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A Captive Audience? The Reading Lives of Australian Prisoners of War, 1914–1918

Edmund G. C. King

The lived experience of prisoners of war remains one of the least explored realms of First World War history. Despite the unprecedented numbers of captives that the conflict produced, captivity never became part of the cultural memory of the war. It remains, as Heather Jones has recently put it, a 'missing paradigm' in First World War studies.[1] The absence of the prisoner of war experience from mainstream narratives about the war has, arguably, been especially acute in writings about Australian and New Zealand forces. In many ways, this is not surprising. The number of ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) troops captured in the First World War was small in both absolute and proportional terms. Unlike, say, the Austro-Hungarian army, for which the number of captives taken amounted to more than one in three of the total number of troops mobilised during the war, Australian forces lost only 4044 servicemen captured between 1914 and 1918.[2] The experience of captivity in an ANZAC context was, therefore, very much a minority one. Yet there are also ideological and cultural reasons for the marginal status of ANZAC prisoners of war in post-war writing. Life behind the wire, with its boredom, lack of activity, and its insinuation of shame and defeat, bears little relation to the 'digger' legend that has become entrenched in the decades since the conflict. The experiences of ANZAC prisoners of war seem far removed from the heroism and vigorous physicality associated with the stereotypical ANZAC soldier.[3] Yet, if we are to rescue historical fact from fiction – to recover, in the words of Dale Blair, the 'reality of the experience from which the legend was hewn' – we need to critically address the emphases and lacunae within the traditional ANZAC narrative.[4] Revisiting the absent figure of the ANZAC prisoner is one way of doing this. Indeed, wartime captivity in many ways represents a *negation* of the highly masculinised image of soldierly identity that the dominant narrative insists upon. Held captive, unable to alter the course of the war in any direct way, reliant on mental resilience and distraction rather than physical bravado for survival, prisoners endured a very different war to the version that would subsequently be constructed in public memory.

However, the archival traces that ANZAC prisoners of war have left behind provide insights that extend beyond the field of military history. Prisoners and civilian internees were not only subject to the scrutiny and surveillance of the nation states that held them. They were also the objects of large-scale state and philanthropic relief efforts. Over the course of the war, huge quantities of food, tobacco, clothing, recreational supplies and books were sent to prison camps and holding facilities behind the lines.[5] The Australian Red Cross initially set aside £10,000 per month for prisoner of war relief, but found by early 1917 that demand was greatly exceeding supply. By war's end, they estimated that the cost of feeding and clothing Australian POWs would exceed £15,000 per month.[6] In September 1917 alone, the Australian Red Cross's London Bureau distributed 15,796 food parcels and 615 packets of clothing and other supplies among the 2924 Australians at that point held prisoner in Germany and Turkey.[7] For charity organisations with religious roots and affiliations, such as the Red Cross and the YMCA in particular, the war was an 'unparalleled opportunity' for extending their influence and helping to promote 'correct' morality among those on active service.[8] Assembling libraries for prison camps and sending packages of books to individual prisoners formed an important part of this wider moral campaign, in which the soldier-reader was seen as a potential site of moral and cultural cultivation.[9] As YMCA worker John Wear Burton noted in an account written after the war,

> Our Australian boys are great readers, and the Y.M.C.A. provided liberally for their needs. In every hut there was an excellent library of general reading matter, and the latest papers and magazines were always available. It was felt, however, that there was a considerable section of men who would appreciate books of a more thoughtful and religious character, and hence the 'Quiet Room Library' was initiated. Many testimonies have been received from the men to the value of the department.[10]

The failure of the British and Australian library professions to effectively mobilise for war only intensified this connection between book provision for soldiers and moral activism. Inward-looking and preoccupied with their own survival in the face of debilitating budget cuts, British librarians left the formation of libraries for soldiers to the voluntary sector.[11] In Australia, the book and newspaper stock for camp and troopship libraries relied heavily on public donations, and these were coordinated by local patriotic societies and other charities. The Australian Red Cross Society set up a Book Depot to solicit donations and purchase newspapers and magazines for soldiers, but ultimately devolved responsibility for it to the Victoria branch of the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship.[12] The Victoria

League, the product of Boer War-era patriotic enthusiasm, had operated ‘bush libraries’ for isolated regions during the years leading up to 1914.[13] On war’s declaration, it quickly became an active disseminator of propaganda for the war effort, distributing over a million pro-war pamphlets within the Empire and to America.[14] Its assumption of responsibility for the Book Depot therefore had clear lines of continuity with the League’s earlier activities, and shows how a pre-existing, voluntary initiative could be mobilised and expanded for war. The *Annual Reports* of the Victoria League of South Australia record with obvious pride the volume and transnational scope of their wartime operations. In 1916, 20,800 copies of South Australian papers went to hospitals, clubs and associations in Britain, Egypt, South Africa and India.[15] A year later, the report describes South Australian newspapers being distributed to AIF troops in Paris, and the dispatch of ‘a hundred novels … by post to Egypt in response to urgent request’.[16] At various times, the Australian YMCA and the League of Loyal Women also collected books for soldiers, adding further layers of complexity to an already crowded relief effort.[17] This strain of enthusiastic but slightly chaotic voluntary enthusiasm crossed over into the running of the troop libraries themselves. Non-professionals like chaplains were often left to manage library operations, something for which most were wholly untrained, and the results could be haphazard.[18]

The various tensions at work here – between amateurism and the library profession; religious and moral entrepreneurship and the reading cultures of the secular world—also affected the two main charities responsible for sending books to British and Commonwealth prisoners of war: the Camps’ Library and the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational). Although the Camps’ Library specialised in the provision of light or recreational literature, it saw itself as having a culturally improving mission. The role of the scheme, as one contemporary article put it, was not simply to amuse prisoner-readers, but to ‘try and inculcate or gradually cultivate in many of them a love for good literature, and a taste for wider and more general and varied reading, which may be of pleasure or benefit to them in later life’.[19] The British Prisoners of War Book Scheme, on the other hand, attempted to provide a full-scale reference library service to soldiers in captivity. The object of the programme was to protect prisoners from ‘mental deterioration’, and ensure that ‘time, which might otherwise have been frittered away … should be usefully employed to their ultimate advantage’.[20] A pamphlet distributed to prisoner of war camps appeals to prisoners’ sense that their lives were simply on hold and advocates study under the scheme as a means of self-improvement:

> On application … almost any book (except magazines, novels, and other light literature) on any subject will be supplied *gratis* to any British Prisoner of War for the purpose of serious study.
>
> Seize this opportunity to cultivate your mind, improve your knowledge, and, at the same time alleviate the tedium of captivity.[21]

As these passages indicate, the selection of books and other printed material sent overseas was by no means random. There were strong utilitarian and moral imperatives guiding book selection and the provision of library services to troops in general. The Camps' Library 'carefully winnowed' its stock of donations before sending them abroad, and Australian Red Cross workers were sufficiently concerned for the morality of their charges that they carefully removed any cards showing 'players' girls' from cigarette packets destined for the camps.[22] Although they mostly provided books to order, the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme also included in parcels the occasional unsolicited religious or philosophical book. These items, which might bear titles like *Reflections* or *Meditations*, were intended for evening reading, and their recipients were encouraged to donate them to the camp library after finishing them.[23] As these examples show, the archives of the various national Red Cross and YMCA societies can provide revealing insights into how charity organisations viewed books. Implements of religion and culture, their provision to prisoners of war and other soldiers formed one small front in a wider moral and cultural battle.

What evidence is there, however, for the reception of these efforts? Were 'Our Australian boys', as John Wear Burton insisted, indeed 'great readers'? Did they respond appreciatively to religious tracts when they were made available to them? Were the efforts of the Camps' Library at all successful in cultivating a 'love for good literature' in the inmates of German and Turkish prisoner of war camps? There is evidence that some ANZAC soldiers at least were more religiously observant than the post-war image of the anti-authoritarian larrikin soldier would indicate. A Church of England chaplain attached to an AIF reinforcement unit in 1917, for instance, reported that stocks of 'hymn sheets and religious pamphlets' on outgoing troopships often '[ran] out due to demand'. Accordingly, he counselled, 'one cannot have too much Church literature' on board 'as it is read with avidity'.[24] Another minister reported 'hundreds of men present' at one evensong in Brisbane camp, a number of whom responded to the service with a spontaneous round of 'For he's a jolly good fellow'. Giving out prayer books to soldiers who had sometimes never held one

before, he resolved to 'teach the men to use their Prayer-books because that will be of more use to them later on'.[25]

Evidence of reading by individual troops (particularly prisoners of war) can be harder to find. Keeping diaries in a prisoner of war camp was often a dangerous practice, and any partially completed diaries would be subject to search and confiscation. Australian soldier George W. D. Bell only managed to hold onto his diary notes because he hid them in empty tubes of toothpaste. Expanded after the war, they are a grim testament of starvation, sickness and Bell's own bitter hatred of his captors. References to books are scarce: indeed, they are most notable for their absence or insufficiency. Bell notes on one occasion that 'reading matter is still unprocurable'; on another that some German newspapers 'smuggled' into the camp hospital contained 'distorted' news about the progress of the war.[26] Recovering from his wounds in a German hospital ward, he wrote of the mental strain of illness and captivity, and how this might be relieved by books, if only there were any to hand:

> If one could obtain a few books to occupy one's mind the intense monotony and starvation would not be nearly so harassing. Unfortunately literature is unprocurable. Not even French or German newspapers are allowed in the wards. Life is eked out in pain mentally and physically day and night.[27]

Reconstructed narratives of captivity written post-war are even less likely than contemporary diaries to preserve detailed evidence of reading experiences. All surviving Australian prisoners of war were interviewed about their experiences on returning to Allied custody, and transcripts of these are preserved in the Australian War Memorial archives in Canberra. However, most of these accounts focus on matters like food, individual instances of ill-treatment by guards and the circumstances of capture. In many of these, the experience of captivity itself is largely a blank, months or years passed over in brief sentences like 'I was in Karlsruhe camp for a period of six months, Freiburg in Baden for 14 months'.[28]

The surviving archival traces of the Camps' Library and Prisoners of War Book Scheme are similarly thin. There is no central repository for Camps' Library papers and the Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational) archives have likewise largely disappeared.[29] Archival sources relating to British Red Cross Society book provision for prisoners are similarly untraceable. Australia, however, is an exception to this rule. Many records series that were destroyed by the British Red Cross offices after the war, such as those relating to

the Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau, were retained by their Australian equivalents.[30] The fortuitous survival of a large tranche of records relating to the Australian Red Cross Prisoner of War Department means that detailed data on the reading tastes of hundreds of ordinary Australian soldiers is still recoverable.[31]

As soon as the Red Cross was notified that an Australian soldier had been captured, the secretary of its Prisoner of War Department, Mary Elizabeth Chomley, sent him a form letter. The letter informed him that the Red Cross would send food parcels three times a fortnight; an initial parcel of underclothing; tobacco; and, if needed, a new uniform. Towards the bottom of the letter, Chomley noted that, 'Books of an educational character may be had free of charge' from the British-run Prisoners of War Book Scheme, but that she and the other workers in the office would 'be very glad to select any books that you wish bought'.[32] As the correspondence in her files shows, many soldiers jumped at this offer. In July 1918, Private Albert Clare of 51 Battalion wrote,

> You ask me if I am on a working party. Yes, I am, but for all that I have a fair amount of spare time, and when you ask me whether I am fond of reading or not, I don't think I would be over stating the fact if I said that in civil life reading was 'The salt of my life'. D'you know that the lack of reading matter here has been one of my chief complaints. You know one's brain – that is the little I have, gets very rusty for want of use, so I am going to ask you to try and send me a couple of books.[33]

Paramatta native Lance Corporal W. K. Hume echoed Clare's implicit linkage of reading and mental health. 'Many thanks for your promise of more books', he wrote. 'Reading, for me, is the one past-time [sic] which relieves the endless thinking.'[34] Many soldiers asked for a portion of their pay to be set aside each month to buy books, which would then be sent on to them via booksellers and merchants that had licenses to export goods to Germany.[35] Sales receipts among her papers show that Chomley mainly relied on the Times Book Club, but she also ordered through a number of other booksellers. Chappell & Co., music publishers, sent at least a dozen parcels of music scores and song albums to Australian prisoners of war in Germany between July and September 1918.[36] The bookshop of the *British Australasian* journal in London sent Australian titles, and the Civil Service Co-operative Society and Harrods forwarded a number of parcels of light fiction. When one officer apologised for the trouble he had put her to in requesting books, Chomley assured him that,

> You need never mind asking me, as it is the one excuse I have for getting out of the office for a little while … I always enjoy my fortnightly excursion to the Times Book Club. Australian books I now get from the British Australasian – they have quite a nice book department on their new premises, and I feel like I am supporting home industries, as the Editor is my cousin.[37]

As the letters from Corporal Hume and Private Clare show, much of Chomley's correspondence casts a revealing light on the inner lives of Australian prisoners of war and the role that reading played during their captivity. The descriptions they provide of their mental state – forgetfulness, irritability, what one soldier called the 'incessant frenzy' of obsessive thought patterns – show that many were suffering from anxiety and depression, referred to at the time as 'barbed wire disease'.[38] Boredom was a constant threat to sanity.[39] In November 1917, A. M. Young of 13 Battalion asked Chomley to send him 'some reading matter', as 'I am a great reader and the absence of books makes the time drag. Would you also send me a pack of cards.'[40] Having something to read meant that a prisoner had a way of occupying time, at least in the short term. Letters and books also represented an emotional and physical connection with the outside world. As psychologist P. H. Newman noted in a study of Second World War British captives, letters – and especially letters from women – often became fetishised objects in prison camp. As he observed, 'every word of letters is read and sifted. Hours are spent in making an elaborate … filing system for … mail, and statistics are kept of its arrival.'[41]

There is abundant evidence in Chomley's correspondence that her letters could mean a great deal to individual prisoners. Although Chomley was a professional woman and a senior bureaucrat, much of her incoming correspondence from the camps represents her work according to traditional gender roles. She becomes a 'mother', 'godmother' or even a 'sweetheart'.[42] Soldiers sent her their portraits (which she put up on her office walls), asking for hers in return.[43] One soldier wrote to her saying how much he appreciated her 'informal style', saying that he had circulated the letter among his cellmates, and that they had all commented that it was 'just like a letter from a personal friend'.[44] Many prisoners sought to bring these textual exchanges to a satisfying emotional conclusion after the war by visiting Chomley in London after their release. In 1919, the journal of the Queensland division of the Australian Red Cross noted that the Prisoner of War Department offices in London had 'been literally besieged' by repatriated Australian prisoners wanting to introduce themselves in person and thank Red Cross staff for their assistance during captivity.[45]

In their letters, and in their requests for books, many of the prisoners appear anxious to assert a personal identity independent of their captive status. A number of prisoners mention careers, either interrupted by the war or merely projected, and stress that they did not simply read for amusement, but to prepare themselves for life after release. This appeal to status in the civilian world through reading choice is especially marked in letters from middle-class men who had served (and were captured) in the ranks. After giving Chomley a long list of his favourite authors, Private F. D. Pollard wrote, 'If I seem to ask too much, remember that I am a University Student and teacher, and would ask perhaps further a book or two about scientific work, or perhaps [a] volume of 'Nature' – anything to while away the hours'.[46] Private W. H. Turner asked for 'a book on Geography of the world, including all countries, industries, exports, imports, areas, currents, winds, and everything concerning geography. Please secure good one … I am a teacher.'[47] A shrewd and sensitive reader herself, Chomley was fully aware of the tensions that could exist between civilian class and military rank in a volunteer army.[48] As she wrote to a senior officer in the Australian Expeditionary Force,

> I am afraid that the NCO's and men have a much harder time than the Officers, as [German camp authorities] draw a sharp line between the classes. It is very hard on some of the Privates, who do not belong to the rank from which they are supposed to come.[49]

Chomley empathised strongly with the predicament that these men found themselves in, and, being exposed to such a large volume of letters, was adept at reading between the lines and perceiving the reality of captive life beneath. As she wrote to one correspondent who described the conditions in an officer's lager, 'I can well understand the unutterable boredom of it'.[50] To a prisoner who described to her in detail the library at Altdamm Lager, she wrote,

> The list of Authors you give, certainly sounds comprehensive and very fascinating. Do you feel you can really apply yourself to solid reading or do you feel apathetic or too restless? The want of quiet would be against serious study I should think.[51]

As her words here indicate, Chomley had a quite different set of preconceptions about the role of reading in captivity to the operators of the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme. While they, and indeed some of their charges, saw prison camp as a kind of British public school – spartan, certainly, but imbued with the kinds of rigours that might encourage

learning – Chomley expected that most prisoners saw reading as a temporary escape only.[52] As she wrote to one prisoner, 'I suppose you want something light and amusing'.[53] Prisoners who wrote asking for Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life* were rebuffed until repeated requests forced her to reconsider. 'I have always rather avoided sending it, as I thought it was not a sufficient change from your own experiences', she explained to one requestor.[54] Other considerations could also influence Chomley's response to certain requests. When Sergeant R. J. Camden asked for some Marie Corelli titles, Chomley replied, 'We will choose the books and I hope you will get what you like. I will not send you anything by Miss Corelli, because she has just been fined £50 for hoarding food, and I think it is disgraceful.'[55] The booksellers' invoices in her files give an ample illustration of what Chomley thought would appeal to the average prisoner of war camp reader instead. Many of the parcels sent through booksellers contained copies of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*. Other titles sent to multiple prisoners include *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, *Three Men in a Boat*, *Ivanhoe*, Mabel Quiller-Couch's *Anxious Audrey* and Mrs. Aeneas Gunn's *We of the Never Never*. By the last months of the war, requests were coming in at such a rate that the Australian Red Cross set up its own official prisoners of war book scheme in place of Chomley's voluntary effort.[56] Funding for this was provided largely by donations from individual battalions in the AIF.[57] However, the war ended before the first books bought under the new programme could be distributed.[58]

Despite Chomley's own attempts to direct her readers, her correspondence provides a vast archive of individual book requests. What sort of books did prisoners ask to read? Private F. D. Pollard asked for 'any novels by Baroness Orczy, H. Rider Haggard, Hall Caine, Allen Raine, Joseph Hocking', and, again, 'Marie Corelli'. Private A. J. Sexton wrote to report the safe arrival of 'The "Comedies of Shakespeare"', assuring Chomley that he was now 'spending every leisure moment … in close communion with the Immortal Bard'. Private Roland Carter requested *She* and *King Solomon's Mines* by 'Rider Hagets'[sic], while Private P. A. Haslam, writing on behalf of his working party, wrote that, 'our favourite authors are Rider Haggard, Gene Stratton, J. and C. Williamson, William Le Quex, Clark Russell, and some of our Australian writers, Steele Rudd and Dyson'.[59] Indeed, repeated requests for Australian national literature are one of the most notable features of the letters. If the desire of many young soldiers to fall back on the reading habits of their boyhood – 'Rider Hagets' – supports Tim Dolin's contention that early 20th-century Australian readers were largely 'indifferent to the boundaries of nation-states', and indeed to Australian literature

itself, the self-conscious literary nationalism of many of Chomley's other soldier-correspondents undercuts it.[60] If, as Martin Crotty has written, early Australian nationalism was based on an ideal of 'bush' masculinity that rejected 'urban life and intellectualism … as feminine', that rejection evidently did not extend to the act of reading itself.[61] After listing several of his favourite authors whose books he hoped the Red Cross would send him, including Mrs. Henry Wood and George Eliot as well as Ralph Boldrewood and Steele Rudd, Sergeant R. J. Camden wrote, 'It give me great pleasure … to know that a man's interests are being looked after'.[62] Reading, Camden's letter suggests, could still be a masculine pursuit, and Camden was apparently anxious to see his own nationality reflected in his reading matter.

As the titles sought by Chomley's correspondents suggest, importing Australian books into prison camp could be a way of asserting a particularly Australian strain of manhood and engendering a sense of group belonging. The works of Marcus Clarke, Steele Rudd and Banjo Patterson represented, for many soldiers, tokens of Australian identity, and reading them – particularly aloud – was a way of performing Australian-ness. Corporal L. A. Foster illustrates the connection between reading choice and the ideals of 'bush' masculinity when he thanks Chomley for a parcel of Australian books, noting that 'you could not possibly have selected anything more suited to my taste. I am truly Australian and love the bush. Although I was living in the city when I enlisted [sic].'[63] Private D. Greenlees asked for 'one book by A. B. Paterson and I think entitled The Man from Snowy River' and remarked that he had memorised 'nearly all Adam Lindsay Gordon's poems now' from a collection that Chomley had sent him earlier, at Sagan Lager in Silesia. He requested one further title: *For the Term of His Natural Life*, which he said he had 'read once in the West', and which he presumably hoped would evoke a corresponding sense of remembered place.

Perhaps the most potent venue for the display of national distinctiveness through literature was the camp concert. As Sergeant R. I. McCurley explained in a letter to Chomley, the poems and literatures of many nations were recited at these events, and he accordingly asked for some volumes of 'Banjo Patterson' and Henry Lawson to be sent out, so that 'our dear old land' could be 'represented'.[64] Another prisoner of war requested several books by Australian poets 'for some of the English boys here who I am sorry to say (but not surprised) have never heard of them'.[65] The fact that a number of these soldiers' requests are coupled with inquiries about obtaining the AIF 'rising sun' badge and numerals for display on their

new uniforms does not seem coincidental. National literature could be a mark of belonging no less distinctive than regimental badge and uniform, and Australian soldiers were clearly keen to display these marks of distinction through conspicuous acts of literary consumption and performance.

In a 1994 interview surveying the then emerging field of book history, Robert Darnton observed that books, ‘by their very nature … refuse to respect national boundaries’.[66] The book trade ensures that texts percolate across borders, finding reading audiences far beyond the nation states where they were first written.[67] The Australian Red Cross’s informal book scheme is an example of this process in action. Drawing on both book-trade connections in London and the complex systems of charitable relief that developed during the First World War, Chomley and her staff were able to send books behind the lines to hundreds of Australian prisoners of war in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. While this textual traffic was transnational in nature, the tastes of the readers it supplied were to a large extent grounded in *national* literature. It was Australian authors that many of these prisoners of war demanded, and the letters they sent to the Red Cross show how important tropes drawn from what has subsequently become known as the ‘bush legend’ were to their sense of identity. Most German prison camps were radically mixed spaces, forcing prisoners from many nations to live in close proximity to each other, but these social dynamics often led to resistance. Prisoners from similar backgrounds tended to gravitate towards each other, forming smaller mono-cultural groups within the wider collective. A group identity based on unit or national belonging could thus emerge as a reaction to the presence of other linguistic or national groupings in camp. The demand that AIF prisoners displayed for Australian literature might be read as a way of demonstrating this kind of group identity. National literature could provide a textual refuge in a confusing environment, a small island of the familiar in which prisoners could forget their captive status and – momentarily at least – ignore the foreign geographical spaces that surrounded them.

<en-group type=endnotes>

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2Aaron Pegram, ‘Informing the Enemy: Australian Prisoners and German Intelligence on the Western Front, 1916–1918’, *First World War Studies*, 4:2 (2013), 167–84 (p. 168).

3Robin Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1987), p. 20.

4Dale Blair, *Dinkum Diggers: An Australian Battalion at War* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2001), p. 16.

5See Heather Jones, 'Prisoners of War', in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume 2, The State*, ed. by Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 266–90 (pp. 273–74).

6J. A. Murdoch to Helen Ferguson, 27 July 1917, South Australian Red Cross Papers, State Library of South Australia (hereafter SLSA), SRG 76/16.

7Extract from Report of London Bureau, September 1917, Australian Red Cross, SLSA, SRG 76/16.

8See Kenneth Steuer, *Pursuit of an 'Unparalleled Opportunity': The American YMCA and Prisoner of War Diplomacy among the Central Power Nations during World War I, 1914–1923* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), Chapter 8.

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13Victoria League of South Australia, *Annual Report* (1914–1915), p. 7.

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15Victoria League of South Australia, *Annual Report* (1916–1917), p. 6.

16Victoria League of South Australia, *Annual Report* (1917–1918), p. 6.

17Victoria League of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 14 September 1915, SLSA, SRG 26/2, p. 44.

18See Jane Potter's chapter in this volume for an example.

19'The Camps' Library', *British Prisoner of War*, 1 (September 1918), 101–02 (p. 102).

20Alfred T. Davies, 'Light through Prison Bars: Some Adventures in Wartime Education', unpublished type-script, National Library of Wales, GB 0210 ALFTDAVIES, pp. 134, 124.

21Alfred T. Davies, *Student Captives: An Account of the Work of the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational)* (Leicester: Stevens & Son, 1917), p. 19.

22'The Camps' Library', p. 101; Mary Elizabeth Chomley to Regimental Sergeant Major John F. Bannigan, 17 September 1917, AWM/1DRL/0428/10/6.

23Davies, 'Light through Prison Bars', p. 78.

24H. Boultbee to Canon D. J. Garland, February 1917, State Library of Queensland (hereafter SLQ) OM 71–51, box 8809.

25Canon D. J. Garland to C. W. Tomkins, 18 January 1916, SLQ OM 71–51, box 8809.

26George W. D. Bell, 'Diary: Thirteen Months Captivity in Hunland 14 April 1917–14 May 1918', Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, ML MSS 893, 4–11 May 1917.

27Ibid., 21 May 1917.

282nd/Lt. Jack Ingram, repatriation statement, AWM/30/B13.8. Ingram made repeated use of Chomley's book provision services, but no trace of these exchanges was recorded in his post-war repatriation statement.

29Davies, 'Light through Prison Bars', p. 11.

30See Eric F. Schneider, 'The British Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau: A Case of Truth-Telling in the Great War', *War in History*, 4:3 (1997), 296–315 (p. 298).

31Amanda Laugesen, *'Boredom is the Enemy': The Intellectual and Imaginative Lives of Australian Soldiers in the Great War and Beyond* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 113–16.

32M. E. Chomley, [form letter, 1917], AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

33Private Albert E. Clare to M. E. Chomley, 13 July 1918, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20, folder 2.

34Lance Corporal W. K. Hume to M. E. Chomley, 16 August 1917, AWM/1DRL/0428/98/2.

35One who did so was Sgt. R. J. Camden, who allotted 6p. per day for 'sending books, etc.' See Sgt. R. J. Camden to M. E. Chomley, 21 October 1918, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

36Chappell & Co. to The Hon. Sec. Miss Chomley, 27 September 1918, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20, folder 10.

37M. E. Chomley to 2nd/Lt Jack Ingram, 5 July 1918, AWM/1DRL/0428/100/5.

38Bell, 'Diary', 10–17 February 1918. On the link between captivity and anxiety disorders, see Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'British Prisoners of War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21:2 (2010), 163–83 (pp. 167–68).

39For a trans-historical account of boredom and military life, see Bård Mæland and Paul Otto Brunstad, *Enduring Military Boredom: From 1750 to the Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

40Private A. M. Young to M. E. Chomley, 2 December 1917, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

41P. H. Newman, 'The Prisoner-of-War Mentality: Its Effect After Repatriation', *British Medical Journal*, 4330 (1944), 8–10 (p. 9).

42For examples of these language choices, see Alice Grant Rosman, 'Godmothers to Prisoners of War', *Adelaide Advertiser* (29 August 1917).

43There are over 400 portrait photographs sent from prison camps in the Chomley collection. See <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P03236.323>, accessed 28 April 2013.

44Private Albert E. Clare to M. E. Chomley, 13 July 1918, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

45*Red Cross Journal* [Australian Red Cross Society, Queensland Division], 4 (1919), p. 265.

46Private F. D. Pollard to M. E. Chomley, 5 November 1917, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

47Private W. H. Turner to M. E. Chomley, 15 January 1916, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

48For further comment on these tensions, see Clive Hughes, 'The New Armies', in *A Nation in Arms: The British Army in the First World War*, ed. by Ian F. W. Beckett and Keith Simpson (1985; repr. Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2004), p. 108.

49M. E. Chomley to Major Coghill, 5 February 1917, AWM/1DRL/0428/132/6.

50M. E. Chomley to Captain Charles Mills, 5 February 1917, AWM/1DRL/0428/132/6.

51M. E. Chomley to Private J. E. Kevans, 28 October 1918, AWM/1DRL/0428/111/4.

52On the analogy between prison camp and public school, see *In Ruhleben: Letters from a Prisoner to His Mother*, ed. by Douglas Sladen (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1917), p. 11.

53M. E. Chomley to Private P. A. Haslam, 11 February 1918, AWM/1DRL/0428/87/7.

54M. E. Chomley to Private D. Greenlees, 28 October 1918, AWM/1DRL/0428/80/3.

55M. E. Chomley to Sergeant R. J. Camden, 11 January 1918, AWM/1DRL/0428/31/7.

56See the files in AWM/18/9982/1/6.

57See M. E. Chomley to Private D. Greenlees, 28 October 1918, AWM/1DRL/0428/80/3.

58Laugesen, *'Boredom is the Enemy'*, p. 118.

59AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20, folder 2.

60Tim Dolin, 'The Secret Reading Life of Us', in *Readers, Writers, Publishers: Essays and Poems*, ed. by Brian Matthew (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2004), pp. 115–34 (p. 128).

61Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity, 1870–1920* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2001), p. 22.

62Sgt. R. J. Camden to M. E. Chomley, 21 October 1918, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

63Corporal L. A. Foster to M. E. Chomley, 15 May 1918, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

64AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20, folder 2.

65Private J. W. Hobson to M. E. Chomley, 1 May 1918, AWM/1DRL/0615/749/19/20.

66Robert Darnton, 'Book History, the State of Play: An Interview with Robert Darnton', *SHARP News*, 3 (1994), 2–4 (p. 2).

67Sydney J. Shep, 'Books Without Borders: The Transnational Turn in Book History', in *Books Without Borders, Volume 1: The Cross-National Dimension in Print Culture*, ed. by Robert Fraser and Mary Hammond (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 13–37 (pp. 22; 33–34).

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