

11

Displaying frontier violence at the Australian War Memorial

Thomas J. Rogers

Introduction

In this chapter, I want to add to a discussion about how stories of frontier violence have been told in the galleries of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra. I wrote this from the perspective of a settler-descended Australian inside the institution, having worked as a historian at the memorial from June 2017 to February 2023. After a brief overview of the historiography of frontier violence, the discussion turns to the AWM's position on displaying frontier violence. The chapter then briefly traces the memorial's position on the question of gallery displays of frontier violence since the 1970s. In greater depth, I consider how this position is reflected in the activity of collecting and in the galleries themselves. I use as a case study the refurbishing of the colonial gallery in February 2019 to highlight some of the difficulties faced by historians and curators in telling frontier stories in a national museum. I conclude by speculating about where future research might take this debate.

It is not only through its galleries that the AWM tells Australian histories. Publications are another significant avenue by which historians and curators at the memorial fulfil the institution's charter to disseminate Australian military history. Taking myself as an example, I note that while working at the AWM, I wrote about frontier violence in a monograph, book chapters

and media articles (e.g. Rogers, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a, 2019b). In this chapter, however, I focus on the memorial's galleries, as the content of publications fits into a different analytical field.

Frontier violence: An overview

The frontier period, and frontier violence, have been variously defined and described (e.g. Broome, 1988, p. 120; Reynolds, 2013, pp. 49–50). In this chapter, I use the term 'frontier violence' to describe the violent clashes between settlers and Indigenous peoples across Australia between 1788 and 1928. In the Australian colonial context, the broad term 'violence' encompasses a variety of acts, including war, massacre, poisoning, spearing, rape, shooting, pitched battle, skirmish and arson. On the British side, the main actors were convicts, free settlers, government officials, British Army regulars and colonial police. Across Australia, Indigenous peoples fought as individual clans, language groups and sometimes larger alliances to retain their land, their law and lore, their sacred sites and their economies (Broome, 2010, pp. 36–56; Connor, 2008; Rogers, 2018b, p. 30). This is the broad picture – the details varied across different locations and during more than a century of tactical and technological development. As I have argued elsewhere, violence was not incidental to British settlement in Australia – it was not an unfortunate side effect. Rather, violence was the means by which British settlers dispossessed Indigenous peoples across the continent (Rogers, 2018a, pp. 10–14, 222–224, 2018b, p. 30).

Settler pursuit of profit on the grasslands of south-eastern Australia was the initial impetus for conflict between Aboriginal people and British settlers. Early settler and explorer accounts of the Australian landscape emphasise grasslands (Batman, 1835; Boyce, 2013, p. 5; Mitchell, 1839, p. 171). Grasslands represented a potentially huge profit to be gained from sheep grazing. It is becoming more widely understood among non-Indigenous Australians that these grasslands were formed by generations of carefully coordinated Aboriginal burning regimes (Gammage, 2011, p. 3). This gradual realisation has come after more than two centuries of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander testimony to the importance of custodianship and care for Country.

For much of the twentieth century, the violence of the British invasion of Australia was ignored by Australian historians and the Australian public. In 1968, the anthropologist WEH Stanner posited that non-Indigenous

Australians practised a ‘cult of disremembering’ of Aboriginal people and their shared histories, which he termed ‘the Great Australian Silence’ (Stanner, 2009, p. 189). Against this trend, Amanda Nettelbeck (2011, p. 1118) reminds us that frontier violence was often remembered by local historians and local museums, sometimes even ‘cemented in social memory as foundational moments’. At the national level, academic historians began to ask questions about Australian colonial encounters from the 1970s onwards, and, in particular, the violence that facilitated the British settlement of Australia (e.g. Reynolds, 1982; Rowley, 1970). This work followed a rising interest in Australian history among archaeologists and art historians, and heralded a growing recognition of frontier violence in Australian society (Attwood & Foster, 2003). Since the late 1970s, the AWM has considered whether frontier violence should be part of its displays (McKernan, 1991, pp. 293–294).

The Australian War Memorial

The AWM was conceived as a place to remember and understand the experience of Australian forces during World War I. The institution traces its history to that war, and to its founder, Charles Bean, Australia’s first official war historian (McKernan, 1991, pp. xi–xiii). Australian families suffered through WWI, with the deaths of more than 60,000 members of the Australian Imperial Force and the return to Australia of more than 150,000 wounded personnel (Pedersen, 2010, p. 454). For some families, the end of the war marked the beginning of life with a physically or mentally scarred veteran (Larsson, 2009, pp. 16–17). Despite these losses, Bean and the others working to establish the AWM were concerned that Australians could not understand the realities of a distant war. The memorial’s approach since that time has been, in historian Michael McKernan’s (1991, p. xii) phrase, ‘commemoration through understanding’.

In pursuit of this aim, the AWM has three distinct but interlinked purposes: it is a shrine, an archive and a museum (AWM, 2021; Inglis, 2008, p. 316; McKernan, 1991, p. xiii). The shrine comprises the Pool of Reflection, the cloisters that house the Roll of Honour (bronze panels that list the names of more than 103,000 Australians who have died in conflict or on operations while serving in the Australian Defence Force and its predecessors), and the Hall of Memory, in which is entombed the Unknown Australian Soldier. In its expansive collection of the records and relics of war, the AWM

functions as a central archival repository of the experiences of Australians during wartime. The memorial's third function, the museum, is the focus of this chapter.

Although founded to commemorate WWI, the AWM building in Canberra did not open until 1941, at a time when Australia was involved in an even larger world war, one that would strike much closer to home. As McKernan (1991, p. 178) observes: 'This was a different war, in scale, in Australian involvement, and, above all, in mood.' Some returned men of WWI were concerned that their experiences might be subsumed by WWII (McKernan, 1991, pp. 159–191). Some simply assumed that a new memorial would need to be built for WWII (McKernan, 1991, p. 178). From the time of its opening, therefore, Australians have debated the precise contours of the AWM's role. As with all museums, the question of whose stories are to be told and how they are to be told have always been subject to negotiation.

A few words on the AWM's governing legislation are in order. The AWM is an Australian federal agency, with its charter defined by the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980*. The AWM was initially established by the *Australian War Memorial Act 1925* as the national memorial for those who had died in the war beginning on 4 August 1914, the day Britain declared war on Germany (Section 2). Later Acts, however, have not listed eligible wars but rather used a formula first developed in a 1952 amendment: 'any war or war-like operations in which Australians have been on active service' (Section 3[b]). This formulation was not without difficulties of its own. Then director John Treloar was concerned that this iteration left out non-combatants such as Australians who had served as official photographers, as war correspondents, in the Merchant Navy or in non-government organisations such as the Red Cross (McKernan, 1991, pp. 227–228). It was not until a 1975 amendment to the Act that the AWM could commemorate these Australians left out of the 1952 Act (McKernan, 1991, pp. 261–262). The 1980 Act, which is the current legislation, made the AWM a statutory authority, no longer with a board but a council, bringing it in line with the National Library of Australia and the National Gallery of Australia (McKernan, 1991, pp. 287, 289). The 1980 Act (Part I, Section 3) is most significant for history-telling because it added to the AWM's remit, for the first time, the causes and aftermath of the wars in which Australians have fought (see also McKernan, 1991, p. 287).

The AWM's position

The AWM publicly stated its position on frontier violence in a media release in 2014. Acknowledging that 'the protracted conflict that occurred during the colonial dispossession of Indigenous Australians is a tragic fact of Australia's history', the statement drew on the memorial's charter to define the role of the institution:

As defined in the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980*, the Memorial's official role is to develop a memorial for Australians who have died on, or as a result of, active service, or as a result of any war or warlike operation in which Australians have been on active service. The definition does not include internal conflicts between the Indigenous populations and the colonial powers of the day. (AWM, 2014)

The AWM's statement notes that the colonial militia units that were raised from the middle of the nineteenth century – which are sometimes seen as the precursors to the modern Australian Defence Force – were not involved in frontier violence. The story of these units is told in the memorial's colonial galleries. The statement adds that because the British combatants in frontier violence were settlers, police or British soldiers the story falls outside the remit of the AWM.

Such, then, is the bald statement of policy. Yet there is a seeming tension between words and deeds. The AWM's galleries do mention violence between Aboriginal people and British settlers. My research suggests that this has been the case since the late 1980s, with the opening of *Soldiers of the Queen*, the permanent colonial gallery. At some point in the late 1980s, the lithograph *Mounted Police and Blacks*, drawn by Godfrey Charles Mundy (1852), was displayed in that gallery. Like many of the photographs and artworks in *Soldiers of the Queen*, it did not have a caption. This lithograph will be studied in detail in the next section, including its seeming contradiction of the AWM's statement – the colonial force in question having 'police' in its title.

The AWM has not denied the historical fact of frontier violence, but some have interpreted its policy to be a denial of the importance of frontier conflict in understanding Australian history. The memorial has argued that the story of frontier violence does not belong in the memorial, but rather at the National Museum of Australia or another national institution (AWM, 2014). The memorial did, however, go through a period in the 1980s when it advanced the view that frontier violence did not amount

to 'war', and thus did not belong in a war memorial. This line of thinking continues to be raised from time to time by commentators, but it has been roundly rejected by various historians, including military historians (e.g. Coates, 2006, p. 6; Grey, 2008, pp. 28–29; Reynolds, 1982, pp. 198–202). Because AWM historians keep up to date with historiography, this old debate around the definition of war is no longer relevant to their thinking.

In the late 1970s, the AWM commissioned historian Geoffrey Blainey to write a report on improving the gallery displays. Among other recommendations, Blainey (1979) observed:

Within the next decade, I imagine that the Memorial will have to include a section on Aboriginal–European warfare, including the Black War in Tasmania in the 1830s, the guerrilla attacks on white settlers etc.

This recommendation was one of several ideas for exhibition renewal and building works that appear to have been too radical for the director, Noel Flanagan, and the board of the time (McKernan, 1991, pp. 292–294). In the 1980s, Blainey was not alone in highlighting frontier conflict. At the memorial's 1981 history conference, one of its historians presented a paper on the 1838 Slaughterhouse Creek massacre (Stanley, 1981). In 1984, the AWM's council approved a chapter on frontier conflict to be written for its bicentennial publication, *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* (Macintyre & Clark, 2003, p. 205). Written by the historian Richard Broome (1988), the chapter remains one of the best overviews of frontier conflict in Australia. The inclusion of this chapter did not elicit the kind of superheated outrage that would come to define the 'History Wars' some 15 years later. As Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark (2003, p. 205) noted nearly 20 years ago: 'Back in the 1980s it was still possible to call for a more inclusive commemoration of war without attracting accusations of betrayal.'

Macintyre and Clark's words remind us that perceptions of frontier violence form part of a broader public debate about Australia's colonial past. For its part, the AWM's responses to queries on frontier violence disclose a theme of avoiding the repudiation of past practices while answering to public expectations. Public opinion is notoriously hard to pin down, but historical and curatorial research is one avenue by which it is inferred. In the course of their research, the AWM's curators and historians remain in touch with (and contribute to) the changing contours of historiography. This is as true for the aspects of Australia's history that are obviously within the memorial's remit, such as Australia's involvement in WWI, as it is for more wideranging

elements of Australian experiences of war and conflict. Curators and historians are citizens of Australia too and, as such, are aware of the thrust of debates in the public sphere, especially those that impact directly on work carried out at the memorial.

There is also a practical consideration: the AWM holds very few objects relating to the frontier period. This has affected the other colonial-era conflicts too, as the case of the South African (Boer) War reveals. As noted above, the original 1925 Act had established a national memorial for those who had died in the war beginning 4 August 1914. When the legislation was amended in 1952, the memorial's task was changed to cover 'any war or war-like operations in which Australians have been on active service' (Section 3[b]). It was only at this point, 50 years after the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging, that the AWM began actively collecting objects and manuscripts from the South African War. As former AWM historian Peter Stanley (2007, p. 30) notes, 'the process of collecting (or not collecting), of deciding what should be kept or displayed or emphasised, is an act of historical interpretation'. Common to all stories told at the memorial, the existing collection feeds into decisions about what to display, but there are also processes by which exhibition curators can seek out and acquire new collection material with which to tell stories. Gradual change is evident with regard to frontier violence, with the memorial's most recent *Collection Development Plan* listing 'material related to frontier violence' among collecting priorities (AWM, 2019, Section 14).

Colonial refurbishment

The AWM purchased two significant works of art by noted Aboriginal painters in 2016, both of which relate explicitly to frontier violence. These artworks, Queenie McKenzie's (1996) *Horso Creek Killings* and *Ruby Plains Massacre I* (1985) by Rover Thomas (Joolama) depict events that occurred from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia. The paintings were first displayed at the entrance to *For Country, for Nation*, a temporary exhibition that related histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service. *For Country, for Nation* was on display at the AWM in 2016 and 2017 and later toured nationally. Because they were painted with traditional pigments on canvas, the artworks were too fragile to go on the exhibition's national tour, and a print of *Ruby Plains Massacre I* joined the travelling exhibition

instead. In late 2018, plans were made to put one or both paintings on permanent display in the memorial's galleries. These plans led to a modest refurbishing of the Soldiers of the Queen gallery, which dated from the late 1980s, making it the oldest in the memorial until its dismantling in June 2020. The gallery itself was a museum piece, reminiscent of an older way of presenting history. An example, noted above, was that many of the images in the gallery were uncaptioned; such an approach would be unthinkable now.

A team that included an art historian, curators, exhibition officers and others assembled to refit the selected wall of the gallery. I was the historian on the team, and my role was to research and help write text relating to the objects. *Ruby Plains Massacre I* is based on histories that Gija Elders told Thomas. The painting depicts the aftermath of a massacre of Aboriginal people by white stockmen on Ruby Plains cattle station, probably around the turn of the twentieth century. The bodies were discovered by Aboriginal stockmen, who walked off the station in protest (Thomas, 1985). The text label for *Ruby Plains Massacre I* was carried over, with minor tweaks, from its earlier display. One of my main tasks, therefore, was to write a text label for *Mounted Police and Blacks*, the lithograph noted above that had long been in the gallery but was uncaptioned. Even the relatively straightforward story behind this little lithograph presented challenges for our team.

The attack depicted in the lithograph is the Waterloo Creek (or Slaughterhouse Creek) massacre, which was carried out by British soldiers in a colonial police unit, the New South Wales Mounted Police, on or about 26 January 1838 (see Rogers, 2018b, pp. 30–31). This 'collision', as contemporary British sources called it, occurred when mounted police under Major James Nunn battled with Gomeroi warriors near the Gwydir River in northern New South Wales. One mounted policeman was wounded, and one soldier estimated that 40–50 Gomeroi were killed, although, as always, the exact death toll is impossible to know with certainty (Connor, 2002, pp. 102–113; Ryan, 2003). The New South Wales Mounted Police was originally formed in 1825 to deal with Aboriginal resistance and bushrangers. Its members were British soldiers from the New South Wales garrison, and for this reason the unit has sometimes been referred to as the 'Military Mounted Police' (Milliss, 1992, pp. 15–16; O'Sullivan, 1979, pp. 1–34). The dress-uniform shoulder scales of this unit, dating from the 1840s, were also on display beneath the lithograph. These scales are the earliest known Australian military uniform items to feature Australian native fauna – the kangaroo and emu. *Mounted Police and Blacks* was first

published in the memoir of its creator Mundy, a professional officer in the British Army. Mundy was in Sydney from 1846 to 1851 as deputy adjutant-general of British military forces in Australia (Macnab & Ward, 1967).

On display in a history museum, *Mounted Police and Blacks* presents three significant problems. First, Mundy's sketch is not that of an eyewitness – he was not even in the colony when the event occurred. It is believed that he heard about the event from soldiers in the Sydney garrison during his time there (Katz, 2017, pp. 47–49). Second, piecing together the actual timeline of the killings is challenging. There appear to have been two 'firings' or periods of shooting: the first in response to a mounted policeman, Corporal Hannan, being speared in the calf; and the second a short time later that lasted some hours (Ryan, 2003; Watson, 1924, pp. 243–259). The third issue is the perennial problem of numbers killed. This is a particularly acute problem at an institution that is centred on the Roll of Honour, on which the names of all Australians who have died in uniform are listed without rank or decoration (McKernan, 1991, p. 226). In any case, a military history museum would be expected to give an estimate of the number of deaths. Yet none of these problems was insuperable. Much is lost in the fog of war, and many displays in the AWM can only present what is known, or alert visitors to that which cannot be known using surviving records. Three soldiers gave testimony to the inquiry into the 1838 killings at Waterloo Creek, and each gave a different version of events. The commanding officer, Major Nunn, did not go on the second firing, and saw four or five bodies (Watson, 1924, p. 251). Lieutenant Cobban saw four or five bodies as a result of the first firing, so his account matches Major Nunn's. He then saw three or four bodies as a result of the second firing. However, he was not with the main body of men at the second firing, being on the other side of the river from them (Watson, 1924, pp. 255–256). Sergeant John Lee estimated that 40–50 people were killed in the second firing (Watson, 1924, p. 251). He was in the thick of the fighting, and his account provides insight into the nature of the event: 'The confusion was so great and the scrub so thick, that I had enough to do to take care of myself and my horse.' Seeking to explain why the shooting had gone on for so long, he testified: 'It was impossible for the party to act in a body; every man had in fact to act for himself' (Watson, 1924, p. 251). These men gave sworn evidence nearly 18 months after the event took place, in April 1839, after the Myall Creek executions, which could possibly have tempered their evidence.

An AWM exhibition is developed by a team. Our team included an art curator, who was Aboriginal; the Indigenous liaison officer; an exhibitions officer, who, among other things, coordinated the production of display cases and text labels; an objects curator; and a historian. After the text was written, an editor copyedited it to ensure that it conformed to the memorial's style guide. As is usual for work on a permanent display, all the team members were memorial staff. When captioning *Mounted Police and Blacks*, our team was faced with the challenge of transmitting all the relevant, nuanced information via a caption card of perhaps 150 words. The final text label read as follows:

The Slaughterhouse Creek massacre of 26 January 1838 occurred when the New South Wales Military Mounted Police, under the command of Major James Nunn, set out in response to violence on the Liverpool Plains. At Slaughterhouse Creek, also known as Waterloo Creek, the Mounted Police battled with Gomeroi warriors. A trooper was wounded, and one soldier estimated that 40 or 50 Gomeroi were killed.

This image originally appeared in the 1852 memoirs of Lieutenant Colonel Godfrey Mundy. A professional officer in the British Army, Mundy was in Sydney from 1846 to 1851 as deputy adjutant-general of British military forces in Australia. The Mounted Police at that time was made up of British soldiers, and when he arrived in Sydney Mundy heard about the incident from soldiers in the garrison. He completed this print from his imagination. (AWM, 2020)

Our team hoped that a useful tension could be developed through the juxtaposition of *Ruby Plains Massacre I*, which was based on oral tradition handed down to Thomas, and *Mounted Police and Blacks*, an artwork that was likewise created on the basis of received oral testimony, but for which official documentary evidence also existed. The juxtaposition of two forms of storytelling, one Aboriginal and one British colonial, might generate audience contemplation of the different ways frontier stories might be remembered and told.

The challenges our team faced at a national institution were similar to those faced by the curators at the Wyndham Historical Society Museum, described by Dalley and Barnwell elsewhere in this collection. In preparatory discussions, our team identified the same tension between oral history and written historical records, for example. A major difference between the AWM and the Wyndham museum, however, is that a national museum

must appeal to a national audience. To answer this need, we included an overview text panel relating the two frontier incidents to the broader story of frontier conflict across Australia.

Future movement

The AWM's public stance on frontier violence has been a topic of analysis by historians, journalists and other commentators. Some have viewed the memorial's position as indicative of a broader reticence about, or denial of, frontier conflict in Australian public discourse (e.g. Ashenden, 2019; Chun, 2018; Daley, 2021; Inglis, 2008, pp. 423–427, 501–504). Critics have asked why the memorial's stance has not shifted with changing understandings of Australia's history in scholarship. Peter Stanley has speculated that the AWM's council is concerned that acknowledging the frontier wars 'will somehow bring Anzac into disrepute' (quoted in Green, 2014). Others have argued that the memorial has traditionally encouraged a type of white Australian nationalism. In addition to more inclusive forms of commemoration, such as *For Country, for Nation*, these commentators argue, gallery exhibitions on the topic of the frontier wars would be an important step in national reconciliation (Reynolds, 2013; Stephens, 2014).

Whether Australia's frontier conflicts 'belong' in the AWM's galleries remains a live question. Past decisions of the Council of the Australian War Memorial have been guided by interpretation of the Act. The Act defines 'Australian military history' as the history of 'wars and warlike operations in which Australians have been on active service', including in the lead-up to them and the aftermath of them. The Act includes in its definition of the Defence Force 'any naval or military force of the Crown raised in Australia before the establishment of the Commonwealth' (Part I, Section 3). Questions asked in 2008 by the late Ken Inglis, historian of Australia's war memorials, are still relevant. Were British soldiers who were deployed against Aboriginal people on the orders of a colonial governor to be considered 'Australian forces'? Should colonial police or private citizens mustered by the colonial government under martial law be considered 'military' (Inglis, 2008, p. 426)?

The uniform shoulder scales and the artwork *Mounted Police and Blacks* went on display in *Soldiers of the Queen* at some point in the late 1980s. This fact suggests that the AWM's curators at the time deemed the New South Wales Mounted Police to be a 'military force of the Crown raised

in Australia'. These objects met the terms of the Act because the unit was raised by a colonial authority, and the men of the unit were British regular soldiers, led by an officer of the British garrison. In the years since Inglis's book was published, work on frontier histories around Australia has raised other moments in colonial Australian history that might also need to be considered in this light.

Stephen Gapps's 2018 book, *The Sydney Wars* (which, incidentally, won the AWM's inaugural Les Carlyon Literary Prize in 2020), drew attention to the establishment of 'loyal associations' in New South Wales by Governor Hunter in 1800. Raised in response to the threat of an uprising by Irish republicans among recent convicts, these associations comprised property-owning free men in Sydney and Parramatta. They were armed and drilled by garrison soldiers. In 1816, Governor Macquarie ordered more associations to be raised in response to Aboriginal warriors committing 'atrocious Acts of Barbarity on the unoffending Settlers and their Families' in the Nepean and Hawkesbury River districts (Gapps, 2018, pp. 144–146, 247–248; Macquarie, 1816). Among other things, Gapps (2018, p. 9) argues that historians have overlooked the militarisation of early New South Welsh society. Recent work on Australian frontiers shows that other colonies can be similarly characterised. In the Port Phillip District (Victoria), some authorities understood their role to be one of military occupation. They established the first native police force and based its structure on the sepoy armies of British India (Rogers, 2018a, pp. 147–185, 192). In Queensland, the Native Police Corps has been described by its historians as a military force (Bottoms, 2013, pp. 5–6; Ørsted-Jensen, 2011, p. 43; Richards, 2008, pp. 7–9). In Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and at the Swan River (Western Australia), colonial authorities put British regular soldiers in charge of armed settlers in pursuit of Aboriginal people (Brodie, 2017, pp. 231–235; Owen, 2016, pp. 72–75). The question for the AWM is whether these varied colonial forces fit the definition of colonial-raised military units, as stipulated by the Act.

Conclusion: The frontier at the AWM

Violence was an important means by which the British dispossessed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. Histories of frontier warfare, however, were largely ignored by Australian historians for much of the twentieth century. In stark contrast, the remembrance

of twentieth-century warfare in Australia has been marked by ritual and tradition, both grassroots and state-sponsored. The AWM was conceived in the shocking industrial warfare of WWI, and it serves as a shrine, a museum and an archive of the wartime experiences of Australians. Its role has been debated since it opened, with questions being asked about whose stories were to be told and the manner in which they should be told.

As the case study of *Mounted Police and Blacks* shows, frontier violence is a very different conflict from the overseas, twentieth-century conflicts that have formed the mainstay of the memorial's permanent exhibitions. The familiar hallmarks are absent: clearly defined combatants, an accurate estimate of casualties, and a great distance between the physical fighting and the mainstream of Australian society. Mundy's artwork instead refers to a sporadic conflict that took place here, where we live, and involved armed and unarmed civilians as well as military, police and warriors. Casualties were not always recorded, and colonial authorities and settlers often deliberately understated Aboriginal losses. A code of silence reigned. For the AWM, questions of classification also arise. Do ad hoc and mixed military-civilian colonial forces equate to military forces raised by the Crown? Where do colonial police sit in this?

The AWM's Act informs the council's position on frontier violence. In 1952, colonial armed forces entered the memorial's remit, as did the causes and consequences of war in 1980. Collecting activity belies the seeming hard line of the memorial's public statements, with acquisitions relating to frontier warfare dating back to at least the mid-1980s. The placing of some of these objects on permanent display suggests an evolution in the memorial's approach to the frontier wars, but the direction the memorial will take in the future remains to be seen.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the constructive questions posed by the other panellists. I also thank my colleagues at the Australian War Memorial: Michael Bell, Margaret Farmer, Lachlan Grant, Karl James and Andrew McDonald, who read earlier drafts and with whom I have had productive discussions on this topic.

References

- Ashenden, D. (2019, 15 January). Saving the war memorial from itself. *Inside Story*. insidestory.org.au/saving-the-war-memorial-from-itself/
- Attwood, B. & Foster, S. G. (2003). Introduction. In B. Attwood & S. G. Foster (Eds.), *Frontier conflict: The Australian experience* (pp. 1–26). National Museum of Australia.
- Australian War Memorial. (2014, 27 January). *Will the Australian War Memorial tell the story of colonial conflicts?* awm.gov.au/media/press-releases/will-australian-war-memorial-tell-story-colonial-conflicts
- Australian War Memorial. (2019). *National Collection Development Plan, 2019–2022*. awm.gov.au/about/organisation/corporate/national-collection-development-plan
- Australian War Memorial. (2020). [Museum label for Godfrey Mundy, *Mounted police and blacks*]. awm.gov.au/collection/C174087
- Australian War Memorial. (2021). *About the Australian War Memorial*. awm.gov.au/about
- Australian War Memorial Act 1925* (Commonwealth, No. 18, 1925). classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/awma1925181925271/
- Australian War Memorial Act 1952* (Commonwealth, No. 12, 1952). legislation.gov.au/Details/C1952A00012
- Australian War Memorial Act 1980* (Commonwealth, No. 104, 1980). legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C01079
- Batman, J. (1835). *Journal, 10 May – 11 June 1835*. State Library of Victoria, MS 13181. handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/249297
- Blainey, Geoffrey. (1979). Letter to Robin Wade, 2 April. In *Proposed alterations to the AWM building – 1978*. Australian War Memorial, AWM315 234/003/007, part 2.
- Bottoms, T. (2013). *Conspiracy of silence: Queensland's frontier killing times*. Allen & Unwin.
- Boyce, J. (2013). *1835: The founding of Melbourne and the conquest of Australia*. Black Inc.
- Brodie, N. (2017). *The Vandemonian war: The secret history of Britain's Tasmanian invasion*. Hardie Grant.

- Broome, R. (1988). The struggle for Australia: Aboriginal–European warfare, 1770–1930. In M. McKernan & M. Browne (Eds.), *Australia: Two centuries of war & peace* (pp. 92–120). Australian War Memorial.
- Broome, R. (2010). *Aboriginal Australians: A history since 1788* (4th ed.). Allen & Unwin.
- Chun, M. (2018, 3 May). Enduring silence: Anzac Day and the Frontier Wars. *Overland*. overland.org.au/2018/05/enduring-silence-anzac-day-and-the-frontier-wars/
- Coates, J. (2006). *An atlas of Australia's wars* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Connor, J. (2002). *The Australian frontier wars, 1788–1838*. University of New South Wales Press.
- Connor, J. (2008). Frontier wars. In P. Dennis, J. Grey, E. Morris, R. Prior & J. Bou (Eds.), *The Oxford companion to Australian military history* (2nd ed., pp. 216–221). Oxford University Press. doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780195517842.001.0001
- Daley, P. (2021, Autumn). Fault lines at the Australian War Memorial. *Meanjin*. meanjin.com.au/essays/fault-lines/
- Gammage, B. (2011). *The biggest estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia*. Allen & Unwin.
- Gapps, S. (2018). *The Sydney wars: Conflict in the early colony, 1788–1817*. University of New South Wales Press.
- Green, M. (2014, 25 February). Lest we remember: The Australian War Memorial and the frontier wars. michaelbgreen.com.au/lest-we-remember/
- Grey, J. (2008). *A military history of Australia* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press. doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511481345
- Inglis, K. S. (2008). *Sacred places: War memorials in the Australian landscape* (3rd ed.). Melbourne University Press.
- Katz, M. (2017). *Not as the songs of other lands: Nineteenth-century Australian and American landscape painting*. Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne. art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/exhibitions/not-as-the-songs-of-other-lands-19th-century-australian-and-american-landscape-painting/
- Larsson, M. (2009). *Shattered Anzacs: Living with the scars of war*. University of New South Wales Press.
- Macintyre, S. & Clark, A. (2003). *The history wars*. Melbourne University Press.

- Macnab, K. & Ward, R. (1967). Mundy, Godfrey Charles (1804–1860). In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mundy-godfrey-charles-2490/text3351
- Macquarie, Governor Lachlan. (1816, 20 July). [Proclamation]. *Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser* (p. 1). nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2176728
- McKenzie, Q. (1996). *Horso Creek killings* [natural earth pigments on canvas]. Australian War Memorial, AWM2017.665.1. awm.gov.au/collection/C2584648
- McKernan, M. (1991). *Here is their spirit: A history of the Australian War Memorial, 1917–1990*. University of Queensland Press.
- Milliss, R. (1992). *Waterloo Creek: The Australia Day massacre of 1838, George Gipps and the British conquest of New South Wales*. University of New South Wales Press.
- Mitchell, T. (1839). *Three expeditions into the interior of eastern Australia* (Vol. 2). T. & W. Boone.
- Mundy, G. C. (1852). *Mounted police and blacks* [lithograph]. Australian War Memorial, ART50023. awm.gov.au/collection/C174087
- Nettelbeck, A. (2011). The Australian frontier in the museum. *Journal of Social History* 44(4), 1115–1128. doi.org/10.1353/jsh.2011.0047
- Ørsted-Jensen, R. (2011). *Frontier history revisited: Colonial Queensland and the 'History War'*. Lux Mundi Publishing.
- O'Sullivan, J. (1979). *Mounted police in NSW*. Rigby Ltd.
- Owen, C. (2016). *'Every mother's son is guilty': Policing the Kimberley frontier of Western Australia, 1882–1905*. UWA Press.
- Pedersen, P. (2010). *The Anzacs: Gallipoli to the Western Front*. Penguin Books.
- Reynolds, H. (1982). *The other side of the frontier: Aboriginal resistance to the European invasion of Australia*. Penguin.
- Reynolds, H. (2013). *Forgotten war*. University of New South Wales Press.
- Richards, J. (2008). *The secret war: A true history of Queensland's native police*. University of Queensland Press.
- Rogers, T. J. (2018a). *The civilisation of Port Phillip: Settler ideology, violence, and rhetorical possession*. Melbourne University Press.

- Rogers, T. J. (2018b). From the frontier to the veldt: Indigenous Australian service, 1788–1902. In L. Grant & M. Bell (Eds.), *For Country, for nation: An illustrated history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service* (pp. 29–39). Australian War Memorial.
- Rogers, T. J. (2019a). Anzac trauma and frontier violence? Re-examining the Coniston Massacre. In K. Reeves and C. Holbrook (Eds.), *The Great War: Aftermath and commemoration* (pp. 124–134). University of New South Wales Press.
- Rogers, T. J. (2019b). William Murray and the Coniston massacre: A returned soldier's frontier crimes were probably not a result of his war service. *Wartime* 85, 36–40.
- Rowley, C. D. (1970). *The destruction of Aboriginal society*. Australian National University Press.
- Ryan, L. (2003). Waterloo Creek, northern New South Wales, 1838. In B. Attwood & S. G. Foster (Eds.), *Frontier conflict: The Australian experience* (pp. 33–43). National Museum of Australia.
- Stanley, P. (1981). 'While acting under orders': The Slaughterhouse Creek massacre of 1838. Unpublished paper. *Australian War Memorial Military History Conference*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.
- Stanley, P. (2007). In the 'street of the historians': Practising history at the Australian War Memorial. *Dialogue*, 26(2), 30–38.
- Stanner, W. E. H. (2009). *The Dreaming & other essays*. Black Inc. Agenda.
- Stephens, Alan. (2014, 7 July). Reconciliation means recognising the Frontier Wars. *ABC News: The Drum*. abc.net.au/news/2014-07-07/stephens-reconciliation-means-recognising-the-frontier-wars/5577436
- Thomas, R. (1985). *Ruby Plains Massacre I* [natural earth pigments on canvas]. Australian War Memorial, AWM2016.718.1. awm.gov.au/collection/C2148046
- Watson, F. (Ed.). (1924). *Historical records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. XX. Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament.

This text is taken from *Memory in Place: Locating colonial histories and commemoration*, edited by Cameo Dalley and Ashley Barnwell, published 2023 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

doi.org/10.22459/MP.2023.11