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Front cover: Soldiers disembarking from a troopship at Port Melbourne after returning from overseas, 1919. NAA: A 7342, Album 1

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World War I – the Great War, as it was once called – was the first war in history where artillery dominated. Millions of high-explosive shells rained down on both sides of the Western Front on soldiers lightly protected by trenches and earthworks. The soldiers were the random victims of gunners often far from the frontline. No Australian now can say, from first-hand experience, what it was like to attempt to survive that awful shelling, night after night, day after day. Some men suffered a lasting impact, confined to mental hospitals in the years after the war, their minds and bodies affected by the condition that was termed ‘shell shock’.

Australia sent 331,781 of its men to the war, an enormous contribution from a country whose total population then was under five million. Sixty thousand of these Australians died on the battlefields or of wounds caused there, and at least another 150,000 came home with significant injuries, many to a life considerably shortened by war. Serving these men near the battlefields in the casualty clearing stations, and in military hospitals further behind the frontline and in England, were the nurses of the Australian Army Nursing Service. There were nearly 2500 of them, with another 700 Australian women serving in other medical capacities.

These statistics of soldiers and nurses, of those killed and coming home, tell us little enough. They do not tell us of the mother who, handed a telegram announcing the death of her son on the battlefield, faints straight away. Family members observed that she never fully recovered. In this case, the grieving woman was also the mother of politician HV Evatt. Jeanie Evatt lost two sons to the war and died at the early age of 59, never reconciled to her loss. She was just one of thousands of Australian mothers to live the rest of their lives in grief. What words of consolation could be offered to Mrs Annie Whitelaw, a mother at Briagolong in Victoria’s Gippsland region, whose six sons all went off to fight the war. Three of them were killed overseas. Another son died from war wounds shortly after he returned to Australia. Like Jeanie Evatt, this mother was left grief-stricken.
The war ends

It is not hard to understand the jubilation that greeted the news that an armistice had been signed in France on 11 November 1918 and that the guns had ceased firing. If the mood of the soldiers was one of disbelief and sorrow for lost mates, at home there were joyous scenes in all Australian cities and towns in perhaps the greatest outburst of public happiness the nation has ever known. Australians danced and sang in the streets and attended churches in massive numbers to sing hymns and give thanks. In all this joy, it is easy to overlook those who could rejoice for their neighbours in their happiness, but could know no real joy themselves – just an ache for a soldier in a far-off grave.

A senior chaplain at the front wrote to such grieving parents of his own experience of Armistice Day. He was still serving in France when he heard the news that the Armistice had been signed. He stood in a tiny war cemetery close to the Australians’ final battlefield, where lay buried the son of the people to whom he was writing. The chaplain wrote to this fallen soldier’s parents that he could hear the sounds of jubilation, the train whistles blaring, the church bells chiming, music and joyful laughter throughout the streets of a village nearly completely destroyed by war. ‘I stood alone,’ he told them, ‘with a lump in my throat, feeling in no mood to wave Flags.’ He had gone to see the grave of his own boy, just 19 and killed at the end of September 1918: ‘He lies with over twenty other Lads side by side, and one of them is your Boy.’ For these parents, and many thousands of others, the pain of loss would always be with them, as if they, too, were shell-shocked and beyond the hope of recovery. And yet Australian life would go on.

Coming home

By the end of September 1919 only 10,000 Australian troops remained in Britain. The rest had come home in ships that Prime Minister William Morris (Billy) Hughes had conjured up after furious argument with those who said that the shipping was simply not there. The influenza pandemic that had ravaged the world from early 1918, causing more deaths than the war itself, dampened to some extent the joy of the homecoming. It ruled out the possibility of great victory marches and large celebrations, but not the family and community gatherings that welcomed, individually, each man home. Spare a thought, though, for the family of the soldier who died of the Spanish flu while his returning troopship was in quarantine in Watsons Bay, Sydney, within sight of his beloved homeland.

To entice men to enlist, and in fairness anyway, the Australian Government had promised that those who fought would be cared for as long as they needed that care, would be provided for as long as they could not provide for themselves, and that the wives, children and dependent mothers of those who were killed would be paid pensions to allow them a fair life in a postwar world. It was a debt of honour that the people and government of Australia accepted, a determination to look after those who had given their lives or their health for their country in war.

To administer this debt, the government created the Repatriation Department. A new term, ‘the Repat’, entered the Australian vocabulary, and not always as a term of endearment. But what a task the Repat had. Limbless soldiers – think of the millions of shells – and men so badly gassed that their lives would be inevitably shortened, men with dreadful gunshot and shell wounds that would take years to mend, men damaged in their minds that only patience and time could help repair – all these demobilised soldiers needed a home and care. Some men and women, after close care in rehabilitation, would soon work again; for others, the journey to recovery might take years. Some would never trouble the Repat at all but would resume their own lives and keep their troubles to themselves.

Among these returned soldiers were Indigenous servicemen. An estimated 400 to 500 Indigenous Australians served.
Despite officially being unable to enlist, having performed the duties of citizens at war, however, they were denied the rights of citizens in the peace. Most, for example, were not entitled to vote. About one-third of Indigenous soldiers were wounded or killed, and to their mothers or wives came the same casualty telegrams that were such a part of the Australian experience of war. Feelings of grief and helplessness were not dependent on the colour of a person’s skin.

**A lasting grief**

When Australia went to war again in 1939 there was no widespread community jubilation as there had been in 1914. People in 1939 knew about war, and innocent Empire patriotism now had no part in Australia’s response. Australia was a different country in 1939 from the place it had been in the optimistic years of the early 20th century.

How could the family of Jack Fothergill have possibly rejoiced in the coming of war again? Jack Fothergill was one of the first Australians to enlist, on 17 August 1914. He landed at Gallipoli at about 8 am on 25 April 1915 and was dead by about 10 o’clock that morning, although we cannot know precisely when he died. We do know that he died at Pine Ridge and that his body was never recovered. He was listed as missing, presumed dead, two months later during which time his parents had been waiting in hope and in the expectation of a letter or two from Jack at the front. On each Anzac Day thereafter, only missing 1917, his family placed an ‘In Memoriam’ notice in the Melbourne Argus. It was almost always a poem, and always specially written each year. The notice in 1931 showed that the sense of loss was still strong: ‘Wherever we go/ Whatever we do/ Our thoughts dear Jack/ Are always of you.’

Robert Fothergill, Jack’s father, died in 1939, just before World War II began, aged 78; his wife Isabella followed him six years later just as that war was ending. The last of the notices to Jack Fothergill was published in the Argus in 1948, 32 years after the first had appeared. We cannot know how many other Australian families mirrored the efforts of the Fothergill family to keep the memory of a son before the public and to keep a family remembrance of him alive. Their efforts, while truly touching, may not have been unique. But what we can say with confidence is that thousands of Australian...
families lived through what we now easily call the ‘interwar’ years in grief and loneliness. The war had changed Australia. It was indeed a nation in shock.

Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice, an exhibition supported by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, is on at the National Archives in Canberra until 27 April 2009, and will then tour nationally. The exhibition catalogue, which includes an extended essay by Dr Michael McKernan, can be purchased from the online shop at www.naa.gov.au.

Dr Michael McKernan has written extensively on Australia at war. His most recent book was The Strength of a Nation.

[right] A solitary mourner at Beach Cemetery in Gallipoli, 1920s.

More than 300,000 men and women served in the Australian forces during World War I. Many of their stories can be found in the National Archives’ collection of defence service records. Each of them had a place of birth, a home, a family. But where?

Oliver Bergstein was born in Iceland; George Dix hailed from the Falkland Islands. While many people have visions of a nation of bushmen marching to war from small towns across Australia, our service people came from all over the world, as Mapping our Anzacs, the National Archives’ new web feature, reveals. It was developed as part of the Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice exhibition.

On Mapping our Anzacs you can browse maps of Australia, the United Kingdom and the world, exploring more than 15,000 places where service people were born or enlisted. Once you’ve found a location, you simply follow a link to see details of all the people associated with it. Further links take you directly to digitised copies of their service records.

Mapping our Anzacs provides a new way of navigating the National Archives’ World War I service records – not by name, but by place. Schools and historical groups will find it easier to examine the war’s impact on their local communities.

Sometimes service records are empty. If a person served in both world wars, their World War I service record was combined with their World War II record. For the first time, Mapping our Anzacs provides users with direct links that connect World War I and later service records. Research is continuing to identify these records, but more than 1500 are already available.

The National Archives is also interested in what you know. An online scrapbook allows you to add notes and photographs to an individual’s service details. Or you can compile your own tribute – an online memorial to service people from your own family or community.

Mapping our Anzacs offers a new view of Australia’s war effort. Access it online at mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au or at the Shell-shocked exhibition, currently showing in Canberra.

By Dr Tim Sherratt, websites content developer at the National Archives.
Resisting the call to arms:
men who did not enlist in World War I

Historian Dr Bart Ziino has researched thousands of records that give an insight into an often overlooked aspect of World War I – men who chose not to enlist for service.

The National Archives holds a wealth of information on Australia's participation in World War I. More than 370,000 individual service records provide immediate and personal access to the lives of those who fought and, very often, their families who waited and inquired anxiously.

But what of those Australians who declined to enlist? Here, too, the National Archives has valuable records of individual lives caught up in war. A series of documents that only came into the collection in 2002 reveals the immense pressure to enlist faced by men of military age, and their individual reasons for resisting that pressure.

In late 1915 and early 1916, as part of a renewed recruiting effort, the federal government sent out ‘the Call to Arms’ to thousands of Australian men of military age. The form confronted them with the question: ‘Are you willing to ENLIST NOW?’ It asked those men who answered ‘no’ to give reasons why they would not enlist. Local and state committees followed up with men in cases where their reasons were not considered satisfactory. Approximately 10,000 responses survive from Victoria, and they provide a fascinating insight into the difficulties, obligations and struggles of life on the Australian homefront in the middle of World War I.

Obligations at home

Ill health was by far the most common response men gave on the Call to Arms form. It offered one way men could decline to serve without having to offer any other
justification, although many ailing men were determined to make it understood that they would otherwise serve their country. Other men weighed their obligation to King and Empire against obligations to family. They assessed the practicalities too: a private’s pay rarely matched men’s civilian incomes or compensated for their absence from the home. James Miller, a clerk of East Melbourne, was simply ‘Unwilling to leave Wife and Child to the mercy of a cruel world.’ John Rosser, of Newport, was decisive: ‘I consider my duty clear to stay here and keep my wife and children.’

The records also show that the demands of the war were beginning to upset the delicate balance within families where sons, husbands, uncles and fathers had already enlisted. Sometimes brothers remained behind to provide for families or look after business interests. William Anderson of Windsor had tossed a coin with his brother to decide who would go to the war. His brother was to enlist, but William promised ‘to take care of Mother and Sister till his return or otherwise.’

Such arrangements were particularly common in farming families where the labour of family members was necessary to carry on operations. Farmers themselves often justified not enlisting by referring to the importance of their industry – who else would feed the troops? John King of Newbridge was certain that his wheat and oats ‘are as necessary to win the war as the making of munitions or serving in the trenches.’

**Serving the country better**

The idea that one was contributing just as much to the war effort by staying at home was borne out notably in the case of author C J Dennis. Working in 1916 as a clerk in the Naval Office, Dennis claimed that he had recently suffered two nervous breakdowns, and insisted that ‘Taking this and other matters into consideration I believe I can serve the country better as a writer than as a soldier.’ He was right. The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke (1915) and The Moods of Ginger Mick (1916) were undoubtedly the most popular Australian wartime works with both soldiers and readers at home, each running to tens of thousands of copies, and the former also going on to become a classic of early Australian cinema.

Literary pretensions elsewhere were given short shrift. A young student who believed he too could make a greater contribution with the pen than the sword was warned sharply by a member of the recruiting committee that ‘any successes you may gain along the lines you describe will be largely spoiled by knowledge of the fact that you failed to respond to your Country’s Call.’ Six months later the young man, CWW Webster, joined the Australian Imperial Force. After his return, he produced the epic poem Between Two Worlds, mourning the loss of friends and expressing his disillusionment with war.

Others too offered their skills to help the war effort at home. Bertram Gustave Bell, of Geelong, had lung problems that prevented his enlistment. Nevertheless, he claimed to be ‘the best shot in Australia’ and offered his services as a rifle shooting instructor. The flyer for Bell’s vaudeville show, which he attached to his form, declared that with his rifle he ‘Strikes matches from the fingers, cuts a bullet in halves on the blade of a knife … and many other equally wonderful shots.’ The Department of Defence did not, it seems, take up Bell’s offer.

**Women’s voices**

While the Call to Arms forms were addressed to men, women’s voices also echo through the records. Mrs Evelyn Brough-Smyth managed a dairy at Krowera and explained that her sons had not enlisted, as ‘I cannot work my farm without them … Should my sons go, or not return, I must be ruined.’ Other women exercised their right to keep sons younger than 21 at home. The mother of 18-year-old Reginald Rundle, from West Melbourne, wrote:
'There are two sons already enlisted. This one is the only one left. The first one went on condition that this one stayed at home.' Parents frequently resisted pressure to allow their sons to enlist. At least one in three men between 18 and 21 years cited their parents withholding consent as the reason for non-enlistment.

Women also occasionally emerged to encourage authorities in the pursuit of their men. Mrs AE Cooper of Albert Park, writing on behalf of her son, nevertheless pointed out: 'There's nothing to prevent the Father from enlisting.' It is unclear what strained relations led to this indictment. Other wives left less to the imagination. Violet Johnson was irked that her husband had, in the year since their marriage, 'provided no home so far and no signs of any.' She informed the recruiting committee: 'He is over six feet in height, good teeth, also been used to country life all his life and good with the rifle also his wife has no objection of his going.'

How many more?

A significant number of men refused to enlist while Germans remained in Australia. Claude Peirson of Newmarket stated on his form: ‘there are to many dam Germans here to leave behind.’ J ohn Webb of Portarlington also found it ‘very hard ... to go away and Fight while there are hundreds of Germans and Austrians walking about reaping the Benefits.' It was very hard, too, for those of German ancestry. Otto Neuendorf of Royal Park was embittered by his father's treatment at the hands of his employers – claiming he had been forced to resign after 25 years service – and turned on the authorities: ‘I ask you! who is going to provide for the dependents if I enlist?’

Members of Parliament, formally exempted from compulsory service by the Defence Act, were also called upon to give reason why they should not enlist. One-time Victorian Premier and soon to be Acting Prime Minister, William Watt, said he would go if men of his age (44 years) were required. ‘Meanwhile,’ he wrote, ‘I shall continue to serve on the Federal Parliamentary War Committee.’ This was hardly enough for Watt’s detractors, some of whom described him elsewhere as ‘an eligible [who] squibbed going to the war he attempted to drive others to.’

For a committed few, it was not the specific circumstances of this war that caused them to refuse service but, rather, the issue of all war. Conscientious and religious objectors reflected a strong sense among a section of the community that it was abhorrent to take any human life. Frederick Carton of Fitzroy was ‘sorry to say at present I could not bring myself to bear arms against human life.’ His was the more typical response among those who claimed to be unable to kill, though at least one declared more strongly that war ‘is only wholesale murder of human life.’ Taking his cue from his religious beliefs, J ohn Thornton asserted that God did not intend men to kill each other. Rather, he wrote, ‘It is for you and I to get down on our knees before God.’ He would not enlist under any circumstances.

For some men, the government’s appeals for a greater contribution were simply too much. George McLay of South Melbourne, whose brother and father had already enlisted, demanded to know ‘how many more of us do you want?’

These are the voices of those who lived through World War I and, for a range of reasons, resisted increasing pressure to join the armed forces. They are rare voices, as so much of what passed in individual lives on the Australian homefront has been lost, or is hidden in the few surviving letters to loved ones at the front. In this unique collection of records, these voices speak directly and powerfully, and they tell us that the issues of World War I were fought and felt not just on the battlefields, but in the everyday lives of those who endured these terrible years.

Dr Bart Ziino is a postdoctoral fellow at Deakin University. He is author of A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War (2007).

[opposite page left] The Call to Arms form of writer C J Dennis.


[top] Bertram Gustave Bell attached a flyer for his vaudeville show to his Call to Arms form as evidence of his skill with a rifle.
Australia’s role in the apartheid sports boycott

For more than 20 years, there were no official cricket matches between Australia and South Africa due to the sporting boycott of apartheid South Africa. In this excerpt from the third annual RG Neale lecture, Professor Richard Cashman discusses the cricketing controversies of the 1970s and the role the Australian Government and Australian Cricket Board played in the boycott.

After the election of the South African National Party in 1948, an informal policy of segregation was tightened, and apartheid (or separateness) was applied to all areas of public and private life, including sport.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Australia, Britain and New Zealand lagged behind an emerging apartheid boycott movement. The impetus for the boycott came from within South Africa and gained support from other African nations. The cause was advanced in the United Nations where African countries were supported by a number of Asian and West Indian nations.

Protests against sporting contacts with South Africa grew during the 1960s. The troubled 1971 Springbok rugby tour of Australia was a watershed in Australia’s sporting relationship with South Africa. During the tour there were violent clashes between pro- and anti-tour demonstrators and police, leading to more than 700 arrests. Games were played behind barbed wire but this did not deter protesters who, armed with bolt-cutters, invaded the pitch on a number of occasions. Because of trade union opposition and security concerns, the tourists were flown around the country in RAAF planes. The Queensland Government of Joh Bjelke-Petersen declared an 18-day state emergency when the South Africans visited there.

**Australian cricket and the boycott**

Roland Perry has written that Sir Donald Bradman’s role in the cancellation of the 1971–72 South African cricket tour to Australia was one of his most ‘impressive legacies’. According to Perry, Bradman, in
his role as Chairman of the Board of Control, sought to ‘peel back the hyperbole’ to get to the heart of the South African problem. Perry notes that while Bradman was opposed to apartheid, he believed that the South African cricketers ‘had tried harder than our protesters to do something about it.’ Ultimately, the intransigence of the South African Government caused Bradman to shift from tour advocate to tour critic. When Bradman announced the tour cancellation he concluded with a simple statement: ‘We will not play them (South Africa) until they choose a team on a non-racist basis.’ Bradman’s reputation and fame ‘meant that this unexpected move was a massive international blow to apartheid.’

Historians of Cricket Australia, Gideon Haigh and David Frith, have suggested rather different reasons for the cancellation of the 1971–72 tour. The ‘clinching argument’ was that both Prime Ministers McMahon (Australia) and Vorster (South Africa) had made it clear that they did not want the tour to go ahead. Bradman reported to a meeting of the cricket board on 8 September 1971 that it had no choice but to accept this advice. The tour, then, was cancelled primarily for pragmatic reasons. It seems clear that protests of 1970 (in England) and 1971 (in Australia) did have an impact. McMahon and Vorster did not want another round of large demonstrations, social divisiveness, massive police involvement and continuing media preoccupation with South Africa. Despite the fact that there had been no real change in the structure of South African cricket over the next year, Bradman raised the issue of another tour some nine months later. He wrote to the Prime Minister’s Department on 6 June 1972:

The Australian Board of Control is very anxious to have a resumption of cricket contests between Australia and South Africa. The present situation is highly detrimental to cricket in both countries, and the profits which could be made from such tours and which are vital to the development of the game, are sadly missed.

The cricket authorities in Australia are non-racial in their outlook. Color is no bar to selection in this country and we in turn are happy to play against others of any color. But so long as the South African Gov’t forbids the selection of a colored man in a cricket team to represent South Africa, then apparently the Aust. Trades Union and the Anti-apartheid people, will continue their opposition to any resumption of matches.

This letter represented a plea to the Australian Government to lean on the South African Government to achieve ‘sufficient relaxation’ of racial regulations to enable the next tour to proceed in 1975–76. It seemed that Bradman hoped that a gesture such as the selection of one or two non-whites in the South African squad might make the tour more acceptable to the Australian Government and public. Bradman had advocated a similar proposal in an attempt to save the 1971–72 tour. He concluded his letter by stating that ‘one would assume that the resumption of such sporting contests to be in the “political” interests of both countries.’ However, a succession of Australian governments from 1972 believed that Australian political interests were best served by maintaining the boycott.

As an astute administrator, Bradman was keen to solve the problem of the cessation of cricket contacts between Australia and South Africa and recognised that apartheid was at the heart of this problem. Bradman’s stance on South Africa was consistent. However, he was a reformer and a bridge builder, who worked within the system, rather than a radical who wanted a complete upheaval of the South African sports system.

**Implementing the boycott**

When Gough Whitlam came to power in December 1972, the Labor Government made haste to dismantle all vestiges of racism and to adopt a more independent stance on foreign policy. One of its first actions was to restrict the entry of racially selected sports teams and individuals and initiate an apartheid sports boycott. Subsequent governments of Malcolm Fraser (from 1975) and Bob Hawke (from 1983) endorsed this policy.

The critical weapon in the government’s arsenal during the boycott campaign was the denial of visas to South African teams and individuals. This was the nub of Australia’s tougher stance. The government applied the test of multi-racial selection to determine whether South African sports participants could gain entry to Australia. Few South African teams could measure up to the tough standards applied by the
Whitlam Government, which demanded equal and non-discriminatory opportunities for white and non-white participants across the board, from club to international level. The government permitted sportsmen and women who came as individuals rather than as representatives of South Africa to enter Australia.

On occasions, the Australian Government took such a tough stance against apartheid that it was in advance of public opinion. The denial of a visa to Boon Wallace, president of the white South African Cricket Association (SACA), was one such occasion. Wallace had applied for a visitor visa to travel to Australia in February 1975, to attend two days of the Sixth Test against England and to visit ‘some friends’, who happened to be Bradman and Tim Caldwell, the past and current chairmen of the Australian Cricket Board. The visa was denied on the grounds that Wallace’s visit was considered an official one designed to advance the proposed 1975–76 Australian cricket tour of South Africa.

When Wallace resubmitted his visa application he was more forthcoming about his objectives. He indicated that ‘the purpose of my visit is to further conversations I have had with certain Australian cricket contacts, on the cricket scene in South Africa generally, [about] the possibility of an Australian team touring South Africa and the terms acceptable to the Australian Cricket Board of Control to undertake such a tour.’ The second visa was also denied because the government failed to see ‘why it should assist the white South African Cricket Association to circumvent the Australian Government’s policy of opposition to apartheid.’ The decision was widely criticised in the media. The Age stated that opposition to racism was stretched to absurdity when it prevented people from meeting to discuss in private something contrary to government policy. The Sydney Morning Herald noted that the logic of his exclusion was pettifogging at best and, at worst, disquieting in its implications for an open society.

The Australian Government was less able to restrict the movement of sporting teams and individuals travelling to South Africa since visas were issued by the South African Government. In such instances, the Australian Government could make known...
its disapproval and even lean on sports bodies and individuals not to tour. While the government failed to stop numerous unofficial tours and visits of individual sportsmen and women to South Africa, it did achieve success in restricting high-profile tours, such as the 1975–76 cricket tour, when both cricket boards were keen to tour.

Bradman visited South Africa in June 1974, meeting Prime Minister Vorster and Boon Wallace, when he sought to advance the cause of the tour. The Australian Ambassador to South Africa, DW McNicol, pondered whether it was appropriate to brief Bradman or to meet him at a social function. ‘Could one be reasonably sure that things said to Bradman,’ mused the Ambassador, ‘would not be disseminated to other Australian cricket authorities and thus inevitably be relayed back to South Africans?’ It is a matter of great irony that the great man of Australian cricket was now suspected of being a possible fifth column – someone batting for the other side – trying to undermine the government’s stance on the 1975–76 tour.

Boon Wallace made some novel proposals to make the 1975–76 cricket tour more acceptable to the Australian Government. He suggested that the Australians should play two Tests against white South African teams and another two Tests against black teams, with the final Test against a ‘mixed side selected on merit.’ The selectors would treat the first four matches as trials for the ‘first integrated South African team.’ In the end, Caldwell had to admit that this was something less than the government’s aims of merit selection and the integration of cricket at every level. He reported back to the Australian Cricket Board ‘that South Africa could not bring about the changes in sport which were acceptable to the Australian Government by October [1975].’

The extended dialogue between the Australian Government and the Australian Cricket Board, and the board’s decision, demonstrated that the latter body took seriously the government’s agendas – even though board members may not have liked them. There were, as a result, no official cricket exchanges between Australia and South Africa from 1969–70 to 1992, when South Africa met Australia in the Cricket World Cup.

The effectiveness of the boycott

There has been much debate about why there was an unanticipated erosion of white South Africa’s will to resist outside pressure and a determination to gain reacceptance into the international community, which led to the rapid dismantling of apartheid in the early 1990s. Historians have pointed both to pressure from within, such as the growth of anti-apartheid political opposition in South Africa and Africa, and from without, such as government, trade union and private sector campaigns affecting trade, investment and sport.

It is difficult to weigh up the precise impact of trade and sports sanctions other than to suggest that they worked, in tandem with other forces, to bring about an end to apartheid. Sanctions, at the very least, had a psychological impact on the governing party and diminished its will to cling to apartheid.

The sports boycott worked in Australia because there was strong bipartisan support for such a stance over two decades. Whitlam, Fraser and Hawke were all passionate believers in the efficacy of the boycott. Recently released Department of Foreign Affairs records of 1977 provide some additional insights into the success of the boycott. While the government occasionally got ahead of public opinion, it went to great pains to advise sports bodies of the rationale for its policies and then to lobby, negotiate and lean on sports organisations, such as the Australian Cricket Board. These records show that Australia played an important role in the boycott against apartheid in South Africa.

Richard Cashman is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney, where he is the Director of the Australian Centre for Olympic Studies. He has written extensively on sport in Australia and Asia and is the author of The Bitter-Sweet Awakening: The Legacy of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games (2006) and Sport in the National Imagination (2003).
Gough Whitlam: a moment in history

A new biography of Gough Whitlam by Professor Jenny Hocking has uncovered some lesser-known aspects of the former Prime Minister’s life. Drawing on records from the collection of the National Archives, Professor Hocking and research assistant Dr Natasha Campo discuss how the influence of his father, Fred Whitlam, and war service shaped Gough’s future political concerns.

On 20 June 1942, just six weeks after his marriage to champion swimmer Margaret Dovey, Gough Whitlam received his call-up papers and enlisted with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) at No. 2 Recruitment Centre, ‘for the duration of the War and a period of twelve months thereafter.’ He was no stranger to the demands of a military life: he had enlisted with the Sydney University Regiment while studying his first year of law at the University of Sydney and registered with the RAAF immediately after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Over the next three-and-a-half years his service took him throughout northern Australia and the South Pacific. At the end of the war, Whitlam was navigator on the only Empire aircraft assigned to the RAAF Pacific Echelon at General Douglas MacArthur’s headquarters at Leyte and Manila, flying members of MacArthur’s staff between the Philippines and Australia.

The details of Whitlam’s war service, while readily accessible through the National Archives of Australia, are not widely known. Like much of Whitlam’s background and family influences, his experiences during the war have been overshadowed by his dramatic political career.

[left] Gough Whitlam’s attestation paper for service in the Royal Australian Air Force during World War II.

[below] Flying Officer Gough Whitlam (centre) with his bomber aircrew of Squadron 13 (left-right): crew member Baxter; Flight Lieutenant Lex Goudie, Pilot; and flight crew Smyth and Turnbull, 1943.
Flying Officer

Gough Whitlam’s wartime experiences were formative. During a lengthy period of training at the RAAF Initial Training School at Bradfield Park in New South Wales, Whitlam learnt morse code, maths, meteorology and navigation. At the end of his initial training, his marks were among the top for his group of trainees, and he was placed third overall. From Bradfield Park, Whitlam was then posted to the No. 1 Air Observers School in Cootamundra, NSW, where for the next three months he undertook further navigation training. By the end of his training he was ranked as a Flying Officer.

In September 1943, after 15 months of training, Gough Whitlam was assigned to Squadron 13, then stationed in Canberra, where it was being re-equipped with Navy Ventura aircraft after sustaining heavy losses and damage during the Japanese air raids on Darwin in February 1942. For the next 10 months, Gough stayed with his parents, Fred and Martha, and his sister Freda (who had also enlisted with the RAAF as a non-commissioned officer). Margaret, now pregnant with the couple’s first child, also stayed with the Whitlams during this time in the city of Gough Whitlam’s childhood. He often had his Air Force comrades over to dinner, where they were treated to his mother Martha’s renowned hospitality.

An influential father

Gough Whitlam’s father, Fred Whitlam, an often overlooked senior public servant, is an important figure in his own right. One of the most satisfying aspects of our extensive research project has been bringing to light Fred Whitlam’s influence on his only son and his own significant contribution to Australia’s political landscape. Fred Whitlam was part of the first wave of public servants who moved to the fledgling city of Canberra in 1927. He served as Crown Solicitor from 1936 and was a prominent member of the Canberra community. As secretary of the Canberra College Association, he was instrumental in the formation of the Australian National University. He was also an elder of St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, chairman of the Australian Churches Committee on International Affairs, and a driving force within the Canberra branch of the Institute of International Affairs.

In 1946, Fred served with the Australian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference led by Labor Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs Dr HV Evatt, where Evatt put forward the proposal for the establishment of an international human rights court. Fred Whitlam retired as Crown Solicitor in April 1949 but continued to be closely involved with United Nations matters as an adviser to the Department of External Affairs and as Australian representative at the 1950 and 1954 sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

A turning point

Significantly, Gough Whitlam’s war service alerted him to what he saw as crucial flaws in the Australian Constitution and the need for expanded Commonwealth power. One of the most important political events during Whitlam’s RAAF years was the 1944 Referendum on Post-War Reconstruction and Democratic Rights.

The Labor Government, as it entered the war under Prime Minister John Curtin, was aware that its wartime powers were temporary. It proposed to extend the powers granted to the Commonwealth during wartime to the significant tasks of rebuilding and reconstruction in peacetime. The cause was taken up primarily by Evatt who, as Attorney-General, introduced a Bill in October 1942 which recommended that a number of powers – including the power to make laws regarding employment, health, transport and for the Aboriginal peoples of Australia – be transferred to the federal parliament after the war. The Bill also incorporated aspects of the four key freedoms then considered fundamental to democratic citizenship: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear. These proposals were put to the people in the 1944 referendum.

Gough Whitlam, now stationed at Cooktown, Qld, followed every constitutional move in the complicated developments towards the referendum. As Crown Solicitor, his father was the formative draftsman of the documents relating to the referendum.

[above] As Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam handed title of land at Wattie Creek in the Northern Territory to the Gurindji people, represented by Vincent Lingiari, in 1975.
He sent the official documents to Gough who, along with the other troops, had also been sent the notes prepared by Evatt for senators prior to debate on the Bill. However, agitation among the troops was not encouraged and when the new Leader of the Opposition, RG Menzies, sought to address the troops as part of his campaign against the referendum, his request was rejected by the Acting Prime Minister Frank Forde, who wrote that ‘it has been decided that no addresses by any person to troops in camp will be permitted.’

This ban, however, did not deter the troops – the Army’s journal Salt gave the referendum extensive coverage with a discussion of both the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ case – nor did it deter Whitlam. He campaigned strongly for a yes vote among his Squadron 13 members at Gove, NT, where they were now stationed, holding meetings at night when the squadron was not out flying. The referendum, put to the Australian people in August 1944, was carried in just two states and failed to gain majority support nationally, supported by barely 46 percent of voters. Squadron 13 recorded one of the highest yes votes, as Whitlam recalls: ‘The CO [Commanding Officer] might even have voted for it! … the armed forces realised how much the federal government had been able to do during the war ... I realised that and it had a great deal to do with my thinking.’ The failure of the referendum was a turning point for the future prime minister.

New connections

Before serving in the RAAF, Whitlam had met no Indigenous Australians, but stationed at Cooktown, Qld, and Gove, NT, he witnessed discrimination for the first time. He was struck by the extent to which the conditions of Aboriginal people in these remote areas differed from those on the fringes of the major cities. During its six months based at the Yirrkala Mission at Gove, Squadron 13 had close contact with the Aboriginal people. Whitlam recalls that, ‘We intruders observed how best to catch fish to supplement our rations.’

It was also at Yirrkala that Whitlam first met the prominent Yunupingu family, whose members would play a crucial role in land rights campaigns over the next 25 years. Whitlam was greeted at the Gove airstrip by Munggurawuy Yunupingu, holding in his arms his young son, who was the same age as Whitlam’s own newborn son, Antony.

Whitlam returned to Sydney on leave on 3 July 1945 and, on the death of John Curtin just two days later, applied to join the Labor Party. On 8 August 1945 the Darlinghurst Branch of the Australian Labor Party issued a membership ticket to ‘Gough Whitlam: student’. On 15 August 1945 the new Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley announced the end of the war against Japan. After five years in uniform, Gough Whitlam ended his war service on 17 October 1945 and returned home.

Professor Jenny Hocking’s biography Gough Whitlam: A Moment in History (Melbourne University Press/ Miegunyah) was launched by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in November 2008. Professor Hocking, with research assistant Dr Natasha Campo, is continuing work on a major biographical study of Gough Whitlam at the National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University. The project is supported by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant with partner organisations, the National Archives of Australia and the National Library of Australia.

[Left] Margaret and Gough Whitlam with their children, from left: Nicholas, Stephen, Catherine and Antony, taken at Catherine’s christening.
In June 1928, Vice-Admiral Kobayashi of His Imperial Japanese Majesty’s Navy laid the first wreath at the new war memorial in Kings Park, Perth. He spoke of the admiration in which his navy held the glory of the beach of Anzac and Australia’s war dead. In reply, Archbishop Clune said that the relatives of the fallen would be grateful to the Vice-Admiral for laying the wreath. At the ceremony’s conclusion, Lt. Gen. Sir Talbot Hobbs recognised Japan’s support for Australia in World War I. ‘Had Japan stood aside,’ he argued, ‘it is difficult to say what would have happened especially to Australia.’

To many people, this image of Japan as a wartime saviour is surprising, especially because of the nation’s role in World War II. Wartime memories have understandably overshadowed the role Japan and Japanese residents played in Australian history before 1941. Records from the National Archives provide evidence of decades of mutual friendship before the war, as well as an element of suspicion and mistrust.

A growing relationship

Few formal ties existed between the Australian colonies and Japan before Federation. In the two decades after 1901, Australia was dependent on British foreign policy for its alliances. However, exchanges between Australia and Japan were frequent. Australian traders operated in Japan from the 1850s, and thousands of Japanese came to Australia as traders and workers from the time of the great exhibitions in Sydney and Melbourne in the 1870s and 1880s until 1941. Amendments in 1904 to the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 permitted Japanese merchants, tourists and students to enter the country on passports.

One of the most enduring ties between the two nations centred on the regular visits of His Imperial Japanese Majesty’s Training Squadron to Australian and Pacific ports between 1878 and 1935. Britain assisted in the development of Japan’s navy and, as a result, Japan became a recognised naval power, especially after its victory in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05. During World War I, Japan engaged in operations against German vessels in the South Seas and off Western Australia.

Records of the training ship visits show that they were initially low-key affairs. However, the Japanese navy’s fame grew and, in 1903, thousands flocked to see the ships in port. School children reported on the event for the women’s magazine, The New Idea.

The official Australian Government reaction to the visits was lukewarm until World War I. In 1915, Melbourne hosted more than 1500 Japanese sailors. The five-day program involved a civic reception, gun salutes, a military guard of honour, dinner at Government House, and calls on the Prime Minister, State Governor, Lord Mayor and Naval Board. Sailors were given free passes to several picture theatres and free transport, and 40 officers were taken for a drive in the country. Similar receptions continued until the late 1930s.

The visits sparked many long-term personal relationships between locals and Japanese sailors. Many Australians were fascinated with the Japanese and were aware that Japan’s navy had accompanied Australian troops to Gallipoli and helped remove the German fleet from Australian waters. These actions led to Vice-Admiral Kobayashi laying the first wreath in Kings Park in 1928.

[above] Japanese merchant family aboard HIJMS Asano during the ship’s Australian visit, circa 1936.
Doing business

Approximately half the Japanese population in Australia after Federation were resident business people. Networks of Japanese and Australian-Japanese businesses were spread around the coast in all states. Towns like Cossack in Western Australia, Townsville in Queensland and Geelong in Victoria had well-known Japanese-run shops, laundries and trading agencies. Japanese businesses in major centres such as Darwin were connected to others throughout the country. The great Japanese trading company network centred in Sydney linked families whose businesses were part of the local fabric of their area and enabled further links to South-East Asia, the Pacific and Japan.

Hirokichi Nakamura of Mosman in Sydney is one example of these traders. He arrived in Australia in 1897, worked as a houseboy while he learned English, and was then employed by Farmer & Co, a large retailer and importer. He opened his own importing business in 1907. Nakamura married an Australian and had three children. By the 1920s, he had become very wealthy through agency arrangements with Japanese firms such as Tashima & Co. of Townsville.

These Japanese trading houses played an important role in the Australian economy. In Sydney, they employed more than 1100 people, many of them Australians. Hundreds of Australian businesses were in contact with Japanese firms around the country on a daily basis. By 1941, 60 Japanese-Australian families lived in Mosman alone. Japanese children went to local schools in Sydney and Melbourne.

Undercurrents

Despite these positive personal and business relationships, soon after Federation and the Russo-Japanese War, publications such as The Lone Hand and The Bulletin began to portray Japan as a villain in fictional stories of invasion. Some activities previously considered harmless began to be interpreted in more sinister terms. After Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, the Australian navy welcomed the Japanese fleet, but also appointed an intelligence officer to liaise with them. District naval officers reported on the onshore activities of sailors and officers, and on visitors to the ships – including the representative of Mitsui and Co. in Sydney, which had arranged ships’ provisions since 1907.

By 1937, fear of increasing Japanese aggression overseas led to extensive surveillance of the Japanese population in Australia. Security service records in the National Archives show that from 1937 all Japanese people in New South Wales were shadowed, including the small number who had been engaged in spying for the Japanese Government from 1934. One was a laundryman who had arrived in 1901 and married an Australian. As a civilian, he acted as a key contact for the Japanese Consulate-General and facilitated the Consulate’s intelligence gathering.

[left] In 1928, the Melbourne Herald published directions for the visiting Japanese squadrons, in Japanese script, on how to get to tourist attractions including the zoo, the museum and picture theatres.

[right] Vice-Admiral Kobayashi of His Imperial Japanese Majesty’s Navy.

[opposite page left] Pearlimg luggers in the Arafura Sea, 1938.

[opposite page right] The police post on Elcho Island, with the patrol boat Larrakia visible in the bay.
1940, he was observed driving Japanese intelligence agents around Sydney, Newcastle and the Blue Mountains.

There was a belief by 1936 that Japanese pearlng boats were massing off Australia’s north in readiness for an invasion. Darwin-based boats had for many decades been landing in Arnhem Land to collect water and fraternise and trade with local Aboriginal people. Boats would group together out to sea for safety reasons, but in a climate of increased fear this caused suspicion. In fact, the boats belonged to four different nations and at any given time between 30 to 50 per cent were Australian. Missionaries working among Aboriginal people in the north wanted what they called the Japanese ‘invasion’ stopped, and some sensational press reports in the south represented the Japanese visits as rape and pillage.

Outcries from southern politicians and lobby groups resulted in the dispatch of a new sea rescue and patrol boat, the Larrakia, and the stoning of a lone policeman on Elcho Island in 1937. The primary role of the patrol boat was sea rescue, at a time when Qantas had begun flights between Darwin and Timor. The Larrakia was only on patrol duty for about three days out of seven. The government knew that the boat could only keep a watch of sorts, but its presence served to placate those who argued that the Japanese represented a threat in Australia’s north.

Interestingly, naval files in the National Archives demonstrate that Australian military authorities only had serious concerns about Japanese naval activity north of New Guinea after 1939. Japan’s war with China from 1937 prompted the Australian Government to keep a cautious watch on Japanese activities in Australia and to closely read Dutch intelligence reports from the South Seas, but Australian and Japanese people maintained friendly relations until Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Italy and Germany in 1940.

The intricate, positive relations Japanese and Australians experienced before World War II were part of the fabric of Australian business and social life. Much of this fabric quietly survived the war through personal relations and even intermarriage. It is important to give due weight to these relationships and the role Japan played in World War I, without minimising the horrors of World War II.

Dr Pam Oliver is a professional historian and an Honorary Research Associate of the School of Historical Studies at Monash University. Her most recent book, Empty North: The Japanese Presence and Australian Reactions, 1860s to 1942, Charles Darwin University Press, won the Northern Territory History Book Award for 2007.
The Battle of Bardia, in a small town on the coast of Libya, was the first major engagement of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF) during World War II. A force of 16,000 Australians of the 6th Division attacked the fortified town of Bardia on 3 January 1941. They broke through the defensive posts which surrounded the town and by 5 January had completely overrun the Italian forces.

One hundred and thirty Australians were killed in the battle, with 326 wounded. The Australian forces took about 40,000 Italian prisoners, as well as the Italians’ supplies of arms, rations and equipment. It was a significant victory in a battle commanded by an Australian staff and fought by Australians.

A neglected battle

I began my research on the Battle of Bardia with two key aims. The first was to fill a clear gap in Australian military history. As the first major battle of the AIF in World War II, Bardia was seen by participants, and on the home front, as a test of the Anzac tradition born at Gallipoli and grown in Flanders during World War I. Bardia is described in the Australian official history of World War II and is mentioned in some biographies and larger works on the North African campaign but, surprisingly, there have been no published accounts that focus specifically on this battle. The wider community has generally not heard of Bardia. The extraordinary point is that, from an Australian perspective, in both scale and significance Bardia is almost certainly the equal of more famous battles in the North African theatre such as Tobruk and El Alamein.

A number of factors help explain why Bardia has been so long overlooked. Within the Western Desert, the effort against the Italians during the first Libyan campaign was quickly followed by more desperate and famous struggles against Rommel’s Africa Corps. For Australians in the context of the wider war, North Africa itself was soon sidelined by the more pressing concerns of the Pacific War. Perhaps, perceptions of the ease of victory, or simply because it was first, have caused events at Bardia to be overtaken by what followed. My research will go some way to addressing this gap.

An uneven fight

The second aim of this research, and perhaps the more significant, was to use Bardia as a case study to examine the influence of Anzac stereotypes and tradition in Australian military history. I wanted to uncover not only the ‘what’ of the action but also why the Australians were so successful, looking beyond explanations that rely on Anzac imagery or denigrating the Italians. What were the real factors behind victory and defeat?

The Battle of Bardia was an example of modern desert warfare where infantrymen usually play a secondary role, yet most accounts point to the quality of the Australian infantry as a decisive factor in victory. These accounts imply that there was something unique or innate about the Australians that was lacking in Italian troops: bravery is contrasted to cowardice, mateship to betrayal, and masculinity to effeminate behaviour. In short, most explanations rely on Anzac-oriented symbolism or ethnic stereotyping.

All modern battles are won due to real, measurable and, to some extent, predictable military factors. Despite overall numerical comparisons, Bardia was not an even fight. The set of relative military advantages for the attackers in terms of weapons, logistics, equipment, training, leadership and intelligence helps explain its outcome. An Australian officer present on the battlefield at Bardia wrote home that:

Our weapons are unbelievably superior to the enemy’s, and I wouldn’t face a rabbit with their rifle and bayonet ... inaccurate and the mechanism is really crude. ... All their machine guns ... have plenty of stoppages and won’t work unless bathed in oil. Grenades look like a PO Money Box and are just as harmful, the casing being aluminium, and if you are 5 feet away your safety is assured completely.

On the eve of battle, Australians were enjoying pudding and cream sent out in Comforts Fund parcels, while many of their opponents had not been fed for three days. Existing accounts largely ignore this type of comparison.
A treasure trove for military historians

The collection of the National Archives offers a rich and under-utilised alternative for military historians and has been invaluable to this project. In Canberra, I consulted a range of military correspondence files that provided important insights into the Army’s decision-making process in the lead-up to Bardia, as well as its high-level interpretation of events on the battlefield. Records of the War Cabinet provided a deeper political context. RAAF unit records and 2nd AIF personnel lists offered more specific details on military operations and insights into the 6th Division.

In the extensive military holdings in Melbourne, I used key correspondence files from various military departments, as well as formerly secret military correspondence files, which helped to contrast ‘real’ military assessments with accounts published in various official bulletins and information releases. The Naval Historical Files helped build the naval picture at Bardia – an often overlooked element of the battle. Various casualty registers were also valuable sources of raw data about the dead, wounded and missing.

In Brisbane, correspondence and army administrative files helped me round out the picture of Bardia from an Australian government perspective, while prisoner of war sheets of Italian POWs sent to Australia gave some insight into Italian perspectives. Transcripts of ABC talks on the battle helped me trace the origins of interpretations which drew on Anzac mythology. In Sydney, records on public censorship and of ABC war correspondent Chester Wilmot also helped me understand how wartime propaganda has influenced subsequent interpretations of the battle.

The Margaret George Award gave me the opportunity to explore this rich collection. I hope that this research will reveal a more complex picture of this battle and help it emerge from the shadow of the Anzac legend.

Dr Craig Stockings is a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy. He has recently published a history of the army cadet movement in Australia, The Torch and the Sword (UNSW Press). This year UNSW Press will publish a book on his current research entitled Bardia: Myth, Reality and the Heirs of Anzac.
Office copying revolution

There has been a revolution in office technology since the 19th century. Ian Batterham, a senior conservator at the National Archives, explores this fascinating history in a new book that provides expert advice to those who care for the copies which are the legacy of this revolution.

Do you remember spirit duplicators, or ‘roneos’ as they were commonly referred to – and their distinctive smell? Did you learn to type on a typewriter or use a thermal fax machine? Office copying has undergone a revolution over the last two centuries with new technologies emerging, and sometimes disappearing. Accompanying these changes in technology has been great social change, as roles and responsibilities within the office environment have also been transformed.

**Typewriters revolutionise office copying**

The typewriter was the first complex technological device used for document copying. It appeared in nascent form in 1714 and was first produced commercially in 1870. The typewriter was a mainstay of the office environment for much of the 20th century, first in its mechanical form and later in its electrical form, and its distinct rattling became the readily recognised signature sound of any office. It was initially used to produce one-off copies and only became a duplicating device when carbon paper was inserted into it, which allowed the production of multiple copies with a single typing. The typewriter was also useful in producing masters for other copying processes, such as the stencils used in rotary stencil copy machines.

And what about the person behind the typewriter? At the beginning of the 20th century, typing was a predominantly male occupation as it was associated with machinery. During World War I, women came to dominate the occupation and this continued for the rest of the century – and the wages of typists fell when the occupation changed from male to female. In larger offices, typists were often grouped together in the typing pool. Their job was to type presentable versions of documents from their almost exclusively male bosses’ scrawled drafts or dictated copy.

**Transforming the postwar office**

A range of other copy processes was found in the office of the early 20th century, including stencil copying and spirit duplicating, which was marked by the strong odour given off by its volatile solvent. The years after World War II saw great changes in office copying, with numerous novel processes appearing in rapid succession, especially from the 1950s. This was due to an increase in business confidence and the broader technological and cultural changes which produced the Cold War, the baby boom and the space race. One defining feature of these new copying processes was their emphasis on ease of use. The division of responsibility in offices was changing, and it was becoming essential that anyone in an office be able to do copying. A premium was placed on features such as ease of use, speed, plain paper processes, and copying without the need for a special stencil, master or intermediate.

One of the most significant developments was the popularity of plain paper electrostatic copying. It first appeared commercially under the brand name Xerox in 1950, after a long gestation period. Early machines were cumbersome and involved considerable work by the operator to produce a copy but, by the late 1960s, the process had reached a level of simplicity, speed and sophistication that gave it the edge over other competition. Plain paper electrostatic copying quickly became the pre-eminent office copy process and remained so into the 21st century, with the photocopier, as many of us know it, a feature of almost every office.
The end of the typing pool

By the late 20th century, the profession of typist had almost disappeared. This was entirely due to the introduction of new office technology – the word processor and the laser printer. Over the 1970s the electric typewriter was slowly transformed into a machine known as a word processor. The word processor had a small inbuilt memory which enabled the typist to review typed text before committing it to hard copy. Word processors rapidly increased in sophistication and transformed into the first generation of personal computer, as exemplified by the Apple Iie released in 1983.

These innovations made it possible for any person with a little training to quickly and easily produce a document of high quality, without a handwritten draft. As a result, women were freed from the drudgery of the typing pool and could consider moving into other occupations – or even management. At the same time, society was changing, and it was becoming increasingly acceptable for women to make this change.

As the personal computer quickly proliferated, it became common for documents to be created and stored as electronic files. Copies, when required, were produced by sending the electronic file to an office printer – initially using impact printing (the old dot matrix printer) and then laser or ink jet printing. Of course, now it is common for the creator of the document to produce the final version, using a personal computer, word processing software and an office printer.

And there the story ends – for now. Looking ahead, many see the onset of the digital age as the beginning of the slow demise of the hard-copy document, although others dispute this vision of the paperless office.

The legacy of the revolution in office copying, with all its invention and variation, with its overlapping and eclipsing, is the millions upon millions of copies that remain. These languish in historical collections of many types: archives, libraries, museums, personal holdings and even art galleries. Some copies are as pristine as the day they were created; others are showing signs of degradation – brittleness, yellowing, fading. It is the conservator’s challenge to preserve them for future generations.

Ian Batterham is Assistant Director, Operations Policy and Projects at the National Archives. His book, The Office Copying Revolution, provides invaluable advice on identifying the products of copying processes and preserving them into the future.


[Opposite page left] Various typewritten and handwritten carbon copies.

[Above] A brochure advertising the Xerox 914 copy machine, 1963. The comment in pencil was probably written by a public servant at the time.


Tip

Archival conservators are often asked how to get a legible copy from a faded original.

One option is to digitally scan the document in colour and at high-resolution (for example 400 to 600 dpi). Photo-editing software can then be used to adjust the image. Areas can be enlarged, and brightness, contrast and colour hues can be adjusted. This can often lead to greatly enhanced legibility.
Imagine trying to do your job in an office where the electricity sometimes goes out for hours at a time, you don’t have nearly enough money, there are no written procedures, and hardly anyone has received the training they need. This is the reality facing many Pacific Islands governments.

Archivists from across the Pacific are now developing tools to help overcome some of these problems. The Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit is an initiative of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, known as PARBICA. It aims to provide practical tools that Pacific Islands governments can use to improve recordkeeping in their administrations.

The National Archives is currently coordinating the project on behalf of PARBICA with funding from AusAID, the Australian Government’s international aid agency. The work has been guided by archivists from countries around the Pacific, including Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, and the state of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia.

**Developing the tools**

Good recordkeeping underpins public sector efficiency and accountability. In turn, this helps to ensure that governments meet their legal obligations and protect the rights and entitlements of their citizens. With good recordkeeping systems, governments can be more efficient as they can easily find the information they need when they need it. Good recordkeeping also improves decision-making, because all of the relevant information about a past action or process can be found in the right place. Accountability is improved when organisations keep comprehensive evidence of their actions and decisions.

This is true in any government. In the Pacific, where funds are limited and specialist training opportunities are sometimes few and far between, it is very difficult for archivists to find the help they need to provide recordkeeping guidance to their governments. Often, tools developed in countries like Australia are inappropriate because they don’t take account of local language, resource and training issues.
The Toolkit project brings together archivists from around the Pacific to develop tools that are meaningful in Pacific government environments. In its first phase, the working group developed ‘Good Records – Good Governance’, a brochure for senior government officials. It explains the importance of recordkeeping and their responsibilities for ensuring that their organisations keep good records. A series of checklists and guidelines were also developed to help government organisations understand their records management strengths and weaknesses. Government officers in Vanuatu, Palau and Samoa attended training to learn how to use the Toolkit.

PARBICA President Setareki Tale of the National Archives of Fiji praised the work so far. ‘The first phase of the Toolkit provides practical procedures and instructions to set recordkeeping baselines which have long been needed,’ he said. ‘We look forward eagerly to putting them to use.’

Real solutions

With these diagnostic tools in place, phase two of the Toolkit is now under way and focuses on providing real solutions to very real recordkeeping problems. The products will be an easily understood file titling system, or record plan, for common administrative files, and a model records management policy.

Official recordkeeping systems often fall into disuse when they are too difficult for staff to use. If staff can’t easily find the file they need, they may not be able to access information about past activities to inform their decisions. They may also be reluctant to place current papers on files if they are unsure that they will be able to locate the information again. A record plan aims to make filing systems easier to use by describing activities in a consistent fashion, using language that is familiar and meaningful to the staff who will use the filing system. As PARBICA’s Record Plan is being developed by Pacific Islands archivists, it will use terminology that is familiar to government officials in the region.

The National Archives is currently working with Archives New Zealand to deliver these outcomes. With funding from NZAid, Archives New Zealand will take the lead on phase three, which will build on the descriptions of records in the record plan to make recommendations on how long Pacific governments need to keep administrative records for accountability or for long-term historical purposes.

An international success

So far, the Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit has been a huge success. The Government of Samoa has decided to translate the Toolkit’s guidelines into Samoan, and the Public Service Commission in Papua New Guinea is developing records management training for all PNG public servants, with the Toolkit as its basis. The President of the Association of French Archivists has arranged to have the Toolkit translated into French, so that it can be used to help French-speaking countries in Africa. Both the English and French language versions were launched on the world stage at the International Congress on Archives in Malaysia in July 2008.

PARBICA members are proud of the Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit. Its success shows that our Pacific neighbours can not only keep their recordkeeping systems afloat, but also even steer the course for the rest of the world.

Danielle Wickman is the Director of Asia and Pacific Projects at the National Archives.

[Top left] A workshop was held in Auckland in December 2008 to develop phase two of the Toolkit. Left to right: Tukul Kaiku (University of PNG), Laithi Belford (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, Samoa), Jeannine Daniel (Office of the Ombudsman, Cook Islands), Evelyn Wareham (Archives New Zealand), Charmaine Scotty (Ministry of Home Affairs, Nauru), Naomi Ngirakamerang (National Archives of Palau), Jacob Hevelawa (National Library and Archives of PNG), Bela Norman (National Library and Archives of Vanuatu), Mark Semmler (National Library and Archives of Australia), Elenoa Delaliakeba (National Archives of Fiji), Mark Crookston (Archives New Zealand), Susan Skudder (SWIM Ltd), Danielle Wickman (National Archives of Australia), Merewalesi Vietayaki (Reserve Bank of Fiji).

In November 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd opened the Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice exhibition in Canberra. He spoke about his memories of Anzac Day in a Queensland country town and reflected on why World War I is so significant to Australians.

In Constitution Place, Canberra, visitors browsed crosses decorated by local school students to mark the 90th anniversary of the Armistice that brought an end to World War I.

In August 2008, entertainer Mark Holden launched National Family History Week at the Victorian Archives Centre, North Melbourne. An initiative of the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations and sponsored by the National Archives, Family History Week involved events across the nation, including seminars, history walks and family reunions.
Thérèse Rein (left), wife of the Prime Minister, visited the National Archives in September 2008. She toured the galleries, viewed records and received a copy of her father’s RAAF service record. Manager of Personal Records, Shirley Sullivan, showed her a diary of former prime minister Harold Holt.

Senator Kate Lundy, a member of the National Archives Advisory Council, launched a new edition of Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for Commonwealth Agencies in August 2008. The standard assists government agencies to describe records being captured in recordkeeping and business systems.

Governor-General Quentin Bryce, pictured with National Archives Director-General Ross Gibbs, was given a tour of the National Archives in September 2008.

Historian and National Archives Advisory Council member Dr Mickey Dewar discussed the circumstances of Darwin residents in the 1950s in her Frederick Watson Fellowship lecture at the Darwin Office, October 2008.

In October 2008 the National Archives marked the 25th anniversary of the Archives Act 1983 with a panel discussion about the legislation’s impact and its future. Speakers (from left) included historian Dr Michael McKeman, National Archives Assistant Director-General Dr Stephen Ellis, and Barry Cohen, former Labor MP who gave the second reading of the Archives Bill in the House of Representatives.
NATIONAL HISTORY CHALLENGE WINNERS

In 2008, for the first time, joint winners were awarded the Archives Prize in the National History Challenge. The annual Challenge invites high school students to become historians as they investigate events and ideas which shaped Australia and its people. The National Archives sponsors the competition and awards prizes to students from years 9–12 in each state who use records from the Archives’ collection to research and develop their essays.

The 2008 winners were Emily Mettrick from Camberwell Grammar School in Melbourne and Christopher Boon from Taroona High School in Tasmania. The theme for the competition was ‘Australia meets the world’.

Emily’s essay discussed the idea that the origins of Australian pride and identity stem from the tragic Gallipoli campaign of World War I. The judges praised her high level of personal engagement with the archival sources and her ability to integrate them into her argument.

Christopher developed the argument that Australia met – and influenced – the world through the inventions and patents of Benjamin Dunkerley, inventor of the Akubra hat. Christopher’s use of a wide range of archival records and other primary sources gave a fascinating insight into Dunkerley’s life and his patents.

Christopher was also named Tasmanian Young Historian for 2008.

[below] Emily Mettrick (left) and Christopher Boon, with Zoë D’Arcy, Director of Public Programs at the National Archives.

PRIME MINISTERS WEBSITE UPGRADED

Which prime minister brought the troops home from Vietnam? Who had tea with a young Princess Elizabeth? Who refused to live in The Lodge?

The answers to these questions, and much more, can be found on the Australia’s Prime Ministers website.

The National Archives is currently redeveloping the site, which was launched in 2002. It is an important resource for students, teachers, media, researchers and all Australians interested in our national leadership and political history, and is visited by some 300,000 people each year.

Australia’s Prime Ministers features digitised documents from the National Archives’ collection, which provide a first-hand view of history ‘from the top’.

Visitors can look at the evidence in the original documents, check the facts and discover some intriguing stories, such as why James Scullin, Prime Minister from 1929 to 1932, refused to reside in The Lodge in Canberra.

The site is also a portal to original records held by other archives and libraries in Australia and overseas.

Since 2008 the National Archives, with support from the Australian Prime Ministers Centre at Old Parliament House, has been comprehensively upgrading the website.

The design and functionality are being improved and new content is being added and reviewed by an expert panel of political historians, official biographers and academic experts. The upgraded site will also provide better access to records.

All Australian prime ministerial libraries have come on board as portal partners of the website, joining the national collections that hold original documents related to our prime ministers, such as the National Library of Australia, Australian War Memorial, and National Film and Sound Archive.

The new Australia’s Prime Ministers website is due for release in March this year.

Visit primeministers.naa.gov.au
Parliamentarians were shown how they could make their mark in history at a special event hosted by the National Archives last September.

‘Your Place in History’ highlighted the importance of keeping government records as part of the national memory. Members and Senators viewed unique items including the briefcase that Prime Minister Harold Holt took to Portsea the weekend he disappeared and Edmund Barton’s 1897 draft of the Australian Constitution.

National Archives’ staff helped guests find family history records using the collection database RecordSearch, and provided information on the Archives’ preservation and conservation work.

Senator John Faulkner, the Minister responsible for the National Archives, spoke about the importance of records for understanding individual lives as well as the nation’s history. ‘The Archives’ services put people back into history,’ Senator Faulkner noted. ‘Exploring the historical and government documents surrounding a single individual reminds us that history may be made by nations, and written by scholars, but it is experienced by individuals.’

The event was also an opportunity for National Archives’ staff to talk to parliamentarians about donating personal records to the collection. The National Archives collects records of governors-general, prime ministers, ministers, secretaries and others who have been in prominent positions in the Commonwealth. These complement the records created by government departments and might include personal material as well as official documents.


[below] National Archives conservator Kylie Roth and Richard Marles MP.

In late 2008, the Archives Amendment Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament. Its passage is significant, coming more than a decade after the Australian Law Reform Commission recommended changes to the Archives Act 1983.

The changes clarify the role of the National Archives in identifying the archival resources of the Commonwealth, preserving them, making them publicly available, and overseeing recordkeeping in Australian Government agencies by determining standards and providing advice.

The amendments redefine the meaning of a ‘record’ to reflect changes in technology and recordkeeping practice.

The Archives Amendment Act also provides that records be transferred to the National Archives as soon as practicable after they are no longer needed for business reasons, to ensure that they are preserved appropriately.

Community groups from around the country are invited to apply for 2009 Community Heritage Grants. Grants of up to $15,000 are available to help preserve and manage locally held, nationally significant cultural heritage collections for future generations. Historical societies, museums, public libraries, archives, and Indigenous and migrant community groups that collect and provide public access to their collections are among those eligible to apply.

The Community Heritage Grants are funded by the Australian Government through the National Library of Australia; National Archives of Australia; Department for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; National Film and Sound Archive; and National Museum of Australia.

On 1 January 2009, the National Archives released the records of Malcolm Fraser's 1978 Cabinet.

The December 1977 election had given the Fraser Liberal/National Country Party Government another decisive victory. But the government's policy options were constrained by economic concerns, inflation of more than 7 per cent and a consistently large budget deficit. Unemployment had risen to almost 7 per cent by February 1978, with 20 unemployed people for every job vacancy.

Among Cabinet's concerns in 1978 were industrial relations and trade barriers, the management of Indigenous communities in Queensland, terrorist incidents on Australian soil, civil aviation, increasing numbers of Indo-Chinese refugees, asbestos and uranium mining, and Australia's poor sporting results in the international arena.

In early December 2008, journalists gathered for the embargoed release of the records, where they heard the Hon. Fred Chaney, a minister in the 1978 Fraser Government, give an insider's view. Historian Dr Jim Stokes also provided context to the issues, events and personalities of 1978.

You can find out more about the events of 1978 and view selected Cabinet papers online at www.naa.gov.au.

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES GRANT WINNERS**

Australia's professional orchestras, filmmaking history, and attitudes towards British decolonisation are the topics being researched by the National Archives' latest grant winners.

Professor Kenneth Morgan, lecturer of history at Brunel University in the United Kingdom, was awarded the Frederick Watson Fellowship. He is researching Australia's professional orchestras from 1932 to 1996, when they were under the auspices of the ABC.

The Margaret George Award has gone to two researchers, Dr Alex Gerbaz, lecturer in film and television at Curtin University in Western Australia, and Dr Andrea Benvenuti, lecturer in international relations at the University of New South Wales.

Dr Gerbaz will examine how Australian films were funded in the 1970s to provide insights into the aspirations, strategies and struggles of independent and experimental filmmakers.

Dr Benvenuti's research will focus on the collapse of Britain's colonial order in South-East Asia, 1945 to 1963, analysing Australia's responses to British colonial and defence policies in Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo states.

These grants are designed to help scholars complete a research project of significance to Australian audiences, and to promote archival research and scholarly use of the National Archives' collection. The $10,000 Margaret George Award aims to encourage talented emerging scholars, while the $15,000 Frederick Watson Fellowship is for those who are established in their field.

For more information about National Archives' grants, go to www.naa.gov.au, click on 'About us' and then 'Research grants'.
EXHIBITIONS

Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice
National Archives, Canberra
Now showing until 27 April 2009

Women Transported: Life in Australia’s Convict Female Factories
An exhibition from the Parramatta Heritage Centre
National Archives, Canberra
14 May to 19 July 2009

It’s a Dog’s Life! Animals in the Public Service
Ipswich Art Gallery, QLD
Now showing until 26 January 2009

Just Add Water: Schemes and Dreams for a Sunburnt Country
Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo, NSW
7 February to 29 March 2009

Max Dupain on Assignment
Public Record Office Victoria, North Melbourne, VIC
15 January to 22 May 2009

Australian Government
Visions of Australia
National Archives’ touring exhibitions are supported by Visions of Australia, an Australian Government Program supporting touring exhibitions by providing funding assistance for the development and touring of cultural material across Australia.

EVENTS

SHAKE YOUR FAMILY TREE DAY
25 February, 10 am–4 pm, all National Archives offices
Begin your journey to find family history in the Archives.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
Talks and seminars, National Archives Canberra:
- Shell-shocked curator talks, 14, 21 and 28 Jan, 11 Feb, 11 and 25 Mar, 2 pm
- Fade to grey, a photographic conservation workshop, 20 Jan, 4 pm
- Out of the Cabinet room - 1978, by historian Dr J im Stokes and performers Shorts and Simpson, 8 Feb, 11 am and 2 pm
- The riderless horse: World War I songs and poems, performed by Chloe and Jason Roweth, 8 Mar, 2 pm
- Mapping our Anzacs, workshop, 17 Mar, 4 pm
- Will Dyson: Australia’s radical genius, by Ross McMullen, 26 Apr, 2 pm
Free, but bookings essential: (02) 6212 3956 or events@naa.gov.au

NEW SOUTH WALES
Defence service records in the National Archives, seminar hosted by Holroyd City Council Library Service, 22 Apr, 10-11 am. Contact: Stephen Coppins (02) 9840 9789

NORTHERN TERRITORY
Seminars at National Archives Darwin:
- Finding defence service records in the National Archives, 22 Apr, 12-1 pm
- Patrol officer records in the National Archives, 13 May, 12-1 pm
Free. Inquiries: (08) 8985 0300 or Duncan.Mackenzie@naa.gov.au

QUEENSLAND
Seminars at National Archives Brisbane:
- Strike a pose: Fashion in the Archives, 17 and 21 Jan, 10–11 am
- From Barton to Rudd: Australia’s prime ministers, 18 and 21 Feb, 10–11 am
- Making Australia home: Focus on German migrants, 18 and 21 Mar, 10–11 am
- Your country’s call: Defence service records, 15 and 18 Apr, 10–11 am
- Border protection: Customs records, 16 and 20 May, 10–11 am
- Queensland by sea: Ships, crew and navigation, 17 and 20 Jun, 10–11 am
Free, but bookings essential: events@naa.gov.au or (07) 3249 4226

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Seminars at National Archives Adelaide:
- Bright ideas: Intellectual property records, 17 Mar, 10–10.45 am
- Ships ahoy: Maritime records in the National Archives, 16 Jun, 10–10.45 am
Free, but bookings essential: (08) 8409 8400 or enid.woodley@naa.gov.au

TASMANIA
Seminars and displays at National Archives Hobart. For more information: (03) 6230 6111
- Hard to port! An introduction to the National Archives’ maritime holdings, display during the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, 2–13 Feb
- How to make the most of RecordSearch seminar, 18 Mar, 12.30–1.30 pm
- Just add water, display during the Tasmanian Heritage Festival, 1–31 May
- How to use the National Archives, Adult Education research seminar, 4 Apr, 10 am–12.30 pm. Enrolments and fees: (03) 6233 7237 or visit www.adulteducation.tas.gov.au

VICTORIA
Conservation clinic: Photographs and photographic media, Victorian Archives Centre, North Melbourne, 12 Mar, 9 am–4 pm. Bookings and more information: (03) 9348 5600

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Events at National Archives Perth:
- Introductory seminar and tour, 11 Feb and 24 Jun, 10.30 am–12 pm
- Immigration records seminar and tour, 12 Apr, 10.30 am–12 pm
Free, but bookings essential: (08) 9470 7500

For the latest information on events at the National Archives around Australia, go to ‘What’s on/ Public events’ at www.naa.gov.au.
Etaples Military Cemetery in France, 1920s. The National Archives’ latest exhibition Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice explores the impact of World War I on Australian society.

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