

## **'By Diggers Defended, By Victorians Mended': Mateship at Villers-Bretonneux**

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**Abstract:** *The term mateship is often used to describe the trust, friendship, and support shared by Australian men in times of war, a bond supposedly specific to groups of Australians. This paper challenges the nationalist and gendered interpretations given to these bonds through an examination of the relationship Australian soldiers formed with the residents of the French town of Villers-Bretonneux during World War I. After the town was almost completely destroyed by shellfire in 1918 a group of Australian soldiers worked to rebuild the homes and livelihoods of the French they were living alongside. When peace intervened before the task was completed the project continued into peacetime. The bonds thus formed have been excluded from official Australian war memories: at Anzac Day ceremonies held at Villers-Bretonneux each year, Australian dignitaries remember the role of the Australian Imperial Force there as one of success against the German army, rather than one which acknowledges the bonds they formed with the people of Villers-Bretonneux during the course of their military duties.*

Villers-Bretonneux, a small town approximately 170 kilometres north of Paris, was the scene of fierce fighting between the Allied and German armies during 1918. On 24 April the Germans attacked the town and took it from the British. Later that day six Australian battalions were hastily moved to the area, and charged with the task of retaking the town. The counter-attack launched by the Australians that night was risky: in a manoeuvre devised by Brigadier General Harold 'Pompey' Elliott, there was to be no artillery barrage before the attack to soften the German defences, and the Diggers waited to make their move until they were sheltered under the cover of darkness. When they attacked, it was across territory which had not been properly reconnoitred. But by dawn the Australians had successfully flushed the Germans out from the area around Villers-Bretonneux. For many, this was the turning point of the war – the counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux marked the end of the successes the Germans had been enjoying during the early months of 1918.<sup>1</sup> However, it was an expensive 'success', with over twelve hundred Australians losing their lives

overnight, and with the almost complete destruction of the town of Villers-Bretonneux.

Despite the destruction, many of the residents of Villers-Bretonneux who had been forced to flee the town soon returned, even before the war was over, and lived alongside the soldiers. Nathan Wise has highlighted the importance of remembering that the soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) were also men – men who were *living in France*, not just fighting in the trenches.<sup>2</sup> Bruce Scates has noted that the men stationed in the reserve lines ‘bordered the civilian world’ and were free to visit the villages which dotted the Western Front, ‘seeking solace, companionship and the surer release of sex and alcohol’.<sup>3</sup> Friendships and bonds could not help but be formed between the men of the AIF and the French under these circumstances. For instance, companionship and maternal care were offered to Australian soldiers by Madame Malfait, a French woman who billeted Australian soldiers on the Somme. During 1918 she wrote to the mother of an Australian soldier, reassuring her that she cared for the men as if they were her own sons, and that she did everything she could ‘to sweeten the life’ of the foreign boys.<sup>4</sup> The bonds thus formed between the French and the Australians were indissoluble. Indeed one of the enduring memories of an old Digger (interviewed on ABC television for the eightieth anniversary of the victories of 1918) was the way ‘the French people looked after us’.<sup>5</sup>

The final pages of *The Digger*, an AIF trench journal published in France, bears testimony to those friendships when, in 1919, the men of the AIF farewelled the country which had been their home. H. Leonard Hyde wrote:

Adieu, fair France, we leave you now  
For tropic, sunny skies,  
Remembering the kindly smile  
That lit your saddened eyes.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, the Commandant of Australian Base Depot wrote – before leaving Le Havre – of his ‘regretful sadness at the final parting from the land that has sheltered us so long...Good-bye, dear France...Good-bye, dear comrades and friends’, he wrote, stating that the ‘greatest among the memories’ of war ‘will be the memory of the France we are leaving where we have lived, loved, lost, and won so much’.<sup>7</sup>

Living so closely with the French prompted many Australian soldiers to extend the hands of friendship and support in ways which could just as easily be labelled mateship – if that help was offered to other Aussies. In 1921 the Mayor of Dernancourt recalled the ‘unforgettable spectacle’ of Australian soldiers during the war years ‘helping in the work in the fields, carting, sowing, planting and reaping with warm enjoyment’.<sup>8</sup> In Villers-Bretonneux a group of Australian soldiers took it upon themselves to begin rebuilding the local school, but peace intervened before their task was completed.<sup>9</sup>

The men of the AIF did not have a monopoly on the help offered by Australians to the French during the war. On the home front goods were made, packed and sent for a variety of French war victims. A number of patriotic funds were also established with the specific aim of raising money to alleviate distress amongst the Allies, with women and children able to participate in this sort of war work.<sup>10</sup> The state school students of Victoria were particularly keen to participate in this way: their War Relief Fund was established in August 1914, and sent vast amounts of money to the civilian populations of various allied countries, especially France. In the final stages of the war the orphans of Villers-Bretonneux were specifically singled out for help from the Victorian Education Department.<sup>11</sup>

The bonds formed between Australians and the French as a result of the shared trauma of the war, and which manifested themselves through these examples of help and friendship, were not a particularly unusual outcome of the war. A number of historians have detailed the ways that, in addition to tearing communities apart, the war also created bonds between people.<sup>12</sup> Jay

Winter argues that networks of help were formed in all combatant countries, and he uses the term ‘adoptive kinship’ to describe the process through which bonds were formed, stating that those who helped ‘joined the families’ of those needing assistance.<sup>13</sup> This concept of figuratively ‘adopting’ those in need had been used in 1920 by the Mayor of Herpy l’Arlesienne, Marcel Braibant. In a letter to the editor of the London *Times*, in which he outlined the devastation of northern France as a result of the war, Braibant mentioned that ‘some towns of Provence and Alsace have come to our aid’ – but he hoped that help could be sent from British cities and towns willing to adopt their poorer allies across the Channel.<sup>14</sup>

Braibant’s adoption scheme struck a chord in Britain. An organisation called the British League of Help for the Devastated Areas in France was inaugurated in London in June 1920, and aimed at facilitating ‘adoptions’ between devastated French towns and cities, and the relatively prosperous and unharmed towns and cities of Britain.<sup>15</sup> The British were then expected to contribute money and/or goods in order to assist the French with their task of rebuilding. While the adoptive kinship networks examined thus far by historians have been restricted to the help extended and received within national boundaries, Braibant’s adoption scheme highlights the fact that adoptive kinship also operated in wider, trans-national fields.

This idea of adopting needy French towns spread to Australia, and in October 1920 a meeting was held at the Melbourne Town Hall to discuss a proposal that the city of Melbourne should adopt the town of Villers-Bretonneux.<sup>16</sup> Some of the most prominent supporters of the adoption scheme were drawn from the ranks of the AIF. General Sir John Monash, Brigadier Harold “Pompey” Elliott – who had played such a key role in the counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux in April 1918 – and Major-General Sir John Gellibrand all spoke in support of the adoption at the meeting. Gellibrand stated that there was ‘strong feeling among the troops in favour of the restoration of the township by Melbourne’ reflecting the deep bonds the men of the AIF had formed with the township.<sup>17</sup> Ex-military men provided the necessary leadership to this example of mateship: Monash

was elected President of the Victorian Villers-Bretonneux Fund, and both Elliott and Gellibrand were Vice Presidents. It was also Gellibrand who moved, at a subsequent meeting, 'That steps be taken to raise £20,000 for the adoption by Victoria of Villers-Bretonneux'.<sup>18</sup> In this case the help offered by Australians, within the context of an imperial effort to help those in need, is proof of the way such help, so akin to notions of mateship, is in no way exclusively restricted to the supposed Australian national character.

When the appeal for £20,000 was launched by Gellibrand on Bastille Day in 1921, he called on the citizens of Victoria to extend the hand of friendship to the people of Villers-Bretonneux.<sup>19</sup> Many of the fundraising patterns and tactics which had proven effective during the war were quickly revived. Mirroring the trends of wartime patriotic funds, the high profile men who had willingly given their name to the 'cause' at the outset, quietly stepped aside to let the women organise, inspire and canvas.<sup>20</sup> Charlotte Crivelli, a French woman resident in Melbourne, worked tirelessly, and largely behind the scenes, to this effect. Money began to flow in to the Victorian Villers-Bretonneux Fund, and the main metropolitan dailies in Melbourne began a subtle campaign to elicit further donations by publishing the names of those who had already given to the Fund – and the amount they had subscribed. The *Age* recorded that Miss C. Armstrong subscribed the amount of £5/5 for the adoption of Villers-Bretonneux, and challenged nineteen other readers of the newspaper to do the same. Sure enough, the *Age* began recording the contributions, all of £5/5, from the likes of Mrs C. T. Hare, of 'Pasley'; Miss M. Thomson of Malvern; and Miss Frances Dennis, all of whom stated that their subscription was made in response to Miss Armstrong.<sup>21</sup> Money for Villers-Bretonneux was also sent from the employees of various government departments; from businesses as varied as Kodak, the Portland Cement Company, and the staff of the Australian Mutual Provident Society; from Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregationalist and Anglican church groups; and from sporting associations and schools. The Womens' Patriotic League in Kyneton forwarded funds, as did the Australian Women's National League of Toorak, and the Red Cross Society of Coleraine. Members of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial

League of Australia (RSSILA) in Nunawading and Lakes Entrance were moved to send in donations, as were the members of the Mildura Settler's Club. Interestingly, while the adoption of Villers-Bretonneux was promoted as a cause specifically for the residents of Melbourne and Victoria to support, there were donors from other states: Mr A. Howatson of Queensland sent £5/5, and Mrs George Armstrong of Wahroonga, NSW forwarded £2, suggesting that – for some donors at least – there was a real effort made to support the cause, rather than simply an effort to keep up with one's social 'set'.<sup>22</sup>

Money was also to be raised by means of a special 'day' for Villers-Bretonneux. Again, this was a fundraising tactic which had proven lucrative during the war. The first fundraising day had been held in May 1915 in response to the plight of the Belgians, and was so successful that the remainder of the war saw 'one "day" succeed another'.<sup>23</sup> The Button (or Mascot) Day held in Melbourne to raise funds for Villers-Bretonneux was the climax of an entire week – 'French Week' – of fundraising, held in late August and early September 1921. On Mascot Day, signs declaring 'By Diggers Defended, By Victorians Mended' were displayed across the city of Melbourne, and the streets were filled with stalls staffed by enthusiastic helpers selling, along with the buttons of the Victorian Villers-Bretonneux Fund, a vast array of donated goods. A 'ruined village' – which had been constructed with the charred remains from a building recently destroyed by fire – was a popular feature. Ex-soldiers called on passers-by to help build a 'mile of pennies', while approximately five hundred collection boxes 'jingled merrily as silver and copper coins were dropped into them by passing citizens'. Concert parties and bands 'sounded above the roar of traffic all day long', and the overall mood in the city was one of 'fun' and 'general merriment'. Reports on the day declared the Melbourne public had given liberally.<sup>24</sup>

Fundraising efforts for Villers-Bretonneux continued to be held after French Week, both in the metropolis and beyond. Despite this though, the appeal to the general public only ever reached about half of its target of £20,000. The shortfall was made up by a donation from the Victorian Department of

Education, whose War Relief Fund still held approximately £95,000 in 1922.<sup>25</sup> There were a number of competing proposals and requests made to the Department regarding how best to spend that money – on necessitous cases, or on a monument, for instance – neatly illustrating the conflicting views in post-war Australia regarding how best to recognise and remember the war.<sup>26</sup> In the end the Executive of the Education Department's War Relief Fund decided that £10,000 should be given to the Victorian Villers-Bretonneux Fund, and the remainder should be used to help disabled soldiers and their dependents.<sup>27</sup> The Department specified that the money for Villers-Bretonneux was to be used to complete the task begun by the Australian soldiers four years earlier: rebuilding the local school.<sup>28</sup> In 1923 the foundation stone of the new school was laid, and in 1927 Victoria College was officially opened by the Agent-General for Victoria, Sir George Fairbairn.

Frank Tate, long-time Director of the Department of Education, composed an inscription for a plaque to be fixed to the front of the school:

This school building is the gift of the school children of Victoria, Australia, to the children of Villers-Bretonneux, as a proof of their love and good-will towards France. Twelve hundred Australian soldiers, the fathers and brothers of these children, gave their lives in the heroic recapture of this town from the invader on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1918, and are buried near this spot. May the memory of great sacrifices in a common cause keep France and Australia together forever in bonds of friendship and mutual esteem.<sup>29</sup>

The wording of the plaque highlights the ambiguity of the relationship between the town and Australia. It was special, but it could not be remembered as an example of mateship: 'mutual esteem' implies an emotional, as well as spatial, distance between those who donated the money and the recipients. The only mates at Villers-Bretonneux were the Diggers buried in the nearby cemeteries.

For the men of the AIF, part of the poignancy of leaving France, as we have seen, had involved saying farewell to the places and people they had formed friendships with; but part of it related to leaving the graves of their mates. The pain involved in leaving AIF graves is usually associated with the withdrawal from the Gallipoli peninsula rather than the Western Front, but the Diggers had been able to establish a relationship with the graves of mates on the Western Front too. When Fred Tugwell learnt that his good friend Henry Colyer had been killed in the woods near Villers-Bretonneux, he set about making enquiries as to the whereabouts of his grave so that he could visit it and 'do all I can for it'.<sup>30</sup> This was not uncommon. J.W. Bell died in May 1918 after being wounded in the fighting at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April. Over the next few months 'some of his mates went...to fix up his grave'.<sup>31</sup> The difficulties involved in farewelling these graves were encapsulated by Frank S. Johnston as he prepared to leave France in 1919. Johnston articulated the bond between the living and the dead in a poem entitled 'Farewell to France' in which he declared his 'deepest thoughts for ever more shall be / Enwrapped about this land across the sea':

I'm leaving France tonight,  
I feel the call of comrades sleeping here,  
Who ne'er will leave this land of loved ones dear;  
Moon shine upon them bright  
Oh pals  
'Tis you that rob this moment of its cheer,  
'Tis you that makes this parting now so drear.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, 'G.H.F.' wrote:

We're off for Home, and so old man  
I'll have to say Good-bye;  
But God, it hurts to leave you here,  
A-staring at the sky.<sup>33</sup>

The graves of Australian soldiers were an ever-present backdrop in many of the news stories on the adoption of Villers-Bretonneux. The initial report on Melbourne's decision to adopt Villers-Bretonneux in 1920 includes a comment made by the French Consul General, regarding the 'sacred Australian necropolis' outside Villers-Bretonneux.<sup>34</sup> Articles and letters published the following year in connection with the fundraising made similar references. It was declared that Villers-Bretonneux had 'a special claim on all Australians, for it marks the last resting place of so many of our gallant dead' while Gellibrand predicted the town would 'remain a place of pilgrimage for all Australians' because it was 'the last resting place of so many of our soldiers...'.<sup>35</sup> When the Lord Mayor of Melbourne tried to enthuse the public into donating money to the Villers-Bretonneux Fund in 1921, he arranged for the Town Hall to host a photographic exhibition of Australian war graves in France, knowing that this would attract a number of people to the cause.<sup>36</sup>

A sense of anxiety was at the heart of the relationships bereaved Australians established with the faraway graves of the AIF – based on a concern that the graves would not be properly cared for. The vast distance between those graves and the bereaved in Australia meant that mates and loved ones, who would traditionally have been responsible for caring for the graves, were prevented from doing so.<sup>37</sup> At the same time as the fundraising for the adoption of Villers-Bretonneux was underway in the latter half of 1921, newspapers began reporting on the withdrawal of the Australian Graves Detachment from France. The bereaved in Australia, most of whom were unaware of the existence of the Imperial War Graves Commission, therefore needed to find other carers – or 'proxies' as Bart Ziino calls them – whom they could trust to look after the graves of Australian soldiers.<sup>38</sup>

The people of Villers-Bretonneux had proven themselves worthy of that trust. Lieutenant Lee, a member of the Executive Committee of the Villers Bretonneux Fund who had worked with the Australian Graves Service in France, attempted to promote the fundraising appeal by telling residents of Melbourne of the way 'The French people, Sunday after Sunday, placed

wreaths on and looked after the graves of Australian soldiers in the cemeteries near Villers-Bretonneux'.<sup>39</sup> Photographs of the French tending Australian graves were irrefutable evidence, and in 1919 the mayor of Villers-Bretonneux promised a group of Australian soldiers still stationed in the area that 'your memory will always be kept alive' within the town, and continued 'that the burial places of your dead will always be respected and cared for'.<sup>40</sup>

So part of the motivation for being a mate to the people of Villers-Bretonneux was so that they would continue to take care of the graves of Australians, thereby assuming the task mates and family would ordinarily have taken on. Indeed in the preface to the list of Committee members for, and donors to, the Victorian Villers-Bretonneux Fund, Lieutenant-Colonel Watson, by then President of the Fund, makes that link obvious. Watson referred to the 'hundreds of gallant Australian soldiers' buried close to Villers-Bretonneux, and reassured 'Australian mothers [that they] can safely trust the preservation of their graves' to those who benefited from the generosity of Victorians.<sup>41</sup> For their part, the people of Villers-Bretonneux were very much aware of the expectations that they should carry on as proxy carers of the Australian graves. When the funds were remitted to them from Melbourne, the Prefect of the Somme repeated the promise made by the Villers-Bretonneux mayor four years earlier:

The inhabitants of Villers-Bretonneux will thus contract a debt towards your countrymen which they can only acquit by piously caring for the graves of the Australian soldiers who sleep in the cemetery of their town.<sup>42</sup>

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission continues to care for the Australian graves around Villers-Bretonneux, but the people of the town uphold the promise to maintain the memory of the Australian soldiers. A memorial to the Australians lies at the base of the local Villers-Bretonneux war memorial: each year the French authorities organise a ceremony there for Anzac Day, and each year a reception for visiting Australians is hosted in the school hall.

Above the hall there is a small 'l'Australie' museum, and Australian visitors to the school are often treated to a rendition of *Waltzing Matilda* performed by the children. The classrooms at Victoria College, and the playground, are flanked with messages imploring the children to 'Never Forget Australia'. The town's logo incorporates an image of a kangaroo, and there is a rue Melbourne, and a rue Victoria in the centre of town. There is even a 'Kangaroo' restaurant.<sup>43</sup>

But while the Australiana around the town of Villers-Bretonneux highlights a generalised relationship with Australia, the Anzac Day ceremonies organised by Australian officials, and held at the official Australian war memorial outside the town each year, offer a more specific memory of the meaning of Villers Bretonnuex for Australia. The comments made by John Howard when he visited Villers-Bretonneux for Anzac Day 2000 typify this selective memory. Howard spoke of 'the bonds' between Australia and Villers-Bretonneux, but positioned them within a framework which recognised only the meaning of the town for Australians as a site connected with military activity, stating that 'on this very sacred piece of French soil...[we] remember the sacrifice of so many young Australians...'.<sup>44</sup> The relationship which developed between both civilian and combatant Australians and the residents of Villers-Bretonneux, during and after the fighting, was not even mentioned by Howard. Such a memory of the relationship between Australia and Villers-Bretonneux offers no challenge to the prevailing view that Australians are only mates to each other.

The supposed mateship bonds shared amongst Australians – especially in times of war – were a nation-building myth necessary to a newly federated Australia, but the relationship which grew between Australians and the French during World War I, and the help offered to each other by the residents of Victoria and the town of Villers-Bretonneux in the years after the war, suggest that mateship is by no means something intrinsically Australian. By continuing to exclude friendships Australians have shared with people of other countries from what can be defined as mateship, we record a history that is incomplete.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example F.M. Cutlack (ed.), *War Letters of General Monash*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1935, pp. 236-38; C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Vol V, The AIF in France, 1918*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1939, p. 604; Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1974, p. 197; Ross McMullin, "Perhaps the Greatest Individual Feat of the War": The Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, 1918", *Wartime*, 2, April 1998, pp. 51-55.

<sup>2</sup> Nathan Wise, "Different Worlds, Different Lives: Social History approaches to histories of the military", *Alpheus*, vol. 2, March 2005, pp. 1-16.  
<http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/research/ejournal/archives/mar05/nwise.html>. Accessed 10 May 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2006, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> Madam Malfait, Vouchelles la Quesnoy, Somme, to Emma Goldsborough, Manly, NSW, 15 November 1918. In author's possession.

<sup>5</sup> "Brothers in Arms: 1918 Remembered", *Four Corners*, ABC TV, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> H. Leonard Hyde, "Adieu to France", *The Digger*, [1919?], included in AWM 2DRL/0598, Venn-Brown, Rose.

<sup>7</sup> Col. C. H. Davis, Commandant, Australian Base Depots, France, Havre, 13 May 1919, published in *The Digger*, and included in AWM 2DRL/0598, Venn-Brown, Rose.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Mayor of Dernancourt published in the *South Australian Register*, 4 March 1921, cited in Geoffrey H. Manning, "Alms Across the Sea – A Tale of Two Towns", *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, vol. 27, 1999, p. 128.

<sup>9</sup> *Robinvale Sentinel*, 5 May 1984, p. 2; Prue Parlicki, *Interpreting Icons of Remembrance: The Villers-Bretonneux Memorial School and the Construction of Australian War Memory*, BA Hons thesis, University of Melbourne, 1992, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Scott, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Volume XI, Australia During the War*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1936, p. 698; Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1980, p. 68; Melanie Oppenheimer, "Gifts for France: Australian Red Cross Nurses in France, 1916-19", *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 39, December 1993, pp. 65-78.

<sup>11</sup> See especially minutes of Victorian Education Department War Relief Fund meetings held 12 May 1916; 19 June 1916; 17 August 1916; 16 October 1916; 1 December 1916; 7 May 1917; 17 July 1917; VPRS 14009/P/001 Unit 1.

<sup>12</sup> Jay M. Winter, "Communities in Mourning", Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee (eds), *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War*, Berghahn Books, Providence, 1995; also his chapter of the same title in Jay M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995; Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999; Bruce Scates, "The Unknown Sock Knitter: Voluntary Work, Emotional Labour, Bereavement and the Great War", *Labour History*, vol.81, November 2001, pp. 29-49; Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian Peoples' Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War*, Curtin University Books, Fremantle, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Jay M. Winter, "Communities in Mourning", p. 326.

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, 12 March 1920, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 June 1920, p. 8; G.H. Manning, "Alms Across the Sea – A Tale of Two Towns", *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, vol.27, 1999, pp. 125-141; Brian S. Osborne, "In the Shadows of Monuments: The British League for the Reconstruction of the Devastated Areas of France", *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol.7, no.1, 2001, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> *Argus*, 8 October 1920, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Argus*, 8 July 1921, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *The Herald* (Melbourne), 14 July 1921, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Melanie Oppenheimer, *All Work, No Pay: Australian Civilian Volunteers in War*, Ohio Productions, Walcha NSW, 2002, p. 30; Ian Willis, "The Women's Voluntary Services, A Study of War and Volunteering and Camden, 1939-45", PhD thesis, University of Wollongong, 2004. See correspondence from Charlotte Crivelli to Sir John Monash, 4 August 1920; 24 August

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1920; 15 September 1920, Monash Papers, Box 21 Folder 189 for the way he stepped aside to let Crivelli run the show.

<sup>21</sup> *The Age*, 6 September 1921, p.7; 21 September 1921, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> *The Age*, 26 September 1921, p.10; 10 September 1921, p. 14; 21 September 1921, p. 13; *Argus*, 11 November 1921, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Scott, *Australia During the War*, p. 728.

<sup>24</sup> *Argus*, 3 September 1921, p. 18; *Age*, 3 September 1921, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> *Argus*, 3 December 1921, p. 25; 4 August 1922, p. 9; 9 August 1922, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> See minutes of Victorian Education Department War Relief Fund meetings held on 26 November 1919; 15 February 1921; 3 April 1922, and 31 May 1922 for examples of requests for the Department's money. VPRS 14009/P/001, Unit 1. Ken Inglis recounts other examples of conflict over utilitarian versus monumental memorials in *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Victorian Education Department War Relief Organisation Fund meeting, 12 September 1921, VPRS 14009/P/001 Unit 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Argus*, 4 August 1922, p. 9. The evidence is inconclusive as to whose idea it was to complete the rebuilding of the school. L.J. Blake (ed.), *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*, Volume 1, Education Department of Victoria, Melbourne, 1973, p. 1294, credits Lt Col Watson; the panel on the memorial obelisk outside Victoria College also gives Watson the credit, but the minutes of the VEDWRO Fund meetings make no mention of rebuilding the school until Tate received a letter from Crivelli suggesting that the Department could donate to the Villers-Bretonneux school. Of course, Watson could have suggested the idea to Crivelli, but there is no paper trail to either prove or disprove this.

<sup>29</sup> Transcribed by author, field trip to Villers-Bretonneux, April 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Fred Tugwell to Mrs Colyer, 13 July 1918; Fred Tugwell to Chaplain 13 July 1918. AWM PR00599, Papers of Colyer, Henry Maxwell.

<sup>31</sup> AWM 1DRL/0428 Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau, 1914-18 War, File 0330302, Bell, John William, Pte.

<sup>32</sup> Frank S. Johnston, "Farewell to France", published in *The Digger* [1919] and transcribed by Rose Venn Brown. AWM 2DRL/0598, Venn-Brown, Rose.

<sup>33</sup> "A Mate's Farewell by G.H.F", published in *The Digger*, and transcribed by Rose Venn-Brown. AWM 2DRL/0598, Venn-Brown, Rose.

<sup>34</sup> *Argus*, 8 October 1920, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Argus*, 20 July 1921, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *The Herald*, 26 July 1921, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss*, p. 9; Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory*, p. 135; Bartolo Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War*, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2003, p.2.

<sup>38</sup> Ziino, *A Distant Grief*, p. 18. Bruce Scates also notes the way Australians were forced to trust others to care for the graves they were (usually) unable to visit in *Return to Gallipoli*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2006.

<sup>39</sup> *Brighton Southern Cross*, 1 October 1921, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Translation of speech made by the mayor of Villers Bretonneux, 15 July 1919, National Archives of Australia, A663 O100/1/102, Attachment G.

<sup>41</sup> Lt Col Charles V Watson, President, Victorian Villers Bretonneux Fund, 1 March 1923, preface in Victorian Villers-Bretonneux Fund, *The Golden Book*, Melbourne, 1923.

<sup>42</sup> *Argus*, 6 February 1923, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> Information gathered on field trip to Villers-Bretonneux, April 2003.

<sup>44</sup> John Howard, 'Transcript of the Hon. John Howard MP at the conferring of awards in the Order of Australia', 28 April 2000.

<http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/2000/address2804.htm> Accessed 10 May 2006.