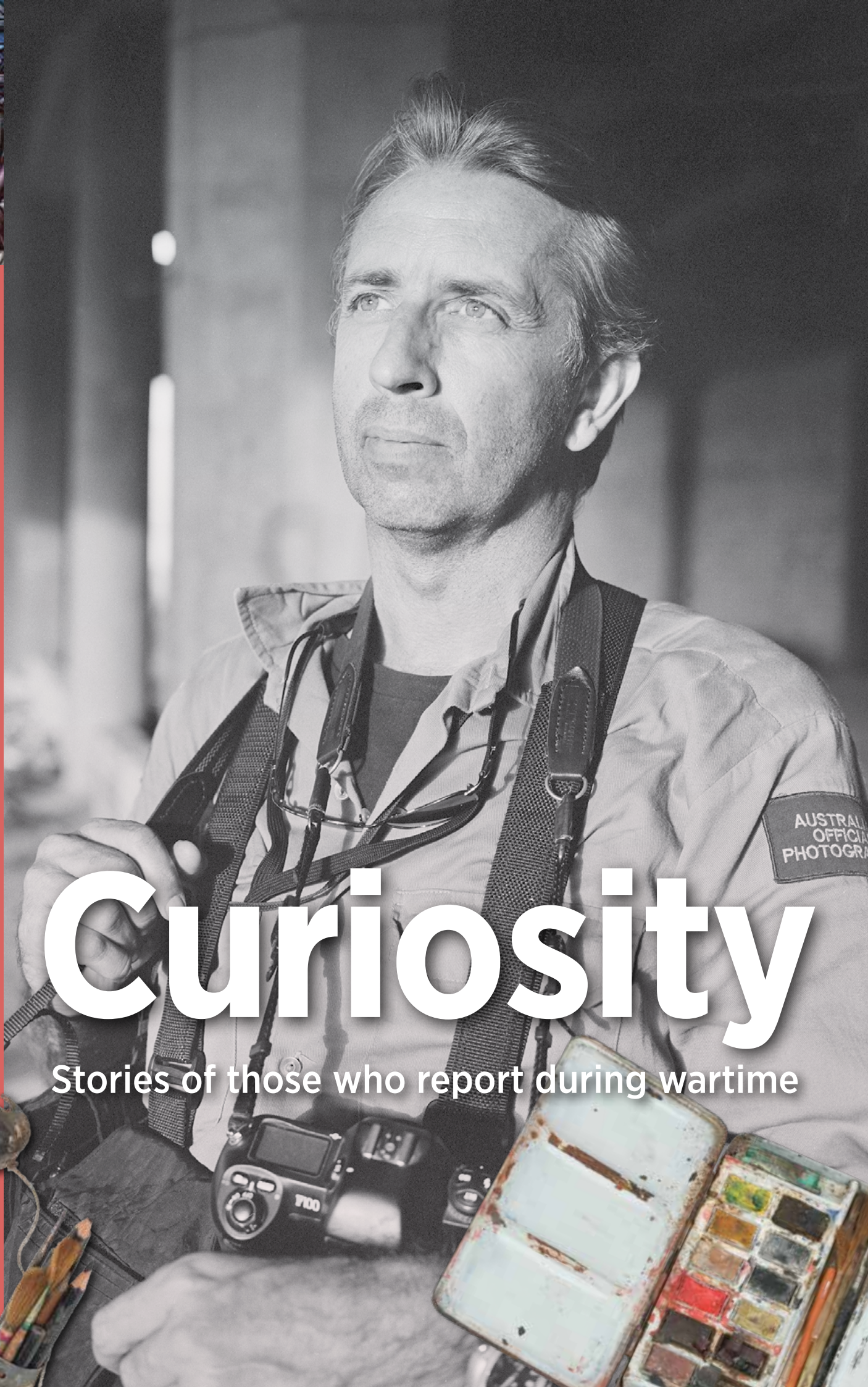




CENTURY OF SERVICE



# Curiosity

Stories of those who report during wartime



*Curiosity – Stories of those who report during wartime*

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Ancestry – Stories of multicultural Anzacs (2015)

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Comradeship – Stories of friendship and recreation in wartime (2017)

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AUSTRALIAN  
WAR MEMORIAL

Comradeship

Ancestry

Patriotism

Chivalry

Loyalty

Resource

Candour

Curiosity



In the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra there are 15 stained-glass windows. Each shows a figure dressed in military uniform, and under each figure is a word which describes a quality displayed by Australians during wartime. One window features an infantryman wearing a trench mortar uniform. He represents all service men and women who have gained knowledge from enquiry, symbolised by an eye in the Egyptian style from which stream rays of light.

This window bears the word *Curiosity*.

# Curiosity

Stories of those who report during wartime

Written by Jennet Cole-Adams and Judy Gauld

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## Note to reader:

These stories relate to war and conflict. You may feel sad after reading some of them. Teachers may wish to be sensitive to students who have family members serving overseas in war zones.

# Introduction

While those who report on war need skill, courage, energy and insight, it is curiosity that drives them. The task of war correspondents – whether journalists, photographers, artists, camera operators or film makers – is to ask and answer questions, both big and small: *What just occurred? What were the experiences of those involved? Why did this occur? Why do wars occur? What can we learn from them?*

Australia has a proud tradition of war correspondents. Perhaps the best known of them is Charles Bean, official war correspondent to the Australian Imperial Force and founder of the Australian War Memorial. Many others have followed Bean, bringing different skills, insights and approaches to the task. For more than a century, they have produced iconic canvasses, haunting photographs, gripping film footage and insightful articles and broadcasts. This book highlights just fourteen men and women who have helped Australians to better make sense of war and conflict.

Reporting on war has always been dangerous work, and many correspondents have been injured or killed. Yet generations of curious men and women have continued to risk their lives to tell others about conflicts, battles and wars.

In 2015 a War Correspondents Memorial was dedicated in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. An important design element of the memorial is a raised and highly polished granite centre. It represents a camera lens or a human eye, and suggests the act of observing or bearing witness to an event. Around this centre, the following words are inscribed:

*Amid dangers known and unknown war correspondents report what they see and hear. Those words and images live beyond the moment and become part of the history of Australia.*



Johnson Pilton Walker Architects, *War Correspondents Memorial* (2015, AWM ART96849)

# An Anzac story: Phillip Schuler

**Most Australians today are familiar with the Anzac story – the courage and mateship displayed by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli in 1915. As a correspondent for *The Age* newspaper, Phillip Schuler witnessed the landing at Gallipoli and several of the battles that followed. His writing and photographs from this time still shape our understanding of these events.**

Although Schuler accompanied the Australian Imperial Force (**AIF**) as it headed to war, he was not an official war correspondent appointed by the government. This meant he did not always have access to the Australian forces. Yet his curiosity saw him go to great lengths to capture their stories. At times he had to find his own information sources, transport and observation points to watch events unfold. During the landings at Gallipoli, he based himself on a nearby island and later wrote:

*The battle opened at 4.17 a.m. ... the men jumped from the boats into the icy **Aegean**, up to their armpits sometimes, their rifles held above their heads, and slowly facing the stream of **lead**, waded to the shore. Eager to be free [for] action, they at once dropped their packs and charged.<sup>1</sup>*

In the days after the landing, Schuler gained access to the hospital ships. His reports described the conditions faced by the wounded as ‘absolutely inadequate’, but also captured the spirit of the Anzacs:

*There were men still with their first field dressings on their wounds after four or five days, whom the doctors had been unable to treat. No man minded. It was always, ‘He’s worse than I; take him first’. Such unselfishness often cost a man his arm or hand, but it meant the saving of his mate’s life.<sup>2</sup>*

**Schuler, with binoculars and maps, watches the movement of ships in the harbour of Mudros, on the island of Lemnos.**

AWM PS1954



Schuler was a 26-year-old journalist when he sailed to Egypt with the first AIF convoy in October 1914. This image was taken on board ship by the official war correspondent, Charles Bean.

AWM G01560



Although Schuler was a correspondent rather than a photographer, he always carried a camera with him. His images taken during the Gallipoli campaign have become important historical records. This image by Schuler shows the beach at Anzac Cove on 26 August 1915.

AWM PS1475

**How might the landscape shown in this image have caused difficulties for the Australian troops?**



AWM REL32805

### Did you know?

While some First World War correspondents had access to **cable**, others, like Schuler, had to send their reports by mail. Articles often appeared in newspapers many weeks or months after they were written. While ships were slow and risked attack, censorship by the British government also affected the delivery of mail.

**How has technology changed the job of war correspondents since the First World War?**

A few months later, Schuler was able to join the AIF troops on the Gallipoli **peninsula** and witness firsthand the August **offensive**. His reports about the battles at Lone Pine and The Nek were widely read and established Schuler as a respected war correspondent. When the AIF withdrew from Gallipoli in December 1915, Schuler returned to Australia and wrote the books *Battlefields of Anzac* and *Australia in Arms*, both of which described the Anzac campaign at Gallipoli.

Despite his success as a war correspondent, Schuler then surprised many by enlisting in the AIF in April 1916. He explained his decision in a letter to the British General Ian Hamilton: 'Once the story of Anzac had been told there seemed no reason for my remaining while others died fighting'.<sup>3</sup>

After basic training in England, Schuler sailed to France in November 1916 and served on the **Western Front**, before being promoted to the rank of lieutenant. On 23 June 1917, Schuler was fatally wounded in Belgium. On hearing of his death, Australia's official war correspondent, Charles Bean, wrote:

*... he worked harder than almost any other war correspondent I ever knew. He wrote only what he saw. His letters were true, and only those who knew what oceans of false stuff have been poured on to the world in this war can appreciate what that means.*<sup>4</sup>



Schuler's image of a soldier resting in the trenches at Gallipoli, August 1915.

AWM PS1517



As well as writing about the battle at Lone Pine in August 1915, Schuler captured this image, which shows Major Leslie Morshead looking up at Australian soldiers killed during the battle. While Schuler wrote about the courage and sacrifice of the Anzacs, he also recognised the commitment of the Turkish soldiers.

AWM A02025

## FAST FACTS Anzac Day

Phillip Schuler captured the significance of the Anzac landing at Gallipoli when he wrote 'The 25th April, 1915, will ever be recorded as the day on which [Australia] became a nation'.<sup>5</sup> Since 1916, Anzac Day has been recognised as a day of national importance. During the war years, the day was marked by ceremonies and marches in London and Australia. By 1927, it had become a public holiday across the country. Today, Anzac Day is a time to **commemorate** all those who have served Australia since the First World War.





Charles Wheeler, *The Battle of Messines* (1923, oil on canvas, 137 x 229 cm, AWM ART03557)

Schuler was wounded in the days after the Battle of Messines, a successful offensive by the **Allied forces** on the Western Front in 1917. He was taken to a **casualty clearing station** but died the same day. He is buried at Trois Arbres Cemetery in Belgium.

Schuler in uniform, probably in the garden of his family home in Melbourne, after enlisting in the AIF in April 1916.

AWM P07692.001

**How might Schuler's experience as a correspondent have influenced his feelings about joining the AIF?**



RELAWM01098



# An eye for detail: George Lambert

**George Lambert's paintings have brought moments in the First World War to life for generations of Australians. For Lambert, who was an official war artist, it was all about capturing the details – even when painting battles he did not witness.**

At the time the First World War broke out, Lambert was working as a successful artist in London. Unable to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) from overseas, he joined a British training unit until December 1917, when he was appointed as an Australian official war artist.

Lambert was sent to the **Middle East** with the task of producing a number of artworks, including a large painting depicting the charge of the Australian Light Horse at Beersheba. This battle was a significant Allied victory that had occurred months before Lambert arrived. Lambert met up with the Australian Light Horse in the Middle East and began by sketching the men, horses, and landscapes to assist him with completing the large painting when he returned to England. Keen 'to get into the spirit of things', he rode along the routes the Australian horsemen had taken and jumped over trenches where they had mounted attacks.

Lambert also produced many smaller paintings and sketches, but like most war artists, found his working conditions challenging. He faced not only the blinding heat and choking dust of the desert, but also the 'sense of hurry caused by having to work to military schedule'.<sup>2</sup> Lambert had been given the rank of lieutenant and was expected to follow the orders of his superiors. At times this meant packing up his materials halfway through a piece to move on to other areas. Despite the challenges he enjoyed the work, noting days after arriving in Egypt:

*I am ridiculously happy. Already I have done three pieces of work and everywhere I look there are glorious pictures, magnificent men and real top-hole Australian horses.<sup>3</sup>*

Lambert received a second **commission** after the war ended, which resulted in his most famous work. His painting of the Anzac landing at Gallipoli in 1915 hangs prominently in the Australian War Memorial.

**Lambert, seen here sketching in Palestine in 1918, was appointed to work as an artist with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.**

AWM A04272

**What are some of the challenges faced by artists working on the war front?**





George Lambert, *Jack Dempsey* (1918, pencil on paper, 23.4 x 17.8 cm, AWM ART02716)

Lambert had become a skilled horseman during the years he spent on sheep stations in western New South Wales. This helped him build relationships with members of the Australian Light Horse.

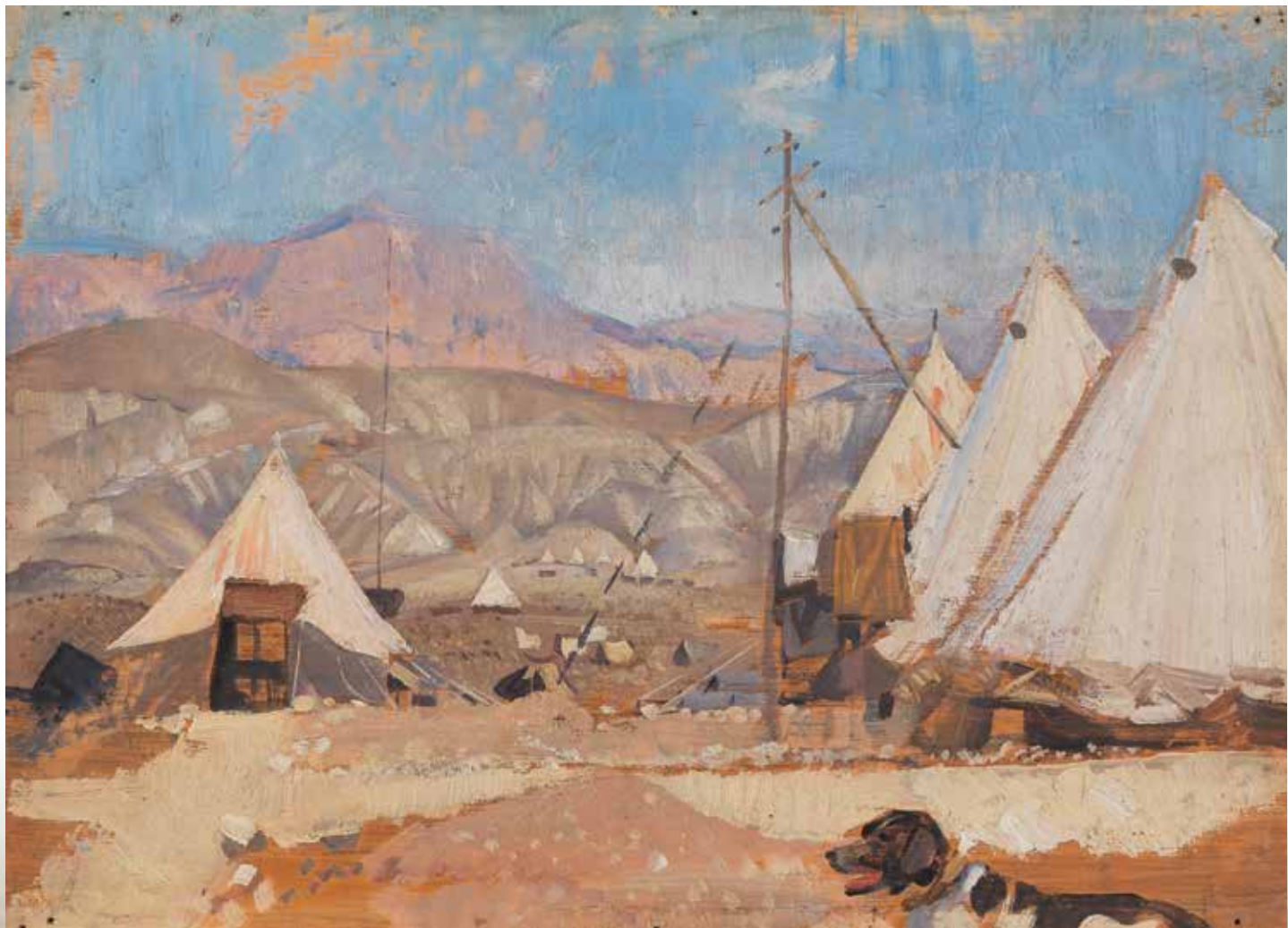
**What were the advantages of Lambert being friendly with the troops he sketched and painted?**

### Did you know?

Between 1914 and 1916 nearly 30,000 Australian horses were shipped to the Middle East to be used by soldiers. The horses did not return to Australia after the war because of the possibility that they could be carrying exotic diseases.

George Lambert, *Headquarters, Desert Corps* (1918, oil on wood panel, 15.6 x 21.9 cm, AWM ART02680)

Lambert stayed in this AIF camp during May 1918.



Boer War  
1899–1902

First World War  
1914–1918

Second World War  
1939–1945

Malayan Emergency  
1948–1960

Lambert saw himself as an 'Artist Historian' and was acutely aware that creating an artwork to record the sacrifice of so many Australians was a huge responsibility. He travelled to Gallipoli in early 1919, determined to learn all that he could about the men's experience so that he could convey it to the Australian public. Charles Bean, who led the visit to Gallipoli, watched Lambert as he worked to gather evidence and noted that he was 'more sensitive than the rest of us to the tragedy – or at any rate the horror – of Anzac'.<sup>4</sup> This sensitivity has been captured in the painting which has since been viewed by millions of Australians.

Lambert returned to Australia with his wife and children in 1921, and completed several artworks commemorating Australians who had served in the war. He continued to enjoy success as an artist until his sudden death in 1930.

George Lambert is still recognised as one of Australia's greatest war artists a century after the First World War.



George Lambert, *Anzac, the landing* 1915 (1920–1922, oil on canvas, size 199.8 x 370.2 cm, AWM ART02873)

Lambert spent six weeks at Gallipoli learning about the campaign and doing sketches to prepare for this painting.

**What can you learn about the Anzac landing from this painting?**

## FAST FACTS Australian war artists

The official war art scheme was initiated during the First World War, when the Australian government appointed fifteen artists to depict the experiences of Australians during the war. The war art scheme has been used in most subsequent wars and conflicts, including on recent **peacekeeping** missions. The artwork produced by official war artists becomes part of the Australian War Memorial's collection. The works produced under the scheme vary greatly, reflecting the various styles and approaches of the artists selected.



George Lambert, *The Charge of the Australian Light Horse at Beersheba*, 1917 (1920, oil on canvas, 139.5 x 261.7 x 10 cm, AWM ART02811)

Lambert was commissioned to paint this battle scene. It depicts a tangled mass of horses and soldiers against a barren landscape.

**Do you think it matters that Lambert portrayed battles that he did not witness?**



These pencil drawings made by Lambert in 1920 all have the same title: *[Study for 'Anzac, the landing, 1915']*. They demonstrate the effort he made to ensure that the details of the painting would be accurate.

AWM ART11391.020, AWM ART11391.021, AWM ART11391.042, AWM ART11391.014

# A personal response: Hilda Rix Nicholas

**Artist Hilda Rix Nicholas explored her personal experiences of the First World War in her artworks – from her grief as a widow to her national pride. In doing so, she also challenged existing ideas about women and art.**

Hilda Rix had travelled from Australia to France in 1909 to work as an artist, but she moved to the relative safety of London after the outbreak of war in 1914. In October 1916, she married Major 'Matson' Nicholas, whom she had met the previous month while he was on leave from the Western Front. Her joy in finding love is seen in a letter she wrote to him just weeks later:

*Dear, I love you so ... You are in danger and I am far away. Oh this ghastly war. Dear husband be brave and splendid and always your best, but don't be reckless. I need you and love you utterly.<sup>1</sup>*

Tragically, Major Nicholas was killed before the letter could be delivered to him.

The experience of loss shaped Rix Nicholas's art, and the paintings she created in 1917 expressed the depths of her despair. While driven by her personal experience, these paintings represented the suffering of all war widows. At the time, much art focused on war heroes and sacrifice and it was unusual to find strong statements about the impact of death.

From late 1917, Rix Nicholas began a series of portraits that celebrated the qualities and commitment of the **Anzacs**. She began by portraying her late husband and his brothers, but the series grew into a large project once she returned to Australia. She received a very positive response to these works, particularly from returned soldiers who appreciated her recognition of their service and sacrifice.

**Rix Nicholas was not an official war artist, but for many years her art was shaped by her experiences during the First World War. This portrait was taken in France before the war.**

Photo courtesy of Bronwyn Rix.



REL/03408.008





Hilda Rix Nicholas, *Major George Matson Nicholas* (1916, charcoal and pastel over pencil on paper, 56 x 38 cm, AWM ART96807)

Rix Nicholas drew this portrait of her new husband on 9 October 1916, two days after their wedding. The couple met when Major Nicholas tracked her down in London to give her some paintings he found in her abandoned studio in France.

**How does this portrait differ from ones she painted later?**



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *A mother of France* (1914, oil on canvas, 72.6 x 60.2 cm, AWM ART03281)

This is a portrait of Rix Nicholas's neighbour from France, whose son had been killed in one of the first battles of the First World War. In portraying the woman's grief, Rix Nicholas presents her as a symbol of the suffering of all mothers who had lost their sons at war.

**How has the artist captured the woman's grief in this painting?**

Hilda Rix Nicholas, *not titled [Study for Pro Humanitate]*, (c. 1917, black charcoal on paper, 55.8 x 38.2 cm, AWM ART96815)

This is a study for one of three major oil paintings Rix Nicholas completed following the death of her husband. A fire at her rural property in 1930 destroyed the painting.

**Why do you think Rix Nicholas chose this pose for her subject? What does it convey?**

## Did you know?

When the artworks of Hilda Rix Nicholas were first offered to the Australian War Memorial in the 1920s, the Director rejected most of her paintings and drawings on the basis that they were too personal.

While many appreciated her art, which was exhibited in Sydney and Melbourne, Rix Nicholas also attracted criticism. In the post-war years she began painting landscapes, a subject that had been mainly painted by men. Some felt her work was too 'masculine' and others claimed that the ten years she spent overseas meant she could not paint realistic Australian landscapes. Rix Nicholas responded to this criticism in a lecture she gave in 1922:

*Why, one might as well say that the Australian men who went abroad to fight and who made the glory of Australia recognised in other lands and our fame ring over the world, are less Australian than if they had remained, with **bayonets** pointed, on a little bit of Australian soil.<sup>2</sup>*

Despite her critics, Rix Nicholas achieved her ambition of taking Australian artworks to Europe. In 1925, she became the first Australian female artist to have a solo exhibition in Paris. After she returned to Australia she remarried and painted from a studio on her rural property in southern New South Wales. Rix Nicholas continued to paint and exhibit until the 1950s, when her eyesight declined. She died at the age of 77, in 1961.

In 2015, the Australian War Memorial added to its collection by purchasing nine portraits by Rix Nicholas. This was in recognition of their national significance in conveying the personal experiences of Australians in the First World War.



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *A man* (1921, oil on canvas, 92 x 75 cm, AWM ART19613)

This painting is part of a series of portraits by Rix Nicholas that depicted Anzacs. Although she used a model for *A man*, it was inspired by her husband, who had been killed in action.



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *Stand at ease*  
(c. 1920, charcoal and coloured crayon  
on paper, 56 x 38 cm, AWM ART96042)

Rix Nicholas returned to Australia in 1918 and made drawings of soldiers who had returned from the war and were yet to find employment.



## FAST FACTS War memorials

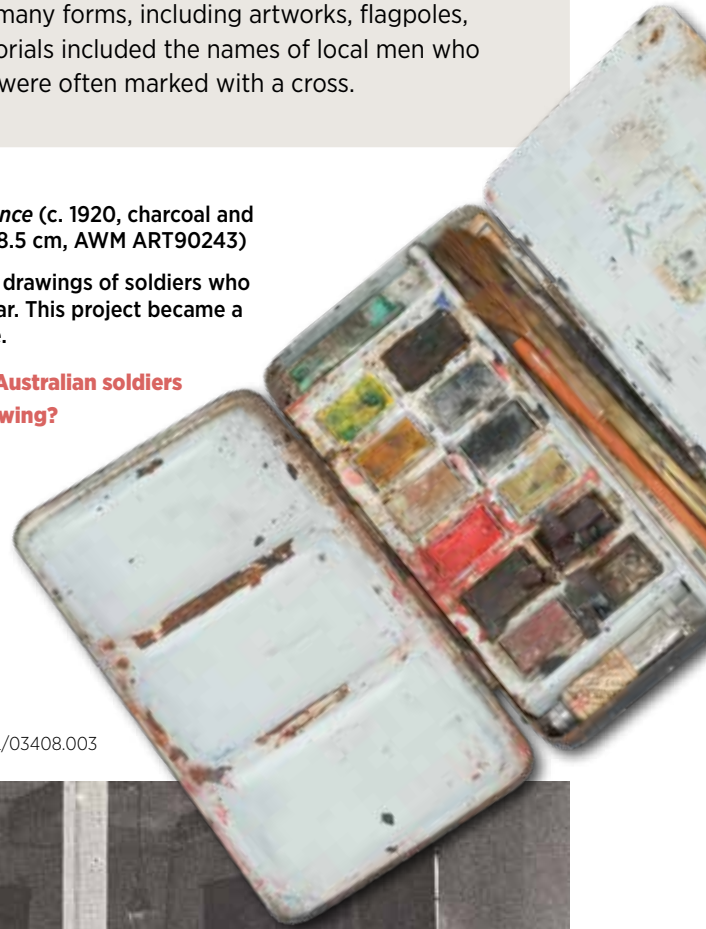
Before the end of the First World War, communities across Australia began to create memorials in recognition of those who had served. The memorials took many forms, including artworks, flagpoles, parks, buildings and honour boards. Many of the war memorials included the names of local men who had enlisted during the war. The names of those who died were often marked with a cross.



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *In France* (c. 1920, charcoal and pastel on paper, 76.8 x 58.5 cm, AWM ART90243)

Rix Nicholas made many drawings of soldiers who had returned from the war. This project became a memorial to their service.

**What characteristics of Australian soldiers are portrayed in this drawing?**



AWM REL/03408.003



Australian soldiers relax at the War Chest Club in 1917. This club was one of many that were run by voluntary organisations to be a 'home away from home' for Australian soldiers on leave in London.

AWM H00186

# Captivating images: Frank Hurley

**Frank Hurley was already well-known for his adventure-filled photos before taking on the role of frontline photographer during the First World War. Hurley was mindful of what would best engage his audience, a skill that saw him capture both horror and beauty in war.**

Hurley began his career working for a postcard company in Sydney, and went on to work as a photographer and filmmaker in exotic locations around the world. Prior to the First World War, his images of the Antarctic, the Australian outback and Java had already amazed large audiences. In recognition of his technical and artistic skills, Hurley was appointed official war photographer in August 1917.

Hurley was first sent to the Western Front, where he captured many haunting images. Although shocked by the ‘hell one sees out here ... strewn with ghastliness’, he did not protect his audience from the death and destruction that he found.<sup>1</sup>

Referred to as ‘the mad photographer’ by the troops, Hurley often risked his own safety to get shots. On 26 September 1917, for example, he wrote in his diary:

*... a terrific angry rocket like shriek warned us to duck. This we did by throwing ourselves flat in a shell hole half filled with mud. A fortunate precaution for immediately a terrific roar ... and up went timber, stones, shells and everything else in the vicinity.<sup>2</sup>*

Although determined to present the reality of war, he sometimes enhanced the photographs he took. Using a composite technique, Hurley at times merged **negatives** together to create one photograph from several images. While some people, including the official war correspondent Charles Bean, believed such images were ‘fake’, Hurley argued the technique allowed the features of war to be better captured. As he explained:

*To include the event on a single negative, I have tried and tried, but the results are hopeless. Everything is on such a vast scale. Figures are scattered – the atmosphere is dense with haze and smoke – shells will not burst where required – yet the whole elements of a picture are there could they but be brought together and condensed.<sup>3</sup>*

**Hurley was on an expedition to the Antarctic when the First World War began, but was appointed as an official war photographer with the rank of captain after his return. This photo was taken in June 1917, after his appointment.**

AWM P05785.001





This image by Hurley shows five Australian soldiers in Chateau Wood, Belgium, in October 1917.

AWM E01220

**What emotional response do you have to this image?**



Hurley captured the devastation of war in this image of Australian soldiers passing through Ypres, Belgium, on 25 October 1917.

AWM E04612

**How do you think the Australian public reacted to images like this during the war?**



AWM REL41986

**Boer War**  
1899–1902

**First World War**  
1914–1918

**Second World War**  
1939–1945

**Malayan Emergency**  
1948–1960

Hurley felt so strongly about using the composite technique that he threatened to resign when he was ordered by Bean to stop. After negotiations, Hurley moved to the Middle East where he could work more freely. During this time, he created some stunning images of the Australian Light Horse in desert landscapes.

After the war, Hurley resumed his private adventures, continuing to make films that won him worldwide recognition and respect. In 1940, just after the Second World War began, he was again appointed as an official photographer. He returned to the Middle East, creating both films and **stills** as military events unfolded. By this time, however, he was working alongside younger photographers who had new ideas and methods. Hurley's contribution was somewhat overshadowed by this next generation.

Frank Hurley returned to Australia, and to his family, in 1946 and continued to take and publish photographs. He died in Sydney in 1962, aged 76.



The photo on the left, known as 'Over the top' is an example of Hurley's composite images, in which he combined several negatives to make a new image. It was exhibited for several months in London in 1918. The photo on the right, taken in Belgium in September 1917, was used in the composite. AWM E05988B AWM E05429

**Do you think the composite image is 'fake'? And if so, does it matter?**

AWM REL41978.001

## FAST FACTS Newsreels

During both the First and Second World Wars Australians received much of their news through short films known as newsreels. Visiting the cinema was a popular pastime and newsreels were shown frequently, sometimes running continuously and at other times accompanying a feature film. During the First World War newsreels were silent and text was displayed on screen between scenes to provide information to the audience. By the Second World War the films had sound, including musical effects, but they were still made in black and white.



Hurley captured this image of military manoeuvres in late 1917 after he moved to the Middle East. It is a 'still' taken from his film *With the Australian Light Horse in Sinai–Palestine*.

AWM B01512

Hurley's image of a respirator drill on board a transport vessel, 1940.

AWM 003583

**Why do you think soldiers needed to use masks like this during the war?**



Hurley carrying film equipment in Syria in December 1941, when he was reappointed as an official war photographer during the Second World War.

AWM P11123.012

## Did you know?

As a photographer, Hurley joined several expeditions to Antarctica, including Shackleton's 1914 expedition during which the ship was crushed by ice. Although the men were forced to abandon ship and all but essential equipment, Hurley managed to save some of his images captured on heavy photographic plates.

# A way with words: Kenneth Slessor

**Kenneth Slessor was a well-known Australian journalist and poet when the government appointed him as an official correspondent for the Second World War in 1940. He soon discovered that the job had many challenges.**

Even when describing the horrors of war, Slessor often used poetic language in his reports. After the costly defeat of the German army by Allied troops at El Alamein in 1942, he wrote:

*The road to ruin runs from Alamein to Gambut and points west. It is ruin, literal and absolute, a corridor of dusty death ... this continuous **mortuary** of burnt metal and buried men.<sup>1</sup>*

Slessor was deeply touched by the number of deaths on both sides of the war. His report at the end of the Syria campaign, read:

*The earth has received the scattered bones of war and forgotten them. Syria, too, in a few weeks of peace will forget, let us hope, the cloud which passed over its green fields.<sup>2</sup>*

He became increasingly critical of military decisions that he felt caused the unnecessary death of Australian soldiers.

Slessor's concerns about Australian military leaders gained strength when he began to cover the war in New Guinea. In October 1943, the army criticised Slessor when an article describing an event he had witnessed was published. Although Slessor defended the accuracy of the article, he had not gained the necessary clearance from the Army Public Relations branch prior to its publication. The resulting dispute led to his resignation in 1944.

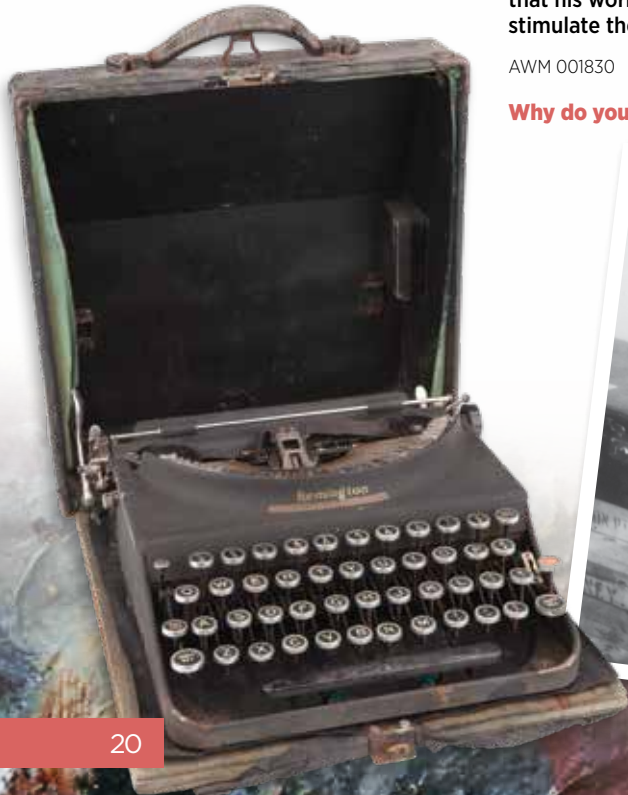
On his return to Australia, Slessor resumed writing poetry and books, and editing journals and newspapers. He died in Sydney in 1971, and was survived by a son.

AWM REL/13135

**This portrait of Slessor was taken in 1940 before he sailed to England. He believed that his work was important 'to keep up the **morale** of the people at home ... also to stimulate the enlistment of volunteers for future reinforcements'.<sup>3</sup>**

AWM 001830

**Why do you think the government appointed official correspondents during the war?**



## Did you know?

Slessor was one of Australia's leading poets. 'Beach Burial', written during the Second World War, was a reflection on the death of so many soldiers. It includes the lines:

*Whether as enemies they fought,  
Or fought with us, or neither; the sand joins  
them together*



Australian troops serving in the Finschhafen area of New Guinea in November 1943.

AWM 060504



A group of correspondents, including Slessor (standing at the right), check their travel rations the night before they leave for Greece in March 1941.

AWM 006819

Slessor (second from the right) at work close to the front line after landing in New Guinea in September 1943.

AWM 057093

**What challenges did war correspondents face in doing their job?**

## FAST FACTS Official war histories

Part of Slessor's role as an official war correspondent was to keep diaries to be used in writing the official history of the Second World War. Official war histories are commissioned by the Australian government to provide a detailed record of the Australian experience of war.

# An informed voice: Chester Wilmot

**Chester Wilmot became a correspondent with the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) early in the Second World War. At the time, many people relied on the radio for news, so his broadcasts from the front were to a large audience.**

During his reports, Wilmot consistently recognised the skills and bravery of the Australian troops. In a broadcast from North Africa in early 1941, he said:

*In pitch darkness on Friday morning two **platoons** sneaked up the branch valley opposite Post 11 and cut their way through the enemy's wire ... Our troops were wonderful under this heavy fire ...<sup>1</sup>*

As well as providing descriptions of the action, his report gave listeners background information to better understand the outcome of this battle:

*The difficulties of the terrain were well enough known but the strength of Post 11 was not ... [It] turned out to be a fortress with guns in hidden positions so placed that the whole hillside could spit fire ...<sup>2</sup>*

Australians, many of whom had loved ones serving overseas, welcomed the depth of these reports.

Wilmot's curiosity about the causes of military success and failure grew throughout the war. In New Guinea he completed the challenging walk along the **Kokoda Track**, where he saw the horrendous conditions being faced by Australian soldiers. This experience helped convince him that the military tactics being used by the Australian command were not appropriate. In a broadcast in September 1942, he exposed a tactical error and said:

*... a chance had been lost, and because of this I felt bitter as I stood on that spur of the Owen Stanley Range ... I was bitter for I knew that somewhere under those treetops there were unnecessary Australian graves.<sup>3</sup>*

Wilmot criticised many decisions of General Thomas Blamey, which resulted in his **accreditation** as a war correspondent being withdrawn. He continued to broadcast for the ABC from Australia, where he also recorded a documentary for the Australian War Memorial.

In May 1944, Wilmot moved to London to work for the British Broadcasting Commission (BBC). After the war he continued to live in England with his wife and three children. Chester Wilmot was killed in a plane crash in 1954 while returning to England after a visit to Australia.

**Wilmot filing an ABC report from the back of a truck in Palestine in 1941. The microphone is covered with white fabric to reduce the sound of the wind.**

AWM 008619

**How might the role of a radio correspondent have varied from that of a newspaper correspondent?**





## FAST FACTS Radio during the Second World War

In September 1939, Prime Minister Menzies made an announcement live on radio that Australia was joining the Second World War. Radio was a valuable source of news and information during the war, but programs related to the war had to be censored before they were broadcast.

Wilmot (second from left) at a press camp in Greece in April 1941. In his reports for the ABC, Wilmot analysed military events and shared his own opinions.

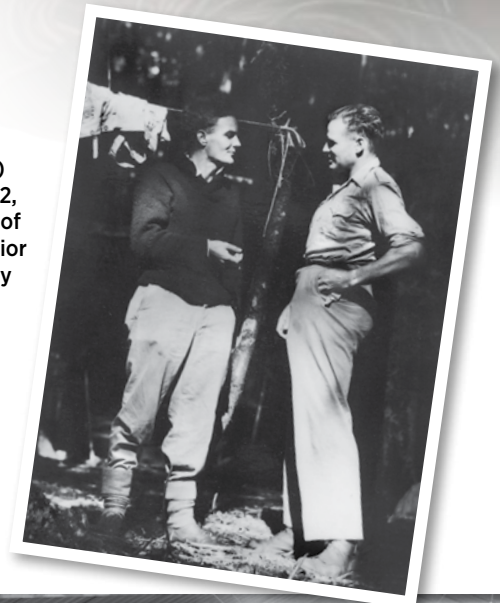
AWM 007820

**Why do you think members of the press were often kept in a group in war zones?**

Wilmot (on the right) in New Guinea in 1942, where he spent a lot of time questioning senior officers about military tactics.

AWM 013472

**What are some of the ways that war correspondents might gather their information?**



### Did you know?

Wilmot was with Allied troops as they crossed the English Channel to invade Europe on D-Day, 6 June 1944. D-Day was a turning point in the war. His BBC report began:

*This is Chester Wilmot broadcasting from a glider bound for France and invasion. We've just passed over the coast of France and all around us along the coast ack-ack fire is going up.*<sup>4</sup>

AWM REL30803.002



Royal Australian Air Force members serving in Malaysia crowd around a wireless radio to listen to news of the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

AWM OG3234

# A determined woman: Nora Heysen

**Nora Heysen was the first woman appointed by Australia as an official war artist, and she soon challenged expectations about the role. Painting in both New Guinea and Australia during the Second World War, Heysen offered audiences a new perspective on the nature of service.**

Like many Australians during the Second World War, Heysen was keen to contribute to the war effort and set out 'to do what I could with my talent'.<sup>1</sup> She had been brought up in a creative household and was already an established artist, having in 1938 been the first woman to win the prestigious Archibald Prize. Nonetheless, war art was still considered a man's task and she had to use her artistic connections to gain selection as an official artist in 1943.

Heysen was given the task of painting women in the services, firstly in Australia and then nearer the action in New Guinea. In New Guinea she was told to capture the work of Australian nurses – a task she soon tired of. Believing that 'mostly war is fought by men', Heysen was frustrated that her role was painting women in the relative safety of the hospitals. She explained, 'I didn't see the sense of being a war artist if I couldn't get nearer the action'.<sup>2</sup>

Although she didn't get to the front like the male artists, Heysen was able to visit several areas where she painted soldiers going about their business, including waiting for transport. As she later reflected:

*A lot of the war up there was just waiting. You'll see that in my drawing, just a lot of people just waiting with their bags for a plane or transport or something to take them somewhere.*<sup>3</sup>

While some people criticised Heysen for choosing to paint nurses relaxing and the New Guinean people, her work now offers an insight into service during the war.



**Nora Heysen, *Sister M Russell nursing a native* (1944, oil on hardboard, 45.5 x 60.8 cm, AWM ART23715)**

Heysen sometimes painted locals during her time in New Guinea. This man had both hands blown off by a grenade while fishing when he was a captive of the Japanese.



Nora Heysen, *View from Sisters' Mess, Finschhafen* (1944, oil on canvas, 39 x 44.4 cm, AWM ART22392)

This painting shows nurses relaxing at an Australian Casualty Clearing Station in New Guinea in 1944. Heysen had been instructed to capture the work of nurses, and was criticised by her commander for depicting them at leisure.

**Why do you think Heysen was criticised for showing nurses relaxing?**



Heysen in Finschhafen, New Guinea, in June 1944. Although she was given a captain's uniform, she chose to wear the comfortable 'jungle greens' worn by the servicemen.

AWM 073882



Nora Heysen, *LST loading troops, Dreger Harbour* (1944, oil on canvas on hardboard, 30.5 x 45.6 cm, AWM ART23627)

This painting shows Australian troops embarking on landing ships in New Guinea in 1944. Heysen had asked to paint Australian troops, as well as nurses.

Suffering from a skin condition, Heysen left New Guinea after seven months and continued her war artist duties in Australia. She worked in Sydney Hospital capturing the service of the army medical units, and then moved to Queensland to focus on the evacuation of wounded soldiers by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

Heysen is best known for her portraits during the war, many of which depicted women as strong and capable. To her this was because: 'I'm a realist and I wanted to portray people as they were'.<sup>4</sup>

After the war, Heysen married and continued to paint from her home in Sydney. Despite believing that 'Women's art has never been appreciated', Heysen received an Australia Council Award for Achievement in the Arts in 1993 and the Order of Australia in 1998.<sup>5</sup> Her art is found in many galleries and collections today. Heysen died in 2003, aged 92.

**Nora Heysen, *Pathologist titrating sera (Captain Robert Black)* (1944, oil on hardboard, 45.9 x 39.6 cm, AWM ART22409)**

Heysen met Captain Robert Black in New Guinea and created this painting of him at work in an Army medical laboratory in Sydney in 1944. Heysen married Black in 1953.

Heysen in her Melbourne studio completing paintings that she began in New Guinea, January 1945.

AWM 085075

**Why do war artists often complete their works after returning to Australia? What impact might this have on the artwork?**



### Did you know?

Nora Heysen was the daughter of Hans Heysen, who was a talented and very successful landscape artist. His bush scenes are displayed in many Australian galleries today.

## FAST FACTS Nurses in service

Female nurses served in Australia and overseas during both the First and Second World Wars. Initially serving with the Australian Army Nursing Service, nurses were not part of the regular military until 1949. Today, male and female nurses serve as part of the army, air force and navy, deploying with troops during conflicts or peacekeeping operations.



Nora Heysen, *Ambulance plane carrying battle casualties from Morotai to Townsville (1945, oil on canvas, 38.7 x 45.1 cm, AWM ART24375)*

This painting shows a RAAF Medical evacuation team transporting injured soldiers to Australia.

AWM REL/06376.003



Nora Heysen, *Transport driver (Aircraftwoman Florence Miles) (1945, oil on canvas, 66.2 x 81.1 cm, AWM ART24393)*

Heysen selected Aircraftwoman Florence Ethel Miles as the subject for this painting because she saw Miles as a 'young, forward lass'. Miles was serving as a transport driver in North Queensland. This is one of many portraits by Heysen that show women as strong and capable.

**In what ways does this painting show Florence Miles to be a strong and capable woman?**

Boer War  
1899–1902

First World War  
1914–1918

Second World War  
1939–1945

Malayan Emergency  
1948–1960

# Close to the action: Damien Parer

**Damien Parer's films and photographs from the Second World War helped Australians understand what it was like to serve on the front line. Always close to the action, Parer was killed while covering the war in the Pacific.**

Parer was working as a cameraman and photographer when he was employed by the Commonwealth Department of Information in 1940. He described his job during the war as capturing a true picture of Australian soldiers and 'keeping newspapers and newsreels supplied with really hot spectacular news'.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the war Parer took footage of the action in Libya, Greece and Syria. Unlike some previous photographers who staged reenactments, Parer believed that he needed to be with the troops to capture events as they unfolded. He filmed the action from aircraft, ships and on the ground.

In 1942 Parer began to cover the war in the Pacific, and it is his images from here for which he is best remembered. His footage of Australian soldiers serving on the Kokoda Track in New Guinea was used in a newsreel named *Kokoda Front Line!*, produced by Cinesound Review. Parer wanted viewers to understand the difficult circumstances faced by Australian soldiers in this area. He began the newsreel with a short introduction, during which he said:

*I've seen the war and I know what your husbands, sweethearts and brothers are going through. If only everybody in Australia could realise this country is in peril, that the Japanese are a well-equipped and dangerous enemy, they might forget about the trivial things and go ahead with the job of licking them.*<sup>2</sup>

This newsreel helped boost support for the war at home and went on to win an Oscar at the 1943 Academy Awards in the United States.



**Parer embarking on a transport ship in January 1940 as an official photographer and cameraman.**

AWM 000401

AWM REL30911

## Did you know?

Many local people in New Guinea helped the Australian forces serving there during the Second World War. The jungle areas were muddy and rough and locals helped to transport supplies and equipment. They also saved the lives of many soldiers by carrying the wounded to field hospitals. At the time, Australian soldiers referred to them as 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels', and more recently their assistance has been recognised with medals.



Between April and December 1941 up to 14,000 Australian soldiers were surrounded by German and Italian forces in Tobruk. Parer took this image of two Australian soldiers in December after the siege had ended.

AWM 010982



Parer standing between two soldiers in New Guinea in August 1943. This photograph was taken shortly after he had helped to carry a badly wounded soldier to safety during an attack.

AWM 055163

**How might Parer's friendship with the troops have influenced his images?**

Parer photographed these soldiers advancing for an attack in North Africa in 1940.

AWM 003413



In 1943 Parer resigned from the Commonwealth Department of Information and went to work for the American company Paramount News. He continued to cover the war in the Pacific, filming American troops. As always, Parer stayed near the action and his reputation for being fearless grew. As Australian correspondent Denis Warner explained:

*[The Americans] think of him as a sort of legendary figure the bullets cannot touch because four of their corps of cameramen have been killed in the fighting here and none of them took the same risks as he did.<sup>3</sup>*

Parer was a deeply religious man and while on leave in March 1944 he married Marie Cotter in Sydney. On 17 September 1944 Parer was killed by Japanese machine-gun fire. At the time, he was walking backwards to film the faces of advancing American **marines** on Peleliu. On learning of his death, the former war correspondent Kenneth Slessor wrote:

*Damien Parer died with a camera in his hand, but his death was as certainly the death of a fighting man as if he had held the trigger of a rifle.<sup>4</sup>*

Parer was 33 years of age, and was buried in the Ambon war cemetery. His son was born the following year, and also named Damien.



Charles Bush, *Group of Timor Guerillas* (1946, oil on canvas on board, 76.2 x 61 cm, AWM ART26363)

Parer travelled to Timor in 1942 and photographed a group of isolated soldiers serving in the area. This painting was inspired by several of Parer's images.

**How would you describe the men in this painting? Why do you think the artist based them on Parer's images?**



AWM REL30799

## FAST FACTS Boosting support for the war

Cinema newsreels were an important way to pass on news and to boost support for the war. The government used newsreels to present a positive image about the Australian contribution to the war. After official photographers collected footage of the war, government officials censored it, cutting out footage which might reveal military secrets or reflect badly on the Australian troops or their commanders. Only then was the footage provided to film companies to be used in newsreels.





*Kokoda Front Line!* received this award, commonly known as an Oscar, in the Best Documentary (Short Subject) category at the 1943 Academy Awards in the United States. The plaque at the bottom reads:

*To 'Kokoda Front Line!' for its effectiveness in portraying, simply yet forcefully, the scene of war in New Guinea and for its moving presentation of the bravery and fortitude of our Australian comrades in arms.*

AWM REL/14879

**Why do you think this Australian film won an American award?**

Australian soldiers and local New Guinean troops gather in a village just prior to launching an attack against Japanese forces in August 1942. Parer took this photo at the same time he was filming footage for his newsreel *Kokoda Front Line!*

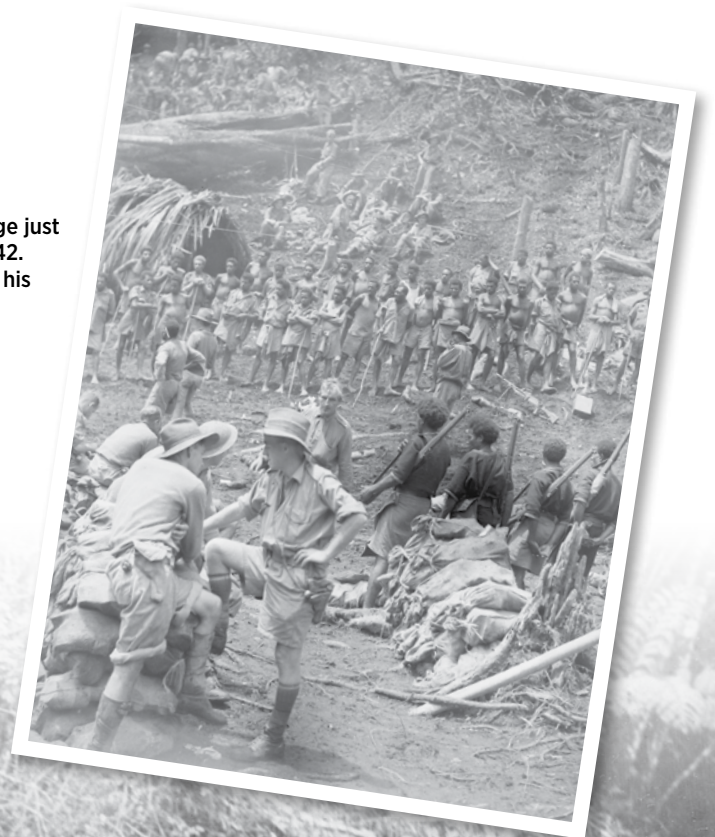
AWM 013250

**What does this image tell you about the experience of Australians on the Kokoda Track?**

Parer was keen to show Australians the difficult conditions faced by the troops in New Guinea. In this image wounded soldiers are being carried over a stream by New Guinean locals in September 1942.

AWM 013256

**Why did Parer want Australians to know more about the war in New Guinea?**



# Realities of combat: Ivor Hele

**At the time he was appointed as an official war artist for the Second World War, Ivor Hele was already serving with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). His experience as a soldier influenced the way he depicted the activities of Australians throughout the war, and later in the Korean War.**

As a child growing up in South Australia Hele loved to paint, and he left school early to study art, firstly in Adelaide and then in Europe. He was working as an artist when he enlisted in the AIF in June 1940, hoping to become a war artist. His hopes came true after six months of service, and as he was already attached to the army in North Africa he did not have to operate through the Military History and Information Section like other official artists. This allowed him more freedom to move about with the troops.

Hele's military service possibly drove his determination to work near the front line and helped him to establish close relationships with the troops. His first-hand exposure to the challenges of warfare also allowed him to portray events through the eyes of those at the front. This perspective helped his paintings depict the skills of the soldiers and the challenges they faced.

Throughout 1942 Hele was constantly on the move in North Africa. Keeping up with the pace of desert warfare, he made quick sketches using charcoal or crayon. Preferring to paint indoors, however, he completed some paintings in a studio in Cairo and a major series when he returned to Australia in 1942.

When he was sent to New Guinea in 1943, Hele drew both Australians and locals, producing works that conveyed the horrific realities of jungle warfare. When one soldier saw Hele's paintings in 1945 he said:

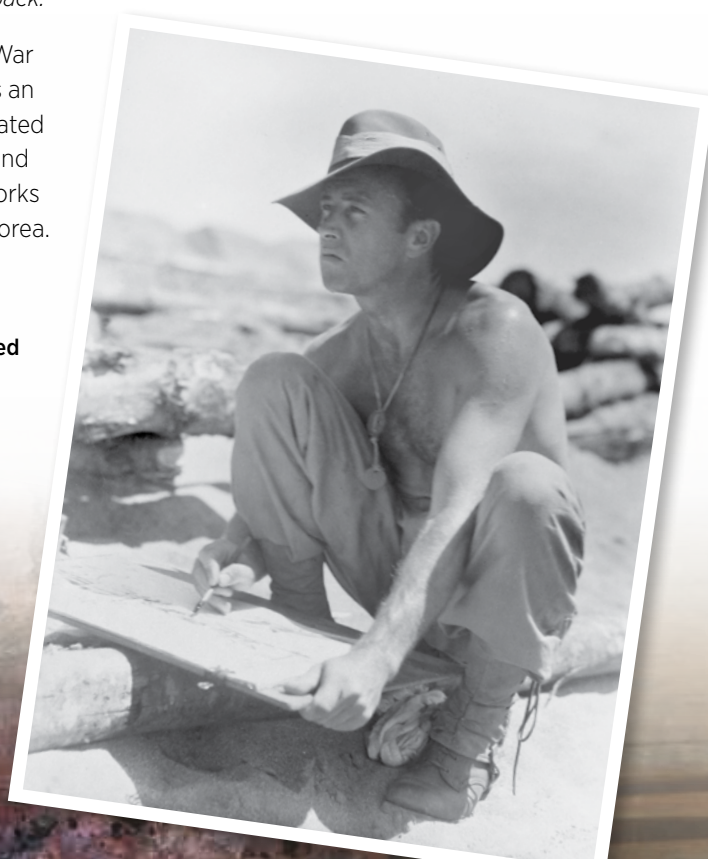
*It's the real thing all right. I've been up there and I know. [Hele's] ... the type of artist the soldiers appreciate because he has obviously been right up close to the fighting. He couldn't have painted like that if he'd just sat back at base and talked to the boys as they come back.<sup>1</sup>*

Hele continued to work on paintings for the Australian War Memorial after the war, and in 1952 he was appointed as an official war artist for the Korean War. The images he created in Korea captured the physical strength of the soldiers and airmen, and also the power of their machinery. These works form a valuable record of the Australian experience in Korea.

**Ivor Hele sketching in New Guinea in 1944, where he recorded all aspects of the Australian soldiers' experience.**

AWM 083629

**What does Hele's clothing tell you about the conditions in New Guinea?**

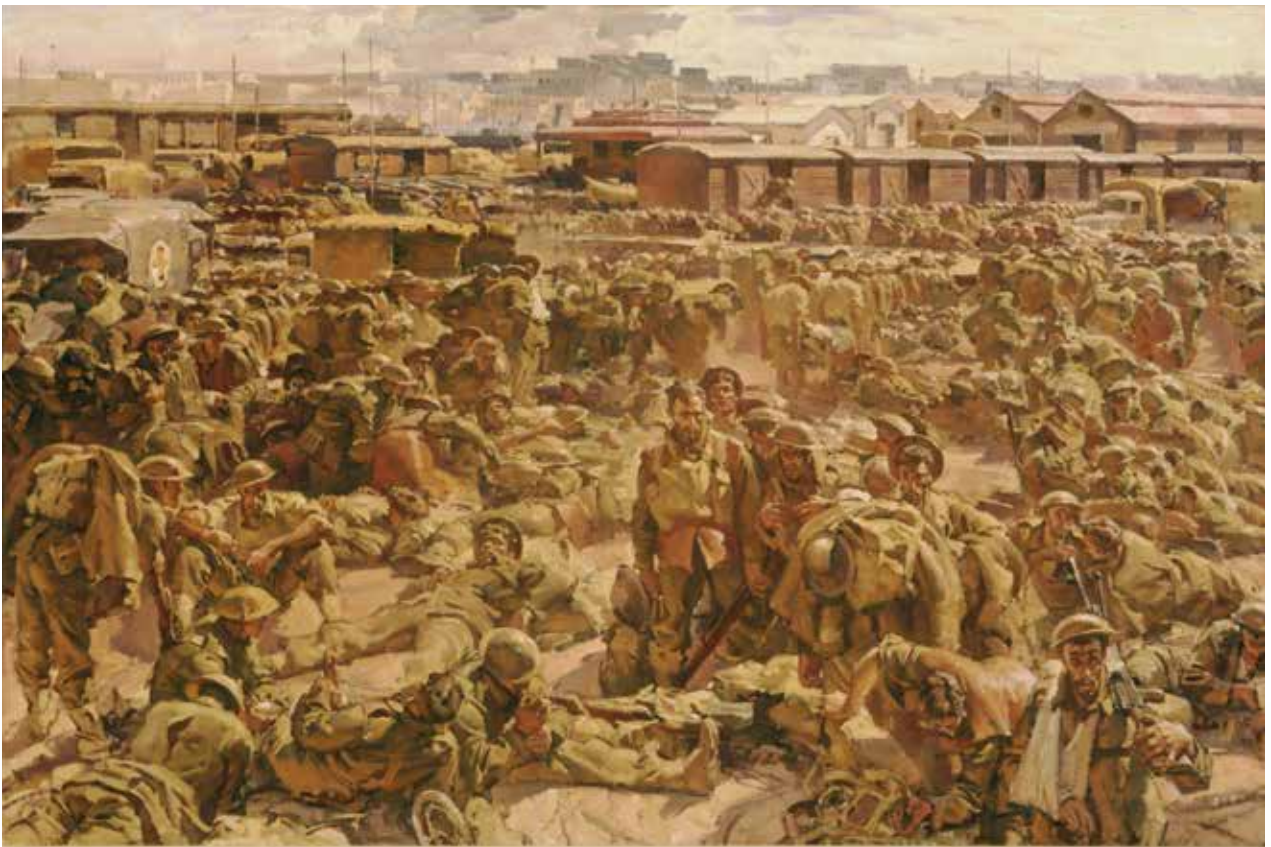




Ivor Hele, *Troops debussing in sandstorm, Libya*, (1943, oil on canvas, 61.3 x 91.8 cm, AWM ART 28480)

From the warm tones of his paintings in North Africa, to the dark greens and greys of the New Guinea jungle, Hele used colour to convey the physical challenges of different locations.

**How has the artist managed to show what it would have been like to be caught in a sandstorm?**



Ivor Hele, *Australian troops disembarking at Alexandria after the evacuation of Greece*, (1943, oil on canvas, 136.9 x 206 cm, AWM ART22230)

In this painting, Hele aimed to capture the spirit of exhausted Australian soldiers after they were evacuated from Greece.

**Why do you think Hele's work was appreciated by many of the servicemen?**

Ivor Hele, *Walking wounded, Missim Trail*, (1944, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 91.3 cm, AWM ART22561)

Hele lived and worked with the Australian soldiers in New Guinea and understood the struggles they faced in the hostile environment.

**What challenges would the jungle have created for Australian soldiers?**



Ivor Hele was Australia's longest serving official war artist, and his service was recognised with awards such as the Order of the **British Empire** in 1954, Commander of the British Empire in 1969, and a knighthood in 1982.

His talent at conveying depths of meaning in his paintings meant that he was sought after as a portrait artist for many decades. He was able to insist that those wanting him to paint their portrait travel to his studio in South Australia, where he lived with his second wife until he died in 1993.

Ivor Hele, *Battlefield burial of three NCOs*, (1944, oil on canvas, 76.3 x 91.6 cm, AWM ART22560)

Hele was present when three Australians were killed in New Guinea during an attack on Japanese troops. He did the sketch for this painting as the dead men were carried to the burial site by their comrades.

**How do you think Australian audiences felt about works like this being displayed during the war?**



Members of the public visit an exhibition of Hele's war art in Sydney in May 1945, just months before the war ended.

AWM 108415

## FAST FACTS The Archibald Prize

The Archibald Prize, awarded annually since 1921, is the most important prize for portrait painting in Australia. Hele won the prize five times during the 1950s. Two prime ministers (Robert Menzies and Malcolm Fraser) and Queen Elizabeth II were among the many public figures who had their portraits painted by Hele.



Ivor Hele, *Centurion tank*, (1953, oil on board, 76.2 x 91.2 cm, AWM ART40305)

In his paintings of the Korean War, Hele captured both the difficulties faced by Australian airmen and soldiers, and the power of the machines they used.

## Did you know?

Many of Hele's works were initially considered too **confronting** to be shown to the public. Nonetheless, the Australian War Memorial mounted a travelling exhibition of his paintings in 1945, and large numbers of Australians visited it to learn more about the war.

One art critic wrote:

*No more powerful statement about war has been made by any artist ... One reacts so strongly to the scene that it is difficult to look at these pictures.<sup>2</sup>*

Ivor Hele, *Medical air evacuation*, (1953, oil on hardboard, 132 x 157.8 cm, AWM ART40301)

Hele was sensitive to the difficulties faced by injured soldiers, as he had been seriously wounded in New Guinea. In this painting, injured men are being transported from Korea to hospitals in Japan.

**What does Hele convey about the Australian troops in this painting?**



# A point of view: Dorothy Drain

**Dorothy Drain worked as a war correspondent in three conflicts at a time when women had limited opportunities in journalism. Writing for the *Australian Women's Weekly* (AWW), she offered her readers a personal perspective on war.**

Drain grew up in rural Queensland and developed a love of words from an early age. In 1932, she left a job with the Queensland government to start her career as a journalist. From 1938 Drain worked at the AWW, where her popular column 'It seems to me' was published weekly for sixteen years.

During the Second World War, Australian Army guidelines made it very difficult for female journalists to enter **combat** zones. Drain was able to travel to New Guinea, but only to report on those involved in supporting the soldiers at the front. In 1946, however, Drain travelled to Japan to report on the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), which supervised the post-war **demilitarisation** of the country. There she was able to move about independently and observe the work of the Australian troops.

In 1950 American military authorities accredited Drain as a correspondent for the Korean War. They also facilitated her work there, including giving her the opportunity to fly over the front line in a two-seater spotter plane. Her report of this incident read:

*I saw the explosion of bombs, the flashes and flame as fighters made a strike, and smoke rising from burning villages that had concealed enemy command posts.<sup>1</sup>*

While in Korea, Drain had the opportunity to interview wounded soldiers and to witness the impact of the war on the local population. She was challenged by the human cost of the war, and in her column reflected that it had achieved little except:

*... proof of the insane **futility** of war. When it is all over, millions of refugees, homeless and hungry, will need the help of the United Nations to resume life in their ravaged country.<sup>2</sup>*

Drain travelled to Vietnam in 1965 to cover Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. She remained at the AWW until 1975, rising to the job of editor in her final years there. Drain never married, and died in Melbourne in 1996.



**Dorothy Drain talks to a member of the Royal Australian Air Force at an air base in Vietnam in 1965.**

AWM 044130

AWM REL30986.001





In 1946 Drain visited Hiroshima and saw the devastation that was caused by the atomic bomb dropped on the city a year earlier.

AWM P01804.002

**How do you think travelling to war zones may have changed Drain's views about war?**

Drain (on the right) in the field with Australian soldiers in Japan in 1950. During this visit she was often the only woman in an area.

AWM 146764

**Why do you think women were discouraged from reporting from war zones?**



Drain wrote a column in the AWW for sixteen years. As a war correspondent, she developed strong anti-war views, and in 1950 wrote:

*War is no place for anybody, man or woman, and if humanity cannot find some more sensible way of settling its arguments it doesn't deserve to survive.*<sup>3</sup>

**Why do you think Drain called her column 'It seems to me'?**

**Did you know?**

The *Australian Women's Weekly*, often known as 'The Weekly', began in 1933 and for many years was Australia's top selling magazine. Although it is still called the *Australian Women's Weekly*, the magazine is now a monthly publication.

**FAST FACTS Female war correspondents**

During the Second World War, the few women who were accredited as war correspondents were expected to stay within Australia publicising the women who worked in support roles for the army, navy and air force. Until the Vietnam War, Australian military authorities believed that women should not be in operational zones because they would not be able to cope with the conditions and needed male protection. Women now report from conflict zones around the world, displaying the same bravery and skill as their male colleagues.

# Lone operator: Neil Davis

**For more than twenty years Neil Davis worked as a cameraman and correspondent covering various conflicts, including the Vietnam War. Fiercely independent, Davis took many risks to bring new insights to television viewers across the world.**

Having left his Tasmanian high school at age 15, Davis first found work at the Tasmanian Government Film Unit and then became a cameraman at the Australian Broadcasting Commission. In 1963 he moved to the international news agency Visnews, where he was employed as a cameraman and correspondent covering the South-East Asia region.

At the time, tensions were building in Vietnam and Davis soon gained a reputation for providing new and compelling footage of the situation there. According to a colleague, he believed that ‘the power of pictures was in most instances more effective than words’<sup>1</sup> and was prepared to take many risks to capture the reality of war on film.

Unlike most other television correspondents, Davis mainly chose to work on his own. He carried his own lightweight camera and sound equipment and often filmed himself talking to the camera. He also differed from others reporting in Vietnam by choosing to spend his time with the South Vietnamese soldiers, rather than their American or Australian allies. As he later explained:

*I preferred to go with the South Vietnamese forces because it was their war. It meant a great deal to them and they were fighting it on their own terms.<sup>2</sup>*

In his effort to be balanced in his reporting, Davis became the first Western reporter to cross enemy lines. He spent several days in 1973 filming the Viet Cong and during this time experienced an aerial attack by the South Vietnamese forces. As he reported:

*... we all sprinted to squeeze into an underground **bunker** covered with foliage. The helicopter sprayed the area for 30 minutes as we sweated underground. Bullets got through the thick bamboo-and-earth ceiling.<sup>3</sup>*

**Davis, shown here in about 1974, was tall and athletic. As a young man, he played Australian rules football professionally.**

AWM P00508.005







Protective Body Armor Vest worn by Davis during the Vietnam War years.

AWM REL34208

Davis films South Vietnamese troops crossing a river in the Mekong Delta in 1967. Working close to the front line, Davis used lightweight equipment so he could move easily with the troops.

AWM P00508.010

Davis on patrol with South Vietnamese troops in the Mekong Delta in 1972. His preference was to move around with the local troops, rather than the Western forces.

AWM P00508.008

**Most TV reporters worked in teams of three, with a correspondent, cameraman, and sound technician. Why do you think Davis liked to work alone?**



Davis left Visnews in 1973, but stayed in Asia, firstly as a **freelance** reporter and then working for the American network NBC. He developed a reputation for **neutrality**, and was the only Western journalist to film as a North Vietnamese tank stormed through the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon on 30 April 1975. This marked the moment of victory for the North Vietnamese forces and the end of the war.

Admitting that he had ‘become addicted to combat’, Davis was injured many times throughout his career.<sup>4</sup> After spending years in Vietnam and Cambodia, Davis moved to Thailand, and continued to cover conflicts, including in Africa and the Middle East.

On 9 September 1985, Davis was killed by **shrapnel** while filming an attempted coup in Bangkok. He was 51 years of age, and was cremated in a Buddhist ceremony in Bangkok.

Davis also covered the war in Cambodia and Laos. In this image he carries a wounded Cambodian soldier to safety in Phnom Penh in 1971.

AWM P00508.004



Davis takes a drink from a South Vietnamese soldier's helmet while in the Mekong Delta in 1972. When filming with the South Vietnamese troops, Davis ate the locally available food and water the soldiers relied on.

AWM P00508.007

**Why might Davis have provided a perspective on the war that was different from other correspondents?**

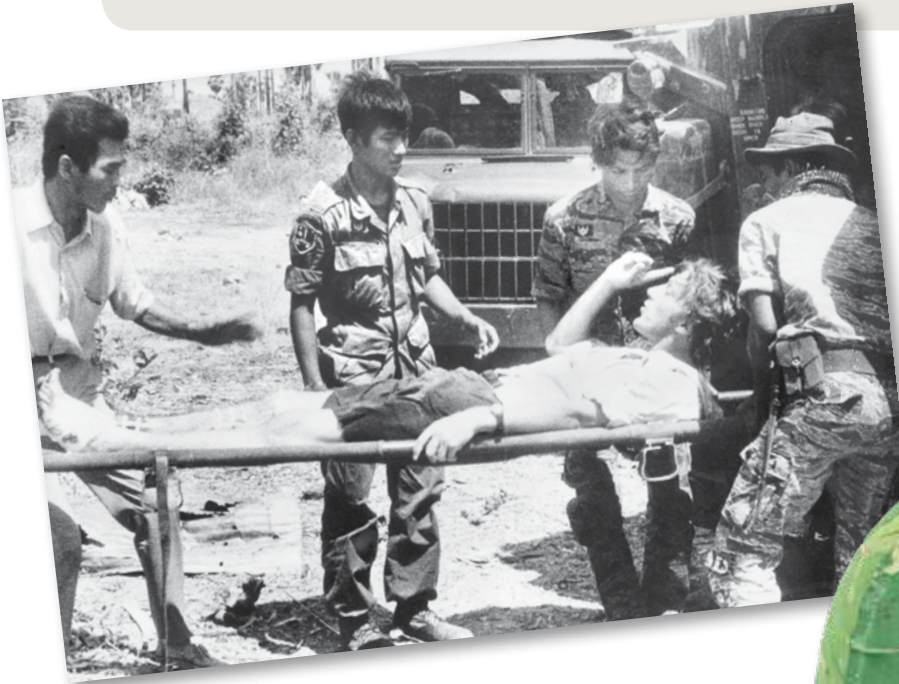
### Did you know?

Throughout his career, Neil Davis kept diaries related to his work. Inside the front cover of each one he wrote the following lines from the poem ‘The Call’ by Thomas Osbert Mordaunt:

*One crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name.*

## FAST FACTS Television and the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War became known as the ‘television war’ because it was the first time that the action during war was broadcast directly into homes around the world. Numerous television networks sent correspondents to report from Vietnam, and the government no longer had tight control over what was aired. Many confronting scenes were broadcast, which caused some people to question Australia’s involvement in the war.



Davis receives medical aid after being wounded in the leg by a **mortar** blast in Cambodia in 1974. Davis was given a **transfusion** directly from a green coconut, which saved his life.

AWM P00508.013

**What do you think drove Davis to take risks?**



AWM REL3474

Davis stands beside a tank in a museum in Vietnam in 1985. Davis was the only Western correspondent to film this tank as it smashed through the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon in 1975, signifying victory for the North Vietnamese forces.

AWM P00508.001

**Why do you think Davis was considered impartial by the Vietnamese forces?**



# Witnessing history: David Dare Parker

**For six weeks in 2003, David Dare Parker photographed the work of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in the Middle East. He was the first official photographer to be appointed by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) since the Second World War.**

As a ten or eleven-year-old, Parker saw photos of the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War and was struck by the power of the images. Although he started his career as a guitarist, his memory of the photos helped him realise that **photojournalism** was the career he wished to follow. Parker changed jobs and continues to work as a photojournalist today. He enjoys the excitement of capturing history as it unfolds.

Parker has worked in many countries, including Turkey, Indonesia, Israel and East Timor. He is used to working in difficult conditions but believes that as a photojournalist, 'your first responsibility is to the people whose stories you are trying to tell'. At times this responsibility has placed Parker in dangerous situations. He has been under attack in Israel and was directly targeted in East Timor. Acknowledging the risks, Parker tries to be careful, saying, 'I'm not going to die for a photograph'.<sup>2</sup>

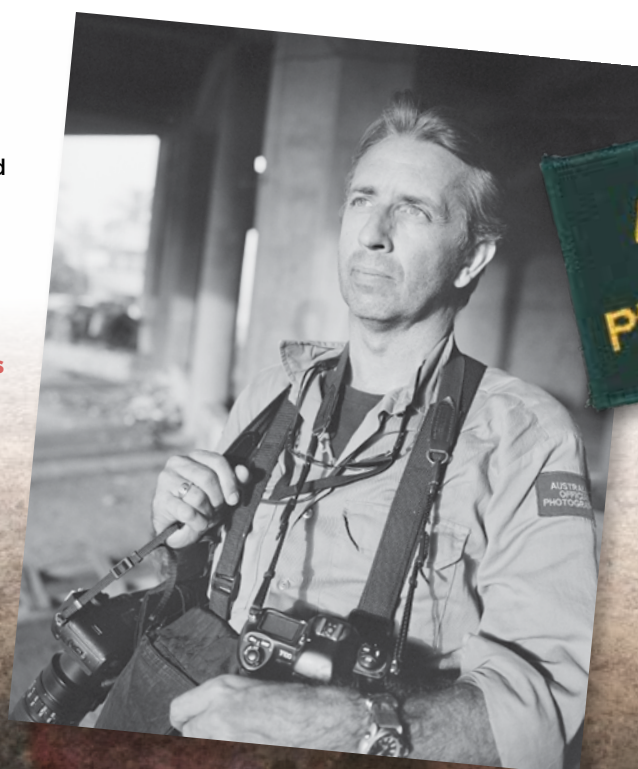
Ironically, during his time as an official war photographer Parker felt safer than he usually does, as he was restricted to documenting the activities of the ADF and was always under their protection. As he was in secure areas, he was not able to cover stories such as the impact of the war on the civilian population.

Through his images, Parker recorded many aspects of the Australian presence in Iraq. He captured navy **mine clearance** teams searching for unexploded mortars, air force bombers returning from a combat operation, and the crew of HMAS *Kanimbla* patrolling for boats involved in illegal activities. Other images featured supply clerks in the military bases, and air traffic controllers working to establish secure conditions for civilian air traffic in Baghdad.

This portrait of Parker was taken when he was in the Middle East in 2003. He felt honoured when the AWM invited him to be an official photographer. As his father was in the army, he was very aware of the Anzac tradition.

AWM P04102.218

**In what way might Parker's respect for the Anzac tradition have influenced his photography in Iraq?**





A member of the Australian Army on night duty in Baghdad in 2003. Australian troops provided protection for Australian **diplomats** in Iraq.

AWM P04103.489

This Australian soldier is travelling in an Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV) during a street patrol in Baghdad. Parker generally prefers black and white images as he believes that they have greater impact.

AWM P04158.017

**How important is having the right equipment for soldiers today?**

A Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) patrol at an airbase in Iraq in 2003. The harsh desert environment meant that Parker had to clean the dust from his equipment each day to prevent damaging the camera lens.

AWM P04101.389

**What are some of the dangers which this patrol might have faced?**



**Boer War**  
1899–1902

**First World War**  
1914–1918

**Second World War**  
1939–1945

**Malayan Emergency**  
1948–1960

Throughout his time in the Middle East, Parker admired the professionalism and humour of members of the ADF. He found they were happy to be photographed and have their stories told at the Australian War Memorial. Many of Parker's photos from the assignment were included in the AWM exhibition *Focus: photography and war 1945–2006*.

As one of Australia's most successful photojournalists, Parker continues to travel the world and work in conflict zones. When he returns home to Western Australia he is able to share his experiences with his wife, Martine Perret, a photographer who has also worked in various conflict zones.



A briefing session for Australian troops at the Australian National Headquarters in Baghdad in 2003.

AWM P04159.161

## **FAST FACTS** The Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) in Iraq

During the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the majority of Australian forces on the ground were members of the elite SAS regiment. Being among the first to enter the war, they captured a range of enemy sites and equipment, from aircraft and air bases to Scud missile launch sites. Their work, including lengthy patrols to gather information about enemy activities, greatly increased the safety of other troops operating in Iraq.

## Did you know?

The Australian Army provides training for all those deployed to conflict zones, including war photographers. The training covers basic medical knowledge, and strategies to use if you are captured, including not revealing information to the enemy.

**What do you think should be taught in pre-departure training?**



Crew members of HMAS *Kanimbla* operating a missile launcher near the Persian Gulf while supporting the operation to disarm Iraq in 2003.

AWM P04103.450

**What feelings might these men have experienced as they launched missiles?**



Parker has made several visits to East Timor to cover crises. This 2007 image shows Australian troops who are helping to ensure the success of the election.

AWM P05977.038

Parker took this image during the presidential election in East Timor in 2007. Members of the ADF helped to maintain security during the election process.

AWM P05977.006



# Working together: Lyndell Brown and Charles Green

**In 2007 Lyndell Brown and Charles Green were appointed as official war artists to Afghanistan and Iraq. Their paintings offer a rare insight into contemporary warfare and reveal beauty in unexpected places.**

Brown and Green are a married couple from Victoria who work as a team to create their artworks. They were already well-established artists when they were approached by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) to work as official artists. According to Brown, their reaction to the offer was complicated 'because we're both peace-loving vegetarian **pacifists**'.<sup>1</sup> After initially declining the position, they reflected on the strong tradition of war artists in Australia and decided to accept.

Over a six week period the pair visited military bases in the Middle East, with the aim of capturing the activities of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel. Although they were not permitted to accompany the troops 'outside the wire', the artists experienced the danger of moving around the region. Brown described their drive to a base in Iraq:

*We were on an armoured vehicle called the Rhino bus and we were wearing our ballistic goggles, our helmets, our 20 kilos of body armour, driving into the heart of Bagdad ... It's about a twenty minutes' drive ... but it is the most dangerous road in the world.<sup>2</sup>*

**Charles Green and Lyndell Brown while working as official war artists in 2007.**

AWM P05728\_339 (Photo by Sean Hobbs)





Lyndell Brown and Charles Green,  
*Route Irish, Baghdad* (2007, oil on  
linen, 31 x 31 cm, AWM ART93307)

This painting depicts an American  
military vehicle viewed from a bus  
travelling along Route Irish – the road  
to Baghdad International Airport  
where vehicles were frequently  
attacked.

**Why do you think the artists chose to  
capture this scene from a window of  
a passing bus?**



AWM REL35763

Lyndell Brown and Charles  
Green, *Dawn, Iraqi waters,*  
*Arabian Gulf* (2007, oil on linen,  
31 x 31 cm, AWM ART93290)

This painting portrays an  
Australian boarding party in  
an inflatable boat returning to  
HMAS *Toowoomba* at dawn.

**Why might the artists have  
painted the returning boat  
from this perspective?**



Boer War  
1899–1902

First World War  
1914–1918

Second World War  
1939–1945

Malayan Emergency  
1948–1960

Brown and Green were amazed by the size of the military bases that they visited. Members of the ADF were often located within larger United States military compounds, and these secure areas housed many thousands of troops. The artists were struck by the bleak landscapes and environmental impact of war. Green described seeing:

*Vast fields, several times the size of the **MCG**, of pallets of bottled water progressively being covered in desert dust.<sup>3</sup>*

Amongst such scenes, Brown and Green also found beauty. The artists tried to capture what they saw by taking numerous photographs to use later when creating their paintings back in Australia. Brown and Green stress that their paintings do not aim to document war, they are instead artistic interpretations of what they saw.



Lyndell Brown and Charles Green, *Ziggurat of Ur, Tallil, southern Iraq* (2007, painting, 31 x 31 cm, AWM ART93313)

The artists were interested in how the military presence in the Middle East shaped the environment. This painting depicts tyres, crates and razor wire, with an ancient temple in the background.

**Why do you think Brown and Green chose to paint this scene?**



Lyndell Brown and Charles Green, *Portrait, Corporal Dianne Cuttler, Kandahar* (2007, painting, 31 x 31 cm, AWM ART93296)

During her time in the Middle East, Brown was amazed by 'the number of women in all different roles in different places'.<sup>5</sup> Corporal Cuttler, shown here in a helicopter, worked as a medical technician responsible for evacuating the injured.

**What flags and symbols are shown on the badge on Corporal Cuttler's arm? What might they tell you about her role?**

## FAST FACTS Women in the ADF

At present women fill nearly 20% of the positions in the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force, and the government aims to increase this to 25% by 2023. In the Australian Army, which is the largest service, female participation is currently at around 12%, and the aim is to increase it to 15% in 2023.

**What strategies could the government use to encourage more women to join the ADF?**

Brown and Green returned to Australia having gained a new understanding of contemporary war and an appreciation for the Australian troops serving in the Middle East. Brown said:

*I was really humbled and impressed by the people we met and their sensitivity, and intelligence, and caution, and professionalism ... I felt very proud to be involved with the Australian troops ...<sup>4</sup>*

The experience of serving as war artists inspired the couple to move from Melbourne to regional Victoria. Feeling relieved to have returned safely from a war zone, they decided to live in a naturally beautiful and quieter environment. They continue to work as artists and both hold positions at the University of Melbourne. The artworks created by Brown and Green in the Middle East were shown nationally in a travelling exhibition in 2008 and now form part of the AWM collection.



Lyndell Brown and Charles Green, *Soldier preparing cargo, Camp Victory, Baghdad* (2007, oil on linen, 31 x 31 cm, AWM ART93295)

In this painting, a soldier is preparing to **palletise** the artists' packs before they depart on a Hercules aircraft.



Lyndell Brown and Charles Green, *Night, soldiers in darkness preparing for patrol, Tallil, southern Iraq* (2007, oil on linen, 31 x 31 cm, AWM ART93317)

Brown and Green witnessed activity on the bases throughout the day and night.



The badges on this shirt identified Lyndell Brown as an official artist.

AWM REL38671.002

## Did you know?

Feeding thousands of service men and women at military bases in the Middle East is an expensive task, as much of the food and water is transported in from elsewhere. In many cases, disposable plates, cutlery and water bottles are also used.

# Where did they report from?

Hilda Rix Nicholas

3



Phillip Schuler

1



Lyndell Brown and Charles Green

13

Frank Hurley

4



Damien Parer

8

David Dare Parker

12



Chester Wilmot

6

George Lambert

2



Korean War  
1950-1953

Indonesian Confrontation  
1962-1966

Vietnam War  
1962-1975

Recent conflicts and peacekeeping  
1990-today



Ivor Hele 9



10 Dorothy Drain



11 Neil Davis

Kenneth Slessor 5



7 Nora Heyson

# Glossary

<b>accreditation</b>	Official recognition that someone is qualified to perform a particular activity.
<b>Aegean</b>	A part of the Mediterranean Sea that is located between Greece and Turkey.
<b>AIF</b>	Australian Imperial Force. The Australian force formed for overseas service during the First and Second World Wars.
<b>Allied forces</b>	The group of nations, including Australia, which fought against Germany and its allies in the First World War and against the Axis powers in the Second World War.
<b>Anzacs</b>	Originally soldiers from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) in 1915, but later used to refer to other Australian and New Zealand troops.
<b>bayonets</b>	Stabbing weapons designed to fit on the end of a rifle.
<b>British Empire</b>	The group of nations or colonies with ties and allegiance to the United Kingdom.
<b>bunker</b>	An underground shelter used for protection, sometimes with openings that a gun can be fired through.
<b>cable</b>	A written message transmitted by an electronic device. The message was carried along wires, and then the text was written out and delivered.
<b>casualty clearing station</b>	A military medical facility, located close to the front line, to treat and/or stabilise wounded soldiers.
<b>combat</b>	Fighting, generally between two or more armies.
<b>commemorate</b>	To act in remembrance and respect for a person or event.
<b>commission</b>	A posting to a military officer's role.
<b>confronting</b>	Something that causes a person to be distressed or upset.
<b>demilitarisation</b>	The process of removing military equipment and installations from an area.
<b>diplomats</b>	Government officials who represent their country overseas.
<b>freelance</b>	To be self-employed and work on projects for different companies.
<b>futility</b>	Sense of something having no useful purpose because there are no benefits.
<b>Gallipoli</b>	A peninsula located in Turkey where Australian soldiers fought in 1915.
<b>glider</b>	A light aircraft that flies without using an engine.
<b>Kokoda Track</b>	The steep and narrow walking track across the Owen Stanley Range in New Guinea.

<b>lead</b>	A metal used to make bullets.
<b>marines</b>	Members of the US Navy who are trained to serve in an amphibious role.
<b>MCG</b>	Melbourne Cricket Ground
<b>Middle East</b>	A large geographical area including countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.
<b>mine clearance</b>	The process of removing explosive land mines from an area.
<b>morale</b>	Positive or negative feelings felt by a person or a group of people.
<b>mortar</b>	A weapon to fire explosive bombs on a high trajectory
<b>mortuary</b>	A place where dead bodies are kept until they are buried or cremated.
<b>negatives</b>	Photographic images made on film or glass, from which photos can be printed.
<b>neutrality</b>	A position of not supporting or helping either side in a conflict.
<b>offensive</b>	A military attack.
<b>Pacific</b>	The part of the world near the western Pacific Ocean, including countries such as Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Japan.
<b>pacifists</b>	People who believe that war cannot be justified.
<b>palletise</b>	Packing goods onto a pallet before they are transported.
<b>peacekeeping</b>	Maintaining peace and order within or between countries, usually by an international force in the aftermath of conflict.
<b>peninsula</b>	An area of land almost surrounded by water.
<b>photojournalism</b>	Journalism that relies on images more than words to present news stories.
<b>platoons</b>	Groups of soldiers (from 25 to 40 in each platoon) who are commanded by a lieutenant.
<b>shrapnel</b>	Fragments of a bomb, shell, grenade or landmine etc.
<b>stills</b>	Single photographs taken from film footage.
<b>transfusion</b>	Transferring blood or other fluids into a person to replace blood lost because of injury or surgery.
<b>Western Front</b>	The central area of operations for Allied forces in Western Europe during the First World War.

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    see also females



George Lambert, *Charles E W Bean* (1924, oil on canvas, 90.7 x 71.1 cm, AWM ART07545)

Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean was Australia's first official war correspondent. During the First World War he travelled with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and reported from Gallipoli and the Western Front. This portrait of Bean was painted by George Lambert after he returned from Gallipoli, where the two men worked together.

If you would like further information on Charles Bean you can read about him in *Ancestry - Stories of multicultural Anzacs*.



Amid dangers known and unknown war correspondents report what they see and hear. Those words and images live beyond the moment and become part of the history of Australia.

War Correspondents Memorial, Canberra



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



AUSTRALIAN  
WAR MEMORIAL