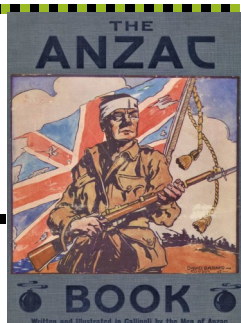


OUR DIGGER POETS, ARTISTS and JOKERS

Although there were "official" artists and photographers, The Diggers always found time to publicise their lot, (good or bad), in their own ways. In this edition I will endeavour to include a mix of yarns, poetry and art that embody the "Spirit of the Digger".

A good place to start is with the "ANZAC Book", which contains articles written by the men at Gallipoli, first published in 1916.



NOTICE: The Turkish artillery is requested to refrain from wasting ammunition whilst our meals are being served.



LOST BY A POOR PERSON: A strong pipe, last smelt in someone's pocket up Monash Gully.

TO LET: Nice dugout on the skyline, owner leaving for field hospital.

MEDICAL: Men suffering from a feeling of fullness after eating, are required to state where they got the extra rations from.

MISSED YOU: Oh how we missed you Bill,

On that famed August nine,

We think about you, Billie, still

In Cairo drinking wine.

You can read a PDF version of the ANZAC Book with this link. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-19061379>



"Do they think we're on a bloomin' pic-nic?"

TO SARI BAIR

DID Ari Burnu, Sari Bair,
With lips of hot desire,
And clutch your skirts in wild despair
At your disdainful ire?

To drive your Abdul from his lairs,
He comes in proud array;
And loud he swears, and when he swears
The Turkish hosts give way.

Oh, Sari Bair, with frowning brow
And flinty breasts of stone—
Fierce Anzac breathes a fiery vow,
Thou art for him alone.

Dear goddess, wise in ancient lore,
Let Abdul curse the Hun;
The waning Crescent fades before
Australia's Rising Sun.

But cheer up, poor old Sari Bair,
And smile 'midst battle smoke,
For Anzac, wild of eye and hair,
Is quite a decent bloke.

"BEN TELBOW,"
10th Aust. Battalion.

A Little Sprig of Wattle

MY mother's letter came to-day,
And now my thoughts are far away,
For in between its pages lay
A little sprig of wattle.

"The old home now looks at its best,"
The message ran; "the country's dressed
In spring's gay cloak, and I have pressed
A little sprig of wattle."

I almost see that glimpse of spring:
The very air here seems to ring
With joyful notes of birds that sing
Among the sprigs of wattle.

The old home snug amidst the pines,
The trickling creek that twists and twines
Round tall gum roots and undermines,
Is all ablaze with wattle.

A. H. SCOTT,
4th Battery, A.F.A.

The Unburied

NOW snowflakes thickly falling in the winter breeze
Have cloaked alike the hard, unbending ilex
And the grey, drooping branches of the olive trees,
Transmitting into silver all their lead;
And, in between the winding lines, in No-Man's Land,
Have softly covered with a glittering shroud
The unburied dead.

And in the silences of night, when winds are fair,
When shot and shard have ceased their wild surprising,
I hear a sound of music in the upper air,
Rising and falling till it slowly dies—
It is the beating of the wings of migrant birds
Wafting the souls of these unburied heroes
Into the skies.

M. R.,
N.Z. Headquarters.

An M.O., tired of listening to tales of “lead-swingers”, said he would give anyone a month’s spell who could spin him something new. One stepped forward. “Well what’s wrong with you?”. “Sunburnt on the roof of me mouth!” “How did you get that?”. “Laying on me back lookin’ at aeroplanes” He got the month spell.

A HOLIDAY WOUND.

Where Dingo Dick of Company Three,
Anzac Battalion I.C.C.,
Got winged in the arm with a shrapnel
shell,
He wrote some letters his folk to tell.

“Dear Mother,” he wrote, “the danger’s
past,
I’ve got my holiday wound at last.
A beautiful wound you can hardly sec,
But it means a bonzer spell for me.
I’m in the A.G.H. 14.
I slept in a bed so nice and clean;
There’s tons of baccy and beer in Cairo—
But the paper’ll call me a blanky hero.

So Mother was happy and mighty proud,
Tho’ her hair was grey and her back was
bowed.
A similar lie Dick pitched to his gal;
But here are the facts he wrote to his
pal:

“Say, Bill, we’ve just had a hell of a
fight,
I lay in ‘Nobody’s Land’ all night,
My arm was smashed to a lump of meat.
And what with the flies and thirst and
heat,
And the wound that throbbed and burned
so bad,
I felt I must go raving mad.
For sixteen hours I stewed out there
I wanted to pray—I could only swear.

“I was done when the stretcher-bearers
came;
They looked for my disc. to find my name.
‘Poor Dick’s a goner,’ one of ‘em said.
Says I, ‘You’re a liar, I’m far from
dead.’
So they carried me back to the ambu-
lance,
‘Cos one of ‘em thought I might have a
chance.
They cut off my arm to save my life,
So I’m finished with camels, and war, and
strife.

“P.S., Dear Bill, when Mollie you see,
Tell her I’m happy as I can be.
But don’t let on about all this rot.
Just say it’s a holiday wound I’ve got.”
—Trooper Bluegum.

“Trooper Bluegum” was the pen name of Major Oliver Hogue, of the 2nd. Light Horse Regiment. He later became Commander of the 14th Light Horse Regiment.



Beaufighter Pilot: by Harold freedman



AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER
Grim and determined
this sturdy Australian
infantryman is typical of
the men who fought the
first desert campaign.



SHED THOU NO TEARS

“The halo and sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth descends upon them, and God will take them unto himself.”—General MacArthur.

SHED thou no tears! . . .
This road they chose, this way of pain
Was theirs,
Who drank the cup of bitterness,
And lie in alien soil, hungering
For home.
From fields wherein the streams of youth ran deep,
They heard the far, clear call,
And answered.
Out from the quiet places and the gentle folk
They knew and loved, and graciousness,
They went, and questioned not.
Thorns were their portion, and their end
A lesser Calvary.
. . . Weep not for them.

For they have gone beyond the Night,
And found
Quiet havens where the waters laughing run,
And rest is given.
They sleep in fields of amaranth, flow’r-crowned;
And all their glory lights the hills
Of Heaven.

Shed thou no tears! . . .
For these high souls, in their last hour,
Walked with Christ, and marvellously knew
The joy and pain of sacrifice; and reached
Their goal, as runners do, with swift,
Drawn breath.
Theirs was a wondrous way, who came,
Down all the winds of turbulence,
To keep, for you, this rendezvous
With Death.
. . . Weep not for them!

“NX65238

SHADES OF MATRUH AND CLEOPATRA'S BATH



I know, Pop, but it takes all types to make an Air Force.

W/O. W. Martin

MIKE—THE MALARIA MO-SKEETER

In tropical regions, there's "mozzies" in legions
But none causes havoc completer
Than one little devil who's not on the level,
It's Mike, the Malaria Mo-skeeter.

With no foe or ally is Mike ever pally,
His aim is to be a world beater;
For Tojo and Aussie's the same to this mozzie,
To Mike, the Malaria Mo-skeeter.

The world's aviation has yet no creation
Like Mike in his striped single-seater,
Bad trouble is comin' when you hear the hummin'
Of Mike, the Malaria Mo-skeeter.

He sure is a glutton and he won't eat mutton—
No sir—nor is Mike a beefeater.
For Mike likes consumin' the blood of a human,
Does Mike, the Malaria Mo-skeeter.

So please heed my warning, at sundown or dawning,
Altho' you may dwell in a heater,
Just keep yourself covered, lest you be discovered
By Mike, the Malaria Mo-skeeter.

In time's smallest fraction you'll be out of action
If once he injects his saltpetre.
The world's greatest vermin is not Jap or German,
It's Mike, the Malaria Mo-skeeter.

"NX116478"

See how our ANZAC Room Library looks now.



These two photos show how desperately we needed the new shelving. We now have over 1,700 books.

LEAPING LENA

Dedicated to a temperamental jeep.

LEAPING LENA, she's a screamer, jolting along the track,
Leaping high, leaping low, the occupants all in a stack
Midst stores and jams and empty petrol cans,
Bags of mail and gear and p'raps a mangled man.

Like a Jumping Jack, thru' the kunai comes the jeep,
To and fro and up and down, the passengers look dead beat.
Legs and arms are flung asunder as the Signals go to town,
Appearing as a travelling circus with the driver as the clown.

She takes off from the ground like a punctured plane,
Doubles up awhile then hits the earth again
With a thumping jar that shocks the lower stories,
Revealing shaking Sigs who feel like wrung-out doyleys.

Onward thru' the mud and slush, towards the distant hills,
Ploughing the track like a paddock and providing many thrills
Till at last there come to view the shacks of Popenetta;
True, Leaping Lena's made it—but travelling has been better.

WX37660.

"Roll Call" by George Mansford © September 2021

"On parade, you horrible lot, the corporal shouts; it's roll call again"
Come to attention and answer "present" when I call your name

Checking names is a must in all phases of war you fight
Nothing worse if a soldier's left behind, so you best get it right
Cos in battles, thick with fear, exhaustion and blinding smoke
Is the need to find out who is missing, wounded or croaked
Who will be there to fight the next battle, be it night or day
To determine badly wounded and those able to stay.

Raw recruits answer roll calls with timid faint shouts
In time, their voices become a loud chorus of what soldiering is about
The ritual grows in strength as does confidence and bearing
A motley group of idlers become alert; disciplined, sharing and caring.
The roll call is to ensure all soldiers are accounted for
It's a sacred ritual enforced by God's disciples **in peace and war

An instrument to help task duties from guard to digging latrines
Miss roll call and extra drill is a reminder where you should have been
Time and time again, both God of Mars and Grim Reaper come and go
Familiar names not answered on parade, and in the silence, memories flow
New young faces join the ranks to fill the gaps where others once stood
In time, they too spring to attention and answer "Present" as they should

Young and old, shoulder to shoulder; ready for the unknown, all as one
Forever a bonded team with purpose until duty done

Soon or late comes a clash of arms and with it, a bloody toll
Then to find out who is missing in battle, a weary disciple calls the roll

At reunions, old soldiers shuffling on parade, answer roll call
Leaning on canes, and trying so hard to keep in step and stand tall
Recalling days as recruits, when answering a searching call of names
Wary of the striped tyrant conducting a strange and silly game
Yet in the fog of war, he became your hero, and you understood why
Cos being separated in battle could make the difference to live or die
Always are hidden human values which vocal roll calls keep alive
Even in space age soldiering where clicking computers thrive”.

Courtesy, RAR Association, Queensland

OUR FLAG

“They want to change our Flag” he said, with sad and misty eyes,
“That Flag I fought for proudly as I saw my coppers die,
We bore that Flag in battle as we marched to make a stand,
To stem the tide of terror and keep freedom for our land,
Why would they want to change our Flag, of red, white and blue
A Flag that means so many things to blokes like me and you,
It’s part of our great heritage, a link with ages past,
And I feel both proud and humble as it flutters from the mast,
That Flag was borne so proudly by the famous Desert Rats,
It was with us in the jungle as we fought the stubborn Japs,

It bears the blood of ANZACS, who all loved it to a man
And it travelled to Korea and the hell of Vietnam”.

“Who are all those folk?” the old chap said, “Why aren’t they satisfied,
Why don’t they love the Aussie Flag, why don’t they feel some pride,
They cannot be Australians, they cannot be Aussie sons,
They must be folk from somewhere else, who speak in foreign tongues,
Who won the War?” he softly said, “Did our boys all die in vain?”
And he looked at me bewildered, while his face was lined with pain,
Then I watched that frail old digger as he shuffled on his way,
And my voice filled with emotion, as I said to him “Good Day”,
So I loathe the knockers of our Flag, their motives I despise,



Our present Flag is the only one I’ll ever recognize.

Courtesy: A Legacy of Poems and Verse—Author unknown

Farewell Gallipoli *By W. Tait 1917*

I hope those soundly sleeping, who lie buried by the bay
Will not hear us as we march away,
Not only muffled is out tread to cheat the foe
We fear to rouse our honoured dead to hear us go,
Comrades farewell.

Together throbbed our hearts that night,
When, behind, the foam shore flickered— faded from our sight,
From east and west we gathered here,
New friends we made, old, grown more dear
We leave you with the dying year,
Comrades farewell.

To those of us not doomed to die on some new field,
Country and home will by and by their welcome yield,
In that our glad hour our hearts will stray back
to Anzac and Suvla Bay.

To you whose absence clouds, the day
Comrades farewell.



Mice of Moresby

Rats of old “Tobruk”,
Or merely Moresby Mice,
We’ve had our fill of fighting,
And of hardships, once or twice.
We have hugged the earth for cover,
With the bombers overhead.
We have seen the bombs exploding,
Heard the swish of falling lead.
We have dived into the trenches,
With our last remaining breath,
Just for a fraction of a second,

Ahead of fire and din of death.
We have toiled and we have sweated,
In the humid tropic heat,
And we longed for many comforts,
And fresh food that we could eat,
But we’ll gnaw our way to freedom,
And nibble at the scum,
Till we drive them back to Nippon,
Or the Hell where they belong.
And when they’ve learned their lesson,
Then maybe these foreign lice,
Will remember “Rats of old Tobruk”,
And “Moresby’s Fighting Mice”.

FUZZY WUZZY ANGELS

Many a mother in Australia,
When a busy day is done,
Send’s a prayer to the Almighty
For the keeping of her son,
Asking that the angels guide him,
And bring him safely back,
Now we see those prayers are answered,
On the Owen Stanley track.
For they haven’t any halo
Only holes slashed in their ears,
And their faces worked by tattoos,
With scratch pins in their hair.
Bringing back the badly wounded,
Just as steady as a hearse,
Using leaves to keep the rain off,
And as gently as a nurse.
Slow and careful in bad places,

On the awful mountain track.
The look upon their faces would make
You think that Christ was black.
Not a move to hurt the wounded,
As they treat him like a saint,
It’s a picture worth recording
That an artist’s yet to paint.
Many a lad will see his mother,
And husbands wee’uns and wives,
Just because the Fuzzy Wuzzies
Carried them to save their lives.
From mortar bombs, machine gun fire,
Or a chance surprise attack,
To the care and safety of doctors
At the bottom of the track.
May the mothers of Australia,
When they offer up a prayer,
Mention those impromptu Angels
With their fuzzy wuzzy hair.

By Bert Beros

We Remember

Do you forget those Angels of the Owen Stanley Track?
Ask any of the Diggers, and those who were carried back.
They haven’t lost their halos, round their Fuzzy Wuzzy hair,
And some of them are lying, with our coppers over there.
We remember you whenee’er we see a smiling darkened face,
And know that there are more of you, in any hostile place.
We remember your sad faces, and the tears so sad you shed,
And we think about your shoulders, all torn and bloody red.
The man who wrote the Angels with the Fuzzy Wuzzy hair
Was a dinkum Aussie soldier, and we know that he was there.
Like him we will remember, with the setting of each sun,
The job that God gave them to do, was a job we knew well done.

By: QX 35502 Sergeant Eric S. Lye, 14 Platoon, 36th Battalion.



Photo by George Silk

AWM Photo:014028



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