

## **Into the light: sexuality, erasure and recollection**

### **Introduction**

This article considers the design and direction a short film about a gay soldier. In contextualising the work, consideration is given to historical relationships in New Zealand, between male homosexuality, desertion, PTSD and alienation. In discussing the nature of military and media censorship, selective memorializing, and social shaming, I consider how a narrative of experience that was hidden from the public on multiple levels, was rebuilt and shaped in a manner that reflected the constraints put upon it.

### **A box of secrets**

In 2016 I wrote and directed a short film called *Sparrow*. This work was not designed in the manner of New Zealand's sanctioned television narratives. Commissioned works like *Great War Stories* (2014-2017), *When We go to War* (2015), *The Forgotten General* (2013), and *Our Day to Remember* (2005), have been instrumental in shaping how contemporary New Zealanders (most of whom have no lived experience of war) understand our nation's engagements with international conflict.

The film *Sparrow* was something different. It told the true story of a man who fought in the dugouts of Egypt in World War II. The family and the small town where I lived were very proud of him. He was a perfect rendition of the sacrificing local boy who was shot saving his mates in a daring raid on a German occupied bunker. The story was tragic and heroic and we all remembered it with pride.

However, the event we celebrated was not as straightforward as we believed. When I grew up, the man's grandson, knowing I was gay, shared with me a small box of letters that he had discovered. His father had kept them hidden in a locked drawer in his workshop. They had been posted from a psychiatric hospital. The contents revealed a heartbreaking illustration of shame and erasure.

This heroic martyr, who had become the stuff of legend, had not died in a bunker in Egypt. He died alone in a psychiatric hospital, deserted by his family (Figure 1). Apparently he had served as an exemplary soldier and he was respected by the men with whom he fought. However, following the death of his gay lover, he stripped off his uniform and in protest at the level of poor command, he carried the man's body out into the enemy gunfire. Although he was shot in the back, he survived the injury and was charged with desertion and attempted suicide. He was sent home broken and he died alone in the small back room of a hospital, less than a two hour journey from where his family lived. The correspondence I read traced fifteen years of the man's explanation and pleading with his son to come and visit him. Few of the Christmas cards, birthday cards and detailed letters had ever been opened.

Protecting themselves from disgrace, his family had sealed up the truth of what happened and replaced the events with an alternative narrative of heroic military sacrifice. The man's protest about the war and his sexuality were erased and he was reshaped into a local legend.



Figure 1: Frame grab from the film *Sparrow* 2016, showing a small, winged boy wandering the halls of an abandoned psychiatric hospital where his grandfather died in disgrace. The film follows his search for the truth behind the family's myth of heroism and reveals the impact his grandfather's actions had on his condition as a bullied child. The film's trailer, official selections, awards, and a variety of preliminary drawings underpinning its development, are available at: <http://sparrowfilm.nz/> © Welby Ings.

I lived with this truth for over thirty years, trying to find a way of bringing it into the world in a way that would protect the family but also honour what I saw as a profound act of love. In our commemorative ceremonies and sanctioned histories of war, such stories rarely appear. Gay relationships<sup>1</sup> between male soldiers and acts of heroism or grief emanating from them are normally rendered invisible.

### **Absence and obfuscation**

However, making this film posed a problem. Although the family agreed to conditions of its telling,<sup>2</sup> New Zealand's major funding bodies refused initially to finance the work. Because it was a story I believed in, we crowd funded the production with support from my university and a small number of LGBTQ positive sponsors. Although funding and permission were surmountable issues, what became really difficult was unearthing material associated with the incident. For the film to be as authentic as possible I needed information. I wanted photographic references so I could design of the hospital wards where such men were kept, I needed information around the manner in which gay relationships were treated by other soldiers and some insight into the way desertion and attempted suicide were documented by the military. But as I began searching for material, I encountered a distinctive phenomenon. It was absence. There was an absence of detail in records, an absence of photographs and an absence of narrative. Although I could comprehend the reasons for the family's replacement legend and I was grateful for the letters, what I had not been prepared for was the level of official erasure and obfuscation that existed around such incidents. When I searched through film reels of the period for footage of psychologically wounded soldiers, I encountered only images of physical injury and when I scoured archives for references to homosexuality, I discovered paucity. What little existed occurred in veiled references and accessing official

material related to suicides, desertion and discharges for homosexuality was surrounded by restricted access. The man's sexuality, the reasons for his protest and the nature of his incarceration had been almost completely erased, both by his family and by the country for whom he fought.

### **Behind the façade**

This felt like a paradox because recent researchers like Bourne (2018) [United Kingdom]; Smaal and Willett (2015), Winsor (2017) and Wotherspoon (2016) [Australia]; Haggerty (2003), Bérubé (1990) [United States] and Brickell (2008) [New Zealand], all provide rich accounts of same sex relationships between soldiers in the World Wars. Using information garnered from letters, photographs and oral history interviews, their research shows that these men were not invisible to the troops with whom they fought nor within the military system they served.

Although I initially assumed that homosexuality might historically have been only of marginal interest to the military, these writers showed that attempts to understand gay men and lesbians within the forces had been a significant and ongoing area of renegotiated policy for over 70 years. Haggerty notes that in the United States:

... despite the best efforts of the armed forces to deny their existence, or in extreme instances, to disavow their findings or destroy documentation, journalists, litigants, and scholars have uncovered an opus of sponsored research that documents the Department of Defence's concern with the incidence of homosexuality within its ranks.

(2003: 12)

However, when I tried to search for documents relating to trials for homosexual-related incidents in New Zealand during the period, it was very difficult. It appears, as a researcher, I was not alone. Haggerty (2003) records similar problems locating information relating to discharges from the United States army for homosexual offenses during World War II, because in these instances the charges were often conflated with other issues. This paucity of information available to researchers seems unusual given that Haggerty estimates that the number of men dismissed 'primarily because of homosexuality during the war ... is probably one to two thousand discharges a year' (2003: 18).

### **Contradictory parades**

To understand how paradoxically such historical obfuscation sits alongside New Zealand's contemporary military state, it is useful to compare two contrasting parades.

Currently New Zealand is the highest ranked country in the *LGBT Military Index* (Polchar, Sweijs, Marten and Galdiga 2014). This index offers a global ranking of over 100 countries by their inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) service members in the armed forces. It ranks countries based on a comparable overview of nineteen policies and best practices. The index currently positions the Netherlands second, Australia fifth, the US 37<sup>th</sup> and Nigeria last.

New Zealand is very proud of this ranking. Its armed forces march in the country's LGBTQ Pride parades in full uniform. Preceded by rainbow flags, they are a distinctive presence. A major contributing factor to the country's high world ranking for inclusiveness has been the military's OverWatch group established in 2012. This operates as a voluntary queer support

network open to all Regular Armed Forces, Territorial Forces and members of the Civil Staff. It actively encourages visibility, challenges stereotypes and promotes the Defence Force as an equitable employer. The group hosts conferences and develops educational initiatives around visibility, inclusiveness and reducing the potential for discrimination (Stone 2017).

These recent developments aside, things have not always been so equitable and transparent. It took until 1993 and the passing of the *Human Rights Act* for the New Zealand Defence Force to repeal its existing ban on openly gay personnel. Prior to this, much of our gay men and lesbian women's military history had been treated as erasable. There are complex reasons for this, but examining how such attitudes have impacted on invisibility in the nation's films of war, we need only look back a few decades.

### **ANZAC and pride**

New Zealand's historical engagements with war (with the exclusion of the nation's internal land conflicts) are commemorated on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The date is officially named ANZAC Day and it is a gazetted half-day holiday.<sup>3</sup> On this date the nation engages in a distinctive memorializing of war. There are ANZAC biscuits, ANZAC Day rugby tests and dedicated radio and television programming. Commemorations for those killed in war and the honouring of returned servicemen and women are enacted through public parades and the placing of wreaths of remembrance at memorials across the country. These rituals of grief and national identity are deeply respected.

In the 1980s, I marched in the dawn parades associated with this day. I had no medals to wear and I was not a member of any regiment. But annually, I carried a small wreath that I would lay at the foot of the cenotaph of the town in which I was living. The object was nothing dramatic; just a small triangular construction of pink flowers that I would tuck in amongst an array of more robust, official offerings. Attached to the wreath was a small note stating, 'For the gay, lesbian and bisexual men and women whose lives were sacrificed: We are everywhere.' On some occasions, the wreath remained in the display for the whole day but, by the evening it had normally been removed. However, for three consecutive years in the mid-1980s at the Auckland Domain it was taken off by officials as soon as I placed it on the cenotaph. Although I tried to avoid drawing attention to the annual ritual, a small number of returned soldiers had come to recognise me and they saw the gesture as an affront. Every time they took the wreath off, I would ask for it back or walk over to where it had been thrown. Then I would reassemble what hadn't been broken and walk with it back up to the cenotaph.

I know that these were not unreasonable people, but they felt that I was being disrespectful. They told me that what I was doing was dishonourable and offensive to other people who had gathered. The final time I attempted to place a wreath was in 1987 and the removal occurred again. By this time I was living in Auckland and taking part in the country's largest gathering at the city's War Memorial museum. On that particular morning I had attempted twice to gather up the broken parts of the triangle and re-place them. On the third attempt, while walking reluctantly back up to the cenotaph, an elderly woman moved in beside me. I didn't really take much notice, but when I bent down to place the wreath amongst the others, she stood in front of the officials and prevented them from removing it. I never knew who she was. Perhaps she had been a nurse or a mother or a sister of a gay soldier. Perhaps she was somebody's partner. But she stood firmly in front of the officials, looked directly at them and said ... 'All men' - then more adamantly- 'All men!'



I never forgot this. It reminded me in a powerful way, that there are hundreds of unaccounted lives and their connections are invisible.

The behaviour of the men who blocked access to the cenotaph was not atypical in New Zealand at the time. Their masculinity and concept of self-sacrifice were tied to a heteronormative military history that had become a significant source of national value building (Lake and Reynolds 2010). Inside this construct, gay men and lesbian women did not exist, or if they did, they were expected to remain silent.

Such experiences were not isolated to New Zealand during this period. In Australia Dreher notes that in 1982, when the Gay Ex-servicemen's Association expressed its desire to lay a wreath at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, the president of the Victorian Returned and Services League (RSL) expressed outrage at their intention. He stated, 'I don't know where all these queers and poofters have come from. I don't remember a single poofter from World War Two' (McKenna 2010: 117). His perception was not isolated. Gay narratives of war were not sanctioned. Our presence was treated as a lie, an affront and an insult. What had gathered agency since people's lived experiences of war, was a selective version of heterosexual, heroic, militarized history that employed the erasure of alternative representations. This position continued relatively unchallenged for another three decades and Dreher notes that the RSL in Australia has still, until recently, 'vigorously rejected demands for recognition of gay service personnel' (2016: 122).

This process of exclusion continues in the context of concerted efforts to promote the resurgence of ANZAC narratives that support an ongoing militarization of national history. In New Zealand such emphases have resulted in increasing television coverage of ANZAC events,<sup>4</sup> the recent proliferation of children's literature about heroic sacrifice during the World Wars,<sup>5</sup> the installation of celebrated High Tech. public exhibitions<sup>6</sup> and significant levels of media attention and national celebration surrounding the ongoing repatriation of soldiers' bodies.<sup>7</sup> It is almost without exception that these initiatives continue to exclude any reference to LGBTQ soldiers, strategists, negotiators or victims.<sup>8</sup>

Catriona Elder has argued that it has always been difficult to question the sanctioned narratives of ANZAC because 'the cult of ANZAC does not open itself to self-critique' (2005: 73). But the obfuscation reaches further than this. Omission has an extensive history in how New Zealand narrates its accounts of war. This may be illustrated by considering three domains: its historical treatment of shell shock, its documentation of desertion and suicide and its erasure of LGBTQ contributions and experience.

### **The erasure of shell shock**

The soldier in *Sparrow* did not die as a result of being shot. He was sent home with a condition known variously as shell shock, combat stress reaction and more recently Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Like a significant number of men at the end of the First and Second World Wars, he returned to a country where the code of heroism respected physical injury but had significant difficulty tolerating the effects of psychological damage (Parsons 2013; Clarke 1991; Boston 1993).

Shell shock was a significant problem that surfaced among New Zealand soldiers in both World Wars. Boyack and Tolerton (1990) suggest that both medical and repatriation officials tended to view the men who 'broke' under the pressures of war, as malingerers. To others, the inability to cope with the rigours of battle also suggested a lack of masculine fortitude (Showalter 1987;

Phillips 2007; Bourke 2000). In New Zealand, repatriation officials were often reluctant to recognize the legitimacy of these men's claims for war pensions and free specialist medical treatment (Boston 1993; Parsons 2013). This reluctance had historical roots that ran back into the First World War. Here, the New Zealand army, in an effort to stem what it saw as a troubling burgeoning of shell shock cases, contained the problem by simply erasing the diagnosis. In 1917 it instructed medical officers to label suspected sufferers 'Not Yet Diagnosed (NYD): Shell Shock'. By the middle of the year, recognizing the increasing use of the words 'shell shock' among the soldiers, it prohibited the term's employment by front line medical officers. Possible sufferers were now labelled 'Not Yet Diagnosed: Non-Efficient' (NYDN) (Carbery 1924: 320). Thus, in two simple steps, shell shock was erased from official records. Men who lost the ability to reason, sleep, walk or speak were relegated to a state of diagnostic persona non grata. Their condition was officially expunged.

### **Silencing narratives of desertion and suicide**

This tendency towards erasure also permeated cases of desertion and suicide (Figure 2). While military documents record five official executions resulting from 28 New Zealand men being sentenced to death for desertion between 28 July 1914 and 11 November 1918, there are very few accounts of these men's stories (Wilson, Summers, Baker, Thomson and Harper 2013).<sup>9</sup> The silencing of such events in World War Two is perhaps most graphically illustrated by the little-known mass desertion in 1943 of more than 500 soldiers from the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force. These men who had been brought home on temporary leave, refused the order to return to the front. Although they were charged and found guilty of desertion, the incident was judiciously hidden from the public. There were no newspaper accounts, no broadcast analyses and no public notices. Later, historical knowledge about the incident surfaced primarily through oral history recordings and informal personal recollection. It wasn't until 2000 that these deserters were posthumously reprieved through the *Pardon for Soldiers of the Great War Act*.



Figure 2: Frame grab from the film *Sparrow* 2016, showing the soldier being shot in the act of desertion. © Welby Ings.

Although today general and individual records covering deserters in World War Two can be located in the files of the National Service Department (Special Tribunal and Appeal Board records) and the Labour Department District Offices (Conscientious Objector files), relatively

robust restrictions apply if one wants to access the information. Narratives and evidence relating to suicide in war are equally difficult to track down. In general, if records are available, they are cursory and relatively devoid of detail. Indeed, when researching the film, the country's archives and museums offered very little beyond names and dates. These difficult deaths did not fit into the sanctioned metanarrative. They had not been expanded like the grand stories of sacrifice that populate the sanctioned theatre of war ... they were simply recorded in lists of statistics and quietly filed away.

### **Invisible identity**

So, what of the contributions of homosexual men and women? Pelts, Rolbiecki and Albright (2014) argue that lesbians and gay men have always been present in the military and Winsor (2017) notes that historically they have been expected to sacrifice both their lives and their identities for their country. Researchers like Sinclair 2009, Bérubé 1990, and Bourne 2018 have also noted that historically 'barring and discharging homosexuals from the military has been sporadic and determinate upon the need for personnel' (Sinclair 2009: 702).

Accordingly, the opportunistic nature of military policy and its implementation has led to some distinctive spikes in judicial records. For instance, in Australia between 1939 and 1945, given the sudden change in the number of gay male soldiers, Smaal (2015) notes that a quarter of homosexual cases in Queensland's criminal courts involved airmen, seamen, pilots and others in the military. In the United States, fluctuations in policy application played out more negatively. At the end of the Second World War when need for soldiers wasn't as great, there was an abrupt increase in the enforcement of anti-homosexual policies that led to suddenly high levels of gay and lesbian discharges (Bérubé 1990).

In New Zealand discharges during the Second World War and in the following decades were kept relatively quiet. There may have been a number of reasons for this. Brickell argues the New Zealand military was governed by three ideas about homoeroticism. They either:

... presumed same sex desires could never be expressed in such a rigorous, highly disciplined environment [or], intimate relationships were possible among military men, but these were almost always platonic [or], relationships were possible, as long as those involved practiced a little discretion.  
(2008: 179)

This need for discretion was well understood. Although Brickell notes that same sex relationships in the military often benefitted from a 'widespread acceptance of close male relationships' (2008: 179), the need for discretion also contributed to invisibility. Official exposure could be catastrophic. During the early part of the Second World War in New Zealand, men found guilty of sodomy could be flogged or sentenced to ten years imprisonment with hard labour. Although in 1941 the requirements for flogging, and in 1951 the provision for hard labour were removed, the imprisonment penalties remained the same until the consolidation of the *Crimes Act* in 1961. In such a climate many gay men in the military and wider society protected themselves by remaining as invisible as possible. Although Brickell (2008) offers accounts of incidental meetings in urban centres and liaisons with United States soldiers who were stationed in New Zealand between June 1942 and 1944, the broad attitude was one of discretion and concealment. In a small country, the public disgrace of receiving a dishonourable discharge was not easy to avoid. If word 'leaked out', things could become very difficult. There were a number of reasons for this. The first was that up until the passing of the New Zealand *Human Rights Act* in 1993, a landlord, employer

or provider of goods and services could discriminate against gay men or lesbians and remain completely within the provisions of the law. The second was that following the Second World War, as in America and Australia, media, churches, social organizations and politicians increasingly turned their attention to issues of delinquency, deviancy and perversion. Homosexuality became conflated with national anxieties around child molestation and youth corruption (Manning 1958) or unmanliness, sexual deviation and moral decline (Mazengarb 1954).

In New Zealand, documentation surrounding discharges for homosexual behaviour is relatively difficult to unpack. Brickell notes that ‘occasionally men were disciplined, or even sent back to New Zealand, for having sex with other men, but little is known about the precise circumstances, and whether or not these were cases of consensual sex or of sexual assault’ (Brickell 2008: 406). Indeed, when attempting to exhume information from trial files, the process remains complex and drawn out. Initially one is required to apply to the High Court for permission to access a record and a robust justification for access must accompany the request. The inquiry is then considered in relation to the reason for the research. If access permission is granted by the controlling agency, additional rules regarding copying and publication may be imposed by the relevant court or the Ministry of Justice at the time of granting access.

Such difficulty accessing and unpacking military data is also noted in Australia where, even though researchers Smaal and Willett were able to gain almost complete access to the National Archives file that had been released in 1992, the content had been so heavily edited that it revealed very little (Stephens 2012).

### **Rebuilding a narrative**

I encountered a related form of erasure when talking with soldiers or their families because often I was hearing information that had been hidden for decades. These narratives were shared with caution. Much of what I heard I will never be able to take into film because people have asked that their family histories are kept private. But in small kitchens across the country, sitting down with a cup of tea, some cake and a high level of trust, I discovered a recurring, poignant kind of beauty. Sometimes the recollections were accompanied by an artefact; a photograph, a small tin containing a medal or a hand written dedication in a book. There were love stories about a uncle who never married or lived with a cobbler who the family discovered when he died, had been blackmailing him all of his life. There were men separated by oceans who maintained correspondence for the duration of their lives but never met again. There were outrageous stories of Prisoner of War camps where same sex relationships were accepted and accommodated, and tales about correspondence discovered after a death that explained the real reasons for multiple divorces and a ‘theatrical’ personality.

These accounts were not sought out. They occurred voluntarily in response to people hearing about the film we had in development. After listening to such accounts, my response was to draw. This may sound a little odd. Normally the primary research method associated with creating film involves writing notes, treatments or drafts of a screenplay. But I do not work this way. In films like *Sparrow* I dealt with the nature of erasure, loss and humanity by visualising the enigma of what I encountered – the haunting emptiness of what was lost (Figure 3). Such drawing involved a process of complex synthesis that enabled me to *feel* the texture of an emotion, colour the effect of light brushing across hope or describe subtle emotional emphases that reached beyond the potentials of written language. Because I see

film as essentially ‘talking pictures’, I find it consistent to process emotional resonances of what I hear, visually. The drawing process enables ideation and development to function iconically and this thinking process leads logically into image-led storytelling.



Figure 3: Welby Ings, *Pre-script drawings of the emotional intensity of story events shared by gay New Zealand soldiers or their families*, 2013-15. Methodologically, these drawings form a kind of *denkraum* [thinking space] in which narrative emphases, character arcs and the visual ethos of a film are conceived and developed. The last three images were formative in the design of the film *Sparrow*. The first image was a response to a story shared about a gay soldier serving in Crete who believed himself responsible for the death of two men with whom he was serving. © Welby Ings.

## Conclusion

In 1931 Lord Beauchamp was exposed as a homosexual. He plummeted from grace. He had been the Captain of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms and the Liberal leader in the House of Lords. When his sexuality became public, King George 5th is said to have exclaimed, ‘I thought men like that shot themselves!’ (Aldrich and Wotherspoon 2002: 44). This assumption reinforced the idea that the appropriate way of dealing with any public evidence of one’s gay identity was erasure, either voluntary or proscribed.

But erasure has a terrible cost. Not only because it distorts history but also because it perpetuates isolation. In New Zealand, for most of last century, formal documentation relating to homosexuality in military records was almost entirely associated with scandal, failure or framings of degeneracy or disobedience. Although gay military personnel enacted heroic behaviour, strategized successful campaigns, protected others, wrote anthems, cracked secret codes and saved lives - prior to any public adoration, they were systematically stripped of their sexuality and if this later intruded, the result was normally disgrace or erasure.



This erasure has been enacted from multiple dimensions. These include social shaming, the selective nature of ANZAC memorializing, distortions in official record keeping, media censorship, military policy and national legislation. All of these phenomena contribute to distort or render irretrievable the rich historical contributions of LGBTQ personnel to historical narratives of war.



Figure 4. *Screen grab from the short film Sparrow, 2016.* Although *Sparrow* was not programmed in any of New Zealand's national film festivals, within two years of its release it had accrued over forty international selections, including festivals in Berlin, Washington, Moscow and London. It was presented with three awards at the Cannes Diversity Film Festival and it won numerous accolades including Best Short at the Miami Outshine Film Festival, and Best film at both the Kolkata and Delhi International Short Film Festivals. Image source. © Welby Ings.

The creation of *Sparrow* posed a distinctive problem. My response was to avoid making an expository documentary and to respond to absence by elevating perplexity and lyrical beauty. These stylistic features were used to lift the delicate humanity of the story so I could emphasize the injustice of what happened (Figure 4).

In researching this work I found the heartbreak of war, not in books or renditions of the Last Post, but in the letters of an ordinary man ... in the private words of a soldier who turned to correspondence and poetry to make meaning of the chaos, desertion and shame he found around him.

Inside one of his letters from 1956 was a short poem. I used its opening lines as a typographical introduction to the film. With his family's permission, it is printed here, in full, for the first time.

When I was ten I could fly  
Along barren beaches  
Above the chill of winter grass  
.... Against the distant sound of thunder.

Men like me ... we soared to the calling of wars  
Signing our names to glory  
The hope of a nation ...

But we fell on foreign earth,  
Flightless  
Torn apart like a paper tickets  
Beyond grief and reason  
Less  
Less  
Than the noble sons of war.<sup>10</sup>

Such words were never meant to be published ... but the soldiers behind them and the stories they tell ... belong in the light.

## REFERENCES

Aldrich, Robert and Wotherspoon, Gary (2002), *Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History: From Antiquity to the Mid-Twentieth Century*, London: Routledge.

Beck, Jennifer and Belton, Robyn (2018), *The Anzac Violin*. Auckland: Scholastic.

Bérubé, Allan (1990), *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II*, New York: The Free Press/Simon & Schuster.

Boston, Peter (1993), 'Bacillus of work: Masculinity and the rehabilitation of disabled soldiers in Dunedin 1919 to 1939', BA (Hons) dissertation, Dunedin: University of Otago.

Bourke, John (2000), 'Effeminacy, ethnicity and the end of trauma: The offerings of "shell-shocked" men in Great Britain and Ireland, 1914-39', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35, pp. 57-69.

Bourne, Stephen (2018), *Fighting Proud: The Untold Story of the Gay Men Who Served in Two World Wars*, New York: I.B. Tauris.

Boyack, Nicholas and Tolerton, Jane (1990), *In the Shadow of War: New Zealand Soldiers Talk About World War One and Their Lives*. Auckland: Penguin.

Brickell, Chris (2008), *Mates and Lovers: A History of Gay New Zealand*, Auckland: Godwitt.

Burger, Peter (2015), *When We Go to War*, Auckland: Television New Zealand.

Carbery, Andrew (1924), *The New Zealand Medical Service in the Great War 1914—1918: Based on Official Documents*, Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs.

Clarke, Russell (1991), 'Not mad, but very ill: The treatment of New Zealand's shell shocked soldiers 1914 to 1939', Ph.D. thesis, Auckland: University of Auckland.

Clifton, Jane (2015), 'Cliche-ridden Kiwi TV war drama saved by costumes and sets', *Stuff* 29 April 2015, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv-radio/68037200/clicheridden-kiwi-tv-war-drama-saved-by-costumes-and-sets>. Accessed 24 October 2018.

Dreher, Tanja (2016), 'Pinkwashing the past: Gay rights, military history and the sidelining of protest in Australia', *Oñati Socio-legal Series*, 6:1, pp. 116-36.

Elder, Catriona (2005), 'I spit on your stone': National identity, women against rape and the cult of ANZAC in Australia', in M. Mikula (ed.), *Women, Activism and Social Change*, London: Routledge, pp. 71-81.

Gil, Maria and Ivancic, Marco (2016), *ANZAC Heroes*. Auckland: Scholastic.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2018), *ANZAC Animals*, Auckland: Scholastic.



Haggerty, Timothy (2003), 'History repeating itself: A historical overview of gay men and lesbians in the military before "Don't Ask Don't Tell", in A. Belkin and D. Bateman (eds), *Don't Ask Don't Tell: Debating the Gay Ban in the Military*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 9-50.

Harper, Glyn (2015), *Roly, the ANZAC Donkey*, Auckland: Puffin.

Harper, Glyn and Cooper, Jenny (2018), *Bobby: The Littlest War Hero*, Auckland: Puffin.

Ings, Welby (2016), *Sparrow*, Auckland: Robin Murphy Films.

Jones, Nicholas (2017), 'Soldiers' bodies to be brought home after change in government's repatriation policy', *New Zealand Herald*, 10 April 2017, [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=11835532](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11835532). Accessed 24 October 2018.

Lake, Marilyn and Reynolds, Henry (2010), *What's Wrong with ANZAC? The Militarisation of Australian History*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

McKenna, Mark (2010), 'Anzac Day: How did it become Australia's National Day?', in M. Lake and H. Reynolds (eds), *Whats Wrong with Anzac The Militarisation of Australian History*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, pp. 110-134.

Manning, Arthur Edward (1958), *The Bodgie: A Study in Abnormal Psychology*, Wellington: Reed.

Mazengarb, Oswald (1954), *Preliminary observations. Report to the special committee on moral delinquency in children and adolescents*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14760/14760-h/14760-h.htm>. Accessed 24 October 2018.

Millett, Peter and Bowles, Trish (2015), *The ANZAC Puppy*, Auckland: Scholastic.

O'Connell, Michelle (2015), *Leaving the Front: A Boy's Story*, Rotorua: BMS Books.

Parsons, Gwen (2013), 'The construction of shell shock in New Zealand, 1919–1939: A reassessment', *Social History of Medicine*, 26:1, pp. 56-73.

Pelts Michael, Rolbiecki Abigail, and Albright David (2014), 'Implication for services with gay men and lesbians who have served', *Social Work in Mental Health*, 12:5-6, pp. 429-42.

Phillips, Laura (2007), 'Gendered dis/ability: Perspectives from the treatment of psychiatric casualties in Russia's early twentieth-century wars', *Social History of Medicine*, 26, pp. 333-50.

Polchar, Joshua; Sweijs, Tim; Marten, Philipp and Galdiga, Jan (2014), 'LGBT Military Index', *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, <http://projects.hcss.nl/monitor/88/>. Accessed 24 October 2018.

Showalter, Elaine (1987), *Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sinclair, G. Dean (2009), 'Homosexuality and the military: A review of the literature', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 56, pp. 701–18.

Smaal, Yorick (2015), *Sex, Soldiers and the South Pacific, 1939-45: Queer Identities in Australia in the Second World War*, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Smaal, Yorick and Willett, Graham (2015), 'Eliminate the females: The New Guinea Affair and medical approaches to homosexuality in the Australian Army in the Second World War', in C. T. and E. Kho (eds), *The Pacific War: Aftermaths, Remembrance and Culture*, London: Routledge, pp. 233-49.

Stephens, Andrew (2012), 'A secret history of sexuality on the front', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 December 2012, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/a-secret-history-of-sexuality-on-the-front-20121220-2bp9m.html>. Accessed 24 October 2018.

Stone, Sophie (2017), 'Overwatch: Rainbow support for our armed forces', *TearAway*, <https://tearaway.co.nz/overwatch-rainbow-support-armed-forces/>. Accessed 24 October 2018.

Werry, Phillipa (2013), *Anzac Day – The New Zealand Story: What It Is and Why It matters*, Auckland: New Holland.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2018), *The New Zealand Wars*, Auckland: New Holland.

'When We Go To War's Debut Episode', *New Zealand Herald*, 26 April 2015, [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1501119&objectid=11438968](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=11438968). Accessed 24 October 2018.

Wilson, Nick; Summers, Jennifer; Baker, Michael; Thomson, George and Harper, Glyn (2013), 'Fatal injury epidemiology among the New Zealand military forces in the First World War', *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, 126:1385, pp. 13-25.

Winsor, Ben (2017), 'The Secret History of Australia's Gay Diggers', *SBS*, <https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/sexuality/feature/secret-history-australias-gay-diggers-anzac>. Accessed 24 October 2018.

Wotherspoon, Gary (2016), *Gay Sydney: A History*, Sydney: NewSouth Publishing.

---

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> In this article I use a range of words to describe male, same sex relationships. When I am discussing historical military framings or social contexts prior to the emergence in the public consciousness of gay identity, I use the word homosexual. In discussions related to material after that period, I use the word gay. The term LGBTQ is reserved for contemporary references that include lesbians, bisexuals, trans and queer people.

---

<sup>2</sup> This included refraining from quoting details from the man's letters that might render the family identifiable, obscuring visual references to places in New Zealand and Egypt and changing his name and that of his lover.

<sup>3</sup> ANZAC is an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The day is associated with New Zealand and Australian troops landing in Gallipoli in 1915.

<sup>4</sup> For a graphic illustration of the intensity of television coverage see the New Zealand Pressreader's 2018 ANZAC day programming at: <http://www.airforce.mil.nz/about-us/news/whats-on/archive/events/anzac-day/anzacday-tv-cov.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Indicative of such publication is a plethora of recent New Zealand children's books including *Bobby: The Littlest War Hero* (Harper and Cooper 2018); *ANZAC Animals* (Gill and Ivancic 2018); *The ANZAC Violin* (Beck and Belton 2018); *The New Zealand Wars* (Werry 2018); *ANZAC Heroes* (Gill and Ivancic 2016); *The ANZAC Puppy* (Millett and Bowles 2015); *Roly, The ANZAC Donkey* (Harper 2015); *Leaving the Front: A Boy's Story* (O'Connell 2015); and *ANZAC Day – The New Zealand Story: What It Is And Why It Matters* (Werry 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Sir Peter Jackson's *Great War Exhibition* was the pilot for a government-funded \$237 million national war museum in Wellington's Dominion Museum Building. The exhibit was intended to run between 2014 and 2018 as part of New Zealand's centenary commemorations for World War I. However, the initiative was plagued by financial and accountability problems, including its centrepiece exhibit being delivered three years late. In 2018 taxpayers were faced with a 13 million dollar bill when it was time to dismantle the memorial.

<sup>7</sup> Indicative of this was the high level of media attention on 21 August 2018 when the remains of 27 New Zealand Army soldiers who served last century in Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam were returned to their families. The repatriation formed part of the New Zealand Defence Forces' *Te Auraki project*, under which NZDF personnel and dependants buried overseas after 1 January 1955, are being returned to New Zealand following a change in Government policy resulting from pressure from families and the RSA. Each repatriation is anticipated to cost between \$170,000 and \$200,000 (Jones 2017).

<sup>8</sup> One exception to this is the inclusion of a small, gay subplot in the six-episode Television New Zealand commissioned teledrama *When We Go to War* (Burger 2015). Despite the film being resourced by a 5.9 million dollar, On Air Platinum Fund grant, the series garnered very mixed reviews that criticised its melodramatic, cliched and overly-simplified treatment (Clifton 2015; New Zealand Herald 2015).

<sup>9</sup> An exception is the online narrative of 28-year-old Private Frank Hughes, the first New Zealand soldier executed in a World War, for desertion on 25 August 1916. See <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/page/first-new-zealand-soldier-executed>

<sup>10</sup> Anonymous. (Name withheld at the request of the family). The untitled poem was found inside a letter written from a Psychiatric Hospital in New Zealand, on May 9<sup>th</sup> 1956.