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978-1-107-02067-2 - *Anzac Journeys: Returning to the Battlefields of World War II*

Bruce Scates

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# ANZAC JOURNEYS

Australians have been making pilgrimages to the battlefields and cemeteries of World War II since the 1940s, from the jungles of New Guinea and South-East Asia to the mountains of Greece and the deserts of North Africa. They travel in search of the stories of lost loved ones, to mourn the dead and to come to grips with the past.

With characteristic empathy, Bruce Scates charts the history of pilgrimages to Crete, Kokoda, Sandakan and Hellfire Pass. He explores the emotional resonance that these sites have for those who served and those who remember. Based on surveys, interviews with pilgrims, extensive fieldwork and archival research, *Anzac Journeys* offers insights into the culture of loss and commemoration and the hunger for meaning so pivotal to the experience of pilgrimage. It shows how the stories of HMAS *Sydney* and Bomber Command, and the historic battles of the 2nd AIF, have loaned new life to the Anzac legend.

Richly illustrated with full-colour maps and photographs of pilgrimages from the 1940s to today, *Anzac Journeys* makes an important and moving contribution to Australian military history.

**Bruce Scates** holds the Chair of History and Australian Studies in the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University.

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# ANZAC JOURNEYS

Returning to the battlefields of World War II

BRUCE SCATES

with

Alexandra McCosker, Keir Reeves,  
Rebecca Wheatley, Damien Williams



CAMBRIDGE  
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who recovered the experience of Australians at war*

*All royalties from the sale of this book are donated  
to the Australian Red Cross, supporting its humanitarian work  
among the victims of war*

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Victoria and Moira Drew at the Australian Red Cross. Anzac pilgrimage is an international project, and the holdings of the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Auckland War Memorial and the Kippenberger Military Archive and Research Library (all in Aotearoa/New Zealand), the British Library, the National Archives, Kew, the Imperial War Museum, London, and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives (LHCMA) at King's College, London, were also consulted. The assistance of the National Institute of Education, Singapore, the Royal Returned Services Association (Aotearoa/New Zealand), and various Australian embassies and diplomatic missions is gratefully acknowledged. London has long been the base for Australian pilgrimages to Europe; thanks are due to Colonel John Hutcheson AM, Army Adviser Australian Defence Staff, Australian High Commission and Professor Carl Bridge, director of the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies at King's College, London, for hosting many of these journeys.

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*Anzac Journeys* has been a scholarly collaboration. Bruce Scates is the principal author of this project – he directed research, structured the book, completed the majority of the fieldwork and researched and wrote most of it. But this project would not have been possible were it not for the key role played by early career historians, namely PhD candidates Alexandra McCosker and Rebecca Wheatley, Dr Damien Williams and the second Chief Investigator on this Australian Research Council grant, Dr Keir Reeves. Alexandra McCosker played a major part in writing and researching chapter 10 (on Kokoda); Rebecca Wheatley chapter 7 (on Greece and Crete); Damien Williams chapters 8 and 9 (on HMAS *Sydney* and Bomber Command); and Keir Reeves – in association with Damien Williams – chapter 11 (on Darwin). Bruce Scates provided extensive commentary in these chapters also, especially concerning the historical dimensions of pilgrimage and devised (with Damien Williams) the map commentary for each chapter. Rebecca Wheatley was principal research assistant (particularly in the time-consuming and difficult task of transcribing interviews) and in 2011 was joined in this role by Damien Williams. All chapters were circulated and discussed, all participated in the gathering of archival and oral testimony and all share in the co-authorship of this work. Keir Reeves' role in fieldwork and research in Europe and Asia was critical to the success of this endeavour.

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# MONEY, MEASUREMENT AND TERMINOLOGY

To avoid anachronism, this book retains imperial units of measurement.

## Money

Australia used pounds, shillings and pence for much of the period covered by this book. In Victoria in 1950 the average yearly wage for a male factory worker was just over £296 while a manager or a clerk was paid around £433 a year. There were 12 pennies (d) in one shilling (s) and 20 shillings in one pound (£). A guinea was £1 1s. When Australia adopted decimal currency in 1966, \$2 was equal to about £1.

## Measurement

The relevant metric equivalents to imperial measures are as follows:

- 1 inch = 25.4 mm
- 1 foot = 0.3048 m
- 1 yard = 0.914 m
- 1 mile = 1.61 km
- 1 acre = 0.405 ha
- 1 pound = 0.4536 kg
- 1 stone = 6.35 kg
- 1 ton = 1.016 t

## Terminology

The Returned and Services League has a long and complex genealogy. To simplify the narrative, the Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA) and the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) have been referred to throughout the text as the RSL. ANZAC was originally the acronym of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, but it also came to represent a place (the site where Australian and New Zealand troops landed at Gallipoli), a group of servicemen (initially those who served in the campaign) and a mythology or legend. In each case the meaning of Anzac is contextualised by the narrative to follow. Australian and New Zealand troops re-formed as the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps in Greece in 1941 and often addressed themselves as Anzacs in other theatres of war. The Australian Office of the Imperial War Graves Commission adopted the title Anzac Agency in the 1940s. Mindful of these historical continuities, this book takes the title *Anzac Journeys*.