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“We refused to work until we had better means for handling the bodies”. Discipline at the Australian Graves Detachment*

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ABSTRACT

The Australian Graves Detachment, a unit over 11 hundred men, was formed in March 1919 on the Western Front. Its mission was to exhume and re-bury the war dead in a small area of Northern France where the Australian Imperial Force had fought. While war memorialization and grief are significant fields of research in First World War studies, much remains to be written with regard to the processes of burying the millions of dead. Little, for example, has been written about the men who undertook the daunting tasks of exhuming and burying. This article seeks to contribute to this emerging area of inquiry by exploring how discipline was enforced at the Australian Graves Detachment through a range of strategies such as negotiation and care for both the men’s physical and mental wellbeing. It argues that at a time where inflexible military discipline and justice were difficult to enforce, such non-coercive forms of control proved more effective for disciplining the men than formal military sanctions. This article first examines the nature of the work undertaken by the Australian Graves Detachment. Second, it turns to the disciplinary issues which arose from the ranks. Third, the article analyses the strategies put in place by the Commanding Officer of the Detachment to maintain discipline within the unit. In particular, the article highlights how entertainment played a key role in maintaining discipline and morale within the detachment, providing the men with a wide variety of amusing activities that kept them under their officers’ watch and control. Sports, games, theatre, movies, the camera club, afternoon teas and other forms of entertainment insured that men had as little idle time as possible. Entertainment became the cornerstone of the Commanding Officer’s attempts to limit misconduct, and to ensure that the unit would complete its mission.

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What happened to soldiers in the many months that elapsed between the First World War's armistice and their demobilization? What did armies do with millions of 'brutalized' and armed men who survived the conflict but could not yet return home? Millions became members of the occupying forces stationed in Germany while others were ordered to complete a wide array of tasks facilitating the transition to peacetime. On the Western Front, the French and the British devoted considerable means and men to providing appropriate, individual grave sites to their fallen citizen soldiers. Alongside them, one small Australian unit was formed in March 1919 under the name of the Australian Graves Detachment. Its mission was to exhume and re-bury the Australian dead and, where possible, identify the bodies located in a small area of Northern France where the AIF had fought, at Villers-Bretonneux and in its vicinity.¹ The unit consisted of a headquarters, five companies, some horses and motor vehicles, and was comprised of up to eleven hundred men.²

While war memorialization and grief are significant fields of research in First World War studies, much remains to be written with regard to the processes of burying the millions of dead.³ Little, for example, has been written about the men who undertook the daunting tasks of exhuming and burying.⁴ This article seeks to contribute to this emerging area of inquiry by exploring how discipline was enforced at the Australian Graves Detachment through a range of strategies such as negotiation and care for both the men's physical and mental wellbeing. It argues that at a time where inflexible military discipline and justice were difficult to enforce, such non-coercive forms of control proved more effective for disciplining the men than formal military sanctions. This focus on discipline is justified by the fact that by the time the Australian Graves Detachment started its work, the armistice had been signed for over four months. This meant that the circumstances of enforcement of military discipline changed from wartime to cessation of combat, providing a space to study discipline in the Australian Imperial Force outside of combat operations, but still on active service, when it executed tasks enabling the transition to demobilization and peacetime. This article first examines the nature of the work undertaken by the Australian Graves Detachment. Second, it turns to the disciplinary issues which arose from the ranks. Third, the article analyses the strategies put in place by the Commanding Officer of the Detachment to maintain discipline within his unit and make sure that it completed its work. In particular, the article highlights how entertainment played a key role in maintaining discipline and morale within the detachment, providing the men with a wide variety of amusing activities that would keep them under their officers' watch and control.

Registering and concentrating the dead

In 1914, as it became clear to the belligerents that the war would not be concluded within a matter of weeks, dead bodies across the battlefield soon became a problem. In terms of hygiene, corpses facilitated the spread of diseases. In terms of morale, it was unpleasant for young, living soldiers to see what they were likely to become should they too die on the battlefield: a rotting corpse that vermin would feed on. It was thus important to organize proper burial for the fallen. In the British Army, no structure existed to oversee this process at the outbreak of the conflict. Burying the dead was an army matter but no organization existed to register the graves and make sure that the fallen were and remained identified. In late September 1914, Fabian Ware, the head of the motor vehicles and personnel section of the British Red Cross in France for the Lille and Amiens district, started collecting

information on the graves' locations, following the Red Cross tradition of informing the next of kin about their fallen loved ones.

Ware's section gained official recognition and was soon in charge of marking and registering the war graves of the British Army, becoming the Graves Registration Commission in March 1915. In the spring of 1916, the Commission became the Directorate of Graves Registration and Inquiry, and answered the many inquiries it received from family members wishing to obtain information as to the final resting place of their loved one. This directorate formed the basis for the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), which was formed by Royal Charter in May 1917 to ensure that a separate institution would continue to take care for the war graves once the conflict was over, rather than relying on the existing appointments which were subject to demobilization.⁵ When the war ended, the IWGC faced the colossal task of concentrating the dead into cemeteries as the devastated land would soon be returned to Belgian and French farmers and those villagers willing to rebuild their dwellings.

As demobilization proceeded, it proved difficult for the British Army to man the Graves Concentration Unit in charge of exhuming and concentrating the dead to form war cemeteries. In early 1919, Cabinet decided to recruit 15,000 men and relied on extra pay to attract volunteers. By June, only 4300 men had been recruited, but the British Army also used German prisoners of war (POW) to compensate for the personnel shortage.⁶ Between November 1918 and September 1921, over 200 000 bodies were reburied by the Graves Concentration Unit to form proper war cemeteries.⁷ The scope of the task was so large at the beginning of the scheme that the British Army required assistance from the dominions to exhume and rebury the bodies. Accordingly, in the spring of 1919, alongside the Graves Concentration Unit on the Western Front, men of the Canadian War Graves Detachment were put to work in the Vimy sector while men of the Australian Graves Detachment worked in the Villers-Bretonneux sector. The units of both dominions comprised over a 1000 men each and were deployed in areas where their forces had registered high death tolls.

From diggers to gravediggers

The first task assigned to the Australian Graves Detachment prior to its assembly in late March 1919 was to draw necessary equipment from army stores. Judging by the first list of items transmitted to the unit by the Australian Imperial Force's (AIF) headquarters, the Australian Corps had acquired much experience in the business of burying soldiers.⁸ The precision and detail with which the list was established not only show that this was a recurring business that had already been carried out following British procedures established throughout the war, but also reveal aspects of the work's physicality. Rubber gloves, oil-skin overalls, hundreds of bars of soap and, most particularly, creosol, a disinfectant and antibacterial agent, speak to the gruesome nature of the task and the potential danger of contamination the men were facing.⁹

In the Australian Graves Detachment's allocated area, most of the soldiers to be exhumed had been killed between the (German) Michael Offensive of late March 1918 and mid-August 1918, when the Allies' offensive had progressed speedily to the east with the Third Battle of Picardy. In other words, by the time the unit commenced its work, the corpses were mostly between nine and twelve months old. This meant that the bodies the unit dealt with were in different stages of decay, depending on the way they had been interred (with uniform and canvas or without), how long after death the bodies had been interred, and the



Figure 1. A section of the Australian Graves Detachment at work, 15/07/1919, near Villers-Bretonneux (AWM EO5493).

nature of the ground in which they were first interred. The fact that sand bags were ordered for bones indicates that in some cases, bodies had already become skeletons. Most of the time however, the corpses exhumed were placed in hessian canvas before being reinterred, indicating that they were still in dry decay (Figure 1). This is the last stage before the bones appear, after the body has successively putrefied, been consumed by insects and fermented. Due to rainy conditions in the Somme and a cold winter, flesh may have taken a long time to dry and in some cases, the men of the unit may have been exposed to strong decomposition smells. While the strength of the smell could fluctuate – it could even be absent altogether when dealing only with bones or well-dried bodies – the sight of skulls, teeth and hands not covered by clothing was confronting. Private Whiting, for example, reported having felt sick ‘dozens of times’, and many in the unit must have shared his experience.¹⁰ The work was sickening, dirty and difficult.

The Detachment was five companies strong. All started burial work in the morning of 14 April 1919 but rain soon interrupted the work. The companies first worked on graves concentration for Adelaide Cemetery, then for Crucifix Cemetery on the outskirts of Villers-Bretonneux. Companies were later split by sectors, moving west to east and operating in Proyart, Bayonvilliers, Morcourt and Framerville, all in the vicinity of Villers-Bretonneux. In each company, officers oversaw that the work was being carried through and working days usually started at 9am. The records do not indicate at what time working days finished, but based on evening activities organized after dinner, it can be assumed that soldiers finished work shortly after five in the afternoon. We know that at full strength, the Detachment was 1100 men strong and that those men buried nearly 5500 dead, that is 5 dead per men over

4 months of effective work, or 45 dead buried per day on average by the Detachment. Of course, not all members of the Detachment were involved in grave digging but this figure gives a sense of the time and efforts it took to locate, exhume, try to identify, transport and then re-inter the dead in individual graves. A soldier could work in an exhuming party one day, grave-digging the next, and reinterment on another due to the rotation of working parties and their role within each company (Figure 2). When Sundays, public holidays, special events, poor weather and leave are subtracted from the number of days during which the Detachment was operational, the amount of effective working days for a typical soldier at the Detachment would be two days of work out of three days of service. This was not a full time load but insured that soldiers would be able to rest both physically and mentally from this difficult work.



Figure 2. Re-burying bodies at the Australian Graves Detachment (AWM P045.41.001).

The macabre nature of the work and the conditions under which the men operated led to much misconduct in the Graves Detachment. In addition, while the burial work itself had been refined and streamlined through the war, the fact that the Graves Detachment was assembled once combat had ceased raised a number of issues. While some Australian soldiers who had formerly seen action in the trenches volunteered for the job, most members of the Graves Detachment were fresh recruits who had arrived in France after the Armistice, and had never fought in the war. The mix of hardened veterans and new arrivals created tensions among the men. One of them, Sergeant Wigzell, recalled:

I volunteered for this work but I am sorry that we are not all volunteers... A lot of the last men who left Australia, who never saw a shot fired – bore none of the discomforts of the trenches or of the risks of the war, were detailed for this job. They are not satisfied with their pay or food

or clothing, and I often wish I had them in the front line, during a hot attack – they would not then have time to worry about these incidentals.¹¹

But Wigzell was in the minority. Indeed, most of the men who had taken part in the war and were sent to the Graves Detachment took the early return option when eligible, and left to return to Australia. After years of war, it is unsurprising that they did not elect to remain on the Western Front as ‘hard labourers’, and chose to return to their home, their family, perhaps with the prospect of a better and more lucrative occupation. Of the few that made the choice to stay, some, like Wigzell, considered it an honour, or a ‘sacred duty’ to care for the dead.¹² However, as aforementioned, the Graves Detachment was mostly composed of fresh recruits. These recruits were not impressed with their allocated job, and soon began to complain about the gruesome nature of the work and the poor conditions under which they were operating.

Negotiation

Issues of indiscipline rapidly emerged at the Australian Graves Detachment and the authority of its Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel John Mott, was soon put to the test. When the Detachment arrived at Villers-Bretonneux in April 1919, it started off its mission with two consecutive strikes. Private McBeath recorded: ‘We have had two strikes, we refused to work until we had better means for handling the bodies, had better food and cut out all ceremonial parades.’¹³ There were a range of punitive disciplinary sanctions Lieutenant Colonel Mott could have used to restore order, but he did not. Military sanctions outside of wartime may have appeared too strict to someone who understood the difficult nature of the work soldiers under his command had to complete. In addition, it was not a given that such a course of action would indeed be effective in putting the men to work. Mott did not report on the strikes in official documents. Instead, he progressively granted what the men were asking for, and more stock was drawn from army stores. Private McBeath, the same soldier who reported the strikes, wrote that as a result of the strikes: ‘Now we get plenty of food, two comforts fund issues a week and they are trying to get a few shillings a week extra off the Red Cross for us.’¹⁴

Such strike actions would have been considered mutiny during the war and would have been severely punished.¹⁵ Disobeying orders was not something that was left unsanctioned during wartime, and armies in Europe were generally draconian in their application of punishments.¹⁶ In the context of the AIF, much has been written with regard to discipline, including poor discipline, and the latest studies indicate that Australian COs at battalion level seemed less likely to impose punishment on the men, most particularly Field Punishment 1 as prescribed by military regulations for a range of offences.¹⁷ Instead, the COs preferred to tackle indiscipline by ensuring the good morale of the men through a wide array of measures designed to conjure good health and good spirits: namely via food, sports, entertainment and comfortable billeting.¹⁸ Now that combat had ceased, Commanding Officer Mott’s powers of coercion were even more limited, and strict military justice was unjustified. Sending disobedient elements to a Court-martial would have increased the tensions – men were not refusing to do their job: they demanded better conditions to complete it. Negotiating and being a reliable administrator who worked with his men proved a better strategy for Mott, rather than imposing sanctions prescribed by King’s Regulations or Commonwealth

Military Regulations. The extent to which Mott was ready to be accommodating that was a noticeable feature of his command.

Indeed, Mott went the extra mile for his men, relaying one of their demands to his superior and advocating for it. The men had asked for an increase in pay – certainly influenced by the British Graves Concentration Unit in which men had been recruited through special rates with extra duty pay – and their request was approved. All ranks were granted an extra shilling a day from 2 May.¹⁹ Financial reward constituted a form of compensation to motivate the men, and in turn ensured good morale. While Australians were the best paid privates of the war and had gained the nickname of ‘6-bob a day tourists’, receiving 5 shillings a day and an additional shilling upon being discharged, this extra shilling was no meagre allowance. It represented a 20% increase in the pay they received while on service. This is significant and perhaps speaks not only to the difficulty of the job these men had to complete, but also to the AIF as a working-class army.²⁰

While no union represented the soldiers, it has been shown that soldiers in the AIF resorted ‘to informal methods of industrial relations and [to] bargaining with their officers.’²¹ This form of industrial bargaining through protest and demand is coherent with unionist traditions in Britain and Australia and was not unheard of, even in the midst of the conflict.²² Now that combat was terminated and that sanctions would not be accepted in the same ways, the men of the Graves Detachment saw their bargaining power increased – and they used it.²³ Mott also had the power to increase a soldier’s pay through promotions and did so. He frequently used promotions to reward good behaviour and good work at the unit.²⁴ Granting the men better pay, better supply and better working conditions ensured they carried on with their work and testifies to the effectiveness of incentives as opposed to sanctions. Now that the war was over, the war rhetoric could not coerce the men anymore, nor could patriotic consent drive their resilience. This strategy can be given further credit when put in perspective with British demobilization strikes and mutinies. On French soil, there is the famous case of the Calais mutiny where British soldiers went on strikes for concessions in late January 1919. Australian soldiers, who were granted a far better pay than their British counterparts, had less difficulties to improve their rations and conditions of living but the active policy pursued by officers such as Mott of ensuring that they had relatively good living conditions prevented major strikes as observed in the worse-off British army at about the same time.²⁵

Sex

Unruly behaviour and disobedience also took more personal forms at the Australian Graves Detachment. One such form of behaviour that Lieutenant Colonel Mott was particularly concerned with was unprotected (or poorly protected) sex, which could lead to venereal diseases. As combat was over, periods of inactivity at camp became more frequent and days became more consistent, with regular working hours. Idleness became an issue and some men used that time for sexual encounters. Due to distance and the impossibility of returning home for leave, soldiers of the dominions had been well known on the Western Front for their high rates of infection with venereal diseases.²⁶ This did not change once the guns felt silent, with many soldiers of the Graves Detachment continuing to visit or discover brothels while on active service. Venereal diseases were mentioned in the unit’s routine orders immediately after its formation at Charleroi (Belgium) and before it entrained

to Villers-Bretonneux: ‘Troops are again warned that this disease is very prevalent in this town [Charleroi]. A blue light depot is open in rue de Mons for all troops.’²⁷ Blue light depots were early treatment depots, indicating that sexual encounters were already taking place as the unit was formed.²⁸

Once the unit arrived at Villers-Bretonneux, troops were again warned that venereal diseases were ‘very prevalent in Amiens’ and that a blue light depot was open all day and night at the Regimental Aid Post. Mott added: ‘If any man should have any signs of the disease he should report immediately as it is only in cases seen early where a permanent cure is sure.’²⁹ Amiens, like many other cities behind the frontline, was known for its brothels during the war, and they continued to operate after the Armistice. Judging by the repeated warnings in the routine orders, the number of men from the Graves Detachment who visited the local brothels was considerable. Sex, or the company of prostitutes, became a form of comfort for the men and this penchant concerned Mott. Still, he accepted it. The routine orders do not mention sanctions other than the suspension of pay for soldiers undergoing venereal treatment. Significantly, routine orders did not explicitly ask the men to stop visiting the brothels. Instead, they provided preventive reminders and encouraged the men to get treated as early as possible.³⁰ Interestingly, one of the civilian women who worked for the Detachment, Ms. Ettie Rout, was a well-known campaigner against venereal diseases.³¹ She was a founding member of the New Zealand Volunteer Sisterhood in 1915 and, during the war, inspected brothels with medical officers. After an inspection, if the establishment was safe, she recommended its authorization with the following statement: ‘we are all convinced that at the present time it makes safe and suitable provision for the sexual needs of the troops.’³² Her role continued at the Detachment under Mott’s supervision. If a soldier’s sexual appetite could not be deterred, it should be managed; an attitude also embraced by the Germans and the French earlier in the war.³³ Attitudes toward commercial sex turned progressively towards acceptance, and if the men were in a condition to fulfil their work, sexual encounters remained unpunished. There were, however, other dangerous behaviours with which Mott was confronted towards which he proved less conciliatory.

Dangerous behaviours

One of these behaviours was bomb throwing. Despite the obvious danger, men played with the explosive devices that littered the area; an activity they identified as fun. Upon arrival at Villers-Bretonneux, a routine order stated: ‘It has come before the notice of the Commanding Officer that men are throwing live bombs about, this dangerous practice must cease at once. Action will be taken against offenders.’³⁴ Only two weeks later Major Mott reiterated:

it has again come before the notice of the C. O. that men still persist in the dangerous practice of throwing live bombs in the vicinity of the canal etc. This practice must cease immediately. Offenders will be severely dealt with.³⁵

The tone of Mott’s response was serious, yet men persisted in disobeying orders. A few weeks later, men were again warned:

not [to] treat Shells Bombs Detonation, etc., as play things. Any man seen removing nose caps, etc., & firing at shells will be severely dealt with. Men wounded by such not in the execution of *DUTY* will have an entry made in his (*sic.*) paybook showing self-inflicted wound.³⁶

However, there are no records of men receiving punishment for this behaviour and some became even more creative.

In June, it was noted in the Detachment's routine order: 'Complaints have been received that members of this unit have been bombing fish in the river. This practice must cease forthwith.'³⁷ These soldiers were not bombing fish, they were simply fishing with bombs instead of rods. A fun but pointless activity had been transformed into a productive one. When the bombs and grenades detonated in the water, they killed multiple fish at once. The fish then floated to the surface, making catching fish easier. Fish and meat were expensive commodities, and since bombs and grenades were easily available, this became an activity practised by a number of soldiers.

Looting

Food was, of course, not the only commodity Australians were after. Australian soldiers were billeted at Villers-Bretonneux and its vicinity for nearly five months and were not always the most respectful of guests. Upon arrival, 'Men [were] warned that damage done to civilian property [would] be charged personally to the offender.'³⁸ This did not prove to be a sufficient deterrent. Only six days later, French authorities complained that men from the Australian Graves Detachment were 'entering houses searching for wines'. Mott ordered that, 'in future the practice of removing wine from cellars must cease.'³⁹ The same day Private McBeath recorded in his diary 'The chaps came across a plant of wine and Champagne. 40 dozen bottles.'⁴⁰ The dichotomy between Mott's language – 'searching' – and that of McBeath – 'came across' – is interesting: McBeath did not see 'the chaps' as looters but as mere finders of a significant quantity of bottles (480 in total), which were just there for the taking.

Pilfering was a common practice during the war and some men of the unit may have remembered their war service at Villers-Bretonneux where they looted cellars with the Moroccan Division of the French army in late April 1918.⁴¹ But wine was not the only consumable soldiers were after. Private McBeath recorded that he 'went out mushrooming' and, on another day, '[Souvenired] a lot of spuds and fried them.'⁴² While mushrooms may have grown wild, the potatoes were likely taken from a French farm or vegetable garden. Interestingly, soldiers of the rank were not the only ones who engaged in helping themselves to French property. McBeath recalled the 'very nice old padre in this unit' who was 'not above salvaging or pinching things for the YM[CA]'. McBeath continued:

It was funny one day, he got two wagon (*sic.*) loads of forms, he fixed them up in the YM, a few hours later around lined up two froggies after their furniture; they saw them in the YM and started blagarding the padre in French, but he quietened them with a few francs and parted in the best of friendship.⁴³

It must have been common knowledge as to who could have gotten hold of their belongings for the French to show up at the Australian camp in search of their furniture. However, routine orders made no mention of punishment actually being enforced on any men for looting.

However, while some Australians were fleecing French properties and cellars, it seems that the French also benefited from the presence of a well-supplied detachment in their ruined town as they began to resettle. On 25 May, Mott wrote: 'Instances have recently occurred of French civilians wearing Australian clothing, it would appear, therefore, that members of this unit are giving away, or otherwise disposing of certain articles of clothing

not immediately required.⁴⁴ As a result, a fortnightly inspection of clothing and blankets was set up. It is unclear whether Australian soldiers were being charitable, were robbed or traded equipment for food and alcohol, but all three of these are likely to have occurred as soldiers were stationed by the town and contact with the population was frequent. In June, a Court of Inquiry was held to investigate the 'loss' of a Douglas sidecar.⁴⁵ The Detachment's records do not present the outcome of the inquiry and while the sidecar may indeed have been lost, it was more probably stolen or sold. These men lived in the midst of a lunar landscape in a devastated region of France where every usable thing was a rare commodity: in these months of 1919, Villers-Bretonneux was a field of ruins with no running water or electricity, littered with explosives and barbed wire.⁴⁶ By the end of the war, inflation and the scarcity of foodstuffs made primary goods expensive to purchase, and it is likely that privates realised that their rations could be increased not only through receiving parcels but also by sourcing food and goods locally. Looting was one way to do it but trading and exchanging goods are likely to have happened too.⁴⁷

This is another instance where Mott proved an effective administrator, making sure that insofar as possible, men were provided with reasonable food at reasonable price.⁴⁸ As time passed at the Unit, reports of looting disappeared from the routine orders, indicating that the issue was addressed through better food supply to the men. Mott issued comforts as the unit arrived at Villers-Bretonneux and opened a unit canteen.⁴⁹ He also made sure that comfort funds were actively sought and regularly distributed to the men.⁵⁰ When the Expeditionary Force Canteens increased the price foodstuffs by 20%, Mott informed all ranks that 'prices will be kept as low as possible under the circumstances.'⁵¹ He organized cheap suppers at weekly dances organized from early June and in one instance, for the Peace Celebrations, regimental funds were even used to purchase beer for free distribution to the men.⁵²

Absenteeism

Another form of indiscipline at the Graves Detachment was absenteeism. Mott demanded that the Captains of the Detachment's five companies send him weekly absentee reports.⁵³ Being Absent Without Leave (AWL) was an offence of the utmost gravity when combat was still underway.⁵⁴ With the end of the war, the grave diggers perhaps saw their mission as less crucial. It was difficult for Mott to apply severe military sanctions prescribed for those who were AWL when the stakes were not as high as they had been during the war, and he only did so when he was dealing with recidivists. In such cases, he pressed charges resulting in forfeiture or hard labour.⁵⁵ However, there were cases where soldiers who had never gone missing before and were declared illegal absentees at the Detachment were forgiven. Either their illegal absence did not show up in their records, or it was subsequently erased.⁵⁶ Mott, it appears, showed clemency to new recruits. Imprisoning or severely dealing with a man who had volunteered to join the AIF and who had gone AWL for a few days while attached to the Graves Detachment seemed disproportionate. The dead were well and truly dead and it made no difference to them if a man took an extra couple of days' leave or went missing for a few days before resuming his task.

Commanding the Australian Graves Detachment

The context in which the Australian Graves Detachment operated was unprecedented. Its mission was a dangerous, filthy and morale-crushing one; a 'gruesome and very sorrowful task,' as a soldier recalled.⁵⁷ In addition, soldiering had lost its *raison d'être* – combat – which complicated the relationships of authority between officers and the men in the ranks. Indeed, it is one thing for volunteer citizen soldiers to obey order on the battlefield, but it was another to be coerced into hard labour. It is therefore not surprising that soldiers were at times ill disciplined. Studying the Australian Graves Detachment provides an avenue to investigate officer–soldier relationships in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) outside of the battlefield.

As aforementioned, Lieutenant Colonel John Mott was the Commanding Officer of the Australian Graves Detachment. Mott had joined the Australian Imperial Force aged 38 as a mechanical engineer in August 1915. Starting as a Sergeant, he became a Captain, a Major and then attended Senior Officers' School at Aldershot (England) before receiving a commission as temporary Lieutenant Colonel when commanding the Graves Detachment. Mott was wounded twice during his war service, taken as a POW to Germany, before escaping through Holland to England. He was also awarded a Military Cross, a Bar and gained two mentions in dispatches.⁵⁸ Mott's experience as a POW may have assisted him with running the Australian Graves Detachment where, just as in a POW camps, many new recruits of the AIF did not want to be there, doing hard labour instead of soldiering. There are no documents in which Mott reflected on the way he used his experience as a POW to run the Graves Detachment, but this does not mean that his time as a POW did not inform his practice as a Commanding Officer of the unit.

Mott's story was well known amongst the troops as one of the very rare cases of an Australian officer escaping a German camp, which conferred him with much aura and personal authority.⁵⁹ He was badly injured when he was captured. He was treated by his German captors and then sent to Karlsruhe, a temporary processing officers' camp, before being sent to Ströhen Moor, a much harsher and more punitive officers' camp. Mott spent six months in captivity as an officer. Under the Hague Conventions, he was not required to work as a labourer, as captive soldiers often were.⁶⁰ Monotony, boredom and isolation often sapped officers' morale in prisoner camps.⁶¹ It is not hard to imagine how bored he must have been, being idle in the camp. Mott was an active and exemplary soldier and being locked away in Germany felt to him like 'purgatory'.⁶² He thus devised an ingenious plot to escape Ströhén Moor and fled to England via Holland.⁶³ It is likely that these long and painful six months informed Mott in how to run his unit as much as the instruction he received at the Officer School in Aldershot after his escape. Finally, Mott served in the 48th Battalion, whose Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel R. L. Leane was an imposing, respected and paternalist figure who was known to care for his men.⁶⁴ Under Leane's command, it is certain that Mott learnt how to discipline and lead a unit, relaying through the ranks the orders of his commanding officer.

Lieutenant Colonel Mott was a man who had risen through the ranks during the war. While some commanding officers of the AIF were 'rigid disciplinarians,' Mott exemplified another type of Australian officer, seeking discipline and achievement through a range of strategies which aimed to alleviate the plight of the soldiers under his command.⁶⁵ Mott was a leader who aimed to get the best out of his men through incentives and accommodation, rather than policing and punishing. In that sense, he continued an emerging characteristic

among Battalion Commanding Officers of the AIF who saw non-coercive forms of control to discipline the men as more effective than military sanctions.⁶⁶

Leave

To tackle absenteeism and allow resting periods with a mental and physical break away from the dreadful work, Mott awarded leave liberally to the men of the Graves Detachment. So rare and precious during the war years, leave became increasingly accessible to the men of the Detachment. They seized the opportunity to tour Europe and travelled the cities and countryside of the old continent.⁶⁷ Roy Cummings wrote that he had:

A glorious few days tour over France and Belgium and a piece of Germany. Went to Versailles where peace is to be signed, and saw the table and had my photo taken by a W.A.A.C. captain standing by it. Saw all the glorious beauty of the palace, one cannot express how lovely it is, especially when all the water fountains are playing. It costs £400 every hour to run them.⁶⁸

Cummings continued with a description of sights in Belgium, Germany and Paris, commenting on fashion and the great time he had in town. Sergeant Wigzell, another man of the Graves Detachment, wrote home that he was 'trying to save enough money for a trip to Venice. I have seen Brussels, Antwerp, Charleroi, Louvain, Namur, Liege – many ancient and historic places.'⁶⁹ Leave to Italy became popular among the men of the Detachment and was easily granted, provided the men were vaccinated against smallpox.⁷⁰ In July 1919, a three-week pre-embarkation leave was granted to the men of the Detachment, something that would have been unheard of during wartime.⁷¹ Paid soldiers who did not see combat and arrived at the Graves Detachment when it was formed, despite the gruesome work they had to undertake, had an unusual 'war' service, at times more akin to a holiday camp than army service. Private McBeath's experience is a case in point – his diary is more akin to that of a tourist reporting on the many sights he saw and the sports he played rather than that of a soldier on active service, and with good reason: he arrived in Europe after the armistice and never saw combat. To his mother, McBeath wrote: 'I only wish you could be over here with me to see some of the beautiful cities and sights, it is worth a fortune to see them and here we are being paid 6/- a day to see them.'⁷²

Physical wellbeing

The good health of the men was necessary for the work they undertook, and hygiene was important because of the risk of infection associated with the task of exhuming and burying dead bodies. Men were provided with rubber gloves and disinfectant but this was not enough to insure their general cleanliness. Mott took steps to ensure that both the men's good health and necessary hygiene be looked after. From mid-April – very early in the unit's life – baths, which were a luxury in wartime, were available once a week for each unit.⁷³ Not every man was thrilled, so to make sure that hygiene was maintained, compulsory bathing parades were organized.⁷⁴ Of greater danger, perhaps, was the influenza pandemic which was rife throughout the globe, but by the time the Australian Graves Detachment was put to work, its peak had long passed in France, with just a mild resurgence in the spring of 1919.⁷⁵ This resurgence led to Mott supplying all ranks with a 'preventative' gargle cure on 9 April 1919.⁷⁶ One of the only two men who died at the Graves Detachment died from Influenza – the other from lobar pneumonia.⁷⁷ But overall, illnesses and infections at the

Australian Graves Detachment were limited. On a monthly average, only 4% of the men of the unit got sent to hospital for treatment.⁷⁸ Treatment time differed for the men as they contracted different types of diseases or conditions (bronchitis, appendicitis, VD and so on.) but overall, the general health of the unit was good.

Sports were also a way to maintain the men's physical (and mental) wellbeing. They became a major activity at the Graves Detachment. Each of the five companies was requested to appoint Sports Committee comprising one NCO and four men just a few days after having arrived at Villers-Bretonneux.⁷⁹ Intercompany matches were organized regularly, providing a space for the men to play and companies to bond with the emulation of team spirit. This was necessary for the newly formed Graves Detachment which was composed of men coming from different battalions. Forging an *esprit de corps* with good morale through sports was, again, not a new strategy in the British Army, but what is striking in the case of the Graves Detachment is the regularity with which sporting activities were undertaken.⁸⁰ In a letter home, Sergeant Roy Cummings wrote: 'we have been having plenty of sports lately', which included running, football and, of course, cricket.⁸¹ Sports kept the soldiers busy, fit, amused, and took their minds off their gruesome work.

The numerous public holidays during the Detachment's service were often the occasion for sports, parades and games tournaments that provided entertainment for the men. At Easter, Good Friday was observed as a public holiday and inter-company football matches were played.⁸² Anzac Day, a week or so later, was also observed as a public holiday and a sports meeting was held with a band playing, followed by a 'special tea' in the afternoon and an Anzac Concert at 6.30 pm at the YMCA tent.⁸³ For the King's Birthday holiday on 3 June, inter-company sports were played as Prime Minister Billy Hughes and former Prime Minister Joseph Cook visited the Detachment. French public holidays were also observed, with a hundred passes issued for the unit's members to attend the Peace celebrations in Paris for Bastille Day.⁸⁴

Entertaining the men

It is entertainment, broadly understood as ways to provide amusements and enjoyment, which formed the cornerstone of Mott's disciplinary enforcement, right from the very start of his commission. As the Detachment was being assembled, Mott wrote to the Australian Agent-General in London for 'comforts and band instruments' to be provided for the unit.⁸⁵ They would provide a much-needed morale-boost after a day of grave digging or burying corpses. Mott opened a Recreation Hall only three weeks after the Detachment started operating. The Recreation Hall was equipped with a 'fine library' at the men's disposal, 'a plentiful supply of writing material', and games.⁸⁶ Books, newspapers and other reading materials had been in high demand in the trenches during the war and Mott saw that the Detachment received them for both the men's morale and to occupy their time.⁸⁷ When the *Anzac Bulletin* ceased to be published, Mott arranged for the High Commission to forward the Detachment daily cables from Australia with copies being circulated to the five companies.⁸⁸ Representatives of the Detachment also called for Australians back home to subscribe for a band for the unit and to send reading materials, and 'amusements'.⁸⁹ Weeks were filled with distractions and recreational activities. In the week starting 28 April, men were invited to a euchre competition in the Recreation Hall or to participate to the camera club on the Monday. On the Tuesday, they could attend a lecture from the Commanding

Officer, which Private McBeath thought ‘splendid’.⁹⁰ On Wednesday a concert was given in the evening. Thursday saw bridge and quoits competitions and on Friday, there were cribbage and draughts competitions, a testament to the variety and rhythm of activities on offer.⁹¹

The YMCA tent

To supervise such activities, the Detachment hired civilians, at times twenty of them, drawn from the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and other organizations present in France and the UK.⁹² One such civilian was a rather well-known patriotic woman in Australia, Miss Rose Venn-Brown, who had worked tirelessly throughout the war at Le Havre for the Red Cross and had overseen entertainments for Australian soldiers provided by the YMCA.⁹³ During the war, the YMCA provided the men with all sorts of entertainment and comforts and continued to do so after the guns fell silent, albeit to a lesser extent after demobilization started.⁹⁴ Miss Venn-Brown joined the Graves Detachment where her ‘ability as pianist and social entertainer’ was much needed.⁹⁵ Her role at the Detachment’s YMCA tent was central. She was ideally suited for the task because she had an extensive network and knew the extent to which comforts and pleasurable activities were essential to the men’s morale.⁹⁶

Theatre

Theatre proved a valuable form of entertainment for the Graves Detachment alongside revues and concerts, which became regular (Figure 3).⁹⁷ Early in June, the Detachment

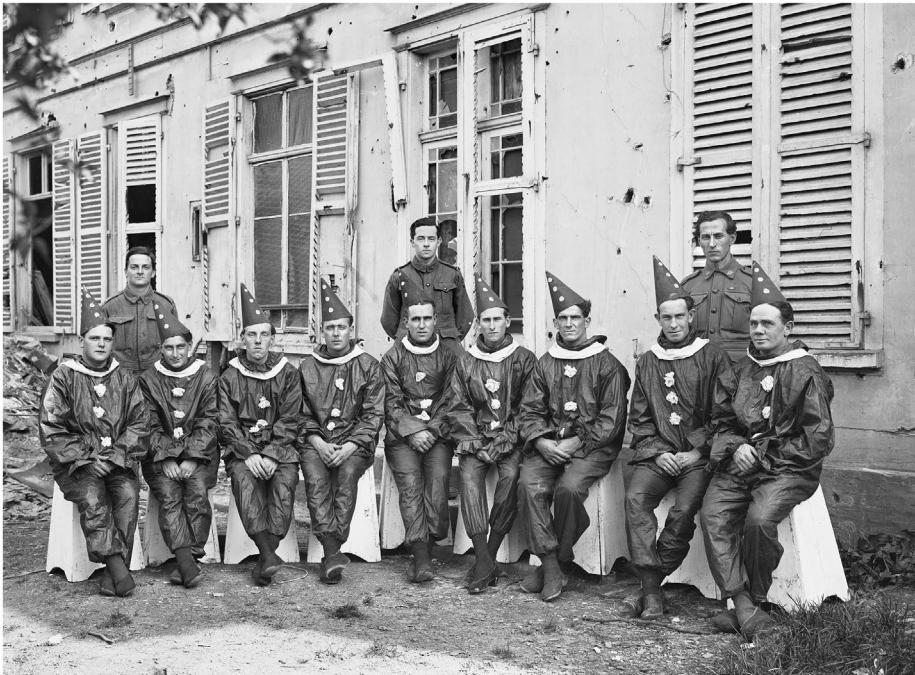


Figure 3. The Kangaroo concert party drawn from the Detachment dressed as clowns, 2 August 1919, Villers-Bretonneux area (AWM EO5445).

greeted the Lena Ashwell Concert Party, which had become famous at the front in the war years.⁹⁸ But the men were not passive spectators.⁹⁹ One of the companies presented 'Burglary', a two-act musical comedy in the YMCA tent (Figure 4).¹⁰⁰ Not only did this keep them busy on the evening, but it required much rehearsing, keeping them out of trouble during their spare time. The play was so popular that it was decided that a permanent 'Battalion Concert Party' be established.¹⁰¹ This was swiftly organized and operational from late June onwards.¹⁰² The YMCA tent also provided the men with movies in the evenings.¹⁰³ Mott noted that this 'means of amusement has been of great value in keeping our men employed during the evenings'.¹⁰⁴ Mott worked tirelessly to organize leisure activities for the troops, particularly in the evening, so as to avoid idleness and the return to activities of which the Australian Imperial Force did not approve.¹⁰⁵ Private Smyth, for example, 'was engaged in operating the YMCA cinema nightly'.¹⁰⁶ Others joined the camera club, which appears to have been quite in demand. As indiscipline was difficult to sanction with military regulations, discipline could be attained through these non-coercive actions in which the men engaged voluntarily.

Dances

In July, regular dancing sessions were organized, particularly on Saturday evenings from 6 to 10 pm. Men were charged a franc and supper was provided. For these events, a pianist and a master of ceremonies were recruited amongst the rank to be 'permanently employed and [...] struck off all other duties.' Instead of seeing the men go to Amiens for entertainment,



Figure 4. Kangaroo Concert Party of the Detachment after or before a performance, 2 August 1919, Villers-Bretonneux area (AWM E05444).

and risking that they would go to brothels, dances were provided cheaply 'in-house', at camp and under supervision. For the official British Peace celebration of 19 July a 'Fancy Dress Ball' was held with a special prize granted to 'the best sustained character'.¹⁰⁷ The day was observed as a public holiday and men going to the ball could wear plain or fancy dress, invite ladies and play cards if they did not fancy a dance. The Battalion Concert Party provided the attendees with short musical items during dance intervals.¹⁰⁸

Activities such as theatre and concerts were not unheard of during the war. In fact, in the British Army, they became quite common.¹⁰⁹ As Amanda Laugesen has noted: 'For the military, providing entertainment [...] was seen as essential to maintaining morale and distracting soldiers from dissatisfactions with army life' and Mott resorted to proven methods to entertain the men, boost their morale and maintain discipline.¹¹⁰ What was unique, however, was the frequency of such activities; rare occasions in wartime, they became daily activities at the Graves Detachment in the summer of 1919. While Private McBeath's diary gives us insights into the danger and hardship that the work exposed the unit to, it also reveals that he did not see fit to complain much and appeared to have had a good time over all. In a letter home to his mother, he wrote:

Every Sunday and Wednesday afternoon we go over to Corbie for a swim in the Somme canal, it is a beautiful stream for swimming. Cricket is in full swing now and I am playing with the company team. The YMCA is well established with this unit now, they have erected two enormous tents, one for pictures. You can get free cocoa and buns, books and all indoor games, the pictures are full sized and a change of programme three times weekly, so we have plenty to pass our time after work.¹¹¹

This is precisely why such activities were offered: to keep the men busy and satisfied.

Conclusion

There is no record of prosecution or Court of Inquiry for bomb throwing, looting or the majority of misbehaviours reported in the routine orders. Marginal disobedience, such as failing to wear a belt or be appropriately dressed when going away from camp or to Amiens, was not punished when, by military code, it could have been.¹¹² Only severe cases of disobedience or misconduct were punished by Mott.¹¹³ For Mott, such liberality, or even leniency, towards minor offenders may have been a form of accommodation to the tough nature of the job his men had to undertake. He often chose to turn a blind eye towards abnormal behaviour in an abnormal situation. Had Mott wanted to, there was a range of immediate sanctions he could have used before resorting to military justice. However, he was a man concerned with efficiency and realised that his unit would be more likely to complete its work with incentives rather than punishments. This strategy is consistent with the Military's understanding of military justice: the objective was to maintain discipline, not to attain justice as a civilian court seeks to.¹¹⁴ Mott resorted to a range of non-coercive strategies which proved more effective than strictly applying military regulations in the demobilization context. Negotiation, care for the men's physical and mental wellbeing together with entertainment was the means by which the Australian Graves Detachment was disciplined. Sports, games, theatre, movies, the camera club, afternoon teas and other forms of entertainment insured that men had as little idle time as possible.

Three elements indicate that such strategies were successful. Firstly, Mott led his unit remarkably well, and between April and August 1919, the Australian Graves Detachment

exhumed and re-buried 5469 men. This was a drop in the ocean of an estimated 600 000 missing on the Western Front, but still an achievement for the Australian Graves Detachment.¹¹⁵ Secondly, the men willingly participated in leisure activities at the YMCA tent: they engaged in various sports, played cards, ran shows, saw movies and were entertained to a degree not seen during the war. Strong participation in entertainment activities provided at the Graves Detachment had its corollary in the third element which enables us to gauge the success of the policy: indiscipline. While forms of indiscipline still occurred at the Graves Detachment, their frequency decreased, and this is notable in July and August, the months in which soldiers benefited most from daily entertainment. A man at the YMCA tent was not at the brothel, looting cellars, getting drunk or playing with explosive devices. As the routine orders pass, one can observe that from April to August, that is from the start to the end of the Detachment's operations, crime, absenteeism and looting diminished. While five soldiers went AWL in May, none did in July. Mentions of venereal diseases also diminished, and strikes did not occur any longer.

Two days before the unit ceased its functions, Lieutenant Colonel Mott wrote to Miss Venn-Brown, who ran the YMCA tent at the Detachment. Mott wished to express his deepest thanks for 'the kind and unselfish way' Venn-Brown had worked for the Detachment. Mott continued: 'I can confidently say, for each and every one of us, that your efforts have been most keenly appreciated. And to me personally as C.O. of this unit you have been a help in more ways than appear on the surface.'¹¹⁶ Such acknowledgement of the importance of leisure activities testifies to the fact that distraction became an essential element of unit life and while it always was throughout the conflict, the hierarchy became heavily involved in organizing regular, if not daily, distractions for the men. This more relaxed approach to soldiering was certainly justified by the fact that fighting was over, men had survived the war and those not eligible for early return should find some form of compensation for their grave digging. The rhetoric of sacrifice or duty and strict military rules became irrelevant to constrain citizen soldiers who behaved more like workers with entitlements than men devoted to a cause. The end of the war had increased the men's bargaining power, which they used to ameliorate their working conditions.

In mid-August 1919, the Graves Detachment's companies were required to move to Le Havre for embarkation to England and then home, and the Detachment was disbanded on 20 August. A much smaller formation succeeded the Australian Graves Detachment and was named the Australian Graves Services, a different unit which operated from September 1919 to late 1921. The Graves Services oversaw the erection of memorials, exhuming bodies, re-interring newly found ones and taking pictures of the graves of Australian soldiers for grieving families.¹¹⁷ The Graves Services went on to commit far more serious offenses than its predecessor. For instance, two members of the Australian Graves Services were prosecuted for running a brothel.¹¹⁸ The Graves Detachment provides a case study in the experiences of those in charge of burying the dead. We know that millions of soldiers were killed during the First World War, we also know how they were (and for some are still) commemorated. Yet, much remains to be understood about the men who laid them to rest, a facet of the war that armies of 1914 were unprepared for, and at which they became terrifyingly effective by 1919.

Notes

1. Australian War Memorial [AWM] file AWM224, MSS611, 1.
2. Strength returns, AWM 25 911/21, 4.
3. Prost, “The Dead”; Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*; Le Naour, *Le soldat inconnu*; Pau-Heyriès “La démobilisation des morts” and “Le marché des cercueils”. In the American Civil War context see Faust, *This Republic of Suffering* and, for the Second World War, see Roberts, “Five Ways to Look at a Corpse: The Dead in Normandy, 1944.”
4. Hodgkinson, “Clearing the Dead”; Smart, “A sacred duty”; Scates, *100 Stories*, 115–118.
5. Summers, *Remembered*, 13–17.
6. Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, 58.
7. Summers, *Remembered*, 29.
8. Australian Graves Detachment, Mobilisation Store Table, AWM25/135/20.
9. Australia Imperial Force (AIF) H.Q. Detachment, 04/04/1919, AWM18 9966/1/21.
10. Smart, “A sacred duty,” 10.
11. Sergeant Wigzell, *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga Wagga), 3 July 1919.
12. *Ibid.*
13. McBeath, *Diaries of Graves Detachment Digger*, 36.
14. *Ibid.*, 36.
15. Ekins, “Fighting to Exhaustion,” 117.
16. Watson, “Morale.”
17. On discipline and poor discipline in the Australian context, see Blair, *Dinkum Diggers* and Stanley, *Bad Characters*; on punishment see Garstang, “Crime and punishment” and Westerman, “Soldiers and Gentlemen.”
18. Westerman, “Soldiers and Gentlemen,” 236–239.
19. Routine Order [RO] no. 42, 6 May 1919 and RO no. 61, 28 May 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
20. Wise, *Anzac Labour*, 8–15.
21. Wise, “Job Skill,” 114.
22. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, 153.
23. Nathan Wise has demonstrated the resurgence of forms on industrial actions in the AIF from mid-1918 onward and the circumstances of the clemency demonstrated by the hierarchy towards them. Wise, *Anzac Labour*, 90.
24. See AWM25 861/21 part 24.
25. Lamb, *Mutinies, 1917–1920*.
26. Butler, *The Official History*, 148–189.
27. RO no. 6, 29 March 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
28. Butler, *The Official History*, 158.
29. RO no. 14, 8 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Stanley, *Bad Characters*, 193, 194.
32. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C971006?search>; see also 3DRL/6487 item 55.
33. Cochet, “Prostitution et bordels militaires,” 853, 854.
34. RO no. 10, 4 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
35. RO no. 14, 18 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
36. RO no. 43, 7 May 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
37. RO no. 75, 18 June 19, AWM 25 707/21.
38. RO no. 10, 4 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
39. RO no. 16, 10 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
40. McBeath, *Diaries of Graves Detachment Digger*, 10 April 1919, 35.
41. *Pages de gloire de la Division marocaine*, 61.
42. McBeath, *Diaries of Graves Detachment Digger*, 21 and 25 July 1919, 46.
43. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1919, 37.
44. RO no. 59, 25 May 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
45. RO no. 66, 3 June 1919, AWM 25 707/21.

46. Report entitled 'Villers-Bretonneux', 24 September 1921 in 'Voyage de M. Loucheur' section of 99 M 47 at the Archives Départementales de la Somme.
47. RO no. 65, 2 June 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
48. Providing good food and a sufficient amount of it was also the role of an efficient CO and one the men were appreciative of. Westerman, "Soldiers and Gentlemen," 221–226. 'Visit to Villers-Bretonneux, July 31,' *Evening News* (Sydney), 4 October 1919.
49. RO no. 11, 5 April 1919 and RO no. 12, 6 April 1919.
50. Mott, Diary of Australian Graves Detachment, 2, AWM 224 MSS 611.
51. RO no. 65, 2 June 1919.
52. Mott, Diary of Australian Graves Detachment, 5, AWM 224 MSS 611.
53. RO no. 76, 19 June 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
54. And quite a popular offence among Australians. Stanley, *Bad Characters*, 185.
55. Personal records B2455, Whooler H. B., (7164) and B2455, Downie A. J., (7977) at National Archives of Australia (NAA).
56. Personal records B2455, McKenna A G (7096) and B2455, McEgan L. J., (5066), NAA.
57. Sergeant Wigzell, *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga Wagga), 3 July 1919.
58. Personal record B2455, Mott John Eldred, NAA.
59. Beyond press reports, Mott also gave a 'splendid' lecture on his escape at the YMCA tent, which was much appreciated by the men. McBeath, *Diaries of Graves Detachment Digger*, 29 April 1919, 38.
60. Ariotti, "I'm awfully fed up with being a prisoner," 281.
61. Ibid.
62. John E. Mott quoted in 'Escape from Germany,' *Bendigo Advertiser*, 16 October 1917.
63. Details of his escape can be found in Pegram, "Bold Bids for Freedom," 30, 31.
64. Westerman, "Soldiers and Gentlemen," 247.
65. Ekins, "Fighting to exhaustion," 118.
66. Westerman, "Soldiers and Gentlemen," 237–242.
67. Richard White has documented the relationship between Australian soldiers and tourism during wartime. See Richard White, "The Soldier as Tourist"; "Cooees across the Strand"; "Sun, Sand and Syphilis."
68. *Tambellup Times*, WA, 26 July 1919.
69. *Daily Advertiser*, Wagga Wagga, 3 July 1919.
70. RO no. 84, AWM 25 707/21.
71. RO no. 91, 30 July 19, AWM 25 707/21.
72. McBeath, *Diaries of Graves Detachment Digger*, 19 April 1919, 36.
73. RO no. 19, 13 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
74. RO no. 31, 25 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
75. Guénel, "La grippe 'espagnole' en France," 166.
76. RO no. 15, AWM 25 707/21.
77. NAA: B2455, William James Bridge (influenza) and Clarence Brushfield Shepley (lobar pneumonia).
78. This rate is established counting all the men 'sick to hospital' during the life of the unit in relation to the total amount of men in the unit, and its active service over a little less than five months. See AWM 25 707/21 and AWM25 861/21 part 24.
79. RO no. 14, 8 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
80. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, 139.
81. *Tambellup Times*, WA, 26 July 1919.
82. Mott, Diary of Australian Graves Detachment, 3, AWM 224 MSS 611.
83. Ibid., 4.
84. Ibid., 5.
85. Mott, Diary of Australian Graves Detachment, 2, AWM 224 MSS 611.
86. RO no. 26, 20 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
87. On the important of reading materials at war and the role of charities in providing them, see Laugesen, *Boredom is the Enemy*, 17–22.

88. RO no. 89, 25 July 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
89. *Daily Herald* (Adelaide), 30 May 1919.
90. McBeath, *Diaries of Graves Detachment Digger*, 29 April 1919, 38.
91. RO no. 32, 26 April 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
92. AWM 25 861/21 part 24.
93. Oppenheimer, "Opportunities to Engage," 85–104.
94. By 1918 the YMCA had set up over 300 centres in France. Hanna, "Young Men's Christian Association."
95. *Queenslander*, 26 January 1933.
96. *Sunday Times*, 30 May 1920.
97. RO no. 49, 13 May 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
98. RO no. 69, 5 June 19, AWM 25 707/21; Ashwell, *Modern Troubadours*, 197–209.
99. Amanda Laugesen, *Boredom is the Enemy*, 83–87.
100. RO no. 61, 28 May 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
101. RO no. 67, 4 June 1919, AWM 25 707/21. Laugesen, *Boredom is the Enemy*, 94, 95.
102. RO no. 78, 21 June 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
103. RO no. 33, 3 June 1919, AWM 25 707/21. On cinema and morale see Véray, "Cinema," 486, 487.
104. Mott, *Diary of Australian Graves Detachment*, 4, AWM 224 MSS 611.
105. Again, the context is important here and Mott's action were in line with those of other Australian officers overseeing demobilization, trying to keep the men busy, with educational schemes for instances. See Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, vol. VI, 1055–1071.
106. *Guyra Argus*, 20 November 1919.
107. Headquarters to companies, 6 July 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
108. RO no. 87, 18 July 19 AWM 25 707/21.
109. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, 139.
110. Amanda Laugesen, *Boredom is the Enemy*, 79.
111. McBeath, *Diaries of Graves Detachment Digger*, 13 May 1919, 39.
112. RO no. 60, 26 May 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
113. Private Alexander Simula was court martialled and found guilty of wounding Private Ogilvie with intent to do him grievous bodily harm and sentenced to three years penal servitude commuted to one year of imprisonment with hard labour. RO no. 88, 21 July 1919, AWM 25 707/21.
114. Welch, "Military Justice."
115. Mott, *Diary of Australian Graves Detachment*, 6, AWM 224 MSS 611.
116. Mott to Rose Venn-Brown, 19 August 1919, AWM27 570/2.
117. AWM 25 755/12.
118. MP367/1, 446/10/1840.

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