

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE RELATING
TO WORLD WAR I

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Charles Bean thought the Australian War Memorial should ‘limit itself to providing sources for the official histories and future historians’.¹ ‘Novels etc. with a war flavour [...] would simply be collected to be stacked in cellars and eaten by silverfish.’² Happily this advice was ignored and World War I novels are included along with other valuable resources at the Canberra Memorial.

Some first editions of the early novels are still available here and there for purchase as ‘rare books’ but many others have now been re-published or digitised and are available as e-books or may be read free of charge on websites such as Project Gutenberg and the Internet Archive.³

The selection below includes novels written during and after World War I, through to the present day. Most are about the Western Front and many explore Australian-French relations; some important novels about Gallipoli and the war in general have been included. Many of the earlier novels are based on personal experiences, perhaps recorded in diaries, as the authors remember and, through their creative imagination, recreate the lives and emotions of those involved in these soul-shattering events in far-away countries. Stories of travel, stories of lives destroyed, of friendships forged, and about the often difficult struggle to survive after the Armistice, are all here in these novels, helping us to go on remembering and imagining the Great War and its aftermath.

¹ Spittel, Christina, ‘Remembering the War: Australian Novelists in the Interwar Years’, https://www.academia.edu/4970350/Remembering_the_War_Australian_novelists_in_the_interwar_years, accessed November 2015.

² Charles Bean to John Treloar, 31 January 1920, Bean Papers AWM 38, 3DRL6673/667a.

³ Project Gutenberg offers over 50,000 free books: <https://www.gutenberg.org/> See also <https://www.archive.org/> and <https://archive.org/details/googlebooks>.

Novels

- Aujard, Edouard A., *The Devil's First***, London, Philip Allan, 1935, 256 p.
Aujard's short story, Sunny-side or Suicide, was included in a list of the 12 best short-story writers in the world in 1929.
- Allen John T., *Forgive us Our Trespasses***, Sydney, N.S.W. Bookstall, 1933, 266 p.
Described as a sensational story of the First World War and its aftermath, set in Europe and Australia.
- Bridges, Royal (Roy), *The Immortal Dawn***, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1917, 279 p.
Based on the diaries of two Australian soldiers.
- Brookes, Mabel Balcombe, *Broken Idols***, Melbourne, Melville & Mullen, 1917, 271 p.
With 16 pages of plates.
- Brookes, Mabel Balcombe, *On the Knees of the Gods***, Melbourne, Melville & Mullen, 1918, 333 p.
With four three-color pictures and eight full-page line illustrations by Penleigh Boyd.
- Brookes, Mabel Balcombe, *Old Desires***, Melbourne, Australasia Authors' Agency, 1922, 306 p.
As this book is now out of copyright, there are a number of reprints available.
- Burge, Linda, *Wings Above the Storm***, Melbourne, National Press, 1944, 227 p., ISBN 978-8-20006-849-5.
- Charalambous, John, *Silent Parts***, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, July 2006, 324 p., ISBN 978-0-70223-562-7.
Explores a family's private myths about a WWI soldier who didn't come home. Silent Parts was long-listed for the Miles Franklin Award in 2007. The novel was republished in 2013 as An Accidental Tourist to tie in with the film of that name.
- Cooper, John Butler, *Coo-oo-ee! A Tale of Bushmen from Australia to Anzac***, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1916, 312 p.
Historical reprints are available.

Crew, Gary, and Shaun Tan, *Memorial*, Port Melbourne, Thomas C. Lothian, 1999, 32 p., ISBN 0-85091-983-5.
Children's book illustrated by Shaun Tan; reprinted many times and in 2015 was republished by Hachette Australia.

Crocker, Arthur, *Australia Hops In*, Sydney, Shakespeare Head, 1935, 266 p.

Daisley, Stephen, *Traitor*, Melbourne, Text Publishing, May 2011, 304 p., ISBN 978-1-92175-837-9.
E-book available. Winner, Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction, 2011.

Dando-Collins Stephen, *Tank Boys*, Sydney, Random House Australia, February 2014, 304 p., ISBN 978-0-85798-130-1.
E-book available. A gripping story that brings to life one of Australia's World War I military victories. For teens and young adults.

Davis, Arthur Hoey ('Steele Rudd'), *Memoirs of Corporal Keeley*, Sydney, NSW, Bookstall Company Limited, 1918, 413 p.
A collection of short stories based on the war; with drawings by Lionel Lindsay. Extremely popular in its day, some 40,000 copies were published between 1918 and 1926.

Davidson, Frank Dalby, *The Wells of Beersheba: A Light Horse Legend*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1933, 78 p.
Decorative borders to the pages of text. This book is more fictionalised reportage than novella; it reflects the co-dependency of horse and rider and the shock of battle. Commissioned by Angus & Robertson for Christmas 1933, the book's illustrations are by Will Mahoney.

Dinan, Jacqueline & John Dinan, *A Woman's War: A Mother's Home Front Battle*, Melbourne, Sid Harta Publishers, October 2009, 276 p., ISBN 978-1-92164-204-3.
This novel refers to the battle of Pozières, where the Australian army suffered its worst casualty rate in any battle to date—23,000 over 5–6 weeks. Also of interest because there was little written about women at home during the Great War.

Ewart, Ernest Andrew ('Boyd Cable'), *Grapes of Wrath*, London, Elder & Smith, 1917, 185 p.

Recreates the first battle of the Somme.

Other WWI books by Ewart include Action Front (London, Elder & Smith, 1916); Between the Lines (Elder & Smith, 1915) and Front Lines (London, Murray, 1919).

Fourdrinier, Florence Francesca, *Pro Patria: Australian Love Stories*, Sydney, William Brooks & Co, 1917, 28 p.

Now available online <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1722488>

Hague, Graeme, *And in the Morning*, East Roseville, NSW, Simon & Schuster, 2003, 598 p., ISBN 0-73181-110-0.

Previously published in 2002.

Keneally, Thomas, *The Daughters of Mars*, Sydney, Random House Australia, Vintage Imprint, June 2013, 608 p., ISBN 978-1-86471-226-1.

E-book available. Inspired by the journals of Australian nurses who gave their all to the Great War effort and the men they nursed.

Lee, Christopher, *Seasons of War*, Melbourne, Penguin Australia, Viking Imprint, February 2015, 144 p., ISBN 978-0-67007-883-7.

A fictional first-hand account of the Allied invasion of Gallipoli. The author scripted the recent TV mini-series Gallipoli.

London, Joan, *Gilgamesh*, Sydney, Random House Australia (Vintage Imprint), March 2010, 272 p., ISBN 978-1-74166-921-3.

E-book available. A reworking of the old epic and a love story at the end of World War I.

McDonald, Roger, *1915 A Novel of Gallipoli*, St Lucia, Queensland, University of Queensland Press, 1979, 426 p., ISBN 978-0-70221-375-5.

E-book, audio and braille versions available. McDonald's first novel, 1915 won the Age Book of the Year award and the Government Biennial Literature Prize (SA); it was made into a highly successful eight-part ABC-TV mini-series (now on DVD). Published to great critical acclaim in 1979, this novel has sold over 100,000 copies.

McKinney J. P., *Crucible*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1935, 272 p.

About a young Australian soldier in France during W W I written by a returned AIF soldier.

E-book now available.

Mann, Leonard, *Flesh in Armour*, Melbourne, Phaedrus, Periodicals, 1932, 366 p.

Republished several times and most recently in 2008 by the University of South Carolina Press (The Joseph M. Brucoli Great War series) with a new introduction by Janette Turner Hospital, ISBN 978-1-57003-770-2. Flesh in Armour has been called Australia's best-known and finest novel about the Great War.

Malouf, David, *Fly Away Peter*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1982, 134 p., ISBN 978-0-70112-625-4.

Malouf's novella, Fly Away Peter, has often been republished and has been translated into many languages. It won The Age Book of the Year fiction prize in 1982. An opera, Fly Away Peter, adapted from Malouf's book, was part of the 2015 Melbourne Festival.

Manning, Frederic ('Private 1902'), *The Middle Parts of Fortune: Somme and Ancre*, 2 vols, London, Piazza Press (Peter Davies), 1929.

Republished as Her Privates We (unexpurgated) by Peter Davies in 1930.

The most recent reprint is by Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2000, with a new introduction by Simon Caterson.

Free e-book online (Project Gutenberg).

Mitchell, G. D. (George Dean), *Backs to the Wall: A Larrikin on the Western Front*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1937, 281 p.

E-book and audio book available. A new edition was published by Allen & Unwin in 2007, with a commentary by Robert Macklin, author of Jacka VC.

Osmond, Robert William, *The Glory and the Dream*, 2 vols, New York, Vantage Press, 1957, 245 p.

Partridge, Eric Honeywood ('Corrie Denison'), *A Mere Private*, (short story) in *Glimpses*, London, Scholartis Press, 1928.

He eventually himself published Frank Honeywood, Private, as part of Three Personal Records of the War (London, 1929), which ranks as 'a minor classic of war literature' (Geoffrey Serle, Australian Dictionary of Biography). The Australian Academy of the Humanities elected him an honorary fellow in the 1970s.

Scanlon, Herbert ('Pte H. Scanlon'), *A Returned Soldier: Being memories of the brighter side of life in the AIF*, Ballarat, Victoria, Baxter & Stubbs, 1919, 28 p.
Introduction: 'The contents of this little book have been written from the many incidents that fall to a soldier's lot in camp and on the field. The writer has tried to show some at least of the brighter lights that shine in the life of a soldier, even 'midst the din of battle, as well as round the camp-fire. "Sint ut sunt, aut non sint"' (They may or may not be.) Scanlon published at least thirteen more books.

Skinner, Mary Louisa 'Molly' ('R. E. Leake'), *The Letters of a V.A.D.*, London, A. Melrose, 1918, 332 p.
'As a writer Skinner could recreate occurrences without subterfuge' (AUSTLIT). D. H. Lawrence described her as 'a queer magical bird of imagination, always deceiving itself'. Meeting D. H. Lawrence in 1922, she collaborated with him in the writing of The Boy in the Bush (1924), made into a television miniseries in 1984.
V.A.D.: Voluntary Aid Detachments were established during World War I by members of the Australian Red Cross and the Order of St John.

Steggall, Susan, *Forget Me Not*, Henley Beach, South Australia, Seaview Press, August 2006, 241 p., ISBN 978-1-74008-397-3.
E-book available.

Tennant, Kylie, *Foveaux*, London, Gollancz, 1939, 448 p.
Starting in 1912 and progressing deep into the 1930s Foveaux tells the story of people struggling against poverty and unemployment in Sydney's inner suburbs. Republished many times, most recently in the USA, April 2014.

Thirkell, Angela (Leslie Parker), *Trooper to the Southern Cross*, London, Faber, 1934, 293 p.
Entirely concerned with Australian soldiers' passage home. Re-published 1985 by Virago Modern Classics.

'Thomas, Vernon' possibly **John O'Brien**, *The Meteren Road*, London, Ward, Lock, 1930, 316 p.
A novel of the First World War, featuring an Australian officer of mixed French and German parentage. Reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement, 21st August 1930, p. 670 and in the Returned Soldier, 16th October 1930, pp. 7–8.

Tilton, May, *The Grey Battalion: The Story of a Nursing Sister*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1933, 310 p.

Autobiographical. May Tilton composed this book using her War Diaries.

Walker Brenda, *The Wing of Night*, Melbourne, Penguin Australia, Viking Imprint, September 2005, 288 p., ISBN 978-0-67089-323-2.

Nita B. Kibble Literary Award (2006). Shortlisted for the 2006 Miles Franklin award.

E-book available. A novel about the strength and failure of faith and memory.

When, Arthur Wesley, *Two Masters*, London, Faber, 1929, 32 p.

When's translations include three novels by Erich Maria Remarque including All Quiet on the Western Front, an outstanding success. He was awarded the Military Medal and two Bars at Petillon in July 1916, at Beaulencourt in March 1917 and at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April 1918.

Womersley, Chris, *Bereft*, Melbourne, Scribe Publications, March 2011, 272 p., ISBN 978-1-92184-402-7.

E-book available. Set in Australia in 1919 at the end of the Great War; Bereft has won many awards and has been translated into many languages. The novel 'opens up the wounds of war; laying bare the events that pre-date the conflict and reach forward into the collective memory ...' Jennifer Levasseur; The Age.

Yeldham, Peter, *Barbed Wire and Roses*, Melbourne, Penguin, September 2010, 396 p., ISBN 978-0-14300-791-3.

First published in 2007, this novel is based on true events. E-book available.

Poetry and Verse

Following is a selection from the hundreds of poems written during and after World War I when soldier-poets and poet-soldiers, as well as poets who stayed at home, wrote about their experiences. Many World War I Australian poetry publications are still available as 'rare' books but much of the war-time poetry can now be read online on sites such as the Australian Poetry Library website. Also included is a selection of twentieth and twenty-first century Australian poets, some writing specifically about the Great War and others reflecting upon war in general.

The selected poetry below reflects changing attitudes towards the First World War: the idea of glorious sacrifice soon gives way to more realistic descriptions of the horrors endured, especially by those poets fighting on the Front Line, and finally we see how the view of death in war, and war in general, has changed.⁴

Further research is required, to include not only French World War I poets, but to promote Australian war poets, especially women poets, who do not seem to be as well known as the English World War I poets often chosen for Australian remembrance ceremonies. As poet and critic Michael Sharkey writes, 'What is striking about Australian women's war poetry written during or soon after World War I is the range of subject matter, variety of moods, and extent of experimentation within and beyond received form. The poetry also reflects a wide range of domestic, professional and other backgrounds of the 'ordinary people' who chose to record their reactions to the war in verse'.⁵

Beaver, Bruce, *Charmed Lives (RMR War 1916)*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1988, 131 p., ISBN 978-0-70222-141-4.

Beaver's poem R.M.R. War 1916 is part of R.M.R. : A Verse Biography of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926) (for Dorothy Featherstone Porter), 1988.

Brennan, Christopher, *A Chant of Doom and Other Verses*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1918, 48 p.

May be read online at the Australian Poetry Library website and other websites such as Sydney University's SETIS project: <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/>

Brereton, John Le Gay, *The Burning Marl*, Melbourne, Fellowship, 362 Little Collins Street, 1919, 29 p.

Poems from The Burning Marl may be read on the Poetry Library website: <http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/brereton-john-le-gay/> or on the State Library of Victoria's Digital website.

⁴ George L. Moss, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*.

⁵ See Sharkey, Michael, 'But Who Considers Woman Day by Day?' Australian Women Poets and World War I (online), *Australian Literary Studies*, vol. 23, n° 1, May 2007 pp. 63–78, <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=113226287359112;res=IELLCC>> ISSN: 0004-9697, accessed 15 December 2015.

- Buckley, Vincent, *Last Poems***, Ringwood (Victoria), McPhee Gribble, 1991, 191 p., ISBN 08-6914-240-2.
Buckley's war poems are classified as 'Soft War Poems' on the Australian Poetry Library website.
- Bull, John James & William Austin Bevan, (foreword by Colonel H. Crowther), *Poppy Fields of France, and Other Verses***, Melbourne, Hilton Press, 1919, 102 p.
May be read on-line on the State Library of Victoria's website.
- Cross, Zora, *Elegy on an Australian Schoolboy***, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1921, 26 p.
'undercuts the mythology of "Mother England" and rails against the sacrifice of her loved one...' (AWM Jacqueline Manuel)
- Dennis, C. J., *The Moods of Ginger Mick***, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1916, 143 p.
Illustrations are by Hal Gye; pocket editions were published for the trenches. Has been re-published many times and may now be read online at <http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/denmood>, a digital text, sponsored by Australian Literature Gateway.
- Dennis, C. J., *Digger Smith***, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1918, 112 p.
Illustrations by Hal Gye.
- Dennis, C. J., *Backblock Ballads and Later Verses***, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1918, 150 p.
Illustrations by Hal Gye.
- Fitzpatrick, Brian, *Songs and Poems: With an Introductory Essay on Poetry in Australia***, Melbourne, Wilke, 1931, 36 p.
Illustrated by Alex McCrae. Limited edition of 400 numbered copies.
- Gellert, Leon, *Songs of a Campaign***, Adelaide, Hassell, 1917, 68 p.
In the same year (1917) Hassell published a second edition and Angus & Robertson published a new edition illustrated by Norman Lindsay.

Gerard, Edwin, ('Trooper Gerardy'), *The Road to Palestine: and other Verses (Written on Active Service)*, Melbourne, Australasian Authors' Agency, 1918, 45 p.

Gerard published two volumes of poetry about the war. This publication may be read on the State Library of Victoria website, digital.slv.vic.gov.au/dtl_publish/pdf/marc/26/2684951.html.

Gilmore, Mary, *The Passionate Heart*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1918, 172 p.
The National Library's Palmer collection (PAL) copy of this book is signed and inscribed in ink by the author: 'The royalties on this book I gave to the blind of the war: because in this book I had written in the community of pain. Mary Gilmore Sydney 18.10.38.' (AustLit).

Hope, A. D., *Antechinus: Poems 1975-1980 (Inscription for a War)*, London, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1981, 110 p., ISBN 0-207-14481-8.

Lawson, Henry, *My Army, O, My Army! and Other Songs*, Sydney, Tyrrell's Limited, 1915, 58 p.

Originally published as a limited edition of 250 copies this book has now been re-published and may be read on-line or downloaded. (Project Gutenberg and other websites.)

MacKellar, Dorothea, *The War in Verse and Prose*, ed. W. D. Eaton, Chicago, T. S. Denison, 1918.

Manning, Frederick, *Eidola*, London, Murray, 1917, 108 p.

May be read online or downloaded.

Page, Geoff, *Selected Poems*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1991, 110 p., ISBN 2-071-6926-8.

A number of Page's poems deal with violence and loss incurred through wars.

Palmer, Janet Gertrude ('Nettie'), *South Wind*, London, John G Wilson, 1914, 58 p.

Both Vance and Nettie were opponents of censorship and conscription, and Nettie had a regular column in The Argus.

Palmer, Janet Gertrude ('Nettie'), *Shadowy Paths*, London, Euston Press, 1915, 56 p.

Palmer, Vance, *The Camp (The Farmer Remembers the Somme)*, Melbourne, Sydney, J. Endacott, Galleon Press, 1920, 27 p.

Many other publications followed, including The Penguin Book of Australian Verse. Freely available on websites such as <http://digital.slv.vic.gov.au>.

Paterson, Andrew Barton ('Banjo'), *Song of the Pen (complete works 1901–41)*, R. Campbell & P. Harvie (eds), Sydney, Lansdowne, 1983, 569 p.

Available on-line. Many publications include such ballads as On the Trek, There's Another Blessed Horse Fell Down and Song of the Australians in Action. At the outbreak of World War I Paterson travelled to Europe to cover the conflict but was unable to get to the front in France. Frustrated by this he returned to Australia and joined the Remount Service which supplied horses for the Australian cavalry in the Middle East. He was ideally suited to his duties and, promoted major, commanded the Australian Remount Squadron from October until he returned to Australia in mid-1919.

Quinn, Roderic, *Poems (The Twenty-fifth of April)*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1920, 194 p.

Freely available on-line.

Seager, Alexandra, *Men: A Collection of Verses Written During the War*, Adelaide, A. Seager, 1919, 68 p.

Scott, Elizabeth, *Songs of Hope, with War Poems and Fireside Verses*, Hobart, Monotone Art Printers, 1920, 84 p.

Shapcott, Thomas W., *Selected Poems 1956–1988*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1978, 123 p., ISBN 0-70222-243-7.

Wrote about his father's experiences as a soldier in World War I.

Soley, Agnes Rose ('Rose de Boheme'), *The Call of the Blood and Other War Verses*, Sydney, Lyceum Club, 1914, 15 p.

Stewart, Douglas, *Sonnets to the Unknown Soldier*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1941, p 29.

The frontispiece of this book is by Norman Lindsay. Over 400 of Stewart's poems are available to read on the Australian Poetry Library website.

Wallace-Crabbe, Chris, *Where the Wind Came*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1971, 69 p., ISBN 978-0-20712-296-5.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe's poem Other People wonders who went to war, as he describes the deaths of four of his uncles during World War I.

Wilmot, Frank, ('Furnley Maurice'), *To God: from the Weary Nations*, Melbourne, Australasian Authors' Agency, 1917, 16 p.

Framed as a prayer to God, this is a passionate meditation on war and the moral culpability of societies who prosecute war; and a plea for peace.... (AustLit)

Published separately in 1917 by Australasian Authors' Agency and then in the collection Eyes of Vigilance: Divine and Moral Songs (Melbourne, Endacott, 1920) with the variant title 'To God: From the Warring Nations'.

Wright, Judith, *A Human Pattern: Selected Poems*, North Ryde, NSW, Collins/Angus & Robertson, 1990, 242 p., ISBN 978-0-20716-484-2.

Born during the First World War in 1915 and dying at the turn of the twentieth century, Judith Wright lived through the Second World War, the Vietnam conflict and the Cold War with its nuclear threat; her poetry is shaped by all of these events.

Note

The editors would have liked to expand this bibliography to include French literature as well as some of the Australian plays, songs and other literary forms influenced by the Great War, but such a large project would require more time and resources than are presently available. Plays such as *The Touch of Silk* (Betty Roland, 1928) and the more recent *Black Diggers* (Tom Wright, in collaboration with Wesley Enoch, 2015), deserve our attention, as well as the many ongoing World War I Centenary Projects concerned with Australian soldiers and the ways in which their lives were changed by being part of life in the trenches of the Western Front and in the host villages of Belgium and France.