

Australian War Memorial

Year in Review 2019-20





Cover image: *The Commemorative Area prior to the 2020 Anzac Day Dawn Service. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the ceremony was attended by a small number of dignitaries including His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Prime Minister the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, Chief of the Defence Force General Angus J. Campbell, AO, DSC, and the Chairman of the Australian War Memorial Kerry Stokes AC. The service was nationally televised. Projected on the building was the name of Private George William Harold Manning, who is listed on the Memorial's Roll of Honour. Manning was wounded during the Gallipoli landing, and later died of wounds received at Lone Pine. Photographer: Sean Davey*

Unless otherwise stated, images in this publication have been photographed by the Memorial's staff photographers: Marcus Fillinger, Adam Kropinski-Myers, David McClenaghan, Bob McKendry, Ian Roach, Fiona Silsby and David Whittaker.

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Australian War Memorial

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Director's message

We will all remember where we were in 2020.

Australia has endured difficult times during devastating bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Canberra residents and businesses also suffered as a result of a destructive hailstorm. By the time I commenced the role of Director in April, the Memorial had been closed to the public for three weeks in order to safeguard staff and visitors from COVID 19.

Memorial staff changed the way we did things: some worked from home, while others worked part-time, caring for the vulnerable. Some were redeployed to other teams across the site. I was proud to recognise the contribution of those who redeployed to Services Australia to assist with the pandemic crisis – the Memorial staff proved themselves agile and committed.

These times have demonstrated how resilient we can be as individuals and as a community, and highlighted the benefits of robust business contingency planning and testing.

The Memorial demonstrated the greatest of flexibility to deliver a meaningful Anzac Day. While closed to the public, we held a commemorative ceremony that was broadcast live across Australia that ensured the Memorial remained the centre of community reflection on service and sacrifice.

There was positive engagement with the creative content produced by the Memorial, delivered online to support veterans and their families, as well as key stakeholders across the country and the world. There have been so many lovely stories shared through the Anzac at Home initiative, and a groundswell of support for the RSL's Driveways at Dawn movement. I am confident we will see buglers in driveways at dawn for years to come.

Despite closing the galleries for 99 days, Memorial staff worked tirelessly to provide stories for digital delivery. The Museum at Home initiative took our stories of courage and determination to an online audience, making it possible to explore the Hudson Bomber and the Mark IV tank via virtual reality and digital scans. We are scanning

the treasures in our collection so that virtual visitors can look at the objects – inside, outside, turn them upside down and inside out, and listen to the stories of veterans associated with them.

While public programs have been closed, schools and our educators continue to develop and deliver content aligned to the national curriculum. Family historians have been able to continue to research their forebears. Blogs, podcasts, videos, and all manner of online content continue to remind our visitors to remember, reflect upon, and examine the Australian experience of war.

The Memorial strives to find new ways to undertake its vital work and to remain relevant. The project to tell Our Continuing Story continues, with much work devoted to the government approvals processes, including submissions to the Parliamentary Works Committee, the Department of Environment Water and Energy,

and the National Capital Authority. We continue to engage with the public on the need to tell the stories of contemporary service and sacrifice, and to do it now. We enjoy bipartisan support in our determination that the Memorial honour veterans of recent conflicts, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. It is our duty to be a place for all generations of Australians, to honour, to learn, and to heal.

As always, all that is contained in this Year in Review has only been possible with the support of government, and our sponsors and donors. I thank them sincerely for their continued support of the Memorial, its staff, Council and volunteers. I also acknowledge Dr Brendan Nelson for his remarkable service to the Memorial, and for presiding over the first six months of activities contained in this review.

Mr Matt Anderson PSM





VISITORS



677,791

EDUCATIONAL VISITORS



104,377

SCHOOL WREATHLAYING



5,704 visitors

LAST POST CEREMONIES



88,445 visitors

FACEBOOK



138,793

INSTAGRAM



28,795

TWITTER



27,611



AVERAGE VISIT



2 hours **25** minutes

FIRST TIME VISITS



43%

VISITORS TO TOURING EXHIBITIONS



27,125

RESEARCH ENQUIRIES



10,882

FLICKR



18,540,557

WEBSITE



5,177,880 sessions

AVERAGE TIME ONLINE



3 mins **43** secs

Development



OUR
CONTINUING
STORY



Today is tomorrow's history. I like that the Memorial doesn't glorify war and I believe if they were to expand exhibits it would be treated in the same way.

Visitor comment, January 2020



SPOTLIGHT STORY

BLISS JENSEN

Bliss Jensen was studying art history at the Australian National University when she first decided to volunteer at the Australian War Memorial. She never dreamt she would return to lead a major gallery development.

“I didn’t actually think I’d be back in Canberra all these years later,” she said. “But having arrived, it really feels like home.”

With more than 20 years’ experience in the museum sector, it’s an area Bliss knows well.

She was working as the creative director on the Western Australian Museum’s New Museum Project when she decided to relocate to Canberra in September 2019 to work on the Memorial’s Development Project. Today, she is the Memorial’s Director of Gallery Development, leading gallery content development, design and production.

“I saw this incredible opportunity come up for the development project here and I was pretty excited to learn more about it,” she said. “It really piqued my interests and here I am today..”

“It is the biggest museum development project in the Southern Hemisphere, and it’s going to be a ground breaking project for the cultural sector.

“The scale is impressive – the new buildings and facilities; a third more exhibition space across 5,000 square metres – and there are some really great opportunities to pull out some of the hidden gems and rethink how we present stories.”



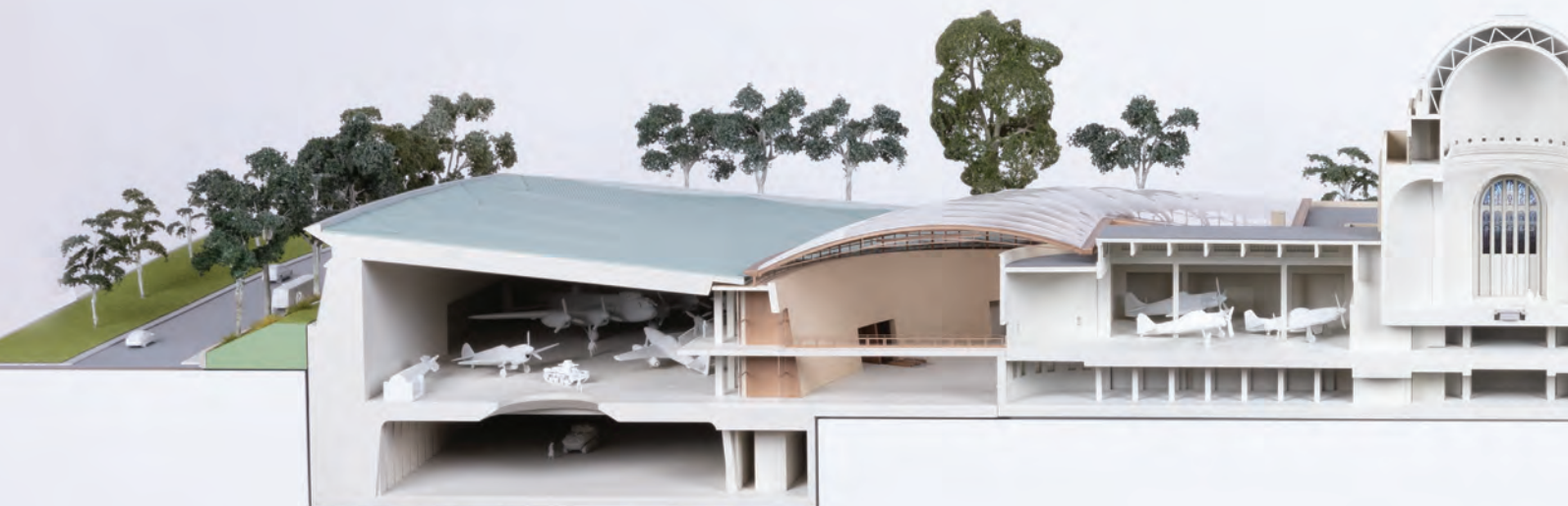
Sharing stories is what the development is all about.

“It really is about telling people’s stories in their own words,” she said. “Personal stories are key, and by highlighting personal stories and different perspectives, we’ll do well to paint a picture of the consequences of war, its aftermath and the social impacts.”

Bliss sees the Memorial as a leader in creating meaningful experiences for visitors and is passionate about the importance of engaging with veterans and community groups.

“It’s an opportunity for all Australians to have their say in the future of gallery content for the Memorial, the stories we’ll tell and the objects which best help represent these stories,” she said.

“We have the artefacts in the collection because people have collected them, but without the stories behind the objects, they’re a little bit arbitrary and remain inanimate.





Passionate about telling the stories of contemporary service, Bliss Jensen is pictured with the Long Range Patrol Vehicle used in Afghanistan on display in the *Conflicts 1945 to today* gallery.

“The exhibition development process is all about tapping into the sense of personal meaning behind all of the objects.”

The Memorial means a lot to Bliss.

“My first encounter with the Memorial was volunteering in the old discovery centre through my Arts Degree,” she said. “It became a really big part of my world at that time and I really enjoyed it, I guess because I’m a people person and love dealing with members of the public.

“It’s also meaningful to me because my father was an exhibitions designer who was contracted for a few Memorial travelling exhibitions.

“I remember him speaking so passionately about the stories behind the artefacts and the photographic collections. I never really understood the emotional gravitas he talked about, but now I’m here, I really

get it – the Memorial is very different to a, say, natural history museum because every object, letter or photo belongs to someone and provides a view in to very personal spaces.”

Her father was a Dutch immigrant who came to Australia after the Second World War. She remembers hearing gut wrenching stories from his family about the Nazi occupation in Europe. Her maternal grandfather, David John Doenau, was in the navy and served on the Bathurst-class corvette, Glenelg, during the Second World War.

She is passionate about telling the stories of contemporary Australian servicemen and servicewomen.

“The contemporary context is the missing link at the moment, so I see there are some really great opportunities to represent stories that haven’t been told,” she said.

“It’s about addressing the fact that some visitors who are coming today don’t see themselves and their stories reflected here. It’s a huge opportunity and one that needs to be taken on wholeheartedly.

“These new stories will of course become our history in time, then others will follow, and our story will continue in new directions.”

She is looking forward to meeting the challenges that lay ahead.

“I’ve been very lucky with the opportunities I’ve had over the years,” she said. “It’s such a privilege to be able to come and work on these amazing special projects.

Challenges might come up, but they’re nothing compared to some of the challenges our storytellers have had to endure. Let’s hope we can make it as special as it can be.”





Information Gallery launch

The Memorial commemorates living history, for every veteran and for every Australian. The time has come to modernise and expand our galleries and buildings so we can tell the continuing story of Australia's contemporary contribution to a better world through the eyes of those who have served in modern conflicts – connecting the spirit of our past, present and future for generations to come.

The Information Gallery, showcasing development plans alongside a highly detailed model of the Memorial building, was launched on Monday 18 November 2019 by the Prime Minister the Hon. Scott Morrison MP. These plans include a new southern entrance, refurbishment of the main building, a new Anzac Hall connecting the main building via a glazed link, an extension to the Bean Building, a new research centre connected to the *Poppy's Café* forecourt, and public realm works. Sensitively connected to the existing landscape, the detailed plans will ensure the heritage façade of the Memorial remains unchanged.



The Hon. Darren Chester MP, Prime Minister the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, and then Director Dr Brendan Nelson with artist's impressions of the Memorial development plans.



Chairman of the Council of the Memorial, Kerry Stokes AC speaks at the launch of the Information Gallery.

New precinct carpark

One of the first tasks of the Development Project is the extension of the underground car park. This will provide additional parking spaces with further access to the Memorial main building and *Poppy's Café*.

Working on the carpark project are two unique employees – Oscar Commandari, who served in Afghanistan, and Matthew Robinson, who served in East Timor – who are part of an initiative providing employment opportunities for veterans returning to the workforce after military service. Oscar and Matthew are currently working on the Development Project, Oscar as Construction Manager at Fredon and Matthew as Site Supervisor at O'Neill & Brown Plumbing Services.



Commemoration

The background of the page is a dark, textured wall with vertical lines. On the left side, there is a vertical wooden staff. On the right side, a person's arm in a tan uniform sleeve is visible. The wall is decorated with vertical lines of red poppies.

*I guess you're amazed, humbled, saddened all at once.
I don't know how to put it all into words, just wow.
We're very lucky to have the people who fought and
died for us and our country.*

Visitor comment, November 2019

Chief of the Defence Force General Angus
John Campbell, AO, DSC attends Anzac Day
Commemorations.





Remembrance Day

The 2019 Remembrance Day National Ceremony was attended by a number of dignitaries, diplomats, school students, and 2,700 members of the public. Australia's Federation Guard and the Band of the Royal Military College, Duntroon were on parade during a ceremony that included formal wreathlayings at the Stone of Remembrance. The Commemorative address was delivered by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd).



Then Director of the Memorial Dr Brendan Nelson and Ms Gillian Adamson lay wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Last Post Ceremony

At the conclusion of each day our visitors gather in the Commemorative Area for the Last Post Ceremony. A serving member of the Australian Defence Force reads the story of an Australian who died as a result of war or operational service. Visitors lay flowers or wreaths in remembrance, and the event concludes with the playing of the Last Post, a bugle call that symbolises the soldier going to his final rest.

On 11 July 2019 we commemorated the Service of Private Sylvester Sullivan (also known as D. Wills), 4th Australian Infantry Battalion, AIF. His story was part of NAIDOC week, which honours the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We came yesterday and returned today to attend the last post ceremony. Yesterday, we left extremely thankful to the people who sacrificed their lives for us to be able to have our lives.

Visitor comment, September 2019



The Last Post Ceremony that occurs before the first sitting day of Parliament is attended by senior members of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia. Pictured laying wreaths are Ken Wyatt AM, Minister for Indigenous Australians; Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia; Anthony Albanese, Leader of the Federal Opposition; and Linda Burney, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians.

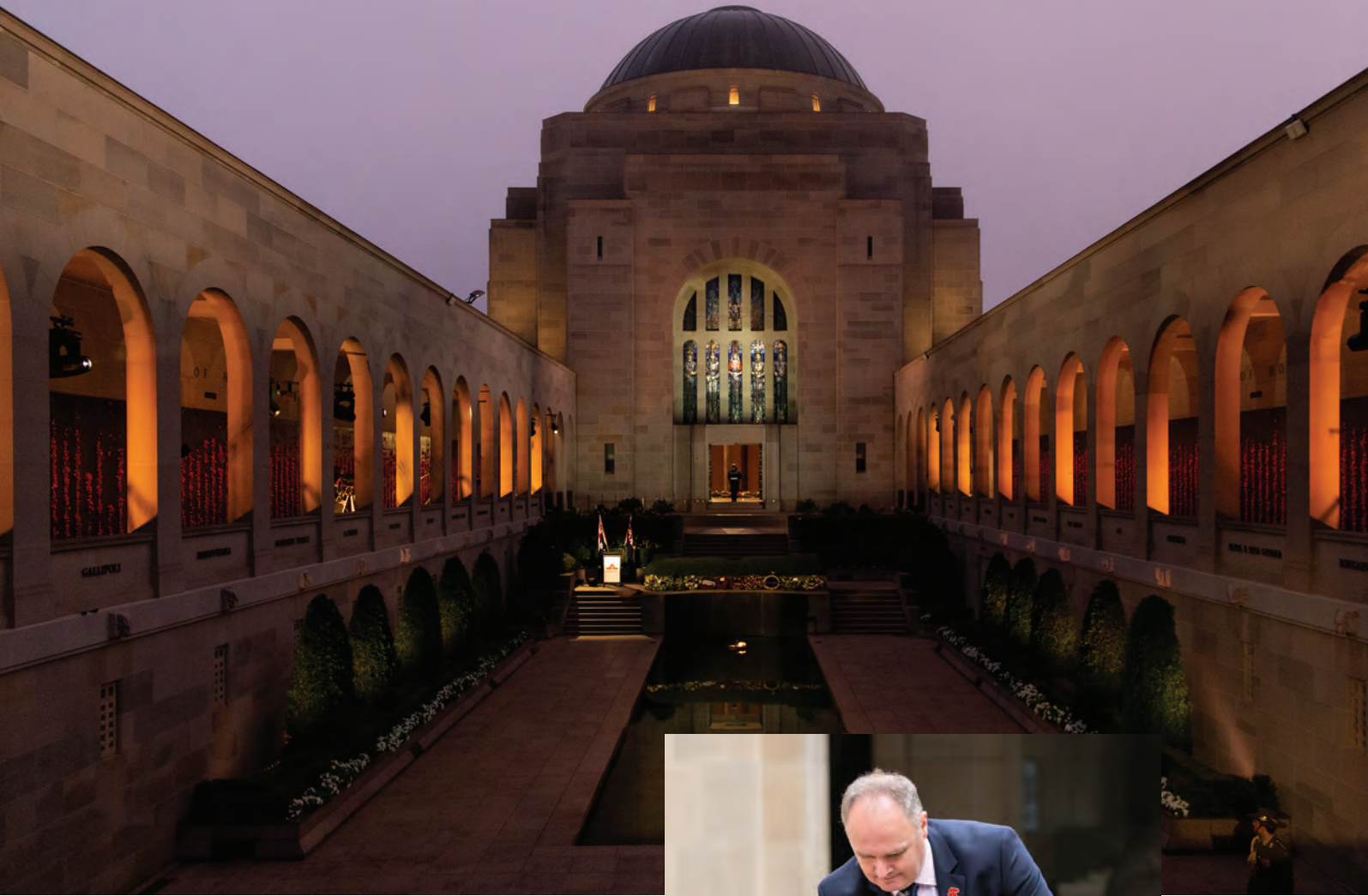


Anzac Day at the Memorial

On 25th April Australians come together to commemorate Anzac Day. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 the Memorial's Dawn Service and National Ceremony were replaced by a commemorative service held in the Commemorative Area of the Memorial. This service was attended by a small number of dignitaries including His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Prime Minister the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, Chief of the Defence Force General Angus J. Campbell, AO, DSC, and the Chairman of the Australian War Memorial Kerry Stokes AC. The service was televised and live streamed nationally.

Australia's Federation Guard Catafalque Party guard the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier as wreaths are laid by Their Excellencies General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) and Mrs Hurley.





The Last Post Ceremony commemorating the 105th Anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli told the story of Private Thomas Anderson Whyte who died of wounds on 25 April 1915. A wreath was laid by Director, Matt Anderson.

I think we have to keep remembering what has happened, but also what is currently happening.

Visitor comment, September 2019

Anzac Day at home

On 20 April the Memorial launched #AnzacAtHome, a digital and social media campaign to engage Australians in commemorating Anzac Day at home. The online hub of content hosted on the Memorial's existing website provided activities and content engaging people in the lead up to Anzac Day, as well as on the day itself.

Anzac TV hosted a range of video material, from short films and documentaries to messages from ADF members and conflict and operation summaries. Members of the public posted over 2,000 poppies on the Virtual Poppy Wall.



Mai
 16, Perth
 they shall grow not old, as we
 that are left grow old: Age shall
 not weary them, nor the years
 condemn.

Thank you for everything. Lest
 we forget

Sarah
 16, Perth WA
 Thank you, for everything. LEST
 WE FORGET

Kaniya
 10, Canberra

I am the biggest, and the most
 sacrifice we would not be here
 today.

Ella
 15, Perth
 Thank you for everything. Lest
 we forget

emily
 16, gleneg
 thanks for keeping our country
 and home safe

Michelle
 15, Perth, Australia
 Sad we dont get to think about the
 ANZACS traditionally, but this will
 bring more people together. To all
 soldiers, old, new. Thank You.

Abbey
 14, Mercedes northgate
 Thank you for honouring
 Australia

Ava Blumenfeld
 11, 12 mound place westport
 dear all the soldiers thank you for
 serving us you have done a good

Imogen
 18, Perth
 You are amazing, courageous
 people. Thank you for your
 service.

Ivy
 15, PErth
 Thank you

BRENDAN
 11
 thank you for every thing you've
 done from protecting people to
 saving them

Renae
 16, Perth, WA
 Lest we forget

Keira
 14, Perth
 Lest we Forget all the soldiers
 that fought for us.

0
 11, act
 thank you for fighting for this
 country



A social media program provided access to online content and encouraged community involvement in #AnzacAtHome, sharing the experiences of people commemorating at home and conducting own driveway dawn services; #ShowYourMedals, images of veterans and current service personnel and their family members in uniform or wearing medals; and #ForTheFallen, sharing video and text of members of the public reciting The Ode.

our country

Bravery, strength, mateship and resilience is what defines our Anzac's and is also what makes me proud to be Australian. Lest we forget.

Michael Scott
10, Sandhurst Victoria
To all those that have fought bravely, protecting our country.
Lest We Forget

Matthew
15, Gleeson
ANZAC

James
16, Australia
Lest we Forget.

Elizabeth
A, or John's the genetic
lest we forget

Aidan Gleeson
Our soldiers have made great sacrifices to allow us to live normal lives. Lest we forget.

Camryn
15, Gleeson Collage
Lest we forget

Nicole
15, Gleeson
Lest We Forget

Tanisha
15, Golden Grove
On Anzac Day we all remember the ones who sacrificed themselves for our nation.

Anneke Zaadstra
15, Gleeson College
Lest we Forget

Aidan Toonen
15, Gleeson
you have paid the ultimate sacrifice, forever freeing our great nation

Jacob
15, Gleeson
Lest We Forget

Niamh
16, Gleeson College
Thank you for your service to



SPOTLIGHT STORY

DAVID HIRCHAUSEN

Tucked behind closed doors in the hidden recesses of the Australian War Memorial, a team of dedicated audio-visual specialists is busy working away to help ensure the Memorial's exhibitions and galleries run seamlessly as they shine a light on the Australian experience of war.

Manager David Hirschausen has been an integral part of the team since he began working at the Memorial 14 years ago. A former materials scientist, he is responsible for the team that manages the installation and maintenance of the Memorial's extensive network of specialised audio-visual equipment.

For David, it's a fulfilling job that combines his love of science and technology with his passion for arts and culture in a creative and meaningful way.

"I started as a technician back in October of 2006, and I've been here ever since," David said.

"I was sick of working in labs and my girlfriend at the time – now wife – was leaving her job and going to art school, and I thought that looks fun, maybe I'll do something similar.

"I'd always had an interest in electronics, and building my own devices, so I wanted to push more into that kind of field where it was a bit more creative."

He studied at the Australian National University's Centre for New Media Arts while working in the Research School

of Physics and Engineering (RSPE), and then took a part-time job at the Australian Defence Force Academy and RMC Duntroon, looking after their audio-visual equipment.

"When this job came up at the Memorial, I thought, 'Okay, I'll apply for it and see what happens,'" he said.

"It all worked out very fortuitously, and it ended up being just the kind of thing I was looking for."

The team looks after everything from research, design, installation and maintenance.

"I had originally thought it would be a short term job, but here I am 15 years later," he said.

"A typical day could see us programming a complex sound and light show, running a conference in the theatre, or craning a new projector onto the roof for the Roll of Honour projections.

"There is always something happening, and I really like that technology can be used to enhance a story. That is a big part of what has kept the work interesting for me."

During his time at the Memorial, David has worked on the installation of the Discovery Zone, the Recent Conflicts galleries, new First World War galleries, and many others in-between. Most recently, he has been involved in the project to reinvigorate the story of G for George in a film that will be launched in the coming months.



The Over the Front and “G for George” sound and light shows are part of David Hirchausen’s work at the Memorial His team manages the video and lighting for displays in the Memorial building.

“There’s always some sort of innovation; something new that you can get stuck into, and that makes it really exciting,” he said.

“During the day, it’s all of that background work of development, maintenance, planning and research. Then in the mornings and evenings, that’s when you are busy out in the galleries getting things done.

“We’re some of the few people who get into all the nooks and crannies and see what’s behind doors.”

He enjoys working closely with the exhibitions teams, curators and external designers to make sure the story they want to tell and supplement with audio-visual equipment is going to work.

“We provide them with options of what might be the best way to deliver that story, and go out and research what equipment is available, what will fit in the space, and how it will integrate into the existing infrastructure,” he said.

“When it comes time to install it, that’s when the team breaks out, physically putting the equipment in, and integrating it into our control rooms.

“Once it’s all been installed it’s a ‘constant painting of the Harbour Bridge’ kind of situation, as you are always maintaining things.

“The visitor may never know that things break or need maintaining, because you are quickly ducking out of corridors and fixing it, or working in a control room to reset things remotely.”

For David, being able to work at the Memorial is particularly special. His grandfather served during the Second World War, and two of his relatives are listed on the Roll of Honour.

“I’m very lucky to have this job and to have the crew that I’ve got,” he said.

“I would like to think that when people come here they get a unique perspective of the Australian experience of war and how it affected not just the soldiers but also Australia as a country and the people who were left at home.

“It’s a thing of pride for people to work here and to say I had a part in telling that story.”



Exhibitions

The way it brings in other facets to conflict resolution - police, diplomats, civilians. It is very human and more complex than originally thought.

Visitor comment, October 2019

Ambassador's office window and Australian Coat of Arms damaged during the bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, 2004, featured in *The Courage for Peace* exhibition. (On loan from the National Museum of Australia)



Special Exhibitions

The permanent galleries highlight specific conflicts, with a number of special exhibitions featuring art collections, thematic displays, or focused on specific events, units and operations.

The Courage for Peace, on display from October 2019 to May 2020, explored peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in which Australian civilians, diplomats, police and military contributed to United Nations efforts across the globe, as well as disaster relief and nation-building in our region.

I found this exhibit particularly interesting. It seems a subject that is glossed over so its nice to see peacekeeping get it's deserved recognition.

Visitor comment, November 2019



The **2019 Napier Waller Art Prize**, held in partnership with the University of Canberra, Thales Australia, the Road Home, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and which is open to current and former Australian Defence Force personnel, received 113 entries in its second year. The exhibition, held in Anzac Hall from from September to December 2019, showcased 12 highly commended works. The award was presented to Natalie Duncan for her work *You are in danger and I am far away*.

...the importance of conveying these personal stories via artwork and letting the public really understand the deep scaring impacts of war on veterans and also the deep impacts on their families.

Visitor comment, September 2019



Displayed in Anzac Hall from November 2019, **Against All Odds** explored a few of the amazing examples of courage, determination, and how sometimes a little bit of luck can be all that stands between a person and death, wounding, or capture. From the First World War to Afghanistan, this exhibition shared stories of near misses and survival against all odds.

Music and the First World War provides a small insight into the experiences of bandsmen, entertainers, soldier-composers and their audiences during the First World War. Displayed from 13 June to 4 November 2019 in the Research Centre, Reading Room, this collection of photographs, diaries, letters, instruments, concert programs and written sheet music revealed the ways in which music enabled people to deal with their experiences.



Individual understanding, a closer look. A lot of the items in the memorial are personal artefacts, and there is often a story behind them. The memorial does a good job delving into these stories.

Laughter: A Powerful Ally explored how Australian comedians and performance troupes boosted the morale of troops in the field from the First World War to Afghanistan. The exhibition went on display in December 2019 in the Reading Room.

Visitor comment, February 2020



In 2016 artist Dacchi Dang began interviewing veterans who served with Australian or South Vietnamese forces in the Vietnam War. These stories formed the basis of ***Brothers in Arms: The Vietnamese Australian Experience of the Vietnam War***, the first substantial acquisition for the National Collection which reflects Vietnamese–Australian perspective on the Vietnam War. The work includes the first hand-drawn animation in the collection, and a series of lacquer panels made using traditional Vietnamese lacquer. The development of the artworks was made possible through a bequest by retired Major John Milton Gillespie, a Vietnam veteran and immigration consultant.



Dacchi Dang, *Brothers in Arms*, (detail) 2016–17.

The Holocaust: Witness and Survivors, which originally opened in 2016, presented the stories of Holocaust survivors and the work of Australian official war artist Alan Moore, who accompanied British troops as they liberated the Bergen–Belsen concentration camp in Germany. This year, additional stories and materials were added, highlighting the experiences of survivors who immigrated to Australia and Australians present at the liberation of concentration camps across Europe. The Memorial gratefully acknowledges the support of the Jewish Holocaust Centre and members of the local Jewish community.



The Holocaust Witness and Survivors

The memorial really shows a human touch and gives all people who's nations participated in wars the ability to reflect and obtain a personal perspective.

Visitor comment, October 2019

Touring Exhibitions



Reality in Flames, Glasshouse Gallery, Port Macquarie NSW. Image: Glasshouse Gallery

Reality in Flames is the first exhibition dedicated to exploring how Australian modernist artists responded creatively to the Second World War. The exhibition constitutes one of the most diverse and comprehensive displays of modern Australian art relating to war, all from the Memorial's National Collection, including works by Joy Hester, Nora Heysen, Frank Hinder, Roger Kemp, Sidney Nolan, Eric Thake, Albert Tucker, and Danila Vassilieff.

The exhibition, originally on display at the Memorial in 2015–16, has since toured regional Australia, visiting Katoomba, Port Macquarie, Adelaide and Tamworth.

It is a very important and challenging look at these events, true historic accounts of the war ... We had not realised the contribution made by contemporary artists to the preservation of these historic events.

Visitor comment, July 2019.

Events



I thought it was excellent, I didn't realise there were so many artefacts here, it was really interesting to see how much there is. I didn't realise how knowledgeable my family was until they were explaining the displays to me.

Visitor comment, October 2019



Big Things in Store



On 5 October 2019, the doors of the Treloar Technology Centre opened to the public for a behind-the-scenes look at our extensive collection of aircraft, helicopters, rockets, transport vehicles, tanks, artillery and equipment used by – or against – Australians for over a century of conflict and peacekeeping activities. *Big Things in Store* is a popular event for the public and was attended by 4,100 people. Memorial staff were on hand to offer information about the collection objects.

The memorial keeps getting better and better, I've been to big things in store before, and each time I come here and there it keeps getting more and more interesting

Visitor comment, October 2019



USE ONLY
ASG23-3-G
SCREWS
OR INSTL

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Friends of the Memorial



The Memorial has many supporters, none of whom are more special than the Friends of the Memorial. Friends attended various special events throughout the year, including curator-led talks and behind-the-scene tours. Pictured here at the end of year function are Robyn and Julian Woods with Friends Coordinator Taylor Jolley.

INTERFET Symposium

To mark the 20th anniversary of INTERFET, on 15 October 2019 the Memorial convened a special half-day symposium to reflect on and discuss Australia's contribution to establishing the security and stability that helped Timor-Leste become a free and independent nation.

Held in the BAE Systems Theatre, speakers included Former Prime Minister the Hon. John Howard OM AC, Former Governor General General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK AC(Mil) CVO MC (Retd), Mr James McMahon DSC DSM (right), Major General Tim McOwan (Retd) AO DSC CSM (left), Official Historian Professor Craig Stockings and Ms Corinda Hollis.





Royal Australian Air Force commemorates 99 years

On 31 March 2020, the Royal Australian Air Force marked 99 years as an independent service. While the Memorial was closed to visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a wreath was laid at the Pool of Reflection in the Commemorative Area to pay tribute to the men and women who have served.

Projects

A close-up photograph of a grey stone memorial. The memorial is a large, flat, circular slab with several circular holes, each containing a dark, cast metal paw print. The stone is set on a grassy area. In the upper right corner, the head and paw of a black and tan dog are visible, looking towards the memorial. The lighting is bright, casting shadows on the stone.

I feel honoured and proud that of all the dogs that have deployed and served, Aussie was the one that was chosen to represent military working dogs over 100 years of service.

Sergeant Alistair Le Lievre, December 2019.



Memorial Grounds



Circling into Sleep – Military Working Dog Memorial recognises the service of Australian military working dogs. Created by Steven Holland, the memorial was dedicated in a ceremony on 24 February 2020 by Mark Donaldson VC. This subtle memorial features paw print track circles into the centre where the ashes of Aussie, Military Working Dog 426, are interred. Aussie served in Australian operations including the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, RAMSI in Solomon Islands in 2004, and four deployments to Afghanistan with the Explosives Detection Dog Team.

Large Technology Objects

Three historic First World War guns, on display from early 2015 as an Anzac Centenary initiative, have been returned to the Mitchell storage facility for conservation. In mid-June the Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle (PMV), LAV-25 armoured vehicle, and Centurion Mk 5/1 Main Battle Tank were repositioned onto these existing plinths adjacent to the main Memorial building.



Aircraft Hall



The Aircraft Hall display was revised this year, providing much-needed space for education groups and out-of-hours functions. The iconic Second World War Kittyhawk and Zero aircraft now feature in this revitalised gallery.



Image: Trippas White Group

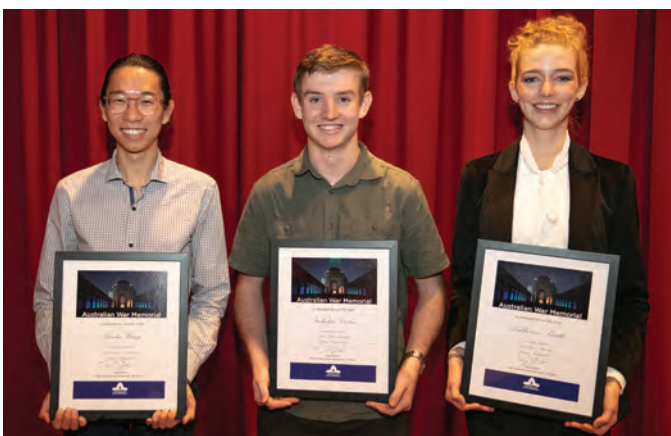
On Closer Inspection interactive digital experience



In July 2019, the Hudson Bomber 360 interactive digital experience was launched. This experience is the latest project in the Memorial's *On Closer Inspection* series, supported by Leidos Australia. The launch event was held at the Canberra Airport alongside the plane featured in the project, a Lockheed Hudson Mark IV Bomber used by the RAAF during the Second World War.

Representatives from Leidos Australia Mr Simon Carr, Director Corporate Affairs, Canberra Airport Mr Michael Thompson, Head of Aviation, and Major General (Ret'd) Brian Dawson AM, CSC then Acting Director of the Memorial, were at the event to launch the project.

Summer Scholars Program



Summer Scholars are selected through a competitive, merit-based selection process open to university students at a late stage of their history degrees, usually honours graduates. They are assigned individual research projects and are supervised and professionally guided by Memorial historians.

This year, three scholars successfully completed research projects related to the Memorial's historical research: Tande Wang (Australian National University) on Australian soldier attitudes towards the Boers during the South African War (1899–1902); Nicholas Dickie (University of Wollongong) on the Desert Air Force during the Second World War (1940–1943); and Katherine Smith (Australian National University) on the Battle of Mont St Quentin in 1918.

Soldiers in Residence Program



The Soldiers in Residence program continued this year with three members of the Australian Army spending time at the Memorial.

Warrant Officer Class Two Graham Bell, Lance Corporal Samuel Jones and Lance Corporal James Carter spent time with the Memorial's education team and toured behind-the-scenes areas to learn about all aspects of the Memorial's operations, and shared their own stories.



SPOTLIGHT STORY

MELEAH HAMPTON

Meleah Hampton was heading to Charles de Gaulle airport when she decided to stop at one last Western Front cemetery.

“It was Crucifix Corner Cemetery at Villers-Bretonneaux and there was one grave right at the front,” she said. “The epitaph read, ‘In loving memory of my dear boy Jack, well done,’ and the ‘well done’ just made me ball my eyes out.”

She decided to learn all that she could about Jack in an attempt to make some sense of the loss of so many.

It was a decision that would have a major impact on her life.

“It turned out that Lance Corporal J.S.S. McCann was from a South Australian Battalion – the 43rd – and he might have served with my great-grandfather,” she said.

“He was 22 when he was killed in action on the 4th of July 1918 at Hamel, and he’s become very special to me.”

Today, Dr Meleah Hampton is a historian at the Memorial; and her eldest son is named Jack.

“I have always been interested in history, and specifically Australian military history,” she said. “I would have been nine or ten when I first started reading about it, and I just kept on reading and reading and reading.”

She learnt that three of her great-grandfathers had also served on the Western Front. Private Robert Henry Millington served with the 50th Battalion at Pozières and endured the mud and cold of the Flanders trenches during the horrific winter of 1917. Another served with the 43rd Battalion and was shot through the mouth during the battle of Hamel. He had two scars on his cheek that looked like dimples, and his house was called “Hamel”. The third served with the British in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and was Mentioned in Despatches for his actions. He moved to Queensland after the war, and Meleah’s grandfather was conceived on the troopship Themistocles.

Studio portrait of the McCann brothers on leave together for the last time in England. From left: Lieutenant (Lt) Claude Cyril John McCann MC, 27th Battalion; 1059 Private (Pte) Jack Stewart Sydney McCann, 43rd Battalion; Captain (Capt) William Francis John McCann MC, 10th Battalion.


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She remembers visiting the Memorial as a teenager and spending an entire day in the First World War galleries.

“I read every word, on every panel, and I can still tell you where the Gallipoli diorama was and what everything looked like,” she said. “I remember all of it, and then when I was living and working in Cardiff as a veterinary nurse I ended up visiting the battlefields on all of my holidays.”

She phoned the Memorial from Britain to ask for advice on becoming a military historian and spoke to the head of Military History.





“there’s nowhere better than here to do what I do.”

Historian Meleah Hampton, alongside her favourite item in the collection, the Mark IV tank located in Anzac Hall.

“He very graciously gave me half an hour of his time, and talked about all the options,” she said. “At the end, he said you need to be aware, this is an extremely limited field – there are no jobs, and you might not get anywhere – but I was single, and I had no ties, so I thought, I’ll have a crack at it, and see how I go, then I thanked him for his advice, and said I’ll see you in seven years.”

She met him in six when she became a summer scholar at the Memorial.

“From the very beginning, the Memorial has been an integral part of the entire process for me,” she said. “It was an obvious place to want to be, but I really didn’t think I would get a job here, and the fact that I did, means that I’m a very lucky girl – there’s nowhere better than here to do what I do.”

Meleah started working as an historian at the Memorial in 2013, and completed her PhD thesis on the 1916 battles for Pozieres and Mouquet Farm. She specialises

in the operational conduct of the First World War on the Western Front and is passionate about making military history accessible to the public.

She is particularly proud to have been involved in the Last Post Ceremony. She wrote the first story when the ceremony began in 2013 and has since written more than 1000, including the story of Jack.

“There are so many stories like Jack’s, and what I would really like is for people to go out and find their own Jack, and find out all about them,” she said. “Jack’s story came with me as I was growing as a military historian, and now it is contributing to the way we remember the war as Australians. And that’s quite a privilege.”

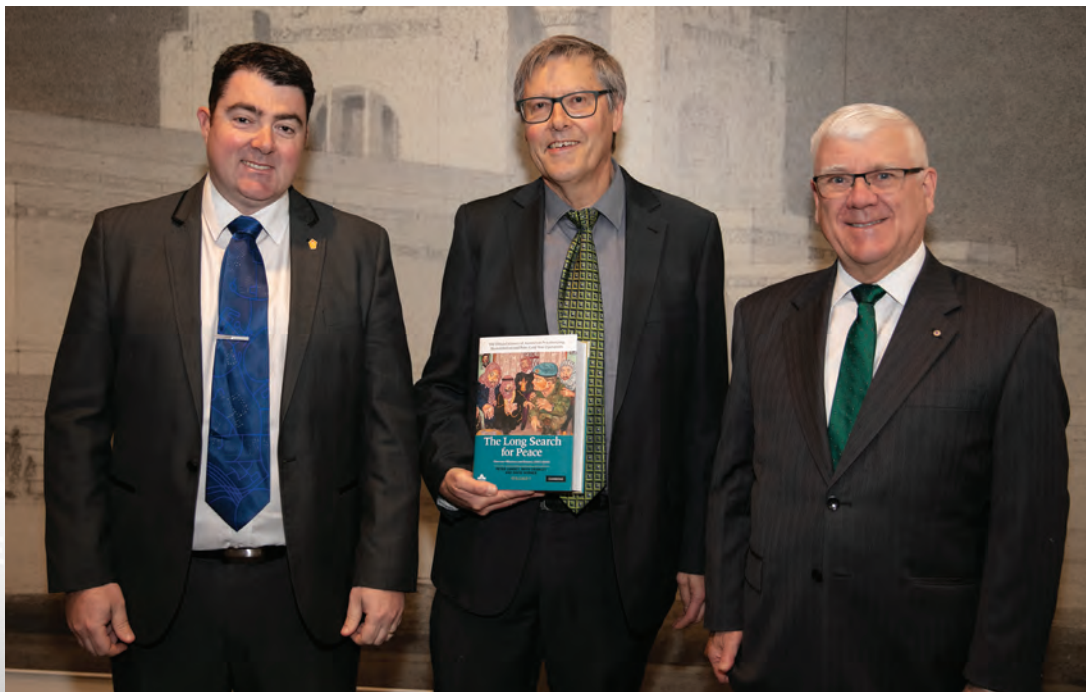
Publications

A photograph of a pigeon sitting on a nest of red poppies in front of a stained glass window. The pigeon is grey and white, facing right. The nest is made of many bright red poppies. The window behind it has a blue and purple design. To the right is a wall with a mosaic of small, multi-colored tiles.

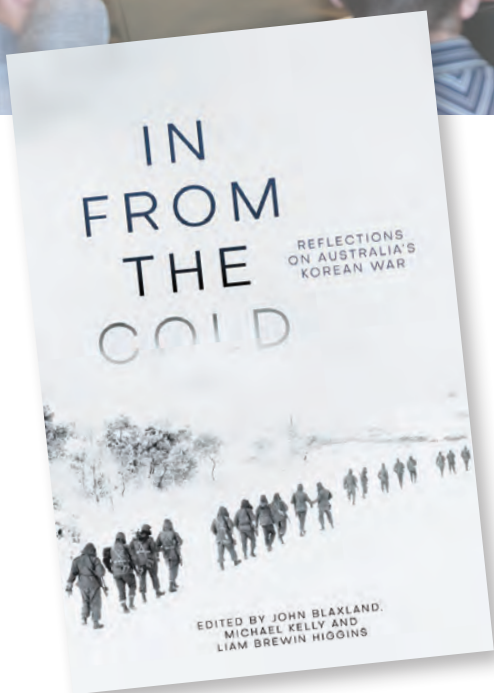
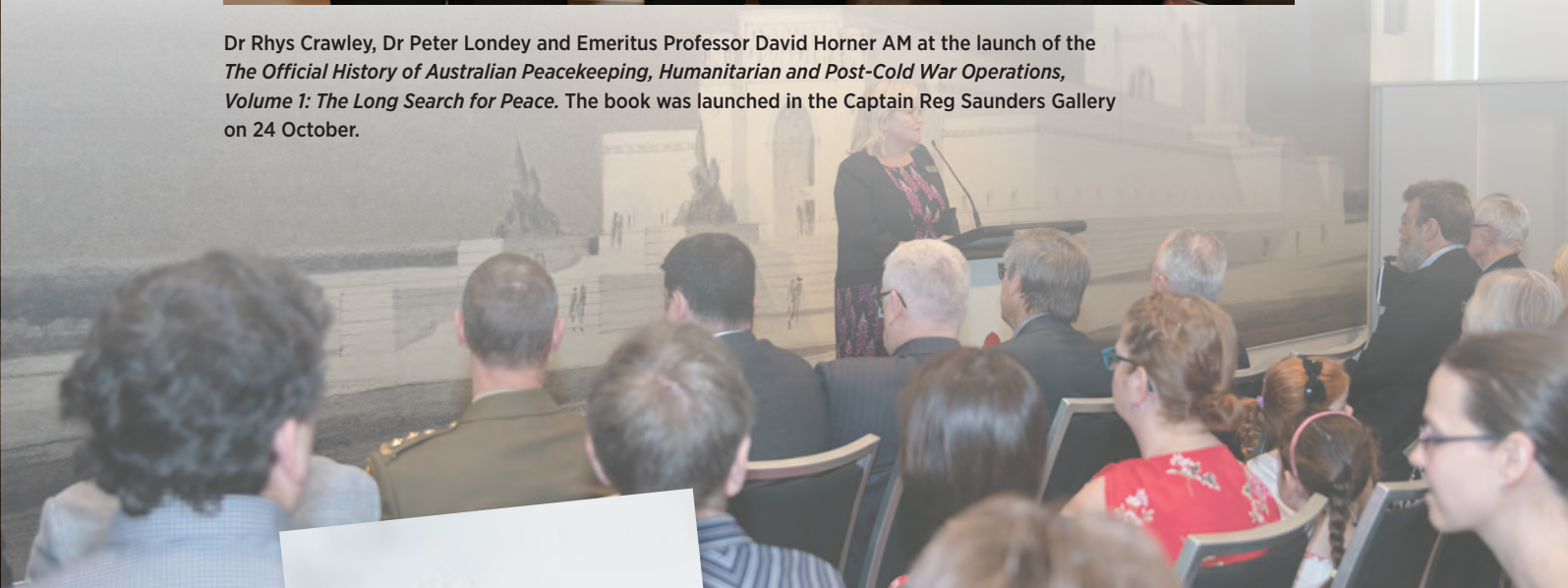
***Very impressive and touching and emotional...
Makes you want to learn more about our history***

Visitor comment, December 2019

Publications



Dr Rhys Crawley, Dr Peter Londey and Emeritus Professor David Horner AM at the launch of the *The Official History of Australian Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post-Cold War Operations, Volume 1: The Long Search for Peace*. The book was launched in the Captain Reg Saunders Gallery on 24 October.



Also released this year was *In From the Cold: Reflections on Australia's Korean War* edited by John Blaxland, Michael Kelly and Liam Brewin Higgins. This book is a compilation of conference papers presented at a military history conference held at the Memorial.

SPOTLIGHT STORY

ROB FISHER



Robert Fisher will never forget his first day of work at the Australian War Memorial.

He can still recite the accession number of the first object he dealt with: REL30087. The Armstrong 12 Pounder RBL Field Gun is one of four surviving guns of the six 1864 Armstrong guns purchased by the Colony of Victoria to equip its horse artillery units. The gun, which was on display in the Colonial Galleries, is still one of his favourite items.

“It was my first day at the Memorial, and that was my first job,” he said. “I had to weigh it, and it weighed 1,080 kilograms, so each time I see it, I think of my first day – 19 September 2002.

“I’d turned up on an eight-month contract as a registration officer, and I’m still here, 18 years later.”

A former outdoor educator from Sydney, Robert is currently the assistant registrar of acquisitions, managing a team of four.

Rob Fisher stands alongside the Armstrong 12 Pounder RBL Field Gun he weighed and measured on his first day of work at the Memorial on 19 September 2002.

As the collection managers for incoming donations, Robert’s team deals with thousands of items each year, ranging from tiny buttons and badges to large technology objects such as planes and helicopters.

“We get offered at least 20,000 items a year, and there are five of us, so it’s pretty full on,” he said.

“We administer all the incoming donations that are on offer to the Memorial so we are the first point of contact for members of the public or the Australian Defence Force when they make their donation offer.

“We run objects through a preliminary assessment with the curators, and they are ultimately the ones who decide what comes into the National Collection. If an object passes the preliminary phase, we then bring it in for a final assessment.

“Once it is onsite, it’s our job to make sure we know where every item is, how it got here, why it’s here, who sent it here, and what legal status it is.”

The team aims to turn donations around within three months, recording details in the Memorial’s collection management system.

“We work with the curators, who assess items and research their background, and Conservation, who need to get involved if there are hazardous items coming in that are a hazard to us, or to the collections,” he said.

“A lot of people don’t realise that the objects they are donating could be hazardous – they could be radioactive, they could have asbestos, they could be mouldy, they could have pesticides, they could be flammable. And then there’s distressing material, which is a hazard as well, and these are the kind of boxes we have to tick before we even get something on site.

“Some donations can be time consuming and complex.”

The team deals with everything from 100-year-old Christmas cakes and biscuits to items from Afghanistan and Iraq. More recent donations have included the “Zeus door” – an access panel from an F/A-18 that was struck by lightning during an operational mission over Northern Iraq – and a re-engineered wheelie bin that was tied to the edge of HMAS Toowoomba and used as illicit drug disposal unit.

“Every object has a story behind it,” he said. “I remember one escape story in particular where there was a note from a little girl who lived in the village outside a POW camp that said if you ever escape we’ll help you out ... very risky note. It’s those little non-descript things that are often tied to a pretty significant event.”

Some donations are particularly tough.

“We’ve got 102,000 stories that don’t end well, so I find the letters are distressing for me,” he said. “They date their letters, and you see their date of death, and you realise that they died soon after, or their wives and children write back, and you realise that by the time they posted their letter, he was already dead, and it was a letter to no one ...

“The families that come in, they still feel it ... I had a daughter come in and her father was a Vietnam veteran. Their relationship was broken, and her donation was an act of reconciliation.”

Today, Robert can’t imagine working anywhere else.

“It’s a good fit for me,” he said. “I’ve always absorbed history and been interested in history, so the content and what the Memorial is about has always sat well with me.

“I’ve thought about going to work for another museum, but they just don’t interest me. If it’s not the Memorial, I would have to do something completely different.

“There’s not much to dislike working here.”



Rob’s favourite image in the collection is this photo showing the Australian Light Horse passing the Great City Wall of Jerusalem during the First World War. Rob believes that this image portrays the youngest country on earth liberating the most important and one of the oldest cities on earth. B01609

Rob’s special field gun stands amongst the many field guns in the Treloar Technology Centre in Mitchell.

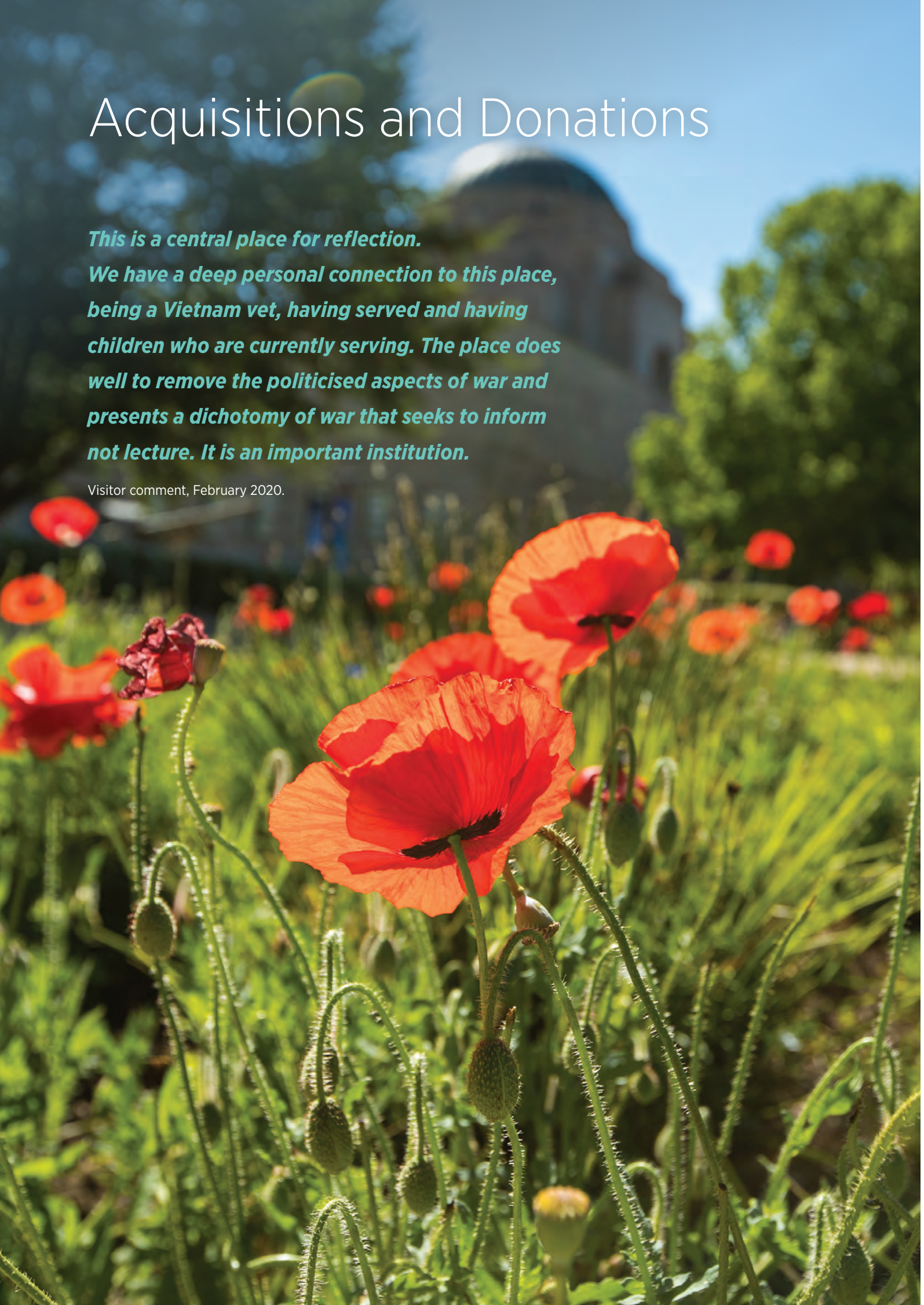


Acquisitions and Donations

This is a central place for reflection.

We have a deep personal connection to this place, being a Vietnam vet, having served and having children who are currently serving. The place does well to remove the politicised aspects of war and presents a dichotomy of war that seeks to inform not lecture. It is an important institution.

Visitor comment, February 2020.





The National Collection of the Australian War Memorial is an extensive collection of artworks, photographs, relics, uniforms, film and sound items. Thanks to generous donations from businesses, service organisations, and members of the public, this year 16,804 items were accepted into the National Collection.

One of the most historically significant items donated recently was a theodolite with box and tripod used by Warrant Officer John McMahon of the 6 Australian Army Topographical Survey Company in New Guinea in the Second World War.



The Royal Australian Air Force donated an access door from an F/A-18A Hornet A21-34 aircraft that deployed to Operation Okra in September–October 2015 and March–October 2016. The aircraft took part in an all-Australian mission with F/A-18A Hornet A21-40, and on 19 September 2016 flew an operational mission marking the centenary of 3 Squadron, RAAF.

Its nose cone artwork, designed and painted by Leading Aircraftman Patrick Kelly, commemorates a lightning strike incident that occurred during an operational mission over Northern Iraq on 2 May 2016.



The Memorial is well known for its large technology objects and extensive collection, but it also houses a significant collection of contemporary artworks.

Memorial Director Matthew Anderson and Head, Art, Laura Webster view recent art acquisitions. These artworks represent the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Australian Defence Force cooperating during the 2019–2020 bushfire crisis, Operation Bushfire Assist.

Partners and supporters



The Memorial would like to thank and acknowledge the philanthropic support provided by its partners over the 2019-20 period including:

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The Boeing Company
The Hordern Family
The University of Canberra

Thank you to the individuals, corporations and foundations who have provided previous financial support. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Staff of the Memorial



Memorial staff faced many challenges over the past year. In January, Canberra was enveloped in a smoke haze from bushfires, requiring the Last Post Ceremony to be moved indoors. On 24 March the Memorial closed its doors to the public, for the first time since opening in 1941. With many staff working from home, the Information Technology Team worked tirelessly to ensure offsite staff could continue their duties. Onsite staff adapted, completing many additional tasks to ensure the Memorial's core operating systems remained functional including the management and delivery of the Anzac Day commemorative service.


Some staff were deployed to assist Services Australia, where their assistance was much appreciated.

After 99 days of closure the Memorial reopened, welcoming visitors on 1 July 2020, with COVID-19 safe procedures in place.



In December 2019, the Memorial acknowledged the many volunteers who assist the Memorial's operations. This annual event includes presentation of length of service awards. Pictured here is then Director, Dr Brendan Nelson, with Bob Stenhouse, Bill Kitto, Margaret Fisher and Fran Buscombe and Assistant Director Anne Bennie.





It's affirmed my understanding of Australian heritage and allowed me to see how australia has developed in to the country it has become. If we cant remember our past, then we wont know where to go in the future.

The Pool of Reflection at the Napier Waller Reflection Ceremony held for Australian Defence Force Academy staff and first year trainee officers at the completion of their Year One Familiarisation Training.



