LEST WE FORGET?
Marginalised aspects of Australia at war and peace

Edited by Bobbie Oliver & Sue Summers
With a foreword by Peter Stanley
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Chapter 5

Anzac Day media representations of women in Perth, 1960–2012

Robyn Mayes and Graham Seal

The annual Anzac Day observance is a focus for articulating popular notions of Australian national identity. Early Anzac Day observations were characterised by a diversity of observational modes, many distinctly masculine and militarist in character, including sports, competitions and marches. It was from the late 1920s that the now characteristic structure of the day (dawn service – march – follow-on – afternoon celebrations including eating, drinking and playing of the gambling game two-up, illegal on every other day of the year) became the dominant form. Widely believed to have experienced an extended nadir in the 1960s and 1970s, since the 1980s Anzac Day has arguably become the single most important national event in the Australian calendar, involving large—probably the largest—numbers of Australians, many of them young, in the same temporal observance in a multitude of locations across the country and around the world. To date, there is a rich literature around Anzac Day observations and meanings focussing on its cultural / folkloric role; the production of (masculinised) national identity; pilgrimage; popular memory / history; and the contemporary reshaping of the Anzac myth by and for indigenous participants.

There is also a substantial body of historical scholarly work which engages with women and war such as that undertaken by Scates and Frances, and women and nation as undertaken by Lake, for example. Less attention however has been given to the representation of women as part of Anzac Day practice and mythology. This chapter begins to address this gap through examination of the ways in which women’s participation in successive Anzac Days in Perth, the capital city of Western Australia, from 1960 through to 2010 is represented in the media. Studies concerned with representations of women for example in war literature relating to the 1914–1918 conflict including texts such as troop
journals and C.E.W Bean's histories, and in Australian war films of the same period\textsuperscript{10} attest to the important role that such popular/cultural texts play in foregrounding masculinity and marginalising femininity in the emergence of the Anzac tradition. At the same time, such studies demonstrate a diversity of representations of women and thus shed light on processes of exclusion and also on the complexity of gender in the Anzac story along with disconnections from the lived experience of Australian women (see Reynaud).\textsuperscript{11}

Our focus is the yearly reportage of the event in \textit{The West Australian}, the major newspaper of record in Western Australia and its capital. Specifically, news articles, editorials and letters to the editor dealing with any aspect of Anzac Day in Perth, including those published on the days immediately before and after 25 April, form the basis of this study. This highly conventionalised reportage is an enduring, widely-sanctioned public interpretation of the collective meaning and importance of the day's events. That is, the reportage not only records select aspects of the Day but is also "a key moment of meaning-making"\textsuperscript{12} around the ritual and importance of Anzac Day. The articles, editorials, special supplements, and photographs which constitute such reportage are part of a broader social understanding of Anzac which informs individual understandings and experiences of the day.\textsuperscript{13} This is not to say that this public record of Anzac Day and the meanings articulated therein are experienced uniformly or go unchallenged, but rather that such texts are part of the social fabric in and against which individual interpretations arise. Further, as David Crouch argues, such meaning is "constantly in the remaking."\textsuperscript{14} Examination of the reportage of Anzac Day across time thus allows insights into the public, ongoing collective meaning-making attending the representation of women on this national day. While this chapter does not set out to conduct a comparison of the Western Australian and Eastern States reportage, this case-study nevertheless offers a counter-balance to the tendency in many official histories and analyses to privilege reportage of Anzac Day as experienced in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne as representative of the nation. In this regard it extends the geographical breadth of Anzac scholarship, just as the large audiences at Perth Anzac Day official events, as identified below, suggest that such future comparison may be productive.

The five decades from 1960 to 2010 are a significant segment of Anzac Day history as they encompass the beginning of widespread public critical engagement with Anzac Day, as exemplified in the publication in 1960 of the controversial play, \textit{The One Day of the Year}. In this work, Alan Seymour gave theatrical voice to mounting critiques of Anzac Day advanced in particular by university students, though also undertaken by a number of Gallipoli veterans and other returned servicemen, and the broader public.\textsuperscript{15} Interestingly, until the
later 1970s women’s attendance at dawn services was discouraged. The 1980s, during which period international humanitarian activism began to address rape in war, were marked by protests staged by groups such as the Women Against Rape (WAR) collective. The latter decades, on the other hand, are associated with two significant aspects of contemporary Anzac Day commemoration. The first is the rising attendance figures. The second is the emergence of what is arguably a growing “resistance to critical debate” around Anzac Day and the wider mythology, which in turn “represses alternative narratives about the meaning of war and what it means to be Australian.” As Donaldson and Lake point out, in a 2003 interview Alan Seymour felt the need to make it very clear that the revised version of *The One Day of the Year* “emphatically does NOT attack or criticise the Australian troops who fought so bravely at Gallipoli.”

**Conventions of Anzac Day reportage**

In *The West Australian*, articles preceding Anzac Day are principally concerned to inform readers about the arrangements for the day: which groups will ‘head’ the parade, which ones will march, the route to be taken, wet-weather arrangements and, in earlier decades, public transport schedules and business trading hours. Coverage of Anzac Day as it unfolds each year tends to focus on attendance numbers for both the dawn service and the march, with particular mention (from the 1980s onwards) of the dwindling number of Gallipoli veterans, along with quotes from Returned and Services League (RSL) officials and excerpts from addresses given by RSL presidents, shifting later to Anzac editorials. Conventional reportage has also expanded during the period of 1960 to 2010, particularly in terms of a growing emphasis on individual human interest stories, histories and connections to Anzac Day. This is evident in the rising number of veterans’ personal stories and war reminiscences, which were few and far between in the 1960s. By the 1980s such stories, focussing not only on individual marchers but also on parade attendees, were part of the formulaic Anzac Day tradition. As such, the way that reportage in *The West Australian* is structured exemplifies “standard news coverage of Anzac Day” across the nation. Reflecting this national trend, Anzac Day as reported in *The West Australian* has in recent years become not only a “media ritual” for journalists, but also a “‘season’ with book launches, commentary pieces and documentaries as well as news reports.” In 2007 a ‘Special 16-page wraparound’ titled ‘Australians at War’ was advertised in *The West Australian* as part of the Anzac reportage, and in 2010 an ‘Australia at War’ poster series was promoted on the front page.
Reportage of women in *The West Australian*

Within the broad generic conventions attending Anzac Day reporting, reference to women's involvement and roles is certainly not the norm in *The West Australian* from the 1960s onwards. In most years, with exceptions as examined below, women are acknowledged only in passing in generic phrases such as: "ex-service men and women" and "we remember and honour those men and women". Overall, articles and human-interest stories focussing on women are far fewer in number than those focussing on men. More importantly, the representation of women and their role/s in Anzac Day observance is qualitatively different to that of men. As an example of this, reportage in 1972 of the first inclusion in Perth of members of the Women's Royal Australian Navy in the Anzac Day march is not only brief but is presented as part of a "Sidelights on Anzac Day" report. It is followed by a considerably lengthier piece in this section concerned with the failure of the Chief Parade Marshall's morning alarm and the fact that he had only 20 minutes to get ready. Parallel to this, both the ritual of Anzac Day commemoration and the reportage broadly situate women in relation to the (historical) roles ascribed to women in the larger Anzac tradition. That is, women are predominantly associated with non-combatant service roles, such as nursing and ambulance driving, the role of home-front worker, and, more broadly, with the relational roles of soldiers’ mothers, wives and sisters. Overall, the involvement of women tends to be represented either as complementary to the masculine Anzac ideal and ritual, or as a threat (to not only Anzac Day but the nation). This is examined in more detail in the following discussion which is organised to reflect these broader roles with attention to central themes and changes over time.

Attendance levels are also part of the context for, if not a factor in, the inclusion of women in Anzac Day commemorations and reportage of their presence/participation. Anzac Day attendance figures for both marchers and onlookers are interpreted as a marker of a broader social acceptance of, if not support for, Anzac mythology. The drop in numbers widely associated with the 1960s and 1970s is seen to indicate a loss of relevance for the broader public. Numbers recorded in *The West Australian* for this period in Perth, however, suggest that assertions of a substantial national drop in numbers of attendees may be exaggerated when applied to Western Australia, particularly in relation to attendances at the dawn service. More generally, the inclusion of a range of 'non-traditional' groups in the march, such as "ex-servicemen who served with the forces of Australia's war time allies during the second world war," encouragement of the participation of Vietnam veterans, and the creation of a "new division" for the "children and grandchildren of dead service personnel" for example, is part of a strategy to ensure wider participation and relevance. At the same time, the RSL, as a "powerful lobby group", occupies a position of
authority not only in relation to the organisation of Anzac Day but also in terms of media attention in the reportage around Anzac Day, though this authority is recently challenged in the media representation examined below.  

Representation of ex-service women: complicities and dissatisfactions

Women's non-combatant roles frequently relegated women to either the periphery or absence in the strongly masculinist emphasis on Anzac Day, and the 'birth' of the nation, understood as a direct outcome of combat on the Gallipoli peninsula between April and December 1915. There were no women present at the Gallipoli landings and the only women in the vicinity of the campaign were nurses serving on the hospital ships and in the field hospitals on the island of Lemnos. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the coverage given to men's service units far exceeds the attention given to women's service units in Anzac Day reports. Interestingly, as occurs in earlier reportage in other Australian locations, the Perth reportage emphasises women's acquiescence with this marginalisation. In articles with titles such as "World War I Nurses at Anzac March" (1960) and "Great War Nurse Watched March" (1965) ex-service women are singled out as spectators, for seemingly no other purpose than to record that they were present and in what is confirmed as their "rightful" supportive place. While the 1960 article simply reported the women's presence under the rubric of "World War 1 veterans who could not march in yesterday's Anzac Day parade", the 1965 article quotes Miss Julia Hart, who it is pointed out is a recipient of the Royal Red Cross Medal for service in places such as Egypt, France, Italy, and Malta. It is reported that she has attended "almost every Anzac Day service", but that she has never taken part in the parade, watching instead from her reserved place on the official dais. Her acceptance of the natural order of this role as spectator is made clear when the article quotes her as follows: "A march is no place for women," she said. "I would never take part in one myself and I would not sanction it for my girls."

However, the reportage also encompasses service-women's dissatisfactions. A 1963 article "AWAS victory after 17 years" is a case in point as is, almost 40 years later, the 2002 article "Tribute to carers". In the 1963 article the president of the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) describes the despondency felt by this group arising from the situation in which, in the president's words, AWAS members were "permitted to go along" to the march but "had no service identification" and were "not mentioned in the official programme". In her summation: "We had less recognition than the boy scouts" and "called ourselves Lonnie's Lost Legion". The previous year, feeling "so tired of being ignored", the women had "sat on the grass during the ceremony and designed a banner so people in future would know who we were. To be excluded from, or invisible in the march is to be excluded from the "centrepiece of Anzac Day". While
dawn services are gaining popularity, as evidenced by soaring attendance rates (some 40,000 people were reported in The West Australian to have attended the dawn service in Kings Park in 2012) the point of the march is not only as McKernan noted to "gather all the returned men together and draw them to one central spot" but also in the process to receive public acknowledgement of their importance to the nation.

The 2002 article foregrounds "retired army nurse, Anne Leach" who headed the Anzac Day march "in commemoration of the army's nursing corps centenary" of "caring for wounded soldiers". She described "the 380 West Australian nurses who returned from World War II" as "A forgotten race". More broadly, the article reports that:

Mrs Leach felt there had been little recognition of war nurses, despite their role in saving the lives and dignity of Australian troops in every conflict since the Boer War.

This media coverage, while reporting on women's dissatisfaction with the levels of recognition afforded in Anzac Day proceedings (and by extension in the media), concurrently presents this dissatisfaction as satisfactorily addressed. For example, the 1963 article celebrates via its title an AWAS "victory" just as the 2002 article is accompanied by a large photograph of "Army nurse Anne Leach" leading the Anzac Day parade in recognition of "the 100th anniversary of the army's nursing corps". As Christine Twomey has argued in her analysis of the media representation of nurse POWs in 1945, this partial recognition of the contribution of nurses to the nation's war effort, on this special centennial occasion (which one can argue is the focal point), paradoxically embraces the nurses as "honorary bearers of the Anzac tradition without challenging some of the assumptions that excluded them for so long."  

**Representation of women's protest: despicable actions and cleaning-up**

Throughout its history, Anzac Day has been the focus of tension, conflict and ambiguity as various groups and interests have sought to monopolise, join, attack or profit from it. A range of issues, including prominent critiques concerning the militarism of Anzac, have been articulated (particularly in the 1960s to 1980s) by diverse cohorts including the many ex-servicemen who have always declined to take part in the event. It is generally understood in the academic literature, however, that the "most serious challenge to the orthodoxy of Anzac Day" was that staged in the 1980s by members of the WAR collectives. These highly contentious protests received widespread, and usually unsympathetic, press coverage. Indeed, The West Australian reported at some length protests which occurred in Sydney and Melbourne. In 1983 an
editorial titled "Anzac protest" described demonstrations staged in Sydney by members of WAR as "acts of irreverence, which sully a national tradition and cause offence to many" sending a clear message that such actions were not tolerated by Western Australians. Such protest had significant consequences for those taking part. For example, as reported in The West Australian, following protests against rape in war, 160 women were charged in Sydney and seven in Melbourne. Three WAR protesters were gaol ed for a month for "coming within 400 meters of the tail end of an Anzac Day parade".

Protests staged in Perth by women's groups are reported in The West Australian in 1977, 1978, 1981 and 1984. In 1977, it was reported that two women were remanded in Perth over the laying of a "rape wreath". One of the charged women is quoted as follows: "I was assaulted and the wreath we tried to lay on the memorial to commemorate all those women who were raped by soldiers was torn up and thrown away." According to a woman who had gone to Kings Park with the two charged women, "The police had taken no action against the people who destroyed the wreath." It is also noted that:

About 20 supporters of two women who tried to lay a wreath at the Anzac Day dawn service to 'commemorate all those women who were raped by soldiers' were evicted from a court hearing later in the day. Some of the women were pushed down the stairs from the first floor court and ordered off the police headquarters precincts.

In 1978, it is reported that an "incident" took place during the march caused by:

... a group of young women who said they were protesting against the rape and killing of women by soldiers. The police confiscated a placard from the women before the start of the parade but did not prevent them from joining the column as it moved to the Esplanade. During the march some spectators jeered and booted at the women, who dispersed when they reached the Esplanade. Some of them handed out pamphlets.

In the 1981 Anzac media coverage women activists were "blamed" for "defacing the State war memorial in Kings Park" with inscriptions such as "Women are the victims of war" and "Raped in war". The Western Australian president of WAR is reported to have denied involvement: "We regard this sort of thing as being in bad taste" she said. "It only serves to give women's movements a bad name." Similarly, in 1984 it was reported that police were "unable to find the culprits in five cases of defilement and desecration of war memorials in Kings Park and four suburbs". Messages painted on the memorials were reported to read: "Women Against War", "Women for peace" and "Stop war".
Reportage of the above actions, and the several ‘letters to the editor’ elicited in response, depoliticise this protest as “simply an act of vandalism”. The 1984 editorial, titled “Anzac vandals”, concluded: “theirs is not so much the voice of a responsible group with something valuable to say as that of a sad and insular subculture”. Not only is this ‘vandalism’ “no part of freedom”, these “despicable” actions are the work of “gormless idiots, unworthy of the title women” who thus “insult” the mothers and other responsible women commemorating the death of loved ones. The perpetrators are described in a separate letter as “hoodlums” and “miscreants”. This strong response – in particular the distinction made between the perpetrators (aberrant women) and the “mothers and other responsible women” – is perhaps explained by the way in which the slogans not only challenge but expose a vulnerability around the core gendered components of the Anzac mythology: namely the notion of the sanctity of the home-front and the role of ‘fighting men’ in protecting women.

At the same time, this aggressive response triggered critique on the part of ‘responsible’ women. One letter-writer drew attention to the history of exclusion of women arguing that the reportage:

... did a disservice to serious attempts by concerned women to draw attention to the treatment of women in war. Over the past few years women have attempted to march at Anzac services and lay wreaths in memory of their sisters, and have been consistently treated as though they were petty criminals.

Similarly, in a 1981 letter to the editor it was pointed out that:

Members of the women’s movement have been forced into this type of action since more acceptable forms of protest about the problem of rape in wartime have been denied them. They are not allowed to march, lay wreaths or display placards at Anzac Day services.

In order to avoid “confrontation and arrest” and “anger and resentment,” the “Rape Action Group for Everywoman—RAGE” organised a separate Anzac Day vigil in 1984. To be held at dawn on Anzac Day at the Pioneer Women’s Memorial in Kings Park, the gathering was to pay “silent tribute to the women raped and killed in war”. Importantly, “the women had police permission for their vigil and had carefully organised it so that it would not conflict with the morning services”. The President of the RSL was asked for his comment. In his opinion, “as the women were not interfering in any way with official Anzac Day services, he believed they had a right to make their protest if they felt it necessary. In that sense it did not concern the RSL.”
The “desecrated” war memorial, however, emerged as central to the question of women’s relationships to Anzac Day events and meanings. In the 1984 press coverage in *The West Australian* considerable attention was given to women who offered apologies (on behalf of women in general) and to the two women who “cleaned up”. A 1984 letter to the editor offered a clear “Apology to our Anzacs” on behalf of young women:

> Please don’t interpret their irreverent defacement of your monument as being representative of the feelings of all young people or of all women. Many of us still think of you with the love and respect you deserve and we thank you for being our Anzacs.  

*Above:* Women’s complex (subordinate and custodial) relationship to the deeply masculinised Anzac tradition is poignantly evident is this 1984 image depicting two young women being commended by the secretary of the Rats of Tobruk Association for voluntarily removing other women’s protest slogans from the memorial at Kings Park. Who indeed painted the slogans—‘Women Against War’, ‘Women for peace’ and ‘Stop war’—remains unclear. (Source: Hugh Schmitt, ‘They saw red—and got working to wipe out shame’ *The West Australian*, April 27, 1984: 1.)

A letter writer in 1981, after establishing her standing as “the daughter of a deceased Australian war veteran”, emphasises her “deep distress” over the “criminal desecration of war memorials by a group of irreverent, irresponsible women”.  

Perhaps most interesting is the reportage of the two women who felt “ashamed that a women’s group might have been responsible for the vandalism”.
The two women, who "do not belong to any women's organisations", are reported to have driven past the memorial to "see if anyone else was cleaning it ... when we saw nobody was working on it, we went down to a shop and bought a bottle of turpentine and came back and got to work' said Kathleen.60

The "Rats of Tobruk Association secretary" is reported to have described this as "a fantastic gesture by these girls". While he was at first worried that they might damage the memorial, he soon realised they were doing a good job, for which they were to be thanked with a "big bunch of flowers" and a thank you letter. This story is accompanied by a photograph demonstrating the erasure of the original action: the women kneel on the steps of the memorial cleaning products in hand smiling up at the past president of the Rats of Tobruk Association.

In a second article, published the following day, their satisfaction in this (domestic) task is made plain: "I'm aching all over" said Mrs James, "but Kathleen and I feel a deep sense of satisfaction over the clean-up".61 This 'clean-up' has a symbolic function in returning the memorial to a state of purity (something that could not be achieved perhaps if members of the Rats of Tobruk Association undertook to remove the slogans) and restoring women to their place as supporters of this tradition.

There has since been no reportage of women's protest in The West Australian. Further, a 2010 article in The West Australian examining past Anzac Days and future relevance in the context of the fact that "Tomorrow's Anzac Day is the first one for which there will be no surviving Australian servicemen from World War I", makes reference to resistance to Anzac Day but does not mention critiques undertaken by groups such as WAR. Rather, resistance is presented as a result of Australia's participation in the Vietnam War, and readers are referred to debates around whether or not Australia should become a republic and change the flag.62 More broadly women's resistance to Anzac is often glossed-over, erased or located in the past. The idea that protest around the marginalisation of women is no longer undertaken is evident in the following claim made in the 2012 and 2013 Anzac Day Media Style Guide: "In the past, women's groups and anti-war campaigners have also questioned the inclusiveness of Anzac Day".63 Interestingly, the 2013 guide under the heading 'More ideas' [for non-clichéd stories and new angles] does draw attention to ongoing debate regarding the exclusion of women:

Note that debate concerning the exclusion of women from the Anzac story continues until the present day. Consider ways to reflect this debate and/or women's perspectives.64

This suggests something of the important role that the media can play in terms of acknowledging "the stories, memories, experiences and observations of a range
of people" including women, who may "hold different beliefs about Anzac Day and its significance" in order to move away from the favoured 'grand narrative' toward a more complex story.

Representation of mothers, wives and sisters: keepers of the Anzac tradition

The press coverage from the latter half of the 1980s consistently emphasises not only women's support for but also emotional engagement with and guardianship of the broader ongoing traditional relevance and importance of Anzac Day. For example, in 1987 at the outset of an article titled "Remembering ordinary people who gave all", a 23 year-old woman attending the march, is quoted as saying: "When I see these old men go past I feel like crying". "War heroine" Nancy Wake who marched in Sydney in 1988, for the first time in 20 years, is quoted as saying that it is "absolutely wrong" to think of Anzac Day as a memorial to war. Service women, presented as "marching for the men" in their lives, are also shown to be satisfied: "on behalf of the 'Royal Australian Army Nursing Corporation [sic]', Mrs Stratham said 'we regard Anzac Day with affection for all the wonderful people we knew who didn't come home'". As such in The West Australian reportage we see what Stanley, writing of the newspaper coverage of the 70th Anzac Day commemoration in 1985, noted was "surprisingly little debate" and a tendency to "treat the day's events with the by-now traditional combination of reverence and romanticism".

There is, further, an emphasis in The West Australian's representation of women attending Anzac Day events on family connections and pride. As seen also in some of the responses to women's protest in the 1980s, familial connections provide "a special authority" to speak about Anzac—sometimes as those who inherit the Anzac tradition. Familial connections are given considerable attention in the latter decades. In 1994, "Florence Rankins, 68" is described as feeling "a familiar mix of pride and sadness today as she pays tribute to the men in her family who went to war". In 2000, Pheobe Freeman, 74, of Coolbellup, is described as having:

...put her late father, Reginald Freeman, in the picture. She wore his image and the medals Mr Freeman won for his service on the Western Front in France and Belgium as she watched the annual march with thousands of spectators lining St Georges Terrace.

Similarly, "Edna Power, 89," is identified as having "gathered with her family at the same spot on St Georges Terrace for the Anzac Day ceremony for 30 years". In 2002, "Nicole Campbell could not hold back her tears as she watched her father march in the Anzac Day parade in Perth", while in 2004 attention is given to two sisters who each year go to the dawn service and the parade in honour of male family members. Such links "between family and military
history” inform a “new sense of pride in the role of military sacrifice in shaping the nation” while “encouraging families to locate themselves in the national story.” Damoulsi argues that “the merging of military and family history” is a key factor in the contemporary shift to a pervasively uncritical stance; it is also central to what Donaldson and Lake describe as a “depoliticised sentimentality” regarding Anzac Day. Importantly, in the reportage in *The West Australian*, women are central to the work of maintaining these links not least as regular spectators attending in honour of male family members.

Familial links are also presented in the paper as following gendered lineages. For example, in 1999 a cartoon addressing the question of “who will remember” the Anzacs once there were no longer any living AIF 1917–1918 diggers appeared under the heading “The Issues”. Cartoon frames posit a series of reflections on the part of diggers marching on Anzac Day in 1920, 1950, 1970, 1980 and 1990. In the final frame, Anzac Day 1999, the AIF 1914–1918 banner is carried forward by a new generation in demonstration of the concluding claim that “At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them!” The fundamentally gendered nature of familial connections to Anzac is clear in the speech bubbles attending the three figures marching in the 1999 frame. There are two men and one woman (the only woman marching in the entire cartoon). The first male figure says “My great grandfather fought at Gallipoli!” while the second male figure says “My grandad fought in New Guinea; I’m wearing his medals!” The female figure says “My gran was a nurse!”

In this manner traditional gender roles continue to be privileged; at the same time however they also continue to be marginalised. In 2009 it was reported that “For the first time, veterans’ partners and widows” marched:

> ... under their own banner in tribute to all women who have supported their men through the turmoil of war. WA Partners of Veterans Association President Sandra Cross said the women were used to cheering from the sidelines at the Anzac Day parade but felt it was time to play a more visible role.

According to the article, the 'WA Partners of Veterans Association' was convened “to increase awareness of some of the difficulties those closest to servicemen experienced, including coping with a partner suffering post-traumatic stress disorder or other health issues”. Arguing that “the emotional effects [of these service-related health issues] are felt by the whole family”, this group sought the acknowledgement of non-service women’s roles as wives and carers. Underscoring this as something of an astonishing achievement, permission to march was withdrawn in 2010 as reported on the front page of *The West Australian* on April 22. This decision elicited three letters to the editor. One of these included explicit acknowledgement of the group:
To the partners of veterans denied the opportunity to march this year, I say bloody well done for an outstanding job of caring for your veteran partners. You have done great service for your country. RSL shame on you.

In general, however, rather than addressing the issue of the exclusion of this group, the three letters used the decision as an opportunity to berate the RSL, and in particular the WA president, for a range of other exclusions and a failure to ensure “maximum participation on the day” and to directly question the RSL’s relevance to and authority over the veteran community.

Anzac Day coverage in The West Australian, not only positions women as responsible for maintaining or honouring (principally male) familial connections to Anzac, it also promotes women more broadly as patriotic keepers of the Anzac tradition. This is exemplified in 2002 by “South Lake mother Vicki Goldsmith [who] said she attended the Kings Park dawn service each year because she was a patriot and loved Australia. She said she took her four-year-old daughter Annabella to the service to instil into her a sense of what Australia and its soldiers had been through in the past.”81 In 2010 Babette Jolly, attending Anzac Day in Anzac Cove, is singled out as having “come to Gallipoli for a simple reason. She said it was a patriotic thing to do. ‘I think it’s something that every Aussie has to do at least once’.”82 This role is foregrounded in the photographs attending the 2010 reportage which include the wife of a veteran in a supporting role; two young women wrapped in Australian flags and emotionally caught up in the performance of Anzac Day at Anzac Cove; a little girl kissing her marching, sailor father; and a little girl jumping in the air and holding an Australian flag. Of the twenty photographs attending the 2010 reportage, females are featured in just five. In addition to the four photographs described above, (just) one image presents a female soldier in combat fatigues, stationed in Afghanistan on the occasion of meeting the Governor General Quentin Bryce. In contrast, ten images honour men’s (idealised) service contributions.83 These photographs in this media context are not “merely visual evidence or illustration; such images are cultural interventions in public and political debates”, in this instance around the ‘meaning of Anzac and women’s place in this defining story of nation.

Conclusion

In 1995, after comparing Anzac Day in 1965 and 1990 as reported in the media, Jenny McLeod concluded that, “since the 1960s, the Anzac legend and Anzac Day have been reinvigorated through the process of explaining it anew as a story of mateship among individuals who exemplify what it is to be an Australian” so that “the story of Gallipoli has become a myth for all of Australia.”84 This
contemporary emphasis on shared meanings and national unity expressed by and experienced on the day, however, relies in particular on the marginalisation of the various critiques presented by divergent women’s groups. The public record in *The West Australian* of women’s involvement and attitudes between 1960 and 2010 demonstrates that women have had and continue to have a range of variously contentious and shifting relationships to Anzac Day and its mythology along with a complexly gendered politics in the making of Anzac Days. Women have long been involved in the ongoing making of [Perth] Anzac Days: as audience, as marchers, and, more recently as the keepers of an Anzac tradition firmly linked to family and nation, as befits patriotic national subjects. Women have also been active in the making of Anzac Days in seeking to expand its meanings not least as a day for critical appraisal of the wider, gendered costs and sacrifices inherent in war.

More generally, this investigation of reportage of Anzac Days in Perth WA across the 50 years between 1960 and 2010 confirms that conflict, tension and dissent have always been integral elements of the day. Moreover, the day has displayed a continual capacity to incorporate such ruptures, challenges and attacks into its structural and ideological framework. While the day has ebbed and flowed in popularity and been the site of considerable external – as well as internal – dissent it has nevertheless displayed a profound ability to incorporate, mediate or silence these tensions, not least through the public reportage in the mainstream print media. The evidence of this success and the attendant ongoing construction of national identity is in the remarkable growth in popularity of the day, especially the dawn service as a popular and official spectacle of nation, not only in Australia but also in wartime heritage sites around the world. Importantly, this success appears to involve the ongoing marginalisation, if not silencing of not only women’s protest but also the diversity of women’s experiences of and contributions to Anzac.

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Julie Lunn who located much of the archival material upon which this chapter is based.
Notes

13 See McKenna and Ward “'It was really moving mate': The Gallipoli Pilgrimage and Sentimental Nationalism in Australia”.
14 David Crouch, “The Perpetual Performance and Emergence of Heritage”, in *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past*, edited by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson. (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010): 58. It should be noted that central to Crouch’s argument is that not only is heritage constantly remade but also that it is always emergent in the present.
17 Christine Twomey, “Australian Nurse POWs: Gender, War and captivity”.
18 Peter Stanley, “Anzac Day, as it was reported” in Michael McKean and Peter Stanley eds (Sydney: William Collins, 1986): 14.
20 Donaldson and Lake, “Whatever happened to the anti-war movement”: 92.
22 Stanley, “Anzac Day, as it was reported”.
26 RSLWA records for the period tend to confirm this observation. The ‘Address to the 49th State Congress’ by President P. Pearson OBE, 19 July 1965 stated “a 20% increase on 1964” for the parade that year. The equivalent Presidential report for 1976 noted 3000 attendees at the Dawn Service “many of whom were of the younger generation”, while “a record Sunday crowd of 6000” attended the Parade and Service at the Esplanade. In 1980, “a possible record crowd” attended the Dawn Service.
27 Stanley, “Anzac Day, as it was reported”: 14.
29 Donaldson and Lake, “Whatever happened to the anti-war movement”: 79. See G L Kristianston, The Politics of Patriotism: The Pressure Group Activities of the Returned Servicemen’s League, ANU Press, Canberra, 1966, for an indication of the extent of RSL influence up to the 1960s. While the influence of the RSL on government and the community has declined, the body retains control of the organising and much of the promotion of Anzac Day (as well as related events and issues at other times of the year).
30 For example in a Brisbane newspaper article under the headline ‘ANZAC DAY MARCH – The Ban on Women’, and quoting a representative of the nursing profession: “We have no desire to march, and the alteration meets our wishes, on which we were consulted by the Anzac Day committee” said the president of the Nurses’ sub-branch of the R S I L A (Miss E M Paten) yesterday”. *The Courier Mail* March 10, 1934: 17.

The source does not identify ‘Lonnie’. We assume it was the nickname of the unit’s commander. There was less recognition for the women despite the fact that, as reported in the same article, “Between 1941 and 1946, nearly 17,000 girls in WA volunteered for the service.” Further, members of AWAS were deployed in 1944 to New Guinea for service in “forward areas” (Mascall-Dare, *Anzac Day Media Style Guide*).


There appears to be no such thing as a retired, or ‘ex’ digger. See Graham Seal *Inventing Anzac The Digger and National Mythology*.

Christine Twomey, “Australian Nurse POWs: Gender, War and captivity”: 274.


Stanley, "Anzac Day, as it was reported"; see also McLeod, "The fall and rise of Anzac Day: 1965 and 1990 compared".


The laying of wreaths without permission as reported in the media coverage is assiduously resisted. For example, it is reported in 1969 that wreaths laid on the Kings Park war memorial by student anti-war protesters in 1969, allegedly with the note ‘Remember the murdered Vietnamese’ were removed by RSL officials (“More Anzac Day Marchers”, *The West Australian* April, 26, 1969: 1). The account of Anzac Day 1968 drew attention to an incident in which after the laying of the official wreaths, a woman doused under a rope barrier near the memorial and mounted the steps with a wreath. An R.S.L. steward moved to stop her, but returned to attention as she placed the wreath among the others. (“15 000 Watch March”, *The West Australian*, April 26, 1968: 1). Interestingly, in 1964 (“Mother Started Wreath Services”, *The West Australian*, April 25: 1) it was reported that the wreath-laying tradition was initiated by grieving mothers.


"No clues to defacers", *The West Australian*, April 26, 1984:12.

"No clues to defacers", *The West Australian*, April 26, 1984:12. The RSLWA presidential address for that year noted that “a guard was mounted at the State War Memorial some days prior to ANZAC [sic] Day to deter acts of vandalism”. The identical note appeared in the report for the following year. Interestingly, despite the guard in 1984, a count of wreaths laid at the Dawn Service that year “revealed that the number of wreaths was well up despite the belief that fewer people would attend this year’s Dawn Service”.


See Christine Twomey, “Australian Nurse POWs: Gender, War and captivity”.


Concurrency, the understanding that war widows “embody the losses which war inflict on a community” (Stanley, “Anzac Day, as it was reported”, 15) leaves no room for addressing rape in war. Recent research highlighting the ‘double jeopardy’ around sexual violence against women in the armed services indicates the politics/sleight of hand inherent in externalising these concerns. See also the recently released DL Piper review of allegations of sexual and other forms of abuse in the Australian Defence Force Academy. Accessed 5 July 2012, http://www.defence.gov.au/culturereviews/docs/DLPiper/.


Schmitt, “They saw red—and got working to wipe out shame”: 1.


Mascall-Dare, Anzac Day Media Style Guide 2013: 25.


Stanley: 17. It is not our intention to suggest that debate is absent; critical articles adopting a range of perspectives appear online on websites such as, in 2012, Scoop Independent News, the literary journal Overland, and Wordpress blogs.

Damousi, 2010: 97.


The West Australian, April 26, 2000: 5.


Damousi, 2010: 103.

Damousi, Memory, Mourning and Wartime Bereavement in Australia, (CUR, 1999): 97; Donaldson and Lake, “Whatever happened to the anti-war movement”: 75.

The West Australian, April 24, 1999: 15.

“Legions remember the spirit of courage”, *The West Australian*, April 26, 2002: 5.


The other five photographs record the Prime Minister paying his respects, the parade in Perth, Anzac Day in a small WA town, Quentin Bryce’s Anzac Day address, and an Anzac Day memorial constructed in East Timor.


For further discussion of this aspect see Graham Seal, “… and in the morning …”: adapting and adopting the dawn service*. *Journal of Australian Studies* 35, 1 (2011): 49–63.
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What is being 'remembered' and what is being 'forgotten' within Australian war history?

The seven contributors to *Lest We Forget?* raise this critical question by examining the experiences of disabled ex-servicemen, of conscientious objectors, of workers 'manpowered' during the Second World War, of the people of Lemnos, of servicewomen and nurses, and the ongoing commemoration of Anzac.

This book clearly shows that much has been marginalised within mainstream historical research and media accounts of the past.

*Lest We Forget?* contributes to a more inclusive, open and true-to-life account of Australia's experience of war and its aftermath upon the nation and its people.