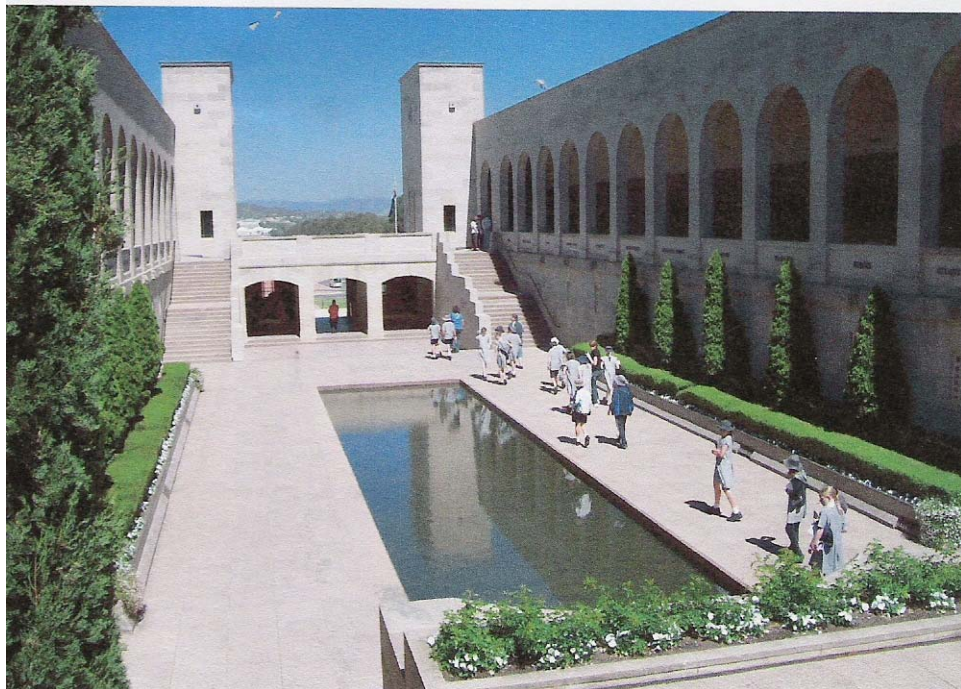


AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
CANBERRA



Matt Walsh

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Introduction

When one is studying Australia's involvement in Military actions and campaigns or looking for information about a relative or family friend the Australian War Memorial comes to mind as a possible source for our research.

However the Australian War Memorial (AWM) is not just a place for research, but a source of the recording of our Aussie culture relating to the home of the "Digger".

The following is designed to provide a short overview into what one will encounter on a visit to the Australian War Memorial for what ever reason.

The Collection

The Australian War Memorial houses many of Australia's War Record. The records were original gathered together in 1917 as part of the function of the Australian War Records Section (AWRS) to ensure that future generations of Australians would have it own records and relics of its participation in the Great War.

Initially, these records were kept in many locations with exhibitions being held in both Sydney and Melbourne. The '*Australian War Museum*' opened on ANZAC Day 1923 in the Exhibition Building Melbourne, where it remained until 1925 before moving to Sydney where it remained until 1935.

The Australian War Memorial which had been conceived by Bean in 1918 as a place –
on some hill-top-still beautiful, gleaming white and silent, a building of three parts, a centre and two wings. The centre will hold the great national relics of the A.I.F. One wing will be a gallery-holding the pictures that our artists painted and drew actually on the scene and amongst the events themselves. The other wing will be a library to contain the written official records of every unit.

Whilst the 'Foundation Stone' of Beans vision for an Australian War Memorial was laid on ANZAC Day 1929 it was not completed until Remembrance Day 11th November 1941. Bean may not have succeeded in all of his ideas however we now have in Canberra the Australian War Memorial.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

The Australian War Memorial is recognised throughout the World as the '*Greatest National Monument*' acknowledging the '*Service of Australian men and women in the Defence of their Country and the rest of the world*'.

Where else in the World is there a **War Memorial** which also incorporates a Museum that has been built in such an impressive location a Nations Capital (Canberra).

From its construction in a Byzantine Style set on a hill and surrounded by lawns and Eucalyptus trees, with a *Commanding view of a Ceremonial Avenue* – "*Anzac Parade*" which is uniquely Australian as it stands as a "Sentinel" looking down on and protecting the Seat of Government – Parliament House – both old and new.

Anzac Parade

Anzac Parade which is a focal point of any visit to Canberra and which leads visitors to the Australian War Memorial is an important part of the total perspective of a visit to the Australian War Memorial.

As one stands at the entrance to the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and looks along Anzac Parade across Lakeburley Griffin to our seat of Government it is easy to pass into '*Dreamtime*' and imagine that one can hear the sounds of 'marching feet' of our troops on the red gravel marching to defend our Nation and Aussie Culture.

The Red Gravel in the centre strip of the Parade was made from crushed house bricks because of the sound created when walked upon which is similar to the marching of military boots during a parade.

The picture is completed by the walls of *Victorian Blue Gums and Eucalyptus Trees* and the *New Zealand Hebe* to symbolize the ANZAC relationship. Anzac Parade was completed in 1965.



The United States of America Reserve Forces and Pipe Band Marching out of the Mist on Anzac Parade



The concept for the establishment of the Australian War Memorial

The concept for the establishment of a place in Australia to *Commemorate the Sacrifice of Australians in War* was that of Charles (C.E.W.) Bean the Official War Correspondent for Australia in WW I.

Bean's original idea was to establish a 'Memorial' where the families of the Australians who lost their lives defending the Free world could have a place to visit and 'Grieve' for those who were buried in place far away and difficult to visit or even locate, many of whom had no known grave.

The idea of establishing both a War Memorial and a Museum developed as he considered that it was important for those who wished to *Commemorate* the loss of a loved one and at the same time to be able to further their understanding of war and what their love one had endured and an overview of all Australians involved. Both of Bean's concepts remain valid today.

The Australian War Memorial is the Australian Nations Tribute to the '*Sacrifice and Achievements*' of the 102,000 men and women who paid the *Supreme Sacrifice* serving their Country both at home and overseas, when called to do so.

The precinct of the Australian War Memorial

On arrival at the Australian War Memorial one is greeted by '*Simpson and his donkey*' a true blue Australian who showed the "*Aussie Spirit*" at Gallipoli during World War I and "*Weary Dunlop*" who served in Greece, Singapore and on the Burma (Death Railway) World War II, both men were dedicated to assisting those who had been wounded or injured in battle.



Simpson & his Donkey "Murphy"



Weary Dunlop

To enter the Australian War Memorial it is necessary to mount a series of steps to gain entry to the Commemorative Area. But first turn and look along *Anzac Parade* and you will see the many Memorials which have been established on either side acting as a "*Honour Guard*" to those who enter the Australian War Memorial and as a guard to our Seat of Government.

The Commemorative Area

On entering the Commemorative Area one is greeted by two *stone lions* which originally guarded the gateway of the Menin Road at Ypres (The Menin Gate). These lions were donated to Australia by the City of Ypres in 1936.





Will. Longstaff's painting of the 'Ghosts of Menin Gate'.



We then enter the Commemorative Courtyard

This leads us to the ***"Hall of Memory"***, which is a place of quite contemplation and reflection on the horrors of war and an opportunity to *'Remember'* those who suffered or gave their lives during times of war.

It is in the ***"Hall of Memory"*** we will find the ***"Tomb of the Unknown Soldier"***. To reach this place of contemplation and serenity we must walk past the ***"Pool of Reflection"*** which has at its head the ***"Eternal Flame"***. On either side of the *'Pool of Reflection'* is located the ***"Hall of Honour"***.

The Courtyard



The Hall of Honour

This is also an opportunity to *'Remember'* and locate the names of family or friends who died defending Australia in all Wars since the late 1900 century. The names are arranged alphabetically and by Unit and do not show rank or honours.

Since the internment of the ***"Unknown Soldier"*** in 1993 a custom has developed by those visiting the Australian War Memorial to place a ***"Red Poppy – a Flanders Poppy"***, next to the name of a family member on the *'Hall of Honour'* or as an acknowledgement of the sacrifice of those whose names are inscribed on the Wall.



The Flanders Poppy



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

The ‘*Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*’ is the Nations way of acknowledging those who have given their lives in defending their Country during time of War. Prior to 1993 Australia did not have a ‘Tomb of an unknown Australian Soldier’. This changed when on the 2nd November 1993 the remains of an unknown Australian soldier who had remained buried in Adelaide Cemetery – Viller’s Bretonneux for 75 years was exhumed and returned to Australia to be interred at the Australian War Memorial on ‘*Remembrance Day*’ the 11th November.



Adelaide Cemetery Viller’s Bretonneux France

*The site of the Grave of the
“Unknown Soldier”
Viller’s- Bretonneux France*

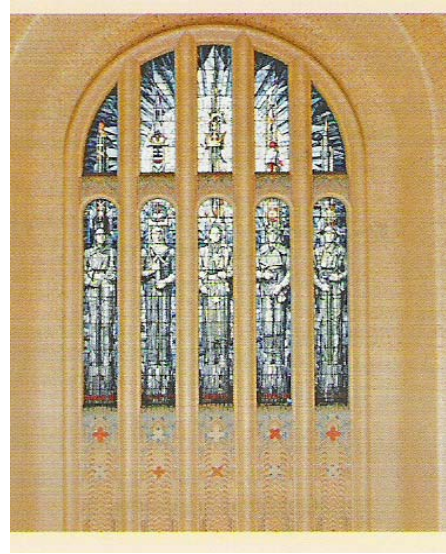


Tomb of the “Unknown Soldier” re-interred Australian War Memorial



Stained Glass Windows

Within the “*Hall of Memory*” will be found a number of ‘*Stained Glass Windows*’ each representing an Australian Service man and woman.



The Mosaics on the dome of the ‘*Hall of Memory*’ depicts the *souls of the dead rising from the earth*, whilst the figures on the walls represent our servicemen and women of World War II.

