing.

## Violet Day



Alexandra Seager started Violet Day on 2 July 1915. She saw the fragrance of the sweet and modest violet as an emblem of remembrance of ANZAC Day. Mrs Seager organised members of her Cheer-Up societies to sell lapel flowers and badges as fundraisers. Violet Day remembrance events were held in South Australia as recently as 1969. PRG 903-1

## Soldiers on the move

Every organisation in the community played its part in easing the circumstances of the soldiers. The South Australian Railways provided free transport. The *SAR weekly notices* give an insight into another era with rates for carriage of dripping, and instructions that 'trick ponies are not to be dealt with as small animals at parcels rate plus 50 per cent when carried by passenger trains, but at livestock rates'.

## News of the war



An amazing photograph in *The Illustrated London news* of 30 October 1915 shows the dugouts of the working ambulance dogs of the French Army, which helped retrieve wounded soldiers in the battlefields. The State Library has a complete set of this originally weekly magazine from 1842 to 2003.

*The Advertiser* of 12 September 1916 on page 8 has a story on South Australia's first Victoria Cross winner, Captain Arthur Blackburn. Research into news 1858 to 1919 has been made easier by the National Library of Australia's newspaper digitisation program allowing keyword searching at <http://newspapers.nla.gov.au>

## The returned soldier

*The returned soldier* magazine, 'written for soldiers by soldiers' was published by the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League, SA Branch from 1918 to 1932 and is a mix of articles, advertisements, poems, letters, news of old coppers, sport, the 'how to help' column and 'the woman's page'. From 1990 the League became known as The Returned and Services League of Australia.