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AUSTRALIA'S COMMUNITIES AND THE BOER WAR

John McQuilton

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Abbreviations

Newspapers

AO	Alpine Observer
B&BA	Bogong and Benambra Advertiser
BMM	Border Morning Mail and Riverina Times
C&HT	Chiltern and Howlong Times and Ovens Register
CC	Corryong Courier
FS	Federal Standard
MI	Murray Independent
O&MA	Ovens and Murray Advertiser
RS	Rutherglen Sun and Chiltern Valley Advertiser
UM&MH	Upper Murray and Mitta Herald
WC	Wangaratta Chronicle
W&TS	Wodonga and Towong Sentinel
YT	Yackandandah Times

Other

AMA	Amalgamated Miners' Association
ANA	Australian Natives Association
AWM	Australian War Memorial
ION	Inspector of Nuisances
NAA	National Archives of Australia
PROV	Public Record Office of Victoria
VMR	Victorian Mounted Rifles

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: "Dot" Briggs

Abstract In October 1901 in the village of Cudgewa, Rev. Campbell Lahore conducted an in memoriam service for Walter Briggs who was killed in the Boer War. Lahore praised Briggs for his sacrifice for empire, and he savaged the men in the Fifth Victorian Mounted Rifles (VMR) for their apparent cowardice at Wilmansrust. This was of some interest to those attending the service because the Fifth VMR had accounted for the largest intake of regional volunteers for the war.

In Cudgewa, in the Upper Murray valley, a small obelisk stands in an empty paddock. It is dedicated to Corporal Walter Briggs, who, at the age of 30, had died "fighting for his country" in South Africa. When built, it stood in the school reserve and in the centre of the village. The site had been chosen to remind future generations of what sacrifice in war should mean.

Walter Briggs was a big man, over six feet in height, hence his nickname "Dot". In February 1900, he had driven his brother, and other successful volunteers for the Fourth Victorian Contingent, from Cudgewa to the Tallangatta railway station in his "express wagon" after a farewell attended by over 200 people. In late 1900, he volunteered for the Fifth Victorian Mounted Rifles (VMR) with his mate, Robert Carlisle, from Granya.[1] Carlisle was accepted, but Dot was rejected because he was overweight. He paid his own passage to South Africa and enlisted in the South African

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Constabulary, one of the imperial units set up in the subcontinent to fight the war. He was killed at Heidelberg in Cape Province on 30 August 1901.

The local paper reported that a "pall of gloom" had descended on Cudgewa with the news of his death.[2] He was the youngest in the family and a "general favourite". The district's Presbyterian minister, Rev. Campbell Lahore, conducted a memorial service in October before a packed congregation. The pulpit was draped in black and partly covered by the Union Jack. Lahore claimed it was noble to love one's country and those without such affection suffered a "serious defect". Cudgewa was not alone in its loss, he said: there were vacant chairs in homes across an empire that mourned for "those brave soldier lads who will never return". Briggs, he told the gathering, had been an exemplar of what it meant to be a British soldier and had died "one of the noblest, most glorious deaths a man can die". He then turned to a matter that was of some interest in the region: whether the men in the Fifth VMR had been cowards when they fled before, or surrendered to, the enemy at Wilmansrust in June. The Fifth's defeat was a "painful and humiliating shock", Lahore claimed. Its men had violated the best traditions of the British Army and had tarnished the recognition that Australian soldiers had garnered during the war.[3] For the district, Lahore's attack on the Fifth meant Robert Carlisle. For the region, it meant the reputation of its largest single intake of volunteers for the war.

The school has gone, as has the memory of Briggs, his sacrifice and his war. Even less is remembered of the reasons behind Lahore's savaging of the Fifth.

Dot's war was the Boer War. Laurie Field described it as the "forgotten war",[4] and the study of the social history of war in Australia bears out the claim. In current historiography, there are only occasional reminders of that war—dissent at home, "Breaker" Morant and monuments that draw little recognition. It has, as Craig Wilcox argued in his masterful analysis of the conflict in South Africa, been "has been lost to sight"[5] in histories of Australia. The celebration of the centenary of federation in 2001 made the point rather neatly. Although it was acknowledged that Australia had men fighting in South Africa in 1901, federation was achieved by peaceful means. The nation, however, was "born" in 1915. Yet, the Boer War was Australia's first experience of a sustained imperial war fought beyond its shores. But what did the war mean at a community level? Using North Eastern Victoria as a prism, this book looks at Australia's "forgotten war" at home.

Notes

1. National Archives of Australia (NAA) B5179, Muster (Nominal) Rolls of Victorian Contingents.
2. *UM&MH*, 12 September 1901.
3. *CC*, 10 October 1901.
4. L.J. Field, *The Forgotten War: Australian Involvement in the South African Conflict of 1899–1902* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1979).
5. Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: The War in South Africa 1899–1902* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press in Association with the Australian War Memorial, 2002) 87.

CHAPTER 2

Portrait of a Region

Abstract The regional economy of North Eastern Victoria was a mixed one. Rifle clubs, initially formed to defend the colony, also filled a social function. The prevailing political orthodoxy in the region was liberalism that found its quintessential expression in the Isaacs brothers, Isaac and John. A mistrust of the metropolis, whether it be Melbourne or London, was part and parcel of regional politics. Two groups were marginalised, the Chinese and the immigrants from northern India and Afghanistan. Sectarianism was an integral part of regional life. The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign was a red letter day for many in the region although not for all.

In 1899, Victoria's North East had little notion that the empire would soon call on its men to volunteer for war. Its citizens were far more preoccupied with the ins and outs of regional life, a growing mistrust of the politicians in Melbourne and the upcoming referendum on federation. It was a typical regional community in one sense. Regions sometimes march in step with the national picture: yet more often they reflect accommodation, mediation and sometimes a rejection of external forces because a region is a place where national and international matters intersect with notions of community and identity. They still do.

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Regional Life

Although those living in Melbourne may have seen the countryside as a dull place to live when set beside the attractions of the metropolis, the region certainly led a full social life. The towns and the rural districts had their racing clubs. Rutherglen's Lake Moodemere Regatta attracted rowing competitors from the other colonies and from overseas. Euchre evenings were popular. Hardly a month went by when one community or another did not hold a dance or ball. The Miners' Sports held in Chiltern and Rutherglen were a social staple for the surrounding communities. The towns had debating and choral societies, brass bands and orchestras, reading and amateur theatre groups. Beechworth even boasted golf links. Companies, ranging from Melbourne's Blind Institute singers to public lectures and Wild West shows, did good business in the region. The newly invented Cinematographe, however, did poorly when it debuted in the North East.[1] The 1890s added two new attractions. The first was the chrysanthemum. Competitions for the best bloom were held at the local, district and regional level. Frosts and wandering cows were the deadly enemies of local competitors. The other attraction was cycling. Men and women embraced the new sport with enthusiasm and cycling clubs were found in every town. Cycling, however, was not without its critics. The Rutherglen paper condemned "scorchers" as a menace to pedestrians and society in general.[2]

Cricket and football were sporting staples for the summer and winter months, respectively. Cricket moved from season to season with little controversy, but not football. Local columnists, such as Bright's "Little Mark", were not above blaming a loss on prejudicial umpiring or the lack of sporting spirit on the part the opposition. There were even allegations of bribery. The Excelsior Football Club, for example, offered a £5 reward in 1897 for anyone who could prove that its players had taken money to lose to Beechworth. The club was back in the news again the following year, accused of "rough play". Excelsior retorted that this reflected a blind prejudice against miners, although one football fan offered a different explanation. Excelsior's poor reputation was due to the consumption of "liquid food" before, during and after the match.[3]

Rifle clubs dotted the region and were found in both the rural districts and the towns. The clubs had been formed to repel invaders landing on Victoria's coast, but, as the coast was some distance away, the clubs filled a social rather than a defence function. Colonel Tom Price visited the region

to inspect the local clubs and from 1896 members could look forward to two or three days drill at Queenscliff.[4]

The rising generation (naturally) provoked despair in their elders. Any anti-social behaviour on the part of the region's young males was roundly denounced as larrikinism.[5] Young men under the influence and fighting and swearing in Freeburgh and North Prentice after a football match brought irate letters and editorial condemnation of these "roughs" and a demand for the establishment of that ultimate symbol of status and respectability, a police station. "Hoodlums" ruined a performance by the Lyceum Dramatic Company in Chiltern and disrupted performances in Rutherglen's Town Hall with their whistling, smoking and spitting. Matthias Grady, after appearing in court on charges of riotous behaviour, was sacked from his job after pleading guilty.[6] Stone throwing, vandalism in cemeteries, kicking a football in the streets—all attracted negative comment in the local papers. Yet, it was axiomatic that if our lot were bad, those further down the road were immeasurably worse. Rutherglen and Chiltern, for example, were potential choices for a lying-in hospital for young pregnant single women. Rutherglen argued that Chiltern was the ideal town: it was well known that Chiltern girls were "loose" and that part of Chiltern's park was popularly known as "Shag and Roger Island".[7]

Ned Kelly was still firmly embedded in regional memory. The police who had played a part in the hunt for the Kelly Gang were mentioned as they moved from posting to posting, or died, or, like Thomas Bracken, committed suicide. And if the regional press toed the line by rarely criticising the police, they sometimes reflected a view of the Kelly story that their readers may have held. The dismal failure of the police party set up to protect Aaron Sherritt in 1880 was well known. The men had remained hidden in Sherritt's hut for over 12 hours after his murder. One was Robert Alexander. In 1897, named as a respondent in a Melbourne divorce case, he failed to appear. As one local paper remarked, he had "displayed an excess of caution" in 1880 and 17 years later, he "again kept out of the way".[8]

The regional economy was a diverse one depending on gold mining, farming, wine production and tourism. The miners in the region had begun to organise under the leadership of the Amalgamated Miners' Association (AMA). It had two astute leaders in George Mead and Thomas Howes. They eschewed the more belligerent tactics adopted by their peers in places like the Hunter Valley and the Illawarra in New South Wales, and instead preferred negotiation. Howes in particular went to great lengths to ensure

that the regional press was aware of the miners' point of view. But when they struck a recalcitrant mine manager, such as John Cock, they adopted a more militant stance. This ensured that during any industrial dispute, although deplored by its editors, the regional press gave the miners' case a good hearing.[9] Although the police monitored the movement of shearers through the region during the shearing season, they gave little trouble. The itinerant labourers required by the wine industry, though, were frequently in trouble with the local constabulary. "Ratepayer", writing to the *Rutherglen Sun*, described them as "scum".[10] The pickers, however, were not the only problems facing the region's vignerons. The British government consistently tinkered with the excise on wine and fortified wines, agitating the region's wine growers and throwing into doubt the future of Rutherglen's newly established Viticultural College. An outbreak of phylloxera in 1899 simply added to the wine growers' woes.[11]

Although the labour movement had established its presence in the region, and papers like the *Alpine Observer* supported "State Socialism", Labor was not a political force regionally. The prevailing political orthodoxy in the region was Liberalism although its definition was never clear. There were Liberal-Protectionists, Liberal-Radicals and Liberal-Conservatives (whose rural members were sometimes called the Country Party). John Bowser, the member for Wangaratta-Rutherglen, for example, always stood as a Liberal and described himself as a member of the Country Party.[12] As Elizabeth Morrison noted in her study of country newspapers, this reflected the slow development of a political realignment that saw the emergence of a political voice that spoke for rural Victoria.[13] Irrespective, Liberalism's quintessential expression was to be found in the Isaacs brothers.

Isaac Isaacs became the member for the seat of Bogong in Victoria's Legislative Assembly in 1892. He served as the Attorney General in the Turner government and held Bogong until he stood for Federal Parliament in 1901. His brother, John, despite an anti-Semitic campaign run by his opponents, won the neighbouring seat of Ovens in 1894 and held it until 1902. Both men were diligent members and attended a host of social functions including those given by the AMA.[14] This posed major problems for Beechworth businessman, Alfred Arthur Billson. A member of the Australian Natives' Association (ANA) and the Beechworth Council, Billson aspired to become a member of Victoria's Legislative Assembly as his father had been. He unsuccessfully challenged Isaacs in

1892 in Bogong, and Albert Craven, who held the neighbouring seat of Benambra, in 1894 and again in 1897.[15] But he remained determined.

Women's rights were an uncomfortable issue in regional politics. Many of the newspapers carried the column written by Lady Cook (née Tennessee Claflin). An American suffragist who had married into the English aristocracy, her column championed female suffrage, temperance and the industrial rights of working women. The Isaacs brothers fully supported any proposal to extend the franchise to women, as did the *Alpine Observer*.[16] Other regional politicians and editors were less enthusiastic. The *Chiltern and Howlong Times*, for example, blamed the agitation for suffrage on the "screeching demands of the advanced female" and titled women who had little to do with their time. Working class women did not need the vote: what they needed was a decent wage for their breadwinners, it wrote. And the *Federal Standard* applauded the misogyny of the Legislative Council when it rejected the Women's Suffrage Bill in 1898: politics, it editorialised, "is altogether outside of women's sphere".[17]

The ANA was part of the region's political and social life. By 1899, it had branches in every major town in the region. Its membership was broad enough to include working men but it was dominated by its middle class members. The ANA promoted itself as a mutual benevolent society for the Australian born but it also had its own political agenda. Federation was one, and the regional branches of the ANA played a prominent part in the campaign to produce a nation from a collection of colonies. A White Australia was another. In the region, this found a focus in two groups: the Chinese and the "Hindoos".

Chinese men had been a part of the gold rush influx of new immigrants in the 1850s. Although some had married into the European community, the majority still lived in the Chinese camps in the major mining centres such as Beechworth, Chiltern, Bright and Rutherglen. They were major contributors to regional charities, especially Beechworth's Ovens Benevolent Asylum.[18] Yet, racist doubts about the Chinese remained and woe betides any women who "associated" with them. These women were virtually outcast. Elizabeth Mickel and her daughter, Clara, who was part Chinese, are one example. The two women lived near Beechworth's Chinese camp and had appeared in court as witnesses for Chinese plaintiffs and defendants. In October 1899, both women were found dead in their hut. The post-mortem found that they had died from pneumonia and starvation. The internal organs of the women were described as "more or

less diseased".[19] Few in the region would have missed the implicit warning about the apparent dangers of miscegenation.

The "Hindoos" were immigrants from Afghanistan and the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent. They worked as manual labourers, contractors and hawkers. Applications for a hawker's licence from any "Hindoo" drew strong protests from local business owners who claimed it would have a detrimental impact on their trade.[20] So, when Chiltern awarded a two-year contract to Fatta Khan to light the town's kerosene lamps and to act as the town's Inspector of Nuisances (ION) in December 1896, the local branch of the ANA vigorously campaigned against the renewal of Khan's contract in 1898. They succeeded, and the council appointed Martin ("Lordy") Byron in his place as ION. It would prove to be an interesting appointment.

Although Lordy claimed to be a "respectable man" who had lived in Chiltern for 40 years, he had one small flaw: the bottle. By 1898, he had amassed 49 convictions for being drunk and disorderly, for using obscene language in a public place and for being a habitual drunkard. Usually fined, sometimes given a short jail sentence, Lordy must have felt that all his Christmases had come at once when he took over from Fatta Khan. By October 1899, however, there were loud complaints about the number of stray cattle and goats wandering around the town, many of them munching their way through local flower gardens and prize-winning chrysanthemums. He was back before the bench in November, explaining that "This sickness is playing up wid me" and that he had taken "a droph of spirits to cure me. I betther have another drink than die."[21] Clearly, Martin Byron was not doing his job, yet his contract as ION was renewed. Drunkard he might be, but he was white.

The temperance movement was also alive and well in the North East. The region had its fair share of the Rechabites, the United Band of Hope and other temperance movement lodges, and it was a regular fixture on the movement's lecturing circuit. Rutherglen, the home of the region's wine industry, was a special target, especially in 1897, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Year. She had, after all, taken the pledge 60 years before. The speakers tended to be somewhat feisty in their language. Reporting one meeting, the *Rutherglen Sun* admonished the movement to remember that temperance in language was just as important as temperance in the consumption of alcohol.[22] Many of the region's clergy were also involved with the movement, including Beechworth's Congregationalist minister, Albert Rivett.

Sectarianism was an integral part of regional life. Clerics and lay members on both sides of the Catholic/Protestant divide frequently took each other

to task in robust debate over matters of religion and even ethnicity, because "Roman Catholic" was frequently used as a synonym for Irish Catholic. It was a sensitive issue in a regional population where over 20% of the population was of Irish Catholic descent. By the 1890s, however, the region's newspapers and civic leaders had adopted a policy of pluralism, a form of public tolerance in sectarian matters. The riots between the Orange and the Green, especially in the capital cities, were roundly condemned.[23] Moderate proposals for the Irish Home Rule movement were supported but the more radical measures taken by groups like the Land League (which included arson and murder) were vigorously condemned. Running beneath sectarianism, however, was an implicit sense that the loyalty of Irish Catholics to empire was doubtful.[24] That, however, was an invisible line that regional leaders would allow none to cross. The Irish could be described as backward and priest-ridden, but if Irish Catholics were *publicly* denounced as disloyal, the region's political representatives, its municipal leaders, its press and the ANA came to their defence, as the Anglican minister, George Gladstone, discovered.

In late 1899, Gladstone launched a crusade against the evils of dancing, for dancing, he said, would surely lead to a new Sodom and Gomorrah. It was hardly a controversial issue. The evils of dancing were a truly cross-denominational cause for some narrow-minded members of the clergy.[25] Gladstone regaled his audiences with tales of young women who had fallen by the wayside because they had tripped the light fantastic: they fell pregnant, turned to drink and prostitution, even committed murder. And he titillated his audiences by promising to name the "fallen" dancing women in his own congregation to prove the point. He reneged at the last moment in front of a packed congregation. Instead, Gladstone crossed that invisible line: he switched his focus to the "low Irish". They were disloyal and the cause of all the social evils in the English-speaking world because of their "drinking, dancing and dynamiting", he claimed. The regional press began to run stories about the loyalty of the Irish and then turned to the hostility Gladstone's campaign had attracted, especially from his own congregation.[26]

Nation, Empire and Metropolis

The North East, of course, did not exist in a vacuum. In fact, the region was frequently preoccupied with events beyond its borders. Federation was one.

The negotiations between the colonies to create a new nation had dragged on for almost a decade. Conventions came and went, promises

made were broken or rescinded. The 1897 Convention, however, promised a breakthrough. Isaac Isaacs had played a major role in drafting a new constitution that was to be put to the people in a referendum. He toured the region promoting a Yes vote and was strongly supported by Craven, Bowser, Billson and his brother. The Anti-Federal League, however, ran a strong No campaign. The meetings drew good crowds. Both sides of the argument were covered extensively in the regional press but the region voted for federation with an overwhelming majority.[27] Defence, often seen as a major factor in the move to federation by historians, received only cursory attention.[28] Across the border, however, the vote was lost. The premiers met in February 1899 to hammer out the inevitable compromise, the Australasian Federal Enabling Amendment Bill. Isaacs was once more a major campaigner for the Yes vote in the region (along with Alfred Deakin) and the region's Yes vote increased. In some booths, the Yes vote was unanimous.[29]

Empire was a vital part of the region's links with the outside world. The regional press had, as Elizabeth Morrison noted, assiduously promoted the "Britishness" of the Victorian colonists,[30] which made June 1897 a red-letter month for the British Empire. It marked the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign—and the empire prepared to celebrate.

It was clear from the beginning that Melbourne was determined to be the centre of the colony's celebrations. Special rail fares were offered to country people to visit the capital to join in Melbourne's festivities. No government funds were available for any regional celebrations. This meant that some towns and districts held none.[31] But other towns, such as Beechworth and Wangaratta, did celebrate with illuminated buildings, processions, speeches, fireworks and Jubilee balls. The rural districts held "monster" picnics and sports for the children followed by a bonfire, fireworks and dances. The children were given "Record Reign" medals. Local rifle clubs provided the *feu de joie*. The turnout was impressive. Beechworth drew a crowd of over 4000; the tiny district of Doma Mungi mustered 500.[32]

Despite the crowds, however, there were some who took a dim view of the occasion. The Chiltern branch of the ANA, for example, refused to participate.[33] And some municipalities, like Bright, were too broke to honour the Queen. It refused to spend funds to celebrate the Jubilee, a decision staunchly defended by the local paper. The Jubilee would only "increase the number of titled nincompoops" who cared little for the welfare of the colony and "far less for its people", it editorialised. Money

would be spent out of "all reason" on celebrations and fireworks for "a monarch Australians will never see". And the needs of the poor would be forgotten in the "howling of a professedly loyal people".[34] Few editors in the region would have openly agreed with these sentiments, yet they also expressed concerns in their papers. The *Federal Standard*, for example, sharply criticised government expenditure on the Jubilee when the colony was still in debt.[35]

These opinions reflected an important element in the region's links with the outside world, a mistrust of the metropolis. Although it frequently took the form of Melbourne bashing, it was also extended to the heart of the empire, London. Threatened increases in excises for wine produced in Australia, as noted earlier, was accompanied by the loud lament that the imperial metropolis did not understand the needs of settler societies like Australia. England and empire were not necessarily synonyms.

Then, in October 1899, news arrived that the empire was at war in South Africa and that the Australian colonies were being asked for troops to fight the war.

Notes

1. *RS*, 29 January, 2 February 1897.
2. See, for example, *AO*, 8 May 1896, 30 April 1898, *CC*, 30 June 1898, *FS*, 5 February 1897, 2, 16 September 1898, *RS*, 8 May 1896, 9 March, 1 June 1897, 30 August 1898.
3. *RS*, 23 July, 20 August 1897, 30 June 1898.
4. *FS*, 4 September, 2 October 1896, 2 September 1898, *W&TS*, 20 March 1896. See also Andrew Kilsby, "The Rifle Clubs" in *Before the Anzac Dawn: A Military History of Australia to 1915*, ed. Craig Stockings and John Connor (Sydney: NewSouth, 2013) 148–173.
5. *CC*, 29 October 1896, 19 August 1897, *O&MA*, 14 January 1899.
6. *RS*, 13 August, 16 July 1897.
7. *FS*, 29 October 1897.
8. *AO*, 19 November 1897.
9. See, for example, *C&HT*, 17 May 1899, *FS*, 26 May, 20 August 1897, 14 January, 18 February 1898, 12, 19 May1899, *AO*, 28 January 1898, *RS*, 18 May 1897.
10. *RS*, 6 March 1896, 13 April 1897, 15 November 1898.
11. *FS*, 21 April 1899, *RS*, 29 May 1896, 2 April 1897, 15 April, 12 May, 26 May, 2 June, 4 July 1899.

12. *RS*, 27 July, 3 August 1897.
13. Elizabeth Morrison, *Engines of Influence: Newspapers of Country Victoria, 1840–1890* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2005) chapter 6.
14. *AO*, 21 September 1894, 6 August, 8 October 1897, *FS*, 6 November 1896, 28 July 1899, *W&TS*, 5 October 1894.
15. M. R. Shennan, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Pioneers of the Ovens and Townsmen of Beechworth* (Noble Park: self published, 1990) 61–2.
16. *AO*, 14 December 1894, 9, 23 October 1896, 22 January, 8 October 1897, *W&TS*, 7 December 1894.
17. *C&HT*, 24 May, 5, 12 August 1899, *FS*, 16 September 1898.
18. See Tom Griffiths, *Beechworth, An Australian Country Town and its Past* (Richmond: Greenhouse Publications, 1987), Carol Woods, Beechworth, A *Titan's Field* (North Melbourne: United Shire of Beechworth and Hargreen Publishing Company, 1985).
19. *C&HT*, 1 November 1899.
20. *CC*, 2 June 1898.
21. *FS*, 28 May, 23 July, 19 November 1897, 13 October, 24 November 1899.
22. *RS*, 7 July 1896, 6, 28 August 1897.
23. See, for example, *AO*, 24 July 1896.
24. Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1987), Michael McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914–1918* (Sydney: Catholic Theological Faculty and the Australian War Memorial, 1980), Roger C. Thompson, *Religion in Australia: A History* (Melbourne: New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
25. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1992) 252–3.
26. *CC*, 28 August 1899, *YT*, 22 September 1899, *C&HT*, 3 October 1900.
27. *AO*, 15 April, 6, 20, 27 May, 3 June 1898, *FS*, 25 March, 20 May 1898, *RS*, 10, 26 February, 5 March 1897, *W&TS*, 12, 26 February 1897.
28. See, for example, Scott Bennett, *Federation* (North Melbourne: Cassell, 1975), J. B. Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism:*

Manipulation, Conflict and Compromise in the Late Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Melbourne: Cambridge University Press,1994).

29. *AO*, 28 July 1899, *C&HT*, 22 July 1899, *FS*, 15 April 1898, 28 July 1899, *RS*, 25 July 1897, 1 August 1899.
30. Morrison, *Engines of Influence*, 304.
31. *AO*, 1 October 1897.
32. *CC*, 24 June, 1 July 1897, *FS*, 28 May, 4, 11, 18 June 1897, *RS*, 1, 25 June 1897, *FS*, 25 June 1897.
33. *FS*, 25 June 1897.
34. *AO*, 11 June 1897.
35. *FS*, 7 July 1897.

CHAPTER 3

"Skyrocket Patriotism": October 1899 to December 1900

Abstract Early expectations of a quick British victory were shattered by Black Week, ushering in a period of jingoism that reached its peak with the relief of Mafeking. The number of volunteers far exceeded the numbers needed, and the Boers were demonised by the regional press. The dominant patriotic fund was the Empire's Patriotic Fund. Rivalry developed between local towns in their displays of patriotic loyalty. The region's women used their domestic skills for the war effort producing comforts for the men serving in South Africa. The months following Black Week also saw a demand for the establishment of VMR units to replace the rifle clubs.

The possibility of war was a staple for the press in the region during the 1890s. Germany, under the Kaiser's leadership, Russian ambitions in China, potential conflict between France and Britain over the Sudan, the Indian frontier, the outbreak of war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, and a host of other skirmishes and crises were all seen as potential triggers for a war that would involve the empire. But a war fought in South Africa between Britain and its suzerains, the Boer republics? If the Transvaal meant anything, it was local men seeking gold, the Jameson Raid, Kruger, Rhodes and intermittent protests by the *uitlanders* (foreign miners) in Johannesburg.

The lead up to the outbreak of hostilities in 1899 skittered in and out of regional press columns and there was hardly uniformity in editorial opinion. The *Rutherglen Sun* described the Jameson Raid in 1895, a botched

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attempt to encourage the *uitlanders* to rise in revolt, as "foolhardy" but the cause just. The *Corryong Courier*, however, blamed the "goldbugs", especially Cecil Rhodes, Albert Beit and London's Jews, describing the raid as an attempt by the "goldbugs" to control the Transvaal's mining industry.[1] Rhodes drew mixed responses: some saw his imperial ambitions in Africa as contributing to the glory of empire; others saw his ambitions as a direct threat to Australian farmers—what Australia grew, Africa could grow. Paul Kruger, the president of the Transvaal Republic, was something of an enigma. He was described as athletic, wily, shrewd, masterful, deceitful and a statesman. The protests of the *uitlanders* generally attracted sympathetic support although one newspaper could see logic in the Boer's argument that to give the vote to transitory foreigners threatened Boer society.[2]

As the crisis developed and deepened from mid 1899, the regional press was still mixed in its response. Some editors, like James Law, were bellicose. It was time, he wrote, "the 'iron fist in the silken glove' was thrust into their Dutch faces".[3] There was also uncertainty as to how the impending war would be fought, and doubt that Britain would need to call on the colonies for men. The latter was set to rest with the British government's request for troops. Attention now shifted to the calibre of potential recruits. The *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, for example, hoped that the volunteers would not be drawn from the shiftless "lower stratum" of society but rather from the men worthy of the best traditions of England and empire, the VMR.[4]

Readers of the regional papers did not always agree with the editorials. "A Constant Reader", writing as a "Christian" and a "man of peace", protested against the "red-hot jingoes" agitating for war and condemned his fellow countrymen "getting ready to cut the throat of the Boers" in an unjust war. The *uitlanders* were the scum of the earth.[5] "Constant" attracted a vigorous rebuttal from "A Staunch Imperialist". The Boers, a "blot on South African civilisation", needed to be "thrashed into subjection". No one would bring a book of logic to a pig, the writer added: a pig needed a good strong stick. Britain had intervened on behalf of her subjects, civilisation and simple humanity.[6] Yet, letters about the war, although often robust in their expression, were few. With the British forces under Sir Redvers Buller still at sea, the initial Boer successes were dismissed as temporary. The departure of the First Victorian Contingent in late October was duly reported but there was little of the fanfare and hysteria so evident in Melbourne.[7] As

one paper noted, the "bubble of excitement attending the Colonial war whoop" had burst and regional society could return to the "even tenor" of its ways.[8]

The "Even Tenor of Our Ways"

Underpinning the regional response to the war's first two months was an axiomatic truth voiced by the *Rutherglen Sun*: the defeat of the Boers was a foregone conclusion.[9] Then came the Black Week. In a single week in December 1899, the British suffered three major defeats at Colenso, Stormberg and Magersfontein. Buller was replaced by Lord Roberts. "Bobs", as he was known, brought more men and equipment to the war as well as a personal interest: his son had been killed at Colenso. Roberts fought a conventional war in one sense but an astute political war in another. During the first months of the war, three British garrisons remained behind the Boer lines, Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking. As beleaguered British garrisons, they were emotionally important, especially Mafeking under the command of Colonel Robert Stephenson Smythe Baden Powell. Relieving the besieged garrisons would become symbolic of the changing fortunes of the war. Roberts promised that all three would be relieved by May 1900. Black Week also brought with it a call from London for a Second Contingent from the Australian colonies and a sea change in public attitudes towards the war. From December 1899 until the end of May 1900, jingoism swept through the region.

Speakers toured the towns promoting the imperial cause and the demonisation of the Boers in the regional press was complete by February 1900. They were now "treacherous savages" who fired on hospitals, convoys of the wounded, women and children; they poisoned water, used dum dum bullets, buried their own critically wounded and robbed the dead. Any doubts about the righteousness of the *uitlanders*' cause and Britain's rights as suzerain vanished.[10] Britain now had two choices—"either clear out or stay"[11]: the former, of course, was unthinkable. The regional press was unanimous in its support for the raising of the Second Contingent and plans to raise a Third. The Third had a particular appeal: it was to be called the "Bushmen". Only men able to ride and shoot would be accepted, just the ticket to beat the Boer (and just the type the region believed it could offer). Unlike the Second, however, the Third would be paid for by public subscription rather than by the government.[12] At the same time, the

Tommy Atkins and Empire's Patriotic funds were launched, and agitation began for the militarisation of the North East.

The call for more men offered a ray of hope for one Chilternite: was it true, he or she asked, that Lord Byron had volunteered for the Bushmen? Alas, the answer was no—he was back in court again on charges of being drunk and disorderly. Lordy claimed he had been caught in the rain "and got soaked through like a dog in a wet sack so he took a drop to warm himself". Senior Constable Johnston claimed Lordy had been found "drunk, dirty and disgusting": he was wet from the waistband down and that had nothing to do with the rain. Given the choice between a 20/- fine or 14 days in Beechworth's jail, he took the latter. Celebrating his release, he managed to fall into the drain behind Soule's Hotel—twice. He appeared in court reeking of muck, slush and sludge. This time he blamed the bench rather than the weather. He had sought a prohibition order against himself but could not get it. And he believed that Johnston had a "down" on him because he had impounded the senior constable's cow.[13]

"We Stand Shoulder to Shoulder"

The Tommy Atkins Fund, established to assist the families of English soldiers, did poorly, partly because it was Anglo-centric, partly because it was promoted by, and seen to be, the property of, the region's Masons.[14] The Empire's Patriotic Fund, however, did far better. Established January 1900 to assist the families of volunteers across the empire, it found an indefatigable champion in Melbourne's Mayor, Sir Malcolm McEacharn. That created problems for the Bushmen's Appeal. As Craig Wilcox noted, running the two appeals concurrently pitched imperial loyalty against nativism,[15] and in the mood generated by Black Week, imperialism triumphed. Rutherglen's Council, for example, voted £50 to assist the war effort: most of it went to the Empire's Patriotic Fund.[16] The council's decision probably reflected the activities of Councillor Thomas Drenen. Drenen formed a Patriotic Movement Subcommittee in January to raise funds for London's appeal and was organising a major patriotic parade for February with McEacharn as the star speaker.[17]

It was a gala event. Welcomed at the station to the strains of "Rule Britannia" played by the Miners' Band, McEacharn was given an official reception, a tour of the district and luncheon. John Bowser and John

McWhae (the chairman of the Melbourne Stock Exchange) accompanied him but it was McEacharn the crowd of some 2000 had come to hear. He did not disappoint. It was Britain's intention to rule South Africa, McEacharn said, and rule it she would. Victoria, he boasted, had already sent over £12,000 to London, eclipsing the total raised in New South Wales: but more was needed. The volunteers had shown their loyalty and it was time for the ordinary people to demonstrate theirs. "We stand shoulder to shoulder with the Mother Country", he said to applause. The motion that subscriptions be taken up for the Patriotic Fund was passed by acclamation, God Save the Queen was sung, and three cheers for the empire and the Queen were given twice. The musical interludes between the speeches included what would become a staple of every patriotic event that followed, Rudyard Kipling's "The Absent Minded Beggar". Only the shire president struck a nativist note and it was a parochial one: Colonel John Hoad, the officer in command of the Australian regiment formed in South Africa, he noted, was a local "boy".[18] The Bushmen hardly got a look in.

The February meeting unleashed a series of concerts, subscription campaigns, canvassing and other activities devoted to raising money for the Patriotic Fund in Rutherglen. Sunday February 11 was designated "Patriotic Sunday". The procession held as the prelude to the day's activities was over a mile long. The ANA marched, the AMA marched, the Rechabites and Druids marched, 500 children marched waving Union Jacks, even the Hibernians were there in their full regalia and it attracted a crowd of 3000. By early March, Rutherglen had raised £425/1/9. A special mention was made of the £112/12/2 donated by the miners through the AMA. Over £390 went to London: the Bushmen received £30/18/-, a mere 7% of the total.[19] Rutherglen's preference for an imperial fund over a nativist fund was typical across the region. Only Oxley Shire heard a different drummer: it raised £101/12/- of which £91/10/7 went to the Bushmen.[20]

The region mirrored the broader colonial picture. A fund created in, and run from, the centre of empire for the empire was a far more popular cause than the Bushmen where the response was so poor that the government was forced to meet the financial shortfall.[21] And imperial jingoism had also neatly tapped into another sentiment, the ordinary soldier. As the *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel* astutely remarked, no matter how people felt about the war, they could not turn their backs on the soldiers' families.[22]

Rutherglen was inclined to remind its neighbours that it had raised more money for the cause than any other community in the region. Naturally, this provoked defensiveness on the part of other communities but none more so than Bright, the shire so strapped for money that it had refused to vote funds to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Bright Shire Council voted £10/10/- to the cause, the lowest contribution made by any council in the region. The editor of the *Alpine Observer* deemed even that an irresponsible act by a council that had succumbed to "rampant" jingoism. Myrtleford, however, saw the donation as evidence of a distinct lack of patriotism in the shire's centre. Myrtleford was well on the way to raising £100 and it had a local man in uniform. Willie Carroll, working in South Africa, had joined the Natal Light Horse. The district needle prompted Bright to take "appropriate action" in mid March. It ran patriotic concerts and opened subscriptions but only raised £31/3/-. A patriotic festival run in April by the women of the town for the relief of "our soldiers' widows and children" raised a further £20 (although the women were criticised for the aggressive nature of their canvassing). Bright congratulated itself on the result, noting that it had been achieved without Myrtleford's vulgar jingoism.[23] But Myrtleford's allegation rankled. Bright would remember it and would revisit the matter to its satisfaction later in the war.

The region's women, who had been active in canvassing for the Patriotic Fund, also responded to the call by Lady Janet Clarke to turn their domestic skills to the service of empire. Comforts were needed for the soldiers including shirts, pyjamas, sheets, bandages, cholera belts, even Tam O'Shanters. Sewing bees were established in the towns and mini sewing bees were established in the schools where the girls industriously applied needle and thread to make handkerchiefs. The women also ran concerts to raise funds for cloth and sought other donations that might serve the needs of the "boys". Rutherglen despatched its first consignment in May 1900. It included 61 bandages, 1 dozen pyjama suits, 12 muffatees, socks, handkerchiefs, 6 dozen lead pencils, 6 dozen bottles of liver pills and 1 tin of lanolin—but no Tam O'Shanters.[24]

Mafeking

As Roberts' offensive gathered momentum and British "reverses" became British "victories", Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking took on an escalating importance. The relief of Kimberley on 15 February 1900 was duly reported by the press, and promoted some excitement in Tallangatta, but

no official celebrations marked the event.[25] The relief of Ladysmith a fortnight later, however, produced a very different response.

The regional press had taken a particular interest in Buller's erratic advance on Ladysmith. In part, this reflected the fact that the Australians in Buller's force were commanded by John Hoad, and Willie Carroll from Myrtleford was part of the besieged garrison. But it also reflected a fascination with a disgraced commander. Would Buller fail again? When it became clear that the garrison *would* be relieved, the region developed an insatiable appetite for the news. Large crowds gathered outside regional newspaper offices to read incoming bulletins tacked to a board, and the news of the victory was greeted with jubilation (except perhaps in Bobbinawarrah where it was reported that the rejoicing was due to the fact that the creek was running once more).[26] Buller, however, received little credit: instead, the regional press showered praise on Roberts and Kitchener. Only Wangaratta saw fit to send Buller a congratulatory telegram.[27]

Streets were decorated with bunting, bells pealed, the rifle clubs fired loyal volleys, effigies were burnt and Boer sympathisers mentioned in speeches were "hooted". In Bethanga, though, celebrations got out of hand. Inspired by either too much patriotism or too much drink, the local miners constructed an effigy, found a Union Jack to hoist above it, and then set the effigy on fire. Constable Downes stepped in at that point and ordered the flag be hauled down. Downes was "roundly hooted" (hooting seemed to be popular in February 1900) and the locals demanded that the Chief Commissioner of Police investigate the constable's loyalty. Downes defended his actions: the crowd had been "as merry as the proverbial wedding bell", so much so that he had given serious thought to reading the Riot Act. The effigy had not been modelled on Kruger but one of the local publicans, who had been foolish enough to have a portrait of Kruger hanging in his bar.[28] Ladysmith, however, was simply a rehearsal. The region, like Australia as a whole, was fixated on Mafeking. Roberts had promised it would be relieved by 21 May.

Mafeking first appeared in the regional press in October 1899. It was reported that Colonel Baden Powell had "hurled some 1500 of the enemy into eternity" and was holding out "without flinching" with a force of 600 men against 6000 Boers. Time and again the regional press returned to this "gallant little band", upholding the honour of the empire, repulsing the enemy's attacks and making sorties against enemy artillery. Despite the odds, Baden Powell showed a cheerful pluck in his defence of Mafeking.

"All's well" he frequently heliographed.[29] News of the relief of Mafeking reached Australia on 19 May 1900 and the region went wild. James Ryan, in the *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, aptly described the response as a "species of patriotic dementia".[30] Pubs did a roaring trade. Informal processions and speeches, bells ringing, bands playing patriotic airs, bonfires, the burning of effigies, singing God Save the Queen, flying the Union Jack, rifle clubs firing *feu de joi* marked the day as thousands turned out to celebrate the event.[31] Corryong took on the appearance of something from the American Wild West: those who owned a gun brought it with them to fire "innumerable salutes" as Corryong's citizens began to "work off their enthusiasm" in the local pub.[32] Woe betides, then, any unfortunate who may have been less than keen on the news. As one man wrote to a local paper, "because I did not choose to obey the command of a drunken imbecile with a tin sword, doff my hat in the street and stand bare-headed while the crowd howled 'God Save the Queen', I was set on and mobbed by a cowardly crew of Jingoes … and mental cripples".[33] He was lucky to have escaped with just a "roughing up". But at least he was spared a "hooting".

The formal celebrations that followed were less boisterous. The churches conducted special services where England, imperial loyalty and patriotism were key themes. Corryong's Presbyterian minister, Lahore, delivered a sermon that summed up the regional message from the Protestant pulpit: patriotism was "a glorious way to die".[34] Bright planted a memorial tree and dedicated the small parcel of land around it as Mafeking Square.[35] Every shire and borough sent Baden Powell a congratulatory telegram. And, of course, there were public meetings and speeches. An empire charged with carrying the burdens of both the white and black man, it was claimed, had been redeemed through the valour of British arms. The "chimes of victory" were in the air.[36]

Baden Powell's heliographs, of course, had masked the reality of the siege. The town had been virtually levelled by Boer artillery, the garrison was on starvation rations and typhoid was rife. Even today, the number of civilians who died during the siege, including indigenous Africans, is not known. Trooper Mick Sharry, writing home, believed that without the "blacks" Mafeking would have fallen to the Boers.[37] Pakenham's masterful analysis of the siege and Sol Plaatje's diary have questioned many of the claims made about the defence of Mafeking and portray Baden Powell as plucky enough, but also as a man with a ruthless streak that never appeared in the press reports.[38] The siege and relief of Mafeking

also remain superb examples of the effectiveness of British propaganda and Roberts's astute use of symbols in gathering support for the war at home: he had promised and he had delivered. And not only had Mafeking been relieved, but Australians were amongst both the besieged and their liberators.

Mafeking also intruded into regional politics. During the celebrations in Beechworth, William Stredwick denounced claims that this was an unjust war as a "lie". He then described an incident that "made his blood boil" and produced a "sensation" in the audience. His wife, he claimed, had recently received a visit from a "member of our colonial Parliament". That member, he claimed, had said he could see no reason for Australia sending "her sons to fight Great Britain's war". As a loyalist and a Britisher, Mrs Stredwick told this "gentleman" that when her sons were old enough, "it would be the proudest day of her life to see them marching off to the railway station to fight in Britain's war". Stredwick, however, coyly refused to name the disloyal politician.[39] Was he referring to Isaacs?

Politics and Loyalty

It may have been due to the mountain air, or it may have been due to Alfred Arthur Billson, but Beechworth took over the regional patriotic stakes from Rutherglen for the rest of the year. There was hardly a house in the town, it was claimed, without its Union Jack. Billson was prominent in every activity associated with promoting support for the war. He gave the key address at the celebrations that followed the Relief of Mafeking, describing it as one of the most memorable feats in world history. As shire president, he ensured that any British success at arms would be greeted with rifle club volleys, a torchlight parade led by the fire brigade and the town band, and a patriotic concert to end the celebrations. The concerts included some interesting tableaux (like one showing mounted riflemen bayoneting a Boer). The most popular items, though, were the songs sung by Jack Regan. His version of "The Absent Minded Beggar" invariably brought the house to its feet.[40]

For Billson, sending the hero of Mafeking a congratulatory telegram was not enough. At his request, the women of the town, led by Mrs Foster and Miss Naumann, launched a sixpenny subscription to provide the colonel with a fitting tribute from the town. The result was the Cairngorm Seal, a pendant made from Beechworth gold and amber-coloured cairngorm, taken from the Woolshed. The presentation letter that went with

the pendant claimed that no hearts in the empire had "throbbed with greater joy" at the Relief of Mafeking than those in Beechworth.[41]

Billson's reputation in Beechworth was riding high and there were rumours in the metropolitan press that Isaacs might not stand for Bogong in the colonial elections set for October 1900, but would stand for the new federal seat of Indi instead in 1901.[42] William Stredwick called a public meeting to test Billson's chances of running for Bogong. Isaacs, typically, decided to take the fight into enemy territory. In what some described as "shabby" behaviour, he took his seat in the body of the hall. He even delivered a lengthy address describing his achievements as the member for Bogong, making it abundantly clear that he would contest the October poll. Some speakers in the hall suggested that Billson would be "unwise" to run if Isaacs chose to stand, but the motion that Billson was a "fit and proper person" to represent Bogong was carried by a small majority. In Chiltern, however, a meeting called to endorse Billson was ignominiously defeated by 247 votes to 3. The two men struck a deal. Isaacs promised that if he won Indi, he would give Billson his unconditional support for Bogong. Billson withdrew his nomination and threw his support behind the incumbent. Isaacs was returned as the member for Bogong unopposed.[43]

There is little doubt that Stredwick's jibe was aimed at Isaacs and it was Stredwick who called the meeting to promote Billson as a candidate for Bogong. What had motivated Stredwick: loyalty to Billson, or prompting by Billson, or anti-Semitism? Or does the answer lie in Zelman Cowen's astute observation that Isaacs inspired either loyalty or antagonism in his political relationships? But it was clear that the loyalty card was not Billson's to play. To remove any doubt, Isaacs nailed his colours to the mast in December 1900: Australia was loyal to the cause and the colonies were the "ramparts of empire".[44] Isaacs would remain a committed empire man (and an anti-Zionist) for the rest of his life.[45]

Rifle Clubs, Mounted Rifles and Rangers

Membership of the rifle clubs jumped after Black Week. New clubs were formed, including some formed by, and for, women.[46] But were the rifle clubs capable of defending the colony in the event of an invasion? Apparently not, according to Yackandandah's Councillor Beatty. In February 1900, he called for the establishment of units of Mounted Rifles or Rangers in every town and district. Although he had no criticism to

make of the rifle clubs, he claimed, he believed that they would be virtually useless in the face of an invasion.[47] If Beatty's speech put some local noses out of joint, it was not recorded: Beatty had a son in uniform and he reflected a long-standing demand in the region for local defence units that could defend both hearth and home.[48] Benalla on the western edge of the region had a VMR unit but there were none elsewhere in the region.

Beatty's call sparked a number of public meetings across the region supporting his call for the establishment of Mounted Rifle (or Ranger) units. Wangaratta and Oxley Shire believed they could muster a force of close to 400. Rutherglen and Chiltern proposed a joint force of over 100 men (although Chiltern wondered whether Rutherglen could hold its end up).[49] Corryong and Tallangatta were not sure as to the number they could muster but agreed to form a unit called the Upper Murray Mounted Rifles. And, they believed, they had a natural advantage: had not the prowess of the district's horsemen earned undying fame in "The Man From Snowy River"? Even hamlets like Porepunkah believed they could create a detachment. Billson (naturally) chaired the meeting called in Beechworth to form a detachment there. The government's response, however, was cool.[50]

In May, the Defence Department announced that, because of financial constraints, no new VMR units would be formed unless existing instructors could drill them. Moreover, any new units would be restricted to 110 men.[51] The western part of the region was in luck. It could draw on the instructors attached to the Benalla VMR, but the decision ended any hopes for an Upper Murray Mounted Rifles. A company was approved for the North East with detachments in Wangaratta, Beechworth and Rutherglen. Thirty-eight, all ranks, was allocated to Wangaratta, and thirty-six each to Rutherglen and Beechworth. Colonel Otter would inspect the men wishing to enlist (along with their horses) in the first week of July.[52] Thanks to lobbying by Bowser, Wangaratta would be the VMR headquarters.[53]

Wangaratta and Oxley may have claimed it had 400 men "busting at the bit" to join up, but when Otter arrived in July in Wangaratta, only 100 men turned up for inspection. Over 500 interested citizens watched the applicants march down the main street. Otter immediately divided the men into three groups: those who lived in Wangaratta, those who lived within a ten-mile radius of the town and those who lived in the "back blocks". Those living outside Wangaratta were exempted from having to prove their horsemanship. The 37 "townies", however, were subject to "an ordeal that was not anticipated" to test their abilities in the sad-

dle. Only 17 succeeded. At the end of the inspection, Otter accepted 60 men, rather than the allocated 38, because of the town's "demonstrated enthusiasm" for the cause. But his decision came with a condition: funds allocated to the maintenance of the Wangaratta's VMR detachment would not be increased beyond the money allocated for a detachment of 38. The extra men were "supernumeraries".[54]

In Rutherglen, 56 hopefuls marched down the main street, watched by a large crowd. Otter began by rejecting horses rather than their owners. Some were too much on the "pony side", others were stallions, others would be unable to carry the weight required by men in full kit. The surviving applicants were then put through their paces including trotting and cantering in a circle (which produced confusion in the ranks and mirth in the crowd). Otter then set out the conditions of service for the 40 men he had selected. They would sign on for 3 years; 12 compulsory drills, 75 "voluntary" drills and a musketry course were mandatory; a special saddle was needed which cost £3/17/6; the uniform required would cost an additional £3/3/-. Their kit, though, was free. He ended with the admonition, "If you don't want to drill, and want to run after cricket and football, then I say resign at once." One man promptly did so, although whether it was the financial demands made by the VMR or a preference for football and cricket was never revealed. A bugler was added and the men signed a declaration in the courthouse. At the end of the swearing in, Sergeant-Major Algie, the regional instructor, addressed the men. "Now you are mine—body and soul", he said, and marched them into the park for their first drill, again much to the enjoyment of interested onlookers.[55]

Beechworth was different. In pouring rain on a miserably cold day, the town's 40 candidates rode in military formation down the streets of the town with only a scattered crowd to watch them before they went through the selection process. Otter praised the men for their parading and testing in the inclement conditions and selected 36 men. This time, however, Algie chose not to march the men to the park for drill: even a drill sergeant, it seemed, was mindful of his creature comforts. At a function that evening, Otter took the opportunity to praise the town's "patriotic feeling and military ardour". Algie added that the new recruits had a reputation to live up to—the VMR had received high praise from Roberts.[56]

The first formal drill of the detachments took place in July under Algie, the first dress parades followed in September, proper training got under way in November and the inevitable first "military wedding" took place when Captain George Patterson of the Beechworth VMR took Vinnie

Barnes as his wife.[57] And although Porepunkah failed in its bid to establish a unit of the VMR, and the Upper Murray Mounted Rifles were not to be, the interest in the VMR did add a new event to the North East's social life—the military ball. Initially linked with the VMR units, it was quickly appropriated by those deemed less than sufficient in defence of colony and hearth, the rifle clubs.

The *Bogong and Benambra Advertiser* aptly described the period between Black Week and the fall of the Boer capitals in mid 1900 as one of "skyrocket patriotism".[58] It burnt fiercely before vanishing, rather like the devastating bushfires that had swept the region from December 1899 until they, too, finally sputtered and died in May the following year. The paper's comment, however, was written two years later and was an attack on the apparent lack of interest in the war in 1902. Yet, who at the end of 1900 (apart, perhaps, from Kitchener) could have anticipated that Roberts's triumphs in 1900 marked the beginning of the real war that would last for another two years?

Notes

1. *CC*, 7 February 1896, *RS*, 21, 27 January 1896.
2. *AO*, 8 October 1897, 17 March 1899, *RS*, 12 February 1897, *UM&MH*, 10, 17 August 1899.
3. *UM&MH*, 10 August 1899.
4. *C&HT*, 28 August 1899, *O&MA*, 15 July, 23 September, 7 October 1899, *RS*, 30 June 1899.
5. *B&BA* quoted in *O&MA*, 7 October 1899.
6. *O&MA*, 14 October 1899.
7. Field, *The Forgotten War*, 39.
8. *FS*, 27 October, 10 November 1899.
9. *RS*, 24 October 1899.
10. *C&HT*, 29 November 1899, 17 January 1900, *FS*, 2 February 1900, *O&MA,* 4 November, 23 December 1899, *RS*, 27 February 1900.
11. *O&MA*, 24 February 1900.
12. *C&HT*, 13 January 1900. See also *CC*, 25 January, 1 February 1900, *RS*, 15 December 1899, 12 January 1900, *O&MA*, 27 January 1900, *WC*, 16 December 1899, 13 January, 24 February 1900, *YT*, 19 January 1900.
13. *FS*, 12 January, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June 1900.

14. *O&MA*, 27 January 1900, *W&TS*, 29 December 1899, 2 February 1900.
15. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 35.
16. *RS*, 6 February 1900.
17. *RS*, 19, 23 January, 15 May 1900.
18. *RS*, 6 February 1900, Graham Jones, *There Was A Time a Shire of Wangaratta Bi-centenary Celebration* (Wangaratta: Shire of Wangaratta, nd) 139.
19. *RS*, 9 March 1900.
20. *FS*, 2 February, 6 April 1900, *O&MA*, 10, 17 February 1900, *WC*, 17 February, 7 March, 17 April 1900, *YT*, 18 May 1900).
21. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 30–5.
22. *W&TS* 26 January 1900.
23. *AO*, 16 February, 16, 23, 30 March, 6, 13, 27 April 1900, *O&MA*, 24 February 1900.
24. *RS*, 27, 30 March, 5 May 1900 (see also *AO*, 16 March 1900, *O&MA*, 10 March 1900).
25. *O&MA*, 17 February 1900, *UM&MH*, 22 February 1900.
26. *O&MA*, 17 March 1900.
27. *AO*, 16 March 1900, *O&MA*, 24 February 1900, *RS*, 2, 16 March 1900, *WC*, 3 March 1900.
28. *W&TS*, 9, 16, 30 March, 6 April 1900, *YT*, 13 April 1900.
29. *C&HT*, 28 March 1900, *CC*, 19 October1899, 25 January 1900, *O&MA*, 28 October, 4, 18 November, 2 December 1899, 17 February 1900, *RS*, 24 October 1899, *UM&MH*, 19 October 1899, *WC*, 15, 18 November, 9, 28 December 1899, 3, 28 February, 17 March, 25 April 1900, *W&TS*, 27 October 1899, *YT*, 20, 27 October, 1 December 1899, 22 February 1900, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 106.
30. *W&TS*, 25 May 1900.
31. *AO*, 25 May 1900, *UM&MH*, 31 May 1900, *W&TS*, 25 May 1900, *YT*, 18 May, 2 June 1900.
32. *CC*, 24 May, 31 May1900.
33. *W&TS*, 25 May 1900.
34. *CC*, 14 June 1900.
35. *AO*, 15 June 1900.
36. *RS*, 15 June 1900.
37. *FS*, 10 August 1900.
38. Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 429–442, Sol T, Plaatje, *The Mafeking Diary of Sol T. Plaatje* (Cape Town: Oxford James Currey, 1999).

39. *C&HT*, 22 May, 16 June 1900.
40. *C&HT*, 22, 26 May, 2, 9, 16 June, 1900, *O&MA*, 26 May, 2, 16 June, 14 July 1900.
41. *C&HT*, 11 July, 1 August, 14 November 1900.
42. *C&HT*, 31 October 1900.
43. *AO*, 30 November 1900, *C&HT*, 24, 28 November, 5 December 1900, 5, 9, 19, 23 January 1901, *FS*, 30 November, 7 December 1900, *O&MA*, 1 December 1900, 12 January 1901, *RS*, 27, 30 November 1900, *W&TS*, 23, 30 November 1900, 4, 11, 25 January 1901.
44. *YT*, 14 December 1900.
45. Zelman Cowen, *Isaac Isaacs* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1967).
46. *AO*, 23 February 1900, *C&HT*, 18 April 1900, *WC*, 21 March 1900, *YT*, 6 April 1900.
47. *YT*, 23 February 1900.
48. *C&HT*, 15 February 1899, *UM&MH*, 5 April 1900, Craig Wilcox, *For Hearths and Homes: Citizen Soldiering in Australia 1854–1945* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1998).
49. *FS*, 4, 11 May 1900.
50. *AO*, 13 April 1900, *C&HT*, 31 March, 4 April 1900, *CC*, 4, 25 January, 8 February, 15 March 1900, *FS*, 13 March, 6, 20 April, 4, 11 May 1900, *UM&MH*, 5 April, 7 June 1900, *WC*, 11 April 1900.
51. *UM&MH*, 5 July 1900.
52. *C&HT*, 16 June 1900.
53. *WC*, 17 January, 7, 24 February, 7, 28 March, 21 April, 23 June 1900.
54. *WC*, 4 July 1900.
55. *RS*, 10 July 1900.
56. *C&HT*, 7 July 1900, *O&MA*, 7 July 1900.
57. *C&HT*, 11 November 1899, *FS*, 30 November 1900, *O&MA*, 1 September 1900, *WC*, 21 July 1900.
58. *B&BA* quoted in the *O&MA*, 11 January 1902.

CHAPTER 4

Exploring Disloyalty

Abstract War brings with it suspicions of disloyalty, and the regional press was quick to point the finger at those suspected of disloyalty outside the North East. Suspicions about the loyalty of the region's Irish Catholic population were ridiculed by local editors and were allayed when a local priest wrote a passionate defence of Britain's actions in South Africa. Yet, jingoism, sectarianism and allegations of disloyalty did come together in the district of Leneva where some of the parents accused the local school teacher of disloyalty in the weeks following Black Week. He was exonerated by a departmental inquiry. Beechworth's Congregational minister, Albert Rivett, however, publicly opposed the war from its beginning.

Jingoism brought with it a search for disloyalty. The regional press was quick to pounce upon evidence of opposition to the war and disloyalty beyond the North East. Dr Fitchett, author of *Deeds That Won the Empire*, and Dame Nellie Melba came under suspicion. Henry Bourne Higgins, John Murray and the other "pro-Boer" members of parliament, who had opposed sending colonial troops to South Africa, received short shrift from regional editors. They had even less time for John Rentoul's Peace and Humanity Society, dismissing him and the Society's 250 members as "notoriety hunters", "cranks" and "disloyalist".[1] The region paid less attention to the anti-war campaign waged by Arnold Wood, Sydney University's Professor of History, or the activities of the Anti-War League,

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which was also based in Sydney and none at all to the vehement opposition to the commitment of troops by the New South Wales Labor politician, William Morris Hughes. Some citizens, however, did take exception to Sydney's "disloyal rag", *The Bulletin*: one subscriber to the Wangaratta Athenaeum, writing on behalf of 30 others, presented the council with an ultimatum: cancel *The Bulletin* or cancel my subscription. The Athenaeum kept its subscription to the "pink infidel", but it was only available "on request".[2]

But what of disloyalty within the region? Apart from Isaac Isaacs, the pickings were slim indeed. In Corryong, for example, William Heath ended up in court after a fight at the races with a volunteer. He was fined and lectured sternly by the bench on matters of loyalty. At Chiltern Valley No. 2, an Italian flattened a man who sneered at Baden Powell. Some Italians, the Chiltern paper reported, had more patriotism than "so-called Britishers".[3] Rutherglen's Presbyterian congregation also had its moment. Gilbert Wallace, in charge of one of the subscription lists for the Patriotic Fund, wrote to the *Rutherglen Sun* in February 1900 slamming the "heresy-hunters" who whispered that he was disloyal.[4] His local minister, H.D.O'Sullivan, also wrote a letter to the *Rutherglen Sun* vehemently denying "slanderous reports" circulating in the town that he was a Boer sympathiser. A month later, however, he resigned his position and left the town.[5] Yet, lurking in the background were Gladstone's "drinking, dancing and dynamiting" Irish. Irish Catholics from New York were fighting with the Boers. Cardinal Moran had initially opposed the war. Sydney's *Catholic Press* and Melbourne's *Advocate* opposed the war. Letters began to appear in the columns of the regional papers questioning the loyalty of Irish Catholics: and the editors responded.

The *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, for example, pointedly noted that seven of Britain's military leaders in South Africa were "Irish". One reader demanded to know what "type" of Irish they were. The editor, in a signed piece, replied that Roberts and Kitchener were Church of England, Cleary, Kelly-Kenny, McCarthy and O'Leary were Roman Catholic and Wauchope was Presbyterian. He then went on to deplore the attempt by the reader to link sectarianism with disloyalty.[6] The *Yackandandah Times* published the religious affiliations of the men in the First Victorian Contingent noting that 31 were "Roman Catholics",[7] allowing its readers to conclude that the "Roman Catholics" were "Irish Catholics" and that the Irish Catholic population had contributed its fair share to the First Contingent. The tour conducted by Father McInerney, S.J., whose brother had been

taken prisoner by the Boers, received substantial press coverage. The Jesuit spoke to packed cross-denominational audiences across the region with a simple message: the war was one of duty in a just cause.[8] But it remained a sensitive issue and regional editors were hardly helped by the region's Catholic clergy. For, although deploring war in general, the majority of the region's Protestant ministers actively and publicly promoted the war effort[9]: their Catholic colleagues, however, were silent. And this probably accounts for the reception accorded Father Patrick Dunne.

Father Dunne

Dunne was the 84-year-old Irish-born priest in charge of St John's Orphanage at Thurgoona, just north of Albury. Dunne had spent most of his clerical life in Australia as a missionary in Queensland. An Irish Nationalist committed to Home Rule for Ireland, he had consistently promoted Irish Catholic immigration, despite opposition from Queensland governments. In December 1899, he wrote to the *Albury Banner*. Some of his co-religionists, he claimed, had been misled by elements in the Catholic press "who ought to know better". He had little sympathy with a "semi-barbarous, corrupt and bigoted government" in the Transvaal that denied Catholics the right to vote. The empire had its shortcomings, yet it allowed Catholics liberty and England partly funded Catholic schools. He remembered South Africa as the place where Afrikaners stopped his attempts to temporarily land some 400 Irish immigrants en route to Australia because they were Papists.[10] He then quoted the opinions of a Catholic bishop in South Africa who described the Boers as ignorant, selfish and bigoted with "no more ideas of morality than a tom cat". Here was the voice regional editors had been looking for: an Irish Catholic priest and an Irish Nationalist defending empire.

The region's Catholic laity seemed to be in tune with Dunne, even if their local priests preferred silence. Individual Catholics and Catholic organisations actively worked to dispel any notion of disloyalty. Rutherglen's Thomas Drenen was one. His belief in empire reflected his middle class background and his place in society, but the prominent part he played in Rutherglen's patriotic movement may have also been motivated by the negative responses to Moran's initial opposition to the war. A similar motivation may well have lain behind the prominent part played by the Hibernian lodges in raising money for the Patriotic Fund in the region. Chiltern's branch raised more money and marched in more parades than

the ANA.[11] Public action and a concerted press campaign, with Dunne as its champion, effectively blunted any attempt to publicly link religious and ethnic affiliation with disloyalty.

This did not mean, however, that sectarianism was a dead issue: far from it. Chiltern's Anglican minister, W.G. Carter, who had praised Dunne's loyalty,[12] had no hesitation in warning his congregation of the dangers of sending their children St Mary's Catholic school in Rutherglen. Its upper school offered secondary education, irrespective of denomination, to the residents of the district.[13] Any Protestant parents who sent their children to a Catholic school would see their children turned from their faith, he claimed. Ireland was a telling example of the failure of Catholic education with the priests keeping the people in "ignorance and superstition". He also hoped that Chiltern's Catholics would appreciate the "kind and truthful spirit" of his remarks and "feel no affront".

He was somewhat optimistic. Father Patrick J. Griffin felt compelled to remind Carter that when England was floundering in the dark ages, Ireland was the keeper of knowledge, literature and civilisation. For the next three months, protagonists on both sides conducted a robust debate through the columns of the *Federal Standard*.[14] The framing, argument and vigour of the debate were familiar, but none of the letters raised the issue of Irish Catholic loyalty in a time of war.

Disloyalty at Leneva

Leneva was part of Wodonga Shire's Green Hills Riding. Henry Beardmore was its councillor and a firm Presbyterian. He and John Gartlan, Leneva's schoolteacher, were friends. Gartlan had achieved modest fame 13 years before by writing the winning essay in a competition run by the Imperial Federation League.[15] He was also a Catholic.

In December 1899, the month of Black Week, the *Yackandandah Times* reported that Gartlan was a Boer sympathiser. According to young Percy Parnaby, the teacher had told his pupils that he hoped the Boers would drive the British into the sea. The citizens of the district, "loyal to the core", had condemned him at a public meeting and were circulating a petition to have him sacked.[16] The *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel* took exception to the report, claiming that it was Percy's father, J. T. Parnaby, who had made the allegations, not the boy, and added that the allegations had since been retracted.[17] What followed entertained Wodonga's citizens for months in the *Sentinel*'s columns.

Parnaby fired the first salvo, claiming that Beardmore had asked him to organise a deputation to wait on Gartlan, demanding that the teacher "explain his loyalty", and flatly denied that a petition existed. He was supported by six other men from Leneva. Gartlan dismissed the allegations as the work of a small clique of parents in the district—and he threatened to sue. Beardmore denied it all, dismissing it as "lynch law under the cloak of loyalty" undertaken by "vindictive loyalists". He did, however, instruct his lawyers to write to Parnaby and his supporters, and threatened to horsewhip one of them. The *Sentinel*, remarking that horsewhipping had an "ominous" ring to it, closed correspondence at the end of March.[18] But tempers were running so high that the participants purchased space in the paper to put their case through statutory declarations.

The imbroglio took a more serious turn in May when Beardmore visited Gartlan. During the visit, the axle nuts on his buggy were unscrewed and Gartlan's vehicle was vandalised. No culprits were found by the police. The incident prompted the citizens of Leneva to call a public meeting where Parnaby's supporters accused Beardmore and Gartlan of "hatching up" the buggy incident. In a bizarre end to the meeting, Beardmore, Gartlan and their adversaries put up a substantial reward of £90 for any information leading to a conviction.[19] At this point, the Education Department stepped in. Despite his denial, Parnaby's petition did exist and it had arrived on the Director's desk. An official inquiry by the district inspector, H.F. Rix, was set for June in the local school.[20]

The school was packed. Some of the principal players, however, were missing. Parnaby and his supporters had refused to attend. Instead, D.A. Williams gave the evidence against Gartlan. Although his children attended a different school, he informed Rix that his son had told him of the allegations and added that a neighbour, Humphrey Boyes, had told him that *his* neighbour's children had reported Gartlan's disloyal utterances to their parents. Young Percy Parnaby appeared but, under his father's instructions, refused to answer questions put by Rix. A second pupil in the school called as a witness denied ever hearing Gartlan make any disloyal statements, but added that he had heard the story from Willie Paterson. Willie, under the watchful eye of the district inspector, flatly denied the claim. Gartlan, of course, denied the allegation. The Dutch, he said, were a brave race but only good would come of the "solidification of South Africa under the British Flag". And a touch of arrogance came through in his testimony. It was his right, he said, as a British citizen, to criticise policy, even if such criticisms differed from views held by the "bulk

of the community". Gartlan was exonerated by the Education Department (although Rix instructed the teacher to hold his tongue in future). Apart from young Percy, the principal witnesses had failed to appear and the evidence was clearly hearsay.[21]

The controversy, however, refused to die. Statutory declarations once more appeared in the Wodonga paper from the participants including two from Boyes. He bluntly asserted that a clique, determined to get rid of Gartlan because of his religion, had planned the charges in a series of secret meetings.[22] And, in the interim, Parnaby had announced that he would be standing against Beardmore in the council elections due in August.

Clearly there was a clique of parents who were unhappy with Gartlan and wanted him removed, and Parnaby had political ambitions. Black Week and its aftermath brought these two elements together in an allegation of disloyalty against Gartlan. It was anticipated that, because of his friendship with Gartlan, Beardmore would suffer at the polls. Voter turnout was high: 140 of the 159 voters registered on the roll cast their ballots. Beardmore tripled Parnaby's vote and was elected by council as the new shire president.[23] The *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel* aptly summed up Leneva's brush with disloyalty as a "fiasco".[24] By the time Rix held his inquiry, the jingoism that had been the vehicle for the anti-Gartlan campaign was on the wane and was well and truly over by August: but it does shows that politics, loyalty and religion can be a heady mix at the community level.

"Foreigners"

Although the Irish Catholics may have come under suspicion, "foreigners" in general did not. A German national at Chiltern Valley No. 2 was apparently threatened and he left the district for The Rock in the Riverina, an area of German settlement. The suggestion that Wodonga had more than its fair share of pro-Boers may have been an oblique comment on the German Australians living in the district but there is no record that these sentiments were translated into hostile actions taken against them. Chiltern's Councillor Jacobsohn probably spoke for the regional German Australian community when he said he was a foreigner by birth but a Britisher by choice. If he went back to Germany, he would have to declare himself an alien, he said.[25] And Chiltern Valley had its loyal Italian.

This lack of regional concern about the threat posed by "foreigners" was clearly evident in the response to the controversy that engulfed the

Board of Works in June 1900. The Board sacked three draughtsmen after they had refused to sing the National Anthem to celebrate the Relief of Mafeking. One was a German national, one was a German national who had taken out British citizenship and the third was Swiss. Whilst the metropolitan press roundly condemned the men, the regional press roundly condemned the Board. The sackings savoured of injustice, of playing to a jingo gallery. Australians were fighting for the right of these men to hold their views and the men had the courage of their convictions. This placed the regional press in some rather uncomfortable company. Rentoul had also championed the draughtsmen. The papers, however, condemned Rentoul's "interference": *that* man was still "profoundly disloyal".[26]

It remains an irony, then, that the one man the regional press did condemn as disloyal was not Irish, or Catholic, and was British born. He was Beechworth's Congregational minister, Albert Rivett.

Disloyalty, Sedition and Treason: Albert Rivett

Rivett was a man of strong views. He deplored sectarianism, opposed the White Australia Policy, championed the state school system and Sunday burials, admired Henry George, believed that the Second Coming was near and castigated a world that had moved too far from God for his liking.[27] He was opposed to jingoism, militarism and war. From its beginning to its end, he publicly opposed the war in South Africa. He did not need the local papers to make his views known: he had his own monthly journal, the *Murray Independent*, which bore the subtitle, *A Journal of Applied Christianity.*

Rivett first publicly questioned the war during Black Week. If Christ's message was understood, he wrote, there would be no wars. This attracted broadsides from "Union Jack" and "Historicus" who admonished him to "preach truth, not disloyalty and sedition".[28] Rivett returned to the fray in March 1900. Considering the expectations building over Mafeking, his column was inflammatory. Britain had no right to be in South Africa, he wrote. It was a conquered country, taken from the Boers who had tamed a wilderness. Britain's relationship with the enemy was one of broken promises and greed. The war was being fought for diamonds and gold, for Rhodes and the "South African gang", not liberty. The Boers were narrow minded, prejudiced, brave, stubborn, deeply religious and independent, fighting to keep their country from the hands of a motley crowd of gold seekers. Abuse heaped on those opposed to the war did not

change the facts, he wrote, adding that it was time to step back from the "unreasonable and Pharisaic cocksureness so prevalent everywhere". He ended by hoping that the Boers would show England that she could not always rule the roost.[29]

Rivett was now accused of treason and some called for him to be silenced.[30] But Rivett did have two defenders. In the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, "Lest We Forget" claimed that the English were rightly hated abroad because they boasted of their superiority. No nation walked less humbly before God than a country that baulked at any major confrontation with a major power, but was more than prepared to take on the weak.[31] "Freelance", writing for the *Bogong and Benambra Advertiser*, defended the man rather than his views. A self-confessed jingo could hardly support Rivett's views, he wrote, but how was Rivett to be silenced—with a violent blow to the head? He had every right to put his views even if he has been ostracised in Beechworth.[32]

Ostracism hardly deterred Rivett. He wrote that if the Relief of Mafeking heralded the end of the war, Beechworth should concentrate on a religious service, not fireworks, because before God, "Boer and Briton are alike".[33] The Boers had never intended to drive the British into the sea and the ambitions of Cecil Rhodes were a major cause of the war. By July, he was arguing that the war was a huge blunder on economic and humane grounds and was not the "righteous success it was boomed to be". He also promoted the Peace and Humanity Society as one of the few organisations in the country that told the truth about the war.[34]

Rivett continued his anti-war crusade into 1901. He savaged the scorched earth policy being pursued by Kitchener in South Africa. The rifle, he claimed, was the symbol of the savage, and militarism was the result of a "stupid jingoism" pushed by "trumpet tongued patriots". There was no "Christ" to be found in Britain's attitude towards the Boers.[35] The loyalists, however, now ignored him, except for one lone letter writer who was moved to attack Beechworth's "little pro-Boer organ" in February 1902. Rivett, the writer claimed, picked through offal "hoping to find something that stinks". The writer wondered why God had not rained fire on the British if the stories of atrocities against the Boer saints printed in the *Murray Independent* were true.[36]

Peace did nothing to dampen the clergyman's ardour. The sight of two Christian nations engaged in war was "enough to make the angels weep" he wrote. The war had been one of wanton aggression against pious farmers and lasting peace never came from the sword. And then,

in what might have been a slip, he added that the sword should only be drawn in self-defence. "Freelance" asked the inevitable question—what constitutes self-defence? The response that may well have chilled Rivett was the letter from "Zion's Watchman": Christ had said that he came not to bring peace but the sword—and this was the time. The nations of Europe were preparing for war and in doing so "were unconsciously carrying out a Divine purpose".[37]

Rivett left Beechworth in June 1902. "Criticus", writing to the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, noted that once into the fray, the minister "shut his ears to all but his own arguments", but he would be missed.[38] Rivett would hold true to his beliefs. During the Great War, he became one of Sydney's leading pacifists.[39]

The historiography of the war argues that opposition was associated with specific individuals or specific groups. The jingoes immediately suspected the loyalty of Irish Catholics, German Australians, foreigners in general, sections of the labour movement and the Labor Party and attacked organisations like the Anti-War League or the Peace and Humanity Society and *The Bulletin*. Barbara Penny argued that imperial loyalty soon swamped any opposition to the war, especially after the war was linked with nationalist aims, and this fuelled an acceptance of dominion status within empire as an acceptable substitute for genuine independence. Chris Connolly argued that opposition to the war was a more complex issue than Penny allowed, reflecting a mixture of class, birthplace and radical nationalism. The triumph of the imperialists, then, was modified by persistent opposition from those groups outside the prevailing middle class Anglo-Scottish hegemony, such as the Irish Catholics and the labour movement. Yet both believed that opposition to the war belonged to minorities, it was part of broader sectional aims being pursued by these groups and that, despite some cultural sympathy in Irish Catholic circles for any country resisting British domination, the Irish Catholic community was as divided as any other in its response to the war.[40]

The North East only matches this picture in part. Regional papers did note that the Irish Catholic community was as divided as any other in its response to the war.[41] But the region had no branches of anti-war groups, such as the Peace and Humanity Society, to focus any regional opposition to the war (although Rivett's campaign closely matched the metropolitan campaigns run by Rentoul, Wood and other intellectual opponents to the war as described by Penny). The fledgling labour movement in the region remained silent on the war. The Amalgamated Miners' Association

(AMA) preferred its own industrial war with Cocks. The regional search for disloyalists and "pro-Boers" had been brief and was at its most intense between Black Week and Mafeking. It had claimed some victims, such as Rutherglen's Presbyterian minister, H.D. O'Sullivan, but failed when it came to Gartlan. Rivett was simply ignored. In one sense, though, Penny's conclusion holds true for the region: imperial loyalty swamped opposition. The *Alpine Observer* reported in April 1902 that, in common with most districts, Bright had an "insignificant minority" who had doubts about the war but when "stimulated by alcoholic fresheners, one does overstep the mark … his correction is short, sharp and decisive".[42] Yet, O'Connor's argument that modification was an important element also holds true, but in an unexpected way. The modification had little to do with a national discourse. It was more a form of mediation, which challenged implied links between disloyalty and ethnicity and religion in a regional community's public discourse. Place and community drew a sharp distinction between the unacceptable (disloyalty) and the acceptable (sectarianism). And the region belies *The Bulletin*'s comfortable claim that the bush was against the war.[43]

Notes

1. *C&HT*, 1 September, 15 December 1900.
2. *WC*, 22 February 1900, 'Freelance' in the *O&MA*, 20 November 1901.
3. *CC*, 12 April 1900, *FS*, 18 May 1900.
4. *RS*, 9 February 1900, *FS*, 9 February 1900.
5. *RS*, 6, 9 February, 9 March 1900, *FS*, 9 February 1900.
6. *O&MA*, 10 March 1900.
7. *YT*, 16 February 1900.
8. *FS*, 2 March 1900.
9. *AO*, 23 February 1900, 26 July 1901, *C&HT*, 23 August 1901, *FS*, 3 November 1899, *O&MA*, 23 February 1900, *RS*, 20 February 1900, *WC*, 8 May 1901.
10. *FS*, 8 December 1899, 7 September 1900.
11. *FS*, 9 February 1900.
12. *FS*, 9 February 1900.
13. *RS*, 5 March 1901.
14. *FS*, 25 October, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 November, 6 December, 13 December 1901.

15. *C&HT*, 27 June 1900.
16. *YT*, 26 December 1899.
17. *W&TS*, 2 February 1900.
18. *W&TS*, 9, 16, 23 February, 2, 16, 23, 30 March 1900.
19. *W&TS*, 6, 20, 27 April, 4, 11 May 1900.
20. *O&MA*, 3 February, 12 May 1900.
21. *YT*, 29 June 1900, *W&TS*, 22, 29 June, 24 August 1900.
22. *W&TS*, 6, 20, 27 July, 3 August 1900.
23. *W&TS*, 10 August, 17 August, 24 August, 31 August 1900.
24. *W&TS*, 22 June 1900.
25. *FS*, 29 February, 7 September 1900, *W&TS*, 9 February 1900.
26. *C&HT*, 6 June 1900, *FS*, 8 June 1900, *O&MA*, 9 June 1900, *YT*, 9 June 1900.
27. *C&HT*, 30 December 1899, 9 May, 26 May 1900, 21 December 1901, *FS*, 27 January 1902, *O&MA*, 22 December 1900, 28 August, 7 December 1901, 13 June, 22 December 1902.
28. *O&MA*, 23 December 1899.
29. *MI* quoted by *O&MA*, 10 March 1900, *YT*, 18 May 1900.
30. *O&MA*, 28 April 1900, *YT*, 18 May 1900.
31. *O&MA*, 5 May 1900.
32. *B&BA* quoted by *O&MA*, 21 April, 5 May 1900.
33. *C&HT*, 26 May 1900, *MI* quoted by *O&MA*, 21 July 1900, *O&MA*, 26 May 1900.
34. *MI* quoted by *O&MA*, 14 July 1900.
35. *MI* quoted by *O&MA*, 27 April, 21, 28 December 1901, 8 March, 10 May 1902.
36. *O&MA*, 22 February 1902.
37. *O&MA*, 14, 21 June 1902.
38. *O&MA*, 13 June 1902.
39. McKernan, *Australian Churches at War*, 153.
40. C. N. Connolly, "Class, Birthplace and Loyalty: Australian Attitudes Towards the Boer War", *Historical Studies*, 18, 71, (1978): 210–32, Barbara Penny, "Australia's Reactions to the Boer War: A Study in Colonial Imperialism", *Journal of British Studies*, 7, 1 (1967): 97–130, Barbara Penny, "The Australian Debate on the Boer War", *Historical Studies*, 14, 56, (1971): 526–45, Field, *The Forgotten War*, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*.
41. See, for example, *FS*, 9 February 1900, *RS*, 9 February 1900.
42. *AO*, 25 April 1902.
43. The *Bulletin* quoted in Field, *The Forgotten War*, 67.

CHAPTER 5

Our Boys

Abstract Volunteers for service were young and single. Selection for service was something of a lottery. Doubts dominated the public rhetoric at farewells; would colonial volunteers be a match for the Boer and a worthy peer of the Tommy in defence of empire? Few men were not officially welcomed home. These men had dispelled any doubts about Australians fighting in a war for empire. The welcome home socials began as all-male affairs but quickly became community affairs. Male leaders in the community gave the speeches at farewell and welcome home socials with an emphasis on duty and empire. Those returning rarely spoke of the personal cost of war.

The exact number of men from the region who served in South Africa is difficult to establish. The embarkation rolls for the Australian contingents list 153 regional men who went to war, signing on for a year's service. The largest intake was for the Fifth VMR with 32 successful volunteers.[1] Regional volunteers also enlisted in other units. Men rejected for service, like Walter Briggs, paid their own passage to South Africa and joined imperial or South African units there. At least five regional men, living in South Africa at the outbreak of the war, joined units raised there. Three men joined the Marquis of Tullibardine's Scottish Horse,[2] and eleven joined up with the Carrington Scouts.[3] Over 170 regional men, then, served in the war.

The embarkation rolls give a very clear picture of the men who served. The vast majority (98%) were single. Over half were under the age of

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25; over 90% were under the age of 30. Almost 60% came from rural backgrounds: 21% gave their occupation as farmers or graziers,[4] 38% listed their occupations as bush labourers, station hands, stock men and horse breakers. In terms of religious affiliation, the majority were Church of England and members of this faith were overrepresented in the contingents when set beside the region's religious affiliation. The other denominations basically matched the regional picture with the exception of the Catholics who were underrepresented in the contingents but hardly by a significant proportion.[5] The regional profile matches those constructed by Max Chamberlain except for the fact that, as one would expect, the proportion of men enlisting from rural occupational backgrounds was somewhat higher than those recorded by Chamberlain.[6] And, despite the emphasis placed on the regional VMR as a natural recruiting ground, the majority of its volunteers came from the rifle clubs.[7]

The majority of the men served one term of service but at least eight men signed on for a second stint. They included two men who would rise through the ranks and serve with distinction, Captain Victor Hennessy from Glenrowan and Lieutenant Stephen Beatty from Yackandandah. Hennessy enlisted with the First Victorian Contingent and would remain in South Africa for the duration, finally coming home in 1902. Beatty enlisted with the Second Victorian Contingent, was wounded and repatriated, and rejoined with the Fifth Victorian Contingent.[8] Beatty would later enlist in the Great War. He was killed in France in 1916.

Leaving

Selection for service was something of a lottery. Applications were lost, successful applicants were culled at subsequent musters, and some men failed their medical in Melbourne, or basic training, or were considered surplus to requirements.[9] This produced a strong sense of dissatisfaction amongst those who had passed the first muster,[10] especially as they had been required to pay their own train fare to Melbourne.[11] Some washed their hands of the whole business but for others rejection acted as an incentive. James Clingin, for example, had been selected in early 1900 for the Fourth but failed at the rifle butts. He came home to Yackandandah, joined the rifle club and practised. A year later he succeeded in joining the Fifth.[12]

Uncertainty marked the successful volunteers' movements before embarkation. Some came home but others did not. Consequently, attempts

to organise farewell socials were often hit and miss affairs. Nor was there any clear sense as to who was responsible for undertaking the task. In Rutherglen, for example, the Fire Brigade gave Robert Drummond a farewell after he enlisted in the Fourth Contingent. Several toasts were enthusiastically honoured and the evening ended with Drummond being chaired around the town on the shoulders of his staggering mates. But there was no farewell for another man from the district who had also joined the Fourth but who did not belong to the Fire Brigade.[13]

Where social status was involved, however, it was more likely to be a "hit" than a "miss". Beechworth learnt that Charles Mahy, a member of the First Contingent, was due home for a day's leave before embarkation. His father was a member of the town's legal profession. The council acted with alacrity. Mahy was given a public reception in the evening and was farewelled by a large crowd at the station the following morning where a bugler played the general salute and a local photographer recorded the event.[14]

The rural communities, however, generally did much better and turned on a community farewell at short notice.[15] Cudgewa may have been somewhat overzealous because it gave two.

The first took place in February 1900 to congratulate six men who had been selected at Benalla for the Fourth as well as one man who had been rejected but decided to go to Melbourne just in case. Over 200 people turned up. Many were brought in by Dot Briggs's "express wagon": his brother was amongst those selected. The men were congratulated on their "good fortune". There was little doubt that they would bear any trials or hardships with the "true heroism of their race" as they defended "the dear old flag, upon which a stain has never rested".[16] After cheers for the Queen and to a *feu de joie* of no less than 54 shots fired by local rifle clubs, the men were paraded before a cheering crowd who waved their hats and handkerchiefs until they disappeared from sight on Dot's wagon. It was an emotional occasion: the volunteers had "strenuously" tried to stifle their feelings.[17] The second farewell took place in March for the three men who had passed the tests in Melbourne. Once more the locals cheered their soldiers until Dot and his passengers disappeared into the distance. They also commiserated with the men who had been rejected, and a "bitterly disappointed" Will Barber who, although selected, could not go. His sister, strongly opposed to his going, had hidden his papers.[18]

Did the failure to formally farewell a volunteer off to do his duty for empire and country reflect badly on the patriotism of a community?

Bright certainly thought so—and it was time to repay Myrtleford for its slight the year before. In early 1901, not only had Trooper Puzey left Myrtleford without any form of farewell but Trooper Toner's return also went unnoticed. (Toner's war had not been a happy one. Not only had he been wounded but he was also run over by the ambulance wagon sent to take him to hospital.) Surely, the Bright paper observed, this reflected a lack of patriotic spirit in Myrtleford. Myrtleford's correspondent immediately went on the offensive. Puzey's departure was abrupt, due to the demands of war. Toner was to blame for his unnoticed return: he had not bothered to let anyone know he was coming. Besides, Toner was hardly a "local"—he came from Barwidgee. It was all nonsense as far as many of the readers were concerned. Barwidgee lies less than six miles from Myrtleford. The names of the men returning were published in the metropolitan papers delivered daily to the region, giving communities plenty of time to organise a reception. And as one Myrtleford resident noted in a letter to the editor, the farewell and welcome home socials were controlled by a few "prime movers" who were highly selective in those they chose to honour. Rattled, the Myrtleford correspondent switched tack. Toner would be given a welcome home social, despite the fact that he came from Barwidgee.[19]

Myrtleford's lapses notwithstanding, matters had begun to work more smoothly with the raising of the Fourth Contingent. Some communities followed Cudgewa's lead and gave socials for the men who had been selected during the first muster. Local councils became involved in organising farewells. Some towns set up special committees to handle the event. Tallangatta's and Chiltern's were known as the Returned Soldiers' Committee, an interesting indication of regional attitudes as will be discussed below. Speeches delivered clearly reflected the belief identified by Wilcox that Australians were partners in an imperial cause.[20] The men were reminded of the awesome duties that awaited them, of England's call, of the stern needs of empire and of the "dear old flag". As "chips off the old block", Australians surely "possessed hearts of oak". Songs and recitations were interspersed between the speeches. "Soldiers of the Queen" was a staple although there were others: "You can get a sweetheart any day, but not another mother" was one.[21] By the time the Fifth Contingent was raised, the region had it down pat. George Gambold at his farewell in Everton was asked to "attest" as to why he had joined the Fifth. He replied, "to assist in upholding the honour of the Queen and Empire, to do his duty; and, if necessary, lose his life in the Empire's defence". He was warmly applauded.[22]

Doubts

When the war began, it begged one simple question: would the colonial Australians prove to be both a match for the Boer and a worthy peer of the Tommy in defence of empire?[23] The speeches at Charles Mahy's farewell in Beechworth reflected these issues. Mahy was taking up arms in defence of empire and, like all Australian volunteers, would meet "expectations". He was instructed to obey his officers, was reminded that he had British blood in his veins and a long and glorious tradition to live up to. Charles was 19 and reacted in a way that reflected his age, gender and the advice given. If the Australians copied the Beechworth Rifle Club's recent success in colonial competition, they would "knock a few Boers over", he said. When a "voice" hoped that the Boers would be finished before he reached South Africa, Charles "hoped they were not": he wanted "a cut" at the enemy, he said, to prolonged cheering.[24]

The behaviour of some of the volunteers attending the musters also fuelled doubts about the Australian volunteer's adaptability to military discipline and an imperial cause. The men who had travelled to Benalla for the muster for the Fourth, for example, had "quite a time of it". Rowdy behaviour and damage to railway property brought regional press censure and a police investigation.[25] And in Wangaratta, "rowdyism", which included destroying the Church of England's flower show, was blamed on young men who came to enlist.[26]

That explains the boosterism so evident in the farewell speeches. The Australians, it was claimed, were vital for victory. British officers in South Africa were "well pleased" with the free, dashing and "irregular" methods used by Australian troops (which turned poor military discipline into a virtue). The Australians were more than comparable with the "picked troops of the world", capable of doing "certain types of work better than the regular army men".[27] When the Australians *did* acquit themselves well in the field, the press felt that "expectations" had more than been met. Australia was producing "first class fighting men".[28] Yet, the doubts lingered. In January 1901, Rutherglen hosted a farewell for the Dare brothers and Thomas Archer, successful volunteers for the Fifth Contingent. The speeches delivered echoed those delivered at Mahy's farewell a year before.[39]

Coming Home

Bright's dig at Myrtleford for neglecting to honour Toner's return reflected a curious inversion in the region's social response to its men who went to war. The farewells, when held, were well attended, but less than

a third of the men embarking received any form of social. The welcome home socials, however, were different. Few men were *not* officially welcomed home, even those who did not want to be.[30]

The *Alpine Observer* had signalled the regional mood in mid 1900 when it printed a stinging attack on Melbourne and its public. Every man who went with the first contingents was treated royally, but where were the welcoming crowds for the men returning, and where were the political leaders who had farewelled them with such enthusiasm? Their absence was "shameful". The *Observer* was not alone in its view, as Henry (Harry) Hennessy's return demonstrated.[31]

Hennessy came from Glenrowan. His widowed mother had returned to teaching to support her two sons and three daughters. Harry joined the First Contingent with his brother, Victor. Both were members of the Benalla VMR. Harry was wounded in May 1900, contracted enteric fever whilst in hospital, and was repatriated to Australia in July. On his arrival in Melbourne, he was hospitalised in the Prince Alfred. Melbourne ignored his return (as it did the return of the other men on his ship). The North East was another matter entirely. The region welcomed him home after his release from hospital. Wangaratta and Benalla decorated their stations for the occasion, members of the VMR were in attendance and the town bands played "The Conquering Hero". At Glenrowan, Bowser delivered the welcome home speech to a cheering crowd and Hennessy was presented with an engraved 18 carat gold keyless Waltham watch inscribed with his name, and "Glenrowan, South Africa, 1899–1900, *Imperium in Imperio*".[32] The *Wangaratta Chronicle* published a photograph of him in uniform as the header for its five-column report of the reception.[33] A month later, Tallangatta turned out a large crowd to welcome home Harry Martin from the Second Contingent. Harry had been stricken with enteric fever before reaching the front, but as far as Tallangatta was concerned, he had done his bit.[34]

Why, then, did the region attach more significance to the welcome home socials than to the farewells? There was the practical element: as noted earlier, the names of men returning home were published in the metropolitan press, giving communities time to organise. There was also a touch of the exotic in the mix; these men had seen war. But the key reason lay in the fact that the men returning home had dispelled any doubts about Australians fighting in a war for empire. Unlike the volunteers who had yet to prove themselves, the returning men had shown that Australians *could* cut the mustard. The return of Charles Mahy to Beechworth in January 1901 captured that sentiment.

The station was decorated and overflowed with an enthusiastic crowd. The band played as Mahy stepped down from the train to meet family, friends and "admirers". There were not enough room in the hall to accommodate those who turned up for the reception. Mahy and his father sat on the stage and Billson presided. Billson claimed that Australia had shown the "absolute unity" of empire by sending men to the war. More significantly, he added, the Australians had shown the "same fighting stuff" that made the empire (rather than England) what it was today. William Stredwick, as one might have expected, upped the rhetoric a notch or two by claiming that the war needed unique soldiers to fight the Boer and they were the Australians. Australians were independent and more than capable of handling the situation if an officer was shot: British soldiers degenerated into an "unruly mob" when they lost an officer. According to Lieutenant Barnes, resplendent in his gold-laced VMR uniform, Victorians had shown that they were not "blackfellows" and described the British troops as "merely marching machines". Mahy rose to speak to thunderous applause. He was pleased, he said, that the war had not ended before his arrival. He had had a good time and would not have missed it for anything. The Tommy, he said, was a basically decent man but, unlike Australians, he needed orders and direction. And the Tommy "stood in awe for the way the colonials gathered the loot".

His father thanked Beechworth for the reception given to his son. He had never attempted to stop him going although he believed "several ladies" had tried to. It was a curious comment and may well have reflected a passing remark by one of the speakers: Charles' mother had been "anxious about him". She was not present at the reception, however, which was an all-male affair. Martin Mahy also acknowledged the toast made by Donald Fletcher who congratulated him on the safe return of his son. Fletcher had one son serving in South Africa and, he announced to the gathering, his youngest son had just been accepted into the Fifth.[35]

Although Mahy's reception was an all-male affair, and others would follow the same path with smoke nights and banquets, most of the public receptions quickly became community affairs. Toner's return to Myrtleford had opened up the issue of who owned the war effort, the "prime movers" or the community. Myrtleford's first welcome home had been for Willie Carroll, the "hero" of Ladysmith.[36] It took the form of a banquet where the cost put it beyond the reach of most in the town. This sparked resentment and brought change. Toner's welcome home took the form of a social in the local hall, which everybody could attend.[37] At Tallangatta,

attempts to turn the welcome home for Troopers Moyle and Ronald into an exclusively male affair with a banquet was rejected at a public meeting because the women and children could not attend. A compromise was struck and the men were given two receptions: a banquet, attended by Tallangatta's male elite, and a social that filled the local hall.[38] The move to community socials brought with it a subtle variation in the toast to the parents of the returned soldier. At all-male affairs, worthy sires had produced worthy sons; at community receptions, worthy sons had come from worthy parents.[39]

From the first to the last, the community welcome home socials were well attended. The venues were appropriately decorated with greenery, flags, bunting of red, white and blue, and portraits of Roberts and Baden Powell. The men were cheered as they entered. The receptions mixed speeches with recitations, songs and tableaux. And the region blithely ignored the plea from Lord Roberts to eschew "wet" welcome home socials (although it is not clear if it also ignored his plea to young women to refrain from kissing the returning men). The presentations for the returning men were substantial, sometimes extravagant. Some were given a gold medal. Others were given a purse of sovereigns or gold double Albert watches to accompany their medals. The last reception was held in February 1903 in Rutherglen.[40] The preliminaries, however, could be tedious. William Tidyman, Henry Crisfield, Charles Carlyle and Edwin Eddy from the Fourth were welcomed home at Chiltern in a social held in the Star Theatre. They had to sit through an overture composed by a Chilternite and played by the local orchestra. The local paper tactfully described the overture as "rather extended".[41]

The rhetoric evident at Mahy's reception was replicated in receptions across the region. Empire and an imperial British heritage were anchored within an Australian context with an emphasis on the Australian as soldier. The hardships of Australian life had produced men more than worthy of standing shoulder to shoulder with Britain's best. Their record was one of bravery, action, courage and daring, and the men had displayed "such brilliant qualities that the rest of the world wondered". They beat the Boers on their own terms—or to put it another way, "Australians could whip the feathers off anything in South Africa".[42] Nor was their worth properly recognised. Trooper Duncan returned home with the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM). According to the chair, he should have been awarded the VC. And, as noted earlier, the Tommy, who had once been held up as a model to be emulated, had become a machine, ill equipped to fight a war in South Africa.[43]

In responding, the men echoed Charles Mahy and, either consciously or unconsciously, added to the reputation of the Australians as gatherers of "loot". Trooper Leslie at his smoke night in Bright, for example, claimed that the Australians were great foragers and never went short. He had on display a collection of souvenirs that included bullets, shell casings, regimental badges and a watch he claimed had belonged to one of Kruger's grandsons. And if their horses were "knocked up", Australians would simply wait until nightfall, visit a British camp, and "swap" their horses for good Tommy horses. He also added that there was nothing on four legs an Australian could not ride. He claimed that he knew a man who had ridden a calf for nine miles before he could get a horse.[44] Corryong's Trooper Davis also boasted of the Australians' ability to alter a horse's appearance to the point where the original owner could not recognise it.[45] The anecdotes of both men amused their audiences. Behaviour that would have been condemned at home as larrikinism, or even theft, was apparently acceptable in war. Perhaps the spirit of Ned Kelly was still alive and well in the region.

Sometimes, the war itself was lost in the speeches given at the welcome home socials. Mick Sharry returned to an enthusiastic gathering, the likes of which had "never been seen before" in Barnawartha. Things went well until one speaker referred to the credit Sharry brought to Barnawartha. The speeches that followed completely lost sight of the war. Barnawartha's growing agricultural diversification was lauded and one speaker announced that he planned to open a creamery in Barnawartha. Sharry had little to say but his reception may well have prompted him to re-enlist.[46]

The VMR, rifle clubs, organisations and the congregations to which the men belonged also held welcome home socials.[47] In form, they generally followed the public receptions where the men responded as was expected of them. But not so Edwin Eddy, one of Chiltern's four from the Fourth who had listened to the extended overture in the Star Theatre.

Eddy had become firm friends with another Edwin in South Africa, Edwin Bawden, from Eldorado. They were both blacksmiths, they shared a Christian name and they had attended the same school.[48] Bawden had finished his stint but delayed his return, preferring to sail home with his mate on the *Britannic*. An outbreak of measles swept through the ship. Bawden was infected and by the time the ship reached Melbourne he was suffering from pneumonia. He died, with his parents at his bedside, in a Melbourne hospital. After the official welcome home social, Eddy

was also given a reception by his local Wesleyan congregation. Crisfield and Carlyle were invited as guests. The minister, James Lade, opened the reception by stating that the temple of the Prince of Peace would not be made a Temple of Mars. The congregation was not gathered to glorify war or for the "distasteful and extraneous praise of their guests". Obeisance done, Lade then described the war as necessary for the preservation of the empire and moved into the more familiar territory of praise for Australian soldiers. Their impudence, jauntiness and, above all, their capacity to work in their own way had shown the Boers that they could be beaten at their own game.

Eddy had agreed to attend the social on one condition: he would not be called upon to speak. Lade, however, insisted. Eddy's response began well. He had done his duty, he said. He noted that he had travelled over 4000 miles on service in South Africa. He thought that Rhodesia would be a good country when it was settled. Then he faltered, and doubt, misery and grief came to the surface. Bawden, he said, had been Anglican, Crisfield, sitting in the audience, was Catholic. Mateship, he said, was far more important than religious affiliation. He missed his mate and blamed himself for Bawden's death. If Bawden had gone home instead of waiting, he would still be alive. The paper reported that "he was excused for resuming his seat".[49] Edwin Eddy provides a rare insight into the intersection between expectations, duty and male intimacy that comes with war: and how war had illustrated, for him, the meaningless of sectarian divisions so evident at home.

Muted Voices

War was a public matter. It therefore followed that farewells and welcome home socials would be presided over by the male leaders in the community who would also give the appropriate speeches. Parents and families attended these events and their presence was reported in the local papers, but they rarely spoke (unless they were important in the local community like Martin Mahy), and if they did, it was always the father who spoke. The fathers' speeches were usually brief and formal, like Trooper Kelly's father who moved the vote of thanks at his son's reception at Wooragee.[50] But when they did speak at length, the speeches revealed differing responses to the war based on class, and a conflict between public expectations and private fears. Two fathers, both called Martin, reflected this in speeches they gave about their sons.

At his son's farewell, Martin Mahy was gratified by the reception thrown by Beechworth but noted that he and his wife "were not satisfied" with their son's decision to enlist because Charles was 19. However, knowing that his boy's "heart and soul" were in the matter, he (rather than we) had finally agreed to allow Charles to go. "That boy of mine wants to go to the front, and I am proud of him", he concluded. Mahy had been honest enough to express his fears as a father, but public notions of duty and loyalty were paramount; the "prolonged cheering" that followed his speech probably offered him reassurance that his decision had been the right one.[51] Over a year later, with Charles back safe and sound, Martin Mahy had a very different version of his son's enlistment. He had never tried to dissuade his son from going, he claimed, even though Charles was 19. His son had taken the opportunity to serve the empire, as many others would have done, if given the same opportunity.[52] Mahy senior had met the obligations demanded by his place in society. His son had done his duty and he, as a father, had approved that duty. Any tension between public obligations and personal fears had been resolved. One can only wonder, however, what Charles Mahy's mother might have said if she had had the opportunity to speak at either his farewell or his return. We know that she was "anxious" about him—but little else.

Martin O'Reilly had a different view. He was a small farmer in the Upper Murray with two sons serving the in war, Matthew and John. John, a horse breaker, was repatriated home after being wounded in 1901. His welcome home social in August turned into a farewell: he announced that he was returning to South Africa to work with the remounts. He had "read on the matter of the war" and felt that Britain was in the right. He was also "tired of talking about the war", he said: "it was too much to him like skiting". His father, however, had doubts: he told the gathering that he "felt it somewhat". For Martin, the war was not about its rights or wrongs: it was about two sons in war with all its potential dangers. He voiced what many parents must have feared. He could not bear to see his sons come home "crippled": who would care for them? He would rather see them both "finished altogether".[53] Unlike Martin Mahy, Martin O'Reilly was unable to reconcile the public and private elements of sons fighting in a war. O'Reilly feared for his sons. And although Mahy saw his son's service as an opportunity denied to many, O'Reilly clearly felt that opportunity had knocked too often at his door. One Martin celebrated the return of a son and public obligations met. The other feared what the future might hold for his sons.

Notes

1. NAA A6443, B5177, B5179, A1194, B5207; Australian War Memorial (AWM) 27/100/1, AWM1.
2. *W&TS*, 25 January 1901, 21 February 1902, Wilcox, *The Boer War*, 29.
3. *CC*, 27 February 1902, *UM&MH*, 20, 27 March, 3 April, 14 August 1902, *W&TS*, 25 January, 21 February 1902).
4. It is highly unlikely that these men were landowners. Rather, they were the sons of farmers and graziers.
5. NAA A6443, B5177, B5179, A1194, B5207; AWM 27/100/1, AWM1; Commonwealth Census 1901.
6. Max Chamberlain, "The Characteristics of Australia's Boer War Volunteers", *Historical Studies*, 20, 78 (1982): 48–54.
7. For example, the Fourth Contingent numbered 3 VMR men in its 22 volunteers, the Fifth 12 of its 32: NAA A6443, B5177, B5179, A1194, B5207 (see also *C&HT*, 14 July 1900, *FS*, 25 April 1902, *RS*, 10 July 1900.
8. *O&MA*, 27 January 1900, 2, 12 February, 25 May, 22 June, 27 July, 19 October 1901,19 April, 10 May, 14, 21 June, 5 July 1902, *WC*, 4, 21 April, 5, 19 December 1900, 9, 12, 16 January, 13 February, 20 July, 21 August 1901, 7 May 1902, *W&TS*, 9 February 1900, 10 May 1901, *YT*, 26 January, 2 February 1900, 2 August 1901, 13, 20 June, 4 July 1902, 8 August 1903.
9. The Fourth and Fifth Contingents and the First Australian Contingent, for example, saw the Melbourne cull reduce numbers by over a third. NAA A6443, B5177, B5179, A1194, B5207. *AO*, 23 March 1900, 15 February 1901, *C&HT*, 25 April 1900, *FS*, 23 February, 30 April 1900, 25 April 1902, *O&MA*, 10, 13 March 1900, 12, 19 January 1901, *RS*, 9 March 1900, *YT*, 19, 26 January 1900.
10. *FS*, 23 January 1900, *RS*, 23 March 1900.
11. *CC*, 22 March 1900, *O&MA*, 7 April 1900.
12. *YT*, 9, 23, 30 March 1900, 11, 18 January 1901.
13. *RS*, 27 April 1900.
14. *C&HT*, 25, 28 October 1899.
15. *AO*, 20, 27 April 1900, *O&MA*, 28 April 1900.
16. *CC*, 8 February 1900.
17. *O&MA*, 17 February 1900, *UM&MH*, 8 February 1900.
18. *CC*, 22 March 1900, *O&MA*, 7 April 1900.

19. *AO*, 18, 25 January, 1, 8 February 1901.
20. Craig Wilcox, "Looking Back on the South African War" in *The Boer War: Army, Nation and Empire*, ed. Dennis and Grey (Canberra: Department of Defence, Army History Unit, 1999) 2.
21. *O&MA* 24 February 1900, *RS*, 15 January 1901.
22. *O&MA*, 19 January 1901, NAA B5179, volume B, Muster Role of the Fifth Contingent for Service in South Africa.
23. See, for example, *FS*, 10 November 1899, 9 February 1900 and *RS*, 23 February 1900.
24. *C&HT*, 25, 28 October 1899.
25. *WC*, 30 May 1900.
26. *O&MA*, 19 April 1902.
27. *C&HT*, 20 January, 14 February 1900, *O&MA*, 24 February 1900, *WC*, 20 January 1900.
28. *C&HT*, 12 May, 11 August 1900, *CC*, 18 January, 15 February 1900, *UM&MH*, 13 June 1901, *WC*, 17 July 1901.
29. *RS*, 15 January 1901.
30. *CC*, 20 June 1901.
31. *AO*, 29 June 1900. (See also *O&MA*, 17 November 1900, *UM&MH*, 11 October 1900)
32. Roughly translated, it reads "an empire within an empire".
33. *O&MA*, 1 September 1900, *WC*, 4 April, 16, 23 May, 4, 11, 14, 18 July, 1 September 1900.
34. *UM&MH*, 25 October 1900.
35. *C&HT*, 21 November 1900, 9 January 1901, *O&MA*, 21 January 1901.
36. *AO*, 25 May, 7 December 1900.
37. *AO*, 25 January, 8 February 1901.
38. *UM&MH*, 13, 27 June 1901, *CC*, 2 May 1901.
39. *FS*, 16 August 1901, *O&MA*, 12 January, 20 July, 17 August 1901, *RS*, 15, 18 January 1901, *UM&MH*, 27 June 1901, *W&TS*, 2 August 1901, *YT*, 4 January 1901.
40. *AO*, 26 July, 2 August 1901, 22 August 1902, *CC*, 19 March, 30 May, 25 July 1901, *FS*, 19 July, 16 August 1901, *O&MA*, 8, 22 December 1900, 27 July 1901, 8 February, 7 December 1902, *RS*, 15 January, 18 January, 23 July 1901, 10 February 1903, *UM&MH*, 29 December 1900, 13 June, 8 August 1901, *W&TS*, 19, 26 July 1902, *YT*, 19 July 1901.
41. *FS*, 16 August 1901.

42. *UM&MH*, 13 June 1901.
43. *AO*, 16 August 1901, *CC*, 30 May 1901, *FS*, 16 August 1901, *O&MA*, 22 December 1900, 20 July, 7 December 1901, *RS*, 18 January, 23 July 1901, *UM&MH*, 27 June 1901, *W&TS*, 12 July 1901, *YT*, 4 January 1901.
44. *AO*, 16 August 1901.
45. *CC*, 30 May 1901.
46. *FS*, 31 May 1901, 16 May 1902.
47. *O&MA*, 29 June 1901, *RS*, 3 June 1902, *YT*, 30 November, 7 December, 14 December 1900.
48. NAA B5179.
49. *FS*, 23 August 1901.
50. *C&HT*, 19 December 1900.
51. *C&HT*, 25 October 1899.
52. *O&MA*, 12 January 1901.
53. *O&MA*, 17 August 1901, *UM&MH*, 2 May, 18 July, 15, 22 August 1901, 10 July 1902.

CHAPTER 6

From the Veldt

Abstract Although a minority of the men found something to admire in the enemy, the great majority uncritically recycled the propaganda that had demonised the Boer in their letters home. The Boer women attracted the strongest censure. Most found little romance in battle. The men did not disguise the reality of Kitchener's war. Initially, the Tommy, the paragon against whom they would be measured, fascinated the men. Familiarity, however, brought about a rapid, and often negative, reassessment. They were not prepared for South Africa's blacks or their numbers, describing them as subhuman. It affirmed their commitment to the racism that would become the White Australia policy.

The men serving in South Africa wrote home and many of their letters were published in the local papers. As the official news dwindled in the column space of the regional papers, the letters kept people up to date with the war. They presented a different view of the war to that provided by official correspondents, and one that reflected many of the prevailing views held in Australia when it came to matters of gender, race and class.

A Gendered Enemy

Most of the men had little time for the enemy. The Boers were dismissed as a "cowardly crew" and men with "no honour". They fired on Red Cross wagons and stretcher-bearers, and they looted the wounded and

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the dead.[1] They reported the Boers' misuse of the white flag to lure men into ambush[2] (even if none had actually seen the Boers do so). Men, like William Tidyman, who admired the Boers' tenacity, or Robert Leslie, who admired the young Boers for "defending their country", were rare.[3]

It was the Boer women, however, who attracted the strongest censure. They were described as "wild", "treacherous" and "dirty, slovenly, patched up looking creatures".[4] Mick Sharry described how two of his comrades were shot by Boer women as the men sought water at the women's well. The women, he wrote, "clapped their hands with delight as the two men fell". Edwin Eddy described how Boer girls drew their skirts to one side as they passed Australian troops "as though you have some infectious disease".[5] This negative view of Boer women became so deeply entrenched that men who had once baulked at orders to clear the women and children from farms for relocation to concentration camps lost their reservations about the women. They still, however, pitied the children.[6] The men's responses to the Boer women, of course, reflected deeply held views about the "place" of women in society. Women who assisted the Boer's war effort by providing intelligence and logistical support, travelled with their menfolk and who killed enemy soldiers were alien to their worldview.[7] Bert Forrester claimed that the women travelling with the commandos were "glad to be captured".[8] Perhaps they were, or perhaps it was Forrester who was glad to see these women being removed from a situation where he believed they had no right to be.

Victor Hennessey, however, noted something else in the women's responses to the soldiers, the fear of rape and murder. And there was substance to those fears. Hugh Ronald's unit captured a Boer camp whilst the men were on patrol. He described with disgust the way 25 Queenslanders in the unit "rushed" the women's quarters. They were there for an hour before the Boers returned from patrol and drove them away.[9]

Soldiering and the Conduct of the War

Raised on stirring tales of battle provided by populists like Fitchett and the school curriculum, many of the men anticipated excitement in combat.[10] Some men found it. William Tidyman, for example, wrote of "lead buzzing around me like a swarm of bees" and breathlessly informed his folk at home that he had had a horse shot from underneath him but "whipped the saddle off him onto a Boer pony and after them again".[11] Stanley Fletcher's letters were full of "close escapes" from death and the enemy.[12]

Most, however, wrote differently about combat. Robert Drummond, who expected "great battles", glumly concluded they were "imaginary only".[13] Walter Payne contemptuously dismissed reports of battles published in the papers as "all brag and lies": for him, war was more akin to murder and bushranging.[14] Alex Wallace found little romance in war when under long range rifle fire from an enemy he could not see, let alone engage: it was a "queer sensation to see dust raising all round, and twigs coming off the trees, and horses falling, and you wonder when your time at stopping a piece of lead will come", he wrote.[15] Wallace also described the way in which men relieved pre-battle tension: "We tried hard to make one another believe we were perfectly cool by cracking jokes", he wrote.[16] Although the charge up the slopes of a kopje "exhilarated" some, others thought the experience was more akin to a "lunatic asylum let loose".[17]

The men universally loathed the dum dum bullets used by the Boers, and shrapnel from the enemy's artillery, because shrapnel had, as Charles Mahy wrote, a "nasty knack of spreading and finding its own billet". Above all, they feared being wounded: it took days by ambulance wagon and an open truck in a train to reach a hospital.[18] Rarely did the letters describe the act of killing, but two men did. Their responses were very different, reflecting some of the responses identified by Joanna Burke in her work.[19] Mahy described the pleasure he took in killing "a Mick O'Hara from New York", a member of an Irish American Brigade who were fighting with the Boers. William Stocks, however, found no pleasure in the act of killing. "My own arm was a long way from steady when I took sight at the poor devil", he wrote.[20] The death of a comrade affected the men deeply, especially the first death.[21] But with time, combat brought with it a sense of fatalism. Tidyman wrote that if it was his fate to be killed, then "so be it".[22]

The letters home never disguised the nature of the war, especially Kitchener's war. By 1901, the "list" was a regular feature. James Dare's was typical. His company had taken 16 prisoners of war, 212 wagons, 50 Cape carts, 47 mules, 17 donkeys, 779 trek oxen, 2547 cattle, 5556 sheep, 4 steam flour mills, 476 bags of grain and 45 ponies.[23] The letters also described in detail the policy of leaving nothing behind that might help the enemy. Ted Robinson described the way everything was smashed, from ploughs to crockery, from organs to furniture, and how the houses were torched and the women and children were transported to concentration camps.[24]

How the men felt about waging Kitchener's war varied. Some fully approved of his tactics. William Burgess believed Roberts had been soft:

Kitchener would "destroy and kill all before him" to bring the war to its proper end. But others had doubts. James Clingin felt "ashamed" when he refused a young woman's request to leave some fowls to feed her sick mother. John O'Reilly had nothing but contempt for the job: "it *is dirty duty* [sic]", he wrote (although this did not stop him re-enlisting as noted in Chap. 5).[25] None, however, had qualms about using the field tactics that had led to the execution of Morant and Handcock. Bert Forrester recorded with approval the "execution" of a Boer prisoner whose haversack was discovered to be full of dum dum bullets. Jack Mason wrote, "It is nothing to see a Boer sympathiser shot here." James Clingin openly admitted to killing one of his prisoners.[26]

Few men, though, admitted to another aspect of what was a mobile war. Although they had been selected as "bushmen", the African veldt was not the Australian bush. Some men wrote of being "separated" from their unit. Only a few admitted to what "separated" meant—lost. Jack Mason did and added, "What a nice bushman I am." Pat Quinlan was another. Lost for 60 hours, he had a rifle but no ammunition—and some curious lions for company.[27]

Splendid Points

The Australians' war in South Africa was essentially one fought on horseback. According to London's *Telegraph*, they were careless in the extreme when it came to their mounts. Iain Spence and Craig Wilcox agree, arguing that Australians rode their horses to death.[28] Letters home, however, suggested a more complex set of circumstances than *The Telegraph* or historians allowed.

Inexperience was one factor. Many of the men who enlisted in the first contingents came from urban and metropolitan backgrounds.[29] Charles Mahy, for example, was a clerk living in Melbourne. The news that the contingents were to be mounted came as a surprise.[30] The regional men who enlisted in the later contingents, however, were experienced horsemen. They offered a different explanation for the attrition rate of their mounts—the mobile nature of the war. The men were required to be constantly on the move, harrying the enemy. To walk and spell a horse meant a lost opportunity. And they listed other causes of death for their horses: Blue Tongue and ticks, tulip grass, colic, malnutrition, even lightning strikes.[31] The geography of the veldt was hardly favourable for a war fought on horseback. The grass and water on the veldt needed to sustain a

large number of horses was insufficient in the dry months of the year, the logistical support for a mounted fighting force was poor and, as George Gambold remarked in a letter home, the scorched earth policy hardly helped when it came to feeding horses. [32] The attrition rates were high and remounts were drawn from across the world. But they were not necessarily in good condition when allocated to a regiment. Jack Mason from Greta, for example, described the horses of his unit as having "splendid points, you can hang your hat on their hips".[33] The horses were, in the end, poorly fed, overworked and expendable.[34]

The one beast that seemed to be indestructible was the Boer pony. Initially, Australians had dismissed the pony but quickly changed their minds. Mick Sharry described the Boer ponies as "the hardiest I ever saw". James Dare admired the Boer pony because, despite its size, it was "terrible good and sure-footed" and it was quick. But it did have a failing apparently common to the breed and those who had fostered its development: his mount was "full of tricks".[35] The cavalrymen in charge of the British army, however, never stooped to consider the advantages that a pony, bred for conditions on the veldt, could offer in the war against the Boer.

Souvenirs, the Tommy, Tucker, "Tip Top" and Home

The region's men were keen tourists. Some visited the graves of the men killed during the war. Others visited sites of historic significance, like the ruins at Zimbaybe.[36] They also sent a steady stream of souvenirs back home: the hides of animals killed which were turned into native shields, shrapnel from Mafeking, objects purchased from African tribes, postcards and shell casings.[37] When life was dull, they challenged English regiments to mini Ashes series. And the men speculated endlessly about the duration of the war. Some were confident that the war could not last long. Mahy, for example, predicted its end no less than five times. Henry Crisfield, however, believed it could go on for years.[38]

At first, the Tommy fascinated the men: this was the paragon against whom they would be measured. Initial reactions were often a mixture of the positive and the curious. Both Stanley Fletcher and James Dare praised the Yeomanry as "fine fellows" and "good soldiers". Percy King, however, could not understand them because their accents and vocabulary were "strange". Mahy could not believe that Scottish highland regiments fought in kilts, but he was delighted to discover that the Gordons, seen as "giants" by the popular press, turned out to be "just men like the rest of

us" and "just as big liars".[39] Familiarity, however, brought about a rapid reassessment. Mick Sharry thought the Yeomanry "a poor lot" with no bush skills. Other letters claimed that the Tommies were more susceptible to malaria and enteric fever. And their horsemanship was woeful. Respect for the Tommy as a fighting man disappeared. Drummond was particularly scathing. The Australians did all the fighting, he bluntly asserted, because British mounted troops were "slow" in getting to the action.[40] And James Clingin firmly believed "our biggest enemy is the Tommy". If the Tommy found two or three Australians and they numbered a dozen "they will belt us". But if the numbers were even, the Tommies gave the Australians a wide berth.[41]

The men rarely commented on the generals but had plenty to say about their officers. Cudgewa's George Barber thought them a positive hindrance: he relished patrols where there were no officers to "interfere" with the troopers' tactics. Quinlan had nothing but contempt for his captain, especially after he put the men on rations for the "benefit of their health". Robert Carlisle doubted that the captains and the lieutenants had the confidence of the men. Wangaratta's Colonel Hoad, however, had the respect of local men writing home and Colonel Tom Price, a "bully" in camp, was praised as the best man to lead his troops into action.[42]

Food was a constant theme in the letters home. Patrols on the veldt were poorly supplied, and the men had little time for the British Army's staples of bully beef and biscuits, the biscuits in particular. They were as "hard as the hobs of hell" and needed a hammer to break them up.[43] And so, despite the reservations the men may have felt about the scorched earth policy, they enjoyed the food that came with implementing the policy, a practice they called "foraging". Fowls, pigs, mutton, beef, pumpkin, fruit, even jam, were listed as part of their daily diet. So, too, was the "tucker" left in the houses, "even the pots on the fire".[44] The line between foraging and looting, however, was a fine one. Donald Anderson believed the troops could take food but not jewellery.[45] Trooper Daley obviously disagreed, writing home that he had "two nice ladies watches that I got from a Boer house". Nor was theft and pilfering restricted to the property of the enemy. As noted in Chap. 5, British horses were also fair game.[46]

Disease stalked the men serving in the Boer War. Men destined for the Rhodesian campaign came to the war via Beira in Portuguese East Africa. They were irritated that it took days to unload the horses but that paled in comparison with Beira's disease and sickness. Henry Crisfield described Beira as "a dead crook hole, worse than Springhurst to look at", a "terrible

place for sickness". Ague and malaria were prevalent.[47] Beira was a pointer rather than an exception. It was rare to find a letter that did not refer to personal illness or the illness of others.[48] Enteric fever was particularly feared. Charles Mahy wrote, "I have not had it yet and don't want it." But he caught it and spent a miserable time in hospital. Mahy also noted the impact disease had had on the first two Victorian contingents. Of some 500 men, only 179 were still on active service. Most had succumbed to disease and had been seconded to other duties until they recovered.[49]

Home was never far from the soldiers' minds. Letters from family and friends were treasured, as were copies of the local paper, which went from hand to hand. When no letters came, the men felt they had been forgotten. Bert Forrester was one. In a letter, he "supposed" the local football season was under way and gloomily predicted that he would not remember how to dance by the time he got home. Like many others, Forrester was home sick.[50] Sometimes, though, the boot was on the other foot and the men were chided for not writing. Frank Johnson gave an ironclad excuse: "we have been away in the wilds", he wrote, "where there are no stationary shops".[51] "Home" itself had different meanings for the men. It included not only family but also community. The men frequently wrote about other men from their district who were at the front, where they were, what their achievements had been and what their health was like (those in good health were invariably "tip top" or the "same old three and four pence"). Home also meant the unit to which the men belonged. William Tidyman, for example, often referred to his unit as "home".[52]

And then there was the "great silence" evident in soldiers' letters—sex. The men never wrote specifically about any liaisons between themselves and women, yet they were occasionally hinted at. Tidyman, for example, wrote that the girls in Hopetoun were treating the Australian soldiers "A1" because the Boers were still close by.[53] William Stocks, describing the relief of Colesberg, wrote that the "blacks nearly went mad with joy" and added, "You bet we had a good time!"[54]

The Exotic and the Other

South Africa was an exotic place for the men from the region. Here were the animals they had read about in school: lions and leopards, antelope and zebra, ostriches and elephants, locusts, and thousands of guinea fowl. The geography was different. Depending on the season and location, the

land either held great potential or offered little promise. The land around Cape Town was dismissed as "not worth much" and few had a good word to say about Rhodesia. It was "purely and simply a kaffirs' country". The Transvaal, however, drew praise as good farming land. In the wet season, the grass grew up to six feet high. Yet even the Transvaal had its critics: in the dry it became "monotonous". The overriding message to those at home who might have been thinking of migrating to South Africa for work or land after the war was over was summed up by William Kelly: "Tell them not to."[55]

Strange animals and a different country the men expected to see, but they were not prepared for South Africa's blacks: they were as "thick as ants". Although some, like Edward Duncan, admired the physical and cultural differences between the African tribes he encountered, [56] most of the men did not. They were affronted by the "nakedness" of tribal Africans. They were shocked to discover that an ox was worth more than a woman. Many saw the black Africans as subhuman. James Dare, for example, enjoyed watching the "kaffirs" fighting each other to get the pennies he tossed in their direction.[57] Some men slipped easily into the role of the colonial raj, using the blacks as "valets".[58] All you needed to do, wrote Tidyman, was to "give them some tucker and they will follow you like a dog".[59] But others found their "boys" difficult. Edwin Eddy noted, "You have to learn a little kaffir to get the niggers to do anything." James Clingin felt they were too independent and needed "a kick every now and then".[60]

Men from labouring backgrounds were disturbed to find that the jobs they did back home were done by blacks: it demeaned their own worth as workers. They felt that both Anglo and Boer had become lazy, marking the beginning of the degeneration of the white races in South Africa. Others were shocked by the punishment handed out to blacks by the military authorities. Flogging was common and William Kelly noted, with distaste, that it left the back of the punished man looking like "raw steak".[61]

The men, of course, brought with them the cultural baggage of a White Australia, its racism and its fears. Robert Drummond wrote from camp, "There is a fearful lot of blacks here." Every day, a "tribe of niggers" came in to clean up the camp, monitored by white soldiers carrying loaded weapons.[62] It was an apt metaphor: guns were needed to protect a white minority from a feared black revolt. For Drummond, the war reaffirmed his commitment to a White Australia.

"When Seated at Your Christmas Cheer"

The men's letters gave their readers a very clear idea of the nature of the war. It was a mobile war, a war of engagement, retreat and ambush in pursuit of an elusive and determined enemy. Readers became familiar with the constant movement of their men across the subcontinent, packed into open rail trucks like sardines, or out on patrol. They became familiar with the forced marches, the choking dust in the dry, or the heavy rain in the wet and the privations of men at war. The letters home also introduced their readers to a detailed geography of South Africa. But Robert Drummond, the man who had been chaired in inebriated triumph by his Fire Brigade mates around Rutherglen at his farewell, touched on a different issue: those at home would never know what the war was really like. Drummond put these sentiments on paper in a bush poem. It foreshadowed a similar, but more famous poem: the one written by Harry Morant before his execution.

> When seated at your Christmas Cheer,
> Pray think of us poor soldiers here:
> On Bully Beef and Biscuits fed,
> And Breezy Veldt to make our bed;
> But still we're happy as we go,
> And hope such things you'll never know.
> And may you always have good luck,
> As well as puddings and Roast Duck.[63]

Notes

1. *AO*, 23 November, 21 December 1900, 5 July 1901, *CC*, 1 November 1900, 24 January 1901, *FS*, 2 November 1900, *O&MA*, 3 November 1900, *UM&MH*, 30 May 1901, *WC*, 24 March, 13 June 1900, *W&TS*, 12 April 1901.
2. *AO* 21 December 1900, *RS*, 19 July, 20 August 1901, *W&TS*, 12 April 1901.
3. *AO*, 16 August 1901, *FS*, 28 September 1900.
4. *AO*, 23 November 1900, 5 July 1901, *O&MA*, 6 July 1901, *RS*, 19 July 1901.
5. *FS*, 2 November 1900, 11 January 1901, *O&MA*, 6 July 1901, *RS*, 19 July, 20 August 1901, *UM&MH*, 26 September 1901.

6. *AO*, 23 November 1900.
7. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 145, 187, 212.
8. *O&MA*, 7 September 1901.
9. *O&MA*, 3 November 1900, *WC*, 13 June 1900, *YT*, 9 August 1901.
10. *O&MA*, 10 January 1900.
11. *FS*, 19 April 1901.
12. *O&MA*, 20 October 1900.
13. *RS*, 14 December 1900.
14. *C&HT*, 26 June 1901.
15. *AO*, 21 December 1900.
16. *O&MA*, 27 April 1901.
17. *AO*, 21 December 1900, 12 July 1901, *O&MA*, 20 October 1900.
18. *C&HT*, 22 August 1900, *CC*, 18 April 1901, *O&MA*, 12 April 1902.
19. Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London: Granta Books, 1999).
20. *C&HT*, 21 November 1900, *RS*, 1 June 1900, *O&MA*, 24 August 1901.
21. *AO*, 5 July 1901.
22. *FS*, 19 October 1900, 19 April 1901, *YT*, 15 November 1901.
23. *RS*, 25 June 1901. (See also *AO*, 21 December 1900, 5 July 1901, *C&HT*, 22 June 1901, *O&MA*, 22 June, 7 September 1901, *YT*, 9 August 1901.)
24. *RS*, 19 July, 13 August 1901.
25. *AO*, 5, 12 July 1901, *UM&MH*, 23 May 1901, *W&TS*, 18 January, 12 April 1901, *YT*, 9 August, 8 November, 20 December 1901.
26. *O&MA*, 12 April 1902, *WC*, 16 May 1900, *YT*, 15 November 1901.
27. *WC*, 8 August 1900, *W&TS*, 28 December 1900.
28. *CC*, 18 July 1901, *FS*, 26 July 1901, Iain Spence, "To Shoot and Ride" in *The Boer War: Army, Nation and Empire*, ed. Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (Canberra: Department of Defence, Army History Unit, 1999) 115–28, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 131, 135, 138, 140.
29. Field, *The Forgotten War*, 39.
30. *C&HT*, 10 March 1900.
31. *FS*, 3, 10, 24 August, 2 November1900, 23 May 1902, *O&MA*, 9 January, 21 July, 25 December 1900, *RS*, 12 October 1900, 25 June, 10 July, 13 August 1901, *UM&MH*, 20 June 1901, *W&TS*, 29 September 1900, Spence, 'To Shoot and Ride', 122.

32. *O&MA*, 28 September 1901, Spence, 'To Shoot and Ride', 115-28, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 131, 135, 138, 140.
33. *WC,* 16 May 1900.
34. Pakenham estimates that over 400,000 horses, donkeys and mules were "expended" during the war (Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 607).
35. *FS*, 2 November1900, *RS*, 25 June 1901. (See also *O&MA*, 7 September, 28 September 1901.)
36. *AO*, 23 May 1902, *FS*, 1 March 1901, *RS*, 4 January 1901, *YT*, 17 May 1901, 23 May 1902.
37. *C&HT*, 18 July, 18, 22 August, 29 December 1900, *O&MA*, 1 September 1900, *WC*, 3 March, 29 September1900, 5 January 1901.
38. *C&HT*, 7 February, 11 April, 25 August, 15 September 1900, *CC*, 26 April 1900, *FS*, 10 August, 2 November 1900, 8 February 1901, *O&MA*, 1 September 1900, *RS*, 25 June 1901.
39. *C&HT*, 7 February, *CC*, 11 July 1901, *O&MA*, 21 July 1900, *RS*, 30 April 1901.
40. *RS*, 14 May 1901.
41. *C&HT*, 7 February, 21 November 1900, *FS*, 8 February 1901, *RS*, 4 January, 14 May 1901, *WC*, 16 May 1900, *YT*, 19 April 1901.
42. *C&HT*, 30 June, 15 September, 21 November 1900, *CC*, 27 September 1900, *FS*, 13 July 1900, *RS*, 1 June 1900, *UM&MH*, 12 September 1901, *WC*, 20 January 1900, *W&TS*, 28 December 1900, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 384.
43. *RS*, 14 December 1900.
44. *C&HT*, 22 June 1901.
45. *C&HT*, 7, 17 February, 30 June 1900, *O&MA*, 22 June 1900, *WC*, 29 June 1901.
46. *C&HT*, 22 August 1900, *O&MA*, 7 September 1901.
47. *AO*, 10 August 1900, *FS*, 3, 10, 24 August 1900, *O&MA*, 15 December 1900.
48. *AO*, 31 August 1900, 10 May 1901, *O&MA*, 1 September, 3 November 1900, *RS*, 14 December 1900, 4 January, 25 June 1901, *W&TS*, 31 August, 4, 28 December 1900, 18 January 1901, *YT*, 17 May 1901.
49. *C&HT*, 22 August, 15 September 1900.
50. *CC*, 20 September 1900.
51. *AO*, 10, 31 August, 23 November 1900, 5 July, 12 July 1901, *C&HT*, 15 September 1900, 22 June 1901, *FS*, 24 August, 28 September, 19 October 1900, 11 January, 19 April 1901, *O&MA*, 9

January, 3 November 1900, 3 August, 7 September, 28 September 1901, *RS*, 12, 19 October 1900, 20 August 1901, *WC*, 10 February 1900, *YT*, 15 November 1901, 23 May 1902.

52. *C&HT*, 15 September 1900, *FS*, 11 January, 19 April 1901, *O&MA*, 19 January, 3 November 1900, 31 August, 7 September 1901, *UM&MH*, 23 May 1901, *YT*, 23 May 1902.
53. *FS*, 19 April 1901.
54. *RS*, 1 June 1900.
55. *AO*, 31 August, 21 December1900, *C&HT*, 25 August 1900, *FS*, 24 August, 28 September 1900, *O&MA*, 10 February, 10 March, 1 September 1900, 26 January 1901, 12 April 1902, *RS*, 30 April 1901, *WC*, 16 May 1900, *W&TS*, 4 December 1900, *YT*, 31 August, 21 September 1900, 19 April 1901, 23 May 1902.
56. *O&MA*, 15 December 1900.
57. *AO*, 10, 31 August 1900, *FS*, 3, 10, 24 August 1900, *O&MA*, 1 September 1900, *RS*, 14 December 1900, 30 April 1901, *UM&MH*, 25 April 1901, *W&TS*, 21 September 1900.
58. *AO*, 10, 31 August 1900, *FS*, 3 August, 10 August, 24 August 1900, *RS*, 14 December 1900, *UM&MH*, 25 April 1901, *W&TS*, 21 September 1900.
59. *FS*, 10 August 1900.
60. *FS*, 11 January 1901, *YT*, 19 April 1901.
61. *C&HT*, 21 April 1900, *O&MA*, 9 January 1900, *W&TS*, 25 January 1901.
62. *RS*, 14 December 1900.
63. *RS*, 14 December 1900.

CHAPTER 7

Removing the Stain: Wilmansrust

Abstract In June, a flying column of the Fifth was ambushed at Wilmansrust. The men in the column were accused of cowardice in the face of the enemy. It became a national and then imperial controversy. Officially, Wilmansrust had left a stain on the reputation of the Australian soldier, but as the men who were there wrote home, a different story emerged: one of confusion, surprise and incompetent military command. By the time the men of the Fifth came home, the men's view had become established as the orthodox view. The men who had been at Wilmansrust were publicly exonerated with multiple welcome home socials.

After Mafeking, the news from the front was consistently positive, thanks to Roberts' skill in public relations. The Boer capitals had fallen, Johannesburg was in British hands and Kruger was in exile. Like the enemy in South Africa, the "pro-Boers" at home were also on the run. In the Victorian elections held in October 1900, seven of the eight MLAs who had opposed sending the First Contingent lost their seats.[1] The column space devoted to the war in the regional press dropped dramatically, giving way to the summary telegraphic reports supplied by Reuters.[2] In part, this reflected a belief that the war was over by the end of 1900. But it also reflected Kitchener's tightening grip over what news was released as he attempted to counter the growing opposition to the war in Britain from the Little Englanders, those who believed that

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the war served little purpose beyond bringing discredit to England and serving the needs of Rhodes, wealthy Jews and "goldbugs" with ambitions in South Africa.[3]

Although the jingoes attacked Australians for showing more interest in cricket than the war, these attacks generally fell on deaf ears regionally.[4] The "wild enthusiasm" that had seen the burgeoning of rifle clubs and the agitation for the formation of VMR units in the region had gone.[5] Membership in the rifle clubs was falling away and, unlike other parts of Australia, no public meetings supporting the war were held in early 1902, not even in Beechworth.[6] Indeed, the war was a subject of snippiness: Banjo Paterson delivered a lecture in Albury on the war. If he "spoke the truth", the Wodonga paper reported, "New South Wales must really have saved the Empire from the Boers".[7] And for a short time, the war in South Africa was eclipsed by the Boxer Rebellion. The *Chiltern and Howlong Times* claimed that the rebellion demonstrated the woeful inadequacy of British Intelligence, adding spitefully that the Chinese currently residing in Beechworth's Benevolent Asylum be repatriated home as "returned empties".[8]

Continuing Boer resistance puzzled many. Were the Boers stupid, or hoping for French or German intervention on their behalf? Or did the "scorched earth" policy explain Boer tenacity and stubbornness? The *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* believed that Boers returning home to find flocks and herds gone, and homesteads destroyed, might well have been motivated to continue fighting, despite the odds.[9] Yet, the region had not entirely lost sight of the war.

The capture of the British general, Lord Methuen, in March 1902 sparked a flurry of interest as did the execution of Harry "Breaker" Morant and Peter Handcock, and the sentencing of George Witton to life imprisonment, for war crimes. Witton's brother launched a petition for George's release. The grounds for the petition had been drafted on the advice of Isaac Isaacs and John Isaacs was the solicitor assisting the Witton family. The petition enjoyed an "extraordinary success" in the region.[10] Interest in the activities of the Isaacs brothers partly accounted for its success, but so too was a growing questioning of British military command that had found a focus in an earlier event—Wilmansrust.

Wilmansrust[11]

Commanded by Colonel Alfred Emanuel Otter, the Fifth VMR departed for the Boer War in February 1901. By June, it was a unit in trouble. Otter, incapable of handling his command, was on his way home to Melbourne.

The unit's strength had dropped from 1000 to 700 men, mainly due to sickness and disease. Its disciplinary record was poor. Major William McKnight, the officer commanding the left wing battalion, fretted over the damage being done to the Fifth's reputation by a minority of its members, a "hard lot" who were unused to discipline and "not particular about others [sic] property", although the latter was of lesser importance. As McKnight remarked, "stealing was rife in the Australian contingents".[12]

The Fifth was attached to General Stuart Beatson's command. Relations between Beatson and the Fifth were strained. Beatson was a strict disciplinarian.[13] Aware of the demands of Kitchener's campaign, he insisted that the men travel light. Each man had a single blanket for sleeping on the veldt, even in the winter months. He also had problems with the more casual approach to discipline evident in the Australian regiment. Beatson had served with the Indian Army and believed that all colonials, whether they be sepoy or colonial volunteer, needed a firm hand.

On 12 June 1901, a flying column of the Fifth, under McKnight's command and numbering some 400 men, camped at Wilmansrust in the East Transvaal. As the camp settled down for the night, a matter of a few miles from Beatson's camp, the contingent followed the procedures set down by their general, based on his experience in India. Four widely spaced pickets were set up around the camp. The contingent stacked its rifles in central positions within the camp, a practice designed to ensure that arms were secure and under surveillance. The camp was attacked by Boers from Christiaan Muller's Middleburg Commando at about 7.45 p.m. There had been no warning from the pickets. The Boers had the advantage of surprise rather than numbers and they were dressed in khaki uniforms taken from dead British soldiers. According to Craig Wilcox, they called on the men in the camp to throw their hands up.[14] The fight was short and sharp. Eighteen Australians were killed (including the doctor accompanying the troops), forty-two were wounded, many surrendered and others fled. The Boers looted the camp, taking the soldiers' clothes, boots and supplies. Beatson blamed the colonials for the defeat. He is alleged to have described them as slackers and cowards or, in the following inimitable words, a "fat-arsed, pot-bellied, lazy lot of wasters" and "white-livered curs". McKnight was relieved of his command.

An inquiry followed but it raised as many questions as it answered. Was Beatson at fault? The pickets were too few in number and too widely spaced, giving the Boers ample opportunity to attack. Grouping the rifles in stacks meant that the men had difficulty in getting to their weapons when the attack came. If Muller had been monitoring Beatson's flying

columns, and the way they set up camp, he would have been well aware of the camp procedures set down by his enemy: hence the timing and nature of the attack. Or was the command structure at fault? McKnight's command was a nominal one, subject to the authority of a British artillery officer, Major Morris, appointed by Beatson. Confusion in the line of command did not bode well for effective tactical operations. Or were the men at fault? McKnight argued that the attack came without warning. There was confusion and the Boers were dressed in khaki. But was no resistance possible? Were the Victorians too quick to surrender or flee? When the Fifth was ordered back to the veldt a month later, one trooper, James Steele, refused to go. He was arrested along with two others who had also voiced reluctance about returning to the veldt. The three were found guilty of persuading His Majesty's soldiers to mutiny and were sentenced to death in July 1901. Kitchener commuted the sentence to 10 years in a military prison in England.

McKnight took the issue to Kitchener and, finding no satisfaction there, returned to Australia in October to report on the affair to the government and to organise a public campaign for the release of Steele and his co-accused. Initially, Australia's prime minister, Andrew Barton, took little interest in the matter. But the timing of Knight's arrival was fortuitous. As Wilcox argues, Wilmansrust became a major controversy in late September when the Melbourne *Age* published a letter from a soldier giving a fuller picture of what had happened, in terms of not only the incident but also the remarks attributed to Beatson. *The Age* championed the men. Naturally enough, *The Age*'s rival, *The Argus*, ran a counter line. It announced that its investigations showed that both Beatson and the Victorians were at fault for Wilmansrust and the unrest that followed. It also added that Wilmansrust had seriously damaged the reputation of Australian soldiers.[15] McKnight, an astute publicist, took advantage of the situation and Wilmansrust became a national issue. This forced Barton's hand. The prime minister sought further information on Steele and his co-accused. The British military authorities overturned the convictions. McKnight's report to the government was also released. It was a stinging attack on Beatson's command (and by implication, the British command of the war), the anti-colonial bias of many of the British officers and the harsh treatment meted out to Australians. Meanwhile, Beatson, "promoted" back to India, ambiguously "congratulated" the Fifth on its record of service under his command.[16]

Australian historians examining Wilmansrust, such as Gavin Souter,[17] Field, Chamberlain and Wallace, lean towards a defence of the Fifth. Wilcox is more circumspect in his analysis. Using McKnight in particular, he paints a picture of a regiment suffering from low morale and a poor reputation and sees the agitation at home as little more than a chance to trumpet colonial autonomy.[18] But there may have been more to Wilmansrust than trumpeting colonial autonomy if the North East is any guide. The region had a special place for the Fifth. Thirty-two men from the region had joined the regiment, the largest number to go with a single unit.[19] They included Stephen Beatty enlisting for a second time, five men rejected for selection in the Fourth (such as James Clingin) and Victor Hennessy who was seconded to the regiment in South Africa—and Hennessy was at Wilmansrust.

From Cowardice to Defiance

The response of the regional press to Wilmansrust in June 1901 was a mixture of puzzlement and making the best of a bad thing. The *Alpine Observer* noted with relief that no district men were amongst the casualties. The *Upper Murray and Mitta Herald*, on the other hand, reported that one local man, Charlie Smith, had been wounded in the right thigh. The *Rutherglen Sun* remarked that few could have expected the Fifth to see such action with the war close to an end. The *Wangaratta Chronicle* editorialised that the casualty list was "eloquent evidence of a struggle made by men against overwhelming odds". But it was a defeat and it had left a stain on the reputation of the Australian soldier,[20] a view pursued by Lahore in his memorial service for Briggs as described at the beginning of this book. When the Melbourne metropolitan dailies bought into the argument, only the *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel* sided with *The Argus*.[21] The rest of the regional press ran with *The Age*. The reason was simple enough. By October, regional readers had a very different view of Wilmansrust. They had been reading letters from their own in the regiment.

The *Wangaratta Chronicle* published Victor Hennessy's account in August. The flying column, he wrote, had seen the Boers on the skyline and there had been occasional contact with the enemy. As the column prepared to camp for the night, they were half-expecting an attack, probably at dawn. He was ready to turn in when the night erupted into chaos: "a wall of flame" was followed by a fusillade from the Boers on three sides. He had no chance to get to his carbine and, as the enemy was dressed in

khaki, it was impossible to tell friend from foe. Many men, he wrote, were shot as they lay in their blankets and horses were "dropping wholesale". Hennessy escaped and reached Beatson's camp at about 2 a.m. the next morning to report before returning to help bury the dead. He did not mention any calls by the Boers for the men to surrender. In the same issue, the paper printed a letter from Arthur Southern. He wrote that the number of pickets had been woefully inadequate to detect any enemy attack on the camp, and when the attack came there was no way to tell friend from foe because of the darkness and the fact that the Boers were dressed in khaki. He concluded bluntly, "We had no chance to rally." A week later, the *Chronicle* printed a letter from a Longwood man, John Saunders, which corroborated the accounts given by Hennessy and Southern.[22]

Letters from local men serving with the Fifth appeared in other papers. William Puzey wrote that Wilmansrust "broke us up" and that the fault lay with Beatson's picketing policy. It offered the camp no protection. Ted Robinson believed that either the pickets had been asleep or the camp had been "sold to the Boers". He was taken prisoner and, after his release, returned to the camp to care for the wounded. He had no idea of what to do because the doctor was dead. He described the burial of the dead in fairly stark terms: the men were rolled in their blankets and buried in a communal grave. George Barber would never forget the groaning of the wounded men and horses. George Gambold, the man who had attested loyalty unto to death at his farewell in Everton, described Wilmansrust as "murder" and laid the blame squarely on Beatson.[23] Walter Dennis, writing to a friend in Beechworth, simply wished he had not been there. Unarmed and unable to get to a weapon, he waited "patiently" for his turn to die. Taken prisoner, he wryly remarked that he was "not short of company". The prisoners and the captors "had a good yarn" before the prisoners were released and he returned to a miserable night of tending the wounded. Many of the wounded were moved to a farmhouse close by, occupied by two Boer women who "cried all night". He praised Muller, firmly believing that he had prevented a wholesale massacre.[24] Regional men were telling a story of surprise, confusion, inept command and poor tactics, not one of rank cowardice.

McKnight's return to Australia in October 1901 and the campaign he ran found a ready ear in the region. The blame for Wilmansrust lay with Beatson and the British Army's disciplinary code that could not differentiate between regulars (the enlisted men in the British army) and irregulars (volunteers). British discipline and Australian soldiers did not

mix: British soldiers were "used to abuse"; Australian soldiers were not. The papers echoed McKnight's claim that the men of the Fifth had been treated "like dogs" by their British commanders. Every regional paper printed the demand made by the Crimean War veteran and Victoria's Military Commandant, Major General Downes, that Beatson apologise to the Fifth. Beatson, rather than Steele and his co-accused, should have stood in the dock.[25]

Yet, the Fifth did not speak with one voice. Two men defended Beatson. Puzey wrote that the problem lay not with the general, but with his brigade major, Bertram Waterfield. Waterfield had a "hatred for all colonial corps" and he had given the contingent a "bad time" from the start. James Clingin echoed Puzey, claiming that Waterfield "hated us and never lost an opportunity to show us that he did". And the infamous remark attributed to Beatson had been Waterfield's. Waterfield, according to Clingin, had "no class".[26]

As the Fifth continued its service, letters home reflected defensiveness about the contingent's reputation as a "beautiful crowd" and an attempt to rehabilitate its reputation. The press reports about the Fifth's "crime sheet" were exaggerated, they wrote, and the contingent was no worse than any others fighting Kitchener's war. Echoing McKnight, they claimed that the regiment had gained a bad reputation "through the doings of a select few",[27] which overshadowed a good fighting record. Otter, according to the men, had been a disaster from the start with no more idea of how to command 100 men let alone 1000.[28] Clearly, the men were concerned that their communities may have believed the official versions of Wilmansrust that had branded them as cowards. They need not have worried. By the time the Fifth returned home in April and May 1902, the unit had overcome the obstacles posed by poor command. The Fifth was now the "Fighting Fifth", a regiment widely praised by British officers with one member a recipient of the Victoria Cross.[29]

Exoneration

Wilcox presents a vivid picture of the return of the Fifth. The men who had been at Wilmansrust were landed on 25 April.[30] They marched through Melbourne's streets and then down St Kilda Road to Victoria Barracks. There they were addressed by Colonel Tom Price and Francis Downes. Characteristically, Price both exonerated and condemned the men: the shame of defeat had been overcome but certain men in their ranks had

dragged their names through the mud. Downes, however, remained insistent that the Fifth were not to blame for Wilmansrust and Beatson's departing congratulations to the Fifth hardly constituted an apology. Price also advised the men to "keep their tongues between their teeth".[31] In May, the men returned to welcome home socials—and they ignored Price.

The Wangaratta men were given a full military welcome as they alighted from the train by the officers and men of J Company of the VMR in full uniform who hosted a smoke night for the veterans that evening. Bowser opened the evening by reading lengthy extracts from a letter written to him by a Captain Clarence Wilson who wrote of "brave men shamefully spoken of by an Imperial officer who had been removed". The men of the Fifth and "most of their officers were alright and equal to any others" according to Wilson. Lieutenant Manley, in charge of the Wangaratta detachment of the VMR, claimed that Wilmansrust was the fault of "shockingly bad management on the part of someone"—he did not need to say who. The men had shown that they were not "white-livered curs" but instead were "amongst the gamest lot of fellows that had trodden on the soil of South Africa". Saunders (the Longwood man) was one of the men at the smoke night and he gave what was by now the standard account of surprise, confusion and the "strange order" that insisted that arms be stacked away from the men.[32]

At a banquet in the hamlet of Moyhu, Private Bone was told by the chairman that Moyhu was satisfied that the "insults and slurs that were continually being hurled at the 5th Contingent were a complete set of falsehoods". And if Bone had had the misfortune to fall in battle, the chair had no doubt he would have fallen with "his face to the foe". Bone's reply reflected the fear implicit in many of the letters written home that the official versions of Wilmansrust may have taken hold. The good will of Moyhu, he said, was important to him. Peechelba, however, may have taken this to extremes: there the men were assured that they had "worn the white flower of a blameless life".[33] This public exoneration characterised every other welcome home social in the region.[34]

Robert Carlisle's welcome home at Granya was particularly indicative of the regional mood. As noted at the beginning of this book, he had succeeded in joining the Fifth whilst his mate, Dot, had not. Dot was already dead, but Carlisle had returned with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). Carlisle also came back to a community where the Fifth had been savaged by Lahore in his memorial service for Briggs barely six months before. Not only were Lahore's admonishments either forgotten or ignored, Granya also broke with tradition.

The local committee decided that Carlisle deserved a smoke night. The women were not happy with the decision. The patriarchy bended and women were admitted, although some adjustments had to be made. So, the women sat, not in the body of the hall (deemed a public space) but on the stage (deemed to be a private space). From there they could "view the proceedings without any inconvenience" (apart, perhaps, from the smoke wafting up onto the stage from the hall floor). Carlisle himself contributed to the evening's entertainment. He did not sing "You're Naughty", one of the items given, but he did recite "A Bush Christening" to warm applause.[35] Granya is perhaps the best example regionally of the community's exoneration of its members of the Fifth. It broke gender barriers and repudiated a clergyman's opinion of the regiment delivered from the pulpit.

The packed attendances at the welcome home socials for the other men was clear evidence of regional support for them, and whereas past socials had honoured only local men, invitations were now extended to other members of the Fifth. Saunders attended two, Payne, Fletcher and Carlyle three, Gambold and Clingin attended no less than four. And there is a suggestion of solidarity between the men of the Fifth and men from earlier contingents. Sergeant Barton, of the Fourth, attended socials in Myrtleford and Beechworth: he was there, he said, to honour good men in the field.[36] The public response to the men of the Fifth (and perhaps pressure from his regimental mates) accounts for James Clingin's change of mind.

At his reception in Yackandandah, Clingin still defended Beatson (even if the local paper misprinted the general's name as Beaston). The general "was as white a man as ever lived, and no man would say a word against him", he said, and the remarks attributed to the general had been made by Waterfield.[37] It was the last time he would do so. At the Beechworth reception, he joined the popular condemnation of the general.[38] In his study of World War One veterans, Alistair Thomson found that some men changed their views and memories to fit with prevailing views and public perceptions.[39] Clingin showed how powerful that pressure could be.

Historians have argued that by 1902, emerging Australian nationalism had been linked with British imperialism under the rubric of the "independent Australian-Briton", reflecting the dominance of the middle class in public discourse.[40] In other words, they were part of the British Empire, not Britain's Empire. This was clearly evident in the region's response to Wilmansrust. Australia as a part of empire was affirmed, yet the "inde-

pendent Australian-Briton" element was dominant in the welcome home socials for the men of the Fifth. This was not just Britain's war; it was Australia's war as well.

The response of the North East to Wilmansrust and its men who had joined the Fifth also reveals the ways in which a regional community can, and will, reshape its view of a particular event. The reshaping is based on what a community "knows" rather than what it is told. People knew the men who had been dismissed as cowards by official sources—and the allegation of cowardice jarred. The letters written home by men like Hennessy provided a different view of Wilmansrust: they presented a picture of confusion and humiliation and, above all, the belief that Wilmansrust would never have happened if those in command of the Fifth had known how to fight a war like the Boer War. The welcome home socials in particular demonstrated how a regional community had repudiated the "truth" as presented in official sources.

Notes

1. The MLAs were Higgins, Styles, Watt, Hamilton, Rawson, Cook and McCay (*UM&MH*, 8 November 1900).
2. Here the regional papers matched the pattern described by Morrison (Morrison, *Engines of Influence*, chapter 6).
3. See, for example, Stephen Badsey, "The Boer War as a Media War" in *The Boer War: Army, Nation and Empire*, ed. Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (Canberra: Department of Defence, Army History Unit, 1999) 70–83, Mark Connolly and David Welch (eds), *War and the Media: Reportage and Propaganda, 1900–2003* (London: New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist and Myth-maker from the Crimea to Iraq* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2003), Pakenham, *The Boer War*.
4. 'Boomerang' quoted in *W&TS*, 10 January 1902, from the *Albury Daily News*.
5. *YT*, 8 January 1901.
6. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 322.
7. *W&TS*, 26 October 1900.
8. *C&HT*, 23 June, 18 July, 1 August 1900.
9. *O&MA*, 29 September 1900.
10. *AO*, 4, 11 April, 12 December, 1902, *CC*, 10 April 1902, *FS*, 28 March, 3 October 1902, *O&MA*, 21 December 1901, *WC*, 29 March 1902, *W&TS*, 4, 11 April 1902.

11. The following account of Wilmansrust relies on the letters written by William McKnight, courtesy of J. K. Cossum, Max Chamberlain, "The Wilmansrust Affair: A Defence of the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles", *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 6 (1985): 47–55, Field, *The Forgotten War*, Robert L. Wallace, *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Printing Service, 1976), Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*. The interpretation is the author's.
12. *AO*, 4 October 1901, *RS*, 29 October 1901, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 319.
13. Spence, 'To Shoot and Ride', 123.
14. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 206.
15. *Ibid*., 317–8.
16. *Ibid*., 318–9.
17. Gavin Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 1992) 57–60.
18. *Ibid*., 318.
19. NAA B5179, *YT*, 9, 23, 30 March 1900, 11, 18 January 1901.
20. *AO*, 21 June 1901, *RS*, 14 June 1901, *UM&MH,* 20 June 1901, *WC*, 22 June 1901.
21. *W&TS*, 4 October 1901.
22. *WC*, 10, 17 August 1901.
23. *AO*, 27 September 1901, *C&HT*, 25 September 1901, *RS*, 13 September 1901, *UM&MH*, 12 September 1901.
24. *O&MA*, 3 August 1901.
25. *AO*, 4, 18 October 1901, *C&HT*, 5, 16 October 1901, *O&MA*, 2 November 1901, 22 March 1902, *RS*, 29 October 1901, 31 January 1902.
26. *AO*, 17 January 1902, *C&HT*, 25 January 1902, *FS*, 31 January 1902.
27. *AO*, 17 January 1902.
28. *AO*, 17 January 1902, *C&HT*, 5 March 1902, *O&MA*, 16 April 1902, *RS*, 11 February 1902, *WC*, 21 August 1901, 16 April 1902.
29. *CC*, 8 May, 29 May 1902, *O&MA*, 8 March 1902. The regiment built an imposing memorial to itself in Melbourne and listed Wilmansrust amongst its battle honours (Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 355).
30. Hennessy had been promoted to Captain of the Sixth Battalion Commonwealth Horse. (*WC*, 7 May, 6 August 1902.)

31. *WC*, 14 May 1902, Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo*, 71, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 331.
32. *WC*, 10 May 1902.
33. *WC*, 7, 10, 14 May 1902.
34. *O&MA*, 28 June 1902, *RS*, 13 May 1902, *YT*, 23 May 1902.
35. *UM&MH*, 15 May 1902.
36. *O&MA*, 10 May, 28 June1902.
37. *YT*, 23 May 1902.
38. *O&MA*, 28 June 1902.
39. Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994).
40. See, for example, Connolly, "Class, Birthplace and Loyalty", Douglas Cole, 'The Crimson Thread of Kinship': Ethnic Ideas in Australia, 1870-1914", *Historical Studies*, 14, 56 (1971): 511–25, John Rickard, *Class and Politics: New South Wales, Victoria and the Early Commonwealth* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1976), Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*.

CHAPTER 8

The Occasional War: January 1901 to August 1902

Abstract The Boer War became an occasional war after 1900. The regional response to peace in May 1902 was lacklustre. Other matters had engaged people's attention: a new nation, a new monarch and a new parliament. Federation on 1 January 1901 was overshadowed by the death of Queen Victoria in the same month. The opening of the first Parliament was observed regionally by the raising of the Union Jack in local school grounds. The coronation of Edward VII was duly celebrated. Victorian politics was in disarray as the Kyabram Reform League began a program of cuts to government spending and the amalgamation of electorates.

When peace finally came, it not only was long overdue but was almost an irritant. Negotiations for peace had been floated many times between December 1900 and January 1902, but in March, they became serious and protracted. A peace agreement was reached on 31 May 1902. The news reached Australia two days later. "PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!" trumpeted the *Rutherglen Sun* in its issue of 3 June and the town did itself proud. Bells were rung, the Union Jack was hoisted, volleys were fired by the rifle club and, at the mayor's request, businesses were closed. The children were given the day off school—or almost. They had to march through town as part of a procession and listen to speeches before they escaped. They were reminded that this was a day to remember, the day when the "British nation came out on top", a day that showed the humane spirit of empire as "evidenced in our Concentration Camps, where we

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have protected the relatives of our foes". The band played patriotic airs in the evening and several hundred people "promenaded" the main street. Church services were held the following Sunday.[1]

The response across the rest of the region was less fulsome. Flags and bunting were in evident display and town bands played patriotic tunes in the evening. Wangaratta, mindful of its status as VMR headquarters, staged a military display by members of J Company.[2] The jingoism and enthusiasm so evident with the Relief of Mafeking, however, had long since gone. By May 1902, the war had become an occasional war, one that had only intruded into regional consciousness with the welcome home socials and the specific issues noted in the previous chapter. The region had found plenty of other matters to engage its attention between the end of 1900 and the declaration of peace. They included a new nation, a new parliament and a new monarch.

Heralding the New Nation

The slow progress of the Commonwealth Bill through the British Parliament in 1900 was accompanied in the regional press by learned pieces on the objections and compromises that were bringing federation closer to a political reality. Few, however, bothered to put pen to paper in letters to the editor. The only issue that did prompt a response was the hope that Albury would be chosen as the site for the new capital, a move strongly supported by the regional press and its readers.[3]

The celebrations accompanying the creation of the new nation on 1 January 1901 were therefore somewhat lackadaisical, so much so that in Chiltern the town band forgot to turn up on the day.[4] Most communities celebrated the day with a flag raising ceremony, parades, rifle volleys and the inevitable picnic for the children. Beechworth gave the grandest display. Under Billson's leadership, there were floats, children marching and speeches. The VMR presented arms and the Union Jack was hoisted. Billson began his address with 'Fellow Citizens of Australia" before launching into a discourse on the benefits of empire.[5] Kiewa did nothing at all to celebrate the day. The *Yackandandah Times* waspishly noted that the "Kiewa-ites" were "engrossed in amassing wealth" and had little time for pleasure. Perhaps—or the fate of Margaret Heffernan may have been of greater interest.[6]

In January 1900, a fire destroyed Dederang's Post Office. Amongst the letters lost was a desperate plea from Margaret Heffernan to her parents.

Margaret, after "stepping out" with a young man, fell pregnant. Her beau promptly left the region, leaving a bogus Sydney address. Margaret did not tell her parents about her pregnancy but went to Melbourne to "seek work" and wait out her time. The baby was duly born but Margaret found caring for him difficult: she was exhausted and the baby was sick. She wrote to her parents, asking for both help and forgiveness. No reply came. Believing that they had abandoned her, she undressed her baby and "dropped him gently into the Yarra".[7]

The police had little difficulty in locating her in the city's boarding house district. She was tried for murder and found guilty. Despite the jury's strong recommendation for mercy, she was sentenced to death. Her parents were distraught: if they had received the letter, they said, the family would have cared for Margaret and her son. The *Yackandandah Times* immediately backed the proposal put by the Women's Political and Social Crusade, with support from the Melbourne's Trades Hall, for a petition calling for reprieve, a call supported by other regional newspapers. The *Australian Woman's Sphere*, a paper devoted to women's issues and published by Vida Goldstein, also took up the case as an issue of women's rights. Much was made of the fact that the judge who had sentenced Margaret Heffernan to death had handed down a far more lenient sentence for a man who had virtually decapitated his de facto partner with a razor. He had been given a two-year sentence for manslaughter because he had been drunk. The petition attracted over 15,000 signatures. Heffernan's case went before the Executive. Her death sentence was commuted to four years' imprisonment in December.[8] Margaret Heffernan, however, was small beer when it came to the death of a woman who was the mother of an empire.

A "National Calamity"

In columns bordered in black, the regional papers reported that Queen Victoria had died at 6.30 p.m. on 24 January 1901. The *Corryong Courier*, apparently forgetting that a matter of six months before it had challenged the claim that Victoria was the Queen of Peace by listing Britain's 40 wars since 1837, called it a "great national calamity".[9] The *Rutherglen Sun* reported that the town was thrown into a "state of deep grief": "strong men bowed their heads in reverence". Shops closed, flags were flown at half-mast, bells tolled and the town band played the Dead March in the evening. Local government bodies met and passed formal motions of

"heartfelt sorrow" that were duly conveyed in telegrams of condolence to London. The memorial services that followed drew large congregations. On the day of the funeral, all businesses were closed, flags were flown at half-mast and again the bells tolled. The proclamation of Edward VII as the new king was read from public places, accompanied by volleys fired by rifle clubs.[10] Yet, although Victoria was publicly canonised by the regional press and local government bodies, and strong men in Rutherglen may have bowed their heads in reverence, there was no evidence of any spontaneous outbreaks of grief at the news. And if the fate of memorial plans to honour Victoria's life is any indication, her death meant little in the region.

Public meetings called to discuss fitting ways to commemorate the late Queen's reign quickly faltered. Wodonga's plans to build a drinking fountain surmounted by an illuminating lamp folded. Instead, the council made a modest donation of £1/1/- to the extensions being planned to Albury's hospital to commemorate the Queen's life. Other regional councils followed suit.[11] Billson in Beechworth, however, had other plans. It became a protracted business and the result was dismal.

Billson chaired the committee formed to find a suitable means of commemorating Victoria's reign. A marble statue of the Queen, or a marble bust on a pillar of local granite, was initially favoured until the costs came in. Anything in marble would cost at least £1000. That was well beyond Beechworth's reach. At Billson's urging, the committee agreed that the town's botanical reserve, long neglected, could be improved and renamed Queen Victoria Park. But what form would the park take? After vigorous discussion, the committee decided on entrance gates, a cairn and a fountain, at a total cost of £55. Local friendly societies were invited to plant trees, donated by the State Nursery. The opening was set for November 1901.[12]

The planting was slow and subject to rancour. The Hibernians and Rechabites strongly objected to the ANA's claim that the ANA had done most of the work. Cows munched their way through the plantings. Canvassing for funds raised only £20. When Billson called a public meeting in October to discuss the park's progress, only the committee members turned up. Billson tersely remarked that "the people did not care" and plans to dedicate the park in November were shelved because, as committee member Thomas Porritt noted, there was nothing to open. In April 1902, the committee met again to review progress: there had been little. Billson pre-empted any attempts to further delay the dedica-

tion by informing the committee that he had already invited the Minister of Agriculture, Sir Samuel Gillott, to do the job in May. Porritt remarked that the minister would "see a good many dead trees". The park was formally dedicated on 10 May 1902 but it was a far cry from the grand plans made a year before. The trees were dead or dying, there were no entrance gates, nor a fountain, but the cairn was in place with a memorial plaque.[13] The park was never completed.

"Bricky" probably summed up the regional mood. He wrote to the Chiltern paper in February 1901, tongue in cheek, urging the building of a memorial, no matter how modest. It would attract "flocks of visitors", irrespective of the shire's bad roads, and even if it were not much to look at, the tourists would "spend a bob or two".[14] Perhaps "Bricky" was a republican; or perhaps he reflected a belief that Victoria had lived a long life and it was time for a new generation to make its mark.

A Parliament, "Gee-Gaws", a "Jook" and "Distinctly Average" Politicians

Few were surprised when Isaacs announced he would stand for Indi. Many believed that the seat was his for the asking[15]: but not everyone. Isaacs was a Protectionist. Free Trade committees were set up across the region seeking a candidate to oppose him.[16] Wodonga led the campaign under a committee chaired by Dr Schlink with the full support of the Wodonga paper's editor. According to Ryan, Isaacs was a brilliant man but he had a "record for shiftiness" and he was "erratic", qualities Indi did not need in its federal representative.[17] The Free Trade committees scored something of a *coup* when the president of the Free Trade Democratic Association of Victoria, T. R. Ashworth, declared he would also stand for Indi.[18] His entry into the race was welcomed by most of the regional papers: only the *Rutherglen Sun*, the *Wangaratta Chronicle* and the *Alpine Observer* openly backed Isaacs.[19]

Ashworth, however, was no match for Isaacs. In part, this reflected the fact that "Free Trade" was a misnomer: the Free Traders believed in some tariffs, prompting the *Yackandandah Times* and the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* to remark that the campaign was a "battle of the tariffs", or the choice between high and low tariffs rather than a choice between Protection and Free Trade.[20] But Isaacs' main advantage lay in the fact that he was a known factor, a man with considerable experience, an astute knowledge of his electorate and a rapport with his audience. Ashworth, as an outsider, was all at sea when voters asked him parish-pump questions. Isaacs handled

these with ease and he won Indi with a comfortable majority of some 1800 votes.[21] Despite the support Ashworth received from most of the regional papers, the electors of Indi voted for a candidate they knew.

Bogong was now free and Billson nominated for the seat. Isaacs swept through the region accepting his complementary socials as the first member for Indi—and offering Billson his full support.[22] Yet, if Billson had thought that the seat was his for the asking, he was quickly disabused of the notion. At the by-election, he was one of five contesting the seat. But this was Billson's hour: he had Isaacs' support, a decade of public life behind him and he had learnt from his mentor. In a meeting in Beechworth, Hans Susemiehl toasted Billson as the "working man's friend".[23] The "working man's friend" had been one of Isaacs's most effective tags during his campaigns for Bogong during the 1890s. Billson took Bogong.[24]

The death of the Empress of India and the decreed period of mourning that followed had initially cast doubts on the opening of the First Australian Parliament in Melbourne set for May 1901. Would the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York open the new parliament, as originally planned? They would and they did. The royal couple received a lavish reception on their arrival (although they felt obliged to quash the rumour that they had promised a case of silver spoons and a sovereign to every child in Australia).[25] The opening ceremony was described as the "most brilliant ceremony ever witnessed in Australia".[26] Hundreds of the region's citizens travelled to Melbourne for the event, curious to see what royalty looked like. It put a bit of a dint in local celebrations,[27] but they were a success, thanks largely to Sir Frederick Sargood's flag movement.

Whilst running as a candidate for the Senate, Sargood had urged Victoria's communities to build flag poles in their school grounds and promised to provide each school with that "dear old flag", the Union Jack, to celebrate the opening of parliament.[28] A veritable forest of flagpoles had sprung up across the region by May. Bright's was over 60 feet high and could be seen from every part of the town.[29] Sargood, now a senator, arranged to have the telegraph lines kept clear on the day the new parliament was opened. At 12.50 p.m., the Duchess would press a key and the signal would be flashed across the state. At that time, all the schools would hoist their Union Jacks in a stirring display of loyalty to empire. Cadets would present arms, a bugle would sound and the children would salute the flag before singing "God Save the King" and giving three cheers for the new nation. Logistically, it could have been a nightmare, but it went like clockwork.[30]

Some, however, took a sour view of the celebrations in Melbourne and particularly the fascination with the royal couple. "Red Bluff", writing to the *Yackandandah Times*, had little time for those who had gone to the metropolis "to participate in the great sycophantic grovel, provided by the State's political pooh-bahs for the 'Jook's' benefit, in return for which they will see looming in the future shoddy titles and other gee-gaws".[31] Others would soon share this disgruntlement.

After the opening of parliament, the "Jook" and his duchess set out for Sydney by special train accompanied by Lord Hopetoun, the Governor General. The special, it was promised, would stop briefly at the main stations along the North Eastern Line. Towns like Euroa, Benalla, Wangaratta, Chiltern and Wodonga could expect a visit from royalty. The towns on the North Eastern Line threw themselves into planning for the grand day. They decorated the stations, dignitaries prepared speeches, posies were made for the Duchess, letters of loyalty were written by school children and pride of place was given to cadets, rifle clubs and the VMR on the platform. Determined not to miss out, towns on the branch lines, like Bright, Beechworth and Rutherglen, sent contingents of school children, clutching their letters of loyalty, to Wangaratta. The first indication that all was not going to plan came at Euroa.

The Royal Train slowed as it entered the station then picked up steam and clattered into the distance, leaving the local committee prepared to welcome the royal couple bewildered and covered in cinders. It stopped at Benalla, where the royal couple spoke briefly to the crowd. It stopped again at Wangaratta to take on water but the royal couple refused to alight. Instead, they sent Hopetoun to chat with Bowser and his official party of local dignitaries. Hopetoun accepted the posies and letters of loyalty from the children of Beechworth, Wangaratta and Rutherglen. At North Wangaratta, railway gangers saw hundreds of slips of paper being thrown from the Royal Train. Pouncing upon them as potential souvenirs of the royal visit, they discovered that they were letters of loyalty written by school children across Australia, along with appeals seeking the intervention of the Duke and Duchess in personal matters. The royal train roared through Chiltern, steamed slowly through Wodonga and stopped at Albury. There the royal couple changed trains where the Duke made his impatience with the delay clear to all. This was the first, and for the vast majority, the last contact the locals would have with royalty.[32] It removed the mystique surrounding royalty for many.

Regional leaders wanted to know why the royal train had not stopped as promised. They were told that the train was running behind time: not even royalty, apparently, could interfere with railway timetables.[33] When

the Duke's birthday came and went the next year, some towns marked the occasion by hoisting the Union Jack but others, like Chiltern, did not. If the Duke could not recognise Chilternites on his tour here, the editor wrote, "They were not going to rave over him now".[34]

In July 1901, a familiar and penitent figure stood before the Chiltern bench: "Martin Byron, Chiltern's distinguished ION, attended, at the forced request of Mounted-Constable Tierney". Lordy argued that he had "found it needful to indulge in a harmless sedative" after being forced to scrutinise the shire's by-laws because he had been summonsing people who did not own livestock.[35] Offered the choice between a "fiver" or a sojourn up the road to Beechworth's Gaol, he chose the latter: it would give him time to "do up the books", he said.[36] Chilternites were used to Lordy: but they expected better from the men they had elected to a new national parliament.

After the celebrations surrounding the opening of the new Australian Parliament in May, political reality set in. There was broad agreement on matters of defence and a White Australia, but little on the issue of the tariff. It dominated parliamentary business and the regional press took sides. The *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, long a champion of Free Trade, castigated the House of Representatives and returned to the attack on Isaacs. The *Alpine Observer*, a supporter of a medium tariff, reserved its ire for the Senate as the latter tinkered with the tariff bill sent from the House of Representatives. As for the calibre of the men representing the nation: they were "distinctly average". There was also growing resentment over the costs of running a new national government: the Commonwealth was almost profligate.[37] As if that was not enough, in June 1902, the Governor General resigned. Initially, Hopetoun's appointment had been warmly welcomed. But the man had a capacity to spend beyond his means. In June, the government made it clear to him that he needed to curb vice-regal expenditure. Hopetoun chose to resign rather than compromise his office by parsimony. En route from Melbourne to Sydney in a special train he stopped at Wodonga. He was given an illuminated address and cheered by a crowd of some 200. He offered his "sincerest thanks" and said was glad to be back in Wodonga once again.[38] If this struck some as odd, remembering the royal visit the year before, they made no comment.

A New Monarch

As the official period of mourning came to a close, plans were made to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII in June. Albert Rivett, of course, dismissed it as a mere shadow of what was to come when "true royalty

was enthroned", Christ with the Second Coming.[39] But others saw the moment as an auspicious one, marked by the end of hostilities in South Africa, and the region's arrangements for the celebrations were well and truly in place. One Anglican minister even offered a special service based on the one to be conducted at Westminster Abbey.[40] The only snag struck by organisers was any attempt to hold a public religious service to mark the occasion. In Chiltern, it was pointed out that the coronation oath referred to the Catholic religion as idolatrous, blasphemous and superstitious and hence Catholics could not be expected to take part. The chair of the organising committee rather wisely left the matter to the local clergy to sort out.[41] The King, however, fell ill with appendicitis and the coronation was postponed. The news reached the North East two days before celebrations were due to take place. Prayers were offered up for the monarch and the Anglican minister in Wodonga spoke of the "great dread" that hung over the nation.[42] But, with all the planning and costs incurred, the question was raised—should the celebrations be cancelled?

Melbourne cancelled the metropolitan celebrations but decided that "country celebrations" should go ahead. Rutherglen refused to do so but the rest of the region went ahead as planned.[43] Tallangatta had a splendid day: a monster picnic, a bonfire and fireworks, speeches, tree planting, a distribution of medals to the children, a concert and finally a dance where the "adults had a terpsichorean fly-around until midnight".[44] But it was Yackandandah's celebrations that attracted most interest because they were the most ambitious. Reaching back into Tudor history, the town proposed to roast a bullock for the people to celebrate the coronation. Councillor Beatty offered the beast and promised 15 butchers and carvers to do the honours. The horns were to be preserved and donated to the local Athenaeum. Representatives of the metropolitan press were invited to attend.

Was Yackandandah aiming too high? The citizens of Clear Creek certainly thought so: they roasted a goat as a "preliminary canter" to show the citizens of "Yack" how it should be done. Yackandandah loftily ignored the jibe. On the grand day, though, the 15 butchers and carvers failed to materialise; so, too, did the members of the metropolitan press. Nor had the men of the town bothered to do their homework. They simply hoisted the carcass over an even fire in the morning. At the same time, they shoved a giant damper and hundreds of potatoes into the coals. When it came time to carve the beast, the meat was well done and sizzling in some parts but still very pink and even "a bit high" in others. The giant damper had

shrunk alarmingly and boys pelted each other with potatoes that were now as hard as stones. But the locals "made the best of it", mainly because the women of the town were well prepared. They had looked askance at the plan to roast a beast and had prepared a mountain of sandwiches and 150 plumb puddings just in case.[45]

The late news of the cancellation of the coronation also produced its embarrassing moments. There is no doubt that many regional editors had composed appropriate pieces celebrating Edward VII's coronation but pulled them. Not so the hapless editor of the *Alpine Observer*. As the rest of the regional press published the news that the coronation had been postponed, the *Alpine Observer* editorialised that the "air we breathe is still throbbing with gratification at the King's coronation festival", the event conducted to the "tuneful accompaniment of the merry bells of peace".[46]

The coronation finally took place on 9 August. The *Rutherglen Sun* suggested that local businesses might decorate their premises and that the festivities cancelled in June should go ahead. And so it came to pass. Without any sense of irony, the *Sun* praised the town's decorations as a "spontaneous display of loyalty". The band played, the fireworks purchased in June were fired and at 10 p.m. (high noon London time), the crowd sang "God Save the King". A crowd of 2000 promenaded the illuminated streets that evening.[47] Across the rest of the region, however, the day was a more low-key affair. Beechworth, without Billson at its head, decided that it had done its bit with the celebrations in June.[48] In Bright, the planned military salute was abandoned because most of the bandsmen and riflemen were away playing football.[49]

Why had the war become an occasional war after 1900? Was it, as Chris Connolly argued, a mixture of apathy and war weariness?[50] There is little evidence of either in the region. When the call for volunteers for the Fifth and Sixth Contingents went out, along with later calls for volunteers for the Commonwealth contingents, regional men responded in droves. Over 100 turned up for selection for the Australian Commonwealth Contingent in April 1902, for example: only 24 were successful.[51] The region assiduously welcomed its men returning from the war, especially the men of the Fifth. Although municipalities no longer organised public demonstrations of support for the war after Roberts's return to England, this reflected confidence that the war had been won and victory was inevitable. As for war weariness, there was nothing to be weary about. Beyond offering its men, there was little the region *could* do. The Patriotic Fund had closed.

The region's women were no longer required to use their domestic skills for an imperial cause. The Defence Department had well and truly closed the door on any VMR units beyond Wangaratta's. Despite occasional protests from jingoes, the region was content with the knowledge that it had met all and any obligations war demanded of it. The war had been accommodated to the even tenor of its ways.

Notes

1. *AO*, 2 June, *RS*, 18 April, 3 June 1902.
2. *AO*, 14 March, 6, 20 June 1902, *C&HT*, 6 June 1902, *CC*, 5 June 1902, *FS*, 6 June 1902, *O&MA*, 7 June 1902, *RS*, 3 June 1902, *UM&MH*, 2 June 1902, *WC*, 4 June 1902, *W&TS*, 6 June 1902.
3. *CC*, 20 December 1900, *C&HT*, 24 January, 22 June 1900, *FS*, 21 December 1900, *RS*, 9 February 1900, *WC*, 17 January, 31 March, 2 May, 21 July 1900.
4. *FS*, 28 December 1900, 4 January 1901, *RS*, 21 December 1900.
5. *O&MA*, 5 January 1901.
6. *YT*, 4, 11 January 1901.
7. *YT*, 2 March 1900.
8. *Argus*, 16 March 1900, *FS*, 9 March 1900, *W&TS*, 14 December 1900, *YT*, 2, 9, 16 March, 21 December 1900.
9. *CC*, 30 August 1900, 24 January 1901.
10. *C&HT*, 26 January 1901, *CC*, 31 January 1901, *O&MA*, 2, 9 February 1901, *RS*, 5 February 1901, *UM&MH*, 7 February 1901, *WC*, 1 February 1901, *W&TS*, 25 January 1901, *YT*, 25 January, 15 February 1901.
11. *UM&MH*, 5 September 1901, *W&TS*, 15 March, 19 April, 17 May, 24 May 1901. The extensions were never completed because pubic response had been so poor.
12. *C&HT*, 13, 16, 20 February, 13 April, 25 May 1901, *O&MA*, 2 February, 6, 13, 16, 23 February, 23 March, 14, 27 April 1901.
13. *C&HT*, 29 June, 6, 13, 17, 27 July, 24 August, 12, 23 October, 6 November 1901, 12 April, 1902, *O&MA*, 29 June, 13, 27 July, 10, 24 August, 6 November 1901, 12, 19 April, 3, 17 May 1902.
14. *FS*, 8 February 1901.
15. *C&HT*, 31 October 1900.
16. *O&MA*, 2, 23 March 1901, *W&TS*, 1, 8 March 1901, *YT*, 1 March 1901.

17. *W&TS*, 1, 8, 15, 22 March 1901.
18. *RS*, 1 March 1901, *W&TS*, 8 March 1901.
19. *AO*, 22 March 1901, *RS*, 26 March 1901, *WC*, 20, 27 March 1901.
20. *O&MA*, 23 March, 25 May 1901, *YT*, 15 March 1901.
21. *AO*, 5 April 1901, *W&TS*, 15, 22 March, 5 April 1901.
22. *C&HT*, 17 April 1901, *O&MA*, 15 June 1901, *YT*, 26 April, 3 May 1901.
23. *C&HT*, 22 June 1901.
24. *C&HT*, 3 April, 12, 15, 26 June 1901, *O&MA*, 29 June 1901, W*&TS*, 14, 28 June 1901, *YT*, 7 June 1901.
25. *UM&MH*, 16 May 1901. The Duke would become King George V after the death of his father, Edward VII.
26. *RS*, 14 May 1901.
27. *C&HT*, 18 May 1901, *O&MA*, 11 May 1901, *WC*, 15 May 1901.
28. *WC*, 5 October 1900, *RS*, 26 March 1901.
29. *AO*, 17 May 1901.
30. *CC*, 16 May 1901, *O&MA*, 18 May 1901, *RS*, 17 May 1901, *UM&MH*, 16 May 1901, *W&TS*, 24 May 1901.
31. *YT*, 3 May 1901.
32. *RS*, 21 May 1901, *WC*, 22 May 1901, *W&TS*, 24 May 1901, *YT*, 24 May 1901, Jones, *There Was A Time*, 138.
33. *W&TS*, 31 May 1901.
34. *FS*, 13 June 1902.
35. *FS*, 1 March 1901.
36. *FS*, 19 July 1901.
37. *AO*, 1 August, 15 November 1901, 14 February, 4 April, 28 July, 1 August 1902, *C&HT*, 13, 16 November 1901, *FS*, 18 October, 27 December 1901, 11 July, 19 December 1902, *W&TS*, 16 August, 11, 28 October, 8 November, 15 November, 25 December 1901, 1 January, 25 April, 9 May, 25 July 1902.
38. *O&MA*, 17 May, 7 June 1902, *UM&MH*, 22 May 1905, *W&TS*, 23 May, 20 June, 4 July 1902.
39. *MI* quoted by *O&MA*, 16 August 1902.
40. *O&MA*, 5 July 1902, *RS*, 24 June 1902.
41. *FS*, 6 June 1902.
42. *W&TS*, 4 July 1902.
43. *O&MA*, 28 June 1902.
44. *UM&MH*, 29 May, 5 June, 3 July 1902.
45. *O&MA*, 5 July 1902, *YT*, 2, 16 May, 6 June, 4 July 1902.

46. *AO*, 27 June 1902.
47. *RS*, 27 June, 1 July, 1, 8 August, 12 August 1902.
48. *O&MA*, 16 August 1902.
49. *AO*, 1, 15 August 1902, *O&MA*, 16 August 1902, *W&TS*, 15 August 1902.
50. Connolly, "Class, birthplace and loyalty".
51. NAA B5207, *AO*, 27 December 1901, *FS*, 25 May 1902, *UM&MH*, 24 April 1902, *W&TS*, 25 April 1902.

CHAPTER 9

Obligations, Monuments and Moving On

Abstract As Charles Smith would discover, the Empire's Patriotic Fund's provision of short term support for men disabled by the war was short indeed. Local communities made plans to commemorate the men killed during the war by erecting monuments to honour the dead. It was hoped that these would act as points of commemoration and remembrance for coming generations. They failed to do so. The first anniversary of peace came and went unnoticed: There were no civic celebrations to mark the day and no commemorative services were held at the local monuments erected for the fallen. The Boer War was well on the way to becoming Australia's "forgotten war".

In Tallangatta, Martin O'Reilly had asked a basic question: what would he do if his son came back "crippled" in the service of empire? Tallangatta would attempt to answer his question.

As noted in Chap. 7, Charles (Charlie) Francis Smith[1] was wounded at Wilmansrust. His mother, Elizabeth, had been informed by telegram that the wound was slight. By July, however, Smith was reported as being "dangerously ill". By August, his leg had been amputated below the knee and in November was invalided to England for the fitting of an artificial leg.[2] Smith's mother would have had a sense of the medical dangers confronting her son: she worked as a nurse and midwife in the local cottage hospital.

Smith returned to Tallangatta in February 1902, greeted by a large crowd at the railway station. At his smoke night, it was decided that some-

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thing more should be done for a local man "crippled" whilst soldiering for empire. A committee was formed and by July 1902 £80 had been raised. At his request, the money was used to buy a house for him and his mother. Smith, however, was still far from well. The amputation below the knee was troublesome which led to a second amputation of the leg above the knee. But how could an amputee, who was a labourer, keep body and soul together as he recovered from the second operation? The committee had the obvious answer, the Empire's Patriotic Fund: it had promised to support those wounded or disabled by the war.[3]

Smith applied to the Fund for assistance, with suitable referees attesting to his good character. He listed his mother and sister as dependants. He was awarded a pension of 1/6 a day for a year from 6 March 1903 to 27 April 1904 and it was renewed in July 1904 for another year. In July 1905, however, his pension was stopped. Receiving no response to his query as the reason, Smith turned to the VMR's Colonel Ryan for help. Ryan lobbied the Fund, describing Smith as "a good honest decent fellow" and his pension was renewed for another year.

Smith had difficulty keeping work. As he put it, "my leg goes against me". One of his employers described him as "a steady honest sober man", but added, "He knocks up fairly quickly". Smith tried his hand at running a "hair dressing saloon", but that failed. By 1907, he was married with a child and was destitute. His wife, Florence, wrote to the Fund applying for short-term relief stating that her husband was "in the country Beging [sic] for a crust". It was granted, if somewhat grudgingly, with the notation on file, "no further allotment to be granted". By 1909, Smith was driving a hackney cab in Melbourne for a living and once more turned to the Fund seeking £25 to replace his artificial leg. He was refused: the Committee felt that "in justice to the many persons still more dependent on the fund, it cannot authorise an expenditure of this amount". Smith, however, had also applied to the premier for assistance. The premier immediately referred the matter to the Fund. Clayton, the Fund's secretary, reiterated his objections to extending any further assistance to Smith and the case was "left in the Lord Mayor's Hands". He decided in Smith's favour. Smith described the news as "a welcome Xmas present".[4]

Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees in their history of repatriation in Australia identified two key elements that underpinned attitudes to the troubled matter of returned veterans. Temporary assistance would be given but not "charity", or long-term support, because both robbed a man of his

moral fibre by inducing dependence.[5] Smith's case certainly bears out that observation.

In uncertain waters, Tallangatta did well by Charles Smith. The community had provided a disabled veteran with some security in the form of a roof over his head. But Smith begged far broader questions of responsibility. Who owed the returned veteran: the government that demanded their services or the communities that sent them? Smith, in one of his letters to the Fund, asked, "Do you think this is a fair way to treat a man who has fought for his Country?" That question would bedevil Australian governments for the next century.

Remembering

Although the war claimed the lives of seven men who lived in the region,[6] monuments were erected to the memory of only five: Samuel J. Oliver, Archie McKenzie, William Petty, Edwin Bawden and Walter Briggs.

Oliver, from Milawa, was the region's first casualty. Aged 30 and a member of the Third Contingent, he was killed at Koster River on 22 July 1900.[7] The response of the regional press was awkward. The *Wangaratta Chronicle* reported that he was popular with his officers, was "fearless with a horse", "handy with firearms" and possessed a "daring nature". It added that his death was "just the sort of end Private Oliver would have desired". (One can only wonder if Oliver would have agreed.) The Oxley Shire Council sent the parents a letter of condolence, assuring them that their son was "made of the right material".[8] The press also reported that the insurance company had done the decent thing by paying out his policy, despite the fact that he had forgotten to change his occupation from "farmer" to "soldier" for their files.[9] Oliver's father received a letter from his son's commanding officer informing him that his son had behaved with gallantry but was shot by the enemy. But this was not enough for a grieving father. He wanted to know more about how his son had died. Private W. Bartlett wrote to him, apparently providing the details he needed.[10] Oliver's monument was a modest tablet fixed to the wall in Milawa's Library Hall. Bowser unveiled it in April 1901. Sam's personal qualities were stressed in the speeches. The inscription on the tablet noted that Samuel J. Oliver had been killed "whilst fighting for Queen and country".[11]

Wangaratta's Archie McKenzie was shot through the head at Rhenoster Kop near Reitfontein on 29 November 1900. He was 26.[12] His

commanding officer wrote that Archie's death had been instantaneous and painless. Mick Sharry, however, claimed that McKenzie had taken hours to die. The local Fire Brigade began raising funds for a monument that would remember the man and serve a practical purpose by doubling as a drinking fountain. The site chosen was the triangular piece of land that lay between the Anglican cathedral and the town hall. Matching the pattern described by Ken Inglis for other Boer War monuments in Australia, fund raising was slow but steady.[13]

William Petty, from Hanson South, was 23 when he died from enteric fever in South Africa on 27 December 1900. Hanson South immediately began to raise funds for a monument. It would not occupy a socially significant space like the McKenzie monument, hedged between symbols of religious and temporal power. Instead, the local cemetery at Greta West (where Dan Kelly and Steve Hart lay buried in unmarked graves) was chosen as the site. By May 1901, the work was finished. The monument was a broken column (signifying a life cut short) on a bluestone base, standing some six feet high. Its inscription read that Petty had died "serving Queen and country" and added that he had been "a good comrade and a brave soldier". But who would unveil the monument? Invitations were sent to Bowser, Harry Hennessy (the wounded veteran who had returned to a hero's reception in Glenrowan in 1900) and the captain of J Company. All sent their apologies. The visit of the Duke and Duchess to open the new federal parliament took precedence. Robert Jackson, a Primitive Methodist minister, did the honours.[14]

On a raw autumn day in May, as Melbourne honoured the royal couple, over 400 people attended the unveiling. The monument was draped with the Union Jack. Jackson may well have startled the crowd by his opening remarks. No wonder, he said, people prayed for the Second Coming: peace on earth was only possible through Christ. But he shifted to more familiar themes. Kruger had started the war. The war itself had shown the unity of, and loyalty to, the empire. There were few who would not shed their blood for the principles represented by the Union Jack. William's father then spoke: his son had left home fit and healthy, obeying a call to arms as a "Britisher". He hoped the monument would inspire future generations. The ceremony concluded with "God Save the King".[15]

Edwin Charles Matthew Bawden served as a farrier with the Fourth Contingent and Eldorado had plans well in hand to welcome him home. But, as described in Chap. 5, he died in a Melbourne hospital from pneumonia. Like Petty, he was barely 23. His funeral was the largest Eldorado

had seen since the McEvoy Mine disaster in 1895.[16] By February 1902, Bawden's monument was finished. Like Petty's, it was a broken column. Standing some 14 feet high, it was built on the town's most prominent geographical feature, One Tree Hill. It had a commanding view of the town. Colonel Price, invited to unveil the monument, handed the job over to Major W.G. Patterson who was conducting VMR exercises in the region. The column was draped with the Union Jack and members of J Company attended the service. Patterson had little to say beyond noting that he remembered Bawden from training at Langwarrin, that it was obvious that Bawden had been well liked and that people should remember the men who went to war to secure liberty. J Company presented arms, the anthem was sung and the service was over. The inscription read that he had died "serving his country" as a "faithful Victorian servant of the Queen". Some, however, had complaints about the monument's location. One Tree Hill may have commanded an imposing view over the town but the "toilsome climb" to the monument would ensure that few would bother to visit it.[17] They may well have been right. The climb to Bawden's monument remains "toilsome".

Wangaratta's monument was formally unveiled in April 1902. It stood 17 feet high. Its inscription, under a Mounted Infantry crest, read "To the memory of Victoria's soldiers who died for Empire in the South African War".[18] Although originally planned for Archie McKenzie, his was now one of four names on the monument: Oliver, Petty and Bawden had been added. Perhaps Wangaratta was not above a bit of poaching—or perhaps Wangaratta believed it had the right to honour the regional dead, reflecting its status as VMR headquarters. A procession, led by the local band, marched through the streets. It consisted of members of the VMR in uniform, members of local rifle clubs and Wangaratta's school children. The families of all four men named on the monument were in attendance. Buglers played a salute as Colonel Hoad did the honours. John Bowser's speech was eloquent. They were here to honour and cherish the memory of these men, he said. The hardest blow in war fell at home "where the weary waiting is". He hoped that, in time, the families of the fallen would see their sons' fate as an honour. He talked of the "quality of valour to face danger" that distinguished British arms in every quarter of the globe before moving into a more nativist vein, the "bravery that has so distinguished Australians at the front". The war had shown that it was empire, rather than England alone, that mattered. It was the duty of this, and future generations, to honour the memory of the brave, or, as he put it, "a

hundred years hence—when we are very quiet—the children in the streets will read here and remember the names of these, our faithful ones". The ceremony closed with "God Save the King".[19]

The last of the monuments built was Cudgewa's honouring Dot Briggs. After the memorial service conducted by Lahore in 1901, Cudgewa formed a committee to raise funds for a monument that not only would honour Briggs but would also serve as a reminder of the sacrifices needed to protect British freedoms and privileges. It took over two years to raise the funds needed. A marble slab on the obelisk gave the brief details of Walter's death and, in relief, crossed rifles on a banner over an inscription noting that he had "died fighting for his country in the ranks of the South African Constabulary".[20] At £85, it was the most expensive monument built in the region.[21] Lahore unveiled it in January 1904.

The monument mirrored Lahore's pulpit for the memorial service held for Briggs in October 1901. It was draped in black and partly covered by the Union Jack. Led by members of the Upper Murray, Nariel and Berringama rifle clubs, and Corryong's band playing "Soldiers of the King", a large crowd marched from the monument to the local hall where it spilled out into the street. Lahore delivered an "eloquent, patriotic and touching address". War, he said, was a relic of barbarism, something that should be alien in the twentieth century, and this war had been "a long and weary struggle". Yet, when a nation went to war, it was the duty of its citizens to uphold the decision made by their government. Fears that Australians "had not grist enough" for war were groundless: "Our young, untried men", he said, "had stood the test like veterans." Their names should be honoured and revered for generations: it was "our duty" to "keep their memory green" rather than historians.[22] Forgotten was his savaging of the men at Wilmansrust.

The riflemen led the crowd back to the monument where they formed up with arms reversed. After a brief speech by Lahore, the captain of the Upper Murray Rifle Club commanded the riflemen to "Present Arms" as the monument was unveiled. The band played "Onward Christian Soldiers". "God Save the King" ended the ceremony.[23]

Lahore's speech, and the unveiling of the Briggs monument, showed how far the rhetoric surrounding the war had come since Oliver's tablet was unveiled in a local hall. At Milawa, the speeches delivered were personal and the dead man's qualities were as important as his imperial loyalty, and his death had shown that Australians *did* have the "grist". By the time Petty's monument was built, the abilities of the Australian in battle were well

established in the popular imagination. Petty was also a "good soldier" and a "good comrade". Here were the seeds of a far more powerful tradition that would find its quintessential expression during the First World War in the digger. But Jackson gave no intimate picture of the man and said nothing about his personal qualities. Rather, Petty illustrated more abstract qualities, such as the principles represented by the Union Jack. Bowser's speech at the unveiling of the Wangaratta monument showed how far this movement into abstraction had taken hold. His portrait of Oliver was an intimate one, but Bowser was simply recycling the speech he delivered in 1901. When it came to McKenzie, Bawden and Petty, the personal element vanished. These men had shown the valour characteristic of imperial arms defending the empire. By the time the monument to Briggs was unveiled, the shift was complete. The man known as "Dot" had become "Walter Briggs", a symbol of duty and an example for future generations to follow, where the "noblest of all deaths" (a soldier's death)[24] was linked with imperial loyalty.

The shift in rhetoric was matched by a change in the way the unveiling ceremonies were conducted. Oliver's had been akin to a funeral. J Company, however, had attended the unveiling of the Bawden monument, not as fellow citizens, but as a military unit honouring a fallen comrade. Hoad, a military man, unveiled Wangaratta's monument and the unveiling was accompanied by military ritual, which included a bugled salute and a veteran in Hoad. Briggs was given the best equivalent a community could find for a military funeral.

The families of the dead attended the ceremonies, but, with one exception, they never spoke. The fact that William Petty's father *did* speak reflected the fact that there were no others to speak on the day. Publicly, the families were voiceless. And only Bowser touched on the private realm by noting that some parents may have doubted the sacrifice they had made. The families did, of course, have a domestic voice. Stories were told and remembered of the dead men. In memoriam notices were placed in the local paper, like the one for Briggs that noted that Walter had "died for his country".

The "Hell Ship"

The *Drayton Grange* provided the region with its two other war-related deaths.

With the war's end in 1902, the demobilisation of the imperial forces began. They included in their number the Second and Third Australian Contingents who had arrived too late to see active service. Some of these

men were repatriated on the *Drayton Grange*. The vessel was a hell ship. Equipped to carry 1500 men, 2306 were on board, some of them stowaways. The ship carried lifeboats for 955. Sanitary arrangements quickly broke down and disease swept through the ship. The ship's medical team was inept and incapable of coping with the task. Sixteen men died. Discipline disintegrated, perhaps because the officers on board had 9.5 bottles of whisky each for the voyage home. According to two Yackandandah men on the ship, the men did what they liked and there was talk of mutiny. Although a Royal Commission was held into what had happened on the *Drayton Grange*, little came from it. The Commission blamed the senior officer on board and those in Durban who had authorised the overloading of the ship. It also found fault with the medical provisions made for the voyage home. The *Drayton Grange* still begs many questions, especially those relating to mutiny. Cyril Brudenell White, a man who would become one of the most significant figures in Australia's military history, was on the ship—but would remain tight-lipped about what had happened for the rest of his life. Also on board the ship was Victor Hennessy, returning home after continuous service since 1899. Comprehensive in his descriptions of Wilmansrust, he was silent when it came to the *Drayton Grange*.[25]

The *Drayton Grange* was of particular interest to those living in Chiltern and Wodonga. Six men from Chiltern and seven men from Wodonga were on it. Chiltern's Percival Dudley was returning home with his mates who included Tidyman, now finishing his second stint. Dudley was seriously ill when the ship docked in Melbourne where he was hospitalised. He died there in August 1902 as the nation celebrated the belated coronation of its new monarch.[26] Walter Lindner was part of the Wodonga contingent. He was hospitalised in the Queenscliff sanatorium before being moved to the Albury hospital. There he died. The 21-year-old was buried in the Wodonga Cemetery. His mates carried his coffin.[27]

Neither Chiltern nor Wodonga made any plans to build a monument to Dudley or Lindner. One explanation is simply that the men had not seen active service, unlike the others commemorated. But there may be another. The region, like the rest of Australia, had already begun to move on.

Moving On

The chrysanthemum competitions had lost none of their lustre and members of the cycling clubs still pedalled their way across the countryside (although both were facing competition from the new "craze" sweeping

the region—ping pong). Football games were still subject to allegations of prejudicial umpiring and Rutherglen planned for next year's rowing regatta. The industrial troubles between the AMA and the mine owners, especially Cock, continued. The annual invasion of itinerant pickers for the region's grape harvest was accompanied by the usual litany of complaints and stern calls for curbing their lawless behaviour. Larrikinism was still evident amongst the region's younger males, which brought gloomy prognostications about the future from their elders. Although the VMR managed to maintain its numbers, and J Company had done particularly well in the state competitions held at Williamstown, the VMR was undergoing change. It would now be known as the Commonwealth Light Horse. And its members were expected to pay more of the expenses associated with the maintenance of a civilian militia. There were also cutbacks in expenditure on the rifle clubs and some folded.[28]

Victorian and regional politics were also changing. A belief that the Commonwealth government was profligate spawned the Kyabram Reform Movement and its offshoot, the Kyabram Reform League. The movement's message was simple: the state may not have been able to control Commonwealth expenditure but it could set its own house in order. It proposed a reduction in the number of seats in the Victorian Legislative Assembly and heavy cuts to government expenditure. Branches of the League were quickly established across the region in the lead-up to the state elections in October 1902 and found ready support in the regional press and regional councils.[29] The *Alpine Observer* was the singular exception: it saw the movement as a "pervert to Conservatism".[30] Although John Isaacs and Billson had little time for the movement, they were clearly out of touch with their constituencies. When Billson put his arguments to a meeting in Beechworth, no seconder came forward to support a vote of confidence in his views as the member for Bogong. Both lost their seats in the election.

The League formed government and immediately cut government expenditure by reducing the size of the public service and the wages of public servants (with the exception of the state's judges). It lowered the income tax threshold to help pay the state's debt. The powers of bodies like the Wages Board and the Mining Boards were curtailed. Schools and police stations were closed. Government institutions in regional areas were under review. The number of electorates was reduced: Bogong disappeared, divided between Ovens and Benambra. And the government cut country rail services (whilst expanding suburban services). The region

found the economic rationalism it had embraced far from its liking, especially the cuts to country rail services. By 1904, the *Alpine Observer* was no longer a lone voice in the region. The reforms were too extreme, and, as Billson had predicted, the League had little interest in regional matters. It served metropolitan interests. Within a matter of months, regional branches folded.[31] Billson capitalised on growing resentment in the newly constituted seat of Ovens. In the state elections of 1904, he won Ovens and would hold it until his retirement two decades later.[32]

At a much lower level, another in public service was about to lose his job. In October 1902, "Wakeful" asked the *Federal Standard* "where's Byron?" Animals were wandering at will around Chiltern. It had been another bad year for Chiltern's ION. Found crawling on his hands and knees in a Chiltern lane, he had once more been fined for drunkenness. The bench had also dismissed several prosecutions brought by Lordy against the owners of unregistered dogs. By law, dogs under the age of six months did not need to be registered and the age of a dog was easily determined by its teeth and the length of its tail. Byron had chosen (perhaps sensibly) not to administer the teeth test for fear of being bitten. The council, though, had had enough: Lordy was sacked. Undeterred, he took the pledge and then applied for the job as caretaker of the Barambogie water reserve, the source of Chiltern's water supply. The application puzzled the councillors: as far as they knew, no such job existed, they had never advertised it, and even if it did exist, they had no intention of entrusting the care of the town's water supply to Martin Byron.[33]

At the meeting that decided to sack Lordy, the council approved claims for extra expenses submitted by the town's lamp lighter, Fatta Khan. After Byron had taken over his job as ION, the council had quietly renewed Khan's contract as the town's lamp lighter. Khan died in 1904. The *Federal Standard*'s obituary on the man reported that he had come to Australia in the 1860s from India. He had worn the Queen's uniform before migrating, and his brother had served as a captain under Roberts' command in India. Although it referred briefly to the "stir" in 1896, it chose instead to praise his imperial loyalty and his integrity. He was buried by co-religionists according to the rights of his faith.[34]

If the war had become an occasional war by 1902, it had become a forgotten war by 1903. The first anniversary of peace in May 1903 came and went unnoticed. No regional paper commented on the significance of the day and there were no celebrations to mark the victory of empire over the Boer. The second anniversary of the war in 1904 also passed unnoticed,

even in Cudgewa where four months earlier, Lahore had urged the community to remember the sacrifice of Walter Briggs. His monument, like those in Eldorado, Greta West and Wangaratta, was never used as a focal point for public remembrance or commemoration. If the structures meant anything, they were an affirmation of an imperial victory where the cost had been light. They would only become memorials in popular parlance after 1918.

Notes

1. NAA B5179.
2. *UM&MH*, 20 June, 11 July, 15 August, 7 November 1901.
3. *Upper Murray and Mitta Herald*, 6, 13, 20 February, 29 May, 3, 10 July, 7 August, 4 September 1902.
4. PROV VPRS 16930 The Empire's Patriotic Fund Applications, Francis Smith.
5. Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees, *The Last Shilling: A History of Repatriation in Australia* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 12–14. See also Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, 35, 355.
6. *C&HT*, 29 August 1900, *O&MA*, 8 June 1901, *YT*, 22 December 1899.
7. The paper gave the place of death as Magoto Pass, Wangaratta's monument and the Boer War Honour Roll (AWM 142) gives it as Koster River.
8. *WC*, 28 July, 1 August 1900.
9. *WC*, 15 August 1900.
10. *WC*, 14 November 1900, 13 April 1901.
11. *WC*, 24 October 1900, 13 April 1901.
12. The Wangaratta monument gives the date of death as 23 October, the local paper and the Boer War Honour Roll (AWM 142) as 29 November.
13. K. S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Carlton: Miegunyah Press at Melbourne University Press, 1998), 52.
14. *WC*, 5, 16 January, 8 May 1901.
15. *WC*, 8 May 1901.
16. *WC*, 10 August 1901.
17. *WC*, 22 February 1902.

18. *FS*, 11 January 1901, *WC*, 5, 15 December 1900, 12 January, 1 March, 10 August, 12 October 1901, 19 March, 12 April 1902.
19. *WC*, 12 April 1902.
20. *CC*, 17 October 1901, 22 May, 4 September 1902, 24 December 1903.
21. Wangaratta's, for example, cost £51 (*WC*, 12 April 1902).
22. *CC*, 30 January 1904.
23. *CC*, 30 January 1904.
24. *CC*, 30 January 1904.
25. *AO*, 29 August 1902, *CC*, 21 August 1902, *FS*, 5 September 1902, *O&MA*, 23 August 1901, *RS*, 15 August 1902, *W&TS*, 15 August, 12 September 1902, *WC*, 1 May, 6 August 1902, Field, *The Forgotten War*, 166–7.
26. *FS*, 15 August 1902, *RS*, 15 August 1902.
27. *W&TS*, 12 September 1902.
28. *FS*, 22 August, 3 October, 28 November 1902, 9 October 1903, 26 February, 9 September 1904, *RS*, 20 May, 15 July, 22 August, 29 July, 3 October 1902, 9 October, 6 November 1903, 5 February, 25 November 1904, *YT*, 7 August 1903.
29. *AO*, 2 May, 3 October 1902, *C&HT*, 16 April 1902, *CC*, 2 October, 5, 11 December 1902, *FS*, 21 March, 1, 21, 28 August, 3 October 1902, *RS*, 15 April, 30 May, 19, 30 September, 3 October 1902, *UM&MH*, 21 November 1901, 15 May, 5 June 1902, *W&TS*, 28 January, 28 March, 18 April, 1902.
30. *AO* 2 November 1902.
31. *AO*, 7 November, 19 December1902, 24 April, 8, 15 May 1903, 3 June 1904, *CC* 8 August 1903, *FS*, 7 November 1902, 23 January, 6 March, 10, 24 April, 8, 15 May, 5 June, 14 August 1903, *RS*, 9 December 1902, *YT*, 16 October 1902, 28 February 1903.
32. *AO*, 4 March, 13, 20, 27 May, 3 June 1904, *FS*, 3 June 1904, *RS*, 19 September, 3 October, 1902, 27 May 1904.
33. *FS*, 18 October 1901, 13 June, 10, 31 October, 5 December 1902.
34. *BMM*, 4 December 1903, *FS*, 10 June 1904.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusion

Abstract The Boer War established a template for the region's response to any future imperial wars. The young, single men would volunteer. Speeches given at farewells and welcome home socials would combine imperial loyalty with a strong nativist theme that championed the Australian volunteer. Committees would raise money for patriotic funds. The women would meet, sew, knit and send comforts to the "boys". The dead would be honoured with the building of local monuments. It is uncanny to see how closely the first sixteen months of the Great War paralleled the Boer War. Yet, this new war held far darker seeds and shattered the comfortable assumptions based on experience gained during the Boer War.

The North East's war began with a sense of surprise and complacency—surprise that South Africa would be a place for war; complacency about the chances of the Boer republics when taking on the armed might of England and its empire. Black Week changed that. A period of intense jingoism swept the region, its moment of skyrocket patriotism. Mafeking marked its high point. But, as Roberts succeeded in the field, the mood changed again to a sense of the inevitable defeat of the Boer. The "real" war was over: what followed was a matter of mopping up or pacification. The period of skyrocket patriotism also included the search for disloyalty based on ethnicity and religion, which the regional press moved quickly to dampen. Disloyalists there might be, but few were to be found in the North East (apart from Albert Rivett who was finally dismissed as

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an oddity and ignored). Peace was almost an inconvenience, coming as it did during plans to celebrate the coronation of a new monarch. And if the monuments built to honour the dead are any indication, the war was forgotten, and forgotten quickly, at the public level. They did not become symbols of commemoration or remembrance for their communities but remained monuments honouring individuals.

The response of the men in the region to the call to arms was strong. Only a minority of the volunteers who turned up for muster were selected. The first contingents left with doubts surrounding the ability of the Australian soldier to match the Tommy. That quickly changed. The Australian soldier was seen as equal to the Tommy and, finally, better than the Tommy. This view was clearly evident in the region's welcome home socials and particularly in its celebration of the men so ignominiously humiliated at Wilmansrust. Although the empire was never doubted, England was. The boosting of the Australian soldier also reflected a well-established belief in the late nineteenth century: national identity and war were inextricably linked.[1] But the Boer War failed to meet that purpose. There was nothing tangible or distinctly "Australian" that nation builders could use to link war with Australian identity. That was yet to come.

The war also left a sour taste. During the war, the Boer republics had been seen as a land of opportunity once the Boer republics had been conquered. Men from the region joined those from elsewhere in Australia who migrated to South Africa to settle or work in the conquered republics. It proved to be a land of disappointment. Local men wrote home that jobs were hard to find and too many men were jobless and starving. Wages were poor, especially in the mining districts: mining companies turned to cheaper black African labour and imported "coloured" labour to meet their needs. Unions were few, even suspect. Nor was there land to be had. Peace negotiations between the Boers and the British ensured that the Boers kept their farms. And Australians had earned a reputation as thieves and ruffians.[2]

Yet, the Boer War left the region with a clear sense of its responsibilities in an imperial war. The young, single men would volunteer when called upon to do so (although the numbers required would be small). The speeches delivered at their welcome home socials would combine an appropriate mixture of imperial loyalty, and a strong nativist theme that championed the Australian volunteer and empire, but England would not necessarily be held up as an exemplar. The men themselves would write home and often feature news of local men for those at home. Committees

would be formed to raise money for patriotic funds. The women would meet, sew, knit and send comforts to the "boys". The region's school children would be dragooned into patriotic demonstrations and reminded of their obligations to both empire and nation: and then be rewarded with picnics and lollies. Monuments built by local communities would honour their dead. With obligations met and discharged, regional life would continue in the "even tenor" of its ways. And so it was when war broke out in August 1914.

It is uncanny to see how closely the first 16 months of the Great War paralleled the Boer War.[3] The upsurge of loyalty and jingoism brought with it suspicions about the loyalty of Irish Catholics and, to a lesser extent, the labour movement (rather than the Labor Government under the prime ministership of Andrew Fisher). The regional press again moved quickly to effectively dispel notions of disloyalty based on religion and ethnicity. The landing at Anzac Cove was seen as both confirmation of the Australian as a natural soldier and, finally, the achievement of that intersection between war, militarism and national identity sought in the Boer War. The women quickly formed themselves into voluntary groups under the banner of the Red Cross to provide materials and comforts for the "boys". The men volunteering to join the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF) matched the profile of those deemed eligible during the Boer War, the young, single men. And, like their peers between 1899 and 1902, many were rejected. The voluntary system, it seemed, would serve Australia as well as it had done in its previous imperial war. There were some departures, however, from the template set down by the Boer War. The nativist rhetoric associated with the welcome home socials increasingly became part of the farewells for the volunteers: Wilmansrust had left its mark. The men now signed on for the duration. And the tentative suggestions that Australians were establishing their own military tradition had taken on a more substantial form, especially after 25 April 1915.

However, the war that followed lasted longer than the Boer War and it held darker seeds. It demanded far more of the region in terms of men, money, time and family misery. Allegations of disloyalty based on ethnicity and religion resurfaced to become a bitter part of public discourse and politics. Even Thomas Drenen, Irish Catholic and a major force in promoting imperial loyalty in Rutherglen between 1899 and 1902, and again in 1914, would find his loyalty suspect because of his religion and ethnicity. The comfortable assumption that the region could supply the manpower demands of the war through the voluntary system was

destroyed by the unending demands for men generated by the Western Front. Conscription, never seen as a possibility in the Boer War, became a dominant issue in the North East in 1916 and 1917. And although Sam Oliver's father was unusual in 1900 in wanting to know more about how his son had died, by 1917 he had hundreds of counterparts, desperate for information missing in the blunt reality of an official telegram. This war was not an occasional war: it saturated the very fabric of regional life and shattered the comfortable assumptions based on experience gained during the Boer War.

The Great War also made something of prophets of Bowser and Lahore. Both had seen the monuments erected to the regional dead in the Boer War as the beginning of a commemorative tradition, locked into notions of empire, nation, duty, sacrifice, obligation and a warrior myth. It is appropriate, therefore, to end this book where it began—in Cudgewa. Close by, and looming over the Briggs monument, is the much larger structure built in the aftermath of the First World War. A column, it honours not an individual man, but 60 men. Like its peers elsewhere in Australia, it is a memorial rather than a monument. It is a site of remembrance and memory: a symbol of grief, loss and turmoil; a reminder of waste, honour, bravery and gallantry; a site where the public and the private coincide or collide—and, perhaps, a lesson that is all too easily forgotten.

Notes

1. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Canto Cambridge University Press, 1997).
2. *AO*, 12 September 1902, 11 March 1904, *FS*, 13 March 1903, *RS*, 18 August 1903, 2 February 1904, *YT*, 8 January 1903.
3. See McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*.

Appendix: Nomenclature and Sources

The war in South Africa between 1899 and 1902 has had many different names: the "South African War", the "Anglo-Boer War" and "Second Boer War". Australians, however, generally referred to the conflict in South Africa as the "Boer War". This work gives preference to the use of the "Boer War" to describe that conflict. Although the war embroiled many thousands of black South Africans on both sides, and they were used as scouts and blockhouse guards, and some took up arms, overwhelmingly they were used as labour; paid, conscripted and impressed. They were minor players as far as the leaders on both sides were concerned. And although India contributed significant personnel to the war in South Africa, their contribution was mainly restricted to the support system needed to maintain a "white" army. As the "hero of Mafeking", Baden Powell, was inclined to remark, this was a "white man's war",[1] a war fought between a European settler society and a European empire.

Language can pose problems for historians. Expressions and allusions can be lost to the contemporary reader. The major problem struck in this research was the use of "Britain" and "England". It was clear from the context that when the nouns were used, "Britain" was usually used to mean "England". If the Scots, Irish or Welsh were involved, they were specifically named. Norman Davies has neatly charted the ways in which "Britain" often read as "England" during the time of the Boer War and his argument has informed this work.[2]

This work relies heavily on the regional newspapers because, apart from the archival sources listed in the Bibliography, no regional sources were

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found. Chris Connolly, reflecting a broader debate in historiography, raised a methodological question that is pertinent for this study. Using the Boer War, he argued that historians rely on sources created by elites to maintain a dominant discourse, especially in times of war, but how typical are they of prevailing opinion?[3] These include the regional newspapers used for this book. Owned and run by middle-class men, they had the power to include or exclude material, a formidable power by any definition. But, as Elizabeth Morrison has argued in her study of country newspapers in colonial Victoria, regional newspapers worked to a more complex agenda than simply maintaining and privileging a dominant discourse (or even an alternative discourse like the papers run by the socialists, labour and first-wave feminist movements in the capital cities). Regional newspapers acted as a point of interpretation at the points of intersection between localism and external forces affecting their communities. This involved representing separate and sometimes overlapping and intersecting sets of identities and loyalties.[4] Regional editors and owners like Andrew Drenen, Thomas Porritt, Richard Warren, James Law, James Ryan, O. V. Briner, John Nolan, and John Bowser not only offered their views through their editorials but also ran articles expressing views that flatly contradicted them to provide divergent views on controversial issues ranging from Home Rule for Ireland to politics, especially where Isaac Isaacs was concerned.

Reporting issues in peacetime is one matter: reporting them during a war is another. Were the papers open to diverse views?

In January 1900, Warren's *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* (Beechworth) ran a "contributed piece", arguing that the *uitlanders*' cause was a "fake". If the *uitlanders* wanted the vote, they should become Boer citizens. Britain did not give foreigners the right to vote, so why should the Boers? The war was being conducted for the benefit of millionaires, "stock-exchange robbers, capitalists and all their jackal crowds". It saw one the world's mightiest nations pitted against one of the feeblest. It was England's war, not Australia's, and it attacked the "shrieking daily newspapers, with their servile echoes in the provincial press" for whipping up war fever. Jingoes had betrayed Australia's future as a republic in the South Seas with their "unholy … wicked and useless war" and the sins of the fathers would be visited on the sons in "agonies of tears and blood". In terms of the war's chronology, it was a provocative piece, considering the jingoism that swept the region after Black Week. It attracted some robust responses and the paper was taken to task by some of its regional peers. Nolan, in the *Yackandandah Times*, for example, described it as a "disgrace to the

columns of any loyal journal". The *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* loftily replied that its columns were open to all and its own loyalty was clearly evident in its editorials.[5] Warren would maintain this stance throughout the war. (He also printed copy from other regional newspapers without attribution, much to the ire of his peers who described the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* as the "great regional plagiariser". But he did attribute copy from the papers printed by his own press, such as the *Bogong and Benambra Advertiser* and Rivett's *Murray Independent*. For that he has this author's thanks.)

With the exception of Rivett's journal, the regional papers supported the empire's war (rather than Britain's), but there was considerable variation in the way they did so. Andrew Drenen's *Rutherglen Sun* was the region's staunchest supporter of the war. It had championed the Jameson Raid and fully supported colonial involvement in the war. Bowser's *Wangaratta Chronicle* had a particular contempt for the Little Englanders. The *Dumfries and Galloway Standard* had mocked a *Chronicle* editorial which supported the war as a "specimen of the indigestible wind" from a place that no one had heard of and where the locals were obviously ignorant of a war engineered by "millionaire adventurers and German Jews". The *Chronicle* retorted that the *Standard* was nothing more than an organ for the Little Englanders and claimed that without the empire, England could never win the war. Her soldiers were "striplings", the inevitable result of a century of industrialisation, which had starved the ordinary people. The colonies, however, built on an agrarian base, had produced the men needed for victory in South Africa.[6] It even accused Kipling of having Little Englander sympathies. When the poet published "The Islanders" in 1902, the *Chronicle* took exception to two lines from the poem: "the flannelled fools at the wicket and the muddied oafs at the goals". Everyone knew, the editor argued, that sport was good preparation for war. And the lines smacked of the sentiments of the Little Englander movement.[7]

Briner's *Alpine Observer*, however, had doubted whether Britain should go to war in the months leading up to October and saw the war as one of "grab" until Black Week. It also ran a column called "Little Englander" until early 1900. The column mixed Little Englander views with concerns over Australia's racial future. England in pursuit of empire had alienated all the great powers and Australia, it argued, was in danger of falling into the "degeneracy" so evident in the Anglo-Indians without a constant supply of new English blood from the mother country.[8] Law's *Upper Murray and Mitta Herald* was prone to question and doubt the war from the

perspective of poor military command and the dangers jingoism posed for the development of an Australian identity within empire. It had a particular interest in Lord Methuen, demanding that he be sacked because he was a drunkard.[9] The *Corryong Courier* also felt that criticism of British generals in South Africa was warranted and was hardly disloyal: good, wholesome criticism never hurt anyone.[10] Porritt's *Chiltern and Howlong Times* noted that soldiers were poorly paid and their medals were worth no more than a few pence, undercutting the glory the jingoes believed they conferred on the men fighting.[11] Ryan's *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel* was ambivalent. Although professedly loyal to empire, the war itself promoted a distinct sense of editorial unease. The paper argued that the war brought with it community responsibilities for the men fighting it and that "the sooner the whole wretched business is brought to an end the better". The paper also drew on the *Bulletin* for material expressing doubts as to why the working class should fight in a capitalists' war.[12]

Did the editor/owners, then, hinder public debate by refusing to print anti-war letters written by their readers? Perhaps. In March 1900, the *Federal Standard* refused to publish a pro-Boer letter.[13] And from February 1900, pro-Boer letters to the regional papers declined sharply. Other editors may well have followed the *Standard*'s lead. In February 1900, for example, the *Alpine Observer* noted it was time to put the debate aside.[14] This could be seen as confirmation of Connolly's argument. Yet, the notion that regional editors refused to print pro-Boer or anti-war letters ignores the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* whose columns were open to all. In the week before the relief of Mafeking, for example, it published a letter from "Lest We Forget", which argued that England, afraid to take on an equal power, preferred to take on a small republic.[15] And it frequently published extracts from Rivett's journal. Perhaps those who doubted the war chose not to write. Perhaps those opposed to the war found their views adequately reflected in the *Bulletin* or the radical Labor press. Or perhaps those opposed to the war were intimidated. But it remains a curious fact that as the pro-Boer letters stopped the pro-war letters also dwindled away, especially after June 1900. The lack of letters, on either side, may well reflect the nature of the war itself rather than simply censorship on the part of regional editors. By 1902, the occasional letters written about the war were lamenting the indifference shown to the war and many of those came from individuals and organisations outside the region.

The region's papers, then, matched the pattern described by Elizabeth Morrison. The dominant discourse was support for the empire in a time of war. But the intersection between localism, divergent views and external forces allowed the papers the space for criticism, even dissonance. For, unlike the metropolitan papers, and the papers and journals published by special interest groups (and Rivett's falls into this category), these were community papers with different aims to those of the opinion shapers in the metropolis, whether the metropolis was Melbourne or London.

Notes

1. Badsey, "The Boer War as a Media War", 78, Plaatje, *Mafeking* Diary, Pakenham, *The Boer War*.
2. Norman Davies, *The Isles: A History* (London: Macmillan/Papermac, 1999/2000), chapter 9.
3. Connolly, "Class, birthplace and loyalty", 210–232.
4. Morrison, *Engines of Influence*, 329.
5. *O&MA*, 13, 20 January 1900, *YT*, 19 January 1900.
6. *WC*, 15 August, 2 June 1900, 10 July 1901.
7. *WC*, 15 February 1902. See also *AO*, 26 January 1900, 18 November 1902, *O&MA*, 1 March 1902, *RS*, 27 November 1900, *WC*, 7 March 1900, 15 February 1902.
8. *AO*, 9 February 1900.
9. *M&MH*, 26 April 1900.
10. *CC*, 1 February 1900.
11. *C&HT*, 27 January 1900.
12. *W&TS*, 22 December 1899, 12, 21 January, 2 February, 2 March, 21 December 1900, 25 December 1901.
13. *FS*, 23 March 1900, *RS*, 9 February 1900.
14. *AO*, 9 February 1900.
15. *O&MA*, 12 May 1900.

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