TO THE VICTOR BELONGS THE SPOILS

A HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN WAR TROPHY COLLECTION

Precis

Australian servicemen during World War One captured more than 1,300 enemy guns and mortars, most of which were subsequently distributed throughout Australia as war trophies.This was in relative terms the largest collection of its kind ever assembled by an allied army, an astonishing testimony to both the AIF 's military prowess, and the digger's determination to make that success known in every part of Australia. Many of these trophies were later enshrined as war memorials and as such became the foci of the newly instituted ANZAC ritual. These were in fact our first Great War memorials and significantly, these were almost as numerous then as the more traditional masonry memorials which followed.

To The Victor Belongs The Spoils documents the collection , and subsequent nationwide distribution of these war trophies. It seeks to understand why Australia - more than any other nation - should have attached so much importance to these bellicose symbols and why they still survive (in significant numbers) as potent, and often anachronistic elements of our public landscape.

To The Victor is also a study of military commemoration, a subject that has recently begun to attract considerable popular and academic interest - both locally and internationally. These studies have tended however to focus exclusively on the more traditional commemorative forms (e.g. stone obelisks, cenotaphs and statues, rotundas, avenues and halls etc.) without reference to the war trophy memorial. *To The Victor* seeks to redress this situation.

CONTENTS

Cover Illustration: *This Turkish I.F.H.16 was allocated to Melbourne's Scotch College in 1921...'Great was the excitement on the morning following its arrival, and for the next few days you could depend on seeing a crowd round it'. The gun had pride of place in front of the Prep School. In later years it was displaced by a building expansion programme and relocated to the 'horse paddock' (Scotch College Archives).*

PREFACE

Prime Minister Billy Hughes was touring the battlefields of France in early 1919 when he and his entourage came across a group of Australian soldiers with a captured German field gun. '"We must have that," he remarked to the men who were showing it, "for Melbourne or Sydney, but we can't have it for both." The men replied, "We'll get you one for every city."' [1]

To The Victor Belongs The Spoils documents the related events that preceded and followed this brief frontline exchange, and which led to the creation of the Australian War Trophy Collection (AWTC). Australian servicemen during World War One captured more than 1,300 enemy guns and mortars, most of which were subsequently distributed throughout Australia as war trophies. The AWTC was, in relative terms, the largest collection of its kind ever assembled by an allied army. This massive ordnance display was an astonishing testimony to both the AIF 's military prowess, and the digger's determination to make that success known in every part of Australia. Many of these trophies were later enshrined as war memorials and as such became the foci of the newly instituted ANZAC ritual, the nearest thing there was (or is) to a ceremony of Australian nationalism. These were in fact our first Great War memorials and significantly, these were almost as numerous then as the more traditional masonry memorials which followed. A significant number still survive as potent and anachronistic elements of our public landscape.

The study of military commemoration has recently begun to attract considerable popular and academic interest - both locally and internationally - with the period 1914-18 being the focus of most attention.

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1 *The Argus*, 3 February 1919, p.4.

This interest is thought to reflect the unprecedented scale of attrition at that time which in turn, gave rise to extraordinary commemorative displays. Australia had the highest casualty rate of any combatant nation (in per capita terms). It also erected more WWI memorials - per head of population - than any other country in the world. Many of these memorials have survived to the present day and it is these which form the bases of most recent investigations. These stone obelisks, cenotaphs and statues, rotundas, avenues and halls survive as distinctive elements of the post-WWI landscape, easily recognisable (even today) in any of the former allied countries.

Investigations in France, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, America and Australia have increased awareness and interest in commemorative practices and also led to a greater understanding of their cultural importance.[2] These studies have tended however to focus exclusively on the more traditional commemorative forms without reference to the war trophy memorial.

To The Victor attempts to redress this situation by examining both the history and cultural significances of the Australian War Trophy Collection. It begins with a broad historical overview of trophy collecting which seeks to place the Australian collection within the context of an ongoing tradition. Government trophy policies are examined in some detail and consideration is also given to the way in which these were influenced by Colonial-Imperial relations at that time. The Australian War Records Section and the Australian War Trophies Committee are central to these discussions, as is the evolution of domestic distribution policy. Comparisons are made with other allied trophy collections in order to highlight the functional and physical characteristics which were unique to the AWTC.

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2 See for example Dr Michael McKernan's anniversary history of the Australian War Memorial, *This Is Their Spirit*, together with the various research papers published by Pf. Ken Inglis in *Australian Historical Studies* and *Australian Cultural History*. Messrs Phillips and Maclean have recently published a survey and analysis of war memorials in New Zealand while Aaron Fox's unpublished thesis, *Silent Sentinels*, offers the first comprehensive assessment of ANZAC trophy memorials. Other recent significant works include James Mayo's *War Memorials As Political Landscape (USA)*, George Mosse's *Fallen Soldiers (German)* and Anette Becker's *Monuments O Morts (France)*.

The study concludes with an assessment of the trophy collection's historical and contemporary significances, and its relationship to the Australian ANZAC tradition.

As with other recent war memorial studies, this thesis also uses extensive site recording information. This data base - representing every Australian state and territory - has been developed from Australian War Memorial (AWM) trophy records and progressively updated over a twelve year period (1981-1993). No consideration has been given however to the 5,000 captured machine guns that were also brought back to Australia and distributed as war trophies. These were portable and relatively fragile, and seldom installed in public, outdoor locations. As a consequence there is comparatively little documentary or material evidence relating to this aspect of the AWTC. There is nothing to suggest moreover that these - unlike the artillery trophies - were ever 'consecrated' as war memorials. Few of these machine guns have survived to the present day whereas the large calibre trophies can still be found in public spaces throughout Australia, often in their original memorial contexts. For these reasons I have chosen to confine this investigation to the artillery trophies which were then (and still are) the collection's most visible and potent elements. The term 'gun' is used throughout these pages to describe both artillery and mortar devices.

THE TROPHY TRADITION

'When A stronger than he shall come upon him
and overcome him, he taketh from him all his
armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils'

Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk.i, ch.2, sec.16 (c.330 B.C.)

In The Old Testament God promises Abraham that his seed shall possess 'the gate of their enemies'. We read elsewhere that Joshua (xxii) , '"when he sent away the children of Manasseh, presented them with the spoil of their enemies as a mark of honour...David also, in referring to that part of the spoil which he was sending to his friends, the elders of Judah, entrusted it to them with these words: 'Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD"'.[1] These passages reveal to us that trophy collecting, the practise of despoiling one's enemy, may be just as old as Noah's grandfather, Methuselah.

The origins and antiquity of this practise are also revealed to us through the etymology of the word *trophy* which derives from the French *trophée*, the Latin *tropæum* and ultimately, from the Greek *tropaion* meaning turning, putting to flight, defeat . It also refers, in Greek and Roman parlance, to 'A structure erected (originally on the field of battle, later in any public place) as a memorial of a victory in war, consisting of arms or other spoils taken from the enemy, hung upon a tree, pillar, etc. and dedicated to some divinity'. These meanings had scarcely altered by the late seventeenth century when Dryden, in his epic work the *Æneid* , penned the following:

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1 Quoted in H. Grotius, 'De Jure Praedae Commentarius', *Commentary on the the Law of Prize and Booty*, Vol. 1, A Translation of the Original Manuscript of 1604 by G.L. Williams with the collaboration of W.H. Zeydel (Oxford University Press, 1950), pp.335-336.

'Around the posts hung helmets, darts, and spears, And captive chariots, axes, shields and bars, And broken beaks of ships, the trophies of their wars' (vii, 254).

Trophy was also adopted by the hunter and the athlete during the sixteenth century, referring in these instances to anything that served as a token or evidence of victory, valour, power skill etc. It is in this context, of course, that we recognise its most modern meaning.[2]

Why then, have contestants - both ancient and modern - felt the need to collect and display trophies? It is evident, even at a superficial level, that the trophy can represent proof of victory....'If one has taken the enemy's weapons (then) it would seem likely that one has defeated the enemy. If one has deprived the foe of the possibility to fight, so one must be the victor'.[3] Victory on the battlefield had to be made manifest if it was to have any lasting significance and it became important therefore to show as many trophies as possible. This meant that trophies had to be brought back and paraded before the home populations. Those who had stayed at home could then participate in the victory celebrations, their lingering anxieties assuaged by the evidence that lay before them. Trophies taken in the heat of battle of course were far more valuable than those that were res nullius, abandoned by an enemy in retreat. Similarly, those that were recovered from particularly righteous and spiritual causes (e.g. the Crusades) were sometimes invested with sacred qualities that could be used to further the victor's advantage.

The Romans may have been the first to institutionalise the trophy custom, creating rituals, pageants and celebratory forms which persist

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2 J A Simpson & E S C Weiner (eds.), *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, Vol.XII (Clarendon Press, Oxford), p.583.

3 B M Holquist, 'The Metal Tophies of the Swedish State', *17th Century War Weaponry and Politics* (International Association of Museums of Arms and Military History Xth Congress, Stockholm, 1984), p.366.

to the present day. The triumphal arch is one such form, an enduring and universal symbol which serves to highlight the fundamental victory-trophy nexus.. 'In the (ancient) triumphal procession a very great part was played by the trophies, the symbols of victory....triumphal arches were raised and triumphal processions ....marched through the capital cities'.[4]

It can be said on this basis that trophies also served as vehicles for propaganda. Triumphal arches can today be found throughout the world, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris being perhaps the most famous example of this ancient architectural form . There are lesser examples to be seen also in many parts of Australia and New Zealand, some of which - in keeping with the Roman tradition - are also flanked by captured enemy weapons *(Illustrations Nos. 1 & 26).* [5]

The ancients used all manner of justification to uphold the trophy tradition. Pronouncements on the subject, by some of their greatest intellects, helped to reinforce their sense of moral, intellectual, and philosophical certitude. Who, after all, would dare challenge the utterances of a Plutarch on such matters?

> *'You are doing nothing that is harsh or unjust; rather you are following the most ancient of laws, which bestows upon superiors the goods of their inferiors: a law that has its beginning in God and its final effect in the beasts'* Camillus [xvii. 3-4] [6]

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4 Ibid., p.365.

5 Ballarat's (Vic.) triumphal arch is probably the best known example. Bega (NSW) and Beaufort (Vic.) also have impressive memorial arches.

6 Grotius, op.cit., p. 48. The author distils a vast weight of precedent and draws on the laws of God, nations, nature, war, logic, and even canon law to conclude - not surprisingly - that trophy seizure is justifiable.

1. Ballarat's triumphal arch and Avenue of Honour, c.1931. Note the tropy guns flanking the arch columns (Museum of Victoria's Photo Archive No.262).

It was not until the early seventeenth century however that an attempt was made - by the Dutch - to formulate a comprehensive legal justification for trophy collecting, one that would, they hoped, withstand international scrutiny.

The circumstances which caused this seminal work to be commissioned are no less interesting. When the Spanish carrack *Catherine* was seized by the Dutch in 1603, the proceeds were distributed in large part to the Dutch East Indies Company.

Many of the Company's shareholders - noticeably those of the Mennonite sect, who disapproved of war under any circumstances - looked askance upon these government favours. Some withdrew from the Company threatening to start up a rival organisation that would devote itself to peaceable commerce. The States General and government, being so seriously embarrassed and alarmed by the widespread criticism of their actions, commissioned one Hugo Grotius to write a defence of their policies. Grotius's treatise, *De Jure Praedae Commentarius* (Commentary on the the Law of Prize and Booty) remains to this day one of the classic texts of international law.[7]

One can distinguish the influences of this seminal work in the 1907 Hague Convention ruling on war booty which, in turn, gave rise to a host of related AIF Routine Orders concerning war trophies.[8] Thus, it can be shown that the rationale and rules governing the formation of Australia's massive WW1 trophy collection were prefigured by a twenty-one year old Dutchman, three centuries before Gallipoli. Grotius, like many in his profession, also uses precedent to demonstrate a continuity of practice, a link between his world and the customs of the ancients. It is possible on this basis to talk in terms of an ongoing custom that spans a millennium, and which links the AIF and Roman legions. It is in this sense that I refer throughout this discussion to a 'trophy tradition'. The *De Iure Praedea* transformed custom into law, and gained for that tradition an enduring sense of integrity and international respectability. The tradition was here to stay, but it remained for the French to effect one final transformation.

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7 H. Grotius, 'De Jure Praedae Commentarius', *Commentary on the the Law of Prize and Booty*, Vol. 1, A Translation of the Original Manuscript of 1604 by G.L. Williams with the collaboration of W.H. Zeydel (Oxford University Press, 1950).

8 T E Holland, *The Laws of War on Land - Written and Unwritten* (Clarendon Press, 1908), p.54.

The wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon were the first to be fought by volunteer citizen soldiers, motivated by notions of collective idealism rather than self interest. The arms profession had previously attracted mercenaries, criminals, vagabonds and destitutes who were mostly drawn from the 'margins of society'. The army was for some a kind of reprieve, a means of escaping poverty, the judiciary, or both. However, from these volunteer ranks there emerged a new kind of soldier, one now entitled to enter the nation's pantheon where his ashes would 'be mixed with those of France's [other] great men'.[9] The interests of the State and the individual were aligned as never before because 'now, at least in public, the gain was said to outweigh the personal loss' [10]

Along with the republic was born 'the cult of the fallen soldier', an idea which would thereafter become increasingly aligned with the centuries-old trophy tradition.[11] Trophy guns, won in the heat of these - and subsequent - righteous clashes came to be regarded, for the first time, as potent reminders of individual courage and sacrifice. They too were now imbued with spiritual and symbolic significances and as such, became increasingly associated with the rituals of military and civic commemoration. It was only a matter of decades before these reverberations were also being felt across the Channel.

The progression from curio and ornament, to civic memorial and sacred relic, unlike the transformation which had affected the soldiering profession was, for the most part, very gradual. Periodically however, governments and other tradition makers would seek to reinterpret and refine the tradition's ancient precepts.

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9 G L Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers, Reshaping The Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p.19.

10 Ibid., p.35.

11 For a full analysis of the 'cult' see Part II of G L Mosse's *Fallen Soldiers, Reshaping The Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford University Press, 1990).

Thus, a frugal English Government seeking to reconcile the growing public interest in war trophies with those somewhat more urbane concerns of the Exchequer, hit upon the masterful idea of turning its arsenal of Waterloo trophies into civic statuary. The idea of overlaying an ancient commemorative form with contemporary symbolism offered a number of important advantages. What could be more satisfying (or cost-effective) for the victor, than to recast the spoils of war into something that was simultaneously noble, public, and enduring? And what could be more humiliating for the vanquished than the knowledge that his guns had been transformed into an object of aesthetic delight, in a form that would serve evermore to remind the world of his greatest military defeat.

When in 1836 the London City Council proposed erecting an equestrian statue of the duke of Wellington, the Government undertook to help defray the cost by contributing '£1,520 worth of bronze metal taken in Wellington's victories'.[12] There soon appeared a second gun-metal monument (to Nelson), which was followed - in 1846 - by yet another equestrian version of the duke, sitting this time atop the triumphal arch at Hyde Park corner.

Once again the Government became involved, contributing more than ten tons of captured Waterloo cannon towards both projects. An old English nine-pounder, also used at Waterloo, was added to the crucible from which the duke's head was to be poured. The *Examiner*, feeling compelled to comment on this variation, added that this trifling contribution seemed '"hardly enough...to make the nose of such a hero, for the head that held the world in awe"'.[13] The Wellington War Memorial was greeted with so much contempt and derision that eventually, 'with the duke long in his tomb', an excuse was found for it to be removed in 1883. Described as a 'monstrosity of ironmongery' and 'a gigantic triumph of bad taste over public

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12 F D Munsell, *The Victorian Controversy Surrounding The Wellington War Memorial* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), p.1.

13 Ibid., p.26

opinion', it singularly extinguished the Government's short-lived enthusiasm for turning trophies into statues.[14]

It was against this background that Britain inherited its largest ever haul of trophy guns, the spoils from the Crimean War (1853-1856). Some 1,500 iron guns and hundreds of brass cannon were shipped back to England at a time when the country's tradition makers - smarting from the Wellington statue episode - were still trying to discover new commemorative uses for the growing inventory of trophy guns. Suggestions that these guns might also be melted down and made into gates were publicly derided as 'paltry parsimony' and immediately compared with 'that senseless statue in Hyde Park'.[15,16] One solution though which had gained a degree of acceptability in Britain, and which might easily be expanded, was that of displaying obsolete and captured weaponry in public spaces alongside civic buildings. One *London Times* correspondent, eager to contribute to the growing debate about the country's war trophies, pointed out - in 1856 - that "four field pieces" had graced the Chelsea Hospital terrace since 'time immemorial'.[17]

Some found their way into museums and in a rare demonstration of largesse the Home Government sent others off to the Australian and New Zealand colonies, as tokens of appreciation for their patriotic support *(Illustration No.2)*. But what to do with the rest?

The issue assumed some public importance when in September 1856, in the *London Times*, a veteran of the Crimean War - the bloodiest of all conflicts - expressed his 'mortification' at finding the guns, captured from the Russians at Sebastapol, 'lying neglected and covered with rust....in an obscure corner' of the Woolwich arsenal....

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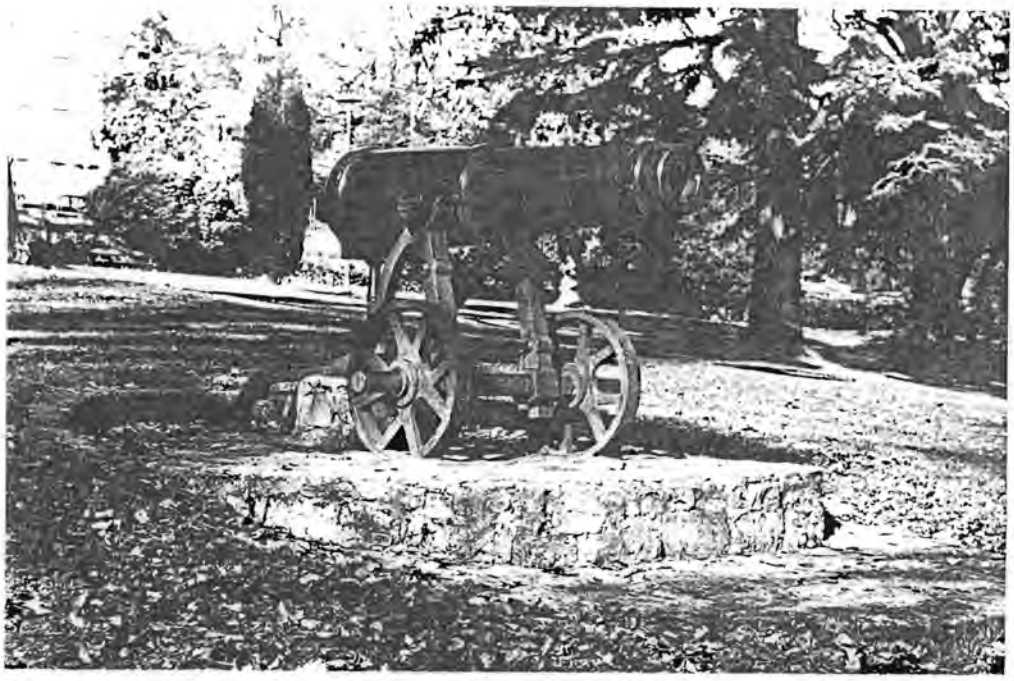
14 Ibid., p.1

15 *London Times*, 16 September 1856, p.8.

16 *London Times*, 10 September 1856, p.12.

17 *London Times*, 16 September 1856, p.8.



2. Crimean War trophy (36 Pdr., No.26851, 1840) allocated to the City of Launceston, Tasmania.

...'In the midst of deep snow and mud, and often under fire from the north forts, had we to remove these guns, comforting ourselves, however, with the idea that they were going to England as the trophies of our success and the proud result of our sufferings and privations.....We feel deeply, Sir, the neglect of these things, which cost us so much blood to win.' [18] Here was evidence of the arms profession's new found status, and here too were the first suggestions that enemy gun metal could serve a purpose other than public ornamentation. This notion that war trophies were also representative of personal sacrifice, never an element of the Greco-Roman custom would, by the following century, emerge as a fundamental tenet of the trophy traditions in both Australia and New Zealand.

There emerged from this mid-century debate one other very important idea.....'if these guns are to be broken up, [then] surely a bronze cross cast from them would be a slight recognition.....to distinguish the men who fought in the trenches'.[19] Referred to later

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18 *London Times*, 10 September 1856, p.12.

19 Ibid., p.12.

as the Victoria Cross, this bronze medal remains the highest of all British military awards. In this tiny cruciform decoration we can distinguish the intersection of the ancient and modern trophy traditions, overlaid with potent Christian symbolism. The ultimate recognition of individual valour, its instigation in 1856 signified both a continuation and reinterpretation of the trophy tradition. The enemy's weaponry, paraded now in a somewhat abstracted form, was now irrevocably linked with the ideals of individual courage, sacrifice and memory (most VC's were awarded posthumously). These significances were to be greatly amplified during the first world war which produced more than 29*1/2* million casualties, and 633 VC awards.

Australia was one of the few nation's to contribute a volunteer army to that conflict and yet - proportionally - it suffered the most casualties of any British Army. It seemed inevitable, given these circumstances, that these trophy guns should eventually acquire an almost sacred significance.

Elements of the tradition were in evidence in Australia, long before 1914. The military ethic after all had been implanted here in 1788, creating a climate that was ideal for the cultivation of ancient martial practices. Thus, when Governor Phillip's convict huntsman was mortally wounded with a barbed spear in December 1790, he ordered that a punitive expedition return with 'two prisoners and the heads of ten aboriginal men.' [20] Some aboriginal dead had their ears, fingers, heads or skin removed as trophies, indicating that the tradition may by then have acquired a more literal, sporting dimension. Contemporary descriptions of these encounters were also couched in the language of the game trophy hunter...'One fine tall fellow appeared on the top of the hill.....but in a moment one knocked him down and the other shot him through the head.....The Aborigine's ear was sliced off, salted and pocketed.' [21] Crimean War trophies also began arriving in the

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20 R. Broome, 'The Struggle For Australia: Aboriginal-European Warfare 1770-1930', in M. McKernan & M. Browne (Eds.), *Australia: Two Centuries Of War And Peace* (Allen & Unwin, 1988), p.94.

21 Ibid., p.114.

1860s, barely a decade after the first Australians had departed for the Maori Wars.[22] As if to emphasize its 'Europeanness' the colonial administration set about copying the trophy arrangements of London and Paris. Effete forms, once the property of the Russian Emperor Alexander, now stood guard alongside the colony's churches, parks and civic buildings in places like Launceston, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. This attachment to tradition was felt particularly keenly in Parramatta (NSW) where the marriage of trophy and classical traditions was most perfectly aligned *(Illustration No.3).*

3. Parramatta Park, Sydney, 1906 (Mitchell Library No.10868).

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22 These can still be seen in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart and Launceston.

Understanding and acceptance of the tradition's precepts grew with our voluntary involvement in a succession of military forays. Our Boxer Rebellion Naval Contingent, for example, was presented with a ten foot bronze cannon weighing two tons. This can still be seen, a century later, guarding the main gate to Sydney's Garden Island Dockyard.[23]

Chinese cannon were also brought back at this time with examples still to be seen in Victoria and New South Wales.[24] The Boer War Contingents also returned with captured enemy guns. On that occasion however the officer commanding the Australian forces had to formally apply to the British for permission to take back to Sydney the gun which had been captured by the NSW Mounted Rifles...'It is a fine specimen of Krupp's best twelve pounder. Truly a great trophy for the brave lads to bring back with them'.[25] The Australian militia continued to defer to the Imperial command on such matters with the result that few trophy guns were ever brought back from these early Australian campaigns.

A number of Boer War guns did however end up in museums, their historical and technological significances seemingly overshadowing their trophy value.[26] Significantly, a small number of these were also arranged prominently in parks, alongside of the more traditional

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23 Said by Bob Nicholls (*Bluejacket and Boxers*, Allen & Unwin, 1986, p. 127) to carry the date 1595, 'and an inscription showing it to be a present from Phillip II of Spain to the Chinese'.

24 At HMAS Jervis Bay, and in a private collection near Colac (Vic).

25 Text credited to Cpt. W W R Watson, NSW Mounted Rifles, and exhibiteded alongside the captured gun now on display in the Australian War Memorial, ACT.

26 One 75mm field gun (Nr.10, Fr.Kp., 1897) is now displayed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Another 38mm Krupp (Fabr.Nr.12963, 1896) is held in storage by the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston, Tasmania.

stonework memorials (i.e. obelisks and cenotaphs).[27] These then were the first flowerings of the modern Australian trophy tradition, a combination of commemorative symbolism, public space and enemy hardware which was to take root and flourish in these Antipodean climes, in the years following the Armistice. The symbolic arrangement of gun and memorial had gained such favour here by the early twentieth century that a number of communities, rather than break with tradition, installed obsolete British guns alongside their Boer War memorials, rationalising that they provided 'a most fitting and effective touch'.[28] These surrogate trophies can still be seen in such places as Perth (Tasmania), Ross (Tasmania), Longwood (Vic.) and Geelong (Vic.). And as if to underline their traditionalism the citizens of Geelong also renamed the site of their new Boer War memorial, calling it 'Transvaal Park'.

A related development which did much to condition the public's attitude towards these matters, particularly during the last decades of the nineteenth century, was the widespread use of guns as ornamentation and decoration. Then as now, municipalities would use obsolete government ordnance in much the same way that we, today, would use garden statuary. Often found in parks and botanic gardens, these silent sentinels were expected - in some ill-defined way - to simultaneously inspire, beautify and edify the masses. In 1913 for example the Northcote Council was asked to consider a proposal to install two massive 8" naval guns alongside the City's main thoroughfare, and in the middle of its recently completed rookeries. Supporters highlighted the 'decorative' and 'ornamental' effects, and at least one Councillor enthused about 'their valuable effect in instilling a military spirit into the boys'.[29]

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27 These include the 75mm field gun (Fried Krupp, Essen, 1897, Nr.7) in Perth's (W.A.) King's Park, and the 88mm (Fried Krupp, 1875, Nr.1485) field gun in Gatton's (Qld.) Lyttleton Park.

28 *Weekly Times*, 13 February 1904, p.14.

An understanding of the nature of the First World War, and its impact on Australian society is critical to this investigation as it helps to explain the enduring importance of the Australian trophy tradition. Much has already been written of course about the stone memorials which began to proliferate here (as elsewhere) at around the same time, and in similar circumstances. Stone or metal, monument or trophy, these features can - and should - be viewed as parallel responses to a common crises.

Australian historians, in seeking to explain the frequency and significance of First War War memorials have properly highlighted the scale of the conflict, the unprecedented casualty rates, and the fact that Australia was almost alone in contributing an entirely volunteer force. Australia suffered the highest casualty rate (in proportional terms) of any combatant nation, and yet only one of these 60,000 war heroes (Major-General W T Bridges) was ever repatriated for burial on home soil. As one Australian poet was to observe many years later.....'something in that first [war] Demanded stone.' [30] Stone possessed qualities of permanency and steadfastness which combined easily with the symbolism of the obelisk, the cenotaph and the statue to give Australians and New Zealanders a potent and traditional commemorative medium befitting these great sacrafices. Hundreds of stone war memorials were erected in Australia in the years immediately after the war, so many in fact that we ended up with more WW1 memorials (per head of population) than any other country in the world.[31] Never since then have Australians felt the

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29 *Northcote Leader*, 1 March 1913. The Northcote Council endorsed the project after a very public and acrimonious debate. Although the guns remain in situ they continue, even now, to attract public criticism.

30 G Page, *Smalltown Memorials*, Paperback Poets, Second Series 5 (University of Queensland Press, 1975), p.13).

31 *The Australian Encyclopaedia* (Australian Geographic Pty Ltd), Vol.8, p.2985.

need to express themselves this same way. These 'Smalltown Memorials'...'were there to give men each year the funeral they had never had.' [32] Cenotaphs in the literal sense, they provided a focus for public and personal grief. Trophy guns for the first time were also widely used for commemorative purposes, these steel memorials often preceding their more traditional stone counterparts.[33] Some 987 (guns and mortars) were distributed throughout Australia by September 1922, specifically for memorial purposes.[34] Recent studies have shown, by way of contrast, that the sum of all other Australian memorials (which includes statues, cenotaphs, obelisks, columns, crosses, arches, gates, cupolas, urns, halls, clocks, hospitals, rotunds, avenues, parks etc.) is around 1455.[35] Though never previously acknowledged, the trophy gun was by far the single most common WWI commemorative form.

A similar situation existed on the other side of the Tasman although, unlike Australia, a tradition of military commemoration had previously taken root there. The Australian landscape in 1914 was almost devoid of monuments, the building blocks of heritage. By erecting thousands of memorials, the sons and daughters of this newly formed nation were, in effect, constructing a popular memory.....'All these soldiers and obelisks, columns and angels protruding from the Australian countryside form a type of artificial

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32 K.S. Inglis, 'Memorials Of The Great War', *Australian Cultural History*, No.6 (1987), p.5.

33 Stone memorials were still being planned and constructed in the mid 1930's almost a decade after the distribution and dedication of war trophy guns. See for example, Mark Clayton' case study 'Commemorating War: The Hawthorn Experience', *Sabretache*, Vol.XXXII, July/September 1991, No.3, pp.25-33.

34 McKernan, p.72. Significant numbers (over and above this civil quota) were also erected by the Defence Forces.

35 K.S. Inglis & Jock Phillips, 'War Memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Study', *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol.24, No.96, April 1991, p.187.

memory network. Investing Australia with monuments was a way of giving the place a memory, rather than giving memory a place. A war memorial in the main street of a small town seemed a simple but effective memo-technique for the nation - a stone and marble Art of Memory.' [36] Unlike Australia, the UK already had a long tradition of preservation and military commemoration.

What is more, it had an existing and extensive network of local and large metropolitan museums which included dedicated military museums.The use of monumental and trophy commemorative forms, when considered in the Australian context, also implied a continuity with earlier British history, suggesting - in some abstract way - that it was even possible to make sense of a war whose traditions stretched back to the glorious days of Blenheim and Waterloo.[37] While these social theories have helped us to understand the role of commemoration, and its relationship to the ANZAC tradition, they fail to explain just why Australians installed so many of these rifled steel memorials, and why they were initially treated with the same regard as other, more traditional moments? A closer look at the cause, rather than the effect of mass attrition is also needed here to fully appreciate how trophy guns were integrated into this 'memo-technique'.

The First World War was a contest without precedent involving static, unseen armies and massed firepower. Artillery emerged from this contest as the dominant force, affecting not only the outcomes but the language and landscape of the battlefields. The combatants were forced to dig trenches in order to escape the constant 'barrages' and 'sieges'. By 1918 the French were discharging, on some fronts, more than half a million rounds each day - at Waterloo Napoleon's artillery had not fired 10,000 rounds - calculating its efficacy in terms of the tonnage discharged for each German casualty.

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36 D. Gilfedder, 'The Mobile Monument: Circulation and the Mobile Art of Memory', *Transition* (RMIT, 1990), No.31, p.57.

37 P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 9.

'War had indeed industrialised itself, and the medium of that industrialisation was the gun and the shell.'[38] Survivors would consistently refer to the shrapnel, the shell shock and the bizarre appearance of their surroundings which were being denuded and continually tilled by high explosives. To this nightmare would be added an even more insidious weapon, the poisonous gas shell. As Paul Fussell later explained .....'the main business of the soldier was to exercise self-control while being shelled.' [39] Little wonder then that the survivors, regardless of nationality, came to attach so much significance to the capture, repatriation and display of enemy weaponry.

It is no less surprising, given this background, that trophies should have been so readily absorbed into the rituals of commemoration in a place like Australia that cried out for memories. The AIF, it might be said, were simply modern gladiators with modern weapons upholding an ancient tradition.

Ironically, the first Australian trophies were naval guns captured in - what were formerly - Australian territorial waters. These actions occurred months before the AIF had even set foot in Europe and the Middle East. Not a single shot was exchanged when in October 1914 the *KGS Komet* , used by the German administration in New Guinea, was captured by *HMAS Nusa*. Armed with a single 1 lb Hotchkiss QF gun, history records that the *Nusa's* pround captain later 'led the way in [to Rabaul], his prize following her captor.' [40] Far less auspicious however was the performance of the Australian Naval & Military Expeditionary Force (AN & MEF) which was landed at Rabaul, at the same time, in order to secure the territories of the German Protectorate. A Court of Inquiry convened in Australia early the following year found that there was a prima facie case of looting

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38 J. Keegan & R. Holmes, *Soldiers* (Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1985), p. 97.

39 Fussell, p.46.

40 S.S. McKenzie, 'Official History of Australia in the War 1914-18', *The Australians At Rabaul* (Angus & Robertson, 1927), p. 131.

against three senior officers and one sergeant from the AN&MEF. The Court found 'that the administration of .....the Expeditionary Force was deplorable', and that one senior naval officer had 'consigned large quantities of curios, muskets, ammunition etc., direct to the Newcastle Naval Depot which he had previously commanded before joining the Expeditionary Force.' [41] These were still early days and the distinction between 'loot' and 'trophy', so comprehensively described in the *De Jure Praedae*, would need to be further explained to the troops.

It was less than a month after these events that the the cruiser *HMAS Sydney* succeeded in destroying the German raider *SMS Emden*. The Australians wasted no time in removing from the shattered wreck a 10.5 cm gun which was eventually taken back to Australia and installed in Sydney's Hyde Park, becoming the nation's first official trophy of war *(Illustration No.4)*. This gun can still be seen at the corner of Liverpool and College Streets. The British attached so much importance to this initial success that they also obtained a second, identical gun from the same shattered wreck.

This was later exhibited throughout North America, becoming a highlight of the massive Allied War Exposition's in 1917 and 1918. Visitors to these exhibitions were led to believe though (by the publicity and labelling) that this second Emden gun, the *piece d resistance*, was actually a British War British war trophy. AIF troops captured thousands of trophy guns and mortars during the next four years, 1,320 of which were shipped back to Australia as trophies.[42] Referred to officially as the Australian War Trophy Collection, it is this massive haul which continues to sustain the Australian trophy tradition.

Britain, which was equally determined to have its share of the spoils had - by war's end - adopted a particularly hard-line approach to these

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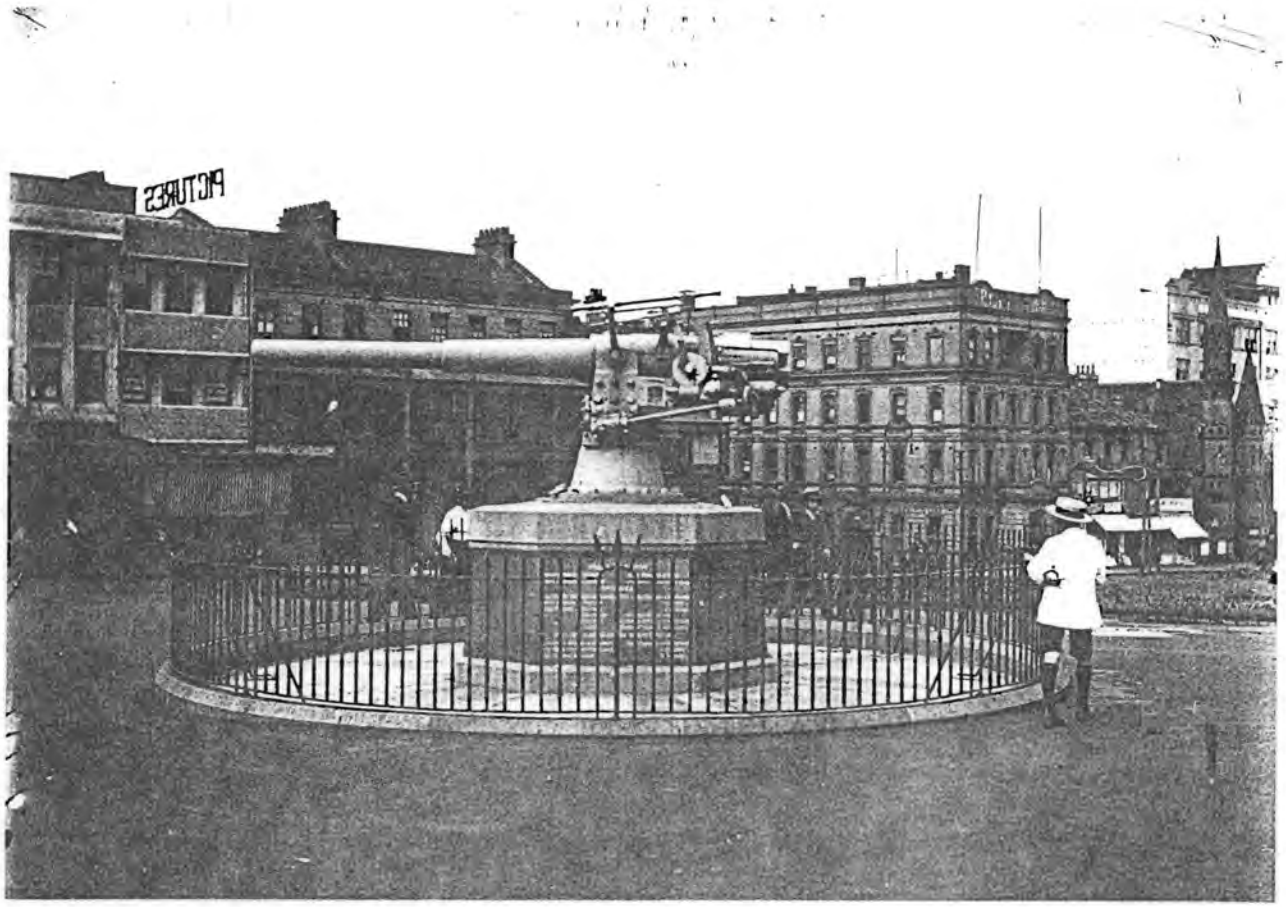
41 Australian Archives (AA) CRS MP 367/1, File 580/2/2745.

42 Australia. House of Representatives, *Debates*, Vol.XC (24 October 1919), p.14008.

matters by urging that peace negotiations should be made subject to 'the return of every gun, trench mortar and machine-gun, and tank that has fallen into the hands of the enemy...The Germans are already boasting that they have emerged from the conflict with an undefeated army, and it is surely not in the interests of the [Allied] cause for which we have fought so successfully that they should be able to foster this sophistry by filling their museums with these trophies as standing memorials of their military achievements in the great war.' [43]



4. Australia's first war trophy gun, c. 1922. This 10.5 cm gun (by Fried Krupp) was recovered from the wreck of the SMS Emden and displayed in Sydney's Hyde Park wher it remains to this day (Mitchell Library No.16630).

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43 Lt-Col Sir Arthur Leetham, 'Provincial Museums and War Trophies', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. LXIV, p.109.

The AIF's haul was in fact by no means the world's biggest trophy collection, the American version being 2 1/2 times larger.[44] It needs to be said however that the Australians collected far more trophies per head of population than any other combatant nation, a fact which could scarcely be ignored. Their enthusiasm for collecting led them to accumulate not only the most (per capita), but also the largest trophy guns ever seized during the war.

Is it any wonder then that historians, seeking to understand the origin and meaning of the ANZAC tradition, should continue to focus on this peculiar proclivity?.....'In the period March 27 to October 5, 1918, the Australian Army Cops of five divisions represented a little less than 10 per cent for the whole of the British forces on the Western Front, but its presence was far, far greater even in the cold light of statistics. The Australians captured 23 per cent of the prisoners, 23 1/2 per cent of the enemy guns and 21 1/2 per cent of the ground wrested from the Germans.' [45]

These were proud achievements by any standards, and these were memories that might well survive a transplant to the other side of the world, to a land still 'devoid of monuments'. Australians thus came to possess a trophy tradition of their own, one that flourished during the inter-war years. There was scarcely a community which did not flaunt some evidence of the ANZAC's prowess and sacrifice and so it seemed, for ages at least, that the memories would never fade.

But as the felloes rotted and the barrels rusted, then so too did the memories begin to dim. In Australia, the imperatives for linking trophies and memorials have become less and less compelling, undermined by growing traditions of dissent, multi-culturalism and

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44 United States of America, Representatives, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, *Report on the Distribution of War Devices and Trophies*, No.979 (to accompany Bill S.643), 13 May 1920, p.4.

45 J. Laffin, 'Western Front 1917-18, The Cost of Victory', *Australian At War* (Time Life Books, 1988), p.162.

nationalism, and the parallel decline of patriotism. The public display of captured enemy weaponry had all but ceased by the Vietnam War, replaced instead by the more benign practise of using obsolete allied armaments *(Illustration No.5).* [46]

5. The Australian trophy tradition had been all but extinguished by the middle of the twentieth century. This Japanese naval gun (c/n 299), captured at Hong Kong in 1945 by the crew of HMAS Strahan (and now displayed at Strahan, Tasmania), is one of the very few trophy gun memorials to be erected here after the second world war.

The Trophy Gun Tradition has undergone a gradual and subtle transformation, re-emerging in a form that can more accurately be described as a Gun Tradition. While the key elements of the ancient tradition still persist (viz. weaponry, memorials, public spaces, and civic and military ritual), the ANZAC significances which rendered it so distinctive (relative to other national trophy collections) have been

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46 This writer knows of only one Vietnam trophy, and two WWII trophy guns on public display in Australia, outside of a museum or military establishment. These are located at Charters Towers (Qld), Strahan (Tas.) and Mareeba (Qld), respectively.

steadily eroded. Standing guard over today's tradition are the ubiquitous 25 Pounders, 3" mortars and bofors guns, many of which have been purchased from army disposals by municipal councils and RSL's, usually for a few hundred dollars.

These latter-day sentinels have largely replaced the Krupps of yesteryear which, often as not, were captured by local lads in the course of some now famous European battle. It is particularly ironic that the keepers of this tradition, the RSL sub-branches, have occasionally abetted this decline by selling and scrapping their original trophies.[47] Recent estimates suggest that the original collection may now shrunk by as much as 80%. Few of those that remain are even recognised as trophies, their appearance and location having both been significantly altered. Only occasionally is the symbiotic trophy-memorial relationship preserved in its entirety *(Illustration Nos.6)*.

Although public interest in these ancient weapons has increased dramatically during the past decade, their trophy values are seldom, if ever recognised. Government, commercial, private, community and heritage interests are now all caught up in what seems like a mad scramble to recover their military past. Scarcely a month passes without the announcement of yet another initiative to restore 'the old gun', and it is interesting to observe that this same scenario is being acted out in countries such as Canada, New Zealand and the United States which inherited the same tradition.[48] The Werribee City Council has been trying (unsuccessfully) for the last three years to regain title to its WW1 trophy, a saga which has many parallels throughout the country. It is all too evident however that these eleventh hour pangs of conscience are motivated more by notions of antiquarianism and heritage conservation, rather than a sense of spirituality or allegiance to tradition. And with each cycle of

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47 In the early 1980s for example the Mittagong (NSW) RSL sold its FK16 - allegedly for $1,000 - to a company that supplied movie props.

48 See *The Southland Times* (NZ), 16 November 1991, p.13 and *The Clarinda Herald-Journal* (Iowa, USA), 4 March 1982, p.1.

restoration and rededication comes a new layer of meaning which gradually clouds the purpose of both artefact, and tradition. Thus, the shining plaque alongside Launceston's (Tas.) Crimean War trophy - installed in 1990 - commemorates the 130th anniversary of that city's Artillery Association, an event which bears no relationship whatsoever to the events which took place - 140 years previously - at Sebastapol.

6. The symbiotic trophy-memorial relationship, once commonplace throughout Australia, is today seldom preserved. An exception to this general rule (above) is the war memorial at Bonnie Doon (Vic.).

Another plaque, alongside Mt Gambier's (S.A.) trophy records the completion of a new rotunda (built to house the trophy), and the fact that that the gun was restored by members of the City's veteran and vintage car club. Seldom nowadays do the memory and the monument, or the archive and the artefact, declare the same beliefs and deeds.

Communities elsewhere have even begun to commemorate the memory of their trophies, in much the same way that they had acted, decades earlier, to mark the passing of more personal memories. In 1990 for example - almost forty years after it had been removed and disposed of in the interests of public safety - the Sandgate (Qld) Sub-Branch of the R.S.L.A. published a booklet which detailed the wartime and post-war history of its particular trophy.[49] Increasingly, as in this last instance, it is the memory being sustained at the expense of the artefact. Similarly, private interests (particularly collectors) are now having to shoulder much of the responsibility for these one public memories.

It would be tempting indeed, given this trend, to speculate about the future of such a bellicose tradition whose symbolism would seem to have all but faded. It must be remembered however that we are talking here about a tradition that has endured for more than a millennium. The ANZAC trophy tradition may be waning and yet, those park guns seem to just keep on sprouting!

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49 Untitled commemorative booklet dated 1990, published by the Sandgate Sub-Branch of the R.S.L.A. This Turkish C96 (Fried Krupp Nr.2065) was partially restored by the Army's 2/14th Light Horse Regiment in 1992 and is now displayed near the entrance to their Enogerra Barracks (Qld).

THE TRADITIONAL TROPHY

Displayed in the grounds of the Brisbane Boys Grammar School is an Austrian field gun. An accompanying plaque explains how the gun was part of a large haul of enemy materials captured in September 1918 by Australian Light Horsemen under the command of Brigadier General L C Wilson (a Brisbane Grammar old-boy). Although described in the official war history as 'booty', the same gun - once returned to Australia - is then referred to by the Australian War Museum Committee as a 'trophy'. Both terms however were later dropped in favour of the word 'relic' which connoted, quite deliberately, qualities of religious sacredness.[1]

These verbal transpositions were partly deliberate, reflecting the Museum's need to respond expediently to changing social and political circumstances in Australia. Linguistic precision was of little concern in a climate of total war whereas the reactionary milieu of post-war Australia demanded the use of less provocative phraseology. The term 'relic' for example had been purposefully substituted into the Museum's lexicon by the country's official war historian, Charles Bean, who was then anxious to ensure the safe passage of the *Australian War Memorial Bill* by defusing mounting public criticism that the trophy collections served only to glorify war.[2]

This verbal imprecision also reflected, to an even greater degree, the uncertainty which existed then in relation to the meaning of the term

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1 (H S Gullett, 'Sinai and Palestine', *Official History of Australia in the War of 1918*, Vol.VII (Angus & Robertson, 1941), p.708.)

2 M McKernan, *Here Is Their Spirit* (University of Queensland Press, 1991), p.88.

'war trophy'. Remarkable though it may seem the Australian Imperial Forces (a highly regulated and, at times, bureaucratic organisation) successfully assembled one of the world's largest war trophy collections - and then shipped it half-way around the world - without having ever formulated or received any coherent guidance as to what, exactly, constituted a war trophy. The Australians began collecting in 1914 (in German New Guinea) even before the first AIF contingents had arrived in Europe and continued to do so, long after the Armistice had been signed. Though deluged throughout the war with Routine Orders, Memorandums and Circular Letters which explained in minute detail the correct procedures for claiming, marking and despatching battlefield trophies, the military hierarchy never attempted to define the object of these attentions. But if the Australian digger was left in the dark on the such matters then so too was his Imperial counterpart, the British Tommy. Indeed, it wasn't until after the Armistice had been signed that the Imperial War Trophy Committee attempted to publicly define the term 'war trophy'.[3]

The AIF troops of course, being for the most part recent volunteers, were especially ignorant of the martial traditions which had caused the barracks, museums and parks of Europe to be festooned with ancient cannon. These men - who lived in a country largely devoid of monuments - had enlisted in a recently created army whose ranks, at the outbreak of war, numbered fewer than 2,500 men. Notions of allegiance to country and *esprit de corps* hadn't as yet taken root. Moreover, few if any of Australia's permanent soldiery had any first hand experience of the customs and ceremonies which underpinned the British military tradition.

Armed thus with considerable naivety, the troops of the 1st AIF embarked on what would later prove to be a spectacularly successful course of trophy collecting. These successes inevitably began to arouse interest both at home and abroad, and led to the first formal proposals - in 1917 - that the AIF collection would eventually be needed for

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3 Lt.Col. Sir Arthur Leetham, 'Provincial Museums and War Trophies', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. LXIV, p.105.

display back in Australia, an idea which did not sit well with the Imperial Authorities.[4]

The British had, until then, always assumed that they would have first claim to the trophies collected by their Dominion allies and responded - somewhat antagonistically - to these early proprietorial sentiments.[5] The Australians and New Zealanders for their part reacted with equal determination, leaving the Colonial and War Offices in no doubt as to their primary allegiances. Faced with such resolve, and dogged by a growing number of competing and questionable claims, the War Office had little choice but to try and reach a common agreement with its colonial allies on what was clearly a sensitive subject. The agency for these mediations was the War Trophies Committee which, operating under the aegis of Britain's recently formed National War Museum (later named the Imperial War Museum), was soon confronted with complex matters of definition and interpretation more befitting a judiciary.

Definition remained the key to resolving many of these issues but, as noted previously, this was to remain an elusive goal. Although the Committee was convened on a regular basis after mid 1917 it repeatedly failed to offer any clear cut policy guidance on critical issues. Judgments, when not deferred altogether, were often made on a reactionary case by case basis rather than through the application of agreed policy guidelines and definitions. Member countries like Australia, which were at pains to disguise their frustration with the process and its outcomes, were then left to distinguish from this weight of individual judgements the outlines of a logic which they could apply with consistency and confidence to future acquisitions.

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4 The Trustees of the Melbourne Exhibition Building wrote to the Australian Defence Minister in August 1917, offering to store and dispaly the Australian war trophy collectionp. See M. McKernan, p.40.

5 *Defence Secretary to AIF HQ London*, n.d., File 16 [4386/1/25] Pt.11 (AWM).

It was via this piecemeal process that the Australians were led to some understanding and recognition of the features which best characterised the battlefield trophy. Although the process was never completed, the Committee continued to hand its members missing pieces from the trophy jigsaw. In July 1918 for example it was asked to clarify if allied weapons that had been lost, then recaptured from the enemy, could also be regarded as war trophies?

The matter had first been raised by the India Office with reference to two British guns which had been recaptured at Baghdad.
Though no final decision was then reached on the matter, it was clear from the views put forward that the Committee 'would favourably consider any claim where it was clearly established the guns were being used by the Germans . Guns lost and then regained by a counter-attack' however 'would not be considered as trophies.' The exigencies of war demanded furthermore that all serviceable or repairable guns had, as a matter of necessity, to 'be handed over to Ordnance for further use, and would only become available as trophies when they finally became unserviceable.'[6] Serviceable enemy weapons were prized just as much for their utilitarian value, often being pressed back into service by their Allied captors. Many such guns - mounted on pedestals - were fitted to merchant vessels, causing concern within the Trophy Committee that these widely scattered trophies might in fact never be recovered *(Illustration No.7).* [7]

The issue of recaptured allied weaponry was of particular interest to the Australians who attached great importance to a battery of four 15cm Belgian howitzers which their 1st Division troops had captured from the Germans at Poziers. These were the first field pieces ever captured by Australian soldiers and plans were already in hand for

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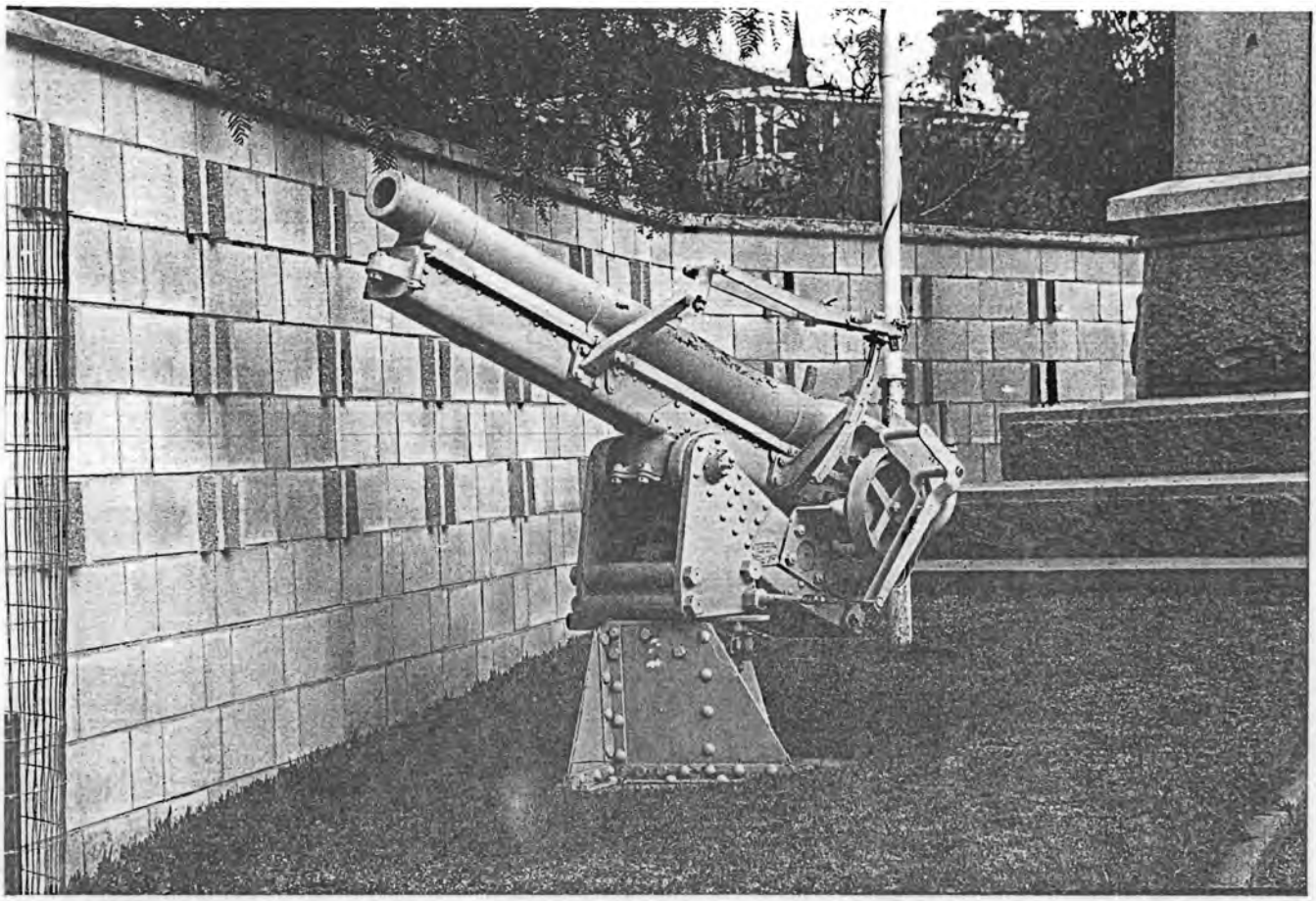
6 Letter from Commandant, Admins., HQ AIF to Australian HQ, Cairo, dated 22 August 1918), File 16 [4386/1/25 Pt.2], Australian War Memorial (AWM).

7 A number of these maritime conversions were returned to Australia as trophies, and are still evident in such places as Mannum, South Australia (C96 n/A, Nr.41), and Puckapunyal (Fried Krupp, 50 mm) in Victoria.



7. Many allied trophy guns were pressed back into service with the merchant navy. This converted trophy (a C96 n/A, c/n 41) is preserved alongside the Mannum war memorial in South Australia (A.Locket)

their exhibition in a new Australia House Museum, in London.[8] AIF HQ's made a similar application the following month for a British 60 Pdr. gun limber which had also been recaptured by Australian troops.

These matter were reconsidered by the Committee the following March when the Australians lodged further claims for a number of British Caterpillar tractors which they had retaken during the August 1918 offensive.

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8 Letter dated 20th July 1918, File 16, [4386/1/24] (AWM).

Committee members were largely of the view that 'no institution would place on exhibition one of our own guns recaptured from the enemy on account of the reluctance to admit that we had lost it.' The AIF's representative, Lt Hurley, attempted to convince the Committee however 'that there was [in fact] no disgrace in losing material under certain circumstances' citing the AIF's desire 'to obtain from the Turks the material left behind during the evacuation [of Galliopli].' When asked by the Committee members if the Australians would even want to place such material in their museum Hurley replied, 'most certainly we would.' [9] True to their word, personnel from the Australian War Records Section returned to Gallipoli shortly after the Armistice and recovered a 4.7" naval gun which they had been forced to abandon during the evacuation of December 1915.[10]

Though hardly more than a peripheral consideration the Australian's continued to press these claims for another eight months until finally, the Committee deftly side-stepped the issue altogether by handing down the decision that allied equipment, recaptured from the enemy, should be looked upon as memorials rather than trophies. As such, the question of how such material should be disposed was properly a matter for the Salvage Department or Quarter Master General, rather than the War Trophies Committee.

This exercise in semantics was parallelled by a far more important debate, also precipitated by the AIF. Australian soldiers participating in the second battle of Gaza in April 1917 had overrun a Turkish trench which was found to contain an elaborate sixth-century Christian mosaic. The mosaic was immediately claimed by the Australians who began planning to have the antiquity shipped back to Australia.

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9 *Extract from the notes of the 17th Meeting of the War Office Trophies Committee held at the War Office on 27th March 1919*, File16 [4386/1/25] Pt.2, (AWM).

10 The latter, which had also seen action at Ladysmith during the Boer War, is still prominently displayed in the Australian War Memorial's Gallipoli Gallery.

The War Office responded however with a request that the mosaic be shipped back to England until the question of ownership could be resolved, and expressed doubts that the object could in fact be claimed as a war trophy. This was the only way, it argued, of preventing Australia from 'laying herself open to the charge of not having been above looting', for which the British had so often condemned the Germans. The War Trophies Committee attempted to adopt the moral high ground by pointing out that the British Government had given an assurance to the Moslems that their holy places would not be interfered with. Committee members felt that the Australians would be breaking faith with this declaration 'as it is possible this mosaic belongs to a mosque.[11]

These pretensions were quietly abandoned however after the Australian War Records Section responded 'with a somewhat pungent reference to the Elgin marbles.' [12] The matter was then quickly dropped by both the War Office and the Trophy Committee, suggesting a degree of sensitivity and lack of moral certitude on the part of the British who had, throughout the conflict, stridently criticised the Germans for engaging in looting. Perhaps the British feared they had more to lose by entering into a debate that was fraught with legal and moral vulnerabilities and which could, potentially, even challenge their claim to an icon as sacred as the Elgin Marbles. Most of the world's great cultural collections - including the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle - comprised objects which, though masquerading as 'trophies', could more accurately be described as 'loot'.[13] Maybe the stakes were far higher than Britain cared to acknowledge, making it imperative - for all the combatants - that the

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11 *Notes on Subjects of A.I.F. interest discussed at the 9th Meeting of the War Trophies Committee held on 2nd May*, File 16 [4386/1/25 Pt.2] (AWM).

12 Quoted in Michael McKernan, *Here Is Thier Spirit* (UQP in association with the Australian War Memorial, 1991), p. 50.

13 See John C Nimmo's *Trophies and Personal Relics of British Heroes* (Ballantyne Press, 1896).

distinction between 'prize' and 'profit' (trophy and loot) should remain forever blurred?
This would help to explain why Australia's military establishment successfully avoided discussing broader moral and legal issues when, as noted previously, a military tribunal found that there existed a prima facie case for charging a number of senior ANM & EF officers with looting in the German New Guinea Protectorate. Although charges were brought against a number of senior Australian officers the court remained unconvinced that the accused had acted with felonious intent...

> *'...thiose who appropiated articles regarded them as souvenirs, and honestly believed that they had a right to them as mementoes of their participation in the campaign...The bad precedent of the Boer War campaign in China, where manay valuables were brought back, had undoubtably set a standard which needed correction but had not been entirely corrected.'* [14]

Charges were dropped and the officers concerned were all given honourable acquittals.

The Hague Convention of 1907 which defined the international groundrules for land warfare was a additional source of comfort to all in this regard, its pronouncements on the subject of 'pillage' being so vague and brief as to offer little discouragement even to would-be plunderers. First defined at the Brussels Conference of 1874, 'pillage, or loot' was still being described and equated, thirty-three years later, as simply that 'booty which is not permitted.' [15] No nation could afford then to have the moral righteousness of its cause, or its military alliances undermined in any way, least of all at a time of total war. The protocols of the 1907 Hague Convention, therefore, were more often overlooked in favour of those somewhat more generous and

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14 S.S. McKenzie, 'Official History of Australia in the War 1914-18', Vol. X, *The Australians At Rabaul* (Angus & Robertson, 1927), p. 196.

15 T.E. Holland, *The Laws of War on Land - Written and Unwritten* (Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 54.

convenient decrees of the ancients, such as that offered by the Bible's King Cyrus ...'It is an enduring law of mankind that, when a city belonging to the enemy has been captured, the goods and the wealth of that city shall be ceded to the enemy.' [16]

Though never articulated as such the AIF's claim to the mosaic may have had more to do with these vague notions of ancient custom than it did, say, with matters of legal definition or judicial principle.

These tentative steps towards formal definition were taken just prior to the cessation of hostilities and as such, were of little benefit to the allied combatants most of whom - like Australia - had already amassed and despatched vast trophy collections. More often than not the War Trophy Committee found itself having to retrospectively judge and justify actions which had occurred months, and sometimes years earlier. It wasn't until 14 November 1918 for example, 3 days after the Armistice, that the War Trophy Committee made public its formal definition of the term 'war trophy'. On that occasion, before 'a large audience of Members of the House of Commons....and a representative gathering of Curators of the Metropolitan and Provincial Museums', the Committee's spokesperson announced that 'The word "trophy" includes all articles of captured enemy equipment, but such articles are only to be considered as trophies for distribution during war, when unserviceable, or not required for conversion'.[17]

But this was too little, too late, a dimensionless outline which focussed on the trophy's salient physical characteristics without reference to its overriding symbolism. The Australians took it upon themselves therefore to try to add flesh to the Committee's skeleton, the

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16 H. Grotius, 'De Jure Praedae Commentarius', *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, Vol. 1, A Translation of the Original Manuscript of 1604 by G.L. Williams with the collaboration of W.H. Zeydel (Oxford University Press, 1950), p.50.

17 Lt. Col. Sir Arthur Leetham, 'Provincial Museums and War Trophies', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. LXIV, p.105.

subjective details which could bring meaning and purpose to an inanimate object and thereby lay the foundations for the nation's first military traditions....

> *'The man who is hauling a battered German machine gun down the duckboards, with the sweat pouring from under his steel hat, pictures to himself all the time the pleasure of showing it some day in some museum at home to his family and his friends.'* [18]

In this instance it is the end use, and the effort of recovery which overshadow the trophy's warlike purpose. Foremost in the mind of Australia's war correspondent, Charles Bean, when he penned this description was the trophy's enduring relevance for all Australians as both a symbol and historic artefact. This is to suggest that the captured gun only becomes a trophy, and only ever realises its full trophy potential after it has been removed from the battlefield. It is the act of capture, as well as the act of removal - both motivated by a sense of shared and enduring public benefit - which collectively distinguish the battlefield 'trophy' from the soldier's 'loot' or 'booty'.

The Australian media were instrumental in helping to popularise and refine these formative notions, particularly after the arrival - in mid 1918 - of the first large consignment of AIF trophies. The *Argus*, for example, left no room for doubt in the public's mind that all 180 trophy guns - then displayed in Melbourne's Domain - had been 'promptly claimed by the [AIF] conquerors....After the enemy had been driven from his position'. It lauded the fact that these had been taken during the Battle of Amiens, the most decisive battle of the First World War with the AIF being the *corps d'elite*. [19] This was much more than just 'unserviceable...captured enemy equipment'. These instead were the rewards of personal courage and sacrifice, each gun representing some well documented act of individual heroism. The trophy gun thus became a symbol for both allied victory and enemy

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18 *Copy of a cable sent by Mr C. E. W. Bean to Australian Press at the end of February*, n.d., File 16 [4386/1/25] Pt.2 (AWM).

19 *The Argus*, 18 June 1919, p.9.

defeat, another propaganda 'weapon' which, like the various *Nomenclature Acts,* could be used to publicly demean the German nation and its mighty war machine.
For these reasons the Australians were reluctant to confer trophy status on anything other than enemy weapons taken during the heat of battle. Lt Col Hurley, the AIF's representative on the Imperial War Trophies Committee, even described with contempt the hour which the Committee 'wasted in considering such questions as wether ancient guns captured in Baghdad should be returned to England or arrangements made for their storage in the East until the end of the War.'[20] These relics of a much earlier battle were *res nullius* - abandoned rather than captured - and it seemed to the Australians that they had little, if anything, to do with the present crises.

The element of risk had to be real, rather than imagined, before a gun was worth admitting to the Pantheon of Australian trophies.
Anything less would have only cheapened the victory and undermined the weapon's symbolic value, particularly in the eyes of those who had served. The trophy provided manifest and unambiguous evidence that Australia's five divisions were performing well against the Teutonic juggernaut that comprised 175 divisions equipped by the mighty Spandau and Krupp factories.[21]

To admit a trophy of any other brand would have surely blurred the all important dichotomy between victor and vanquished, thereby undermining the weapon's symbolic value. It is for this reason perhaps that the Australian trophy collection mainly comprised materials that were both manufactured and used by the Germans. One can distinguish in this vast assemblage, even today, a clear preference for trophies that were unambiguously associated with Germany. Although trophies from Austria, Belgium, Russia, Mexico, France, Italy and Portugal can still be seen in various parts of Australia, these were

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20 *Letter from Lt Col Hurley to Commandant, Admin HQ, AIF,* 26th September 1917, File 16, [4386/1/24] (AWM).

21 These were the leading armament manufacturers in Germany during WW1.

mostly produced in the furnaces of the Rhine and Rhur Valleys, and in places like Munich, Spandau, Essen and Karlshrue.

The AIF's allegiance to these principles was uncompromising, so much so such that it even chose to forego the opportunity of returning to Australia with the war's largest trophy gun, a 15" naval gun which had been captured by the 3rd Battalion in Arcy Wood after having been rendered inoperative by the retreating Germans. Senior Corp officers elected to ignore a Prime Ministerial 'demand' from Billy Hughes that the 15" gun be repatriated to Australia. Preferential arrangements were made instead for the return of a smaller 11" railway gun which - unlike the 15" naval gun - was regarded by the Australians as 'a genuine capture' since 'it was still firing during the Australian attack'. Later described as 'The finest trophy captured by any nation participating in the Great War', it was exhibited for a time at the Champs de Mars in Paris before being shipped to Australia in 1919 *(Illustration No.8).* [22]

These high ideals were largely upheld by Australia's Imperial Forces for the duration of the war. It was only after the war, once responsibility for the collection had been passed to civilians and non-combatants, that the digger's idealism was seriously compromised. Responsibility for the distribution and dedication of these trophies now rested with the local, state and federal representatives whose interests and concerns were often unrelated to those of the returning ANZACs. A number of French weapons for example were gifted to Australia in 1921 and accepted as substitute trophies when it became evident that there wasn't enough in the way of captured weaponry to satisfy the national demand.[23] Many ceded guns were accepted on this basis with native clubs and shields from Papua New Guinea also being added to collection at this time.[24]

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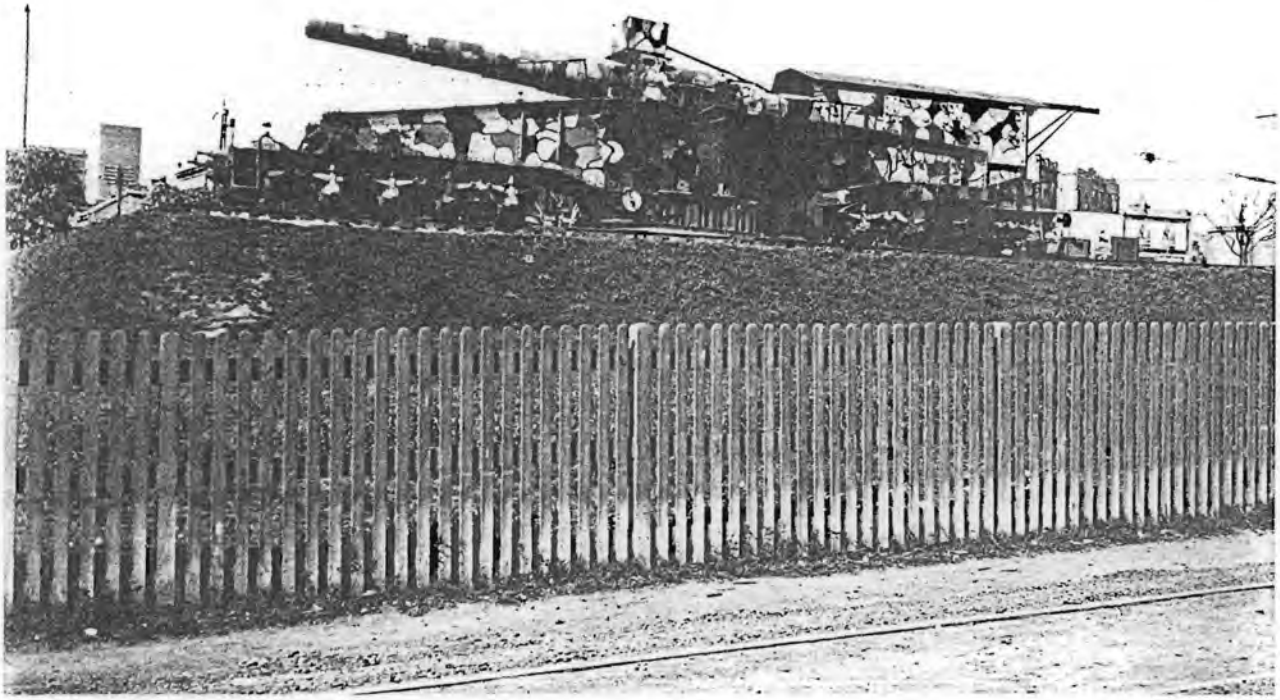
22 *Reveille*, 1 July, 1934, p.6. The railway gun is now displayed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

23 *The Argus*, 10 October 1921, p.8.

cont'd...



8. Described as 'the finest trophy captured by any nation participating in the Great War', the 11" railway gun (Fr.Kp. Nr.77) is shown here in 1922 diplayed near Sydney's Central Railway Station (Mitchell Library No.17584).

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24 Guns and mortars ceded by the Germans were distributed in accordance with the number of divisions each ally maintained in the field. Australia's apportionment of these guns etc was estimated at around 200 which represented 15% of its total trophy haul. For a deatiled explanation of this arrangement see *Number of trophies captured by the Australian Imperial Force and position with regard to shipment to Australia and distribution there,* Memorandum dated 27 March 1919, File 16 [4386/1/95] (AWM).

The latter were selected for inclusion on the somewhat questionable basis that they had been collected from the Sepik area, formerly administered by Germany.[25]

Before long Australia's Trophy Committee was offering obsolete British ordnance to those municipalities which had initially failed to secure a captured German weapon.[26] Such concessions however were more the exception than the rule and for this reason, did little to undermine the way in which the war trophy was perceived.

After five years of war the Australians had reached a shared understanding, a consensus view of this thing they called the 'trophy' which would soon become such a commonplace and dominant feature of the Antipodean landscape. These came in many shapes and sizes, from every corner of the globe, and in varying states of repair. Outwardly at least there was little suggestion of something constant or traditional about these alien forms. One nation's loot was another's trophy and what was coveted in one allied camp, was sometimes scorned in another. And yet, in every Australian community they were afforded the same prominence and reverential regard. Though difficult to define, the war trophy was instantly recogniseable.

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25 File MP 367/1 [580/2/3123] (AA) discusses the 'native curios' received from Papua New Guinea.

26 The citizens of Brighton (Vic), rather than miss out altogether, agreed instead to accept an obsolete Mk.V 15 Pdr gun which the Australian Contingent had used during the Boer War.

ACQUISITION

By early 1919 the Australians had lodged claims for 997 guns and mortars, and received undertakings from the Imperial War Trophies Committee that they were to receive a further 200 ceded weapons. Although official estimates vary, Australia's Minister for Home and Territories claimed towards the end of that year that 1,320 trophy guns and mortars had already arrived in Australia, and that these represented the bulk of the nation's allocation.[1] This number increased slightly in 1921 when the French government donated 'a number of guns...in recognition of the service rendered by the Australian soldiers in the war'.[2] France's largesse may have been influenced by the fact that Australia had previously 'presented' it with the largest trophy gun ever captured during the war, a 15" naval gun which the 3rd Battalion taken in August 1918. [3]

This was by far and away one of the biggest trophy collections ever assembled, second only to that of the United States which went home with 3,293 guns and mortars.[4]

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1 Australia, Representatives, *Debates* 1919, Vol. XC, p. 14008.

2 Reported in *The Argus* on the 10th and 20th December 1921 (pages 7 and 7, respectively. The Geelong College Council of Australia acquired a further two trophy guns through direct negotiations with the French Military authorities. See for example Aubertin to Jess, 21 September 1919, File 16 [4386/1/123] (AWM).

3 See *The Argus*, 2 August 1919.

4 United States of America, *Representatives*, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, 'Report on the Distribution of War Devices and Trophies', No.979 (to accompany Bill S,643), 13 May 1920, p.4.

Though 2 1/2 times larger than the Australian collection the American haul was less impressive, and less visible in per capita terms. The latter was distributed amongst an enormous population (106,021,537 in 1920), at the rate of one gun or mortar for every 32,196 Americans. The Australians by contrast were able to provide every 3,091 residents with a trophy, a rate that was far in excess of Canada (1:10,717) and only marginally surpassed by New Zealand (1 :3,000).[5] The Australian collection moreover contained weapons from almost every front, from both the northern and southern hemispheres, and included the war's largest single trophy (viz. the 11" Amiens gun now displayed at the Australian War Memorial).

But just what was the Army now to do with such a vast and spectacular collection? More importantly, just how was it to be shipped across 13,000 miles, who would meet the enormous costs, where was it to be stored, and who would provide the manpower needed for this enormous logistics undertaking? To answer these questions we must firstly look to the origins of the Australian collection and the agency that nurtured its spectacular development.

The Australians had been in the European front lines for almost fifteen months before they laid claim to their first trophy guns. This is not to suggest however that they hadn't enjoyed any military success to that point, or that they were insensitive to the interest in captured enemy weapons. The Australians in fact had been exposed to these acquisitive practises almost from the outset, having helped with the dispatch of two trench mortars and a Nordenfeldt field gun captured by the New Zealanders at Gallipoli.[6]

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5 Canadian trophy statistics have been extracted from Donald Grave's journal article 'Booty! The Story of Canada's World War One Trophy Collection', *Arms Collecting*, Vol.23, No.1 (February 1985), pp.9-10. New Zealand estimates were supplied to the author by Aaron Fox whose unpublished study of the NZ trophy collection, *Silent Sentinels*, is quoted elsewhere in this thesis.

6 Gilmore (et alia), in Aaron Fox, 'Silent Sentinels', B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of Otago, 1987, p.11.

So why hadn't they taken a greater interest in the matter, and what factors caused them to become interested after Poziers? Military historians like Ann Millar and Michael McKernan have properly highlighted the part played by Australia's press correspondent, Charles Bean, in helping to stimulate and sustain interest in battlefield relics, and to arouse interest in the idea of a national museum in Canberra to honour the exploits of Australia's soldiery.[7] Bean's influence and enthusiasm however only started to bear fruit during the last years of the war, most noticeably after his visit to the Canadian War Records Office in early 1917. He had prior to then lacked both the authority and the inclination to collect large calibre enemy weapons. The Bean factor, while not insignificant, needs to be considered within the broader context of allied collecting activities if it is to be properly understood.

Bean was in fact a relative latecomer to the trophy business, the Canadian Government having given consideration to its trophy policy position as early as August 1915, and put an 'unofficial national curator of war trophies' in the field by the following year.[8] Britain, New Zealand and Belgium were all establishing similar collections, these initiatives also being attributable to enthusiastic Bean-like individuals *(Illustration No.9).* Britain and France - by mid 1917 - had each staged public trophy displays and America, that same year, also joined in the competition for war trophies. [9] By contrast, it was more that a year later that the AIF mounted its first impromptu trophy display (held in August 1918 in the French village of Bertangles) *(Illustration No.10).* Charles Bean's enthusiasm is somewhat more comprehensible when considered in these terms, representing perhaps a response to inter-allied competition and an over-reaction to the realisation that Australia was being left behind.

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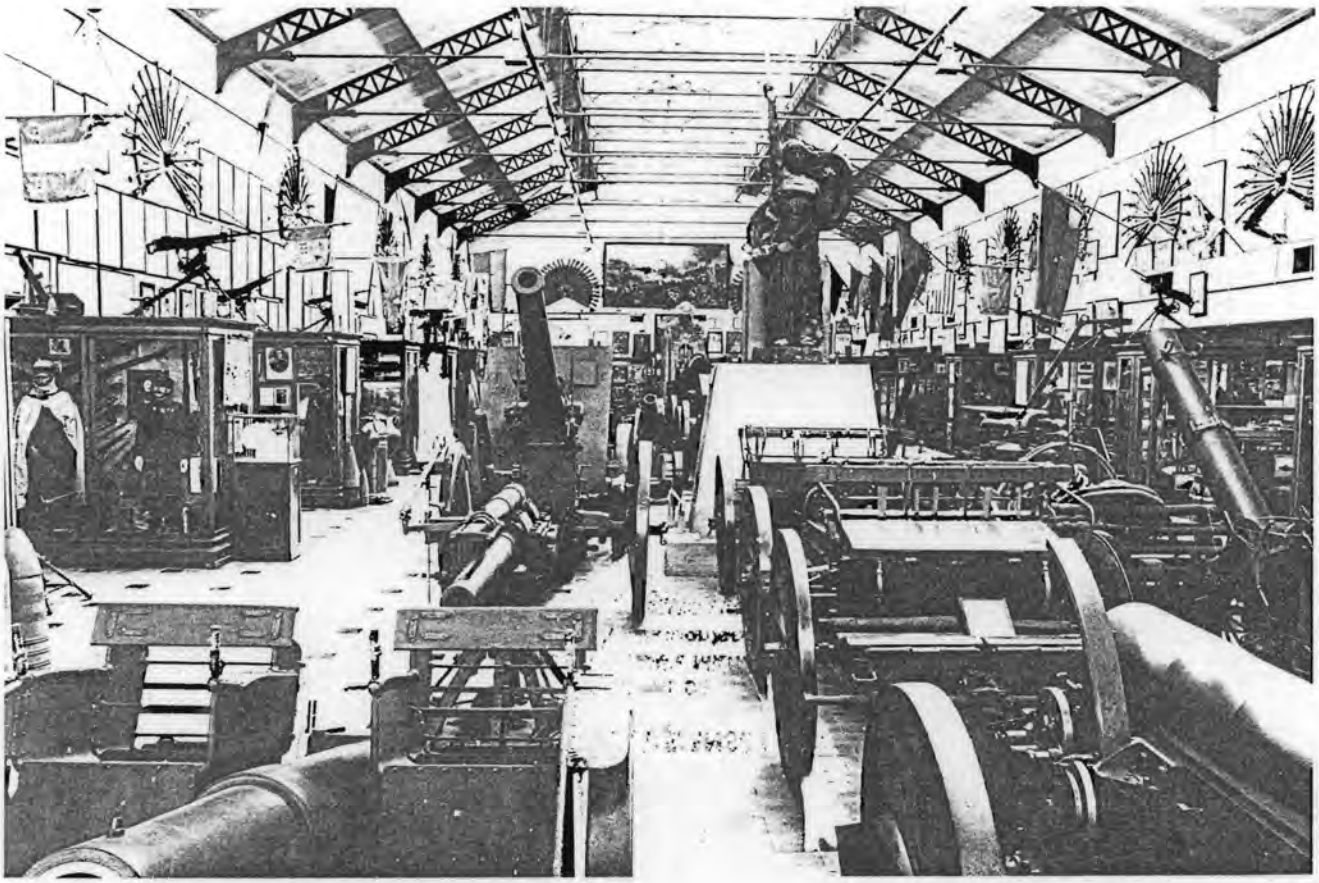
7 See Chapter 2 of M McKernan's, *Here Is Their Spirit* (University of Queensland Press in association with the Australian War Memorial, 1991); and Ann Millar's 'Gallipoli to Melbourne, The Australian War Memorial 1915-19', *Australian War Memorial Journal*, April 1987.

8 Graves, p.3.

9 Fox, pp.15-16.

However, what the AIF lacked most prior to Poziers was not so much the interest as the wherewithal, a designated individual or unit that could have brought focus and authority to these activities.

But as Millar acknowledges. there were other equally compelling factors then at work. The AIF had suffered its greatest losses in July 1916, sustaining 28,533 casualties during the Somme offensive. Recruits were needed urgently to help replace these and earlier losses and the Australian command considered that battlefield trophies might serve as useful stimulants in this regard.



9. Belgian war trophies displayed in the Cinquantenaire Palace, Brussels. The exhibition bears a striking resembance to those organised (in Melbourne and Sydney) in the early 1920s by the Australian War Museum (Musee Royal de l'Armee et d'Histoire Militaire).

10. The AIF's first trophy gun exhibition was held in February 1918 in the French village of Bertangles (Imperial War Museum E(AUS).2860).

It was this thinking which led the ANZAC Commander, Lieutenant General Birwood, to write to his British colleagues in the following terms...

> *'I shall be very glad if permission might be given for the early despatch to AUSTRALIA of any trophies which might be available , instead of at the end of the War, according to the normal procedure....I know that such trophies will be valued enormously throughout the various States of AUSTRALIA, and I believe their very appearance will tend to stimulate recruiting.'* **10**

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10 Birdwood to HQ 2nd Army, 29 June 1916, File 16 [4386/1/24] (AWM).

The Australian war hero Lt. HugoThrossell VC was also sent home from the Middle East in 1918 accompanied by three captured enemy guns.

It was felt in this instance that the formidable combination of war hero and war trophy might help overcome the community's waning interest in the war effort and thereby, facilitate further recruitments.[11] Military and civilian authorities had adopted a far less subtle strategy the previous year when the country's first war trophy was unveiled in Hyde Park just one day after the failed conscription referendum. Addressing the large crowd on that occasion was the captain of the Australian cruiser *HMAS Sydney*...

> *'"It is with mixed feelings that I am taking part in this ceremony...a great referendum has taken place and you have turned it down...Do you still refuse to reinforce your men at the front?' My men are 'ashamed to return here and see the conditions in Australia and Sydney generally, the city swimming with young men you ought to be at the front, but won't go'.'* [12]

Like its marble counterpart, the trophy memorial had been made into a highly ideaological object, 'a way of honouring some people in the community, the volunteers, and dishonouring others.'[13]

It was also around the time of these horrendous losses that communities in Australia and New Zealand gave first thought to erecting war memorials both to honour their dead, and provide public account of the cost. The ANZACs, who had to deal with these crises as best they could, chose instead to emulate their allies by gathering together their own battlefield memorials. Trophy guns had, after all, for centuries been connected with the rituals of commemoration and

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11 File MP 367/1 [580/2/3172], Australian Archives (AA).

12 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 December 1917

13 K.S. Inglis & Jock Phillips, 'War Memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Survey', *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol.24, No.96, April 1991, p.191.

bereavement. These were to be held over against the day when the diggers could erect their own hometown memorials as indeed, they eventually did. It was some time later though, through the agency of the Australian media, that this crucial trophy-memorial nexus was explained to those back home.[14]

Overriding all these influences was the British War Council's decision in March 1917 to establish a National War Museum. More than anything else, this served to focus Australia's interest in trophy collecting. The Australians had earlier become wary of Britain's intentions when, in October 1916, it established an Imperial War Trophies Committee (IWTC). Although the Committee had provided for dominion representation by creating a sub-committee, it was evident that the interests of the new National War Museum would be allowed to override those of the member nations. As the Australian representative later observed, 'the Dominion Committee was established for the purpose of dealing with such stuff as the War Office saw fit to make available.'[15] Indeed, it was only at the latter's unanimous request that the institution's name was changed to Imperial War Museum.[16] This then was the catalyst which indirectly prompted the Australian Cabinet - five months later - to approve the establishment of its own Australian War Museum (AWM) together with an Australian War Trophies Committee (AWTC) which, like its Imperial namesake, was principally concerned with policy and administrative matters affecting captured enemy guns.

An Australian War Records Section (AWRS) was also established at this time and assigned the more arduous task of physically retrieving

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14 See for example the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 December 1917, and *The Argus*, 3 February 1919.

15 Hurley to AIF HQ, 26 September 1917, File 16 [4386/1/24] (AWM).

16 *First Annual Report of the Committee of the Imperial War Museum 1917-18*, in Aaron Fox, 'Silent Sentinels', B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of Otago, 1987, p.13.

the nation's battlefield trophies. It's resources were increased following Britain's creation of the Imperial War Museum.

As the interest in trophy collecting began to grow then so too did the sense of inter-unit and inter-allied rivalry, fuelled by notions of *esprit de corps* and national pride. Competition within the Australian ranks was deliberately stimulated by the officer commanding the AWRS, Lieutenant Treloar, who 'arranged to have a monthly list published showing the number of trophies collected by the various units' with special reference to those that had 'undertaken to obtain a relic or trophy for each man in the unit.' [17] The result was a 'trophy scramble' which steadily gained momentum, the objective being to secure the most, the biggest, and the best collection of captured enemy weapons (*Illustration No.11*). [18] The stakes were high and inevitably there were occasions when allied armies lodged competing claims for the one trophy, as occurred in mid 1919. This last instance, which saw Australians and New Zealanders competing for a German anti-tank gun, was only resolved (in New Zealand's favour) after a year of negotiations when the matter was referred to a Court of Inquiry.[19]

These situations became more common as the allied armies gained the ascendancy during 1918, only to be re-enacted soon after the war by competing civilian interests.[20] Reconciling these parochial interests would prove later to be an even greater challenge. Trophy collecting for the frontline troops, meanwhile, had developed into something of a competition, a secondary battlefield objective pursued with great vigour, enthusiasm, and sportsmanlike regard for the rules. The Australians soon demonstrated considerable prowess at the game, individual initiative being a hallmark of their success...

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17 Millar, p.38.

18 Ibid., p.36.

19 File 16 [4386/1/25] Pt.1 (AWM), passim.

20 Treloar to War Trophies Committee, 27 May 1919, File 16 [4386/1/110] (AWM).

> *'...In the remains of the DRANOUTRE village today , I located a German 77 Field Gun with ammunition limber, both in good condition. I was told by the "Mission Belge" officer there that they had been there for five or six months at least. As no one seemed to own them, I marked them as "captured by Australian Troops in 1917", fixed our labels and took note of all markings'.* [21]

As Bean's biographer Denis Winter recently pointed out, 'most men [also] took pride in their effectiveness by comparison with British units fighting on their flanks. A few even recognised the status of the Australian Corps (with the Canadian) as the British Army's elite attacking troops'.[22]

11. According to the Australian war correspondent and official historian - Sid Gullett - 'any man who could manage to get a [trophy] gun dragged out...should consider his day's work done.' (Imperial War Museum E(AUS).1240).

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21 Gullett to Treloar, 31 March 1918, File 16 [4386/1/12] (AWM).

22 Denis Winter, 'The Pen & The Pride', *The Australian Magazine*, August 7-8 1993, p.45.

This status had been won at great cost with the trophy, often as not, providing the only tangible measure of allied success. For this reason the Australian and Canadian troops became openly resentful of suggestions that the newly created Imperial War Museum should have first call on all battlefield trophies, describing the arrangement as 'very unsatisfactory'. Despite repeated representations to the War Office, AIF HQ could receive nothing more satisfying than the following formula response..."'the question of allocation of trophies captured by Colonial Troops has been referred to the Colonial Office"'.[23]

Tensions were fuelled in July 1918 when, under the headline 'Imperial War Relics', The*Times* described how a delegation of foreign Ministers was given a tour of the new National War Museum facility, and how they showed particular interest in 'some field guns and an anti-tank gun captured by the Australians...'.[24] The latter had never been informed of the transfer which, after further investigations, proved to be one of several Australian trophies 'evidently sent by mistake' to the Museum's Pimlico store.[25] What had started out as a property rights matter soon became identified with issues of national pride, the AIF at pains to disguise its frustration and annoyance. Australian feelings became so inflamed that Prime Minister Billy Hughes eventually exhorted the Governor General to represent Australia's case to the Secretary of State for Colonies...

> *the ...'Commonwealth of Australia cannot agree to your suggestion that Imperial War Museum should have first choice of all trophies of war and other relics captured by Australian Troops...Ministers hold...'that the sacrifices made by the soldiers of Australia entitle them to possession in their own country for their kindred to see of the tangible results of their valour. Deposition in a museum in London...would be only of interest to the traveller whereas the people most interested would be 13,000 miles away...Britain already has a history and traditions and relics and trophies*

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23 AIF HQ to War Officre Secretary, 6 July 1917, File 16 [4386/1/24] (AWM).

24 'Imperial War Relics',*The Times*, 16 July 1918, p.8.

25 IWM Curator to AIF HQ, 30 July 1918, File 16 [4386/1/25] Pt.1 (AWM).

...extending back for centuries...whereas Australia has none here other than what she draws from the mother country. A nation is built upon pride of race and now that Australia is making history of her own she requires every possible relic...' [26]

The Australian media added its voice to the growing outcry until finally, in July 1918 the Imperial War Museum formally relinquished its claim to dominion trophies.[27] Only in the last months of the war were the Australians finally able to put these matters of principle to bed, and begin focussing on more practical concerns. The resolution couldn't have been more timely as it was only a matter of weeks after these events that the Australian Corps pulled off the biggest trophy haul of the war, capturing 173 guns in a single day*(Illustration No.12).* [28]

The storage and processing of war trophies was never perceived to be a problem during the early years of the war, if only because the conflict was never expected to drag on for five years. The Australian military command moreover had no way of anticipating the growth of interest in trophy collecting, or the enormous trophy gains that were to be made later in the war. What had begun as a trickle - at Poziers in July 1916 - had assumed flood proportions after the Battle of Amiens (in August 1918), the Australians' finest hour. The first trophies allocated to the AIF were in fact a number of German machineguns which were fitted into five wooden cases and promptly shipped home.[29] By early 1919 however Australia's Secretary for Defence had been asked to provide '20,000 [square] feet of floor space' to accommodate the first shipment of 220 trophy guns.[30]

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26 Prime Minister to Governor General, 26 February 1918, File MP 367/1 [580/2/2675] (AA).

27 *The Age*, 18 February 1918

28 John B Cooper, *The History of Prahran* (Melbourne, 1924), p. 338.

29 Despatch No.53, 30 November 1916, File 93 [12/12/1] (AWM)

This initial consignment represented just 16% of the total Australian allocation. The Americans had a similar requirement for 491,480 square feet but their task was somewhat simplified by the passage of dedicated war trophy legislation (passed by Congress on 7 June 1924) and the appropriation of $US39,000 to facilitate the collection's storage and subsequent dispatch.[31]

12. The Australians captured 173 guns in a single day during the highly successful Amiens offensive of August 1918 (Imperial War Museum Q.9273).

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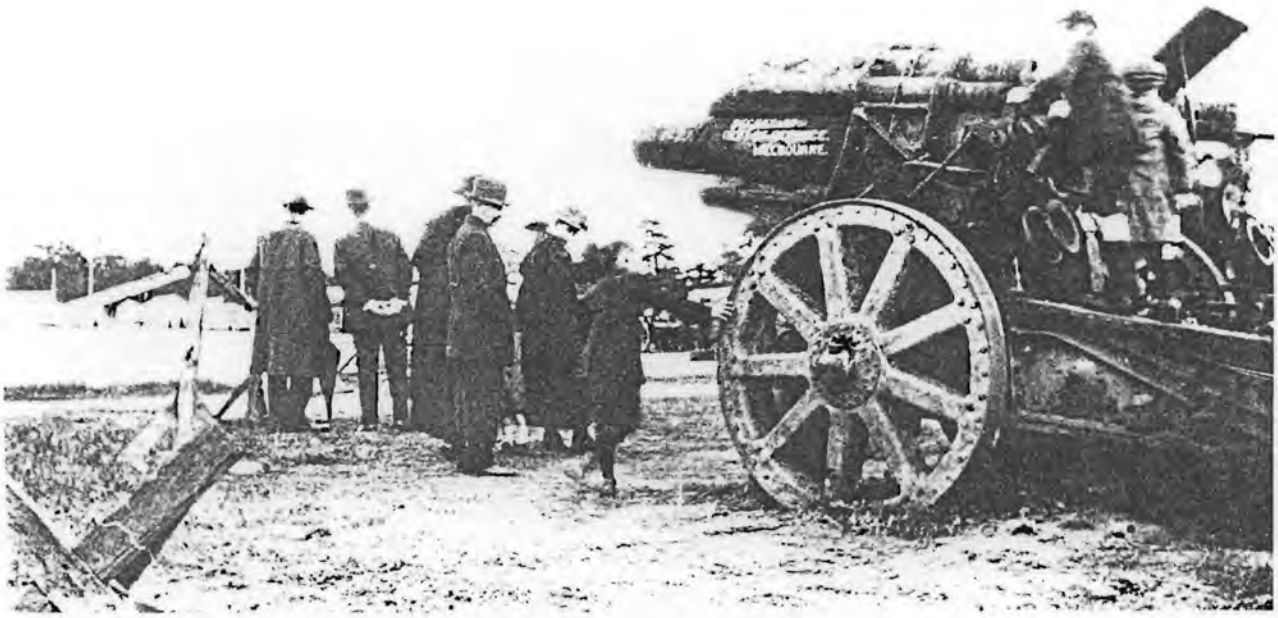
30 Trahair to Defence Secretary, 4 April 1919, File 93 [2/2/3] (AWM).

31 United States of America, Representatives, 68th Congress, 1st Session, *Report on The Distribution of War Trophies and Devices* (No.23 to accompany bill (H.R. 3675), p.3.

The Australians, by contrast, displayed no such preparedness. Only when pressed by the influential members of the recently formed Australian War Museum Committee did the Department agree, 'as a temporary measure', to house the collection in Melbourne's Domain and provide a small military guard to deter would-be vandals. Personnel from the 3rd Military District were also instructed to unload and tranship the consignment.....'it being understood that no inconvenience will be caused ...by this arrangement' *(Illustration No.13).* [32] Though cobbled together in a matter of weeks, this 'temporary' arrangement was to persist until at least 1927.[33]



13. The Defence Department agreed 'as a temporary measure to house the trophy collection in Melbourne's Domain (above). Remnants of the collection were still being held there in 1927 (Museum of Victoria's Photo Archive No.6076).

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32 Memorandum from the Secretary for Defence to The Commandant, 3rd Military District, 15 May 1920, File 93 [2/2/3] (AWM).

33 *Mildura Telegraph*, 20 October 1927.

Responsibility for housing the collection was - after June 1919 - to have been shared between capital cities with 'larger trophies' being 'sent [direct] from England to be unloaded in the State to which belongs the unit which captured them'.[34] Most of these however were eventually unloaded in Melbourne where both the AWTC and AWRS were headquartered. A notable exception however was the 185 ton Amiens gun which simply had to be unloaded in Sydney as this was the only Australian port with both adequate lifting facilities, and a compatible rail gauge.

It was generally understood by the end of the war that few, if any of the trophies would need to be maintained in serviceable condition. Allied intelligence and ordnance personnel were understandably interested in cutting edge technologies like the Amiens gun but otherwise, their was little else in the AIF collection to hold their particular interest. The AWRS nonetheless took considerable trouble to ensure that the integrity and serviceability of each trophy was maintained before, during, and after trans-shipment. Comprehensive written instructions were prepared for each class of weapon and circulated to Section personnel employed at the AIF's Milwall Dock and Calais facilities where the trophies were readied for loading....

> *...'Trench Mortars ...are checked with advice notes and given a number prefixed by D. Medium Trench Mortars are numbered as 1. Carriages as 1.a the Clinometer as 1.b trail or mounting 2. and spare parts box as 3...The D number should then be painted on each part before stacking. Full particulars such as regimental number, name of maker, date and place of capture are recorded with the D number on description sheets, one copy being filed for reference and one passed to 3.A.W.'... etc.* [35]

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34 *Reception and custory (sic) of trophies of war in the Commonwealth Military Districts*, n.d. File 38 [3 DRL 6673/750] (AWM).

35 *Trench Mortars*, Memorandum dated 25 July 1919, File 16 [4386/1/87] (AWM).

Each weapon was then given a liberal coating of grease to protect it against the rigours of the long sea voyage. Similar instructions, which classified trophies accordingly to whether they could (or could not) be stored outdoor, had also been circulated to military personnel in each State. Small trench mortars and serviceable weapons for example had to be stored indoors while all trophies had to be 'deprived' of small detachable parts 'such as are liable to be taken for souvenirs'.[36] These were supposedly taken into the Ordnance Store where they were suitably and 'separately packed to enable them to be identified later with the guns to which they belong.' [37] These displays of reverential regard for damaged enemy equipment were far and above what one might have expected from the arms profession, indicating perhaps that the trophy ethic had been well and truly assimilated by then.

In May 1919 the Imperial War Trophy Committee agreed to hand over without delay all trophies which had been captured by the AIF. The Australians argued that this arrangement would help relieve the growing congestion at the Croydon Depot which had served throughout the war as a central collection point for dominion trophies. Considered in conjunction with this request was another application by the Australians for a trophy store at Millwall Dock, it being explained that the Australian Government had a policy of 'not moving irreplaceable records by sea so long as the submarine danger existed'.[38] These anxieties in fact were not wholly unjustified as the Australians had almost lost their much prized Belgian howitzers - the first trophy guns ever captured by Australian troops - when the ship carrying them to Australia was torpedoed shortly after leaving England.[39] Whether though Australia was justified in maintaining this

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36 *Reception and custory (sic) of trophies of war in the Commonwealth Military Districts*, n.d. File 38 [3 DRL 6673/750] (AWM).

37 Memorandum from the Secretary for Defence to The Commandant, 3rd Military District, 15 May 1920, File 93 [2/2/3] (AWM).

38 *Notes on subjects of AIF interest discussed at the 9th meeting of the War Trophies Committee held on 2nd May at Room 209 War Office*, n.d., File 16 [4386/1/25] Pt.2, (AWM).

policy stance six months after the Armistice is doubtful. Nonetheless, it succeeded in gaining the Committee's qualified support for a dedicated AIF trophy store on the understanding that this would then become a cost to the Australians. This push to gain control of its own collection was also influenced by growing concerns within the AWRS that the Australian trophies might easily become lost in the system , particularly as that system was already beginning to groan with the pressures of demobilisation. Trophies had already been despatched to various centres throughout Britain, sometimes without AIF knowledge or approval. Elements of the Australian collection for instance were known to be with the Ordnance Store at Woolwich, the Pirbright Trench Mortar School, and at Southampton, Pimlico, West Croydon and Blackpool. Many trophies were also held by an AWRS sub-section at Calais in France. The AIF had even assisted this dispersal process by loaning some of its trophy guns to Belgium, and handing others over to the navy.

Centralising the collection at Millwall Dock gave the AWRS a degree of control, and a chance to minimise its losses.[40] Despite strong representations no similar concessions were ever granted for the 369 guns and 271 mortars which the Australians were holding as trophies in Egypt. This problem was compounded by feelings of antipathy expressed by many Light Horsemen who regarded 'trophy collecting as a vast joke', caring 'damn all about trophies or any other relics'.[41]

Circumstances in the Middle East were vastly different from those on the western front. The AWRS had a single representative there who had to contend with inhospitable terrain, isolation, vast distances and rapidly advancing front lines, factors that were hardly conducive to the promotion of patriotic fervour, or the collection of war trophies.

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39 *The Argus*, 3 February 1919.

40 See *Notes by Australian War Records Section*, n.d., File 16 [4386/1/24] (AWM).

41 Gullett to Treloar, 29 July 1918, File 25 [1013/36] (AWM) quoted in Millar, p.37.

It seems remarkable therefore that almost half the Australian trophy collection should have originated from this theatre of operations. The organisation that recovered and despatched these guns and mortars was the AWRS which in November 1917 - two months after it had been authorised to collect war trophies - had a total staff complement of just fifteen. This had grown by 1919 to 652, reflecting the considerable importance which the Australians had come to attach to their trophy collection.[42] Many of the Allied armies (e.g. Belgium, New Zealand, United States, Britain and France) were similarly engaged at that time, having also established AWRS-like organisations earlier in the war. Most of the Section's employees were demobilised troops awaiting passage back to Australia. The Commonwealth Government was grappling with the enormous task of repatriating 180,000 individuals scattered over a territory extending from Asia Minor to Britain. It took ten months to complete this task during which time many soldiers became involved with educational, training and employment projects (such as the AWRS). A number of the returning troopships were also loaded with trophy guns and mortars, these being stored in the holds where they could double as ballast.

The first such consignment of 220 guns reached Melbourne in 1919 (per *SS Bulla*) with the balance arriving during the following four months. This arrangement relieved the Commonwealth Government of what might otherwise been a very considerable shipping bill.

By the end of 1919 the AWRS had completed its assigned task, most of its personnel having previously embarked on the returning troopships. Although it had been in existence for less than two years it was, in that brief period, able to achieve an enormous amount. Of particular significance were the two (overlapping) public trophy exhibitions which the Section helped organise in late 1918. Responding to an invitation from the War Office the Section arranged - in December - for no less than 224 of its captured guns and mortars to be relocated to The Mall facing Buckingham Palace, where they were exhibited (as a discrete collection) alongside other allied trophies *(Illustration No.14 & 15).*

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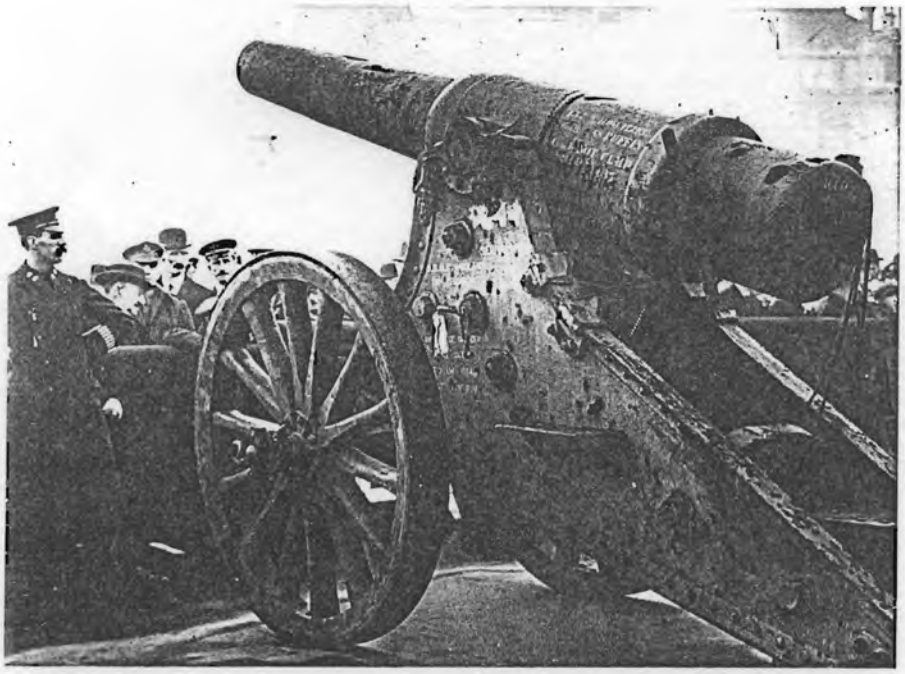
42 Miller, p.39.



14& 15. 224 Australian trophy guns were displayed in London's Mall in late 1918 (above and below). Jubilant diggers set fire to a number of these trophies - at the base of Nelson's Column - during spontaneous Armistice Day celebrations (Imperial War Museum Q.31245 (top) and Q.30330).

This overwhelming display of firepower and military prowess coincided with the Australian Prime Minister's official opening of the new *Australia House* building in London's Horseferry Road. To mark that occasion the AWRS had installed - for public display - a diverse collection of trophies that included German ersatz materials, an Albatross fighter plane and a range of captured German weapons. Significantly it was the *Australia House* opening rather than War Office Mall exhibition which the Australian media chose to report. And it was through these despatches that the people back home gained their first understanding of the war trophy's significance, and their first portent of what the future had in store...

'...When he [Billy Hughes] was out at the front he saw a 15 pounder gun which, though broken, would admirably serve a monumental purpose. "We must have that," he remarked to the men who were showing it, "for Melbourne or Sydney, but we can't have it for both." The men replied, "We'll get you one for every city." ' [43]

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43 *The Argus*, 3 February 1919

'ONE FOR EVERY CITY'

The Argus had created a powerful image with its description of Prime Minister Hughes 'out at the front' exhorting his troops to retrieve - at least - one gun for every Australian city.[1] Owing more (one suspects) to the imagination than history, it nonetheless passed as good news copy. After five years of unrelenting sacrifice and restraint it was now clear to those back home that the government was about to share with them the rewards of victory.

The Prime Minister's message had been received so clearly as to generate, in just three months, no less than 1,000 trophy applications which included requests from 300 rural and regional municipalities. [2,3] Meetings were hurriedly convened in every part of the country with countless committees and delegations appointed to decide how they might best be able to guarantee a trophy gun for their particular community. In some instances it was both logical and convenient to hand this important task over to some pre-existing organisation. The citizens of Northcote (Vic.) for example empowered the members of the *Northcote Soldiers' Welcome Home Committee* in September 1922 to make application on their behalf for 'the gift of a cannon or some such'.[4] When that Committee ceased to exist the matter was simply passed on to the *Anzac Memorial Hall Committee* which in turn - just five months after the initial application - became known at the *Northcote Soldiers' Memorial Committee*.

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1 *The Argus*, 3 February, 1919.

2 *The Argus*, 26 June 1919, p.4.

3 *The Age*, 18 June 1919, p.9.

4 *Northcote AMHC to Commandant*, 3 MD, 22 September 1919, File 194 [Melbourne 22] (AWM).

Others thought to try and improve their prospects by applying direct to the British Government, only to be referred back to their respective state governments.[5] Delegations began arriving from distant townships, the residents of Nhill (Vic.), Red Cliffs (Vic.) and Sandgate (Qld) being convinced that the occasion demanded nothing less than a show of force. These applications and delegations were still being received in 1928, almost eight years after Billy Hughes had first fired the Australian public's interest in the matter.

The organisation responsible for handling these applications was the Commonwealth War Trophies Committee (CWTC) which closely resembled its Imperial namesake. When first convened in late June 1918 it comprised the Commonwealth Ministers for Defence, Home and Territories (Chairman) and the Navy, together with the Chairman of Trustees of the Melbourne Exhibition Building, Sir Henry Weedon.[6]

After a year of apparent inactivity the federal opposition began - in July 1919 - to raise questions about the CWTC's composition and performance. The Chairman defended his Committee's position on that occasion by explaining that it had recently sought to expand its membership by inviting 'some gentlemen whose services would be of considerable help.' Although some replies were still outstanding the Minister was able to announce to the House (of Representatives) the inclusion of polar explorer, Sir Douglas Mawson, together with Sir W Blundell White who had distinguished himself at Gallipoli. Calls for state representation on the federal Committee were initially resisted on the grounds that membership 'must be largely determined by possibility of attendance at meetings.' [7]

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5 *Treloar to War Trophies Committee* (WTC), 17 February 1919, File 22 [739/6/3] (AWM).

6 *Trahair to Defence Secretary*, 4 April 1919, File 93 [2/2/3] (AWM)

7 Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 July 1919, Vol.LXXXVIII, p.10668.

Charles Bean had previously warned the Defence Minister of the need to adequately accommodate the state's interests in any trophy distribution solution that the Commonwealth might arrive at. To this end he had recommended the establishment of State Trophy Committees which would then assume responsibility for intra-state distribution of all Commonwealth allocations. Bean insisted however that the Commonwealth had to be represented on these state bodies, possibly via the appointment of an AIF representative.[8]

The federal opposition continued though to hound the government over the matter of state representation, even describing the CWTC on one occasion as 'a Melbourne committee'. In the face of sustained criticism the government finally acceded to opposition demands by agreeing - in October 1919 - to implement the State Committee solution which Bean had advanced nineteen months beforehand.[9]

The states at that time were still mistrustful of Commonwealth ambitions and were continuing to resist attempts to widen the powers of the Commonwealth parliament. The Commonwealth government on the other hand - having recently lost a third attempt to increase its powers by referendum - was reluctant to fuel these antagonisms by contesting the matter of trophy distributions. It was equally conscious of the need to play down any issues that might further provoke the civil unrest that had affected Australia throughout 1919. As Gavin Souter remarked many years later, this (i.e. 1919) was 'the strangest, most violent year the Commonwealth had ever known.'[10] Riots and lesser disturbances flared up in many cities and towns and often as not, the returned soldier was to be found in the thick of each mêlée. Some soldiers believed that after having taken up arms to preserve the Australian way of life, they'd earned 'a special right to have their say

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8 *Extract from memorandum by Mr Bean to Minister to Defence*, March 1918, File 16 [4386/1/44] (AWM).

9 Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 2 October 1919, Vol.XC, p.12938.

10 Gavin Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australi 1901 - 1919*, (Collins Publishers, 1976), p. 286.

in peace.' [11] Others seemed to believe that this right placed them above the law which led to a number of particularly violent confrontations between police and soldiers. Although the soldiers were in fact responding to a wide range of social and political issues, these outbursts of discontent were frequently (and conveniently) diagnosed as symptoms of Bolshevism.[12]

The recently established Returned Services League had partly foreshadowed these disturbances by drawing attention to the 'possible state of chaos that may occur...when all these thousands of men return if they are not intelligently organised.'[13] Hughes's Nationalist government was equally sensitive to these concerns and for this reason, sought to win the support of the returned soldier by introducing gratuities, preference in public employment and, later, an ambitious scheme to settle soldiers on the land. [14] Significantly, the war trophy distribution guidelines were also modified to provide for these new soldiers settlements.[15]

Each state war trophy committee consisted of a Senator, a member of the House of Representatives, a representative of the state government, an AIF officer and the Director of the Australian War Museum.[16] The Victorian Trophy Committee later delegated part of its responsibility to the Mayor of Melbourne who in turn, convened a

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11 Peter Sekuless and Jacqueline Rees, *Lest We Forgeet, The History of the Returned Services League 1916 - 1986*, (Rigby Publishers, 1986) p.3.

12 Souter, pp.290 -291.

13 Sekuless and Rees, p.24.

14 Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia*, Vol.4, 1901 - 1942, (OUP, 1986), p.189.

15 The Dreeite (Vic.) and Trawalla (Vic.) Soldier Settlements, for example, received 75mm and 77mm trophy guns, respectively.

16 *Australian War Museum to Northcote Anzac Memorial Hall Committee*, 9 October 1919, File 194 [Melbourne 22] (AWM).

sub-committee of municipal mayors to determine how the city's allocation might be fairly apportioned.[17] These state appointments were finally resolved around mid October 1919 with the CWTC holding its first business meeting about a week later.

The Committee's first and most difficult task was to formulate a workable set of distribution policy guidelines which would satisfy what were often competing regional, state and national interests. In these matters it was able to derive some benefit from the work of the Imperial War Trophies Committee (IWTC) which had eventually arrived at a number of inalienable principles which might be applied with equal effect to the Australian collection. Charles Bean had also enunciated a number of distribution principles which derived from, or at least mirrored, the IWTC's own findings. Fundamental to both was the firm belief that the bulk of the collection should be equitably distributed amongst the population, but only after adequate provision had been made for the national interests, as represented by the Imperial and Australian War Museums. That these points were never contested may have had some bearing on the fact that they, too, were derived from Roman law...

> ...*'among the Romans, every kind of spoil, including even moveable possessions, was acquired not for the soldier who seized it, and not even for the commander in his own right, but for the Roman people.'*[18]

Trophy committees throughout the Commonwealth, and in North America were all of the view that the bulk of the trophies should be distributed amongst the population on an equitable basis.

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17 *Town Clerk St Kilda to Mayor of Melbourne*, 12 March 1932, File 06/012/0011 (St Kilda City Council). See also *The Age*, 23 May 1922.

18 H. Grotius, 'De Jure Praedae Commentarius', *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, Vol. 1, A Translation of the Original Manuscript of 1604 by G.L. Williams with the collaboration of W.H. Zeydel (Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 146.

Where they differed, and where historical precedent ceased to be of any benefit, was in relation to the interpretation of the word 'equitable'.

This remained the CWTC's biggest challenge, one for which it was unlikely to receive much encouragement or praise. This situation was compounded somewhat by the fact that Australia also lacked a strong trophy tradition, one that might have offered the Committee a weight of domestic precedent. A small number of trophies had been allotted to Australia after the Boer War and it was known that these had been divided equally, as far as possible between the Commonwealth and the states. This however was hardly an adequate prescription for distributing 1,340 trophies amongst a population that had been wracked by political and social division, profoundly scarred by unprecedented casualty rates, and which remained deeply mistrustful of federal ambitions. There were no guarantees moreover that the distribution principles successfully applied to other allied populations would hold true for Australia. Both Canada and the United States for example had opted for the principle of proportional enlistments whereby each state received an allocation that was directly related to the number of troops they'd contributed to the war effort. Neither North American country however had been exposed to two bitterly divisive conscription plebiscites, the effects of which were still sorely felt in Australia.

It became evident that the Committee would eventually have to choose between the North American enlistment principle, or the proportional population criterion adopted by New Zealand. Committee members were painfully aware that significant sections of the community would be disadvantaged by whichever they adopted. Opponents of the enlistment principle expressed justifiable concern that the trophy could become a kind of patriotic barometer which would only serve to focus and sustain, rather than heal social divisions. The West Australians on the other hand felt that they would be unfairly disadvantaged by the application of anything other than an enlistment principle, particularly as they had contributed more enlistees - proportionately - than any other state...

> *'...In 1921 the Federal Treasurer Sir Joseph Cook stood on a captured gun outside the Melbourne Town Hall and declared that the people of Western Australia had led throughout the war in men, money, general enthusiasm and patriotism. Western Australia recorded a much higher 'yes' vote in both conscription referendums than the other states...The state death rate in proportion to numbers enlisting was [also] significantly higher than total AIF deaths.'* [19]

Local governments also recognised advantage in pressing for this option...'it was doubtful if any city in Australia had such a fine record for war efforts, or for the number of its citizens who had enlisted as St. Kilda.' [20]

There appeared though to be even less support for the idea of a population based distribution which, it was felt, would only benefit the populous states and large metropolitan centres, leaving rural communities particularly disadvantaged. Questions were raised about the accuracy of the government's population statistics while those in rural centres were concerned that they might be even further prejudiced if the Committee used the town, rather than the shire as its basic population unit.[21] The Federal Opposition also made it known that it had serious reservations about a population based distribution formula, arguing that the various state War Trophy Committees (WTC) 'will confine the trophies to the State capitals and ignore the country districts.' It sought to overcome these inequities by calling for the establishment of a parliamentary review committee to oversee the CWTC's work, a suggestion that was politely dismissed by the Government.[22]

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19 Suzanne Welborn, *Lords Of Death: A People, A Place, A Legend*, (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1982), p.160.

20 *The Age*, 25 June 1923

21 *The Argus*, 25 December 1920

22 Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 1 August 1919, Vol.LXXXVIII, p.11182.

Communities throughout the country responded with equal predicability, public opinion on the matter having been influenced in part by a critical press...'If Sydney gets the monster railway gun, Eucla [W.A.] may ultimately mount a German revolver or a steel hat.' [23] Despite these and many similar protestations the CWTC revealed in June that the distribution would proceed along population lines in accordance with the following principles...

> *Towns with a population of more than 10,000 are to receive two guns and two machine-guns. One gun will be given to towns with a population between 3,000 and 10,000 while towns with a population between 300 and 3,000 are to receive one machineguns [sic].'* [24]

This initial step towards a formal policy position was met with a broad range of public criticisms. Supporters of the enlistment principle were told that there were no accurate statistics available to the Committee since many men from country towns had enlisted in the cities. The small wheatbelt town of Nyabing (W.A.) was particularly aggrieved and 'began a series of impassioned pleas' by drawing attention to the 'impressive' number of Nyabing men killed.[25] Rural communities felt handicapped by this arrangement which was certain to leave them not only with fewer trophies, but smaller ones at that (i.e. machines guns rather than artillery). Residents began to draw critical comparisons with neighbouring communities until inevitably, trophy size became synonymous with civic importance *(Illustration No.16).*

The Corowa Council for example 'refused to accept so small a thing' when, after having requested a gun, it was offered a machingun.[26] The federal member for Eden Monaro was also at pains to disguise his disgust, arguing on behalf of his constituents that '"What we have

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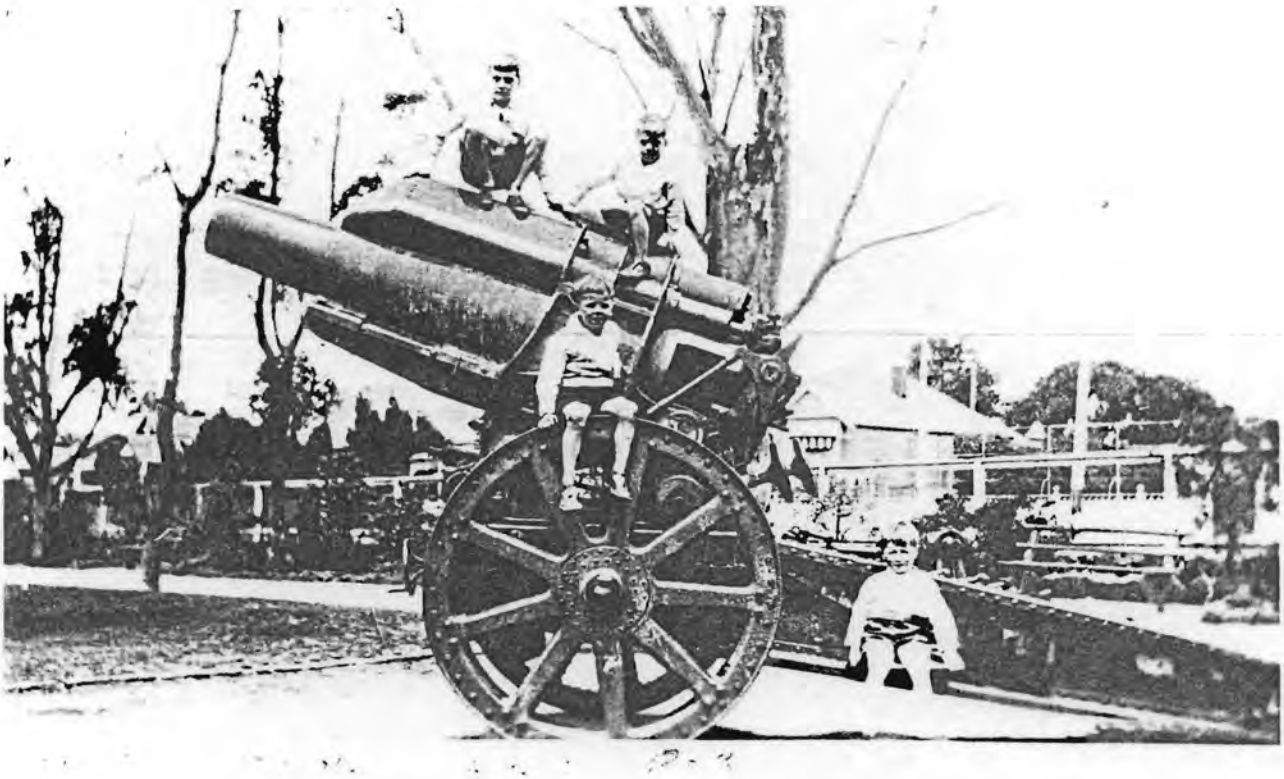
23 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1920, p.8.

24 *The Age*, 18 June 1919, p.9.

25 Suzanne Welborn, *Lords Of Death: A People, A Place, A Legend*, (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1982), p.150..

26 Brian Burton, *Flow Gently Past* (Corowa Shire Council), p.163.

done is ignored, we sent dozens of men to the Front, and many of them lie buried in France today. We have subscribed thousands to the War Loans, and the First Peace Loan, and yet, when we apply for a war trophy for this district we are ignored."' [27]



16. '...inevitably, trophy size became synonymous with civic importance'. This massive 21 cm Mörser was photographed in Footscray Gardens in 1928 (Museum of Victoria's Photo Archive No.1558).

This disquiet however was by no means confined to the bush. Williamstown (Vic.) councillors were outraged to learn that they'd been allocated a machinegun, particularly after the Committee had recently presented the Williamstown High School with a canon. The Council refused to appoint three trustees as had been requested by the CWTC, adding that they were only 'prepared to accept a trophy in keeping with the importance of the[ir] city.' [28] The offer of a trench mortar to St Kilda was said to have not only 'hurt the dignity of the

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27 Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, August 1919, Vol.XCIII, p.3752.

28 *The Argus*, 19 December 1922, p.17.

members of the St Kilda Council, but also that of other public bodies....The fact that the Caulfield Grammar School has been given a captured German field-gun is [also] strongly commented on when comparisons are made with the trench-mortar allotted to St. Kilda.' [29] And it was with an air of embarrassed resignation that Malvern's Mayor had to report...'the best he could get was a trench mortar.' [30]

The CWTC had no sooner settled on this procedure when it was compelled to introduce another policy consideration. Australian soldiers had been led to believe throughout the war - usually by the Commanding Officers - that captured guns would eventually be returned 'as far as possible, to the people to whom the units which captured them wish them to be given.' [31] This was partly the reason why captured guns were so speedily marked by their captors *(Illustration No.17).* Although it was never officially endorsed by the Australian command the notion continued to gain widespread currency within the ranks. Orders were issued on a number of occasions, reminding 'Commanding Officers of units and others [that they] are not permitted to make any promise with regard to the distribution of trophies captured by their or any other unit.' [32] A number of officers were reprimanded for breaching these orders but all to little avail. State and Federal leaders even became embroiled in the issue when, in late 1916, the Defence Department refused to hand over to Queensland a trophy gun which had been captured by a locally raised unit and promised to that state by the Battalion's Commanding Officer.[33] Similar incidents involving both state and local governments occurred in South Australia and New South Wales.[34] Having failed for five years to correct the misunderstanding it was

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29 *The Argus*, 27 September 1921, p.7.

30 Lynn Strahan, *Private Lives and Public Memory, A History of the City of Malvern* (Hargreen Publishing Co., 1989), p.171.

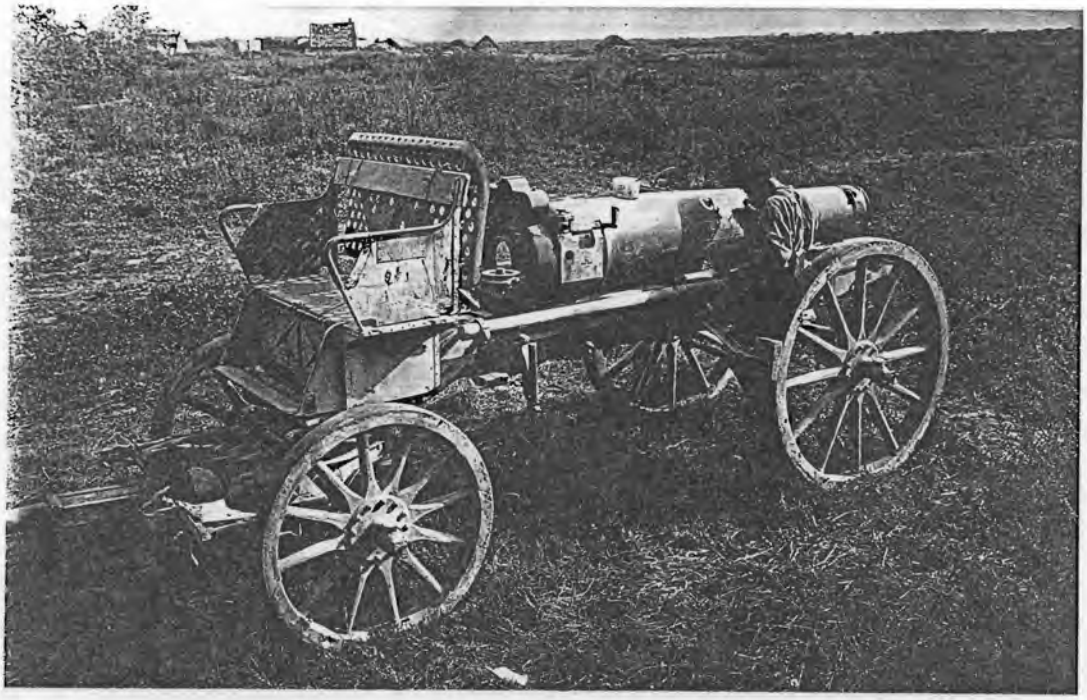
31 *The Argus*, June 26, 1919.

32 *AWRS to AWRS (BEF)*, 28 May 1918, File 16 [4386/1/26] (AWM)

33 File 93 [12/12/1] (AWM) contains a full description of this incident.

34 *HQ AIF*, 27 February 1919, File 16 [4386/1/50] (AWM)

now felt, particularly by Charles Bean, that the Commonwealth had a moral obligation at least to try and honour these wartime undertakings.



17. A trophy gun captured by the 5th Australian Division near Guillacourt in August 1918. Guns were marked in the field after capture so as to ensure their eventual return to the state (or town) from whence their captors had originated (Imperial War Museum E(AUS).2894).

Returned soldiers were 'desperately keen on getting trophies' and had even 'threatened forcibly to seize the trophies which were then going forward to the various towns and municipalities.' [35] This was one of the significant factors which caused the CWTC to review its position and announce the following amended policy...

> *...after making the necessary provision for the National War Museum [it has been decided] to give to each State trophies captured by the units it has raised, on the principle that these trophies are of the greatest value and interest in the place where their captors are personally known. In the case of units coming from more than one State, the trophies will be divided amongst the States concerned. Trophies not identical with any particular unit will be distributed between States on a population basis.'* [36]

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35 *Treloar to Bean*, 10 July 1925, File 38 [3 DRL 6673, Item 752] (AWM)

Considerable care was taken at the time to assuage public concern about the proposed National War Museum by explaining - particularly to the ex-diggers - that it would take no 'more of these [trophies] than would afford specimens to show to future generations', and that 'these will mostly comprise trophies which cannot be connected with any particular state.' [37] Among the first to benefit from this arrangement were the CMF (Citizen Military Forces) units with which the AIF had been affiliated. Next in line were the AIF battalions and regiments which had physically captured the trophies followed lastly by the civilian population. Most people were happy with this method but inevitably there were those who still felt they'd been dealt an injustice. The Federal Member for Brisbane for example demanded to know why the country's 'greatest' trophy - the 11" railway gun - had been sent to Sydney when it was well known to have been captured by Queensland troops? [38]

The citizens of Prahran were equally distressed to learn that a 105mm canon that had been captured by local lads (from the 22nd Battalion) had mistakenly been assigned to the nearby municipality of Richmond. Fortunately for the Victorian WTC the two councils agreed to resolve the matter themselves by effecting an exchange.[39]

By the end of 1919 the CWTC had cleared the last of these policy hurdles and could finally begin focussing on the task of distribution. Trophies were consigned to their respective state committees on the agreed understanding that freight charges would be covered by the state governments. Distribution beyond the capitals then became a matter for the states to resolve, this being achieved with less difficulty in the more closely settled eastern states. As expected the largest single allocation went to New South Wales which possessed 38.7% of the

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36 Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 8 October 1919, Vol.XC, p.13059.

37 *The Argus*, 26 June 1919, p.4.

38 *Debates*, 6 August 1919, Vol.LXXXIX p.11294.

39 File 194 [*Prahran*] (AWM)

national population (@ 1920), and received 38% of the available trophies. Victoria received the next largest consignment with Queensland, South Australia, West Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory benefiting in that order *(Illustration No.18).*

18. The Northern Territory, with less than 1% of the national population, recived the least number of trophies. This photograph of Darwin's trophy gun and war memorial was taken on Anzac Day, 1935 (Museum of Victoria's Photo Archive No.1446).

Included in this nationwide distribution were a number of German communities that had endured racial persecution throughout the war, and which had also been forced after 1917 - by the *Nomenclature Acts* - to adopt anglicised names. The offer of a war trophy may have been welcomed by some of these as a means to publicly demonstrate both their allegiance to Australia, and their rejection of German militarism.[40]

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40 Rosewood (Qld), Hahndorf (S.A.) and Germantown (NSW) each accepted captured German guns. The latter (two) were renamed Holbrook and Ambleside following the introduction of the *Nomenclature Acts.*

Although written offers were sent to a total of 3,497 towns the Committee sometimes had to wait months for a formal reply. Offers were viewed with considerable importance at the regional level and as such, usually became subject to lengthy community consultation. A total of 267 offers were sent to Queensland towns but as of early October 1920, only 86 acceptances had been received.[41] A December 8th (1920) deadline was therefore imposed with councils being advised that unclaimed trophies would be pooled and reallocated to other municipalities. These veiled threats however had little effect whatsoever as the first round deadline was progressively extended another year through to the 31 December 1921.[42]

By then of course the matter had begun to attract considerable Opposition attention with the Federal Government being regularly asked to explain the ongoing delays. Before long Prime Minister Hughes also became embroiled in the issue with the Opposition calling on him to 'stir up the Department in charge.'[43] The Government's problems were only compounded by mounting allegations of neglect as by that stage, many of the trophies had lain idle and exposed to the elements for more than a year...

> *'Being an ex-infantry Digger myself, I..was disgusted to find that the weapons we lads with our own hands took from the German hordes, and on which we were proud to place our Battalion marks, are being left up in the Exhibition grounds to rust and rot...the various gamins of Melbourne delight to climb all over them and multiply the parts...Could not...arrangements be made for the proper distribution of these historical trophies..?'* [44]

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41 Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 October 1920, Vol.XCIII, p.5345.

42 *The Allotment Of A War Trophy To St Kilda*, n.d., File 06/102/0011 (SKCC)

43 *Debates*, Vol. XCII, p.2913.

44 *The Argus*, 2 June 1920, p.11. See also *The Argus*, 4 June 1920, p.11.

Charles Bean, being particularly sensitive to such criticisms, also wrote to the Director of the Australian War Museum about the matter...

> *'On the asphalt beside the big parade ground at this barracks there are lying derelict six German guns, three trench mortars...the trench mortars being partly dismantled. They are rusting, and give the appearance of so much old junk. It seems to me that a display like this always harms our collection.'* [45]

The problems experienced by the CWTC were by no means unique to Australia as both Canada and New Zealand had had to overcome similar difficulties. Both these countries though were able to commence distribution by late 1920. In America the trophy programme was delayed until late 1924 but this may have reflected, in part at least, the enormous size of their collection (2 1/2 times larger than Australia's).

A second round of allocations was begun in late 1920 with the cycle of reallocations continuing on until at least May 1922. Although trophies were still being issued in the late 1920s the Director of the Australian War Museum was finally able to announce in September 1922 that the distribution was 'practically completed.' [46] While most trophy gun offers were taken up a small number of these were declined. The citizens of Thursday Island (Qld) had no choice but to refuse the Committee's offer of a massive 150mm long range gun as there was simply no way of transporting the 11 ton colossus to their remote community.[47] Distributions were also affected by vocal pacifist and anti-war lobbies which had been gathering support in Australia since the late nineteenth century. Public opinion on these matters may have

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45 *Bean to Treloar*, 1 July 1925, File 38 [3 DRL 6673, Item 752] (AWM)

46 *McKernan*, p.27.

47 This gun (Fried Krupp, Nr.103, 1918) was subsequently reallocated to the St Kilda City Council who, in the early 1970s, sold the gun to the Carribean Gardens entertainment centre in Melbourne where it is still being used today as playground furniture.

also been influenced by the publication in 1915 of a new book - *Krupp's And The International Armaments Ring* - which attributed the 'monstrous development of the race in armaments' and the spread of jingoism to Germany's powerful Krupp dynasty.[48] The author, who coined the term *Kruppism* to describe these nefarious relationships, used the work of Australian artist Will Dyson to illustrate his treatise. Dyson, who later served with the AWRS as a war artist, had by that stage already established an international reputation with his anti-German Kulter Cartoons which he drew for the *London Herald (Illustration No.19).*

Park guns had become a focus for anti-martial interests in Australia, even before the commencement of hostilities in 1914. In 1913 for example the Northcote (Vic.) Council decided to install two obsolete 8" naval guns alongside the shire's main thoroughfare. The decision precipitated a bitterly divisive debate with public calls for both 'unsightly disfigurements' to be rolled into the Merri Creek and covered up with mullock.[49] Councillors were also divided over the matter, some arguing that 'the less military spirit...instilled into the minds of the lads the better.' [50] These hostile attitudes were later echoed by *The Argus* when in 1921 it described the recently arrived trophy collection as 'so much artillery junk', adding that 'it is the men behind the guns who are more interesting than these dumb mouths.' [51] It was in New South Wales however that the issue generated the most acrimony, developing eventually into a party-political debate which profoundly affected the distribution programme in that state.

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48 H Robertson Murray, *Krupp's And The International Armaments Ring* (London, 1915), p.xi.

49 *The Leader*, 24 May 1913.

50 *The Leader*, 1 March 1913

51 *The Argus*, 21 June 1919. The *Argus* soon abandoned this critical tone and began to describe the war trophies - like most other major Australian newspapers - in more positive terms.

KULTUR PROTECTOR

Those Minor Germans, GOETHE, BEETHOVEN, and WAGNER:
"Hail, Saviour Krupp, how can we ever thank thee?"

From Kultur Cartoons, by kind permission of Messrs. Stanley Paul & Co.
Frontispiece.

19. Will Dyson's frontpiece for the 1915 publication, 'Krupp's and the International Armaments Ring'.

Attempts in 1924 to transfer the Australian War Museum displays to Sydney sparked off strong debate within the City Council causing one Labor Alderman to declare 'that he hated war and that the war museum collection should be "dumped over the Gap" or "outside the Heads"...'[52]

This outburst had been preceded by other displays of anti-martial sentiment, most noticeably in 1920 when Council refused to convene a meeting of metropolitan mayors to assist the distribution of war trophies.[53] These actions though had only served to provoke Labor's opponents and thereby, further politicise the debate. With media assistance *(Illustration No.20, overleaf)* the mute war trophy was soon transformed into an ideological pawn, a convenient focus for party politics. The state's Labor Education Minister responded to these escalating attacks by prohibiting the exhibition of war trophies in schools under his control.[54]

The announcement was greeted with widespread public outrage, particularly in country areas where the public school sometimes offered the only suitable display facility in town. The citizens of Duri (NSW) and Nana Glen (NSW) both implored the Minister to reconsider, arguing that 'they had no public building or appropriate place of any kind where it [the trophy] could be placed. Failing the Public School, the Trophy would be lost to us, a fact we would very much regret.'[55] Significantly, the policy was immediately overturned by State Cabinet following Labor's electoral defeat in May 1922.[56]

There are indications that the public's attitude towards war and military history may have also begun to shift during the early 1920s. Initial enthusiasm was replaced by disinterest and, as one military historian would have us believe, outright aversion.[57] Communities which had so readily joined in the trophy scramble were now having second thoughts as the anti-war lobby took on a broader, more grass-

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52 McKernan, p.84.

53 *Debates*, 29 October 1920, Vol.XCIV, p.6091.

54 *The Argus*, 26 March 1921, p.8

55 Duri School file correspondence dated 9 March 1921, an extract supplied to the author by the NSW Department of School Education.

56 *The Education Gazette* (NSW), 1 June 1922, p.132.

57 McKernan, p.85.

The Bulletin

Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, for Transmission by Post as a Newspaper.

Vol. 42.—No. 2138. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1921. Price 9d.

THE PACIFIST.

"The Labor Mayor of Sydney refuses to accept guns won by the A.I.F. as trophies for the city."—*Daily paper.*

AUSTRALIA: "Doesn't that stir your blood? Aren't you an Australian, too?"
LABOR LORD MAYOR: "Chuck the gun over the Gap! I doan' believe in war. Besides, some of them blokes fought agin our comrades in Russia."

roots complexion. In 1928 for instance the CWTC 'offered another gun from its cupboard of war leftovers' to the residents of Malvern (Vic.). The offer was subsequently declined by Council which had found 'from experience of the Gun at present placed in front of the City Hall', that these things 'had caused great grief from time to time to widows and mothers of deceased soldiers.' [58] *The Labor Call* showed far less restraint in making known its opposition to the trophy collection and all that it represented...

> *'Melbourne has two gruesome scrapheaps that are aftermaths of the world's great war...One of these scrapheaps is a human one - Caulfield Military Hospital; the other is a ghastly collection of scrap iron in the Exhibition Gardens, Melbourne...No father or mother, mourning a soldier son killed or one back home a cripple or a degenerate, can pass these hideous contraptions without a shudder. They have been referred to by the lip-loyalists as the glorious relics of a struggle in which our boys, dying, won undying fame'...but...'how many men care a jot about what guns were captured at Mont St.Quintin or Villers-Bretonneaux? Would it not have been better to spend the money on soldiers' hospitals that it cost to bring devilry devices to our shores?...If the high panjandrums of Victoria think any edifying or educational advantages are gained by displaying Australia's captures of steel and iron loot in France and other seats of war they are mistaken....'* [59]

Events followed a similar pattern on the other side of the Tasman where the removal of trophies during the inter-war period was also attributed to the growth of anti-war sentiment at that time.[60]

Trophy guns however were more often seen in a positive ideological light and in some rare instances, were even adopted as peace symbols. Geelong's Boer War memorial gun for example was acquired and installed at the initiative of a 'peace celebrations committee' formed in

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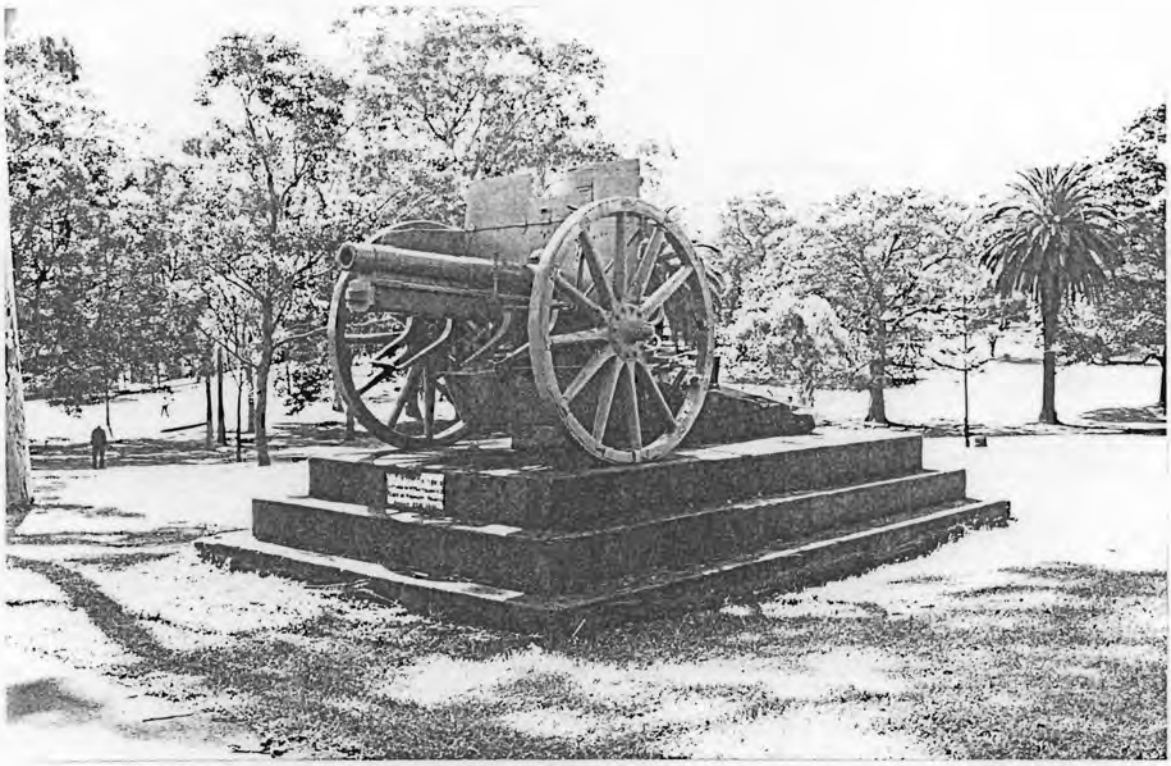
58 *Lynne*, p.171.

59 *The Labor Call*, 21 January 1921, p.12.

60 Fox, *Silent Sentinels*, pp.81-88.

1900.[61] Similarly, it was the *Northcote Soldiers' Welcome Home Committee* which first took charge of that municipality's trophy acquisition arrangements. Many trophies were also installed in peaceful parklike settings, often alongside shrines and commemorative statuary *(Illustration No.21).* Women were very much a part of these activities 'with the ladies [of Coffs Harbour] who had helped so much with the war effort being asked to unveil a captured German mortar.'[62]



21. St Leonard's Park, North Sydney (C96 n/A Nr. 5973)

Trophy transfers were formalised by the signing of a printed *Agreement* which bound the recipient to observe a number of minimum obligations. Each *Agreement* had to be signed by three appointed Trustees and an ex AIF member who, in so doing, undertook to...

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61 *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 August 1990.

62 Neil Yeates, *Coffs Harbour, Pre 1880 To 1954*, Vol.1 (Coffs Harbour City Council, 1990), p.142.

(a) *Arrange for it [the trophy] to be permanently housed in a public park, garden, or building within the town, whichever may appear most suitable, and for its subsequent preservation and safe custody.*

(b) *Arrange a simple ceremony, at which it should be formally taken over.*

(c) *Bear all expenses connected with transport and installation after arrival at the nearest railway station.* [63]

No provision though was ever made for enforcing these requirements as evidenced by the fact that some 80% of the trophies have since disappeared.[64] Fears that Australia might have not had enough trophies to go around were gradually allayed as councils failed to respond to deadlines, thereby increasing the number available for redistribution. Ironically the situation was even further alleviated by the NSW Government's decision to disallow war trophies in public schools, those weapons which had been earmaked for State School being released for reassignment.[65] This, in turn, allowed the CWTC to gradually relax its guidelines by again reconsidering the plight of those in soldier settlement areas, and 'those in the great back country' who had 'sent such a lot of fine young men to the Front.' [66] It was on this basis that some small rural communities, which had previously been promised nothing larger than a machinegun, were eventually able to amass 'formidable array[s]' of weaponry *(Illustration No.22).* [67]. After refusing to accept 'so small a piece' as a machinegun the

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63 *City of Northcote Agreement*, 17 July 1920, File 194 [Northcote] (AWM)

64 This estimate derives from national survey data collected during the period 1980-86 when the author was employed as a Curator of Weapons at the Australian War Memorial. The database has since been updated to 1993 using field data collected by the author, and provided by various interstate contributors.

65 *War Trophies*, Municipality of Woollahra (MW), Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 28 February 1921, File 195.G.

66 *Debates*, 23 July 1920, Vol.XCII

22. Some communities were able to amass formidable arrays of weaponry. Cootamundra (NSW) eventually boasted two field guns and a mortar, all of which were displayed in Albert Park. This view of the town's trophy display was taken in 1938 following the region's first recorded snow falls (Mitchell Library No.69110).

Corowa (NSW) Shire Council was subsequently allocated both a trench mortar and a field gun. Ironically though, it took the Council another ten years to agree on where to display these weapons.[68] The people of Warracknabeal (Vic.) fared even better by finishing up with no less than seven machineguns, a howitzer and a trench mortar.[69] But civic pride was never totally appeased. In Red Cliffs, a remote Victorian border town, the citizens were disgusted to receive a replacement 8.2" howitzer which they described 'a heap of old rubbish..."a gas pipe on a farm wagon"...' [70]

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67 *The Nhill Free Press*, 1 July 1921.

68 Brian Burton, *Flow Gently Past* (Corowa Shire Council, 1973), p.163.

69 Ian Maroske, *Warracknabeal: A Municipal History 1861-1991* (1991), p.97.

These victories however were but skirmishes compared to the community debates which sometimes followed. For having finally secured their trophies, councils were then faced with the problem of choosing a site that satisfied everyone. Recipients were left to decide their own display policy which can't always have been a straightforward task, particularly as few people in country areas would have even seen a war memorial, let alone a canon or a mortar. Unlike its North American and European allies, Australia was also completely devoid of regional museums. It took the residents of Corowa Shire ten years to agree a suitable location for their trophies during which time they were relocated no less than six times.

These debates though were more often concerned with matters of detail rather than substance since in most cases, there was broad agreement on the underlying principles. Australians had all inherited the view that war memorials, like other civic monuments, should be given prominence. And as with graves and cemeteries, it was universally accepted that these captured guns should, ideally, also be placed in tranquil garden settings.

The link between grave and garden was of critical importance and has been traced back to the Enlightenment when changing attitudes to death transformed the Christian cemetery into a 'peaceful wooded landscape of groves and meadows.' Pestilential odour and overcrowding had also hurried the separation of burial ground and church, and the consequent development of the new garden cemetery. Nature was thus afforded a dominant place in cemetery design with shade trees often being used to symbolise eternal sleep...'The new garden cemetery of Pere Lachaise, which was opened outside Paris in 1804, became a paradigm for cemeteries all over Europe.....- part park and part garden - [it] made burial in a natural setting not the privilege of a few, as it had been, but the norm for the population of Paris.' The latter was 'transformed into a landscape garden with some twelve thousand trees, populated by birds and animals as well as the dead.' In this manner the 'more disgusting reminders of mortality were kept out of sight.' The American Park Cemetery Movement

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70 *Mildura Telegraph* 20 October 1927.

(1830-50) may have also influential in helping to shape European - and thereby - Australian attitudes towards death and commemoration.[71]

By the mid-nineteenth century these changing attitudes had begun to affect the way in which trophy guns were publicly displayed. As memorials and symbols of personal sacrifice it was felt that they should also be arranged in settings that allowed for quite reflection, just as the French had done in Paris by 'tastefully arranging their guns captured at Sebastapol along the Boulevards.' [72] At the same time, across the Channel, the British started calling for their Crimean War trophies to be arranged 'sphinx-like' alongside the new Terrace-walk that ran from Thames -bank to Chelsea.[73] These ideals had been so thoroughly assimilated that even during the First World War, the Imperial War Trophies Committee began entertaining the idea of placing its captured guns in parks where the public might derive greater benefit.[74] Australian troops returning from Europe must have encountered these symbiotic garden/gun arrangements time and again, and many would have also returned with memories of their own captured guns arranged near Nelson's column, and amongst the trees that lined The Mall *(Illustration No.14)*.

With inevitable predicability, communities throughout Australia began to copy these established European customs. Williamstown (Vic.), in seeking to convince the CWTC of its trophy worthiness, emphasised both the 'importance of the city and the beauty of its botanic garden.' [75] Similar pleas were entered by the Prahran (Vic.) Council which

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71 George L Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping The Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford University Press, 1990) pp.39-41.

72 *London Times*, 10 September 1856, p.12.

73 *London Times*, 16 September 1856, p.8.

74 *Notes on Items of interest to Australia discussed at the 11th meeting of the War Trophies Committee held on 25th July 1918*, File 16 [4386/1/25] Pt.II (AWM).

75 *The Argus*, 19 December 1922, p.17.

reported that it had 'acquired thirty-one acres of park lands at "Como"', and that it was proposing 'to expend a considerable sum on its beautification.' [76] Similar arrangements had been made for Australia's largest war trophy, the 11" Amiens guns which was to have been 'permanently placed in the gardens adjoining the central railway station' in Sydney *(Illustration No.8).* [77] Some trophies were displayed alongside park rotundas in a manner that clearly - and unconsciously - echoed the Roman practice of using captured property to adorn public stages.[78] The public green of course was common ground, a place 'without territorial conflict' where 'townspeople can expect their monuments to be maintained.'[79] The commemorative purpose of these greenbelts was often reinforced by assigning the name 'ANZAC Park', an act which helped to give place a memory.

The commanding position was second only to the park and garden as the preferred trophy location and in many instances the two criteria were combined *(Illustrations Nos. 21, 23 & 30).* The elevated location afforded both prominence and context with its clear visual reference to the gun's historical design function (viz. defensive armament). Some surmounted hills (e.g. Goulburn, NSW) while others (e.g. Sandgate (Qld.), Warrnambool (Vic.) and St. Kilda (Vic.)) were installed in commanding positions overlooking the sea. The latter appears to have been an intentional and much favoured relationship, the combination of sea and hill having symbolic relevance to the terrain at Gallipoli. At least one returned soldier was compelled to remark on this geographical coincidence when, in 1915, a war memorial was unveiled at Mt Eliza on the cliff overlooking Perth (W.A.) *(Illustration No.23).* [80]

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76 *Prahran Council to WTC*, 23 November 1921, File 194 [Prahran] (AWM).

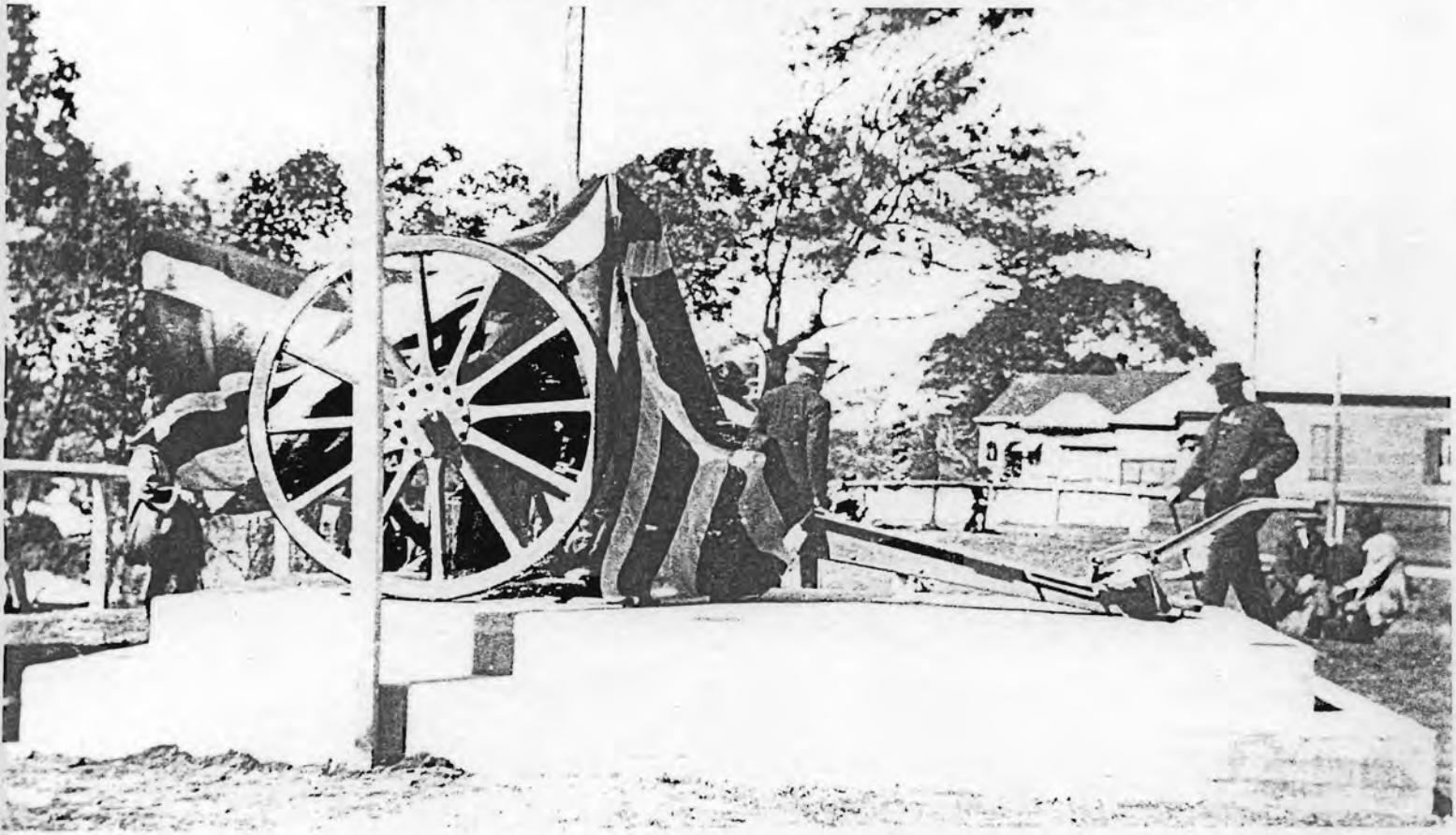
77 *The Argus*, 2 August 1919, p.19.

78 H.Grotius, p.335. Trophy-rotunda arrangements can still be seen at Charters Towers (Qld.) and Mt.Gambier (S.A.).

79 James M Mayo, *War Memorials As Political Landscape* (Praeger Publishers, NY, 1988), p.30.

80 Welborn, p.151.

Many memorials and trophies also had stepped bases 'which raised them well above the spectator's eye level, demanding an attitude of reverence.'*(Illustrations Nos. 21, 24 & 30).* [81] The citizens of Enfield (NSW) for example installed their trophy in a 'commanding position' alongside the country's busiest highway, where it wouldn't possibly be missed.[82] Civic buildings sometimes offered the same advantages and for this reason were also favoured as trophy display sites *(Illustrations Nos. 24 & 25).* The organisations benefiting from the CWTC's largesse were also required to arrange a formal unveiling ceremony. Additional caveats were sometimes imposed by state WTC's the Queensland Committee insisting for example that trophy guns should be integrated with any existing or planned memorials.



23. The Sandgate (Qld.) trophy - above - was displayed in an elevated position overlooking Bramble Bay, the combination of sea and hill having symbolic relevance to the terrain at Gallipoli. (John Oxley Library No.169185)

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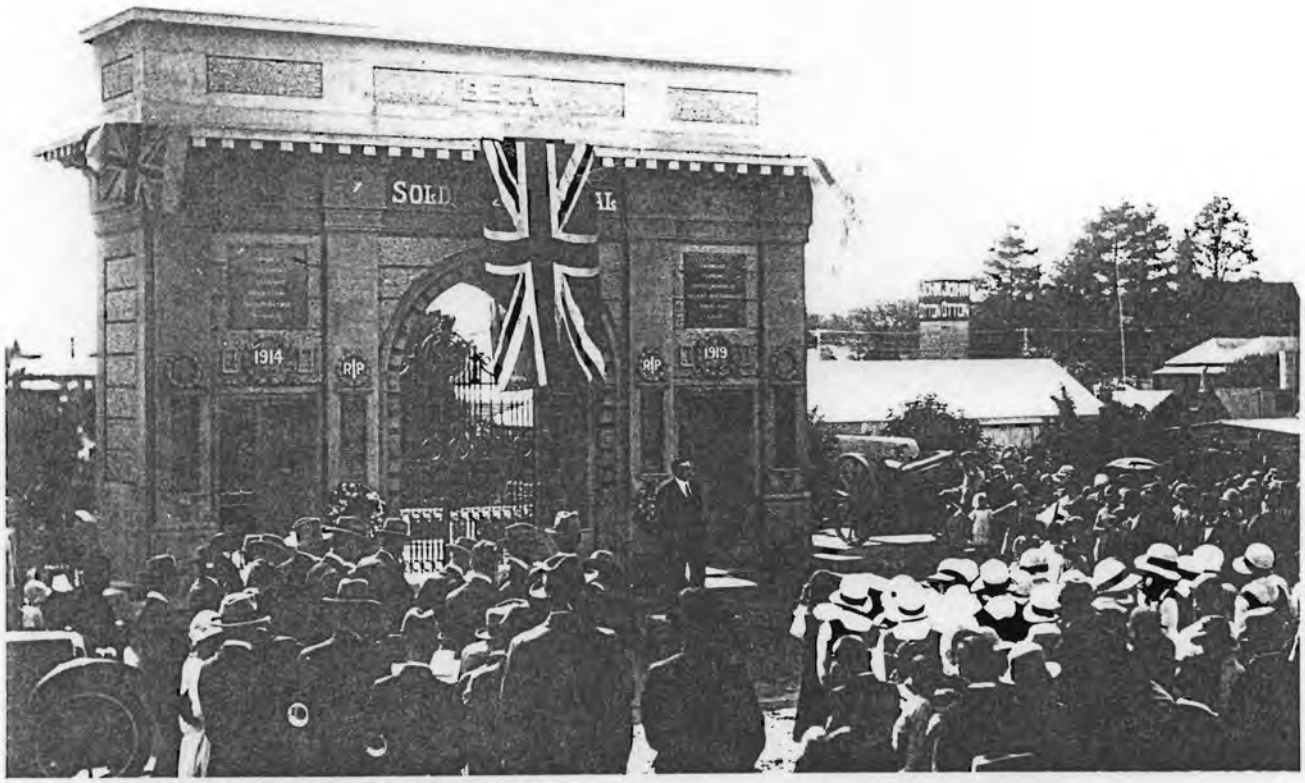
81 Judith McKay & Richard Allom, *Lest We Forget: A Guide To The Conservation Of War Memorials*, (RSL, 1984), p.4.

82 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 October 1924.

24 & 25. Civic buildings were often favoured as trophy display sites. The Ararat (Vic.) Town Hall (above) and St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney (below) are both seen here being guarded by trophy guns, the latter dating from the Crimean War (Museum of Victoria's Photo Archive No.6930 & Mitchell Library No.17368)

Although ceremonial guidelines were never issued to recipients these unveilings all displayed a common regard for martial, ecclesiastical, civic and political customs. The format for these trophy ceremonies had in fact been determined long before the war, similar rites having been performed throughout Australia following the Boer War. We need only consider one such ceremony, which took place in the tiny Victorian township of Longwood in 1904, to distinguish the elements that were common to hundreds of subsequent trophy unveilings.

The Longwood unveiling was attended by a 'large and representative gathering' that included the Shire President, the district's parliamentary and senior military representatives together with children from all the schools in the district.[83] A succession of speakers praised the sacrifice and recounted the circumstances until finally, the regimental trumpeter sounded the Last Post. Proceedings would then terminate with the whole assemblage singing the national anthem *(Illustration No.26).*



26. Unveiling the memorial arch and trophies at Bega (NSW) in 1920 (Mitchell Library No.02302).

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83 *Weekly Times*, 13 February 1904, p.14.

In many post-war trophy ceremonies the gun was quite literally unveiled, having been draped throughout the ceremony with a Union Jack *(Illustrations Nos.23 & 30)*. Patriotic fervour was particularly evident in those communities - like Enfield and St Kilda - which had supported the conscription referenda. The Mayor of Enfield asked his gathering to rejoice 'that the British Empire had maintained its integrity', and that 'we were still able to enjoy the freedom that the British Empire gave.' [84] His counterpart from St Kilda displayed just as much loyalty with his opening address...'Whenever you gaze upon this great engine of modern warfare, I want you to remember that the British Empire, during the Great War, enrolled a magnificent army of 9,496,370 men...' [85] This last unveiling was preceded by the distribution of handbills and attended by a uniformed band which, in combination, lent a carnival air to the proceedings. The unveiling at Woollahra was also held in conjunction with a United Service and Patriotic Demonstration which had been organised specifically for that occasion.[86]

It was the ecclesiastical emphasis however, the inclusion of religious ritual and iconography which best distinguished these pre and post-war unveilings. Nowhere had the experience of mass death been more keenly felt than in Australia which had suffered more casualties - in proportional terms - than any other British army. Personal sacrifice on this scale demanded some form of spiritual reconciliation, particularly as Australia's war dead had all (bar one) been buried overseas. Memorial unveilings (be they marble or metal) were overlaid with religious meaning as communities sought to 'give [their] men each year the funeral they had never had.' [87] In this way people could also reaffirm - in public at least - their allegiance to the popular

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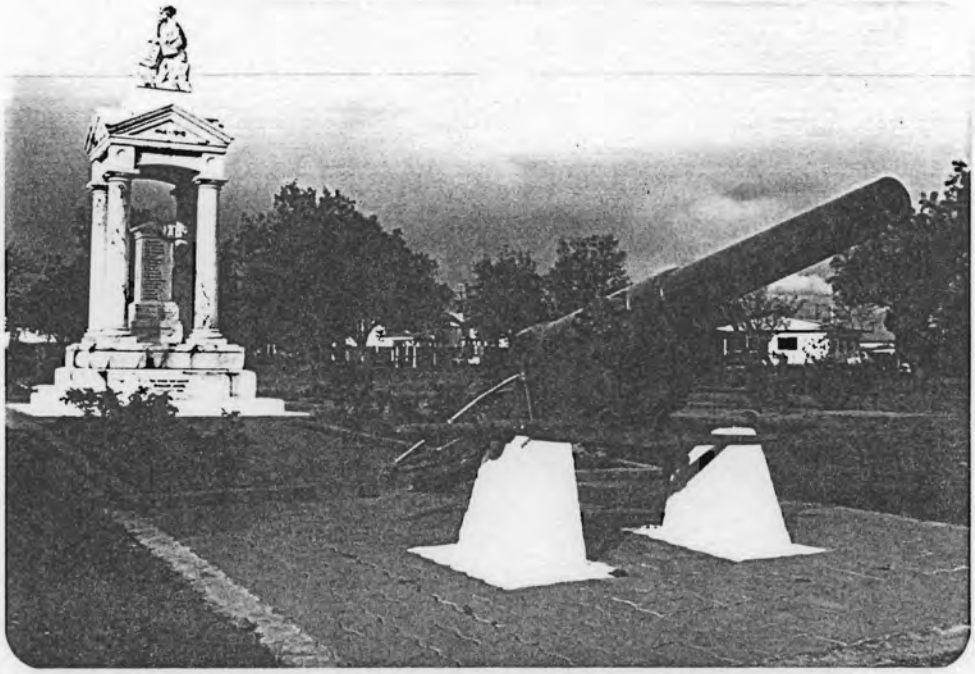
84 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 October 1924.

85 *A Message*, Handwritten speech by Burnett Gray, 23 June 1923, File 06/012/0011 (SKCC)

86 *Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting*, 29 May 1921, File 195.G (MW)

87 K S Inglis, 'Memorials of the Great War', *Australian Cultural History*, No.6 1987, p.5.

credo that gains to Empire and country outweighed the sense of personal loss. Belief in Australia's war aims allowed people to not only justify their loss[es], but to also transcend death itself. Thus, 'the fallen were truly made sacred in the imitation of Christ' their suffering and death being analogous to the latter's Passion and resurrection.[88] This new civic religion, 'provided the most solid ground from which the war experience could be confronted and transcended.'[89] War memorials were thereby transformed into sacred places, the foci for a new 'cult of the fallen' which had provided the nation with martyrs and shrines of national worship.[90]



27. 'Many trophies were installed alongside masonry memorials whose form, function and appearance...owed much to Christian symbolism'. (Gatton, Queensland, 1986).

The intimate connection between the fallen soldier and Christ himself was reinforced by the iconography and ritual that accompanied these commemorative unveilings. Often the trophy site was set aside in a non-denominational religious ceremony jointly performed by a military chaplain and priests from all the local churches.

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88 Mosse, p.35.

89 Ibid., p.75.

90 Ibid., p.35.

The citizens of Woollahra even sought the church's permission to hold their unveiling on the Sabbath so as to further underline the sacredness of the occasion. The flag draped trophy, moreover, was clearly reminiscent of the catafalques used - then as now - during military burial ceremonies. The themes of remembrance and reverence were oft repeated throughout these ceremonies, and in dedicatory inscriptions like 'To The Glory Of God'. Many trophies were installed alongside masonry memorials whose form, function and appearance also owed much to Christian symbolism *(Illustration No.27)*.

The Australian poet Geoff Page has well summed up the mood of those occasions in his poem, 'Smalltown Memorials'. From these lines we can also glean some hint of what the future held in store for Australia's war trophy collection...

> *'1919, 1920:*
> *All over the country;*
> *Maybe a band, slow march;*
> *Mayors, shire councils;*
> *Relatives for whom*
> *Print was already*
> *Only print; mates,*
> *Come back, moving*
> *Into unexpected days;*
> *A ring of Fords and sulkies;*
> *The toned-down bit from an*
> *Ex-Recruiting sergeant.*
> *Unveiled;*
> *Then seen each day -*
> *Noticed once a year;*
> *And then not always,*
> *Everywhere.'* [91]

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91 Geoff Page, 'Smalltown Memorials', *Paperback Poets*, Second Series 5 (UQP, 1975), p.12.

REDEFINING THE TRADITION

The idea of conducting a religious service around deadly, inanimate war machine would strike most of us today as absurd, profane even. It seems remarkable at this distance that such scenes could have been sanctioned, let alone acted out on countless occasions. What seems even more strange perhaps is that the apparent absurdity of these events went altogether unremarked. Feelings of unease and embarrassment - if they did ever exist - were universally repressed in a manner that tends now to suggest the existence of a completely different morality and world view.

Australians, then, could gather around an 11 ton high-velocity German field gun - one that was certain to have killed a few diggers - and listen attentively as their civic and spiritual leaders recounted in precise terms the details of its awesome destructiveness.[1] Spiritual, personal, and in some cases aesthetic qualities were extolled with equal conviction and often as not, politicians would scramble for the opportunity to participate in these important gatherings.

Things were different then, but just how different? Why was it so important for communities then to have their own captured gun, something which few, if any would have ever seen before? And how was it possible to reconcile the gun's form and innate destructiveness with established notions of aesthetics and morality? Furthermore, how might we account for the profound attitudinal shifts that have occurred during the last seventy years since the trophy was first installed as a dominant feature of the Australian landscape? These answers, if they can be found, might lie in an understanding of the war trophy's original significances.

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1 See for example *The Age*, 25 June 1923.

We've seen already how the war trophy acquired different meanings during the war, and how those meanings were sometimes altered to suit the dominant political and military agendas. Trophy guns were used initially to help stimulate recruiting, and to dishonour those who had failed to enlist and/or opposed the conscription plebiscites. On the other hand, the Belgian howitzers captured by the AIF at Poziers had been imbued with historical significance since these were the first European trophies ever captured by Australian forces. The massive Amiens gun meanwhile had acquired icon status. As the largest of all world war one trophies it became a source of great national pride. The trophy therefore was effective on a number of different levels and quite often its meaning would vary from one interest group to another, and from one individual to another. After the war, however, a whole new set of values was brought to bear on the collection as governments were again compelled to refocus on domestic issues.

Chief among these was the notion that the trophy should serve, first and foremost, as a war memorial. Trophy guns thus became the first, and the most common of all war memorials to be erected in Australia. These were - and still are - more numerous than the ubiquitous digger on a plinth which has since come to symbolise military commemoration in this country *(Illustration No.6)*. Trophy memorials were usually installed years - sometimes decades - before their masonry counterparts at a rate that would seem to suggest an overwhelming preference for metal, rather than marble commemorative forms. It is more likely however that this outcome reflected a range of practical, rather than aesthetic considerations.

Trophies were relatively accessible and were available for distribution fairly soon after the war. These were also being distributed on a gratis basis whereas even the humblest of stone monuments might have cost several hundred pounds.[2] Trophies, moreover, were far less likely to precipitate the bitter community wrangling that characterised so many of the later attempts to select and install more conventional war memorials.

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2 Hawthorn's memorial column cost £2,371 in 1929.

The range of choice with trophies was very limited which also meant that there was little scope for subjective based argument concerning such matters of form, style, cost and medium. But this is not to suggest that trophies were completely devoid of ideological merit. Quite the opposite. For the trophy memorial, unlike the digger on the plinth (and its many variations), could be transformed into a highly egalitarian symbol which forcefully represented collective rather than individual effort. There were never any names inscribed on these metal monuments whereas other commemorative forms displayed a high degree of selectivity by honouring some, and dishonouring others. In this respect at least the trophy gun seemed a more appropriate symbol, one that accurately reflected the egalitarianism of the ANZACs themselves. It must also be borne in mind of course that most war memorials had been dedicated to kings, queens and generals prior to world war one.

Many of the war memorials erected at this time made extensive use of traditional cemetery iconography and as such, were sometimes barely distinguishable from the monuments that filled the local burial ground. The trophy gun by contrast was a forceful and unambiguous symbol which, in post-war Australia, could relate to nothing other than recent military events. These factors in combination produced a monumental form that was both powerful and desirable.

There seems little doubt that artillery - then as now - was also imbued with an aesthetic quality, one that was appreciated by a significant cross section of the community. Strange as it may seem, Northcote's 8" naval gun was lauded even before the war as an 'ornament', and something that would help improve the appearance of the town.[3] By war's end one could also distinguish the beginnings of a connoisseurship with some trophies being passed over on the basis that '"they were not decorative enough".'[4] Even now, it is not uncommon for newlywed couples to choose these ancient guns as props and

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3 *The Leader*, 1 March 1913.

4 Donald Grave's journal article *Booty! The Story of Canada's World War One Trophy Collection*, Arms Collecting, Vol.23, No.1 (February 1985), p.8.

backdrops for their once-in-a-lifetime wedding portraits *(Illustration No.28).* [5]

Trophies also fulfilled a range of sociological and psychological needs which might conveniently be described as propaganda. This was a cheap and effective way of demonstrating both the prowess of the Australian soldier as well as the Empire's superiority, relative to Germany. Blockbuster trophy exhibitions were staged by nearly all the allied armies in a undisguised effort to try and maximise these effects. The demonstration of relative might was, however, just one of several propaganda objectives. Trophies were also used with great effect to help ridicule Australia's enemy to which end, the English language proved to be a most helpful medium. Trophy guns would frequently be described to the public and interpreted by the press in derogatory and anthropomorphical terms which helped foster the perception that German weaponry was ineffectual, or that the Germans themselves were a grotesque, sub-human race.

The Australian war correspondent Charles Bean was among the first to propagate this subterfuge by likening the German 8" howitzer to a 'toad', and the 4.2" gun to a 'snake'.[6] These were soon joined by '"Dirty Dick" (a great squat howitzer which, by the way, had fired 194 rounds at his former employers).' [7] It didn't matter that some of these trophies were battle scarred and disfigured as this helped to heighten the overall impression. To this ignominy would be added such headlines as 'Krupps Made It, Ludendorff Lost It, St.Kilda Holds It.' [8]

It had been a common practice for the troops in the trenches to assign comic names to the various German artillery devices which had largely determined the ebb and flow of the conflict, and which had also inflicted the majority of allied casualties. These names - such as

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5 *Western Independent*, 11 August 1992, p.28.

6 *The Argus*, 18 June 1919, p.9.

7 *The Argus*, 21 June 1919, p.8.

8 *The Sun*, 25 June 1923.

Werribee couple Lisa Hollowood and William Luca with the bridal party on their wedding day. Photo: Barry Sutton Photographers.

28. Greenwich Reserve, Newport, Melbourne, 1992.

plum pudding (trench mortars), *Whiz Bang* (a 75mm field gun), *Lovely Lilly* (a 6" naval gun), *daisy cutter* and *Big Bertha* (a giant trench mortar) - were used to interpret the Australian trophy guns in a manner that was clearly intended to help downplay the nature of the artillery threat, whilst simultaneously belittling the opposition in general, and Friedrich Krupp in particular.[9].

There was however another, far more subtle purpose to this strategy. By naming these inanimate objects soldiers could also ascribe to them certain human attributes. In this way the troops were able to assign qualities - such as vulnerability - to an enemy that had remained faceless and invisible for much of the war. As Paul Fussel later remarked...'The German line and the space behind it are so remote and mysterious that actually to see any of it's occupants is a shock.' [10] But if the enemy remained detached and illusive for those in the front line, then he was nigh invisible to the five million Australians who were 13,000 miles removed from the conflict.

Feelings of anxiety were compounded for these people who, until the arrival of the first German war trophies, had no way of comprehending the precise nature of the threat that confronted them, and their loved ones in Europe. These anxieties would perhaps have been less acute for the English who, on certain days, could even hear the sound of the artillery duels across the Channel. For many Australians it was a relief to be able to see and touch these silent guns with their splintered barrels and pock marked carriages. They could finally render visible an enemy that had remained faceless for five long years and by assigning to each gun a personality, they could be doubly assured of his vulnerability. The threat could be contained. This helps in part to explain why it was so important for Australians to own their own trophy, why "It was impossible to have too many [trophies]", and just why they were so frequently described in personal terms.[11] One prominent Melbourne trophy was reported, at the time of unveiling, to 'possess an almost human air, as if looking vainly for rescuers who will never come.'[12] And included in the first trophy consignment was another gun that had "got[ten] one fair in the mouth.'[13]

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9 Bertha was Gustav Krupp's wife.

10 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (OUP, 1975), p.76.

11 Ann Millar, 'Gallipoli to Melbourne, The Australian War Memorial 1915-19', *Australian War Memorial Journal*, April 1987, p.38.

12 *The Sun*, 25 June 1923.

Related to these propaganda significances was the belief that trophies also represented the spoils of war, the just rewards for a nation that had been unjustly wounded. Victorious armies had for centuries been reaping these very same rewards and it seemed only proper that Australia, with its magnificent military record, should derive similar benefit. Trophies were also regarded as a form of compensation and, as noted previously, this desire for recompense was most keenly felt in those communities which had responded willingly to the call to arms. Tiny Nyabing (W.A.) with its 'impressive number of...men killed' felt particularly deserving, as did the Melbourne seaside suburb of St.Kilda.[14] Although the latter had been compensated with one of the largest guns ever captured by the AIF, this gesture was still received by council as a 'slight but welcome recognition of St. Kilda's splendid efforts in the war.'[15] From this compensation notion sprang the perverse but popular belief that municipal stature was somehow linked to the size and number of one's trophies. There is ample evidence - as previously discussed - to show that in Australia, the war trophy became a barometer of civic pride. The idea of paying homage to a captured enemy gun seems less bizarre when considered in these contexts.

But just as personal suffering demanded compensation, then so too did Australia's injured (and infant) sense of national pride. The Australian nation may have come of age at Gallipoli but importantly, the ANZACs had retreated from the Dardanelles with nothing to show for their six month trial. To this ignominy was added the knowledge that Australians may have indirectly helped the Germans and Turks to victory on that occasion. The Krupp dynasty which armed most of Europe's armies had enjoyed a long and happy association with Australia that dated back to the Sydney Exhibition of 1879. The Krupp display of steel guns took out a gold medal on that occasion, marking the beginning of a long and mutually profitable liaison.

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13 The Argus, 21 June 1919, p.8.

14 Suzanne Welborn, *Lords Of Death: A People, A Place, A Legend* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1982), p.150.

15 *The Sun*, 25 June 1923.

The Public Library of Victoria even derived some small benefit from this unlikely partnership, receiving - in 1913 - a personally inscribed centenary history of the Krupp company. Of far greater interest however were Krupp's capital investments in this region. Though rarely acknowledged, the Krupps - just prior to world war one - owned much of Australia's base metal industry.[16] The Gallipoli defeat may therefore have been facilitated by gun metal mined in Australia, possibly even by some of those who wore the slouch hat. The odium of this knowledge may have increased Australia's desire for compensation which, in turn, would help to explain why so much Krupp metal was brought back to these shores after the war, why those trophies which had been turned against the Germans were particularly prized and why, during world war two, some communities were more than happy to see their trophies 'recast...in service against the Huns...'*(Illustration No.29).* [17]

29. The most prized trophies of all were those which had been pressed back into service, against their makers. These Australian Field Artillery troops were photograhed near Vaux Villers in August 1918, preparing to fire a captured German C96 n/A field gun (Imperial War Museum No.E(AUS).2852).

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16 William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp 1587-1968* (Little, Crown & Co. Pty. Ltd., 1968), p.262.

17 See *The Sun* (Melbourne) 8 April 1942 and Ann Longmore's *The Show Goes On*, Vol.3 (Hudson Publishers, 1989), p.102.

Altruism also played a part in helping to shape community interest in the trophy collection. There is in fact a considerable weight of evidence to show that these guns were expected to perform a number of didactic functions. Australians were told time and again, 'Whenever you gaze upon this great engine of modern warfare...to remember' the horrors of war, the need for preparedness, and the 'promises to care for those who had been left by those who would never return.' [18,19] For these reasons trophies were quite often installed at schools and repatriation hospitals where they were expected to perform like beacons, illuminating the future with a clear and positive message that would be received by 'generations yet unborn.' [20]

No assessment of the Australian War Trophy Collection would be complete without some discussion of its relationship to Australian nationalism, and the ANZAC legend in particular. Historians on both sides of the Tasman have highlighted the war memorial's importance in helping to establish and sustain this shared legend.[21] Some have identified the memorial as a stepping stone, 'an important stage in the creation of national myths around which have 'occurred the rituals of Anzac Day, the closest thing either country possessed to a ceremony of nationalism.' [22] Similar links have been established in Europe where the war memorial is said to have 'occupied a sacred place dedicated to

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18 *A Message*, Handwritten speech by Mayor Burnett Gray, 23 June 1923, File 06/012/0011 (SKCC).

19 *The Age*, 25 June 1923.

20 *The Argus*, 3 February 1919, p.4.

21 See for example Shaun Patrick Kenaelly, 'Anzac Memorials', *IPA Review*, Winter 1990, Vol.43 No.4, pp 54-59; and Chris Maclean & Jock Phillips, *The Sorrow And The Pride, New Zealand War Memorials* (GP Books, 1990).

22 K.S. Inglis & Jock Phillips, 'War Memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Study', *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol.24, No.96, April 1991, p.179.

the civic religion of nationalism.' [23] Trophy memorials by comparison have only ever been cursorily investigated.[24] Attempts to link the trophy and ANZAC traditions have been largely superficial, drawing for the most part on circumstantial evidence. Ann Millar for instance, in trying to explain why there were fewer trophies collected in the Middle East, draws attention to the fact that the immensely popular *Anzac Book* had not been distributed there during the war (whereas it had been in western Europe).[25]

This lack of interest in the trophy-legend relationship is partly understandable given that there were no Australian trophies from Gallipoli. But by looking further ahead, well beyond these formative months, it is possible to distinguish a number of critical links which begin to suggest something more compelling than coincidence. The ANZAC myth may have been hatched at Gallipoli in 1915 but in fact, it wasn't until the last years of the war, in France, that it was finally forged into a legend. The highpoint of that legend was the operation against the Amiens salient which took place on the 8th August 1918, 'a day which the Germans regarded at the blackest in their history.' [26] This was the campaign which established General Monash as a daring and innovative commander, and it was here that the Australians, after having been 'thrown into the breech', succeeded in halting (and reversing) Germany's overwhelming advance towards Amiens, and thence to Paris.[27] This was the Australia Corp's 'finest hour', the highpoint of a legendary campaign which had begun on the shores of Gallipoli.[28] Significantly, it also marked the AIF's largest ever

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23 George L Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers, Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (OUP, 1990), p.101.

24 Aaron Fox's B.A.(Hons.) thesis *Silent Sentinels* is the notable exception to this rule, being the first, and most comprehensive investigation to date of ANZAC war trophies.

25 Millar, p.37.

26 *The Age*, 13 June 1921.

27 3 February 1919,

trophy haul. The 173 trophy guns captured that day were all shipped to Australia and subsequently unveiled as war memorials, affording the only material evidence of Australia's crowning military achievement. These therefore became the very embodiment of the ANZAC legend that was to grow in stature with each successive unveiling and ANZAC day. The events of that day were recounted over and again in terms that left no doubt as to the trophy's symbolic significance.

There were of course few communities in Australia, prior to 1919, which had a focus for their ANZAC Day rituals and celebrations. The distribution of the Australian trophies helped overcome this problem as guns were progressively enshrined throughout the country. These became the first, and the most common of all Australian war memorials. More importantly, they gave many communities their first April 25th rallying point, a powerfully symbolic destination where previously, there had been nothing. The granite and marble memorials which appeared later were in fact the artificial constructs of a people far removed from the forge which had cast the legend. They were representational whereas the trophy was legend made manifest, something that could lend immediacy, purpose and ambience to the ritual occasion. Although the focus has since shifted (from the metal to the stone memorials) the trophy remained for many years integral, if not central to the annual Anzac ceremony *(Illustrations Nos. 18 & 30).* Guns of course were (and still are) very potent and unambiguous symbols which, when viewed within the context of an ANZAC Park, a memorial hall or a war memorial precinct, spoke forcefully about legend and military commemoration. They could not be missed - if only because of the children perched on their barrels - whereas their masonry counterparts (Geoff Page's *Smalltown Memorials*) were more easily overlooked...

> '*...seen each day -*
> *Noticed once a year;*
> *And then not always,*'

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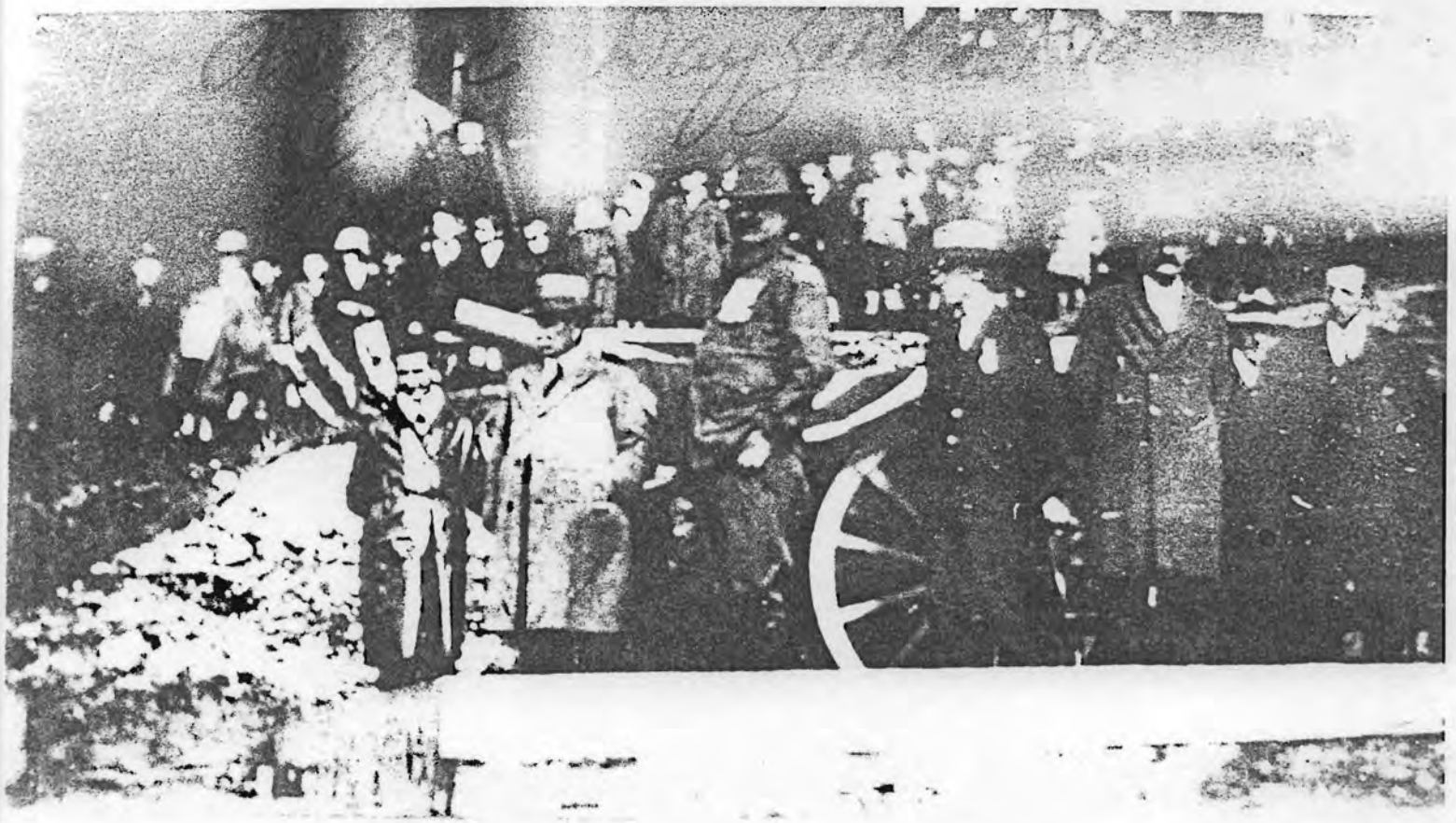
28 David Horner, 'Our Finest Hour, The Fight That Changed Australia', *The Australian Magazine*, August 7 - 8, 1993, p.12.



30. Zeehan, Tasmania, 1923. The trophy gun provided many Australian communities with their first April 25th rallying point (West Coast Pioneers' Memorial Museum).

The *Sydney Morning Herald* sought to underscore this legendary importance by comparing the trophy collection with the 'treasured relics of Cook's landing or Phillip's foundation effort; or...the mighty days of the gold rush.' [29] Significantly Cook's voyage of 1788 and gold fields uprising of 1854 were later commemorated with monument-gun arrangements which, in form at least, perfectly prefigured the Great War trophy memorials *(Illustration No.31).* [30]

Those who forged the legend in Europe and the Middle East continued after the war to nurture and promote the trophy-memorial-legend alliance.

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29 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 August 1924,

30 I am referring here to the Captain Cook memorial in Cooktown (Qld.) and Ballarat's Eureka Stockade monument in Victoria.

These legions regrouped under the banner of the RSL (Returned Services League) which remains, to this day, the keeper of the tradition. RSL representatives were usually always in attendance at trophy unveilings and significantly, it is this League which continues to sustain and protect the remnants of Australia's trophy collection.

31. Ballarat's Eureka Stockake monument which perpetuates the memory of another legendary Australian conflict, and which may have been the paradigm for many of the Great War trophy memorials (Museum of Victoria's Photo Archive No.430).

It was the Enfield-Croydon Sub-Branch of the RSL which, in March 1987, convinced the Strathfield Municipal Council to rededicate its restored trophy on Anzac Day during the annual commemorative service.[31] The trophy's ongoing importance was highlighted again when the guest speaker on that occasion observed that 'for many of our generation, memorials like this are the only tangible reminders we have of the tragedy of war, of the lives given so that we may live in peace today.' [32]

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31 *R Wallace to Town Clerk*, 17 March 1987, File G/8 523, Strathfield Municipal Council (SMC)

The RSL has responded to these, and similar remarks by reminding councils, in no uncertain terms, of their moral and legal obligations to their world war one trophies. A report that St. Kilda may have disposed of its trophy drew an immediate response - in 1981 - from both the League's Federal and State branch presidents. The latter reminded Council of the gun's 'paramount importance' while the National Executive added that it 'views the loss of this weapon as a serious matter.'[33] The League is understood to have recently begun lobbying the Victorian Government for heritage legislation that could afford some measure of protection for the state's remaining trophies. The RSL has also provided funding for public restoration and education programmes, Judith Mackay and Richard Allom's *Lest We Forget: A Guide To The Conservation Of War Memorials* (1984) being one of the more practical outcomes of this strategy. Politicians have also begun to see merit in championing this cause , Dr. John Hewson being among the more conspicuous of these.[34]

These factors in combination tend to suggest that trophy guns were much more than ritual appendages and that they may, instead, have been the very keystones that stabilised and sustained the Anzac tradition, particularly during its formative years.

Inevitably though these spokes and felloes began to rot, and the carriages began to rust, placing both the trophy and the Australian public at risk. Councils were quickly led to realise that steel and timber, unlike granite and marble, were simply not suited to prolonged exposure to the elements. Trophies required constant maintenance, the cost of which had to be passed on to the ratepayers. The Enfield (NSW) Council was compelled, as early as 1929, to spend

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32 *Untitled typewritten speech by Mr Ford*, n.d., File G/8 523 (SMC)

33 *Ruxton to Town Clerk, 3 February 1981 and Keys to Town Clerk*, File 06/012/0011 (SKCC)

34 The Federal Opposition Leader has made a number of representations to the Municipality of Woollahra concerning the deterioration of their 150 mm naval gun. See *Town Clerk to Hewson*, 4 February 1990, File 195.G/6/1500 (MW).

maintenance, the cost of which had to be passed on to the ratepayers. The Enfield (NSW) Council was compelled, as early as 1929, to spend £14 on the manufacture of new trophy wheels after the originals had rotted away.[36] Maintenance demands and public injuries steadily increased during the inter-war period and on one occasion, in Melbourne, a schoolboy was crushed to death when a trophy gun collapsed.[37] These factors steadily undermined the trophy's cultural and spiritual importance to the point where, during world war two, councils were actively seeking to divest themselves of these responsibilities.[38]

This pattern of events was repeated in both Canada and the United States. In 1940 the Dominion Archivist and Chairman of the Canadian War Museum Board even offered to the government, for scrap, all German war trophies on hand. 'The offer was accepted and later the board extended their salvage operation to include all trophies returned by municipalities and institutions throughout the country.' [39] New Zealand might have followed suit had it also possessed the industrial capacity for reprocessing these steel leviathans. The memories of World War One had by that stage been consigned to the pages of history, overtaken by a far more immediate crisis. The emphasis had shifted then to practical rather than symbolic commemorative forms, the memorial park, hall and swimming pool being far more common than the obelisk, cenotaph or trophy. Some councils however had great difficulty deciding whether to part with these generational landmarks which had been so thoroughly absorbed into their collective

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36 *Quotation from H J Bishop & Son.*, 14 October 1929 (SMC)

37 I am advised by the Archivist at Scotch College that this happened just prior to the Second War War, and that the gun - pictured on the cover of this thesis - was subsequently buried in the school grounds.

38 St Kilda made a number of unsuccessful attempts during the second world war to give its gun back to the Defence Daprtment (see SKCC Report No.29540, Box 117). Woollahra succeeded in 1930 in handing its gun back to the Army's South Head Depot.

39 Graves, p.9.

consciousness.[40] Hawthorn's council in 1948 began searching for 'some other way of complying with the conditions of the trust agreement relating to the war trophies' so 'that they may be removed from the parks and gardens.' [41] A similar move by Geelong - that same year - met with strong resistance, one councillor despairing that 'It was a pity to uproot everything of historic value.'[42]

The trophy's symbolic values was further undermined during the post-war decades, hastened by the emergence - in the 1970s - of the all pervasive tidy towns ethic. Councils were hard pressed to justify the retention of these now forlorn relics which, in many instances, had even outlived their usefulness as playground furniture. Many of Australia's 1,340 trophy guns and mortars are now thought to have been destroyed during this post world war two period. Some were sold for scrap while many found their way to the local dump, via the council depot. Others were dumped into the ocean and down abandoned mineshafts, or used as construction site infill. The trophy's spiritual significance was steadily eroded and replaced with a range of commercial, utilitarian, decorative, recreational, technological and antiquarian values. Guns were treated like 'garden statuary' being moved from one park location to another, and from one town to another *(Illustration No.32).* [43] One Sydney council was even persuaded in 1957 to reinstate its trophy, believing that 'it would be a wonderful plaything for small children attending the adjoining playground.' [44]

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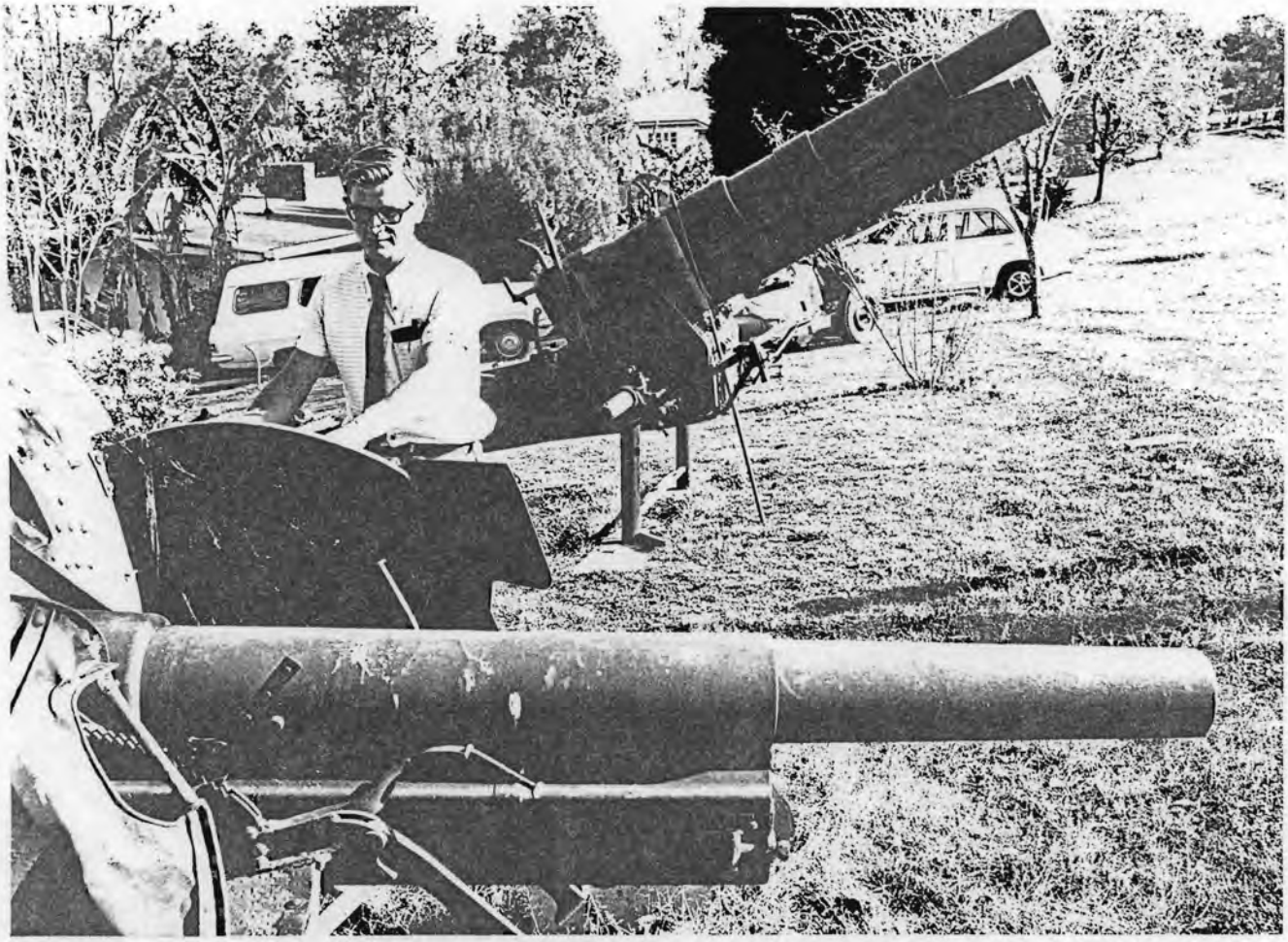
40 In his 1981 *Australia Day* address the Govenor-General recounted his chilhood memories of the trophy gun which once occupied the upper Esplanade at St. Kilda. *Ruxton to Town Clerk*, 6 February 1981,*Council Minutes*, File 06/012/0011 (KCC).

41 *Council Minutes*, 21 January 1948, Hawthorn City Council (HCC).

42 *Geelong Advertiser*, 25 August 1948, p.1.

43 Judith McKay & Richard Allom, *Lest We Forget: A Guide To The Conservation Of War Memorials*, (RSL, 1984), p.3.

44 'Transfer of field gun from South Head Military Reserve', *Council Minutes*, 23 September 1957 (WMC).



32. Trophies began to be treated like 'garden statuary' after the Second World War. These examples (an l.F.H.Kp. Nr.16191 and an s.F.H.13) 'were found lying on their sides behind [Brisbane's] Albion Park' during the early 1970s, and were later installed in a suburban front yard (Courier Mail 2061/RSM 1500-7).

This dislocation of memory affected metal and masonry memorials alike, both of which were steadily uprooted by commercial redevelopment and urban expansion pressures.[45]

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45 See D. Gilfedder, 'The Mobile Monument: Circulation and the Mobile Art of Memory',*Transition* (RMIT, 1990). The metal memorials were comparatively mobile and portable and as such, began to disappear at a faster rate.

Intervention by private collectors during the 1960s helped to preserve a significant number of trophies, whilst simultaneously fuelling mainstream heritage and commercial interest in this long-forgotten aspect of Australian military history. In this manner responsibility for Australia's remaining trophies was passed from councils to museums (and RSL sub-branches), and from the public to the private sector. From this process there emerged a new commercial ethic, and a growing sense that the trophy - in some ill defined way - was part of our collective heritage. Guns were valued as much for their collectibility, and their intrinsic, technological significance. Trophy market values began to steadily increase throughout the 1980s in line with the growing commercialisation of Australia's heritage. Interest was also fuelled by the advertising and entertainment industries, particularly the Australian film industry *(Illustration No.33, overleaf).* [46] This gradual renaissance reached something of a peak during 1988 when local history studies were massively catalysed by Bicentennial funding.

Councils everywhere struggled to recover their pasts (and justify their grant allocations) and, in process, would occasionally rediscover their war trophy guns. Many recoveries, restorations and research projects were subsequently initiated with the trend - even today - showing little sign of abating. Communities that had lost their guns even took steps to commemorate the memory of their trophies.[47]

For some however this reawakening was cause for renewed moral anguish. The Woollahara council was concerned by 'changing community attitudes towards [these] bellicose symbols', and feared the trophy gun's potential to generate 'heated and somewhat emotional debate.' [48]

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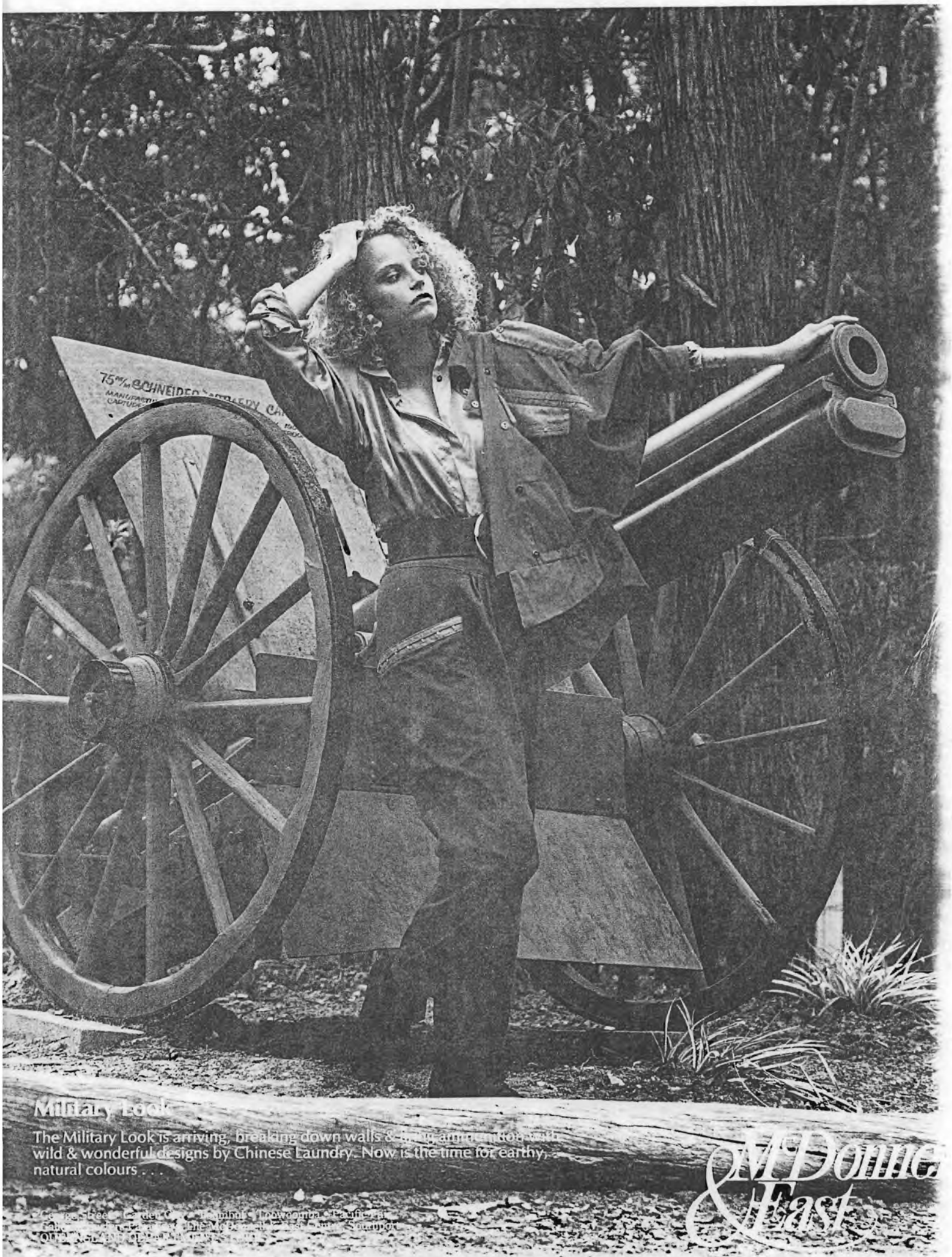
46 Films such as *Break of Day (1973), Gallipoli (1981)* and *The Lighthorsemen (1986)* have all used WW1 trophy guns as film props.

47 See *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 August 1990 and untitled commemorative booklet published in 1990 by the Sandgate Sub-Branch of the R.S.L.A.

48 *Town Clerk to Property Officer*, 15 November 1990, File 195.G (MW)


Military Look
The Military Look is arriving, breaking down walls &
wild & wonderful designs by Chinese Laundry. Now is the time for earthy,
natural colours . . .
&Dome
&East

It recognised that 'at the minimum' there was 'a moral obligation' for council to preserve its gun, and that this would have to be balanced against the need 'not to offend any person or group.' [49,50] The matter was finally resolved when council decided that inaction was the most appropriate course of action. It may have been rediscovered but like many of Australia's surviving trophy guns, it faced an uncertain future.

The situation at Woollahara is in many respects indicative of the dilemma now confronting all trophy owners and custodians. These first generation war memorials have been severely degraded to the point where they nearly all require major restorative surgery and financial outlay *(Illustration No.34).*

Only a fraction of these, moreover, are preserved in their original trophy-memorial contexts. And yet, although depleted by almost 80% the Australian War Trophy Collection remains the world's largest, and most important world war one artillery collection. These scattered remnants have now acquired immense historical and technological significance, a point that is generally understood by councils, private collectors and mainstream heritage agencies (e.g. the Australian War Memorial) alike .

But how can a service organisation like a municipal council possibly justify a $37,950 expenditure on such a non-essential service as the restoration of a park gun, something that offers little more than a recreational benefit? [51] The sense of moral obligation is often there, but this is seldom matched by the necessary financial and technical services. For many trophy guns this eleventh hour reawakening may have come too late in the century to be of any practical benefit.

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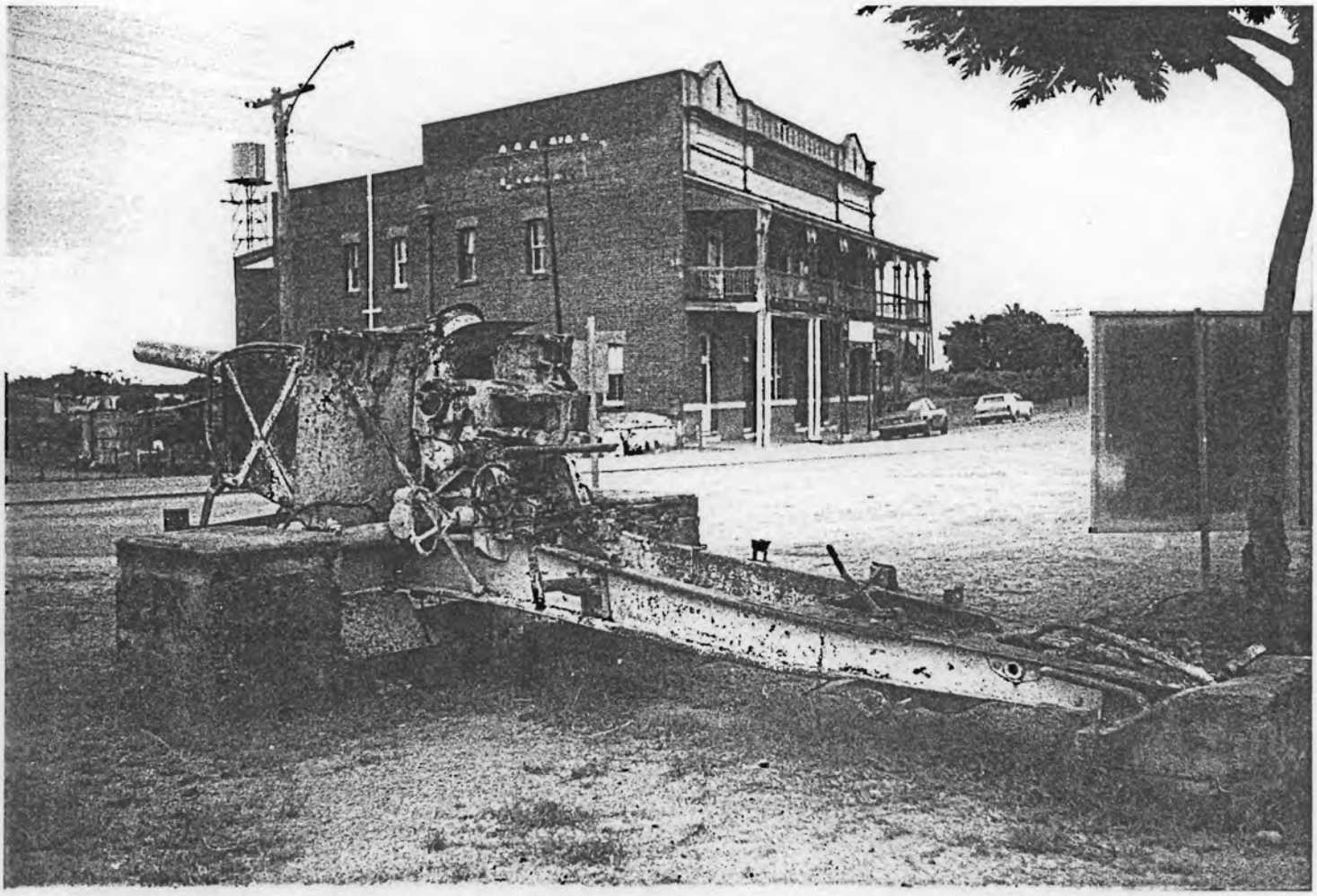
49 *Property Officer to Town Clerk*, 12 September 1990, File 195.G (MW)

50 Town Clerk to Municipal Engineer, n.d., File 195.G (MW)

51 This was the amount the Fineart Foundery Pty Ltd quoted in 1990 for restoring Woollahra's 1500 mm naval gun.*Municipal Engineer to Planning Committee*, n.d. File 195.G (WM).

Then again, it would seem to matter little even if the resources were available to these modern day custodians. For what they'd be preserving would be the history and the technology, rather than the memories and the sense of spirituality which once set these guns and mortars apart as the building blocks of an enduring national ethos.



34. This derelict F.K.16 (Nr.10292), like many of Australia's surviving trophies, faces an uncertain future. For almost seventy years it has guarded the main street of Ravenswood, a North Queensland ghost town.*

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Series 194 is of particular interest as it includes more than 3,000 trophy distribution files (one for each recipient) The latter are arranged alphabetically on a state by state basis.

Corresponding with these files are the trophy distribution index cards which are held by the Memorial's Curator of Weapons. These are also arranged alphabetically (by state) and summarise the origin (i.e. place and date of capture), distribution destination and distinguishing characteristics of every Australian trophy.

Australian Archives

The Commonwealth file series MP367/1 includes some material relating to the Australian War Trophy and Australian War Museum collections. Of particular interest are those items held at the Brighton (Vic.) repository in the AA 580 range.

Local Government Agencies

This investigation has made considerable use of council minutes and registry correspondence files. These files have proved to be a very rich source of information, particularly as they provide a comprehensive record of the trophy's progress from arrival to disposal. Trophy correspondence is usually found filed under the heading 'War Memorial'. The following abbreviations are used throughout: Hawthorn City Council (HCC); St Kilda City Council (SKCC); Strathfield Municipal Council (SMC); and Municipality of Woollahra (MW).

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