

Author's Note

Heirs to Ahmegodheho, started in 1968, the year I turned seventeen and read *Doctor Zhivago* and *War and Peace*. I had already read *Gone With the Wind*, *A Horseman Riding By*, *Hawaii*, *The Forsyte Saga*, and *A Modern Comedy*. Clearly I loved the family sagas, but was hit by a few thoughts. Perceptive, vivid and with a great sense of their eras as all these books were, the driving forces of sexuality, money, egotism and the desire for control did not seem developed enough. This was in part due to my teenage sensibilities (and their lack) and also to the censorship codes and public tastes that these writers worked under. The way such stories always focused on the hero or heroine left me wondering how the other characters would see the unfolding story, how would they see society and narrate the story, what was their role and what did they want? It also came to me that Australia had a history that was suitable for family sagas. I began to write, but travel, work, politics and reading other people's books instead of writing my own devoured time and focus and then as I was finishing the first version, (which ended with the 1968 bushfires) came Colleen McCullough's *The Thorn Birds* (1977) and I felt that Australia's capacity for the family saga had been met.

In 2002 at a dinner table conversation developed onto what changes an Australian man who had been born under Queen Victoria's reign and was still living would have seen. This ignited my interest and I rewrote *Heirs to Ahmegodheho*: probably less than ten per cent dates from what was written in the 1960s and 1970s. With one character living five years each side of the twentieth century, they and the reader see Australia develop from a British colony in the years of that empire's height into the multicultural, predominantly urban society that it has become. My time-span of 1895-2005 more than doubles that of the *The Thorn Birds* and although both families are rich squatocracy, their settings are very different, as is the narrative structure, characterizations, outlook, presentation and themes.

The central character of *Heirs to Ahmegodheho*, Ross Clarke, has the form and social placing of the traditional hero and he enacts out that role. He has the hero's luck, charisma and stamina, but he is in a world where the traditions, beliefs and social structure that sustained such heroes are rapidly changing. With a narrative that reveals his thoughts, how he maintains his power and what others think about him, the traditional view of the hero becomes unsustainable. This also applies to other traditional roles, the heroine, the father figure, the donor, the villain and the loyal followers.

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Whenever any historical novel is read two questions arise: what combination of fact or fiction is presented and how does the author know the world of which

they write?

To answer the last question first; after 1965 much of what I have written is based on experience and observation, albeit sometimes moved around from its time and locale. In the 1968 bush fires we did sit in neat orderly rows doing our final exams and some of us were called out when homes were ablaze or close to it. Cora's experiences at the pool were based on my experiences in South Australia in the great bushfire of 1983. The keyword there is based: after seeing the flames I did not see anyone burned, did not see fleeing kangaroos and did rush home, without aid from a gallant horseman. Other observations are accurate. Horace's 1968 dance in Sydney recalls a Trotskyist event in another time and place. The description of the bizarre Communist demonstration in Sienna was inspired by what I saw in Florence in 1986. Washing went grey on clothes lines in Gringila as late as 1974. Migrants did sleep in the same bed in shifts and put their wages into the Opera House Lottery.

Pamela Groz's political performance and Byron's ravings about the merits of birdseed as a staple diet and the reasons he gave were overheard by unknown street ravers, but in differing times and locales to those I give and they did not know each other. I was present at Melbourne's May Day in 1980 and an Adelaide protest in 1984 and made a fictional composite. Satirists have had a field day with the strange ideas, conspiracy theories and extremism of the hippies and radicals of the 1960s, but the right were worse. The belief that the Beatles wore wigs and that Peter Paul and Mary were Communist subversives was widespread. There were very paranoid, shadowy right wing groups much concerned with victory in Vietnam, one of them led by a 1940s Trotskyist turned to the far right. Such attitudes had widespread support. When in 1967 I expressed my opposition to that war I was reassured that the atomic bombs that would solve the problem "would only be little ones." Young Ross's comment about Bibles on the docks were being turned to pulp was recounted by a returning aide worker lecturing our church group. A returning GI recounted how if he wanted to find out the details of upcoming secret missions he asked the bar girls, many of whom were suspected Vietcong. The drunkenness on flights into Saigon was also recounted not by a witness but third hand.

Although community radios were set up around Australia in the 1970s, the Melbourne station in *Heirs to Ahmegodheho* is a total fiction, as are Fred's magazine and Stephanos's cinema.

And now to deal with the question of how historical fiction is created outside living memory. To paraphrase William Faulkner; the past is not dead, it is not even

passed, it remains all around us. Eloura town and district and the surrounding farms are all based in a jumble of recollections, readings and experiences that go over decades and more importantly, imaginative creation.

The town of Eloura is a fiction in the sense that it does not exist and some parts are totally imaginary: these include the Pharaoh, Jan's pie shop and the police station and jail. Others are transported from locations as far apart as far northern Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia and put side by side. A few are actually from southern New South Wales. The massive cedar table in the massive kitchen where school was conducted and fireplaces large enough to roast a beeve and massive slate floors sound far-fetched, but the kitchen of my great Aunt's farm on the Clarence River was like that in the 1950s and she told me that school was conducted there many years before. In the days before electrical lines farms did mark their presence with rows of trees, usually poplars. Cora's experience at Ahmegodheho of being in a time warp recall many visiting old houses, but Caufield's, Clarkstead and Ahmegodheho itself are total fictions.

Books that were influential for an overall impression of Australia's past were Geoffrey Blainey's *Black Kettle and Full Moon* Cyril Pearl's *Australia's Yesterdays: A Look At Our Recent Past*, A.K. MacDougall's *Australia: An Illustrated History*, Donald Horne's *The Lucky Country* and *Days of Hope 1966-1972* Phillip Knightley's *Australia* and Bill Bryson's *Down Under*. The latter two works focus more on recent events, but still have interesting and informative views.

To deal with events chronologically, there were New South Wales cavalry contingents to both Victoria's 1897 jubilee and the Boer War. Like so much in *Heirs to Ahmegodheho* I have used a fact as a basis but developed it through imagination by using Stanislavski's magic if. If I were a nine year old aristocratic Australian boy in 1899, how would I perceive that procession? Like a method actor researching costumes I research the soldier's uniforms, the structure and order of such processions and the behavior of watching crowds, but ultimately imagination and narrative needs have primacy.

There were for example communities of Cornish miners who migrated to Australia, but they came to rural South Australia, and over a generation before I have such people arriving as part of the great British migration of the Edwardian Era. The transition from horse drawn plows to tractors in southern New South Wales also occurred in the later Edwardian Era, but the meeting about this and the thoughts and views expressed are only likelyhoods. Fiona Carruthers *The Horse in*

Australia was the most useful printed source for stressing the importance of horses in the years before trucks and cars took over.

The role of women in rural areas and the small details of rural life once again has a factual base. Such works as Jennifer Isaacs *Pioneer Women of the Bush and Outback* and Susanna De Vries's *Great Pioneer Women of the Outback*. Henry Lawson's short stories and again Geoffrey Blainey's *Black Kettle and Full Moon* were the most prominent single works in forming this base. However many other accounts, museum displays, homestead visits and photographs were absorbed over decades.

Concerning sexuality, the punishments given to Sean Fisher and Albert Moon were probably more extreme for males than generally happened in reality; ostracism, job dismissal, a bad reputation and perhaps a bashing by male relatives seem the usual response, although information seems rare. However for women the fears for their future expressed by Alison Fisher and Rosalynd Jervis seem a common reality. With lesbianism in the Edwardian era almost everything has to be conjectured. If there are reliable sources they seem hard to find. It would be the 1920s before Freudian psychology, the emancipation of women and the publication of Radcliffe Hall's *The Wells of Loneliness* opened this topic up.

With Irish politics, a group raising funds using the methods the group in Eloura use would have almost certainly not been tolerated. As a prostitute Jenny would have been anathema to any Irish nationalists. In his *W.B. Yeats 1865-1939* Joseph Hone refers to an Irish Nationalist splinter group in America called the Triangle were involved in at least one murder, but they seemed to have been shunned by even Irish radicals. Although the Irish Free State government executed 78 Republicans during Ireland's Civil War, as far as is known no women were executed. However the attempt on Churchill's life was recently made public in the television program about the experiences of Churchill's bodyguard, and the June 1922 experiences of Jenny and Brionny in the area known as the block have a base in reality. When they join the procession of children being led through the fighting by a priest, this is based on a contemporary photograph. Ireland's troubles and civil war as presented in *Heirs to Ahmegodheho* are based predominantly in the following sources: Keith Jeffrey's *Ireland and the Great War*, the chapter on Dublin at Easter 1916 in William Weir's *Fatal Victories*, Carlton Younger's *Ireland's Civil War*, Tim Pat Coogan's & George Morrison's *The Irish Civil War* and Robert Kee's documentary series *Ireland: A Television History*. If Jenny Doyle's fanatical attitude and politics seem exaggerated investigate the life of Maude Gonne in her autobiography, *A Servant of the Queen, Maud Gonne* by Samuel Levenson, *Lucky*

Eyes and a High Heart: The Life of Maud Gonne by Nancy Cardozo or my *W.B. Yeats and Maud Gonne: Romance and Reality*.

In writing about Australia's wartime involvements the single major source is the Canberra War Memorial; the dioramas were an outstanding inspiration. Massive amounts have been written about Australia's role in the world wars and television documentaries abound; I cannot remember them all but for the home front 1914-1919 among the most important are L.L. Robson's *The First A.I.F. A study in its Recruitment*, David Stewart's & James Fitzgerald's *The Great War: Using Evidence* pages 98-149 and Ernest Scott's *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Vol. XI Australia During the War*. When Albert Moon quotes the official rules to Keith Anstee they are verbatim from that source, which also supplied a description of the imprisoned Buddhists and their behaviour. Both Scott and also Maureen Anderson in the school textbook *Retro 2* reproduced photographs are sources for what life was like in the internment camps. The latter provided inspiration for a description of Keith Anstee's living quarters. Once again conjecture and imagination have to fill in many gaps. Susanna De Vries's *Heroic Australian Women in War: From Gallipoli to Kokoda* was useful for both world wars. Roland Perry's *The Australian Light Horse*, Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years* and Patsy Adam-Smith's *The Anzacs* gave vivid and important overviews. Joan Beaumont's *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* appeared on shelves just as this work was being proof read, but still provided useful insights and information and brought about some changes.

As Robson mentions with the start of WWI several units were formed in rural NSW. This gave me the idea for the Eloura volunteers. The habit of tossing a penny between brothers or partners and the one who stayed home being considered the loser was widespread during the war. In many histories Aboriginals were supposedly banned from the Light Horse – so why did an Aboriginal Lighthorseman in Newcastle publicly appeal for the return of his stolen cavalryman's hat? After hearing that I wrote of Max bending the rules to allow Cyril Abaya and Clyde Whaley to enlist, then in 2010 I heard an ABC Radio National interview where a historian described this happening in rural areas. This was not the only conjecture that later was proved correct.

Gallipoli is one of the most written about campaigns in history. As early as 1964 historian A.L.A. Marshall wrote that more books had been written about Gallipoli than about the Marne, Waterloo or Gettysburg. It is impossible to keep up with the books still coming out on Gallipoli. In Grahame Wilson's *Bully Beef & Balderdash: Some Myths of the AIF Examined and Debunked* he describes the

April 25th landing in terms of its confusion and of how a few British trained professionals rather like Cuthbert played a prominent role in achieving as much as was gained. He also uses extensive and important primary source material to debunk the role of the Anzac as the bronzed, hardy, fearless bushman who was a natural soldier. While not denying their courage or extraordinary capacity for stoic endurance, I have tried to represent characters who are more plausible and varied than the mythic and monolithic stereotype.

I wrote of small Anzac groups holding out against sudden Turkish attacks on the first morning at Gallipoli and being overwhelmed, but only knew of this happening to Lalor's Victorian unit until I read David W. Cameron's *25th April 1915: The Day the Anzac Legend Was Born*. He describes this as happening to several others. I do not know what Mustafa Kemal was doing when he first realized the Anzacs were advancing, but I liked the image of that human falcon being at falconry and of rushed Turks being in pajamas wolfing down breakfast. The image of Ross Clarke arising from the dead was nearly edited out for clumsy symbolism, but in the middle 1960s another schoolboy had recounted this as actually happening to his grandfather at Gallipoli. A second story told a few years later was used: that of Kirby "the Illawarra man" who died as described. Ross Clarke's battlefield commission is based on two separate incidents involving corporals. A Corporal Lang ended up commanding hundreds on the first day; the other was my great uncle, James Hill, who was a corporal in the 7th Light Horse Regiment at the start of the Battleship Hill fiasco and a sergeant-major in its aftermath – and unlike Ross, reduced to private for gross swearing at an officer months later. Apart from those already mentioned the following were major sources for the Gallipoli campaign: the military records of my great uncles, Squadron Sergeant Major James Hill and Private Francis McNamara, C.E.W. Bean's *Gallipoli Diary*, Richard Reid's *Gallipoli 1915*, *A Turkish View of Gallipoli* by Kevin Fewster, Vecihi Baçarin, Hatice Hurmiiz Basarin, Ann Moyal's 1989 illustrated edition of Alan Moorehead's *Gallipoli*, the 2007 edition by Susanna and Jake de Vries of Sydney Loch's *To Hell and Back: The Banned Account of Gallipoli* by Sydney Loch, and Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* and the cinematically released documentary of the same name released about two decades later. From *Bully Beef & Balderdash* the early Chapter were useful. For details about the August offensives my written sources were two books by David W. Cameron *Sorry Lads, But the Order is Go: The August Offensive, Gallipoli 1915* and *The Battle For Lone Pine: Four Days of Hell at the Heart of Gallipoli*. The description of Kitchener among the dunes of Gallipoli is taken from a photograph of the time and also from J.B. Priestley's recollections from when he was on parade in 1914, which he mentions in *The Edwardians*.

For the campaign on the ground war in Palestine Jean Bou's *Australia's Palestine Campaign*, was excellent. Anthony Bruce's *The Last Crusade: The Palestinian Campaign in the First World War*, T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Brian Gardener's *Allenby* and sections of *Bully Beef & Balderdash* and *The Anzacs* were useful. Lawrence did complain of Australians refusal to salute. Sources useful for some sections of that campaign involving the light horse were Jill Hamilton's *First to Damascus*, Paul Daley's *Beersheeba* and Anthony Staunton's *Australian Light Horse: Palestine 1916-1918*. After writing about Ross Clarke's horse slipping on a Turkish rifle left in the sand at Romani I found a photograph of captured Turkish rifles left in the sand after that battle. Ion Idress's *The Desert Column* and started as his wartime diary but was edited for publication. It was used for the Gallipoli campaign up to the Romani campaign. The Armidale Light Horse Museum was even more invaluable than the Canberra Museum. Perry's *The Australian Light Horse* was vital here.

For the air war in Palestine the Canberra War Memorial museum was the major source, followed by F.M. Cutlack's *Vol. VIII Australian Flying Corps Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*. Many of the earlier sources for the war in Palestine contain information about the air war there. For those who think the callousness of Robert Clarke and the hearty brutality of the knights of the air is impossible or overdone find almost any primary source from the pilots and start reading. In his memoirs Von Richtofen wrote of "the artistry of the kill" and Kingsford Smith wrote of "the joy of battle" in 'War and Circuses.' Years after writing up Robert Clarke's thoughts and actions an ABC radio documentary about the life of composer and wartime flyer Arthur Benjamin revealed strong similarities in attitudes (like Robert he was a married closet bisexual) also revealed much of the WWI pilot's mentality. Adrian Hellwig's *Australian Hawk Over the Western Front: A Biography of Major R.S. Dallas DSO, DSC, C de G avec Palme* does the same.

Information about the overall effects of 1918-1922 influenza pandemic came from Richard Collier's *The Plague of the Spanish Lady: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919* a section of *Broken Nation* and John M. Barry's *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History*.

The Ukrainian Civil War contained many bizarre episodes, the prostitutes in nurses' uniforms, Hetman Skoropadsky being crowned king of Ukrainia in a circus ring, massive bandit gangs ruling like Medieval warlords and English sovereigns being the most highly rated currency, are all factual. The proclamations by

Gregoriev and Frunze are verbatim primary source material. While nobody like Ross was known to be with the Makhnovites, a Lieutenant Ward did serve as a leader with Moslem rebels fighting Bolsheviks on the southern front. There was also Major H.N.H. Williamson, a professional British Soldier who served with General Deniken on the Southern front between early 1919 and the fall of Novorossiisk in 1920. He kept a diary which was later expanded into a book edited by John Harris *Farewell to the Don: The Russian Revolution in the Journals of Brigadier H.N.H. Williamson*. Much of the atmosphere, the mentality of an officer in that situation and factual information have gone into my novel. Like Ross he was disillusioned with the White cause. Of the Australians who served in the war against the Bolsheviks maybe a few dozen were on the southern fronts and just under 140 were located on the Northern Front based in Archangel. Michael Challenger describes their Northern Front experience in *Anzacs in Archangel: The Untold Story of Australia and the Invasion of Russia 1918-1919*. Good overviews of Russia's revolution and subsequent civil war are Evan Mawdsley's *The Russian Civil War*, Voline's *The Unknown Revolution* and William Henry Chamberlin's two volume *The Russian Revolution*. Although the latter two works were written in the 1930s they have held up well against revelations that emerged since the fall of Communism and have important sections on the Makhnovite movement and the war in Ukrainia. Voline was also an important primary source for the Makhnovites. Other important sources for the Makhnovites include the eyewitnesses Emma Goldman in *My Disillusionment in Russia*, eyewitness Pytor Arshinov's account in *History of the Makhnovist Movement* and Paul Avrich's collection of primary source material *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution*. M. Palij's *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno* and on the internet *The Nestor Makhno Archive* were both useful. However all these sources have much to say about Makhno's actions, Bolshevik betrayals and White guard brutality, they give little information about what Makhnovite society was like. The detail about Makhnovites taking the Orlov horses was a virtual aside in an SBS documentary. The description of what Makhnovite units looked like is based on two photographs; one is in *Trotsky: A Documentary* by Francis Wyndham and David King, the other is from Orlando Figes' *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924*. The only reason I have not listed this work as a source is because I have not yet read it in its entirety. Makhno was as historically important as Ross Clarke says and as unnoticed as I depict. Different writers supply different accounts of how he spent his time in Paris. All agree on the poverty, ill health, drinking, and desperation. He died in the middle 1930s.

With the world of flight the Hughes-Clarke dream of an airway that would unite the empire by flying from Dublin to Dunedin resembles the real Imperial

Airways dream of London to Sydney in some aspects, but differs in others. Imperial Airways were not stuck in a red tape morass in Egypt, received no help from Allenby, were not blackballed in India and what they did achieve happened years after Eloura Airlines set up their route. Mrs Simon Hoare was the first woman known to fly from England to India. This was in 1926, this was three years after I had Brionny MacNamara doing that. While in fiction Rosalynd Clarke flew Sydney to Paris in 1927, I met the great niece of probably the first female passenger to fly from Australia to England, and this was in 1937 for the coronation of George V. The first woman to fly from England to New Zealand was the aviatrix Jean Batten in 1934 over a fifteen day flight, apparently with many delays. In October 1936 she became the first to fly directly between those points. Crossing the Tasman was considered more dangerous than crossing the Atlantic due to more erratic and extreme weather and less naval and mercantile support. The N.S.W. state government and the Australian Civil Aviation Board frequently refused permission for attempts to fly the Tasman. Robert Clarke's 1927 attempt would have been banned in reality. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans had commercial flights before the Tasman was crossed. Many of the little details concerning aviation come from assorted accounts. When Clarissa Chapman gives an alienated description of how flying affects pilot's faces she is paraphrasing an enthused account in 'First Flight to Alice, 1921' by Francis Birtles.

Ross Clarke recounts details of Imperial Airways 1932 Arabian Fort; this information comes from the investigations of Alexander Frater. In the 1980s he retraced the old Imperial Airways route and collected recollections from survivors and described many physical remnants and policies from Imperial's days in *Beyond the Blue Horizon: On the Track of Imperial Airways*. Rupert Prior's *Flying. The Golden Years: A pictorial Anthology* also covered this era, making the time come alive with its reproduced primary source material. For details about the early days of Australian flight the following written sources were useful: Norman Ellison's *Flying Matilda: Early Days of Australian Aviation*, Kylie Tennant's *Trail Blazers of the Air*, Brian Carroll *Australian Aviators: An Illustrated History*, Norman MacMillan's *Wings of Fate: Strange True Tales of the Vintage Flying Days*, and Jim Haynes & Jillian Dellit's collection of primary source material and their writings *Great Australian Aviation Stories*. John Stackhouse's *From the Dawn of Aviation: The Qantas Story 1920-1975* was useful for not only information about Qantas, its planes, routes competition and the amalgamations of 1940, but for information about the Short flying boats. It even had an original coloured 1930s cutaway of an imperial flying boat. R.G. Grant's *Flight: The Complete History* was invaluable for its technical information and diagrams, often accompanied by illustrations that made the planes vivid.

As well as the written sources real planes got the imagination going: I have seen so many that several blur or are in the subconscious. Others stand out: the Avro at Mascot, the bombers in the Canberra museum, Moree's 1945 DC3 and Kuranda's transplanted and crashed WW2 bomber.

The issues of the Great Depression and the New Guard were entwined and appear so in my novel and in my written sources. Gerald Stone's *1932: A Hell of a Year* was a major source and sections of Lowenstein's *Weevils in the Flour: An Oral History of the 1930s Depression in Australia* were useful. Other sources are Keith Amos's *The New Guard Movement 1931-1935* and Eric Campbell's *The Rallying Point: my Story of the New Guard*. The latter should be used with extreme caution. Much of Tom Caufield's speech and what is said and planned at the New Guard meeting afterwards comes verbatim from primary source documents. There was a beach fight between Communists and guardsmen, but it was in Sydney and not as violent as the version I created.

When in 1935 Ross and Alison attend a Milton first showing of a *Tarzan* film made three years before that is very likely. It often took three years for films to leave Sydney and reach NSW towns. I can remember *Doctor Zhivago* and the *The Sound of Music* both released in 1965, first playing in our town in 1968. The arrival of uncensored or under edited Hollywood prints arriving in Australia is something I heard about in the early 1960s and may be reality. I can remember some films that had scenes which were edited out on later television and DVD editions. The original version of *Tarzan* did contain a nude underwater scene as I have described it; this turned up a few years past in a television documentary about sexuality and Hollywood.

So much fiction has been created around WW2 that I strived to say something new. The execution of Papuan collaborators has (in a television documentary) only recently been revealed. Japanese raiding parties on the Australian mainland may never be revealed because it may not have happened. Rumours of Japanese landing and raiding in Australia are common, but nothing about such matters ever gets into government releases or the history books. In 1974 I heard of a Japanese commando raid on a communications base near Port Hedland. Is this why Qantas chose to fly the long distance between Ceylon and Perth rather than the much shorter flight to Port Hedland? The given reason, that the waters around Port Hedland were too choppy for flying boats to land safely sounds odd. As Murie says, why not just build a breakwater?

The sections about the blitz in Britain also rely on hearsay – in three out of

four cases on personal experience and the other was on recounted family and neighborhood memories. Although none of these British people knew each other, the overall patterns of their stories were very similar and on some points matched exactly. They all mentioned the fact of the anti-aircraft shells causing havoc on the civilian population and they all agreed that few cars were on the streets and the blackout made it dangerous to be out. They all spoke of the Blitz and the blackout as being both boring and dangerous. One woman recalled that eggs and tea were luxuries, they may have eaten one or two eggs a month. When we both simultaneously reached for the same library display book on the Blitz she said to take it because although she had read dozens of books and seen dozens of films and tv shows about England in the war, none had ever shown the reality that she had experienced. Cuthbert's musings about the reality of Dunkirk and the popular image are based on a section of Phillip Knightley's *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist and Myth Maker*. The crash of a government Lockheed Hudson in Canberra in August 1940 with government ministers aboard is factual and the story is detailed in Andrew Tinks' *Air Disaster Canberra: The Plane Crash That Destroyed a Government*. This work is also very good for details about the workings of Australia's government and air services in the 1930s and early 1940s. The detail about Menzies' preference for train travel and his reasons comes from Michael McKernan's *The Strength of a Nation: Six Years of Australians Fighting for the Nation and Defending the Homefront in WWII*. This book was of great use as an overview of Australia at war and on the home front. Others used for the same purpose were Kristin Williamson's *The Last Bastion*, Gavin Long's *The Six Years War: Australia in the 1939-1945 War* and Brian McKinlay's *1942: End of Innocence*. All three provided valuable source material, particularly in their illustrations. When Rima Clarke stands collecting in her peasant costume while a truck with anti-fascist slogans drives past her this scene combines two photographs from McKinlay's book. Much of what Zoe Carruthers recounts is from Peter Grose's *An Awkward Truth: The Bombing of Darwin February 1942*. Other parts come from many documentaries and McKinlay's work. Peter FitzSimons *Kokoda*, William Manchester's *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964* and his *Goodbye Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War* were all useful for facts and atmosphere about the war in New Guinea, as were several documentaries.

Even more useful were the recollections of our town chemist who recalled being ordered to go on patrol uphill to get fresh water for Americans, from the same stream that flowed past them. The patrols took casualties. My father was on a flight that was shot down behind enemy lines and they made their way to Dutch coast watcher's plantation only to find the Japanese had been there first and killed

her. The whole crew made it back, but my father caught malaria and tropical ulcers and they were recurrent decades later. There were no Americans involved, no Coastwatcher's daughter or native guide and no Death Falls. The fate of Robert's sons bears similarities to four brothers, the Swanns of Dapto. Distant relations to my mother, two of the four died in the Pacific War in 1943 According to local memory (but not the War office records) another was missing in action with the Canadian paratroopers at Normandy. I can remember the death of the last brother in a freakish accident at a motor rally around late 1959 or early 1960 and the family talk about the Swann family.

Horace Clarke and his 1941 experiences with the Communist Party are almost the exact opposite of my own in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I felt then and now that Communism was extreme and impractical and told them so - in a brash butting in manner that in recollection embarrasses. Even for a teenager my manners were way out of line. In response and debate they were polite and considerate. Acting that way in 1941 would have probably got different responses.

The rules about rationing, transport and collaboration are on the books in reality but a Swiss Airline in Australia in 1944 and the Eloura Trial are total fiction. How often such breaking rationing rules led to court cases seems uncertain. There was one publicized Australian treason trial, but this was in Western Australia and involved a few individuals loyal to Japan.

The postwar section is largely based on recollected stories and personal memories. Every Spanish Civil War survivor I met in Australia recalled how the government banned known Republican veterans but let Spanish fascists in. In Oriana Fallaci's *If the Sun Dies* she describes how the early Nazi migrants were brought to the USA and made acceptable to the public by being specialists who would bring essential expertise to the space race project. Just as the American government used the space race as an excuse to bring in the Nazis, so the Australian government used the Snowy Mountains scheme. In Australia thousands of Axis veterans flooded in and had a way of becoming foremen and bosses, twelve out of fifteen such became foremen, as I can well remember. In that respect Francisco Dreutti's factory experiences resemble mine from the late 1960s till 1980. The 1946 visit to a refugee centre by Clarissa Dreutti was mine backdated about twelve years.

While writing this note a *Sydney Morning Herald* obituary appeared for the last captain of what had been the last of Qantas/Imperial Australian commercial flying boats. The boat was broken up for scrap at the end of 1947.

People, organisations, places and events must be fictional imaginative creations, but sometimes realities can inspire or initiate the creative process.

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