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Pour Noble et Vaillante France: Les relations franco-australiennes, les identités franco-australiennes pendant la Grande Guerre

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‘For noble and valiant France’: French-Australian relations, French-Australian identities during the First World War

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the perception, projection, and mobilisation of French identity in Australia during the First World War. Australia's participation on the Western Front from 1916 onwards meant that more Australians than ever before had a tangible connection with France, and it became a place of trauma as well as fascination. Yet, from the beginning of the conflict, French identity, language, and culture took on a heightened significance in Australia. French-Australians and their networks of francophones and francophiles played an important role in shaping this mobilisation of identity and culture, despite their numerically small proportion of the population. Drawing on a wide variety of French and Australian sources, this thesis examines the responses of French-Australians to the war and analyses how French identity was expressed in both civilian and military contexts.

This thesis represents the first study to incorporate an extensive use of French sources to examine Australia's First World War experience, and to analyse the role played by French-Australian relations. The French sources, notably the French diplomatic archives, demonstrate that the discourse regarding French identity was driven by a diverse range of people, in multiple spheres, and on many levels of society. French-Australian connections and networks based on social, political, cultural, and linguistic identities reveal a transnational influence which is not widely known. From diplomats and government officials, to businessmen, soldiers, charity workers and the ordinary man on the street, many people took part in, and were influenced by, the discourse.

In the public domain, French national identity, French cultural imagery and essentialised images of France and French people were linked to the rhetoric of patriotism and were used to influence public opinion and support for the war. On the home front, the French-Australian fundraising organisations drew on transnational connections and successfully combined cultural representations with patriotism and fundraising. In the military sphere, French national identity had implications for men of military age who were subject to French military service obligations, and their experiences reveal a wide range of opinions and attitudes towards French identity. Examining how French identity was projected and mobilised, by whom, and for what purpose, provides a new perspective from which to understand this pivotal period of Australian and French shared history.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

This thesis comprises only my original work.

Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

This thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of the bibliography, tables and appendices.

Signed: _____

Pauline Mary Georgelin

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‘For Noble and Valiant France’: French-Australian identities, French-Australian relations during the First World War

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A note on translation

The translation of original quotes from French to English are my own unless otherwise stated. To indicate that a quotation was originally in French, I have marked the footnote with an asterisk. The originals can be found in the Appendix under the heading of each respective chapter.

Introduction

Prologue: 'a highly artistic, cultivated and sensitive race'

In July 1918, Melbourne businessman W.A. Hartnell was moved to write to French Vice-Consul Henri Fliche. Enclosing his £25 donation for the French national day appeal had inspired him to spontaneously express his feelings about France and the French. Describing himself as an ordinary man in the street, but also one who was interested in history, he reflected on the centuries of conflict between Britain and France, but noted that the wars had always been conducted with chivalry and respect. Hartnell praised the stoicism of the French, 'a highly cultivated, artistic and sensitive race'. He declared: 'I have always admired your people – during the war I have learned to love them.'[1]

When Britain entered the Great War on 4 August 1914, Australia in its capacity as a Dominion was also at war. Australia immediately pledged its support, and dissenting voices of socialists and pacifists were largely drowned out in an overwhelming outpouring of loyalty and affection for the 'mother country'.[2] The extent to which Britain would support France under the terms of the *Entente Cordiale* had been subject to some uncertainty as the dominoes fell and the European powers mobilised. However, after initial indecisiveness, Britain did enter the war, officially in response to the German violation of Belgian neutrality.[3] In Australia, the British Empire and its reasons for going to war remained central in the discourse of patriotism throughout the war. Early patriotic displays, if not purely Empire focussed, highlighted Belgium in particular, and the Allies more broadly. However, as the war progressed France took on a greater prominence in the discourse as a reason to *continue* the war. Declaring one's admiration and love of France became equated with patriotism, and francophilia – once the preserve of the cultured elite – permeated through the country.

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[1] Hartnell to Fliche, 10 Jul 1918, MAE 428PO/1/50.

[2] Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Crows Nest, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin, 2013); John Connor, Peter Stanley, and Peter Yule, *The War at Home*, vol. 4, The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2015), 147–54.

[3] Robert Tombs and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (London: William Heinemann, 2006), 464–65; Robert Tombs and Emile Chabal, eds., *Britain and France in Two World Wars* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

Sir John Madden, Chief Justice at the Supreme Court in Melbourne, appealed to the public on the occasion of the French national day in July 1915. His words aimed to inspire pro-French sentiment and encourage support for fundraising.[4] Madden described the destruction wrought on French industry, the loss of occupied cities, the 'suffering and self-sacrifice' of the French people. He concluded that Australians could lessen the 'dreadful pain and sorrows of our comrade – noble and valiant France – by the knowledge that even the most distant people of the world loved to console and thank them'. Both letters display the emotive rhetoric of patriotism which was commonplace throughout the war, and Madden's letter demonstrate the role played by newspapers in both influencing and expressing public opinion. Hartnell felt sure he had comprehended the idea of what a French person was like, and his opinion reflected the discourse of the day. Why did he think that the French were a highly cultured and artistic race? How had he learned to love them? The phrases he used drew on prevalent essentialist imagery of the time, incorporating racial stereotypes, pro-war propaganda and the established clichés of French identity. The manner in which such clichés were disseminated, by whom and for what purpose, is one of the questions that will be explored in the following chapters.

General introduction

This thesis investigates French-Australian identity and French-Australian relations during the First World War. It explores how French people and francophones in Australia responded to the war and analyses the variety of ways in which French identity was perceived and mobilised in Australia. During this pivotal period for the France-Australia relationship, French identity was expressed through connections between French people and Australians in both civilian and military contexts. Australia's participation on the Western Front from 1916 onwards meant that for Australians, France became a place of trauma as well as fascination. Australia turned its attention to France, and more Australians than ever before had a tangible connection with the country. From the beginning of the conflict, French identity, language and culture took on a heightened significance in Australia. This thesis argues that French-Australians and their networks of francophones and francophiles played an important role in shaping this mobilisation of identity and culture, despite their small proportion of the population. Drawing on

[4] *Argus*, 28 Jun 1915, 8; MAE 428PO/1/48

original French sources my research provides a transnational analysis of this cultural mobilisation, and a new layer of understanding to Australia's war experience.

My approach is influenced by cultural history and transnational history functioning as two intertwining strands. Cultural history, which studies the practices and symbols through which humans make sense of their world, incorporates a broad range of subjects and methods, and spans high culture to popular culture.[5] Although cultural history is not a new field, it was in the 1990's that cultural approaches transformed First World War historiography. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost traced the historiographical arc from diplomatic and military histories, to economic and social, finally noting the emergence of the 'cultural turn'.[6] In recent decades historians of the First World War have created a large corpus, incorporating cultural history with other approaches to analyse the conflict, and have extended the field to include more personal, affective experiences of war, such as the symbolism of commemorative practices, the role of art, and of intellectuals.[7] Joan Beaumont and Bart Ziino have provided useful works on the Australian historiography.[8] Eminent cultural historian John Horne further developed the field with his concept of cultural mobilisation: Just as men, money and resources needed to be mobilised for the war effort, so too did minds.[9] It is through 'the gathering together of the cultural institutions and practices of a nation at war in support of the war effort' that minds are mobilised.[10]

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[5] Peter Burke, *What Is Cultural History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).
[6] Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History, Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[7] Heather Jones, 'As the Centenary Approaches: The Regeneration of First World War Historiography.', *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 3 (2013): 857–78, http://dx.doi.org.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/10.1017/S0018246X13000216; Some of the key historiographical overviews include John Horne, 'End of a Paradigm? The Cultural History of the Great War', *Past & Present* 242, no. 1 (1 February 2019): 155–92, https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gty039.
[8] Joan Beaumont, 'Remembering Australia's First World War', *Australian Historical Studies* 46, no. 1 (2015); Bart Ziino, '"Total War" in Australia: Civilian Mobilisation and Commitment, 1914–18', in *Australians and the First World War*, ed. Kate Ariotti and James E. Bennett (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 165–82, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51520-5_10; Bart Ziino, 'The First World War in Australian History', *Australian Historical Studies* 47, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 118–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2015.1021820.
[9] John Horne, ed., *State, Society and Mobilisation in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[10] Jay Winter, 'Cultural Mobilization: Henry Moore and the Two World Wars', in *A World at War, 1911-1949 : Explorations in the Cultural History of War*, ed. Catriona Pennell and Filipe Ribiero De Meneses (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 19.

Jay Winter's discussion on identities has been a useful framework from which to consider the place of identity in this thesis.[11] Winter proposes three layers or levels of identity. Firstly, the individual identity, which is self-created, but which also reflects the individual's relationship to the society or group to which they belong. Secondly, the collective identity, which in wartime becomes the national. The collective identity expresses alterity created through opposition to an 'other' and, as Winter explains, the 'other' can be the enemy or another 'other' which is defined by exclusion, for example those on the home front as opposed to soldiers. The third layer of identity is local, defined by one's city, or *quartier*. Identities are always complex and multilayered, but in wartime they take on heightened significance: identities are essentialised and stereotypes abound. Identities are performative: 'reaffirmed through the cultural performance of social bonds'.[12] Winter notes the role of nostalgia in the construction of identity, for example in wartime London music halls, theatre and song, British people expressed nostalgia and a 'tendency towards constructing an idealised past.'[13] Complex layers of identity, nostalgia and idealisation will be analysed in the chapters which follow.

The second strand of the framework is transnational history, which seeks to understand 'the flow and transfer of ideas, people and goods between countries, and between communities, real and imagined.'[14] Pierre-Yves Saunier's theoretical framework of transnational history describes the structure of connections and circulations which in turn create relations between people and communities. Saunier argues that the transnational flow of relations can be one of alignment, where both groups work towards a common cause, or one of mobilisation, in which one group influences another group to action, and likens this flow of influence to that described under its more European label: cultural transfers.[15] Horne's historiographical overview of First World War cultural history, however, adds that 'if cultural history only deals with representations it misses half its subject, which is experience.' Horne defines experience as actions shaped through representations and cultural symbols, as well as by events.[16] It is where action and ideas intersect. These two elements combine in my research question, which aims to consider

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[11] Jay Winter, 'The Practices of Metropolitan Life in Wartime', in *Capital Cities at War, Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[12] Winter, 4.
[13] Winter, 13.
[14] Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 60.
[15] Saunier, *Transnational History* see chapter 4 especially.
[16] Horne, 'End of a Paradigm?', 161.

how French identity as an idea and French-Australian relations, expressed through actions – intersected and informed each other. In its exploration of what it meant to be French in Australia during the First World War, this thesis demonstrates the multifaceted nature of French identity in Australia. The various manifestations of French identity reflect different aspects of French-Australian connections during the war, and varying contexts in which French identity was conceived and utilised. French identity could be a specific factual concept, such as when it was tied to nationality, and a man's name was on the list of soldiers to be called up. Frenchness could be that cultural flavour which fundraising activities capitalised upon to engender feelings of connection and inspire the practical help, goods and money, that Australians provided to France. Frenchness operated alongside as an abstract and powerful concept which was appropriated to extoll the virtues of Britain's and Australia's ally.

The originality of this research lies in its use of French archives to build up a picture of wartime Australia from a new perspective. The French sources reveal the identities and motivations of a section of Australian society which mobilised French-Australian identity in response to the First World War. This thesis provides new information regarding the extent and nature of French-Australian connections during the war, and argues that these transnational connections played an important role in motivating ordinary Australians to maintain support for the war. The thesis also provides new information about French-Australian identity, in its exploration of what constituted Frenchness in Australia. It addresses wider questions of national identity and patriotism, demonstrating that such issues had implications for ordinary people and also influenced public discourse about the war. Within the transnational framework, the consul, fundraising organisations, civilian volunteers and soldiers constitute spaces of interface and connection, of the transfer of people, objects and ideas between Australia and France. Including soldiers' and civilians' experiences provides a wide perspective on the French in Australia and different prisms through which to view ideas of nationality and patriotism.

This thesis has made use of a wide range of French and Australian archival sources, among which are the French diplomatic archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE), held at two sites. The archives held at La Courneuve near Paris contain the correspondence between the diplomatic representatives and the ministry, but worthy of special mention are the archives of the Melbourne French consulate located at the MAE's second site in Nantes. The story of the rediscovery of the French consular archives, found

in a Melbourne garage in 1987 after being lost for decades, is a fascinating tale.[17] However, corresponding files for the Sydney consulate from this period have never been located. Because of their relatively recent rediscovery, the Melbourne consular archives have been used in only a limited way to date. Although they have informed scholarly work on the French presence in Australia, they have not been used as the basis for a significant study of Australia's First World War history.[18] This research breaks new ground by drawing on the MAE archives to examine Melbourne's – and Australia's – wartime society, culture, and politics from the French perspective The consular archives have allowed this study to build up a complex picture of Australia's French population on the eve of the First World War, orbiting around the vice-consul as a hub, and to focus not only on the prominent and successful, but also on the less well-known, the 'ordinary people' who otherwise may have remained anonymous. Sometimes, biographical details are able to be well-fleshed out, at other times it is necessary to piece stories together, when records provide just a tantalising glimpse.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Australia, as Bergantz argued, Frenchness was a multifarious concept propagated by different groups and individuals, both French and non-French. Frenchness was a form of cultural and social capital, utilised to express social status and good taste, not simply an inherent state.[19] As this thesis demonstrates, the archives themselves confirm that having been born in France was not the only prerequisite for having a say on what constituted French identity. Indeed, amongst the individual records we find people born in France who could not actually speak French and who had no real allegiance to France. Conversely, some Australian born people were fluent in French, held French nationality and acted as interpreters in France during the war. There are many grey areas where nationality, national identity and language skills overlapped. In September 1916 seventy-one Melbourne citizens signed a letter – a petition – asking Aristide Briand, French Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, to award the Legion of Honour to Australian David Norman Trenery, in recognition of his

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[17] Colin Nettelbeck, 'The Consul's Treasure', *Explorations*, no. 7 (1988): 19–23.
[18] Bergantz's PhD thesis is the most notable work drawing on these archives. Alexis Bergantz, 'French Connection: The Culture and Politics of Frenchness in Australia 1890-1914' (PhD, Canberra, Australian National University, 2015); Alexis Bergantz, 'Mapping the Consul's Treasure: A Discussion and Guide to the French Consular Archives', *The French Australian Review*, no. 61 (Australian Summer 2017); Alexis Bergantz, 'The Culture and Politics of Frenchness in Australia (1890-1914): Reflections on a Research Project', *The French Australian Review*, no. 62 (Australian Winter 2017).
[19] Bergantz, 'French Connection'.

work raising funds for France. We will discover this episode in Chapter Five, but it is noteworthy that the petitioners referred to themselves as 'the French colony of Victoria, and Friends of France'.[20] Less than half of those on the list were born in France. However, because of their cultural or business ties, their friendships, or because of the work they had done raising funds for France, they all considered themselves worthy of making representations to the French Government. It is therefore not appropriate, and I believe too limiting, to confine the study to those who were born in France. French, francophone and francophile 'Friends of France' all form part of this story of connections, just as they considered themselves part of the story at the time.

The French presence in Australia dates to the earliest journeys of Europeans to this country, and the history of encounters between British and French explorers and colonisers. During the nineteenth century, French immigrants were among those who travelled from all parts of the world in search of adventure or a better life. Although they were less numerous than other immigrant groups, French migrants to Australia worked in a great variety of professions, contributed to the development of many industries, and their impact outweighed their numbers.[21] Anny Stuer's demographic study of French migration to Australia, in which she analysed census data, remains a valuable reference.[22] Stuer concluded that the French mostly migrated as individuals, and did not settle in groups, in contrast to other major groups of immigrants. Many of them were enterprising individuals who came to Australia 'to do their own thing'.[23] A notable exception was the French colony in Sydney: centred around the wool industry, commerce, and shipping, it constituted a visible presence.[24] Despite the stereotypical Frenchman's individualistic streak, the establishment in Sydney of the French Chamber of Commerce, the French language newspaper *Le Courrier Australien*, and a French benevolent society were tangible proof of community. In both Melbourne and Sydney, formal and informal networks centred around commercial and cultural interests, while religious and educational institutions run by French congregations also provided links to France. The image of France and Frenchness in Australia mirrored patterns of the historical

[20] MAE 428PO/1/44.
[21] Ivan Barko and Eric Berti, eds., *French Lives in Australia* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015).
[22] Anny P. Stuer, *The French in Australia* (Canberra: Department of Demography ANU, 1982).
[23] Stuer, 45.
[24] Jacqueline Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia: A Personal History of Wool and War* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017).

relationship between France and Britain, alternating occasional hostility and distrust with affection and admiration. However, the relationship imported to Australia was further complicated by South Pacific colonial rivalries engendered by Australia's geographic proximity to New Caledonia. Trade and shipping routes which linked Australia and France in the antipodes formed another sub-strata of the relationship.[25]

There are several broad strands of enquiry in Australian historiography to which this thesis responds and contributes. It adds to the dialogue regarding the role of the First World War in the creation of Australian national identity and the Anzac Myth. Through its investigation of French and French speaking soldiers from Australia, it presents a different picture of diversity in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). It is useful to consider the expression of French-Australian identities examined here against the broader backdrop of the evolution of Australian national identity during the war. Holbrook noted that the first historians of Australia's war, Charles Bean and Ernest Scott, framed their narratives through the dichotomy of British versus Australian identity.[26] For Scott, Australians were Britons transplanted in a new country, while Bean emphasised essential Australian traits, exemplified in the soldiers of Anzac. Australia's participation in the war was framed firmly in its position as a dominion of the British Empire, and phrases such as 'British stock' pepper the rhetoric. Yet, this was a period when Australians were also pondering their national identity. The response by French-Australians, expressing identity outside of the British Empire label helps illustrate the complexity of identities, and when Australians civilians reached out directly to France, they demonstrated a desire to frame their response separately. An example which will be presented in Chapter Four shows French-Australian fundraising organisations sending their donations directly by ship to Marseille for distribution to French charities, not only because that was a more direct route, but because it allowed their goods to be directly distributed, and thus retain their Australian label. Thus, we glimpse a relationship between the expression of French-Australian identity and the development of Australian identity in the First World War period, where defining oneself as 'not British' was a common factor. The complexity of identities is also examined in the first section of the thesis which deals with the experiences of soldiers. As Winter observed, soldiers from the British Empire colonies inhabited a sort of 'middle ground', both part of an imperial effort but also of an emerging

[25] Robert Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1990).
[26] Carolyn Holbrook, *Anzac - The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney: New South, 2014).

national identity.[27] Similarly, some of the French-Australian soldiers inhabited a kind of middle ground, belonging both to France and Australia, whether by birth, or inherited nationality.

Australian historians, like their international colleagues, have highlighted the value of connecting the civilian and home front experience of war to that of the fighting front, to better understand how societies endured the war, and were transformed by social and political upheaval.[28] Many have noted the phenomenon of mass civilian involvement in philanthropic organisations, and the unprecedented involvement of women in the public sphere through volunteer work. My thesis examines this phenomenon through the transnational paradigm of French-Australian connections. Scholars of Australian wartime philanthropy have not explored this aspect of Australia's home front history, for which the French archives reveal a rich seam of information. This thesis also examines French-Australian connections in the context of pro-war propaganda and the debate over conscription, an issue which divided Australian society from 1916 onwards. Robin Archer and Sean Scalmer argued that the conflict over conscription was a major element of Australia's war experience, and had a fundamental impact on post-war society. On two occasions French-Australian relations overlapped with the conscription conflict – either being influenced by it (Chapter Five) or attempting to influence it (Chapter Seven). In this way the present work contributes to the ongoing scholarship, shedding light on the Australian home front experience by analysing the use of French cultural images and stereotypes, as well as official French intervention within those public conversations.

By analysing the meanings and implications of French identity in Australia during the war, this thesis responds to Ziino's call to further understand how Australia endured the war.[29] He argued that despite the growing body of cultural histories, the Australian historiography of the First World War has focussed more on military operations, and the experience of soldiers. Ziino identified the history of civilian commitment to the war as an area for further study, noting that when Australian historians have explained the civilians' ability to sustain commitment to the war they mostly attribute this to the agency of the coercive powers of the state. Ziino takes as his starting point the theories of Annette

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[27] J. M. Winter, *Remembering War : The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century.* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 2006), 158.
[28] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*; Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*.
[29] Ziino, '"Total War" in Australia'.

Becker and Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau, who famously coined the term 'war culture' to describe the collective system of representation and thought which gave the war its meaning and allowed soldiers and civilians to endure it.[30] Ziino asks whether Australians fought a 'total war' and whether a 'war culture' existed in Australia.[31] This thesis will show that the mobilisation of French culture and identity played a part in the Australian home front experience, and can offer another perspective on how Australians endured the war.

The thesis is divided into three sections, each analyses the question from the perspective of a different section of society. When war was declared, the first people to be affected were young men of military age. The first section of the thesis, Chapters One to Three, begins by exploring how French-Australian men of military age responded to their French military service obligations, and then analyses the experience of French speaking soldiers in the Australian army. At the individual level, it asks how the soldiers' experiences were shaped by French nationality, cultural identity, or by speaking French. For the French-Australian soldiers, French identity was a fluid and contested concept, which was influenced by extrinsic factors at a political, legal and social level, and intrinsic factors on the personal level. For the young men of 1914, being designated or considered a French citizen brought with it a set of obligations and complications.

Chapter One examines French army soldiers from Australia – men who were categorised as French citizens – who answered the call to serve under the French flag, leaving Australia to fulfil their French military service obligations. The chapter draws on French archival sources to build up a picture of this section of society in a way which has not been done before. It outlines the French military obligations as they applied in Australia and analyses their implications and implementation for young French-Australian men. The chapter presents a range of individual experiences and responses by these men, and reveals the complexity of French identity as it was perceived by the men themselves, by other Australians, and by both French and Australian government officials as they haggled over which country had 'rights' over the men. The range of sometimes conflicting and contradictory views regarding what constituted French citizenship and

[30] Annette Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 102.
[31] Ziino, '"Total War" in Australia'.

identity provides a new perspective of the diversity of French citizens resident in Australia.

Continuing the investigation into French-Australian men of military age, Chapters Two and Three explore the role of French and French speaking Australians in the AIF. While French citizenship entailed military obligations, some eschewed this requirement. Chapter Two examines those who chose voluntary service in the AIF – rather than join the French army – and seeks possible reasons for their choices. The Frenchmen in the AIF were a diverse group, and their diversity allows us to explore the concepts of citizenship, naturalisation, national identity, and national allegiance, and the conflict between externally imposed identities and intrinsically expressed allegiance which influenced their choices. This chapter adds to previous studies of the multicultural aspect of the AIF which have analysed other ethnic groups represented in its ranks, providing a more complex picture of its composition. Implications of the 1916 Aliens Registration Law for French citizens are also analysed.

The French-born men who joined the AIF were not the only soldiers to have French language skills. Chapter Three investigates the role of French language skills in the AIF, asking how French was learned, taught and incorporated as part of the Australians' experiences on the Western Front. The chapter profiles some of the soldiers in the AIF who were French speakers, but not French-born, and explores the variety of ways in which they acquired their skills. It also analyses the contribution of French-Australians who established language classes for soldiers. French language skills bridged the home front and the fighting front, and underpinned French-Australian connections as AIF soldiers used French in the front line and while behind the lines, as interpreters, and as teachers of French to their comrades.

The second section, Chapters Four to Six, focus on the civilian sphere and trace how French-Australians, along with those in their francophone and francophile communities formulated a specifically French-focussed response, through the establishment and operation of French fundraising organisations, such as Australian Branches of the French Red Cross, and charities for French mothers, babies, and orphans.

The operation of French war charities in Australia is one of the less well-known aspects of the two countries' shared war experience. My research expands on previous scholarship, analysing the transnational connections which facilitated the transfer of

people, ideas, money and goods between Australia and France. The thesis argues that the French patriotic funds functioned not only to raise money and goods, but also to differentiate and define French identity, as they combined positive images of France with patriotism and philanthropy. Chapters Four and Five trace the establishment and operation of French fundraising organisations in Melbourne and present new information about the networks, based on local and transnational connections, which underpinned their success. Chapter Four focuses on the years 1914 to 1916 examining how French-Australian fundraising charities were created and became increasingly successful. Chapter Five examines the period from late 1916 until early 1919, a transformative period for the Australian home front, when early optimistic hopes for victory were replaced by resolution, determination and disillusionment as the war dragged on, and casualty lists grew. In Australia, society was divided along religious, political and class lines by the debate over conscription, with the first plebiscite held in October 1916. Chapter Five contextualises the operation of the French fundraising organisations within the conflicts which beset society and reveals that at times they were also subject to their own conflicts.

Chapter Six traces the mobilisation of French-Australians and francophiles in the cause of French fundraising in Sydney and the other capital cities. The organisations they created incorporated French identity and cultural symbols into patriotic work, and transnational networks facilitated the transfer of goods and money directly from Australia to France. The chapter then analyses another aspect of the French-Australian experience on the home front: the visits to Australia by French soldiers based in New Caledonia as they transited through Australian ports on their way to and from the front. Their presence provided an opportunity for intercultural connection, and reveals aspects of the French-Australian relationship in the Pacific Region.

In the third section, Chapters Seven and Eight broaden the focus to examine the influence of officially organised French bodies which functioned as vectors for shaping and disseminating French identity in Australia. This section shows the actions of French officials and organisations in multiple contexts who shaped the image of France using a range of soft power, cultural diplomacy and propaganda strategies, in public and behind-the-scenes situations. It examines their motivations and their interactions with Australians, and considers the transnational dialogue inherent in these examples of soft power. Chapter Seven focusses on pro-France propaganda in Australia. It explores the networks of connection between the French government and its representatives in

Australia, tracing how official pro French and pro war messages were disseminated. Key findings are the inclusion of Australia in the French government's broad international propaganda policy, despite Australia's geographic distance and small population; France's use of links with French and francophile Australians to help monitor and shape public opinion, and France's interest and intervention in the issue of conscription in Australia. Chapter Eight continues the theme of soft power and examines two French organisations which operated in Australia during the war: the Alliance Française (AF) and the French Economic Mission. The AF had been part of the French cultural landscape in Australia since the creation of its first Australian committee in Melbourne in 1890. In Chapter Eight we see how the AF's pre-existing policy of international language diplomacy was appropriated to encourage support for France, and by extension for the war. The permanent presence of the AF contrasts with the short term yet powerful phenomenon which was the 1918 French Economic Mission to Australia. While stand-alone studies of the Mission's impact have been done, I re-contextualise its visit to consider its place within French-Australian relations over the course of the war, and in relation to the French connections already examined in the thesis.

The thesis title and research questions refer to national units 'France' and 'Australia' – and the case studies therein draw on examples from across Australia. However, Melbourne figures more prominently in the thesis for two reasons. This is mainly driven by the sources – the MAE archives – and their detailed and extensive information for Melbourne which is not available in the same way for Sydney. However, it is worth bearing in mind that Melbourne was the location of the Australian capital city, as well as Australia's second largest city, with a diverse and representative population. Winter, in his comprehensive and informative social and cultural study of Paris, London and Berlin at war referred to these capital cities as 'unique and emblematic'.[32] Melbourne's position as a major city, reflecting and influencing national opinion, provides a setting which is both typical and unique. Nonetheless, events in Sydney, as well as other Australian towns and cities, also inform this analysis of the role of French-Australians, and of French culture and French identity in the context of a society at war. Chronologically, the present study covers the period from 1914 – 1919. Although hostilities on the Western Front ended in November 1918, it took several months for Australian soldiers to be repatriated.

[32] Winter, 'The Practices of Metropolitan Life in Wartime'.

Moreover, the connections described in this thesis persisted beyond the war, and had long lasting consequences, but 1919 represents the neat demarcation line of the post-war period.

Chapter 1. 'Frenchmen for the colours': French army soldiers from Australia

When France's general mobilisation was announced on 1 August 1914, Frenchmen living in Australia were subject to French military service laws and therefore would also be mobilised. This chapter examines the profiles, activities and experiences of some of those French-born men living in Australia and analyses the implications of their French nationality, in the context of the war. It investigates how French identity was interpreted and expressed by the men themselves, and by others, including their fellow French-Australians, military and government officials, and members of the general public. The French archival sources relating to their military service obligations provide the identities of those men of military age living in Australia who were considered French citizens. However, as it is the Melbourne Consular archives which exist for this period, and not those of Sydney, this has influenced which stories can be told to illustrate the whole. As combatants in a horrific and murderous war, the men were subject to the universally shared experience of physical and psychological trauma, an aspect of the war which has been well documented by historians.

The soldiers who left Australia to serve under the French colours demonstrate the multiple layers of identity – from the individual to the group, personal and public, described by Winter. The sources thus permit us to approach the question both from below and above – from the perspective of those in government and power, as well as ordinary people: city and country dwellers, rich and poor, businessmen and labourers, who are thus representative of a broad cross section of society. The originality of this chapter lies in providing both a wide and a detailed analysis of this group of French-Australians, demonstrating the diversity of their socio-economic backgrounds, their life trajectories, and their expression of French identity.

I. The French population in Australia at the outbreak of the war

The 1911 census provides the data on the French-born population in Australia just prior to the war. It shows that 2,876 people gave their birthplace as France: 1,973 men and 903 women.[1] Of these, around nine hundred were men of military age, with some approaching

[1] Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, April 1911, Volume II: Birthplaces. Australian Bureau of Statistics, https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2112.01911?OpenDocument

the upper age range, therefore by 1914 several hundred men living in Australia were liable for French military service.[2] Of these, the majority were mobilised into the French army, while a small proportion, around 170, joined the AIF instead. Still others, following the pattern set by the general population, chose not to enlist at all. The French-born population in Australia was small, and just one of many groups of non-British immigrants. In fact, Australia's German community made up the largest group of non-British born immigrants.[3] A handful of studies of the French in Australia have examined the participation of men from Australia in the French army. The most notable is Dwyer's detailed study of the Sydney wool buying community, the strong link it formed between France and Australia, and the personal experiences of the author's own French-Australian family. Dwyer, whose father and uncles fought as poilus, gives the individual stories of the woolbuyers as well as tracing the historical significance of the wool industry in the story of French-Australian relations.[4] In Western Australia, De Pierres traced the contributions of his French-Australian ancestors who fought in the French army in both world wars.[5]

The recruitment of French soldiers in Australia set off a dialogue between France and Australia. Communication between consular and government representatives demonstrate the sometimes conflicting, dual demands on these men. The implementation of the mobilisation order demonstrated the scope and variety of French ideas around identity, patriotism and duty by those who either considered themselves French, or were considered by the French authorities as such. Among those who were mobilised into the French army from Australia, some were high-profile, and others not. In what way did such contrasting positions affect their choices and their experiences? The interactions between the French and Australian actors involved in the mobilisation provides us with a transnational perspective on French-Australian relations that were significant in this context, as men, information and ideas were transferred between the two communities on a local level and between the two countries at the macro level.

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[2] Stuer, *The French in Australia*.
[3] The 1911 Census notes 32,990 people born in Germany, and 2,876 people born in France. Australia's population in 1911 was 4,455,005.
[4] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*.
[5] Paul de Pierres, *Alliés Pour Toujours Allies Forever* (Wyalkatchem W.A.: Paul de Pierres, 2014).

II. France's diplomatic representatives in Australia

France had established diplomatic representations in Australia in the 19th century.[6] In 1914 the French government was represented in Australia by Vice-Consul Jules Homery, based in Melbourne who had responsibility for Victoria and Tasmania, and his superior, Consul-General Alexandre Chayet in Sydney who was responsible for the rest of the country. Homery arrived in Melbourne in late 1913. He immediately became part of the social scene and tried to make his mark upon the French community of Melbourne, with whom his dealings were not without conflict. He died suddenly of a heart attack in October 1916, and his role was temporarily filled by the Belgian Consul-General, Edouard Lauwers, until the arrival of Henri Fliche, the permanent replacement, in April 1917. In the less populated states, the French government was represented by consular agents who reported to the Consul-General in Sydney.

The consul's role was a multi-faceted one which encompassed a range of different responsibilities – from trade issues to registering births deaths and marriages of French citizens, to the promotion of French culture and language. It also included overseeing military service obligations for French men living in Australia. The consul kept details on file of French citizens living in his jurisdiction and communicated with the military authorities in France. Each year the '*classe'* of those men who would turn twenty that year was drawn up (the *tableau de recensement*) and instructions sent to each recruit. This included a medical examination, so that the young man would be declared fit for service, and in due course he would receive his *fascicule de mobilisation* or call up form. Of course, the consul could only ensure that every French citizen undertook his military service if the Frenchmen's whereabouts were known. Those mixing in the right circles of society in the major cities could easily be identified, but some living quiet lives in rural areas could manage not to be found. Sometimes enquiries had to be made. The call up form, when it was delivered to a recruit in France, included instructions for the postman. Should the recruit have gone missing, the postman was permitted to make discrete enquiries of the neighbours, but rather than go in search of the recruit himself, the postman was instructed to relay any useful information back to the authorities. The consul occasionally received letters from the recruitment bureaux in France, enquiring if a certain

[6] Bergantz, 'French Connection'; Colin Thornton-Smith, 'Paul Maistre, Vice-Consul and Later Consul for France in Victoria, 1886-1898, 1901-1908', *The French Australian Review*, no. 17 (December 1994): 3–47.

man had turned up in Australia. Finally, the *ordre de route* would arrive, and the recruit would depart to join his unit. Having received this order, if the young man did not arrive as instructed, he would be branded *insoumis* – an absentee or deserter.[7]

According to French law, all men born in France retained their French citizenship, even if once resident in Australia they had become naturalised British Subjects. Moreover, those with a French-born father also had the right to French citizenship, and therefore were legally bound to carry out their two-year military service – which became a three year obligation after the law was revised in 1913.[8] However, in Australia, French law did not apply and hence it was sometimes impossible to enforce compliance.[9] As late as September 1918, representatives of the French and Australian governments were still negotiating how to enforce the French law.[10]

There was some flexibility afforded to men living overseas – they could apply for a deferral of military service (*sursis*). Some were granted this deferral because they had a family, or because travel to France would be detrimental to their careers in Australia. In August 1914 many who had previously benefited from this had their situation revised, such as Louis Foulet, an artist, who had first been granted a deferral in 1912. Extending the deferral in June 1914, Homery had argued that Foulet's career as an artist would suffer if he were to return to France for military service. Implicit in this request was the esteem accorded to the profession of artist, that it constituted a valuable part of French culture. Similarly, in October 1914 Homery noted that Louis Gambeau, well known to the consul and 'a lovely young man' who was working at Government house as an 'aide-chef', was not yet required to go. He would be mobilised when required, explained the consul.[11] A

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[7] The word 'insoumis' and 'insoumission' – absent without leave in English, although often translated as 'deserter', contained different nuances of meaning in French military law. Although in 1911 Australia introduced a system of military training for young men for home defence, overseas military service was not compulsory in Australia. In France, an 'insoumis' was someone who had not reported for military service. The penalty for 'insoumission' was 5 years in prison. A deserter was one who went missing from the unit in which he was serving. (Dictionnaire de la Grande Guerre, Françoise Cochet and Remy Porte, 327-328. Joan Beaumont, Broken Nation Australians in the Great War, 13 and 32.)

[8] Note on application of the *Loi du 7 Aout* 1913 in Australia, MAE 428PO/1/48

[9] In 1911 The Department of External Affairs applied to have the situation regarding dual citizenship and French military service clarified by the Solicitor General. See legal ruling 431. https://legalopinions.ags.gov.au/legalopinion/opinion-431

[10] Miscellaneous (General): French deserters in Australia; repatriation of dependants of Australian soldiers, 1918, (File 3480. AJCP Reel No: 6992), (from Records of the Foreign Office / General Correspondence from Political and Other Departments (FO) / Correspondence. Political (FO 371)).1918. https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/235277403.

[11] Homery to Mademoiselle Craquelin, 29 Oct 1914, MAE 428PO/1/43.

sursis was also granted to Louis Crivelli from 1909-1913 while he continued his studies in medicine at the University of Melbourne.[12]

III. 'A Sacred Duty to Join the Colours'

i. August 1914: mobilisation

The telegram declaring French mobilisation reached the desk of the consul in Collins Street, Melbourne late on Sunday 2 August 1914. While Australian newspapers had still clung to shreds of optimism in their Saturday headlines, when they returned to publication on Monday, they presented the full extent of events unfolding in Europe. Would the French consuls have also been informed by telephone over the weekend? The telegram sent from Paul Cambon, French Ambassador in London, instructed them: '*prenez mesures nécessaires'* – 'take necessary steps'.[13] The first necessary step would be the notification to Frenchmen living in Australia of their obligations to report. The first call up notices appeared in the major daily newspapers on 3 August and were repeated regularly throughout the war.[14] Also on 3 August, the final day before Britain confirmed its declaration of war, both German and French citizens were free to answer the calls to the colours of their respective nations. The Sydney *Sun*'s evening edition reported that in Melbourne, streams of young men were already flowing to and from the offices of both the French and German consulates, eager to go back to their countries and join the armies.[15] Many made the voyage on vessels of the French-owned shipping company *Messageries Maritimes*, which operated well established routes between New Caledonia, Australia and France. Homery requisitioned berths for several Frenchmen on the liner *Sydney* which was to leave Melbourne on 1 September 1914. Some of those who travelled on the *Sydney* were taking advantage of the amnesty which had been declared by the French government.

ii. The Amnesty

Even prior to the war, the Consul was responsible for locating deserters. But as of August 1914, their situation became more complex. Swiftly following the mobilisation, the declaration of an amnesty for deserters residing abroad was sent to the consuls via Paul

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[12] Crivelli, Louis registre matricule, Archives de Paris.
[13] Cambon to Consul 2 Aug 1914, MAE 428PO/1/48.
[14] 'French Subjects Called On', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 Aug 1914, 10.; 'Frenchmen Called to Arms', *Evening News*, 3 Aug 1914, 1.
[15] 'Eager Applicants', *Sun*, 3 Aug 1914, 7.

Cambon, French Ambassador to Britain.[16] The instruction from Paris advised that the amnesty would apply to those whose desertion dated prior to 2 August, and would be granted until 14 September, for all those who voluntarily presented themselves to the military or diplomatic authorities. In Melbourne, several men took advantage of the amnesty immediately, reporting in person to the consul's office, where each one made an official declaration of repentance. The deserter's status was then normalised, provided he proceeded immediately to France via the next available ship, his fare paid for by the French Department of Foreign Affairs. The Department had also informed the consul that he was to be responsible for the distribution of payments to the dependents of mobilised soldiers who were the family's breadwinner.

iii. Some early responders

Several groups of men left Australian shores to report to their French units in 1914, on ships such as the *Malwa* in late August, the *Sydney* in September, and the *Dumbea*, in October. One of those who left on the *Sydney* was Leon Bazin from Le Havre. He had lived in Australia since 1902 and was married to an Australian. Although he had been *insoumis* for a time, he had regularised his situation in 1904 so that by 1914 he was classed as a reservist. The English language skills he picked up in Australia resulted in his posting as an interpreter for the British army. But this position would only last for a few months – he was relieved from his job for drunkenness.[17] Back in 1910 in Melbourne he had been described as a wharf labourer when the story of him being stabbed in a fight appeared in the newspapers.[18] The press reported on the movements of French troops through Australia throughout the war, often mentioning by name those who were mobilised. This visibility of France's war through a local perspective enhanced the perception of the relationship between allies as something which was not only happening in distant Europe but could be seen on the streets and at the docks.

In August 1914 the *Malwa* which was already carrying a large contingent of Frenchmen from Sydney, called in to Melbourne to pick up more.[19] Most of the twenty-one Sydney-based reservists travelling on the ship were wool buyers, among them Jacques Playoust.[20]

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[16] Telegram to consuls from French Ambassador London, 10 Aug 1914, MAE 428PO/1/48
[17] AD Seine Maritime, Régistres Matricules, Bazin Léon Louis, 1R3019
[18] 'Laborer Stabbed', *Herald*, 30 Aug 1910, 8.
[19] 'Frenchmen to the Front', *The Age*, 25 Aug 1914, 8.
[20] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*.

Jacques was the son of Georges and Marie-Thérèse Playoust. The Playoust brothers Georges and Joseph from Tourcoing had settled in Australia in the 1880's. Georges and his wife Marie-Therese, and Joseph and his wife Blanche were prominent citizens and leading members of Sydney's French community, active in business as wool buyers and through the French Chamber of Commerce, and contributing culturally through the Alliance Française. Four sons of Georges Playoust and three sons of Joseph joined the French army from Australia.[21] One of Jacques' brothers, nineteen-year-old René, was a student at the Agricultural College, and as Jacques sailed for France, René volunteered for the AIF along with some of his student friends. This act prompted the immediate disapproval of his family, demonstrating their unequivocal identity as French citizens. Jacques described his brother's act as 'by no means praiseworthy'. As Dwyer explains, René may have been unaware that his action would have led to him being branded a deserter. In any case, as he was only nineteen years old and had volunteered without the approval of his parents, René's Australian army service was terminated in a matter of days, but not without him first posing for a photo in the Australian uniform. [22]

At the same time as mobilisation of local Frenchmen began, so did recruitment for Australia's volunteer force. The Australian Government had agreed to send an initial contingent of 20,000 volunteers to support Britain, a target it met in the first month. There was little question of Australia's loyalty and sense of duty towards the British Empire. A combination of blood ties and practical considerations drove the strong identification with Britain. In 1911 half a million Australians had been born in Great Britain and many more traced their ancestry to Britain. Moreover, Australia's perceived vulnerability due to its status as a white colonial settlement in Asia meant that Australia was still largely dependent on Britain for defence.[23] The proportion of British-born recruits was highest in the first contingent raised in 1914, reflecting that the paradigm of British Empire loyalty was a major factor in enlistments at the start of the war. At the same time, in public meetings and at patriotic rallies across Australia people expressed solidarity and support towards France and Belgium.

The major powers of Europe, with their great standing armies had their systems for mobilisation well planned in advance. By contrast, Australia's small regular army had

[21] For a detailed study of the Playoust family, see Dwyer.
[22] Dwyer.
[23] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 14.

been flooded by volunteers. Among them were some French citizens. In September 1914, Homery wrote to Atlee Hunt, the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs:

> 'I have been informed that a certain number of Frenchmen resident of Melbourne, several of which are liable to military service in France, have been enlisted among the troops of the Australian Forces going to the front. It will greatly oblige me if you would kindly let me have the names of these men.'[24]

It took some time for Atlee Hunt to respond to this request – the Australian government had been inundated with applications. He replied that it would be too difficult to obtain the names of the French citizens who had enrolled in the AIF. 'To do that would entail a laborious search through 20,000 attestation sheets.' He offered Homery 'a copy of the AIF nominal roll when completed if that would suit', in the expectation that this would remain a list of 20,000 names.[25]

Australian army officer Lt. Col. Richard Courtney was one of those dealing with the influx of volunteers. Creating a new volunteer army brought all sorts of challenges, but both Courtney and Atlee Hunt had been considering what sort of men would be useful in this new army. From the headquarters of the newly formed 14th Battalion, in November Courtney wrote to Homery:

> 'Under instructions from Military Headquarters, Australian Commonwealth, I am to enlist if possible eight French Subjects who can read or write English fairly well, with the object of utilising their services as interpreters if necessary with the Battalion under my command […] I would be greatly obliged if you could put me in communication with likely men to whom, in your opinion, this proposal would appeal.'

A few days later Atlee Hunt wrote a similar request. The Vice-Consul's reply was unequivocal:

> 'Outside of those who may have enlisted already without my consent and knowledge in the Australian Expeditionary force, I do not know of

[24] Homery to Atlee Hunt 28 Sep 1914, MAE 428PO/1/48
[25] Atlee Hunt to Homery 11 Dec 1914, MAE 428PO/1/48

> a single able-bodied Frenchman here, under 49 years of age, who is at liberty to enlist in a foreign although allied army, as you are probably not ignorant of the fact that all Frenchmen, whether residing in French territory or elsewhere, have the sacred duty to join their own colours in time of war especially, or remain at the disposal of the country.'

Conversely, over the course of the war, Homery also received letters from Australians wishing to join the French army. By late 1915, a book published in Paris earlier that year was available in Melbourne. *Au Service de la France: Les Étrangers de 1914* told the story of the foreigners who had rallied to the cause of France.[26] With its dual function of propaganda and message of thanks to those foreign soldiers, the book's self-congratulatory tone is a declaration of how well France was viewed by the world. Men from all around were flocking to the cause of Freedom. In fact, 30,000 foreigners volunteered for the French army in the early days of the conflict.[27] Those who contacted the consul offering their services, may have been swept up by the emotion expressed in such books, as well the rhetoric in the press; many of them were simply too old for the AIF, while others had been rejected on medical grounds. To each, Homery explained that recruiting non-Frenchmen was not part of his role. If they wished to, they could travel to France at their own cost and apply to join a unit. He warned them though, that such a journey could be dangerous.

In the patriarchal society of the early twentieth century, French nationality was handed down via one's father. In response to newspaper advertisements of 15 October 1914, calling upon those in the *classe* of 1914, Homery received a letter from a young man in rural Victoria. He explained that as his mother was French, he expected the call up would apply to him, and he would be pleased to serve in the French army. However, on further questioning it was established that the young man did not have details of his father, only his mother, who was French and called Marguerite. The consul replied that without being able to prove the French nationality of his father, he would not be eligible. This insistence on nationality via the male would re-appear later in the war, when many Australian-born wives of Frenchmen were required to register as aliens.

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[26] M. C. Poinsot, *Au Service de La France: Les Volontaires Étrangers de 1914 (Avec Préface de M. Paul Deschanel)* (Paris: Dorbon-Ainé, 1915).
[27] Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Understanding the Great War*, 100.

iv. '*Bon pour le service militaire'* – implementing the French mobilisation

Responses to the mobilisation were not uniform: some Frenchmen displayed hesitation or reluctance towards the obligations imposed upon them. A detailed focus on the process of mobilisation for six young men from Victoria demonstrates the official French policy conveyed by the consul as he implemented the call up, and the varying responses by the men and their families to the imposition of the law. In September 1914 the *classe* of 1915 was called up early. Although born in Victoria, René Chaleyer, Emile Deville, and brothers Ambroise, Henri, Gaston and Leopold Lamandé were counted as French citizens.[28] The extensive correspondence created in the attempt to have these men join the French army reveals a range of attitudes regarding French nationality and duty. It takes us beyond the universal hurrahs and enthusiasm demonstrated in the public sphere to a more complex human response and suggests possible factors influencing their choice between French or Australian army. On 22 October 1914 the consul wrote to each of them. In the case of Deville, he wrote to Emile's father, requesting that he call at the consulate to arrange the inscription of his son in the *tableau de recensement* of the class of 1915. Once they had received their call up notice, the next step would be to arrange the medical appointment. On 10 November, Homery advised Doctor Crivelli that these six, listed under the class of 1915, had been requested to attend his surgery for their required medical examination. Documents were sent to Crivelli, to be returned to Homery with the results of each recruit's medical visit. Each form was filled in by Crivelli confirming that none of them had attended their appointments. Crivelli was dismayed that none of the six called-up young men had appeared for their check-ups, and condemned this lack of enthusiasm, lamenting that it would bring shame on the French community: 'they will no longer dare to call themselves Frenchmen'.[29]

Homery replied to Crivelli on 17 November 1914. He referred to their conversation, in which Crivelli had suggested contacting the Consul-General in Sydney, to see whether the names of these reluctant young men – '*réfractaires'* could be published in Sydney's French newspaper, *Le Courrier Australien*. Homery, however, suggested that would not be wise. While he approved of the patriotic motives for Crivelli's suggestion, he argued that it would cause embarrassment only to those who had been caught out avoiding their

[28] 'Classe de 1915' All the correspondence regarding the call up of these six young men is from MAE428PO/1/48.
[29] Crivelli to Homery, 16 Nov 1914, MAE428PO/1/48*

duty, whereas in fact there were so many others who had managed not to be found by the Consul, and who were also 'shirking their duty to their country'.[30] Homery suggested the best course of action would be to wait until three months after each one had received his individual call up, when they would be officially named '*insoumis'*. This potential public 'naming and shaming' surely would have had greater consequences for those men from prominent families, thus public image and social expectations could have been a factor for some in their choice between the French and Australian armies.

The six received their call ups – the *ordre d'appel* - from the *Bureau de Recrutement de la Seine* Melbourne on 25 May 1915, and the following day received their departure orders – *ordre de route* – instructing them to proceed to Cherbourg, to the 1st Colonial Infantry Regiment, to which they had been assigned. En route they were also to report to the 3rd Recruitment Bureau of the Seine, in Paris. They had three months to comply with the order, and report to their unit by 27 August. Any recruits who had difficulty paying for their own passage would have their costs paid for by the vice-consulate. René Chaleyer finally did attend his medical appointment, and on 1 June 1915, Doctor Crivelli declared him '*bon pour le service militaire'* fit for military service. Out of these six men, some would join the AIF, and only René Chaleyer would join the French army. He eventually sailed for France on 29 June 1915. From a prominent family, his story is perhaps not typical but it does reveal that privilege did not always make the road smooth. As a case study, Chaleyer illustrates the kinds of connections and experience which were available to French-Australians belonging to the more privileged class.

René Chaleyer was born in Melbourne in 1895 and attended an elite Jesuit-run private school. His father, Joseph Chaleyer was a wealthy and successful businessman. A member of the French Chamber of Commerce, he had been recognised and appointed by the French government in 1908 as official *Conseiller du Commerce extérieur de la France* – a five year appointment.[31] Joseph and his wife Madeleine were both born in France. As Stuer mentions, according to the 1911 census, it was more common for French men to have 'married out' ie married a woman who was not French, but the Chaleyers, along with the Crivellis, were among those who had not. Despite having lived in Australia for many years, the Chaleyer family retained strong ties with France and considered

[30] Homery to Crivelli, 17 Nov 1914, MAE428PO/1/48*
[31] *Le Courrier Australien,* 6 Nov 1908, 4.

promoting French language and French trade to be a patriotic duty. Hence it was natural for René to be registered for military service. René was the only son, and his father had worked hard to build up his successful business. In the period between René's call up, and his departure, Joseph Chaleyer called on the consul, and sent a note the following day requesting a written confirmation of their conversation. He had requested that René be required to do just one year of military service, and if the war lasted longer than a year, he be released at the end of the war.'[32]

As René prepared to leave Melbourne, Homery wrote three letters for him to take to France. The first was to the British Consul at Cherbourg. 'Allow me to introduce the bearer' he wrote. Chaleyer was from a 'distinguished French family of this town'. Homery suggested the British consul might introduce René to some nice English people in Cherbourg, and would be grateful for any kindness shown towards him.[33] The second letter was to the commanding officer of the headquarters at Cherbourg. 'The bearer of this letter belongs to one of the most honourable families of Melbourne. He has left everything, his family, his position, and his native land.'[34] The reply from Cherbourg confirmed that Chaleyer had arrived safe and sound and was being well cared for. 'You can rest assured that his superior officers will give him a most friendly welcome and will do all they can to ease his entry into military life. I will personally take a special interest in him, as he and all the other young men who have left everything in order to fulfil their duty, deserve to feel that they are not completely alone, and that someone is concerned for their welfare.'[35]

The third letter was to the Commander of the Recruitment Bureau of the Seine. Homery explained that Chaleyer had been posted to the infantry regiment and was proceeding there as ordered. However, Chaleyer had expressed his wish to join a different unit – he would prefer an artillery unit, or a motor transport unit. Homery asked the commander to take this into account, as Chaleyer was from a distinguished French family, and 'having put aside all considerations, was leaving his native land to travel so far to do his duty as a Frenchman.'[36] Although he did join the 1st Colonial Infantry Regiment upon his arrival in France, Chaleyer's desire to avoid the infantry was well-founded. After just a few

[32] J. Chaleyer to Homery, 16 Jun 1914, MAE428PO/1/48
[33] Homery to British Consul, 28 Jun 1914, MAE 428PO/1/48
[34] Homery to Commanding Officer Cherbourg, 28 Jun 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48 *
[35] Commanding Officer Cherbourg to Homery, 20 Aug 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48 *
[36] Homery to Commanding Officer, 28 Jun 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48. *

months, he was unwell and was later found to have heart problems. Thus, he was eventually transferred to the transport unit, as part of the 19th *Escadron de Train*.

At war's end, Chaleyer's demobilisation came too slowly for his father, and in December 1918, Joseph Chaleyer felt compelled to draw on his contacts again, writing to the consul (who was by this time Henri Fliche). He explained that René was now working as an interpreter for the Americans, in Germany. He begged Fliche to write to the minister, so that René could be demobilised as soon as possible. 'My health is failing, and I need him to help in the business.'[37] The official history of René's unit shows that they were indeed working for the Americans, and this unit included interpreters. I have not discovered evidence that shows René was officially an interpreter, but in this inter-army role his English skills would have been valuable. [38] The newspapers reported in April 1919 that Chaleyer was still with the French army and had been awarded the Croix de Guerre.[39] In late 1919 his parents travelled to France; René and Madeleine returned to Australia on 6 January 1920, while Joseph stayed in France until 1922. His extended stay may have been related to his import business, as trade and manufacturing were slowly recovering in France.

v. Sailors who deserted and then repented.

Many of those who took advantage of the 1914 amnesty granted to deserters were sailors. A closer analysis reveals how they arrived in Australia, and how the consul carried out his work to gather up recruits, highlighting the wide variety of Frenchmen who were in Australia in August 1914. What a world away their lives were from the comfortable successful businessmen of established French society in Australia! Adventure, poverty and the ancient seafaring traditions of France's maritime regions would have been the background to their naval service. But once in Australia, it must have been very tempting to re-start one's life in the land of promise. Some of them had arrived quite recently.

On 31 March 1914, a French ship 'bearing an exceptionally weather-beaten and sea-stained appearance' dropped anchor in Melbourne.[40] The *Mezly* had begun its voyage in Norway and was carrying a load of Baltic timber. The voyage had been exceptionally

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[37] J. Chaleyer to Fliche, 20 Dec 1918, MAE 428PO/1/51
[38] Historique du 19e Escadron du train des équipages militaires. Guerre 1914-1918, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6460687t/f1.image
[39] *Age*, 23 Apr 1919, 7.
[40] 'Storm-Tossed Barque', *Argus*, 1 Apr 1914, 17.

long and arduous, as she endured forty-two days of destructive storms, winds of 'a terrible force' and 'prodigious seas'. The exhausted crew had been finally able to rest and restore order to their ship, and upon arrival in Melbourne were deemed 'a fine, healthy-looking lot of men' who had 'apparently almost forgotten their exciting adventures'. Except that for a few of the French sailors, this voyage was perhaps the final straw. Some of them sneaked away from the ship in Melbourne and didn't look back. But although they were gone, they were not forgotten. One of them was young Fernand Denis. The consul was aware that Denis had found work in Yea, a rural town outside Melbourne. On 5 September 1914 Homery wrote to Denis' employer Mr Burch. Denis had not made an appearance at the consulate, despite having been instructed to do so, 'He must come to Melbourne […] so that he can catch the next steamer.' But by October he was still not found. Mr. Burch confirmed that Denis had left Yea, and was thought to be 'staying in an hotel'. He does not appear to have complied with the call up instruction.

Similar was the case for Jean Chevalier, who had deserted from the *Eugenie Fautrel* when it berthed in Melbourne in March 1913. Chevalier had briefly stopped in at the consulate, but then left for an unknown destination.[41] One of the consul's responsibilities was to meet the captains of French vessels, who would inform him if any of their crew left the ship, either legally or illegally. Both Chevalier and another sailor, Louis Quéré, had left the ship, and so Homery would have been keeping an eye out for them. They both duly reappeared in 1914 in time to be added to the list of *rapatriés* whose fares on the *Sydney* were paid for.[42] Emmanuel Pujol was another former sailor who reported straight away to the consul when war was declared. On 4 August 1914 he signed the declaration repenting his desertion before Homery.[43] He stated that he had been a sailor on the *Condorcet*, but had deserted the ship in Belgium in 1912. When and how he arrived in Australia is not stated, suggesting that if you did not want to be found, you could 'slip in quietly' to Australia, in those days before universal passport control. He was provided with a berth on the *Sydney*, joining the 183rd Infantry Regiment. Pujol died of wounds on 8 June 1915 in the Vosges.

Somewhat slower was the mobilisation of Auguste Choumery, born in Boulogne sur Seine in 1885, another *insoumis* who had made his life on the other side of the world. He

[41] Consul to Administration de l'Inscription Maritime à Morlaix, 25 Jun 1914 MAE 428PO/1/48.
[42] MAE 428PO/1/43.
[43] MAE 428PO/1/43.

was a popular French chef working at the Oriental Hotel in Melbourne, when the hotel staff held their annual ball in 1914.[44] It was about this time that he came forward to make his declaration under the amnesty. He declared that he had not originally reported for his military service in 1905 because he was living in London at the time. However, he did not leave for the front immediately, and continued working as a chef. By February he was working at the Commercial Travellers Association, a major city hotel. It seems his employer and colleagues had put pressure on him not to leave. He was well-liked, and the letter written by his manager also gives an indication of the consternation which France's obligatory military service provoked in some Australians, who perhaps preferred Australia's system of volunteer recruitment. The manager wrote to the consul:

> Our newly appointed chef Monsieur Choumery has devastated us by the news he has to go to the war. If you can possibly see your way to remit his sentence, without impairing his national rights, you will greatly oblige us and do much needed service to Australian gastronomy.[45]

Homery replied that duty compelled him to send Choumery to fulfil his military service, and 'may I add that Mr Choumery would only incur a sentence if he did not go.' Eventually in May 1915 Choumery produced a medical certificate to prove that it was ill health which had hitherto delayed his departure, (notwithstanding his work as a chef) and that he would be fit to leave by 9 June. This was indeed the date he left, on the *Osterly*, a British mail steamer, bound for Marseille. Choumery's position as a chef, which had been valued by his colleagues as vital to Australian gastronomy, was one of those cliched yet true examples of the typical profession of a Frenchman. According to the 1911 census statistics, 20.6% of French males living in Australia were working in the service industry as cooks or waiters.[46] Yet another cliched image is bound up in the story of the young French artist, Louis Foulet.

vi. An artistic young Frenchman: Louis Foulet.

On 16 July 1914, an exhibition was held at the Centreway Art Gallery in Melbourne. The genteel cultured folk of Melbourne flocked around the paintings of Louis Foulet,

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[44] 'Oriental Hotel Staff Ball', *Punch*, 13 Aug 1914, 30.
[45] MAE428PO/1/49.
[46] Stuer, *The French in Australia*, 155.

expressing their admiration for this talented young French artist. The guests of honour at the exhibition were the Governor General Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson and his wife Lady Helen. While principally consisting of landscapes painted in France and Australia, three paintings represented the seedier side of life in *Belle Époque* Paris: *Le Tripot (the Gambling Den), L'Absinthe* and *La Danse des Apaches*. The viewers were entranced by Foulet's reimagining of familiar Melbourne streetscapes, with such motifs as '*Collins Street'* and '*Elizabeth Street'* viewed through French eyes. The young artist's background was impressive, according to the newspapers. He had come from an artistic family – his father was an architect, and his grandfather a painter. He had won a gold medal at the *Salon des Indépendants* and had studied under the great Impressionist masters Monet and Pissarro. Nonetheless, despite his impressive background, *The Age* described his style as 'curiously archaic in his methods and in his outlook' rather than reflecting modern French techniques. His study of a Parisian woman was 'lacking entirely in atmospheric suggestion'.[47] *Table Talk*, reflecting on the social importance of the exhibition rather than its artistic merit, commented that Lady Helen had spent 'over half an hour' looking at the paintings, and judged Foulet 'a clever young artist'. [48] *Punch* proclaimed 'Foulet is the first French artist who has paid Australia the compliment of coming out to study her light and scenery.[49]

While Foulet had clearly studied art in France before arriving in Australia, he seems to have embellished his story for an Australian public eager for French culture. Foulet was born in 1891, thus making him twelve years old when Pissarro died, and research to date shows no trace of him having studied under Monet. Hence the somewhat lukewarm reception of his paintings by some (perhaps more knowledgeable) art critics. Foulet's exhibition provoked reflection on the place of European language and culture in Australia, demonstrating how closely it was tied to notions of elite society. Attending the exhibition was a way to prove one's cosmopolitan and European sophistication.

> Mr and Mrs. Henry Stead gave a reception on Friday afternoon at the Besant Lodge, Centreway, in order that many of Melbourne's artistic and literary people might meet the young French artist Louis Foulet, whose pictures are still delighting a constant stream of visitors daily. The gathering was pleasingly

[47] 'Exhibition of Paintings', *Age*, 8 Jul 1914, 14.
[48] 'Mon. Foulet's Exhibition of Painting', *Table Talk*, 16 Jul 1914, 9.
[49] *Punch*, 2 Jul 1914, 33.

> informal, and it goes without saying that it was enjoyable, for Mr. and Mrs. Stead are ideal as host and hostess. Quite a cosmopolitan atmosphere was created by reason of the fact that at least three languages, English, French. and German, were to be heard in any part of the room. If such a custom grew more common it might help powerfully to remove from Australians the reproach of being the worst linguists in the world, and give just the necessary encouragements to those of our progressive educationists who are strongly advocating the serious study of modern languages rather than the classics. Boys are apt to think that French is merely a "frill" for girls' education, but they generally take very readily to German. Mr. Stead gave it as his opinion that German was more generally useful for a businessman going through Europe than the language of diplomacy.[50]

One regional newspaper's report on the event expressed much about how Foulet encapsulated concepts of both French and Australian identity. The article features in the newspaper's social and gossip pages, *Woman's Miscellany* – the domain of women. Lady Munro-Ferguson spoke to Foulet in French at the exhibition – showing that she was European and cultured. 'It took an artist from Paris to show Melbourne how picturesque its streets are.' she said.[51]

Foulet was not just a one-dimensional character. He was also a competitive swimmer. Back in Paris he had competed in the 1911 Christmas Cup, a Christmas Day swimming race across the Seine at the Pont Alexandre. Swimming across a swollen river with extremely violent currents, he came second, in a field of 15 international competitors. [52] He was clearly popular, and his sportsmanlike persona would have also appealed to those Australians, who saw themselves as a 'race' of sportsman, a notion which would be drawn upon for propaganda later in the war. Many newspaper articles report his ranking in swimming competitions after his arrival in Australia. A member of the Melbourne swimming club, he competed in events such as the half mile swim off St. Kilda in January 1914 where he came third.[53] On 14 February 1914, a hot day, he competed in the 50 yards 'international race' coming third to a Swede and a German.[54]

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[50] *Leader*, 25 Jul 1914, 49.
[51] 'Woman's Miscellany', *Warrnambool Standard*, 24 July 1914, 5.
[52] 'Natation – La Coupe de Noël' *Le Figaro* 26 Dec.1911 6, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k289443j.
[53] 'Swimming'. *The Bendigo Independent* 12 Jan 1914, 3.
[54] Carnival At "The Dive." (1914, February 21). *Camberwell and Hawthorn Advertiser* 21 Feb 1914, 7.

As Foulet enjoyed this attention, the situation in Europe would soon bring an end to his antipodean adventure. The *sursis* was ended, and he was one of a group of Frenchmen who left Melbourne on the *Dumbea*, his fare to be paid by the consul. His departure in October 1914 was reported in the press, curiously commenting that he was 'not called, but volunteered'. This could have been a thinly veiled value judgement on Australia's volunteer army comparing it to the French conscription system. The article continued: 'He has promised to return to Australia, if spared, with pictures and sketches that should prove of great interest to the admirers of his work.'[55] Before he left, and while his mobilisation was underway, Foulet had also become naturalised, on 22 September. [56] This may have been an attempt to avoid going back to France, part of a plan to join the AIF instead (which required recruits to be 'British subjects') or perhaps it symbolised a promise to himself to return one day. Foulet's war service took place in France, in infantry units, and he regularly sent back stories of his experiences, which were reported in the press for his admiring public. He was remembered as a swimmer as well as an artist.[57]The story of his romance and marriage in July 1915 to an Alsatian girl whom he met in hospital while recovering from wounds even included a photo.[58] His new wife was 'youthful, charming and possessed of all the chic natural to the daughters of France'.[59] In 1916, news was relayed via his Melbourne friends that he had been wounded for a second time, and awarded the Croix de Guerre. His military record shows that he was twice cited for bravery, each time associated with being wounded.[60]

Although Foulet had expressed his desire to become Australian, the war would upturn his life and he never returned. He continued to practice art in Paris, working as an art teacher.[61] He is typical of French migrants from this period, described by Theodore Zeldin as 'enterprising individuals, making their own choice, rather than participating in a mass movement', and by Stuer as each having an individual purpose, 'to do their own thing'.[62] Foulet's ability to reinvent himself as a successful French painter was possible because

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[55] *Herald,* 9 Oct 1914, 12.
[56], Louis Auguste Foulet Naturalisation, NAA: A1, 1914/17796.
[57] 'Swimming' *Sporting Judge*, 2 Oct 1915, 1. Foulet featured in this article about the members of the Melbourne Swimming club who have enlisted.
[58] 'Honeymoon in War', *Herald,* 2 Oct 1915, 14.
[59] *Ballarat Star*, Thursday 6 February 1919, 2.
[60] Foulet registre militaire, AD de l'Allier.
[61] Art Exhibition: *Le Petit Journal* 18 Oct 1933; Art teacher: noted on his *registre militaire.*
[62] Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Stuer, *The French in Australia*, 145.

of Australia's geographical distance, and the accepted clichés of Frenchness. His birth certificate shows that his father was a factory worker, not an architect, at least at the time of Louis' birth. As for whether his grandfather was an artist, there was actually a *Prix Louis Foulet*, awarded in 1906, by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, which was awarded for studies in the history of art and design. Our Louis' story remains intriguing. The known facts about him indicate that he was audacious rather than mischievous in embellishing his artist persona. His story is a strong indicator of the public's willingness to accept stereotypical images of France and the French, images which would take on a wider importance, not just as a cultural interest, but part of the Allied governments' propaganda message. That France was the sensitive, cultured, artistic race, in opposition to the traits of the Germans – *Scientific* barbarism – merely enabled, and underlined what people already wanted to believe. The reports of Foulet's bravery in France reinforced the perception of strong direct links between Australia and France, not just for those who knew him, but for wider public. To the abstract concept of brave and noble France, were added concrete and personal examples, provided by those who were individually known.

vii. A patriotic family: the Crivellis

Another significant source of first-hand news from the French trenches direct to Australia came via the sons of Doctor Marcel and Charlotte Crivelli. The Crivelli family's contribution to the war effort was enormous and varied. Of the seven Crivelli children, the four oldest sons were eligible to serve in the French army. The four eldest sons of Marcel and Charlotte Crivelli were Louis, Georges, René and Marcel junior. All four served in the French army and their war service demonstrated the patriotism which was typical of their family. As bilingual French-Australians, and educated elites, they inhabited a particular cultural space. Their stories are valuable for two reasons: firstly because the Crivellis were part of an important network of French-Australian connections which underpinned French fundraising in Australia; secondly, their observant and communicative letters published back in Australia provided Australians a view of France and the French experience of war. The Crivelli sons were all born in Melbourne but were registered as French citizens and there was never any doubt that they would report for military service at the appropriate time. The three eldest were awarded the Croix de Guerre. They all survived the war, although Georges died young, in 1923.

The two eldest sons, Louis born in 1888 and Georges born in 1890 were already in France undertaking their military service when the war broke out. After graduating from the University of Melbourne, they travelled to France via the USA in mid-1913, accompanied by their father and their younger sister Hélène, aged 16. Louis had studied medicine, while George's degree was in Agricultural Science. Younger brother René was still at the University studying Engineering. Louis served throughout the war as a doctor. In a poignant letter published in Australian newspapers, Louis describes his experiences at Douamont, where he and his brother René were both fighting, and the moment when the French recaptured the fort. Louis was at this stage with the 26th Field Artillery Regiment. He describes seeing René: 'this morning he came here plastered with mud from head to foot, thinned down to a shadow, dying of hunger, and just dog tired'.[63] Louis received the Croix de Guerre in May 1916. He had been on the front since the beginning of the war and had shown conspicuous bravery on multiple occasions at Verdun. René later wrote about his brother Louis: 'as for the decorations, he deserved a Legion of Honour more than I did, and should have received one. Whenever he was caring for the wounded, he completely ignored danger.'[64]

Georges was serving in the 44th artillery regiment when the war broke out. Soon after, he transferred to the newly created '*aérostier'* group and was responsible for aerial observation from a fixed balloon. The fascinating accounts of his experiences were published in the newspapers as well as in a post-war compendium of the war record of Melbourne University Graduates.[65] As Georges progressed through the aeronautic service his English language skills were put to good use when he was assigned to train American troops in 'modern aerial observation'. In July 1918 he began training US troops in California where he spent the final months of war. His contribution was highly regarded, such that he was recognised by General Pershing.[66] While still in the artillery, a letter that Georges had written to his father, in which he denounced the Germans, was reproduced in the newspapers. He was shocked to hear that some people in South Australia were claiming the Germans were 'pleasant people'. He continued with some descriptions of fighting on the front line, remarking that 'the Germans were not being very pleasant.' [67]

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[63] 'Taking Douaumont', *Weekly Times*, 23 Dec 1916, 34.
[64] René Crivelli to his sister Hélène. Crivelli personal correspondence – Michael Crivelli collection.
[65] SHD GR 5YE158039 Crivelli Georges feuillet du personnel ;
[66] 'Three Brothers Face Foe', *Herald* 10 Sep 1918, 10.
[67] 'A Terrible Nightmare', *The Express and Telegraph*, 14 Jun 1915, 4.

It is significant that the report was regarding South Australians, the region in which German settlers had established themselves during the 19th century. Anti-German sentiment, propaganda and legislation affected the German communities in South Australia especially.

René was born in 1894, so Homery sent René's form to the Préfet de la Seine in Paris in March 1914, to include him in the Class of 1914. His form listed his profession as student, and that he was adept at horse riding and swimming, could ride a bike and drive a car. Homery recommended that René not be sent yet to France, as he was studying at the University of Melbourne. He argued that allowing René to continue his studies would be beneficial, as the skills he learnt as an Engineering student would be potentially valuable to the French army. However, his request for a *sursis* sent on 24 June 1914 was overtaken by the declaration of war. [68] As was usual practice, Homery received a duplicate of René Crivelli's *ordre d'appel*, sent from Paris 11 September 1914. René left Australia on 15 October, the day after receiving his call up notice. He was ready to go. When René was initially posted to the 54th Infantry Regiment at Laval, Homery wrote to the recruitment commander, expressing his dismay. Homery repeated René's special standing, his talented and patriotic family background, the contribution already being made by his two brothers Louis and Georges. He urged the officer concerned to make use of René's abilities by assigning him to a more appropriate unit, such as the '*service de télégraphie sans fil'* where his skills could be utilised. René was indeed transferred to an artillery unit and trained as a telephone operator. A photograph of him using a telephone in the trenches appeared in the Australian press.[69] René was injured twice at Verdun, and was tended to by his brother Louis, the doctor. He was mentioned for bravery three times, received the Croix de Guerre, and was awarded the *Légion d'Honneur*, France's highest award for bravery in 1921.

Marcel junior, born in 1899, was the youngest of those who went to war. Despite (or because of) his three older brothers, already serving, he was eager to also join the colours. He left Australia in 1918, in time to join an artillery unit a few weeks before the Armistice.

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[68] MAE428PO/1/48
[69] 'Telephonists at work in the trenches', *Punch*, 15 Jul 1915.

He also served as an interpreter with the French Military Mission to the American army in 1919.[70]

The letters which the Crivellis wrote from the front were part of the widespread practice which saw personal letters published in the newspapers. The proliferation of letters from the French-Australian soldiers created a sense of connection between France and Australia, even while Australian soldiers were still in Gallipoli. The testimony of a Melbournian on the front at Verdun underpinned the link to France's struggle. Bilingual, bicultural Australian Frenchmen bridged this gap and brought the experience of French army personnel directly into the homes of the Australian public. Their effect would be to strengthen support for the war, and for the alliance, by making it feel personal. The letters were reprinted in capital cities and regional towns. They must have played a role in reinforcing the enthusiasm demonstrated by volunteer workers who responded to the fundraising calls from Charlotte Crivelli (which will be introduced in Chapter Four) such that even in Mildura, a regional town several hundred kilometres from the capital city, women were inspired to work and fundraise for French soldiers. Louis, Georges and René all wrote many letters, which included their experiences at Verdun.[71] The variety, and detailed descriptions given by Georges made for good reading, peppered with articulate recounts of his experiences in an observation balloon, and his narrow escape from being hit by a German shell, writing; 'I escaped by a coat of paint'.[72]

viii. French-Australian connections in the cinema industry

In the early days of cinema in Australia, the French Pathé company had established a presence, and among those representing this French export to Australia were Frenchmen René Tournouer of Ballarat and Roger Puech of Sydney. They were well regarded in their local communities, were both managers of Pathé Cinemas in those cities, and they too reported back from France to friends in Australia about their experiences at the front. Tournouer and Puech, along with Sydney cinematographer Henri Hérault, testify to a French presence in Australia brought about through the early days of cinema in Australia. Both Puech and Tournouer travelled from Australia to join their units in France, and both

[70] Crivelli, Marcel Jehan, Registre Matricule, AD de la Seine-Maritime/Le Havre/1919/1R3472.
[71] The letters from French-Australian soldiers are examined in more detail in a forthcoming article. Pauline Georgelin, '"The Fighting in France": French-Australians Report from the Front', *French Australian Review*, no. 69 (Australian Summer 2021): 27–51.
[72] 'French-Australian in the Fighting Line', *Gippsland Mercury*, 27 Apr 1915, 4.

were killed in 1916 in the fighting at the iconic battles around Verdun. Puech was born in Mazamet, the French centre of the manufacture of sheepskins. This town in the mountainous Tarn department had strong links with the Australian wool industry, as most hides were imported from Australia. The Puech family was prominent in the wool industry and Roger's brother Edgard who also fought in the French army was a wool classer. But Roger had branched out, managing the cinema. He reported for service when the war broke out and served in the 141st Infantry Regiment. Family connections linked the Puech brothers to Henri Hérault, who was the Australian manager of Pathé Frères.[73] Hérault was their brother in law, married to their sister Marthe Puech, of Randwick. Both Henri and Roger were among those who left on the *Malwa* from Sydney on 24 August 1914, the same voyage taken by many Sydney wool buyers. In Melbourne, a big crowd cheered as they farewelled the twenty or so French soldiers leaving for France on the M*alwa*, and those on deck responded with '*nous fêterons notre Noël à Berlin*' – we will celebrate our Christmas in Berlin.[74] Henri Hérault and Roger Puech were mentioned by name, signalling that they were better known. The newspaper commented that the French in Australia were not very many, and that most of them were wool buyers. While the first statement is true, one of the by-products of this thesis will be to uncover the identities of Frenchmen whose professional status was less high-profile than the wool buyers' and did not fit into such neat categories. The *Malwa* was also carrying one of the first shipments of goods from Australia destined for the Red Cross: ten cases of goods – with many more packed ready for the next steamer.[75] Before Hérault left, his opinions on the likely outcome of the war and the fate and behaviour of the nations involved was published in the press.[76] Some of his predictions came to pass, such as the eventual defeat of Germany and the abdication of the Kaiser, but many months later than he had estimated. Hérault was killed on 1 March 1915 at the battle of Vauquois, soon after his arrival in France, and his death was announced in the press. Puech was mourned in Sydney, after dying of wounds in the Bar-Le-Duc hospital near Verdun in March 1916.[77] When the French

[73] Curiously in 1913 Henri Hérault had instigated a court case against Roger Puech and against Tournouer regarding the use of the name of Pathé Frères cinema, however as the judge had found in favour of the defendants, they were allowed to continue using the name.
[74] *Argus*, 26 Aug 1914, 10.
[75] 'Red Cross Society', *Age*, 27 Aug 1914, 9.
[76] *Sunday Times*, 23 Aug 1914, 6.
[77] 'M. Roger Puech' *Courrier Australien*, 28 Apr 1916, 4. 'A Verdun Hero' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 Apr 1916, 16.

community of Sydney mourned collectively for the dead of Verdun at a requiem mass, held at Sydney's French Church, Roger Puech was among those listed, and whose family was present that day.

René Tournouer, who managed the Ballarat Pathé cinema, arrived in Australia in 1903 with his mother and brothers. In August 1914 he had staged a fundraising film night at the cinema for the benefit of the Red Cross. When he left for the front in September 1914 he was described as well-known and popular. He left his many good friends with much regret, but looked forward to fighting 'shoulder to shoulder with some of your own Ballarat boys'.[78] Tournouer was mobilised with the 2nd Zouaves regiment. He wrote letters from the front to his friends in Ballarat, soon describing his month long stay in hospital recovering from a shell splinter and a frozen foot. In one letter, he states that he is proud to be an adopted Australian; in another, he apologises for forgetting some of his English. His letters include some terminology which is kept in French. Mostly military or combat terms, they are words which he would never have had to learn in English in his civilian life such a shell '*lacrymogène'*. He was killed in the tragic slaughter of Fleury-devant-Douamont, Verdun, on 20 July 1916.[79]

IV. The complexity of dual allegiances

Belonging to both Australia and France created complex issues for some French-Australians. It was a potentially ambiguous space to inhabit, where government representatives were still discussing which country's law applied, and no clear rules about dual nationality had yet been drawn up. This section considers the cases of some men for whom being both French and Australian resulted in awkwardness and a certain fluidity of national identity. The cases are drawn from a list which was drawn up in 1915 when further directives called for the classes of 1887 to 1892 to be mobilised. The list included older men who had previously been classed as reservists but were now called up, and some recently identified men such as Édouard Breton who was born in La Réunion, and Vyvian De Belabré, the son of the French Consul in Liverpool, England who was in Australia for reasons unknown.[80] It also included brothers Auguste, Emile and Albert d'Assonville.

[78] 'Mr R. Tournouer's Farewell', *Ballarat Courier*, 12 Sep 1914, 5.
[79] 'Letters from The Front', *Ballarat Star*, 4 Mar 1916, 10.
[80] MAE 428PO/1/48.

i. The d'Assonvilles

The three d'Assonville brothers demonstrate an identity and experience which contrast with the stereotypical migrant success tale. Their story is emblematic of the difficulties which dual identity could bring, as well as the trauma of war. Born in Australia, they were counted as French citizens because their father was French. The brothers were Albert born in 1876, Emile born in 1878, and Auguste born in 1881. All three listed their profession as 'garçon d'hotel', showing that they were neither young nor elites. In the detailed form which was filled out for each recruit, Homery recorded whether they could ride a horse, ride a bike, or drive a car. Curiously, alongside all these details, was the note that the d'Assonvilles 'could not speak French'. Of the three, Albert and Emile left for France in February 1916, while the youngest, Auguste, stayed in Melbourne and remained *insoumis*. This follows a pattern common to many families with multiple brothers, deciding for some to volunteer, whilst leaving at least one at home. Upon their arrival in France in August 1916, Albert and Emile reported to the 1st Colonial Infantry Regiment in Cherbourg– a unit which seemed to have been be the first port of call for the unknown quantity that were the not-quite-French, not-quite-colonials from Australia, until they were transferred to a suitable unit.[81] Whatever their level of French, they must have had to improve quite rapidly! Emile was serving with the 264th Infantry Regiment when he was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* on 19 May 1918. The citation referred to him as a good soldier, an Australian volunteer, and commended his courage in hand-to-hand fighting.[82] On 27 May he was taken prisoner by the Germans after being wounded. When Emile and Albert returned to Melbourne in May 1919, the *Age* reported their homecoming, mentioning that they were both wearing the Croix de Guerre, and the Verdun decoration.[83]

Emile d'Assonville's later experience reveals a problematic aspect of hybrid identity. When he returned to Australia, he had trouble finding work due to the injury to his right hand, yet he was not eligible to receive a pension or healthcare assistance from the Australian government. Vice-Consul Fliche wrote two letters in June 1919 to the Minister for Repatriation, on behalf of the d'Assonvilles. In the first, he made a representation on behalf of the two brothers, explaining that they had tried to enlist in the AIF but had been rejected, and were subsequently mobilised into the French army in 1916. Fliche pleaded,

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[81] D'Assonville Emile/ D'Assonville Albert, Registres Militaires, Archives de Paris.
[82] Ibid.
[83] *Age* 19 May 1919, 7.

in his first letter to the minister, for the men to receive the returned services medal – one of the several different medals awarded to returned men in the demobilisation period, to indicate their level of participation. This visual acknowledgment of their service would have facilitated entry to jobs, or institutions as well as providing an excuse for physical damage. The minister, Senator Millen, passed the buck by sending the requests onto his colleague the Defence Minister. The Consul's pleas on behalf of the men are poignant and heartfelt, but the response was predictable. Despite Fliche's mention that the d'Assonvilles had fought in the 'glorious and common cause' of the Allies, the men would not qualify for medals, nor for any help from the Australian government. This was, of course, only granted to returned members of the AIF.[84]

ii. Joseph Foray

The question 'where is home' presented complications for men with dual allegiances, as evidenced by the case of Joseph Foray, whose relatives were in Australia. Where men such as the artist Louis Foulet were able to create a new identity in Australia, there were both advantages and disadvantages to this geographical distance. Many deserters or adventurers who wanted to start a new life chose Australia. They were nicely out of the way of the French government's reach, and the constraints of old Europe. For some Frenchmen the disruption of the war reversed this advantage. In most cases, the French-Australian soldiers had relatives in France, so that like many French soldiers, they had the support of family and somewhere to go when given leave. But for those without close relatives in France, they would feel just as 'far from home' as the AIF soldiers. Joseph Foray's case was even more challenging. When he wrote to the Vice-Consul in 1917, Foray was serving with the French *Armée de l'Orient,* on the Salonika front, and his request to return to Australia was heartfelt and desperate. Foray explained that he had lived in the Melbourne suburb of St. Kilda (traditionally a suburb where French have settled in Melbourne), with his uncle's family, the Artauds – a well-known Melbourne French family. French government regulation stipulated that soldiers from overseas countries could apply for leave to visit their families, but only with approval of the local consul, in the form of a certificate of loyalty.[85] Foray's timing was unfortunate. His first

[84] 'Eligibility Enquiry, French Consul' NAA: A2487, 1919/6377. 'Returning Soldiers badge – French Consul', NAA: A2487, 1919/6380

[85] A directive from Cambon, dated 15 Feb 1917, regarding military service stated: leave will be granted to some soldiers serving who come from overseas, but only if they provide certificates of loyalty.' This is the regulation that applied to Artaud / Foray family MAE 428PO/1/47 *

letter, dated 19 October 1917, must have arrived on the desk around about the time that Henri Fliche had been on leave. It remained unanswered, so Foray eventually sent another in February 1918. Fliche answered in May, reassuring Foray that he would send the certificate. Did Foray successfully apply for home leave to Australia, armed with this letter? His name does not feature on the French online database of those who were killed – *morts pour la France*. So far it has not been possible to find more information about him.[86] Family loyalty certificates were also written in February 1917 for the three Crivelli sons fighting in France: Louis, Georges and René.[87] The letters explained that they came from an established French family, detailing how long ago they had left Australia and had not seen their family. While the Crivellis may have kept these in case of an opportunity for home leave, they never used them to support a trip back to Australia. Relatives in Paris, notably their aunt Suzanne Caubet, provided a welcoming base for them on leave, and regularly received comforts parcels for her French-Australian nephews.

The Frenchmen examined above demonstrate the diversity of the French-Australian microcosm, seen through a range of professions, class and background not previously visible in biographies of the more well-known. Their mobilisation into the French army provides the context common to all of them, yet their individual stories demonstrate the complexity of French identity in Australia, and the impossibility of distilling one type of Frenchman, despite the externally imposed stereotypes. Some did correspond to stereotypes – the artistic Frenchman, the chef whose culinary expertise was so valuable, the heroic soldier. Also noteworthy is the diverse range of opinions regarding French citizenship more broadly, implicit in the correspondence relating to the mobilisation.

[86] MAE 428PO/1/50
[87] MAE 428PO/1/45

Chapter 2. The Frenchmen who joined the AIF

The conflicting nature of national identity for French-Australians is also evident in the experiences of the French-born men who served in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). French citizens resident in Australia had a 'sacred duty' to join the colours in time of war, however, for a range of reasons, not all of them complied. This chapter analyses the profiles of men who joined the AIF rather than answer the French government's call. It aims to discover what their activities and experiences reveal about attitudes by and towards French-Australian identity on a personal and an official level. It also suggests some possible motivations for rejecting French military service obligations. This representative group then allows us to consider the wider questions of citizenship, nationality and naturalisation which affected French-born Australian men, providing both the French and the Australian perspective regarding how these laws and expectations were applied by the local authorities. While it is not possible to tell the stories of all of the Frenchmen in the AIF, I have chosen cases which illustrate the variety of individuals, their varying responses to the citizenship requirements, and the range of attitudes of the men towards their French nationality. The examples illustrate the participation by French-Australians in many different roles in the AIF, as well as in the precursor to the Air Force: the Australian Flying Corps. Finally, the chapter considers Australia's Aliens Registration law of 1916, analysing how it was applied to the French in Australia, and how some individuals responded to it.

The identities of French-born members of the AIF can be found in National Archives of Australia's database of attestation papers.[1] The attestation paper was the first step in the enlistment process and records a range of information about the volunteer recruit, including his place of birth and whether he was a 'natural born British subject' or a 'Naturalized British Subject'. The originality in this chapter springs from expanding the database of French-born AIF members created from the attestation papers. The MAE archives provide valuable extra clues regarding members of the AIF who were considered French, either by holding French nationality, or having a French father, which automatically placed them in the sights of French authorities and classified them as liable

[1] Located under NAA Series B2455.

for French military service. Comparing these two complementary sources, with their lists of recruits who left Australia to join either the French or the Australian Armies, reveals the variety of identities of the Frenchmen in the AIF, illustrating the diversity of French people in Australia, and the variance of ideas around nationality and citizenship, national allegiances and patriotism.

A variety of scholarly works have documented the multicultural nature of the AIF, examining the presence of soldiers from different ethnic groups and placing them in the context of their respective immigrant experiences.[2] Such work fits within the broader historiography of Australia's involvement in the war, with historians in recent years questioning the Anzac myth and the previously accepted stereotypical image of the digger.[3] The current widespread interest of Australians in knowing who the Anzacs really were and understanding their experiences and their diversity is associated with the 'memory boom', the growing popularity of family history as well as the centenary of the Great War.[4] While acknowledging that the majority of AIF soldiers had some ties to either Great Britain or Ireland, recent Australian scholarship has analysed the AIF's foreign-born members and contributed to a better understanding of its composition from a social and immigration history perspective.[5] In addition to those which have focussed on particular ethnic groups, the work of Karen Agutter also analysed the multicultural AIF and its foreign-born members more broadly, and showed the perspective of the non-British migrant's experience in an army which was predominantly 'white'. Agutter linked the foreign-born recruits to their migrant journey and showed that the problems experienced by various ethnic groups in being accepted into mainstream white Australian

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[2] John Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2003); Elena Govor, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History* (Sydney: UNSW Press in association with National Archives of Australia, 2005); Jean Bou and Peter Dennis, *The Australian Imperial Force*, vol. 5, The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2016); Mark Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs: Jews in the Australian Military* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2017); Jeff Kildea, *Anzacs and Ireland* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2007).

[3] Anna Clark, 'The Place of Anzac in Australian Historical Consciousness', *Australian Historical Studies* 48, no. 1 (2 January 2017): 19–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2016.1250790; Holbrook, *Anzac - The Unauthorised Biography*; Marilyn Lake et al., *What's Wrong with ANZAC* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

[4] Bart Ziino, ed., *Remembering the First World War / Edited by Bart Ziino.* (New York, London: Routledge, 2015); Bart Ziino, '"A Lasting Gift to His Descendants": Family Memory and the Great War in Australia', *History and Memory* 22, no. 2 (2010): 125–46, https://doi.org/10.2979/his.2010.22.2.125.

[5] Karen Agutter, 'Foreign-Born Soldiers in the AIF: Australia's Multinational Fighting Force', in *Australians and the First World War: Local-Global Connections and Contexts*, ed. Kate Ariotti and James E. Bennett (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2017), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unimelb/detail.action?docID=4947268; Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War*; Govor, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History*.

society did not necessarily stop once they joined up. Agutter places the French in the context of this wider study of the multicultural AIF, and compares their status as allies, upon the outbreak of the war, with that of expatriate Russians. Of the foreign-born soldiers in the AIF, the French were in a unique position, even when compared to those of the other Allied nations. For example, Russian immigrants faced specific difficulties returning to their own country to join up, even though the Russian Consul-General initially attempted to enforce his government's call for all reservists to return to serve in the Russian army. This pressure gradually transformed into coercion towards Russian-born Australians to join the AIF.[6] By contrast, the French, upon whom pressure to enlist under their own country's flag never wavered for the duration of the war, benefitted from regular shipping routes and subsidised fares. The French presence in the AIF has been presented for a non-academic audience, such as De Pierres' commemorative book which lists many members and presents the profiles of some.[7] Elsewhere, the stories of particular individuals have been told, such as the Varcin brothers, Queensland farmers of French origin, who will figure later in this chapter.[8] However, previous studies did not take into account the additional information available in the French archives, nor did the writers consider the phenomenon of Frenchmen in the AIF from the French perspective. This chapter represents a more comprehensive study than has previously been done.

The question of nationality and national identity is not always straightforward when analysing the foreign-born members of the AIF. One cause was the fluidity of movements by migrants who finally arrived in Australia. Another was the multiplicity of ethnic identities, across and within empires. Therefore, the attestation paper is only the beginning in identifying those who belong to a particular group, and naturalisation and other records are an important complementary source.[9] This one common element – birthplace – contrasts with the diversity of the men themselves. In the AIF there were also many others who were French speakers, or who identified as French – whether born in French territories such as New Caledonia or born in Australia to French families. Their stories provide a window into the French population in Australia during the war.

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[6] Agutter, 'Foreign-Born Soldiers in the AIF: Australia's Multinational Fighting Force'.
[7] de Pierres, *Alliés Pour Toujours Allies Forever*.
[8] For example, Stemmler's book is written from the perspective of local history: Roslyn Stemmler, *Boys from the Bush: Wallumbilla in the Great War* (Wallumbilla, Queensland: Roslyn Stemmler and the Wallumbilla Town Improvement Group, 2015).
[9] Agutter, 'Foreign-Born Soldiers in the AIF: Australia's Multinational Fighting Force'.

Despite their varying characters and profiles, some of these Frenchmen in the AIF did present a particular French image. Nonetheless, their variations also are indicative of the profile of the French community originally posited by Stuer: that for the most part they migrated to Australia operating as individuals, with their own agendas. [10] Among Stuer's conclusions based on her statistical analysis of the French-born population, was the 'marrying out' phenomenon: Frenchmen tended to marry locals rather than bringing French wives with them. They showed little desire to create their own communities in the host country, or to recreate the village back home as many migrant groups had, demonstrating successful integration. Secondly, Stuer commented on the aging of the male population, and this seems to be confirmed by the proportion of those who were old, or who lied about their age when providing their ages upon enlistment in the AIF. Analysis of the French-born members of the AIF seems to bear out this statistical profile. There were indeed a high proportion of older men, and among those who were married, the wife was most commonly an Australian.[11]

In the records of the soldiers who listed France as their place of birth, the MAE archives are the complementary additional resource which identify those who were considered by the French government as French, and by the Australian government as Australian (or British), providing more examples of French-Australian identity. Approximately 170 men listed France as their place of birth when they enrolled in the AIF, but by examining the detailed information they provided, it is clear that around 20 of them should be counted as British rather than French. Families were living in France, perhaps for extended holidays, or for work, when these men were born. Alfred Parish, born in Paris, requested to stay in England after he was discharged: 'I have all my people here in England and also my wife.'[12] Howard Cunningham, born in Chantilly, stated 'I was born in France while my people was visiting that country'.[13] Amongst the group there were also about 30 who did not go on active service overseas. They were either rejected due to health reasons or because they were too old, while others deserted soon after enlisting, and a small number joined the army in the late stages of the war.[14]

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[10] Stuer, *The French in Australia*.
[11] Stuer, 142.
[12] Parish, Alfred, NAA: B2455
[13] Cunningham, Howard, NAA: B2455
[14] Likewise, of the AIF recruits who were born in New Caledonia, some of these appear to be French, and others British.

I. Identity and citizenship

The Frenchmen who volunteered for the AIF were not only making a positive choice, but in many cases also a negative one, whether rejecting, ignoring or defying the Consul's order for mobilisation. Each man's motivations were individual and personal and cannot be fully known. Nonetheless, examining and speculating on the reasons and the circumstances of their choices reveals further details about the nature of the French community, ideas around French identity, and the mutual perceptions of French-Australian relations at the local level. Although British citizenship was a requirement for enlistment in the AIF, this was enforced with varying degrees of strictness. Individual application of the law ranged from the lax to the overzealous. Applying for naturalisation became an issue that many men had never had cause to weigh up before. Among the French-born recruits, some became naturalised to facilitate their enlistment in the AIF but they were by no means the majority. Others had done so prior to the war, and still others served in the AIF only becoming 'British Subjects' in later years. By 1915 the Australian Government had introduced a policy of not granting citizenship to foreign-born men of military age. This would encourage citizens of Allied countries to fulfil their military service obligations.[15]

Gildas Toumelin, working as a labourer in Adelaide, was a former sailor from a fishing community in Brittany. He was one of many whose application for citizenship was rejected in May 1916 with the words: 'certificates of naturalisation are not being issued at the present time to Frenchmen under 50 years of age'.[16] Nevertheless he joined the AIF a month later, as a French citizen, and served in a Pioneer battalion. His service record reflects episodes corresponding to the clichéd stereotype of a drunken sailor. He had several charges of drunkenness recorded against him, as well as going absent without leave. He was even found guilty of breaking out of hospital in Rouen after being wounded in August 1918. He returned to Australia in 1919 but did not re-apply for naturalisation.

Jean Pierre Becker was a long-time resident of Australia, and volunteered for the AIF in August 1914, one day after being naturalised, at age 49.[17] A medical orderly, living in

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[15] Govor (2005) cites the note written by Atlee Hunt in the citizenship application of a Russian AIF soldier: "the only reason for not naturalizing Russians at present is to require them to perform military service." NAA: A446 1953/50472 Volkofsky.

[16] Gildas Toumelin Naturalisation, NAA: A1 1916/12259

[17] Joan Pierre Becker Naturalization (Note : the incorrect spelling is the title of this document), NAA: A1 1914/14746

Adelaide, he was born in Paris. In Australia he had worked as a chemist dispenser, and in France had been in the volunteer medical corps, according to the information he gave at attestation.[18] He had arrived in Australia in 1892, but English was not his best of the four languages he spoke. According to his records, he spoke French and German fluently. The recruiting officer noted 'he will be useful'. Serving in the 10th Battalion, he survived active service at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. He was wounded three times, was awarded the military medal in September 1917 at Glencourse Wood near Ypres, for bravery establishing forward aid posts under fire.[19] Becker, at age 49, would not have been compelled to join either the French or the Australian army. His naturalisation and his choice to join the AIF clearly formalised the ties he had already established to Australia.

The following letter to one of the major daily newspapers demonstrates public understanding and perceptions of the rules around enlistment and citizenship. As it was signed by one 'Anglo-French' who preferred to remain anonymous, one could assume this was a man who was weighing up his own obligations and options regarding which army to join. It was clear that differing rates of pay could also affect one's patriotic allegiance.

> Sir, Australian naturalisation not being recognised outside Australia, French-born citizens cannot enlist in the Expeditionary Forces but must join the French army. The pay of a private being less than one penny a day, will they not get some relief from the Patriotic Fund? It could be paid to the wife in Australia. Yours etc, ANGLO-FRENCH.[20]

The Australian army's higher rate of pay was certainly a factor in some decisions. In January 1915 Homery noted that Paul Luquet, born in Paris, had refused to act on the order for mobilisation and instead had taken a better paid position with the Australian forces. Homery assured the Paris recruitment officer that he had pointed out the gravity of this decision to Luquet, but apart from that he could do nothing more.[21] (in fact Luquet then deserted from the AIF soon after volunteering).

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[18] Becker, Jean-Pierre, NAA: B2455.
[19] AWM, Awards and Recommendations, https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1589505.
[20] 'French-Born Australians', *Argus*, 20 Mar 1915, 19.
[21] Homery to 7th Recruitment Bureau, Paris, 13 Jan 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48.

One useful source relating to the AIF is the analysis provided by Jean Bou and Peter Dennis.[22] They argue that an analysis of statistics contributes to a better understanding of the AIF's nature, and the valuable data provided in their profile of the AIF builds on Beaumont's landmark study.[23] An analysis of professions in the cohort of Frenchmen in the AIF shows that about 10% were cooks, chefs, waiters; and about 20% were labourers, farmers, gardeners, or miners. This is consistent with AIF figures. For the Frenchmen, the category of labourer also covered several former sailors, demonstrating this as an achievable transition back to on-shore life for those who had left their ships while in Australia, whether legally or illegally. There seems to have been more seafarers amongst the French, 2.2% seafarers in the AIF, compared to 6% out of our group but two of these were discharged as medically unfit before even serving. Other professions included hairdresser, and wool buyer, reflecting the strong presence of the wool buying community based in Sydney, most of whom joined the French army. The men are illustrative of how varied French migrants to Australia were in this period. Among them were heroes and patriots, farmers, professionals, tradesmen and drifters. Seven of them deserted and seven were court-martialled. Four of them won the Military Medal and one was awarded the Croix de Guerre. Some signed up enthusiastically, and others saw their chance to get away, or a free ticket back to France. As with those who joined the French army from Australia, a varying level of French language ability can be observed.

II. 'Doing their own thing' the diversity of Frenchmen in the AIF

Leon Turbé, from Ile d'Yeu, a small island off the coast of Brittany, had made his way to Australia after serving just one year of his French army service. He had worked as a butcher and a slaughterman. He responded to the mobilisation call up in March 1915, sending a letter (postmarked Ballarat) to the consul in badly written French. He apologised that he was not able to report for duty earlier, explaining that he had been ill, but now was ready to go. Homery replied asking him to send his *livret militaire*, so that he could start the mobilisation process.[24] But Turbé eventually joined the AIF. He enlisted in Sydney, in a different state, and in the jurisdiction of a different consul. Perhaps he remembered that at the end of his stint in the French army, the good conduct certificate

[22] Bou and Dennis, *The Australian Imperial Force*, 5:82–83.
[23] Joan Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, vol. Vol VI, The Australian Centenary History of Defence (South Melbourne, 2001).
[24] Turbé to Homery, 2 Mar 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48, 'Jetais malade mes mintenon je suis près a partir le plutos posible demin sie vous voules'.

usually awarded to a French soldier for satisfactory service, had been denied him. When he enlisted, he declared that he had also spent time in the French navy, and this would explain the numerous tattoos which his physical description listed! His time with the 34th Battalion was peppered with various misdemeanours, but hopefully he was able to be reunited for a short time with his brothers who were serving in the French army. It was clearly an effort for Turbé to write to Homery in French, but despite his difficulties he was trying to be correct in his behaviour towards the French government's representative.

By contrast, the issue for Emile Gané was his limited knowledge of English. Gané was 44 years old, from Morbihan, Brittany. He had spent 8 years in the French army and was described as 'an experienced soldier'. Well-travelled, he had been in New Caledonia before coming to Australia. At attestation he had the questions interpreted for him. Too old for active combat, he served in support roles in France. He had been a pâtissier in France, and a cook in Australia, perhaps useful skills in his support role.[25]

Some of the men's personnel files demonstrate complex characters and situations. One interesting example was Louis Le Cor, an engineer living in Broken Hill. Firstly, he lied about his age. He stated his age as 44 in 1916 when he joined up, but by 1918 when he was discharged due to ill health (partly caused by an injury) he was 53. In July 1918 he was discharged but requested to be posted to a munitions factory in England rather than return to Australia. In November 1918 he asked for his passport, and one month leave to visit family in France to help sort out his brother's affairs. This was extended by a further month in December. It was at this point that he disappeared from view, and subsequently all letters, telegrams and embarkation instructions to him were left unanswered. The military authorities were concerned, because his wife in Australia had five dependent children.

Meanwhile, in August 1918 a Miss E. Falle of Sydney had written to the army to obtain his address: 'as I want to send him a Christmas parcel'. On 8 December she wrote again to army records: 'I have not heard from him since July, could you let me know his whereabouts as I am the only one in Australia who corresponds with him'. The final letter from army records to Miss Falle dated January 1919 explained:

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[25] Gané Emile, NAA B2455 ; AD de Morbihan,

> ‘I have to inform you no definite advice has yet been received as to his return, but on receipt of this information his next-of-kin will be immediately advised, who in this case is his wife, who resides in Broken Hill.’

The distance of our perspective one hundred years later, and the absence of further correspondence prevents us from knowing the full story, and one can only speculate as to the other side of the story. The trauma of war fragmented so many lives. However, Louis Le Cor seems to have vanished in France, leaving both his wife (and the five children) and Miss Falle wondering.

For others, the upheaval of war may have presented a chance to get back home. Pierre Marie Gueno was a 20-year-old sailor. One of several sailors or ex-sailors in the group examined, and possibly one of the many who jumped ship in Australia. He joined up in January 1916 in Brisbane and was assigned to the 25th Battalion. He listed his mother in Dieppe as his next of kin. After training in Australia and England he finally got to France in April of 1917. He had a problematic war. His service record shows a long list of misdemeanours, some minor and some serious, including numerous times going absent without leave, even absconding while in hospital. On 29 Oct 1917 he was gassed. He was court-martialled in August 1918 for a self-inflicted injury to his right hand – by administering a caustic substance rendering him unfit for service. However, he survived the war and in August 1919 went back to his mother in Dieppe.

Charles Joseph and Mary Join were married in Binic, a small town in Brittany in 1912. Aged 29, he was a cook and had spent five years in the French Navy. He joined up in Adelaide but not until April 1918. Mary, his next of kin, was back in Binic. Enlisting so late in the war meant that he avoided time at the front, and his 10-month stint in the AIF resulted in a trip home. At war’s end, he applied to be discharged in the UK, and went to join Mary in Binic.[26]

By contrast, Leon Piollet, a ‘teacher of languages’ wanted to avoid going to France. He was prepared to go on active service, although he had already served some of his time in the French army. But at age 38 and having spent time in Brazil before coming to Australia,

[26] Join Charles, NAA: B2455.

he was determined not to return to a cold climate. So, he wrote a letter requesting (successfully) to be assigned to the camel corps serving in the Middle East.[27]

The list of AIF soldiers who can be categorised as French is augmented by those whose names were on the consul's list for mobilisation, judged by the French government to be French. Some of these men do not appear in a search of the attestation records using France as birthplace, as they were born in Australia. But as demonstrated by the case of Crivellis among others, birthplace was only one element which contributed to nationality and identity. As we saw in Chapter One, Henri Lamandé was one of those young men on the consul's list, along with his brothers Leopold, Ambroise and Gaston.[28] They were among the several called up soldiers who had raised the ire of Doctor Crivelli and who were mentioned in correspondence as not daring to call themselves Frenchmen if they did not show up for duty with the French army. They came from a well-known Melbourne French family. Their father, Ambroise was a successful businessman: a member of the French Chamber of Commerce, he held the position of *Conseiller du Commerce Extérieur* which was appointed by the French government.[29] Among Lamandé's business interests was the importing of French alcohol. He was the Australian representative for Louis Roederer champagne, and James Prunier & Co. cognac. Their mother was on the committee of the AF and took an active part in the fundraising activities of the French Red Cross. Their sister Alix, an accomplished musician, often gave recitals at fundraising functions organised by the Alliance Française. Although born in Victoria, they were considered to be French citizens via their French father, and Henri described himself as such on his AIF attestation paper, even though by virtue of being born in Australia he also would have automatically acquired the status of British subject.

Of the four brothers, two would join the AIF, Henri and Leopold (Leo). Henri Lamandé was a motorbike enthusiast and a member of the Victorian Motorcycle Club. In 1910 he had competed and come fourth in the club's annual 100 km motorbike race. He listed his profession as importer – his company imported motorbikes. Perhaps his choice to join the AIF, in November 1915, was because he was not a conformist, but rather a 'free spirit' who did not want to be compelled to go, but who volunteered to go. He survived the war,

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[27] Piollet Leon, NAA: B2455.
[28] The family name was usually anglicised in English language press reports, written as Lamande. However, in French documents such as the mobilisation list it is written as Lamandé, and likewise when Leopold signed his attestation form, he wrote it with an accent on the final -e.
[29] 'Nouvelles d'Australie' *Courrier Australien*, 6 Nov 1908, 4.

returned to Melbourne and continued to operate the motorcycle business. [30] Leo Lamandé joined the AIF in in August 1915, giving his profession as draper. He would eventually be promoted to Company Quartermaster Sergeant, in charge of supplies, perhaps a good use of his skills from civilian life. Two of the letters he sent home were published in his local paper in rural Victoria. His letter dated April 1916 (though published in June), while still training in 'the land of land of sand, dust, gravel, stone and heat' – presumably Egypt – describes conditions and daily life in the desert camp. He mentions that many of the Australians 'have gone to ___ the land of my forefathers'. He leaves a blank, not mentioning France by name, perhaps assuming that this would not have got past the censor. He then describes the amazing reception of the AIF by the French 'We were told that their reception there was something tremendous and wonderful. They practically speaking walked over a bed of rose leaves while on the march.'[31]

In October, he wrote of his journey from Egypt to Marseilles, where he spent nine days 'having a good look around'. The letter is full of enthusiastic descriptions of France. He thought Marseilles was a fine city, with many wonderful sights, and beautiful cathedrals and churches. France was 'a delightful country'. He wondered at the natural beauty of the country as he travelled from south to north, taking 56 hours to travel from Marseilles to Le Havre, before crossing the channel to reach the training camp in England. He finishes the letter with a remark on the high prices of goods in both France and England. 'I don't know how the poor get a living at all over here. Australia will always do me – good, free easy Australia!'[32]

Leo and Henri were the two older of the brothers, and the younger two did not enlist in either the French army or the AIF. The Lamandé family retained strong links to France although clearly the sons had embraced their Australian identity. Ambroise Lamandé senior was on the committee of eminent French citizens who were chosen to receive and entertain the members of the French Economic Mission in 1918, and his commercial interests were no doubt discussed. Lamandé senior retired to France not long after the war, and died in Rennes in 1923.[33]

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[30] *Argus*, 19 Jun 1920, 5.
[31] *Rainbow Argus*, 9 Jun 916, 3.
[32] Cobram Courier, 19 Oct 1916, 5.
[33] *Australasian*, 26 May 1923, 33.

Emile Lindsay Deville, another French citizen on the consul's list, was born in Sydney but enlisted in Melbourne on 5 May 1915. As he was only nineteen years old, his enlistment included a letter from his father giving his permission. A wool buyer, he had also had some military training in the Melbourne University Rifles. In late 1914, Deville was notified of his impending military service, and in early 1915 as the orders for mobilisation were sent out, he was faced with his own choice. The call up notice was dated 26 May 1915, but in a letter dated 27 May 1915, Emile's father wrote to the consul (in French), informing him that Emile had already joined the AIF. He explained that Emile had claimed his British nationality, and therefore would not be reporting for duty with the French army. [34] In France he was posted to the No. 2 Australian Casualty Clearing Station, therefore a non-combative role yet still on the front line. After more than a year working with the medical corps, he was transferred to the 1st Anzac Corps Headquarters Intelligence unit in May 1917, where he worked for the intelligence police service.[35] His French is likely to have been useful for this posting: it was common for those with language skills to be transferred to intelligence if they were not interpreters. After the war he was discharged from the AIF in England and opted not to return to Australia. Instead, he went to Mazamet, a wool industry town in south-western France, where he established himself in a business exporting sheepskins. For Deville, the journey to France cemented his links to the country of his parentage and opened up possibilities which he may not have chosen otherwise.

Among those decorated for bravery was Joseph Varcin. The Varcin family in Queensland demonstrated the peripatetic nature of many migrant experiences. It was not uncommon to have arrived in Australia via other countries or from other parts of the British or French empires. The Varcin family were farmers at Wallumbilla, Queensland. They came from the Savoie region of France, arriving in Australia in December 1909 after an unsuccessful stint as farmers in Algeria. They had moved to Algeria in 1900, prompted by a pioneering spirit and the promise of bettering their economic status.[36] The reality was quite different, and after nine years of battling 'flood, drought, indigenous theft and violent murder' they decided to move on. Joseph was the second of the five sons, three of whom enlisted in the AIF. Stemmler describes the Varcin family's arrival in Queensland and their

[34] MAE 428PO/1/48
[35] Deville Emile Lindsay, NAA: B2455.
[36] Stemmler, *Boys from the Bush*.

difficulties caused by their lack of English. The family spoke French, the French Arabic dialect of Algeria, and their local Savoie dialect. Getting lost on their way to their farm, they were helped by a local Italian farmer who could communicate with them in the same Savoie dialect. Despite the family's circuitous journey to rural Queensland, they were still monitored by the French government. The eldest son, Jean-Baptiste Emmanuel, had already been declared a deserter. He had encountered the wide reach of the consul soon after arriving in Australia, when correspondence was exchanged in 1911 between government officials regarding his obligation to report for military service. 'He has been in Australia about one year and is not naturalised'. He expressed his unwillingness to return to France, unsurprising given he had just started establishing his new farm. [37] His French military service file, showing he had not responded to his call up order in 1910 and was officially *insoumis* as of 4 May 1911, gives his address as Wallumbila, demonstrating that from the mountains of Savoie to the outback of Queensland, the French government was watching! [38]

The Varcin brothers' participation in the AIF, their exploits and experiences tell tales of adventure and tragedy. Joseph was the first son to join the AIF in 1915, aged 23. He was awarded the military medal in May 1917, fighting at Bullecourt. In charge of a Lewis gun, he had 'showed himself to be a leader of exceptional quality and courage'.[39] Felix enlisted in 1916, aged 24, and the youngest brother Marcel Firmin (known as Firmin) also joined up in 1916 aged just 18. His twin brother Constant stayed home with their mother and father, because they needed someone at home who spoke English. Firmin, fighting with the 15th Battalion tragically died of wounds on 12 August 1918, just before his 20th birthday. Although their Australian army service was testimony to their allegiance to their new homeland, Joseph in particular enjoyed the chance to speak his mother tongue while in France. As family historian Stemmler recounts, the family always remained aware that the brothers had evaded French military service, continuing to keep a look out and wary of anyone coming from the French government to look for them.[40]

By contrast, the case of Medric Fraillon demonstrates a different trajectory. He had already served three years with the French navy. He was 42 years old and an engine driver

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[37] The Case of Monsieur Varcin – French Subject, NAA: A1, 1911/6430.
[38] AD de Savoie FRAD073-1R 198
[39] https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1563138, accessed 25 Jan 2019, AWM28 1/23 Recommendation file for honours and awards, AIF 1914-1918 War
[40] Stemmler, *Boys from the Bush*.

living in Geelong, when he enlisted in January 1917 and joined the railway unit. On 19 November 1917 he was awarded the Croix de Guerre for conspicuous bravery, when a tractor pulling two trucks of ammunition was hit by a shell and caught fire.[41] Prior to his enlistment, he demonstrated a strong connection to France in his 1915 correspondence with the Defence Department. Obviously fascinated with machines, he offered detailed letters outlining his ideas for technical inventions which would help win the war. He quoted his beloved France as his inspiration and signed the letters 'yours in freedom'.[42]

The French in the Australian Flying Corps

Frenchmen were also part of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) and the Central Flying School at Point Cook. One of them was Jean Claude Marduel, born in Lyon. An adventurous man with a colourful past, he had arrived in Australia 1908 and set himself up as a teacher of languages and principal of the Berlitz School of Sydney. In advertisements for this 'brand new method from Europe' he labelled himself as an Officer de l'Academie (sic).[43] In 1908 he won a legal dispute over the use of the name Berlitz.[44] He was also a motorbike rider: in January 1911 he competed in the Melbourne to Sydney motorbike race.[45]

It was the arrival of the French aviator Maurice Guillaux, that set Marduel's career on a different course. Marduel attached himself to Guillaux and learned to fly, later being referred to as Guillaux's pupil. During late 1914 he was feted as a French Aviator in the press, flew from Melbourne to Sydney, and took numerous passengers up for a flight, including a cabinet minister.[46] Firmly established at the Richmond airfield (which would later become the RAAF Richmond Base), he was 'in charge of the aviation grounds since M. Guillaux's departure to the war'.[47] Eventually, in March 1916, he also enlisted, and became a member of the Australian Flying Corps serving with No. 1 Squadron, based in Heliopolis Egypt. His active service did not last long, and he was discharged in September 1916 due to health issues. It was after his return that he applied for citizenship, listing his profession as airplane mechanic.

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[41], Fraillon Medric, NAA: B2455.
[42] M Fraillon submits an idea for increasing the efficiency of submarines, NAA: MP472/1, 2/15/1271
[43] *Sunday Times*, 31 May 1908, 1.
[44] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 Apr 1909, 5.
[45] *Adelaide Evening Journal*,13 Jan 1911, 4.
[46] 'Biplane Flights', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 Nov 1914, 13.
[47] *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 9 Oct 1914, 3.

The process of Marduel's enlistment is an example of the sometimes confused way in which nationality and citizenship requirements for the AIF were interpreted and implemented. Even though Marduel had been mentioned in the press in 1914 as a French aviator, when he enlisted in 1916 he declared that he was born in St. Helier, Jersey, in the Channel Islands.[48] However, later in 1916 when applying for citizenship, he was obliged to confess that he had invented this story: 'they wanted to know at the Recruiting Office whether I was naturalized or not, and as there was no time for me to go through the formalities I said I was born in an English country where French is spoken, thus accounting for my French accent.'[49] By May 1917 he had moved to Victoria and was an instructor at the Central Flying School in Laverton.[50]

Serge Maurice Artaud, another motor-cycle enthusiast, also joined the AFC. Indeed, familiarity with motors and machines being a pre-requisite for joining the AFC, there was a correlation between types and aptitudes of those who joined. Artaud, whose cousin Joseph Foray had written expressing his desire to return to Australia, was only 20 years old when he joined up, and was living at his parents' house '*La France'* in Melbourne. However, his war service did not lead to a journey to the home country – he was posted to the Middle East. A strong connection between France and Australia existed during the early years of aviation, resulting from the pioneering spirit common to the early practitioners in both countries. The exploits of Oswald Watt with first the French and then the Australian squadrons, demonstrate this link. Watt's 'audacity and cool resolution' earned him a *Croix de Guerre* and the *Légion d'Honneur* before he transferred to the AFC in 1916.[51]

A further statistic to consider with this cohort is their ages. In June 1915 the AIF's maximum age for enlistment was changed from 38 to 45 years. 27 of the French-born enlistees in the AIF were between the ages of 40 and 50 – around 18% – and a few of these lied about their age. This is quite different to the AIF's figure of 5% of enlistees aged between 40 and 45.[52] French-born men in Australia were an aging population by this time. Stuer attributes this to the large number who had migrated to Australia in the 1890's

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[48] Marduel Jean, NAA: B2455.
[49] Jean Marduel – Naturalisation, NAA: A1, 1916/24167.
[50] 'Australians Learn Air Fighting', *Herald,* 19 May 1917, 1.
[51] William A. Land, 'France-Australia by Air', *The French Australian Review*, no. 64 (Australian Winter 2018).
[52] Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*.

in search of economic betterment.[53] However, many of these older men were physically damaged by the harsh conditions in the trenches and were discharged with health issues. Others were rejected as unfit before even going overseas. What were the implications for those older French-born men, who were in fact not fit, of trying to join the Australian army? The French government gradually moved towards mobilisation of older men, but its method was bureaucratic. For those who wanted to serve, volunteering at the local recruitment office provided a more straightforward route to army service, and for others, being seen to have attempted to enlist may have been valuable. As the war progressed there was growing pressure on men to explain why they had not enlisted, although the AIF was voluntary. Pressure to enlist came from multiple quarters. The 1916 'Call to Arms' was an Australian government initiated personal appeal sent to each man deemed fit to fight.[54] In public spaces, potential recruits were harangued by emotive speeches at enlistment stands and recruitment drives. Pro-war women's groups such as the One Woman One Recruit League involved women pledging to each work on one man personally known to them until he enlisted. Pressure – both for and against enlistment - also came from the debates around conscription which arose in the wake of the losses at Gallipoli.[55] In Australia, distance and the jurisdiction of Australian law rather than French meant the consul only had limited recourse to coerce men into fulfilling their military obligations, should they be reluctant. The Consul clearly was not able to coerce all those on his list. He had three methods of encouraging: announcements in the paper, personal letters and peer pressure.

III. Challenging French identity

i. Refusal to enlist

The case of Edouard Bordeaux, another older man, provides a further example of the sort of pressure applied, in this case by Homery. Cajoling, or just plain nagging, whichever, it did not work. Bordeaux had arrived in Australia in 1898 aged 27, and by the time he

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[53] Stuer, *The French in Australia*, 142.Statistics of French-born males, according to the 1911 Census Total: 1,973. Ages: 15-29 = 15.4% (304) Ages 30-49 = 30.8% (608) Ages 50+ = 51.9% (1024). It would be interesting to analyse the records to get an idea of how these figures were affected by arrivals between 1911 and 1914.

[54] Bart Ziino, 'Enlistment and Non-Enlistment in Wartime Australia: Responses to the 1916 Call to Arms Appeal', *Australian Historical Studies* 41, no. 2 (1 June 2010): 217–32, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314611003713603.

[55] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*.

applied to be naturalised in 1912 he was working as a veterinary surgeon.[56] He was a successful professional and in 1914 was engaged on the teaching staff of the University of Melbourne.[57] In July 1915, as the French Red Cross in Melbourne publicised its forthcoming fundraising concert, Bordeaux wrote to his university colleague, French lecturer Maurice-Carton enclosing money for the patriotic concert. He made a suggestion as to who should sing the Marseillaise at the concert. He considered Horace Stevens, whom he had recently seen perform, a worthy choice: 'I never head this rendered with as much vigour and enthusiasm since I left France'.[58] Maurice-Carton seconded this opinion, as he passed on the letter to Jules Homery.[59] The correspondence illustrates Bordeaux's connection to and engagement with Melbourne's French community.

Bordeaux had already completed three years of military service between 1891 and 1894. Nonetheless in September 1916 Homery notified him that he would be called up. Bordeaux was instructed to travel to Versailles as soon as possible, where he would be posted to the 22nd Infantry regiment. But at nearly 45 years of age, he had no intention of leaving for the front. He replied that not only was he now naturalised, but that his work at the university did not permit him to offer his services to the French government. Homery's response was somewhat harsh. Homery replied on 12 September that, without having asked permission first of the French government, his naturalisation did not preclude him from his obligations to France. Moreover, he risked being guilty of desertion, with a penalty of between 2 and 5 years in prison. Homery hoped that Bordeaux would reconsider, and imitate the 'hundreds and thousands' of expatriate Frenchmen throughout the world who had responded to the call of their homeland in her hour of danger.[60] Just as Homery predicted, Bordeaux's military file was marked *insoumis*, despite his age and his previous service.[61] The clash of ideas in this correspondence demonstrates two sides of the coin regarding the concept of how to be a good Frenchman in time of war. Homery's tone, almost petulant and strident, contrasts with Bordeaux's matter of fact one. Judging that his contribution, as a vet, to education and animal welfare was the most sensible use of his time, he also considered that he had done his duty to

[56] Edward Francis Joseph Bordeaux, Naturalisation, NAA: A1, 1912/10138.
[57] UMA, 'Very old staff cards', Bordeaux.
[58] Bordeaux to Maurice-Carton, 3 Jul 1915MAE 428PO/1/ 48
[59] Maurice-Carton to Homery 5 Jul 1915MAE 428PO/1/48
[60] Homery to Bordeaux, 12 Sep 1916, MAE 428PO/1/45
[61] Bordeaux, François Edouard Joseph, Matricule 1684, Archives de Paris, Registres matricules du recrutement (1887-1921), http://archives.paris.fr/s/17/etats-signaletiques-et-des-services-militaires/? *

France and it was reasonable to stay in Melbourne. He would continue to teach specialist veterinary science courses at the university.

The cases of Benoit Lacharme and Paul Auriac also demonstrate what happened when some men resisted coercion by the French consul, contesting authority and externally imposed French identity.[62] When Lacharme did not appear, and was listed as *insoumis*, the local authorities in France contacted his family in an attempt to find out where he was. Lacharme's father made a declaration, and showed the authorities a letter from his son in Australia, confirming that he had joined the AIF, expecting to then join the British army once he got to France. In fact, Lacharme's service with the AIF did not cover him in glory, he was court martialled for stealing 310 francs from a house in Armentières in which he was billeted in December 1916 and sentenced to six months hard labour, after which he was returned to the front.[63] Another Frenchman resident in Melbourne, Paul Auriac, was known socially to the consul and had been present at the grand dinner held for Melbourne's French community to celebrate 14 July 1914. But when mobilisation was declared, Auriac refused to proceed willingly to France. Auriac asked several times for assurances from Homery on behalf of the French government. Perhaps rather presciently, he wrote: 'When the war is over, will the French government guarantee the repatriation of those reservists who have family in Australia?' Auriac also wanted guarantees regarding the allowances payable to his family. 'Failing this, I am sorry to say I cannot see my way clear to go.'[64] When Homery wrote to Courtney asking which Frenchmen had joined the AIF, he particularly mentioned Auriac by name in his request. Auriac had indeed joined the AIF in September 1914, however, his war record was not good, and he led Australian military authorities a merry dance, described at one point by Australian authorities as 'the biggest humbug in the AIF.'[65]

ii. The Aliens registration laws and the French soldiers

Issues of citizenship and naturalisation were further complicated by the introduction of the Aliens Registration law (War Precautions Act) in October 1916 which required all foreign-born, non-British residents, as well as Australian wives of Aliens, to register with the local police. At this time both countries were keenly feeling the great loss of men on

[62] MAE 428PO/1/49.
[63] Larcharme B. Court Martial, NAA: A471/1/6137.
[64] Auriac to Homery, 26 and 28 Aug 1914, MAE 428PO/1/49.
[65] Auriac Paul, NAA: B2455.

the Western Front and pressure grew for remaining men to enlist. Despite widespread demonstrations of positive sentiment towards France our noble ally, Frenchmen were also subject to the Alien Registration law. Consequently, the government now had a new source of information identifying French-born people. This inspired Consul-General Chayet to approach the Australian Government, requesting a list of all the Frenchmen who had registered. One government member he could certainly rely on to support his cause was the francophile Premier of NSW, William Holman.[66] Pressed to respond, Australian government officials discussed how to help the French government locate its citizens, while acknowledging that in Australia, Australian law must be applied. Therefore, the French government could not legally force men to sign up.

> Chayet has been making representations to Holman that there are in NSW about 100 Frenchmen who are subject to military duty in France but who have not reported for such service and the Consul desires to be informed whether there is any law under which these men can be compelled to report.[67]

One department official wondered whether the War Precautions Act would allow the Australian government to organize for the reluctant Frenchmen to be deported to New Caledonia. Once there they would be subject to French law and could be compelled to go to war. Upon reflection this option was ultimately rejected. The officials needed to tread a diplomatic path between the pressure from France via its Consul-General, and their regard for Australian procedures. Chayet's request was considered thus:

> 'referring to the request by the French Consul-General to be furnished with a list of French citizens who have registered under the Aliens registration regulations […] I am not sure that the French Consul-General is not asking a great deal too much. […] regret that it is not practicable to comply with request.' And handwritten at the bottom: 'PS: Suppose all the consuls made the same request'.[68]

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[66] Jill Donohoo, 'NSW Premier William Holman and the "Inexhaustible Interest of French Affairs"', *The French Australian Review*, no. 61 (Australian Summer -2017 2016).
[67] J. V. Tillet (Crown Solicitor) to Sir Robert Garran (Solicitor General) 26 Apr 1917 NAA: A456/3 W17/11 File 1, 'Frenchmen in Australia liable for military service in France'.
[68] Steward to Major E.L. Piesse, Department of Defence, Melbourne 7 June 1917 NAA: A367-C3075M.

However, in 1918, the pressure paid off, and lists of those Frenchmen who had registered were eventually provided to the Consul-General. Although by this time the war was nearing its end, France was eventually successful in using its special status to influence the minister and the civil servants. The lists provided by the government departments to the consuls gave a state-by-state census of remaining Frenchmen who could potentially be called up, the men listed as Aliens. The varying numbers reflect the size of the French-population: for example, the list for New South Wales is the longest. They often state if the man had left the country, or joined up, thus providing an extra layer of information, but the lists significantly show the last ones left behind – those who really did not want to, or could not, join up. Conscientious objectors, personal reasons, or ill-health are among the possible answers to the intriguing question of what made these men *not* go. [69] Among those who registered as aliens under the new act were Henri and Jean Deville, the parents of Emile Deville who was fighting with the AIF.[70]

iii. Some responses to the Aliens Registration law

If some soldiers became naturalised in the hope of exempting themselves from French military service, or to facilitate their enlistment in the AIF, others may have become naturalised to facilitate their hoped-for return to Australia after the hostilities. However, as more men from this group were naturalised after the war, than before, naturalisation might also be linked to the introduction of the Aliens Registration Law in 1916. The requirements of the Aliens Registration law were considered onerous by some. Writing from Queensland, after the war, Gontran Tournouer expressed his annoyance.[71] Gontran was the elder brother of René and Roger who both fought in the French army. He had served in the AIF in the Middle East but then was retired due to ill health. He seems to have embellished his army record somewhat after the war. Nonetheless, he went on to make an important contribution to French culture in Queensland by heading the Brisbane AF and was an involved member of society. He was chosen to make a speech in French upon the occasion of the French Economic Mission's visit to Brisbane in 1918 and met General Pau. He also generated a copious amount of correspondence with both the Australian military authorities, and with the Home Affairs Department, which was

[69] French – Australia – List for Consul General – Men of Military Age (18-47 years) NAA: A385/6.
[70] NAA: MT269/1 2001/00491203 Vic/France/Deville Henri. NAA: MT269/1 2001/00491203 Vic/France/Deville/Jean.
[71] Gontran de Tournouer Naturalisation, NAA A1 1922/9472

responsible for citizenship matters. In a letter relating to his own and his brother Roger's naturalisation, he complained that when Roger returned from five years at the front in the French army, he encountered suspicion on the part of the authorities. Roger produced a certificate confirming his British nationality to the immigration officials. However, the official remarked that 'he could have typed this himself'. Therefore, to avoid being deported, he had to be subjected to 'the indignity of registering as an alien', and going to the police station and reporting, 'along with Germans and Russians', until he had regularised his situation.[72] The Alien Registration laws, citizenship and nationality issues were layered on top of the pre-war white Australia policy to strengthen Australia's insular and exclusive attitude towards immigrants. This contrasts with a comment quoted by Stemmler, when Frenchman Joseph Varcin reported to his unit in August 1915, one of the last contingents of reinforcements to be sent to Gallipoli: 'Colonel White of the Light Horse commented that day on the diverse background of the Australian soldiers, writing: 'nearly half of this show is not very Australian at all.'[73]

The issues of nationality and naturalisation that the French-Australians were faced with had become part of public discourse, as evidenced by this joke of 1915. Interestingly it is from a page which included jokes poking fun at Chinese, and Germans, among others.

> From Oriel's French Guide:-
>
> H: Bon jour, mon cher Gaston!
>
> G : I embrace you, my dear Henri!
>
> H: These are gloomy times, dear Gaston!
>
> G: Entirely horrible, dear Henri.
>
> H: Atrocious, dear Gaston.
>
> G: Not at all pleasant, dear Henri.
>
> H: Gaston, is it that you are naturalised?
>
> G: But, yes, and you, dear Henri?

[72] Gontran de Tournouer Naturalisation, NAA A1 1922/9472
[73] Stemmler, *Boys from the Bush*, 243.

> H: Ma foi, I also am now an Australian. I speak the Australian with facility. I say "My oath" and "Sacré blimey." Nobody would now take me for a Frenchman, thanks to our many lessons.
>
> G: You flatter me, dear Henri.
>
> H: But why, then, have you not become a soldier?
>
> G: Eh bien! I might ask of you the same. But, no, I have my reasons. It is I that ask you. Are you then a coward?
>
> H: If anybody else had said that to me, dear Gaston, I would pass to him the blue eye on the jaw. I forgive you, for are we not friends?
>
> G: Bah! I grow fatigued with you. You make always the evasion. Why do you not enlist? Are you, I repeat, the coward?
>
> H: Judge then, dirty dog! I am married.
>
> G: Bon dieu, dear Henri, I am desolated that I have doubted you. You are a hero. I dare not do that. It is I that am the coward, for I have merely enlisted. I will die for my country, but I will not be married.[74]

Gaston and Henri's conversation addresses many aspects of the situation for French-born men in Australia during the war, and perceptions of French identity more generally. As well as the decision of whether to join up, it asks 'is a Frenchman actually courageous?' This is all the more amusing when contrasted with the hyperbolic messages constantly presented in the press. It also considers the question of whether being naturalised was automatically linked to enlistment. As this section has shown, the legal implications of naturalisation were viewed differently by French and Australian governments. On a broader level, the joke introduces the thorny topic of marriage. Was it an acceptable reason not to enlist? Many men were pondering this same question. Henri has not enlisted because he is married. Gaston, however, is aghast at the thought of marriage! The joke also references the traits which make Henri and Gaston stereotypical Frenchmen. The Frenchness of their banter is immediately apparent in their names, their accent and the syntax of their language. Thus, the conversation includes a few 'in jokes' poking fun at

[74] 'The Passing Show', *Argus*, 9 Jan 1915, 5.

French vocabulary and grammar which would appeal to the contemporary reader who had studied French at school.

Attempts were still being made up until the late stages of the war to gather up the remaining available Frenchmen to fight under the colours. Letters exchanged between the diplomatic representatives in London outlined the legal perspective in 1918.[75] New Zealand had agreed to pass a law allowing the arrest of any members of allied countries who had not done their military service, and the French wanted to know the position of Australia on this. The Australian government responded that it would put a similar law into place, but the agreement stipulated that the law would not apply to naturalised Frenchmen, or to Frenchmen who had already embarked overseas with the AIF. Those who had joined the AIF but had returned to Australia – for example discharged due to illness or other reasons – would be subject to the law. It also provided for an allowance paid by the Australian Government to compensate for the difference between a French soldier's pay and the AIF rate. By the time it was passed the war was almost over.

The Frenchmen who joined the AIF, and those who commented and judged this choice provide another layer in understanding how French identity was expressed and understood. The backdrop of the French military service requirements, and the associated questions around nationality and naturalisation, reveal how this range of interpretations regarding French identity evolved in the context of the war. The case studies show that sometimes the choice to join the AIF was reasoned and deliberate, particularly for those who were pressured to do their duty as Frenchmen and join the colours. Joining the AIF could symbolise an attachment to Australia and gratitude for the new start in life it had afforded. At other times it was the more straightforward and practical option – the Australian soldier received a higher rate of pay. For some who had been evading the French authorities, the AIF meant they could continue to do so. The range of reasons is as numerous as the recruits themselves. The diversity of this group of men reflects the diversity of not only the AIF but also of the French residents in Australia. From barely literate ex-sailors to wealthy urban professionals, heroic types to dubious characters, these

[75] Miscellaneous (General): French deserters in Australia; repatriation of dependants of Australian soldiers, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-728043352. Accessed 25 Oct 2020.

individual stories illustrate the nature of French migration and French migrants, their diversity, and the different trajectories which brought them to Australia.

As we have seen, both those who were born in Australia, and those who were born in France could consider themselves, or be considered, French. However, there were many French speaking soldiers in the AIF who did not fit into either of these categories, but who nonetheless played a part in French-Australian connections through their linguistic contributions. They will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3. Francophone soldiers – speaking French in the AIF

Although some French-born soldiers were naturalised British subjects, they were also classed as French citizens, while some Australian-born men were accorded French citizenship. These men expressed cultural identity and national identity in a variety of ways. However, while birthplace and nationality could be fluid markers of identity, French language skills also played a in defining identity for AIF soldiers: some were fluent French speakers, and as the war continued, others acquired, or developed their existing language skills. This chapter investigates the significance of French language for the Australian soldier for communication, defining and understanding cultural identity and creating connections. As Krista Cowman argued, knowledge of French eased the British soldier's experience of war by allowing them to form connections and mitigate the feeling of foreignness. Its benefits were both emotional and physical – ranging from comfort to survival.[1] This chapter asks if this assessment is also true for the Australian soldier, and investigates a range of contexts which demonstrate that a knowledge of French could be both beneficial to the Australian soldier's war experience, and sometimes vital to his survival.

Some AIF soldiers were already French speakers before the war, despite not being of French birth or nationality, and the first section examines case studies of men who came from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, and whose language and communication skills contributed in a range of situations on the front line. Next, the chapter will trace how AIF soldiers were provided with opportunities to learn French before they departed for the Western Front. The value of French language skills for soldiers was widely acknowledged, and the French-Australian community played a significant role in setting up and administering teaching programs, in conjunction with other benevolent organisations such as the YMCA. Through examining the roles of individuals such as the teachers, and the organisations which facilitated it such as the AF, this chapter will demonstrate the utility of these French-Australian connections on the home front which helped smooth interactions in France. Finally, this chapter examines

[1] Krista Cowman, '"The … 'Parlez' Is Not Going on Very Well 'Avec Moi'"', in *Languages and the First World War: Communicating in a Transnational War*, ed. Julian Walker and Christophe Declercq, Palgrave Studies in Languages at War (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 25–43, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137550309_2.

some of the situations in which AIF soldiers encountered language learning once they arrived in France. This chapter therefore adds a new element to our understanding of the Australian soldiers' experience on the Western Front. It argues that identifying and examining the French speakers in the Australian army provides an unexpected counter narrative to the archetypal monolingual digger – often of British heritage – and that therefore the AIF's linguistic and cultural connections in France were more widespread and nuanced than asking for egg and chips, or 'plonk' at the *estaminet.*

This chapter references and builds upon two strands of existing scholarship on the role of languages in the First World War: firstly, the study of linguistic interactions between the British army and the French, and secondly the role of languages in the Australian military context. Elizabeth Greenhalgh explored Franco-British liaison at command level, showing that effective communication between the two armies was crucial to the ultimate success of the Franco-British coalition.[2] Craig Gibson explored the gamut of situations in which soldiers of Britain and her Empire encountered the French civilians behind the front line, with a chapter entitled 'Communication' examining the language skills, or lack thereof, among British soldiers.[3] Since the Centenary, interest in the connection between languages and conflict has expanded, part of the cultural turn in the historiography. *Languages and the First World War* (part of the Palgrave Studies in Languages at War series) has been the forum for excellent work in this field. The series of books drew initially from conferences held in Antwerp and London in 2014. It continues to be a forum for valuable research via the blog and subsequent publications.[4] Franziska Heimburger examined interpreters in the French army, their recruitment, their role in liaising with the British and Allied armies, and with civilians. In general, according to the policy jointly decided by the French and British command, interpreters were drawn from the French army, and would be posted to British units, whereas British army officers with linguistic

[2] Elizabeth Greenhalgh, *Victory Through Coalition* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[3] Craig Gibson, *Behind the Front: British Soldiers and French Civilians, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[4] Christophe Declercq and Julien Walker, eds., *Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory* (Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Christophe Declercq and Julian Walker, eds., *Languages and the First World War: Communicating in a Transnational War*, Palgrave Studies in Languages at War (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

skills would be appointed as liaison officers and intelligence officers. Part of their role was interpreting, even if it was not their official designation. [5]

The Australian soldier's linguistic and cultural experiences abroad are the subject of recent scholarship. Many diggers had little or no French, and their efforts to communicate once they arrived in France mirrored those of the British soldier and ranged from challenging to humorous. Véronique Duché and Diane de Saint Léger's linguistic analysis of the Australian Soldiers' Magazine *Aussie* – a trench journal first published in France in January 1918 – demonstrated how French code-switching was used by the diggers to define their specific cultural space and identity.[6] The digger's imperfect knowledge of French signalled his place as an outsider in the French speaking community. Moreover, it signified the class or group to which he belonged: differentiating him from the higher social classes in Australia who were likely to speak French.[7] Amanda Laugesen has contributed much to the scholarship on language and the intellectual life of Australian soldiers, including analysing their creation of a 'slanguage' as they combined French loan words with Aussie slang to create their own vernacular.[8] More recently she has reconsidered the 'language landscape' of the war and shown the variety of ways in which Australian soldiers absorbed and used French, German and Arabic in the various theatres of war. Moreover, their use of a distinctive Australian form of English, distinguishing themselves from the British, was firmly bound up in the development of national identity.[9]

When dipping into the pool of francophone soldiers from Australia, one can cast a net widely and deeply, even though non 'British' and multilingual soldiers were a minority in the AIF. The prevailing image, both then and now, of the digger who spoke only

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[5] Franziska Heimburger, 'Fighting Together: Language Issues in the Military Coordination of First World War Allied Coalition Warfare', in *Languages and the Military*, ed. Hilary Footitt and Michael Kelly (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Franziska Heimburger, 'Mésentente Cordiale? Langues et Coalition Alliée Sur Le Front de l'ouest de La Grande Guerre' (Doctoral Thesis, Paris, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2014).
[6] Phillip Harris, ed., *Aussie : The Australian Soldiers' Magazine* (Flêtre, France, 1918).
[7] Véronique Duché and Dianne de Saint Léger, 'Aussie: Code-Switching in an Australian Soldiers' Magazine - an Overview', in *Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory*, ed. Christophe Declercq and Julian Walker (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
[8] Amanda Laugesen, *Diggerspeak: The Language of Australians at War* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2005); *'Boredom Is the Enemy' The Intellectual and Imaginative Lives of Australian Soldiers in the Great War and Beyond* (Farnham Surrey and Burlington Vermont: Ashgate, 2012); *Furphies and Wizz-Bangs: Anzac Slang from the Great War* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[9] Amanda Laugesen, 'Cross-Cultural Communication and the Experiences of Australian Soldiers during the First World War', in *Communication, Interpreting and Languages in Wartime*, ed. Amanda Laugesen and Richard Gehrmann, Palgrave Studies in Languages at War (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), https://doi-org/10.1007/978-3-030-27037-7_2.

English was exemplified in *Aussie.* He is obliged to give French a try, but proudly displays his faux pas. The comedic way in which he struggled with French was a kind of trope which expressed a general experience – many of his comrades were struggling in just the same way, and humour helped him to cope with being far from home in unfamiliar surroundings. *Aussie* was a forum in which to present the Australian's distinctive identity, differentiating himself from both the British and the French. Thus, his struggles with French language are part of what marks him as an Australian.[10] Even so, alongside the self-deprecating anecdotes we do find reflective and serious pieces in *Aussie*, which aim to impart cultural understanding. For example, *Leave-making in Paris* veers from the humorous – as misunderstanding builds between the Aussie soldier and the cab-driver – to an informative description of Paris.[11] In *A Misunderstanding*, the hapless Aussie (Pepp) recounts his attempts to woo Germaine by helping her mother harvest turnips.[12] The contrast between the Aussie soldier's clumsy French, and a native speaker's speech is signalled orthographically: "*Voolez-voo*,' bows Pepp, "*moy aiday-voo*?" But when Germaine hurries away:

"*Porkwa*?" demanded Pepp, indignantly, "*Porkwa Germaine parti toot sweet*?"

"*Ah Monsieur*," replied the old lady, '*il faut faire le beurre maintenant, puisque vous êtes si bon. »*

The everyman soldier Pepp is a type, and fulfills a function – the ordinary digger sees himself reflected in such characters and can laugh at himself. Yet clearly the writers of *Aussie* were able to express themselves in correct French. In fact, the two parallel worlds co-existed within the ranks of the AIF: linguists, non-linguists and the range in between. This chapter first considers those who may be considered 'linguists' – those who already had French language skills before the war was declared.

I. AIF soldiers with pre-war French language skills

The previous chapter drew on the information available in the service records of AIF soldiers, which allow us to identify and categorise them according to their birthplace. However, through anecdotal and circumstantial sources it is possible to identify other

[10] Duché and de Saint Léger, 'Aussie: Code-Switching in an Australian Soldiers' Magazine - an Overview'.
[11] Aussie – The Australian Soldiers' Magazine, No 1, 18 January 1918
[12] Aussie – The Australian Soldiers' Magazine, No. 9, December 1918

members of the AIF who spoke French. My research has uncovered many examples, from a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds. Although it is impossible to quantify the French speaking soldiers who left from Australia to serve with the AIF overseas, this section will present some case studies illustrating some of the ways in which Australian soldiers, even if they were not French, began their wartime experience with an ability to speak French. By examining individual trajectories in letters diaries and memoirs, this section asks how they gained this linguistic competence, and how their language ability was bound up in their wartime experiences.

First this section will focus on Alan Rowland Chisholm, who started life in ordinary circumstances in New South Wales, was educated in Sydney, and demonstrated an early talent and passion for languages. It will then consider the examples of French speaking Australian soldiers whose language skills enabled them to communicate while fighting alongside French soldiers in France during 1918 in a liaison zone referred to in both Australian and French accounts as the International Post. In pre-war Australian society, knowledge of French carried connotations of style and class. It was important in commerce, notably in the wool trade. Just as in Britain, it signalled a certain level of education, with the accompanying cultural capital. However, as the case studies analysed here demonstrate, men from a variety of socio-economic (and educational) backgrounds had access to language skills. While those from privileged backgrounds had access to higher education levels, it did not automatically follow that highly educated meant wealthy.

i. Alan Rowland Chisholm

Alan Rowland Chisholm is now best known for his academic career, as professor of French at the University of Melbourne, and notably as an internationally renowned scholar of Mallarmé and symbolist poetry. However, for this thesis he offers particular interest as an erudite French speaking AIF soldier. His cultural and linguistic knowledge provided him with opportunities for interactions not accessible to many of his comrades. The contributions he was able to make because of his language skills are recorded in his war diary and notebooks, letters home, a published memoir *The Familiar Presence*, and the unpublished memoirs *Martial Memories*, and *Without Footnotes* held at the

University of Melbourne archives.[13] Along with a recently published biography, they detail his experiences in France, his interactions with French civilians, and his views on French language and culture.[14] Chisholm studied French, Latin and Greek at Sydney University, graduating in early 1911. After teaching for eighteen months, he left Australia in May 1912, and travelled to Europe on a scholarship. For two years he lived and studied in Berlin, Leipzig and Paris, deepening his knowledge of French, and after intensive study, becoming fluent in German. Upon his return to Australia in 1914 he took up a position as lecturer in French and German at the Sydney Teachers' College, bringing dynamism, innovation and rigour to the department. He volunteered for the AIF in December 1915 and sailed from Sydney in August 1916.[15]

Chisholm on active service

Chisholm's diary and memoirs describe in detail his time working in the wireless and intelligence section, on listening posts intercepting and translating German messages, and liaising with the French. His anecdotes reveal the attitudes of soldiers, and French civilians to British and Australian soldiers speaking French. Chisholm's more nuanced understanding of local attitudes is illustrative of a different war experience that was available to him as a French speaker. While on active service, Chisholm found many opportunities – sometimes ad-hoc and sometimes officially – to continue his vocation as a French teacher, to the benefit of some of his fellow soldiers. During his university days, Chisholm had already befriended older scholar and poet Christopher Brennan. After volunteering for the AIF in 1915, Chisholm encountered Brennan's brother Philip as a fellow soldier on the troopship carrying them to Europe. During the voyage he taught basic French to Philip and a few companions.[16] He also later described tutoring the commanding officer of his company. The commanding officer sent for him and told him he was very pleased with his work. 'He also asked me to give him some French lessons, and I've been doing so ever since and am on good terms with him now.'[17]

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[13] Alan Rowland Chisholm, *The Familiar Presence* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966) Alan Rowland Chisholm (1888-1981) Collection held at UMA 1979.0034; 2002.0029 and 1984.0003.
[14] Stan Scott, *Chis: The Life and Work of Alan Rowland Chisholm* (Melbourne: Ancora Press, 2019).
[15] Chisholm, A.R. NAA: B2455.
[16] Alan Rowland Chisholm, *Men Were My Milestones* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1958), 87.
[17] Letter from Chisholm. to his mother, 1 Mar 1918 UMA

Although he had initially been taken on as an infantry soldier, Chisholm's intellectual abilities were soon recognised, such that during training in England he was transferred to the signals section. On 3 January 1917, he was interviewed and tested for interpreter at the War Office.[18] Once in France he was assigned to the British Wireless Headquarters and learned the use of codes and the Intelligence Telephone, listening and translating German telephone messages. Chisholm's group, as part of the Corps Signals Wireless Group, was attached to infantry units, first with to the 2nd Anzac Corps and then 1st Anzac Corps. During September and October 1917 he was assigned to another role: interpreter for the press station, which involved translating the wireless news from Paris, Germany and Italy.[19] He found the work was interesting and left him 'plenty of leisure'.[20] In the following days his diary entries are in French and then the Spanish he had been teaching himself. In October, after a stint close to the frontline in the mud of Ypres, collecting reports, he returned to the press translating role at Hazebrouck. He and a fellow wireless operator set up their equipment in the home of a 'fine Flemish-French family - carpenters' with whom he got on well, and spent a 'happy fortnight' living in their home.[21]

Chisholm's memoir *The Familiar Presence* was published fifty years after his war experiences. The affection and perspicacity with which he described his interactions with French soldiers and civilians provide valuable insight into how one francophone Australian's war was coloured by his language abilities, facilitating his own connections with the locals, as well as acting as a go-between for his fellow Australians.[22] In early 1918, he was stationed at Brigade Headquarters which had been established in a farmhouse. The farm's pig population had been reduced by shelling and, Chisholm speculated, by headquarters' staff. One day the farmer and his daughter were 'miraculously' able to return to their farm with a cart, intending to take their remaining pigs to safety. Chisholm's diplomacy was required 'smoothing things out' when the farmer realised only three pigs remained.[23] Another of Chisholm's interventions between locals and diggers involved the water supply at a farm. Thanks to his interpreting skills the Australians were allowed to obtain water, while showing respect to the farmer.[24]

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[18] Chisholm War Diary, UMA 2002-0029-001
[19] Ibid.
[20] Chisholm to his mother, 1 Mar 1918, UMA
[21] Chisholm War Diary; Chisholm to his mother 1 Mar 1918, UMA 2002-0029-001
[22] Chisholm, *The Familiar Presence*.
[23] Chisholm, 5.
[24] A.R. Chisholm, *Martial Memories*, 3, UMA 1979.0034, Box 1

Further recollections tell of Chisholm's experiences in April 1918, while billeted at Vignacourt, a town behind the lines through which thousands of Allied troops stopped for rest. While there he befriended French soldiers billeted in the same village, spending hours of pleasant conversation. For Chisholm, the French were not an unfamiliar, puzzling people, they were known. Yet he was able to observe their attitudes and comment on them with an outsider's perspective. The following anecdote shows French people being unaccustomed to Australians speaking their language. 'One linguistic peculiarity that often annoyed me was the refusal, by some of the village folk, to believe that anyone in a British uniform could speak French.' Chisholm recalled his transaction with a French village woman, arranging to have his washing done. The woman 'fired off a salvo of gibberish at me' and Chisholm implored her to speak French. She replied 'ah oui, vous êtes le soldat qui parle français'. But then went on to say 'eh bien, Monsieur, compris? No watt-air'.[25]

Intellectual and cultural life on the front line

Chisholm's ability to derive some cultural benefit from his time on active service was the remarkable thing about his war experience. His talent for language learning and his voracious appetite for reading is evidenced in the notes on books he read while at the front – in French, German, Italian, and other languages. He slips between languages in his diary, as he notes and reflects on the books and authors read including Dante's *Divine Comedy*; literary observations interspersed with reflections on philosophy and metaphysics. He had a fortunate knack of obtaining books – sometimes exchanged by French soldiers, sometimes left behind in captured German posts. Demonstrating his persistent curiosity, Chisholm's diary also includes linguistic observations. His diary entry of 21 May 1918, at Bertangles records his observation of the 'local Picard patois' recording what he heard with a linguist's attention to detail:

> The Picards here when speaking their patois say 'ti' for 'toi', e.g. tais-ti, bois ti thé etc. They also use the old form 'avoit' (avwɛ) for avait, 'plancher' becomes 'planquer' and inversely, 'sucre' becomes 'chucre'.

[25] A.R. Chisholm, *Martial Memories*, 4, UMA 1979.0034, Box 1.

Chisholm's involvement in the AIF Education Service

In June 1918 Chisholm was approached by Lt. W. J. Mulholland, who oversaw the creation of the AIF Education Service in France. Formed in the latter stages of the war, and inspired by the Canadian model already operating, the AIF Education Service's aim was to support the demobilisation of the AIF soldiers, by providing them with skills and training to facilitate their reintegration into civilian life during the war. Its second aim was to provide the men with beneficial pastimes to keep them occupied while waiting for their return journey. Soldiers could learn skills from bookkeeping to beekeeping, technical and university courses.[26] During the organisation's establishment in the latter half of 1918, teachers were recruited from the ranks to assist with planning and syllabus design and were subsequently appointed to the various units as Education officers. In October 1918 Chisholm's language and teaching skills were utilised to good purpose when he was appointed Education Officer for the 26th Battalion, and later as 'supervisor of modern languages' to the 7th infantry brigade. These postings involved teaching and organising classes, as well as appointing and managing other teachers. The AIF Education Service will be introduced again later in the chapter.

By January 1919, Chisholm was among the many thousands of Australians stationed in Belgium. For the four Australian Divisions who spent those winter months in the area around Charleroi, the AIF Education scheme, as well as sports and other organised events, were an important part of their demobilisation process. Chisholm's work as an education officer kept him busy, as did his social life, attending several musical evenings and dinners every week. 'I'm getting my French perfected all the time as well as being treated so well.' The Australians were largely well received by the Belgians, and when Chisholm took civilian friends to a concert put on by the Australians, they 'enjoyed it immensely although they couldn't understand any of the words'. Chisholm continued to spend these final months of the war as a cultural and linguistic mediator between the Australians and their Belgian hosts. During the winter of 1918-1919, he recalled 'because I could speak French, I was allotted many strange and interesting tasks – establishing friendly relations with the Town Hall; steering the mess cooks towards less Anglo-Saxon menus; giving

[26] Australian Imperial Force, *History of the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation* (London, 1919); Darryl Dymock, 'A Sweet Use of Adversity - Adult Education in the Australian Army in the Two World Wars' (PhD, NSW, University of New England, 1990).

linguistic help to a few men who wanted to marry Belgian girls'.[27] Soon after the Armistice, as his unit marched through recently liberated villages, Chisholm would accompany the battalion doctor, acting as his interpreter as they visited the 'stricken communities' offering assistance where needed. In a poignant episode from this time Chisholm describes he and the doctor visiting the home of an elderly couple, the wife gravely ill and near death. The doctor provided her with care and medication to ease her passing. When they returned to the house the next day, the woman had died during the night, and the old man's stoicism prompted Chisholm to reflect on the eternal presence of death for all men, not just the soldiers who faced it every day on the front line.[28]

Chisholm's language knowledge led to diverse encounters with soldiers and civilians, from the amusing to the tragic. From his position on the listening post to his role in the Education Service at the close of the war, his war work also demonstrated a range of experiences. Chisholm experienced the war through an intellectual and metaphysical paradigm, as well on the harsh physical plane. He judged that the teaching, cultural, linguistic learnings all benefitted him as a person.[29] However, his experiences initially remained personal – they were not widely publicised in the manner of those whose letters were published in the newspapers at the time, but were limited to those in his own circle, and only later were shared with the public through the publication of his wartime reminiscences. Later, as a leader in French studies he published many newspaper articles on France, French politics and the war from France's perspective during the Second World War, and inspired generations of students at the University of Melbourne.[30]

ii. Australian soldiers communicate with adjacent French troops: The 'International Post'

Francophone soldiers in the AIF played in an important role both for communicating with French civilians while out of the front line, and also when fighting alongside French troops. From April to August 1918 Australians and French soldiers rubbed shoulders as they were stationed alongside each other, during their rest times behind the line, as well as at the front as they fought alongside each other in several battles. The International Post was the name given to the area of the front line where liaison posts were established

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[27] Chisholm, *The Familiar Presence*, 6.
[28] Chisholm, *Without Footnotes*, UMA 2002.0029, Box 2
[29] Letter from Chisholm to his mother, 23 Jun 1917, UMA 2002.0029, Box 1
[30] Scott, *Chis: The Life and Work of Alan Rowland Chisholm*, 121–26.

linking the Australian soldiers and French soldiers who inhabited adjoining trenches during this period.[31] Interactions between the French and Australian soldiers relied on official interpreters, as well as unofficial communication, and AIF soldiers who spoke French were able to communicate with the French soldiers in the adjacent trenches. At times, such communication skills were vital, and at other times facilitated camaraderie. Accounts and unit diaries by both French and Australian participants recount the role played by French speaking AIF soldiers and demonstrate that the connections created were recognised by men of each side.

During the 1918 German spring offensive and the subsequent push-back by the Allies, Australians participated in several battles in the Somme region. Some of these battles, such as the recapture of Villers-Bretonneux from the Germans during the night of 24-25 April 1918 are now iconic in the Australian public narrative and have become a key part of Australia's official commemorative practice. Other battles from this period in which Australians participated are less well known, such as Hangard Wood and Monument Wood. The accounts by and about French speaking Australians who were there in the trenches and in the rear areas, fighting alongside and fraternising with the *poilus,* provide another strand to the more global question of how French and French speaking Australians responded to the war, by analysing episodes in which multilingual communication enhanced interactions.

As Romain Fathi argues, Villers-Bretonneux has become part of Australia's 'national identity making process' and, hand-in-hand with the Anzac Myth, the meaning ascribed to it has evolved over the century since.[32] The creation of the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux and its symbolism have been appropriated by successive Australian governments in a self-referential manner to fit the purpose of the day. From its earliest re-telling, by official war historian Charles Bean, the details of the battle were blurred to emphasise the role of the Australians. Today, because it is the site of the annual Anzac Day ceremonies in France, Villers-Bretonneux looms large in public consciousness. Fathi rightly points out that the Australian historiography has focussed

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[31] I have written about these encounters briefly in English, and in more detail in French. Pauline Georgelin, 'Encounters Between Diggers and Poilus: Finding the History in Family History', *The French Australian Review*, no. 59 (Australian Summer -2016 2015); Pauline Georgelin, 'Rencontres entre poilus français et diggers australiens' (Honours Thesis, Melbourne, University of Melbourne, 2015).
[32] Romain Fathi, *Our Corner of the Somme - Australia at Villers-Bretonneux* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

almost exclusively on the role of the Australians, glossing over the participation of French, British and Canadian soldiers. It is not my intention to re-analyse the battles here, that job is for military historians. However, these episodes of cross-cultural communication in the AIF are valuable from the perspective of the cultural and social history of this investigation.

'Fred Tindale has been awarded the Croix de Guerre', announced Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*, 'for keeping gallantly the very strong co-operation between the British and French troops to which he was temporarily attached.'[33] The citation relates how Tindale acted as a go-between for the French and Australian troops at Hangard. The fighting at Hangard Wood near Villers-Bretonneux, in April 1918 occurred during the period when the two armies were fighting side by side. French and Australian regimental histories as well as personal accounts contain many references to the opportunities for spontaneous fraternisation between French and Australian soldiers.[34] Lieutenant Fred Tindale serves as one example to represent the approximately thirty AIF soldiers who were born in the French Pacific colonies, and to illustrate the variety of ways in which an AIF soldier could be a French speaker. However, although illustrative he cannot be assumed typical because only a comprehensive examination of this cohort would reveal its diversity. Tindale was born and educated in Noumea, where his father ran the Noumea Gas company. The Noumean *France Australe* newspaper claimed him as a native son 'one of their own'.[35] The 5th Brigade's diary for April 1918 records Tindale constantly reporting back on the French positions. While official liaison officers were also present, the Australian officer who spoke French contributed to 'strong cooperation'.

A noteworthy episode occurred in early April 1918, when Australians of the 19th and 20th Battalions were stationed alongside the French in the fighting around Hangard Wood and Monument Farm. On 9 April, the 165th French Infantry Regiment was stationed at Hangard, south of Villers-Bretonneux. To their south was the river Luce, and to the north of the town the Australian 20th Battalion held the adjoining line at the wood. During the night the Germans intensified their attack on the village and the French line was threatened. The commander of the 165th Infantry Regiment sent a desperate note in French via runners to the Australians on his left, asking if they would lend him a company to help

[33] *Daily Telegraph*, 13 Jul 1918, 16
[34] Georgelin, 'Encounters Between Diggers and Poilus: Finding the History in Family History'.
[35] *Daily Telegraph*, 13 Jul 1918, 16

hold the line until expected reinforcements arrived the next morning. The runners, 'greatly distressed', were met by Captain Claude Morgan-Jones who had been reconnoitring the lines.[36] Morgan-Jones was a journalist working for the *Sydney Evening News* prior to his enlistment. He had been educated in England and could 'speak and write French and translate German'.[37] Thus he could read and understand the hastily written note, and responded by providing his platoon and their guns. The Australian unit remained with the French until they were able to retake the town the following morning. The French unit's record refers to this help from 'a neighbouring English platoon', demonstrating that Australians, as English speakers, were often lumped together generically with the British.[38] Towards the end of the war they were more often distinguished separately by the French as Australians.

On 12 April 1918, as the battle for Hangard Wood continued, with the AIF's right flank adjoining the left flank of the French army, Lt. Colyer was in charge of the post, which was shared with the 165th infantry regiment. Colyer 'maintained an intimate understanding of the French, whose officer he used to visit every morning. This morning, on his way back from that visit, Colyer was killed.'[39] The Red Cross Report of his death stated that 'he was in the French line at the time as an interpreter'.[40] Colyer, a schoolteacher, had an arts degree from Sydney University, where it is likely that he studied French, and he had trained at the Signals School in Belgium in January 1918.[41]

Further reports from both Australian and French sources tell of the joint attack on 3 May at Monument Wood. The Australians were in the line alongside French colonial troops: Moroccans, Zouave units and Tirailleurs.[42] The 48th AIF Battalion formed the liaison post with the 3rd Tirailleurs, whose unit history described the Australians as 'our valiant

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[36] AWM /PR90/091
[37]; Claude Morgan-Jones, NAA B2455.
[38] Historique du 165e Régiment d'Infanterie, Paris, Henri Charles-Lavauzelle, 1920 ; Journal de Marches et opérations du 165e Régiment d'Infanterie, https://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/fr/arkotheque/inventaires/ead_ir_consult.php?a=4&ref=SHDGR_GR_26_N_II
[39] C. E. W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War*, vol. 5 (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1942), 515.
[40] AWM 1DRL/0428 Red Cross Report.
[41] Colyer Henry Maxwell, NAA: B2455.
[42] Zouaves and Tirailleurs were troops of the French Colonial Army of North Africa. Zouaves were mostly European, usually composed of French colonists, while Tirailleurs units were typically composed of French (white) officers and native soldiers. Anthony Clayton, *Paths of Glory: The French Army 1914-1918* (London: Cassell, 2003).

neighbours' who had previously retaken the village of Villers-Bretonneux.[43] It was during this battle that Australian Charles Williams, a former member of the French foreign legion, was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his heroic rescue of a French officer. The 3rd Tirailleurs unit history describes good relations with the neighbouring Australians, particularly during lulls in the fighting as cigarettes, wine, and food were shared. 'From this daily domestic business, under the shells, a real and genuine friendship was born. Australians and Tirailleurs, placed on the 'suture' which joined the French and British armies.'[44] Figure 1 shows AIF soldiers alongside the French colonial troops of the 3rd Tirailleurs Regiment in June 1918, still stationed in adjacent sectors.

Figure 1 Australians of the 37th Battalion with French Colonial troops of the 3rd Tirailleurs Regiment in the International Post.[45]

Also taking his place in the International Post during May was French-Australian soldier Joseph Georgelin. Georgelin's unit, the 14th Battalion, with D company (his company) on the right, was stationed alongside soldiers of the Colonial Moroccan Division at Monument Wood. 'The *Poste Internationale* established on the extreme left of the French, and the extreme right of the British Army, was jointly tenanted by a handful of French and 14th Battalion men.'[46] They 'enjoyed the unique experience of being the last man on the right flank of the whole British Army on the whole Western Front.'[47] This is just one snapshot but is emblematic of the diversity among those sharing a common

[43] De l'Algérie au Rhin – Journal de Guerre du 3e Tirailleurs de Marche, gallica.bnf.fr. *
[44] Ibid.
[45] AWM/E02559.
[46] Newton Wanliss, *The History of the Fourteenth Battalion AIF* (Melbourne: The Arrow Printery, 1929).
[47] Wanliss.

language, as well as suggesting more broadly the scale of the polyglot multinational forces who fought in the war. Georgelin was born in Brittany and had lived in Jersey before coming to Australia. The common thread between him and the Moroccan soldiers beside him was the French language.

Private Edwin Huck appreciated getting to know French civilians and soldiers too.[48] His diary entry of February 1918 states that he acted as an interpreter for his mates at the butcher. During June and July 1918, he had spells in the line at the International Post, and came to know the Zouaves next to him. In June he enjoyed 'fun, vin rouge, cognac' with them. In July he referred to them as 'good troops', noting some differences in their procedures, for example, the Zouaves' use of donkeys. His diary includes the name and address of a Zouave soldier and that of his family who lived in Savoie, perhaps indicating an intention to visit the family after the war.

iii. Understand French for your physical safety

Knowledge of French could be beneficial, and indeed crucial, to the health and safety of soldiers in all kinds of contexts. In billets it was important to understand warnings given by the French hosts, and in the frontline, being able to identify oneself to fellow soldiers could mean the difference between life and death. [49] In the Villers-Bretonneux sector during the night of 1 August 1918, men of the 14th Battalion were relieving a French battalion of the 3rd Zouaves at the International Post. The French mistook one of the Australian platoons for Germans, showering them with bombs. One Australian was killed, and one wounded. [50]

In his war memoir, Lieutenant Joe Maxwell recounted a humorous incident in his description of the battle for Hangard Wood, as the men of his battalion linked up with French troops.[51] 'An interpreter was essential. Our men spoke execrable French, punctuated with a few idioms of Australian profanity.' The French used names of different towns as a password each night, and the choice of 'Dijon' was challenging for the diggers. As an Australian soldier returned to the line that night after a patrol, he was challenged by the French. 'Demi-john' he replied, and was fired upon. A string of

[48] Edwin Huck WWI Diary, UMA, 1994.0124.001
[49] Cowman, '"The … 'Parlez' Is Not Going on Very Well 'Avec Moi'"', 34–35.
[50] Wanliss, *The History of the Fourteenth Battalion AIF*, 315.
[51] Lt. Joseph 'Joe' Maxwell, VC, fought with the AIF in Gallipoli and France, and published his memoir of the war *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles*, in 1932.

colourful language saved him: 'Can't you frog-eatin', bone-headed gazobs compree your own language. Allez tout sweet!'[52] Tales of Australian soldiers communicating in French while under fire contrast with the humorous images portrayed by Maxwell, and in *Aussie*. The run of the mill soldier, with no linguistic skills, needed help if he was to communicate at all in French. Such help was available, and French-Australians contributed their skills to help the Australian soldier engage with French language learning.

II. 'A great boon to the men':[53] Australian soldiers learn French before leaving for the Western Front

French and francophone Australians, working with local branches of the Alliance Française (AF) contributed to the important task of helping AIF soldiers to learn French before they departed for the Western Front. Their contribution included participating in the creation and distribution of French phrase books and organising and providing language classes. Australia's Governor General noted the value of this work in 1916. 'In Australia we have about 100,000 men in France, not many of whom acquainted with French, which might have made their stay there much more cheerful.'[54] With the AF's help, those yet to go to the front might obtain a little knowledge. He also opined that 'in case of misfortune' a little knowledge of German might also be useful.[55]

In Australia, French phrase books and French language classes provided soldiers with the opportunity to learn before they left for the front. French and francophone Australians made an important contribution to this cause through the creation and distribution of an Australian-made French phrase book, *Easy French for Soldiers,* written by local French speakers, and whose sale benefitted French fundraising organisations. French-Australians also assisted in the provision of language classes for soldiers before their departure for the front, demonstrating the value of connection and community. In partnership with government and military representatives, as well as organisations such as the YMCA, they utilised their networks and skills to form a bridge between Australians and French on the home front, and facilitated the Aussie soldier's ability to communicate effectively once in France.

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[52] Joe Maxwell, *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles* (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1932).
[53] YMCA Field Secretary R. Cameron to French Red Cross Melbourne, 16 Feb 1917, MAE 428PO/1/64.
[54] 'Study of French', *North West Post*, 28 Nov 1916, 2.
[55] Ibid.

i. French phrase books – *Easy French for Soldiers*

As Cowman has outlined, knowledge of French was something the ordinary soldier needed to add to his toolbox in order to survive the war.[56] For some British soldiers this new requirement was quite alien, particularly for those who had never encountered another language. Others could draw on some prior knowledge, such as 'schoolboy French' although many soldiers found that what they had learnt in the classrooms of their youth was a little rusty.

As soon as British soldiers arrived in France, the shortcomings of their language skills were realised – Cowman quotes a figure estimating that ninety percent of British soldiers did not speak French – and a multitude of pocket dictionaries and phrase books for the use of soldiers were printed.[57] Phrase books already being printed and sold in Europe for the benefit of travellers were adapted for the use of soldiers, with military and technical terms added. Other scholars have noted the value of phrasebooks not only for the British soldier, but for all soldiers in this transnational multilingual war, and explored the social and military aspects of their use.[58]

In the Australian press, government advisor and businessman William Warren Kerr noted that few members of the Australian military had 'sufficient knowledge of conversational French and German', and discussed what should be done: 'There are surely many qualified civilians' who could 'remedy the deficiency'.[59] Australians were reminded that they were following the lead of Britain in this 'deficiency': 'One of the difficulties of Tommy Atkins (the British Soldier) in France was to establish conversation with the French' explained the Launceston *Examiner*.[60] The phrase books quickly proliferated in Australia, and their usefulness for the Australian soldiers was advertised in the papers. '*French Made Easy'* would be a useful booklet 'for those visiting France, including members of our contingents' and was available for six-pence.[61] In July 1916, the *Winner* published a handy guide by Alfred Amadée, whose 'School of Phonetic French' operated in Melbourne. The guide would be useful to those who did not want to pay their six

[56] Cowman, '"The … 'Parlez' Is Not Going on Very Well 'Avec Moi'"'.
[57] Cowman.
[58] Franziska Heimburger and John Horne, eds., *Si vous mentez vous serez fusilé: Manuel de conversation à l'usage du soldat allemand* (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2013).
[59] *Herald*, 21 Oct 1914, 8.
[60] *Examiner*, 9 Oct 1915, 4.
[61] *Daily News*, 19 Dec 1914, 2.

pennies for the phrasebook – they could cut out the article from the newspaper. The list of 'Easy French phrases commonly in use' was practical although quite general and did not include any military terms. It covered obtaining food in either a shop or a restaurant, including the important: 'I prefer a cup of tea'.[62]

The Australian soldier could obtain a range of imported phrase books. In a catalogue of French books for sale in Melbourne during the First World War, the list includes a phrase book published in Britain for the fighting man '*Easy French for Our Men Abroad and How to Pronounce It*.[63] Another example, '*Soldiers' Spoken French*', by Helene Cross and published in New Zealand, was 'a handy pocket size, strongly bound in leather'.[64] Cross's book was very successful, re-printed in England and the USA. It contained a guide to the correct pronunciation and included military as well as general terms. Intending soldiers were encouraged to buy it for their own safety: 'Instances have recently been known, where soldiers, having lost their regiment, have been fired on and killed by their own Allies, through being mistaken for Germans, and being unable to speak one word in French'. Soldier were exhorted to never be without their phrase book, so as to avoid this tragic fate.[65]

In addition to the imported British phrase books, was the locally produced *Easy French for Soldiers* phrase book. (figure 2) Its production, distribution and use in Australia illustrates the local French community's active role, and the networks which were involved, in enabling the Australians' French language learning. Local French-Australians, including committee members of the Melbourne AF and the Victorian French Red Cross, collaborated with the Mission to Seamen to produce it. Publicity regarding its sale refers to second and third reprints in August and October 1916, and it continued to be sold during 1917. The booklet's production reflects concern by French-Australians about the Aussie soldiers' ability to communicate in France. It combined practical help with an astute business decision. The booklet's cover states that it was compiled by the Missions to Seamen and could be obtained at the Seaman's Institute or at the Melbourne office of the French Red Cross (FRC Vic). All profits from its sale

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[62] *Winner*, (Melbourne) 19 July 1916, 4.
[63] Wallace Kirsop, 'Selling French Books in Melbourne during the First World War', *Explorations*, no. 11 (December 1991).
[64] 'Soldiers' Spoken French', *Western Mail*, 23 Feb 1917, 44.
[65] H. Cross, *Soldiers' Spoken French, with Correct Phonetic Pronunciation, &c.*, 1917, http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/f/1cl35st/SLV_VOYAGER470798.

would go to the FRC Vic. This collaboration between the French Red Cross and the Mission to Seamen sprang from links between strong philanthropic women in both organisations. The ladies' committee of the Mission to Seaman was the Ladies Harborlight Guild (LHLG). Sisters Ethel and Frederica Godfrey were committee members of both the FRC Vic and the LHLG. From a comfortable, cosmopolitan family, they had travelled to Europe, studied in Belgium and mixed in the same social circles as the establishment – mostly women – who ran the Victorian Branch of the French Red Cross, and the AF. These organisations will be examined in detail in later chapters. Ethel Godfrey was on the committee of the LHLG, which provided a welcoming homely space for visiting sailors. Frederica had been on the committee of the AF and in 1917 would become the secretary of the FRC Vic. The LHLG committee decided in 1915 to create its own phrase book – the minutes of June 1915 report that the French classes held in camp, and the phrase book were very useful.[66] The author of the phrase book is not identified, its content was probably based on existing models. Given the social connections of those involved, it was likely that someone from the AF contributed to its production.[67] According to the newsletter published by the LHLG's newsletter *Jottings from our Logs* 6,000 booklets were sold in 1916, and its multiple reprints indicate that it was widely appreciated.[68]

[66] Minutes of the Ladies Harborlight Guild Committee, 15 June 1915, Archives of the Mission to Seafarers, Melbourne.
[67] *Argus*, 9 Aug 1916, 13; *Argus* 5 Oct 1916, 3.
[68] Email from Geraldine Brault, Assistant Curator at Mission to Seafarers, Melbourne, 22 Feb 2020.

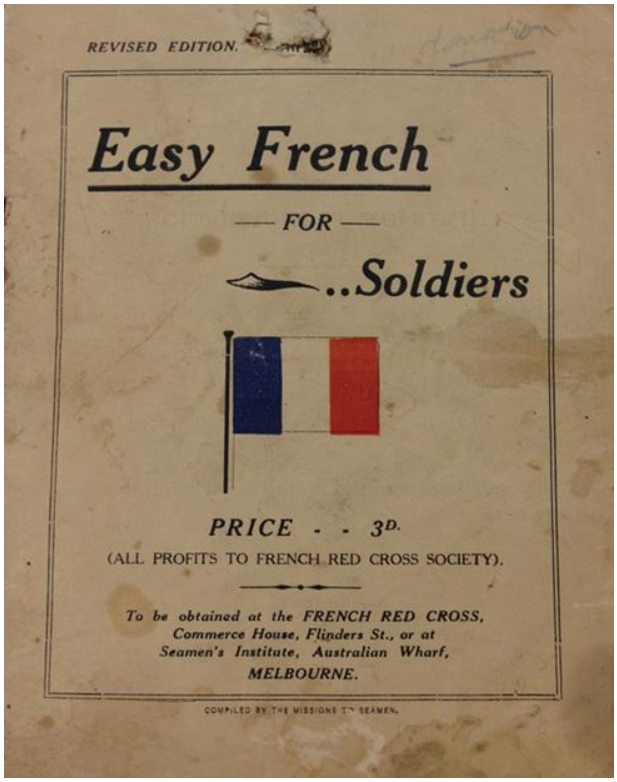

Figure 2 *Easy French for soldiers*. [69]

As well as procuring a phrase book, soldiers prepared for their time in France by taking lessons. French classes for soldiers were offered in AIF training camps across Australia. The establishment of these language classes demonstrates the important role of networks and connections, as French-Australian individuals and organisations cooperated with government and military representatives to set up and deliver classes on a scale not seen before. The YMCA was a valuable part of the network. On an international scale it played a huge role in supporting Allied soldiers at all stages along their journey, from the initial training camps in their country of origin to establishments at large camps in France and to small YMCA huts close to the front line. The YMCA was present at the front, and in the rear, in training camps, in France, Britain and Australia. One of the services provided by the YMCA was French classes, which it offered in bases in France as well as in the large training camps in Britain. It also ran French classes in Australian training camps, and in 1917 R.G. Cameron, head of the YMCA's training program in the Tasmanian military camp at Claremont, wrote to the French Red Cross office in Melbourne, with an

[69] Easy French for Soldiers, Missions to Seaman (1915), Monash University Archives, MAT Rare Pamphlets, PAM 448 M678E 1915

order for multiple copies of *Easy French for Soldiers*.[70] He enclosed ten shillings in advance payment for forty copies of the booklet, intending to distribute it to the soldiers participating in the 'several' French classes in the military training camp. Cameron explained the books 'will be a great boon to the men, as they give the pronunciation, which the military books don't.'

A letter from Tasmanian training camp ordering extra copies indicates that the phrase book was distributed beyond Melbourne, but this is not surprising given Tasmania's geographical proximity and small population. Moreover, it illustrates an example of the phrase book and practical classes being used in conjunction. His letter also indicates that the book was well received, and he appreciated its helpful pronunciation guide. Many of the Australian soldiers leaving for the Western Front in 1917 had a phrasebook in their pack, and the money used to purchase it had gone to a good cause.

ii. The Alliance Française organises French language classes

The AF also played a key role and activated its networks around the country to step up its teaching mission. The AF, founded in Paris in 1883, established its presence in Australia at the end of the nineteenth century. The Melbourne AF was the first established, in 1890, followed by Sydney in 1895. By the time war was declared, an AF was operating in the other major Australian cities too. The AF's role during this period will be more fully examined in Chapter Eight. However, this chapter will outline how the AF contributed to the AIF's French language skills, which constitutes another facet of French-Australians' response to the war. In July 1916, the YMCA requested help from the AF to run French classes at the various military camps in Western Australia. As well as organising teachers, the AF wrote a booklet of exercises and vocabulary enabling the Australian soldier to ask for 'the most necessary things or information.'[71] It was anticipated that French would also be useful as it was 'the language of diplomacy, the language of interpretation par excellence in the Mediterranean, the lingua franca of the Levant'.[72] As they prepared to leave for the Western Front, Western Australian soldiers learnt French from the specially written handbooks (available at a cost of sixpence).[73]

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[70] YMCA Field Secretary R. Cameron to FRC Vic, 16 Feb 1917, MAE 428PO/1/64.
[71] *West Australian*, 29 Jul 1916, 6.
[72] *West Australian*, 8 Sep 1916, 6.
[73] *Camp Chronicle*, 7 Sep 1917, 8.

In 1917, Melbourne's AF organised and delivered French language classes for soldiers. The classes were given by volunteers, some of them professional teachers, some of them native speakers. The soldiers were provided with learning materials, a phrase book and manual. The organisation of the classes reveals how attitudes about French language and learning were reframed in the context of the real and practical needs of those proceeding to the front. Prior to the war, the Melbourne AF had an elitist reputation, and was known for its committee composed mostly of wealthy women who valued the social rather than the pedagogical aspect of cultural events.[74] The AF did also foster language learning and administer examinations but there had been some conjecture in the pre-war years regarding the seriousness of its attitude and the level of academic rigour with which it carried out its mission.[75] Its response to the needs of soldiers to acquire language skills introduced a more practical role, adding to, while never forsaking, its function as a venue for establishment ladies to take afternoon tea and display their culture and refinement.

The AF Melbourne's French Classes for soldiers were instigated by Mrs Mary Foster, wife of Brigadier-General Hubert Foster, Army Chief of Staff. The Fosters were a multilingual couple. In his long and varied career, Brigadier-General Foster who spoke French, German and Greek, had worked for intelligence in the British Army. Arriving in Australia in 1906 he had set up the Australian Army's staff college and started the first university level courses for the military at Sydney University.[76]

Mrs Foster, herself a member of the AF, wrote to the committee in November 1916 with her proposal. She specifically requested the help of the French committee members to provide the classes, their qualities as native speakers being particularly useful. Classes were to be given at the main Melbourne Training Camp at Royal Park and at the School of Aviation, at that time known as the Central Flying School.[77] Mrs Foster's position in society and her contacts with the AF contributed to the success of her project, and her team of instructors worked quickly to establish the classes. Teachers taught on three days per week, and an average of 350 pupils per day attended. Trainee aviators appreciated the classes 'as with the work in which they are engaged, they may have to descend in parts

[74] Bergantz, 'French Connection'.
[75] Bergantz.
[76] Warren Perry, 'Foster, Hubert John (1855–1919)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed 1 December 2019, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/foster-hubert-john-6218.
[77] AF Minute Book 4, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.

of the country where no other language but French is spoken'.[78] The Fosters also collaborated to produce a handbook of 'simple phrases and technical terms' which would be freely distributed to the student soldiers. The hoped-for outcome of the classes and the booklet, was not only of a practical nature, but also to bring about 'union and harmony between nation and nation'.[79]

The AF responded enthusiastically. Volunteer teachers included Fernand Maurice-Carton, lecturer in French at the University of Melbourne, Monsieur and Madame Gaston Lamandé, and tenor and active member of the French community Napoleon Boffard. Another of the teachers was Paul Fahoury. He would go on to have a successful career as a French teacher in Australia: in 1918 he was listed as 'professor of languages' at elite Jesuit school Xavier College, and published a textbook on French history.[80] However, a momentary spotlight on his engagement in the project is an indicator of how war brings out an emphasis on the other. Fahoury's identity was just ambiguous enough to cause slight concern to authorities. In March 1915 the Australian intelligence services had made inquiries regarding his ethnicity and loyalty. His file reveals that he was a Christian Syrian, born in Lebanon to a French mother and an Assyrian father. The report declared he was opposed to the Turkish regime and therefore not a security threat.[81] The enquiry is indicative of the racist nature of Australian society at the time, the belief in a British 'race' which was intrinsically superior, and the implication that non-British had to earn their place in society by merit.

French classes at the Central Flying School began in December 1916 and were considered a valuable addition to the pilots' training. The commanding officer wrote that the Australian pilots in France would be greatly helped by knowing some French in the event that they came down far from British lines among French people. 'The 24 officers who went in the French course last month attended it with keenness and regularity, the 31 at present under instruction are equally appreciative and assiduous.'[82]

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[78] 'Soldier's Wife Leads – Lessons in Camp' *Weekly Times*, 20 Jan 1917, 10.
[79] 'Soldier's Wife Leads – Lessons in Camp' *Weekly Times*, 20 Jan 1917, 10
[80] *Advocate*, 21 Sep 1918, 15.
[81] NAA: MP16/1, 1915/3/286 Fahoury Paul,
[82] NAA: A38/7/421

III. Teaching and learning French in the AIF in France and Belgium

i. Learning French

AIF soldiers engaged with learning French as part of their Western Front experience, in a myriad of settings – both formal and informal and their attitudes towards it and the benefits they perceived from becoming French speakers was different for each one. This section will examine a case study drawn from the diary of Cornelius Searles, a baker from New South Wales who continued his profession in the army.[83] His experience was determined by the setting of his posting: as he was not an infantry soldier, but a baker stationed behind the lines. His diary indicates that he valued the opportunity to learn French, and the connections with local people which resulted from his ability to communicate. Such connections brought benefits for himself, and for the French family whom he befriended. Cornelius Searles arrived in France in November 1916 and was stationed at the 3rd Australian Field Bakery in Calais.[84] Because he remained in the same town for an extended period he was able to establish a friendship with a local family, visiting them on a regular basis. His diary shows how his relationship with Julien and Marie Waeles developed hand in hand with his efforts to learn French and conversely, his motivation to learn was reinforced by this friendship. His first impressions on arriving in Calais were that the French seemed very nice, but were 'amused at our ignorance of their language' and 'perplexed by ours'.[85] On 4 March 1917 he 'spent afternoon with a French engineer and his wife. Had a rather enjoyable time.'[86]

On 1 January 1918 Searles noted that he had kissed some girls, and discovered a French custom, perhaps the *bise* – 'a form of New Year's greeting practised here, and amongst those known to the French they are treated the same way as their own people so in my small circle of friends the greeting was passed on to me.' The next day he was 'invited to dinner with the French family and was promised a real French turnout'.[87]

Searles had by now had quite a few dinners and walks with Julien Waeles and his wife, and met their only son, also called Julien, a soldier in the *Chasseurs à Pied*. On 15 January 1918 he recorded that he had started formal French lessons, 'have started learning a little

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[83] Cornelius Searles World War I diary 18 April 1916 – 1 March 1919, MLMSS 10158 1 (1).
[84] Cornelius Searles, NAA: B2455.
[85] Searles World War I diary, 25 November 1916.
[86] Ibid, 4 March 1917.
[87] Ibid, 2 January 1918.

French, but finding it difficult', and on 17th January enjoyed his first meal of snails at the Waeles' house.

Searles continued to visit his French friends on a regular basis, met other French people at their house, and attended French classes. 'I have stuck to the French and find I can parle une petit (sic) so it makes the visit to Home (sic) much better and more interesting'.[88] Searle shows interest and concern for the couple's son. When he came home on leave for ten days, Searle noted that Julien 'looked well', 'has been working some miles behind the lines' and 'expects to be in the air in about a month's time', an idea which upset his mother: 'il est pas bon pour mon garçon'.[89]

Searles' experience is emblematic of the trajectory followed by many soldiers, re-fashioning their self-identity, adding French speaker or French learner and able to speak to the civilians or soldiers alongside him. The comfort derived from his friendship corresponds to what Walker and Cowman described. His relationship with the family brought multiple benefits – they fed him, welcomed him and taught him about French language and customs. However, another benefit was derived from his helping them. He sometimes brought them gifts of white flour from his bakery, and on one visit he had 'found the old lady out of sorts and her spirits at zero'. Searles set to work making 'a few plain cakes' while they cooked dinner. The couple were delighted with the result and 'as Julien put it, Madam est tres content (sic)'.[90] In this way Searles was able to retain an element of humanity and connection to normal civilian existence.

ii. Teaching French – The AIF Education Service

French-speaking AIF soldiers also played a role as teachers. They passed on their knowledge sometimes in ad hoc ways, and also in formally established settings, the most notable of which was the AIF Education Service. A wide variety of French-speaking AIF soldiers taught French to their comrades through AIF Education Service. Among those who contributed to the program were professional teachers such as Chisholm, and others whose only qualification was a prior knowledge of French. The AIF Education Service was established in the latter part of 1918 and was part of the huge undertaking to repatriate the 185,000 Australian soldiers who were overseas. There were 95,000 AIF members in

[88] Searles World War I diary, 6 March 1918.
[89] Ibid, 16 March 1918.
[90] Ibid, 21 July 1918.

France and Belgium, 60,000 in the United Kingdom (including sick and wounded and reinforcements in training), and 30,000 in Egypt and elsewhere. The AIF Education Service operated in France, Britain and Belgium, and on a smaller scale in Egypt, offering technical, vocational and general courses. Guest speakers delivered lectures on topics of interest, and debates were held on issues of the day. Within this structure, another role for francophone AIF members presented itself. Among the many subjects offered was French, and soldiers had the opportunity to take classes while awaiting their marching orders back to Australia and during the sea voyage home.

Examining the nature and operation of the French classes, and identifying the instructors, this section provides further insights into French-Australian identities in the AIF. Some of the instructors were French by birth, some were schoolteachers, but they were a heterogeneous bunch. Perhaps this is because Australian university undergraduates were eligible for priority return home, enabling them to resume their study in the 1919 academic year, and many graduates in the AIF were required to remain in their positions of authority. The Education Service was widely publicised via speeches, pamphlets, and other announcements including in the soldiers' newspapers *Aussie* and *The Digger*. An Education Officer was posted to each unit, to explain the system, act as a go-between, and encourage participation – all part of the army's policy to maintain positive morale among the troops. Many of those recruited for the Education Service had been teachers before the war, while instructors for vocational training were chosen for their professional experience. Those initially chosen for senior positions were officers, like Chisholm. For soldiers who had previously been schoolteachers, the post on the teaching staff enabled them to re-connect with their craft.

As the scheme expanded, instructors were drawn from all ranks and included men from many walks of life. Matthew Haultain-Gall noted the significance of the AIF Education Service as an important part of the soldier's demobilisation process, and argued that the period of winter 1918-1919 during which four of the five Australian Divisions spent in Belgium has been largely glossed over by historians.[91] One of the French classes can be seen in figure 3 which shows Australian soldiers learning French in a classroom in Belgium in 1919.[92] For many of the men this setting, and the very act of sitting on a

[91] Matthew Haultain-Gall, 'Soldier to Civilian: The 1st Australian Division's Transition from War to Peace in Belgium, 1918–1919', *History Australia* 16, no. 1 (2 January 2019): 20–37.
[92] AWM/ E04454

classroom chair, would have been novel and unfamiliar after their years on the front line. The classroom is full, with soldiers at the back forced to stand, indicating perhaps the challenge of locating classroom space or maybe a more enthusiastic attendance rate coinciding with the photographer's presence. The sentence on the blackboard reads: 'Monsieur B est-il dans la chambre? Non, il est au cinema' (Is Mr B in the bedroom? No, he is at the cinema).

Figure 3 Australian Soldiers learning French in a classroom in Belgium, 1919.[93]

Sergeant Richard Mulvaney was another AIF soldier who was eager to share his passion for French with his fellow diggers. Mulvaney was a schoolteacher before joining the AIF, and was appointed as a French teacher at the Base Depot.[94] His enthusiastic call for more students echoed the recruitment drive undertaken by the scheme's directors and was published in the Base Depot magazine, *Digger*, perhaps as part of the overall strategy. 'French Taught: Why not learn?' its headline read. Mulvaney had about seventy students

[93] AWM/E04454
[94] Mulvaney, R. NAA: B2455

in his French classes but was 'desirous of getting more'. He claimed that in about three weeks he could provide the average digger with enough conversational French 'to lead – if not to higher – certainly to more interesting developments. Sergeant Mulvaney gets into ecstasies when speaking of the French language. He says, 'there is too much of humour and vivacity in the French not to bubble up in almost any of their words – their language is the champagne of Europe.''[95]

Mulvaney's claim that a little knowledge of French would assist with 'interesting developments' hints at what may have been the priorities of many diggers as they prepared to leave France: their last chance to have a foreign fling before returning to Australia. His evocation of humour, vivacity and champagne creates the image of French used for fun, rather than survival, an image which contrasts with Chisholm using French to speak to the old and frail as he visited devastated villages, and the use of French to communicate with neighbouring troops. The Australian soldier had needed to acquire a few words of French to fulfill a range of basic needs, as trench journals and memoirs peppered with French phrases indicate. However, in thinking of new ways for its use in a post-war life, this perhaps formed part of his psychological and cultural demobilisation. Psychological in the sense of reframing his own sense of self, and cultural in the sense of reframing French as something he would use in peacetime too.[96] When Chisholm arrived at the University of Melbourne to take up his teaching position, he noted that there were 120 students in the French department, and that a large proportion of the men were returned soldiers.[97]

It may seem ironic that soldiers took French classes at the end of the war. However, there were a few good reasons for doing so. We need to keep in mind that they were returning to a society which valued French as an integral part of a well-rounded education, therefore for some it must have represented a chance to get ahead. In Australia, knowledge of French was an advantage for promotion in some sectors of the public (civil) service. French fitted within the category of generalist subjects which could lead to high school and university qualifications. If many soldiers had picked up French in a piece-meal

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[95] Australian Imperial Force (1914-1921), *The Digger : Australian Bases France. AIF.*, 16 Mar 1919 (Le Havre, France, 1918), 2.
[96] Romain Fathi and Bart Ziino, 'Coming Home: Australians' Sorties de Guerre after the First World War', *History Australia* 16, no. 1 (2 January 2019): 5–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2018.1558078.
[97] Scott, *Chis: The Life and Work of Alan Rowland Chisholm*, 61.

fashion during the war, some formal classes would enable them to build on what they had learned. Learning took place in small and large settings – wherever there was a willing teacher and some interested students. Jacques Playoust, of the prominent Sydney wool buying family, had spent the latter part of the war posted as French interpreter to the 13th Australian Field Artillery Brigade. In December 1918 as the unit assumed their post-Armistice duties Playoust provided French lessons to his fellow soldiers.[98]

The AIF Education Service allowed Australian soldiers to not only improve their French language knowledge, but also engage with France more broadly as a place of learning. Some soldiers took advantage of the scheme to access higher education while in France, applying for university courses including at the Sorbonne, which rarely would have been available in other circumstances.[99] For others, it was the perfect opportunity to align learning with professional goals. Emile Deville, as mentioned in Chapter Two, decided to stay in France, and went to Mazamet to perfect his knowledge of sheepskin processing. He would later use his contacts in Australia to establish commercial links. Captain Garnet Adcock had arrived in France in 1916 already able to hold a basic conversation in French and worked at improving his French while there, as well as learning some German and Flemish. His French and Flemish certainly did help to make his stay in France 'more interesting' – he married a Belgian woman, Marguerite Marie, in November 1918. His position as an officer with the tunnelling corps, and his fluent French afforded him many opportunities to interact with civilians, and he was called upon to interpret on many occasions.

In November 1918 Adcock joined the Education Service, describing his work as 'interesting and abundant'. He organised classes, arranged for men to attend various schools and found positions for them on farms and in factories, as well as teaching several subjects: 'French, Chemistry, France and the French, and Belgium'.[100] In Australia he had been a mining engineer and studied chemistry at university. When his period of teaching finished, he embraced the chance to study something new and spent several months at Grasse, the centre of perfume production in the south of France. There he learned specialised techniques which he would apply back in Australia. In June 1919,

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[98] AWM4/13/40/34 13th Field Artillery Brigade Unit Diary December 1918
[99] For example, Gilbert Ponder, an accountant from Adelaide, successfully applied to study French at Edinburgh University, this was amended in his records to Grenoble University, while Lt. A. Clunies Ross applied to study at the Sorbonne. AWM19 TE1/53 and TE1/122
[100] AWM2017.6.197 Letters of G.I. Adcock 1916-1919.

after so much time spent in France, Adcock declared he felt 'foreign' and found London 'repellent' when stopping there before his return to Australia. As a French speaker, Adcock arrived in France with an open mind and an eagerness to learn and this, coupled with some good luck and his officer status, led to his extensive and profound engagement with France, French culture and society.[101]

Shipboard French classes

As the process of demobilisation continued it was decided to provide classes for the soldiers on their transports back home. An Education officer was provided for each ship, and instructors appointed from within the ranks of the returning soldiers. Among those selected as a French instructor was Corporal Joseph Georgelin, temporarily promoted from Private for the duration of his work in the Education Service. Georgelin was one of three French instructors on the *Miltiades* which left England on 19 June 1919.

The classes on board the troop ship *Miltiades* were well attended, with 510 students enrolled – 38% of the soldiers on board. While bookkeeping (75 students) and Motor Mechanics (62 students) were the most attended, the French classes were also popular, with 42 students. The French class was divided into three sections – 'commercial, general and a special class for those who wished to learn how to write French well enough to communicate with their friends in France and Belgium.'[102] The French course included 'general conversation and the elementary rules of construction', including irregular verbs. However, the students' progress was hampered by their 'poor knowledge of English grammar'. Classes were taught three mornings per week. As Georgelin was a gardener by profession, and had no greater qualification for the job than being a native speaker, he must have found it helpful that textbooks and the syllabus were provided. The students studied their French grammar and verbs using two textbooks: Hugo's for the elementary level and Siepmann's for the advanced students. We can only speculate on the motivations of the soldiers who thought they would have one last go at learning French. In any case, the shipboard classes were judged a great success – both students and instructors demonstrated enthusiasm. 'The Educational Service has justified its existence

[101] AWM2017.6.197 Letters of G.I. Adcock 1916-1919.
[102] AWM20 6444/1/2 AIF Director of Education Files – Reports of Education officers returning to Australia

as far as this Transport is concerned, even if it has only provided the means for beguiling the tedium of the voyage.'[103]

If *Aussie* conveyed the humorous side of the soldiers' attempts at learning French, the other side of the coin can be seen in *The "Dernière Heure"*.[104] Published by the Australian section of British Headquarters in Rouen, its editors were Australians James R. W. Taylor, a journalist, and Cyril Leyshon White, an artist. They had spent three years in Rouen with the 1st Australian General Hospital and were the creative team behind the unit's journal *Jackass*. Just like the other belligerent armies, the AIF units published an extensive array of trench journals.[105] Both a souvenir and a homage to France, *The "Dernière Heure*" has been described as a 'landmark document' emblematic of the emerging development of Franco-Australian relations independent of the British Empire.[106] It conveys an overwhelming sense of francophilia, of nostalgia for France which will soon be left behind, and the impression that 'something of importance has been revealed to the Australian soldiers during their time there'.[107] Its sometimes sentimental poetry and prose, ranging from humorous to serious in tone includes many entries in French, some literary, including a specially composed poem by Henri de Régnier, only some of them with an accompanying translation.[108] There is an assumption that its readership understood French. Nettelbeck argues that *The "Dernière Heure"* demonstrates a poignant leave-taking of France which embodies the shift in awareness that had occurred for many Australians. While they may have embarked on their journey inspired by thoughts of Empire and the British Race, this was transformed, and added to it was a love of France as their principal motivating factor. In addition to the horrors of war they endured in battle, Australian soldiers witnessed French and Belgian civilians being killed and the destruction of towns and landscapes. Cornelius Searles, the baker stationed in Calais, wrote regularly of bombs being dropped on the town, and of the civilian casualties. The connections forged by the French-speaking Australian soldiers

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[103] AWM20 6444/1/2 AIF Director of Education Files – Reports of Education officers returning to Australia
[104] Cyril Leyshon White and J. R. W. Taylor, eds., *The 'Dernière Heure'* (Rouen: L. Wolf, 1919).
[105] David Kent, *From Trench and Troopship: The Experience of the Australian Imperial Force, 1914-1919* (Alexandria, NSW: Hale and Iremonger, 1999).
[106] Colin Nettelbeck, 'Not Just a Nostalgic Farewell: The "Dernière Heure" as a Landmark Document in Franco-Australian Friendship', *The French Australian Review* 59 (Australian Summer 2016).
[107] Nettelbeck, 68.
[108] Henri de Regnier 1864-1936, Symbolist Poet and Member of the Académie Française.

examined here demonstrate an expanded self-awareness which can be situated within the broader development of a separate Australian identity.

Despite the humorous depictions in *Aussie* of the Australian soldier's clumsy attempts at French, we have seen that French speakers were present in the Australian army in a variety of ways. Francophone Australian soldiers experienced their time in France with different levels of knowledge and language-learning backgrounds. The examples provided here illustrate the range and extent of their knowledge of French, as well as the range of attitudes towards learning it. Some embraced the opportunity for cultural and linguistic expansion, while others realised that they had been given a chance and might as well make the most of it. Among the French speakers in the AIF, some were already fluent or had a working knowledge before they left Australia, while others had the necessity for learning French thrust upon them. Many soldiers availed themselves of classes and phrase books provided for this purpose. French-Australians contributed to the widespread attempts to teach French to the soldiers, with organisations such as the AF, and French teachers providing their time and expertise. In France, Australian soldiers engaged with learning French in a variety of ways, showing motivation as they realised the personal and practical benefits it would bring them. Officially organised classes, such as those provided by the YMCA and the AIF Education Service, backed up individuals' attempts.

French speaking AIF soldiers were able to use their language skills in many different contexts, which informed their war experience, and framed their identities as French speakers. The ability to speak French brought cultural learnings and created connections with civilians and soldiers – at times frivolous, at times meaningful and profound. Australian soldiers used French in military contexts, in the heat of battle, where communication was crucial, and in intelligence work. Moreover, for many, the experience of teaching and learning was for many of them a completely new paradigm or experience. All this connection is not to detract from the horror of the experience of war, which has been well documented by military historians, by the soldiers themselves in their memoirs, and in collections of diaries and letters such Bill Gammage's stark and powerful classic *Broken Years*.[109] As Cowman suggests, the ability to communicate in French may have

[109] Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1975).

helped to offset the trauma of front-line battle. The French speaking Australian soldiers identified above illustrate that a range of pathways led them to speak and learn French, and that doing so affected their war personal experiences of the war in a range of settings. Whether of French nationality, or as French speakers, the experiences of these soldiers were framed around their engagement in either the French Army or in the AIF. For French-Australians who did not fit into any of these categories, fundraising and volunteering were the main possible activities through which to express support and commitment to France and to express French identity. The response of French-Australians on the home front, and from the civilian perspective, will be the focus of the next section.

Chapter 4. The French fundraising organisations in Melbourne, 1914 to 1916

> *'Cela vous montrera que si les hommes de France se battent pour défendre leur patrie, nous autres femmes de France nous ne sommes pas inactives et nous avons notre tâche.*[1]

On the home front, a core group of French and francophile Australians built on existing networks to create specifically French fundraising organisations which channelled aid from Australia to French war charities. The French fundraising organisations not only provided material aid, they also drew on French cultural images to inspire pro-French and by extension pro-war sentiment. French and francophile residents of Melbourne established a branch of the French Red Cross, and those in other capital cities followed suit. In Sydney, the French community founded the French-Australian League of Help (FALH), directing its resources to the French Red Cross and other French causes. Across the country local committees were also set up to assist French civilian causes such as orphans, mothers and babies. In addition to raising money, a constituent part of this distinctly French response to the war was the mobilisation of myths and ideas about France. Thus, these organisations served as a vehicle through which to express notions of French national identity, culture and patriotism. Alongside the transfer of goods, money and people between Australia and France, this cultural mobilisation constituted an important element of Australia's home front experience.

This chapter considers what form these cultural representations took, how they were perceived by the public, and how they informed the public narrative of pro-war and pro-France rhetoric. Common patterns emerge, such as the use of archetypal French cultural images. The figures of Napoleon, Joan of Arc, and French peasants were used to articulate particular French qualities and values such as courage, fortitude and heroism. Engendering this support for France, the work of the fundraising organisations informed

[1] 'This will show you that if the men of France are fighting to defend their country, we others, women of France, are not idle, and we have our task.'. Suzanne Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, letter written between 25 July and 8 August 1915. Michael Crivelli collection.

the public discourse about the reasons for the war, adding the invasion and occupation of Northern France to the cries of 'for the Empire' and 'for Belgium'. The present chapter examines the years 1914 to1916 in Victoria, while the following chapters focus on the latter half of the war, and then expand the view to other parts of Australia.

The French patriotic funds represented a major point of intersection between Australians and French people, and a sphere in which civilian and military experiences overlapped. The French-Australian patriotic funds operated within national, international and transnational structures, just as did wartime philanthropical organisations in other countries. Both internationally and within Australia, their operations were underpinned by transnational networks of connection between communities and individuals. Although they operated within expected defined national and international structures, their distinguishing feature sprang from the fact that they side-stepped the familiar structure of the British Empire, instead establishing and making use of direct links between Australia and France. Understanding their origins and operations, and the important role played by French-Australian connections expands our knowledge of the Australian home front experience and of how support for the war was sustained.

An important connection underpinning the success of the French patriotic funds in Australia was that between Charlotte Crivelli and Suzanne Caubet. Charlotte Crivelli, née Duret, was the second daughter of French doctor Charles Duret, who had arrived in Melbourne in 1869 and established a successful practice as doctor to Melbourne's French community and to the Establishment. Charlotte was five years old, and her older sister Suzanne was twelve when they arrived. In 1878 Suzanne married Léo Caubet, the acting vice-consul, and the pair left Melbourne soon after for Caubet's next consular postings, first in Breslau and then London. Léo Caubet died in 1892 leaving Suzanne with seven children. She settled in Paris, where, as we will see in later chapters, she became an important hub for French-Australian contacts during the war. The young and brilliant Doctor Marcel Crivelli arrived in Australia in 1887, to take over the reins of Duret's practice, having been introduced via contacts in Europe. Marcel and Charlotte were married soon after.[2] As a committee member and former president of the Melbourne

[2] Colin Nettelbeck, 'Charlotte Crivelli (1868-1956) Patriot and Fund-Raiser', in *French Lives In Australia*, ed. Ivan Barko and Eric Berti (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015); Colin Nettelbeck, *The Alliance Française in Australia 1890-1990: An Historical Perspective* (Melbourne: Fédération des Alliances Françaises d'Australie and Institute for the Study of French Australian

Alliance Française (AF) Charlotte Crivelli had already had an influence on the place of French culture in Australia. Moving in the same social circles as wealthy establishment families, she had the support of important networks and the ear of the rich and powerful. Charlotte Crivelli mobilised these networks in establishing the Victorian Branch of the French Red Cross (FRC Vic). Crivelli was not only the driving force behind the creation of the FRC Vic, but she also galvanised support for the French Mothers and Babies Association – *La Société d'Assistance Maternelle et Infantile* (which will be referred to as the *Assistance Maternelle*) and for French War Orphans Charities. Her influence began in Melbourne but spread throughout the country, and her personal connections to France contributed to the success of the French fundraising causes in Australia. Although both Linda Wade and Colin Nettelbeck have written about Charlotte Crivelli's work in this sphere, this thesis draws on previously unexamined sources to provide a more in-depth analysis of the French fundraising organisations as a whole, situating Crivelli as a key figure but also widening the scope.[3] All the correspondence relating to the establishment of the Melbourne branch of the French Red Cross was in French. However, once underway, it adopted as its formal English title *French Red Cross Victorian Authorised Branch*, although in everyday parlance, it was referred to simply as the French Red Cross. To differentiate the Victorian branch from its French parent organisation, it will be hereafter referred to as the FRC Vic, while the French parent organisation, with its headquarters in Paris, will be referred to as the *Croix Rouge Française* (CRF).

This chapter on fundraising focusses primarily on events in Melbourne and in addition to the extensive French sources available at the MAE, it is informed by collections held by the University of Melbourne Archives (UMA). In 2014, coinciding with the centenary of its foundation, the Australian Red Cross donated its 100-year-old archive to the UMA.[4] The Australian Red Cross archive inspired valuable new scholarship on the Australian experience of fundraising and philanthropy, notably by Oppenheimer.[5] A further UMA source, the Swallow and Ariell archive provides a detailed account of the fundraising

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Relations, 1990). See also the French-Australian Dictionary of Biography: https://www.isfar.org.au/bio/crivelli-charlotte-1863-1956/

[3] Linda Wade, '"By Diggers Defended, by Victorians Mended": Searching for Villers Bretonneux' (PhD, Wollongong, University of Wollongong, 2008); Nettelbeck, 'Charlotte Crivelli (1868-1956) Patriot and Fund-Raiser'.

[4] 'Red Cross History and Heritage' http://www.redcross.org.au/heritage-collection.aspx, accessed 8 Nov 2020.

[5] Melanie Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity: 100 Years of Australian Red Cross 1914-2014* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2014).

efforts of the self-proclaimed 'Busy Bees': a group of women employees at Melbourne's Swallow and Ariell Biscuit company who worked tirelessly for a range of causes. The links they forged with French soldiers and civilians, through their work for French charities, provide the microhistorical perspective of one group of war workers whose activities are emblematic of the development of people-to-people connections between France and Australia.[6]

During the war, aid from Australia to France was sent via multiple channels, either directly to France, or via London. An outline of the structures through which this occurred will help contextualise and differentiate the French-Australian fundraising organisations.

I. Background of the fundraising organisations

i. The origins of the Red Cross

The establishment of the Red Cross was inspired by Henry Dunant's 1862 publication *A Memory of Solferino*, in which he described the brutal scenes of death and injury he witnessed as an observer of the 1859 battle. Dunant's call for a neutral organisation to tend to the casualties of war led to the Geneva Conference of 1864 at which the first international convention leading to creation of the Red Cross was drafted. In the following decades it evolved from its European origins into an international organisation with the aim of providing medical care for wounded soldiers. Its declared principles were that casualties of war be no longer considered combatants, and that medical aid be provided with the protection of neutrality. In the early twentieth century, the Red Cross extended its purpose to provide aid to civilian victims of conflict and disasters.[7]

ii. The Croix Rouge Française (CRF)

In France, the CRF was formed from an amalgamation of three organisations which had operated since the 1870's. Although coordinating their efforts during the war, the three entities retained their separate identities within the whole during the Great War. They were: the *Société de Secours aux Blessés Militaires* (SSBM) – Society for the Assistance to Wounded Soldiers; the *Association des Dames Françaises* (ADF) – the Association of French Women; and the *Union de Femmes de France* (UFF) – Union of Women of

[6] Swallow & Ariell Pty Ltd. (S & A),1961.0035, Units 41 and 81, UMA.
[7] Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity*.

France.[8] These three groups, formed under the jurisdiction of the French army, and adhering to the Geneva Convention, were required by their statutes to unite and coordinate their efforts in time of conflict. The SSBM was the largest in terms of its scope and funding. The *Comité Central de la Croix Rouge Française*, the central governing body which controlled the three entities, was formed in 1907 and presided over by the Marquis de Vogüé.[9]

In London, the British Committee of the French Red Cross was founded in the early months of the war, and was a conduit for aid to France from all parts of the British Empire. It established an enormous network in Britain and France.[10] Throughout the war, it was one of the main channels through which the Australian Red Cross, and many other Australian organisations sent money and goods to France, but it was not the only channel. Moreover, the Committee's Director D.H. Illingworth demonstrated that the contributions from Australia were viewed from a decidedly imperial perspective. The British Committee of the French Red Cross, whose patrons and committee members included a long list of royalty and nobility, as well as French Ambassador Paul Cambon, administered the aid from Britain's colonies and dominions as part of 'a great inter-Allied mission' and 'to make the best possible showing for the Empire in France'.[11]

In 1916, Illingworth thanked Australian Red Cross President Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson for goods received from 'generous Australia' which had been shipped to France via London: 'over forty thousand cases of necessities […] sent to two thousand different hospitals […] three hundred motor cars and ambulances…' and the list went on. Yet the same letter explains that some of the money received from Australia (including funds from the Wagga Wagga French Day) would be allocated to the Lord Mayor's British

[8] Frédéric Pineau, Virginie Alauzet, and Benjamin Lagrange, *La Croix Rouge Française: 150 Ans d'histoire* (Paris: Autrement, 2014).
[9] The Marquis de Vogüé (1829-1916) diplomat, historian, archaeologist and member of the Académie Française, was President of the SSBM and the Croix Rouge Française from 1903 until his sudden death in November 1916.
[10] Laurence Binyon, *For Dauntless France* (London/New York/Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), 324–235.
[11] Illingworth to Marsh, 7 Sep 1918, ARCS 2015.0035 Unit 211, UMA. Marsh was London secretary of the Australian Red Cross.

Empire Fund for the French Wounded, for the creation of a monument intended to express 'the Empire's Tribute to France.'[12]

iii. The Australian Red Cross

Prior to 1914, Australians were aware of the Red Cross and its activities, and there had occasionally been interest in creating local branches, most notably during the Boer War (1899-1902). However, these branches were neither permanent nor official. Pivotal to its creation was the arrival in Australia of Governor General Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson and his wife Lady Helen, in May 1914. As Oppenheimer explains, it was under the leadership of Lady Helen, as she became known in Australia, that the Australian Red Cross was born and thrived.[13] Lady Helen had been involved in Red Cross work in Britain before coming to Australia, and had spoken publicly on the subject prior to the outbreak of war. She had urged Australians to create their own local and regional networks along the lines of those set up in Britain. In August 1914 she wrote to the press outlining the structure and scope of what she proposed would be an Australian branch of the British Red Cross Society and gave detailed instructions on the sorts of help which would be needed.[14] The Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society reported directly to London, and came to be more generally known as the Australian Red Cross Society although it was not until 1919 that a charter was issued to officially establish the national body. Structurally, its national headquarters and central depot operated in Melbourne, while each Australian state had its own division, to which a multitude of local branches reported.[15] An office of the Australian Red Cross was opened in London, and commissioners were appointed in the zones where Australians were stationed. As the war progressed the Australian Red Cross operated on an international scale, with representatives, volunteers and depots providing support in all the sectors where Australians were engaged. The Australian Red Cross sent goods and money to Red Cross

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[12] Illingworth to Munro Ferguson 5 Oct 1916, Australian Red Cross Society (ARCS) 2015.0033, Unit 211, UMA. The monument referred to was most likely never built, at least not in the way it was imagined in 1916.
[13] Melanie Oppenheimer, 'The "imperial" Girl: Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, the Imperial Woman and Her Imperial Childhood', *Journal of Australian Studies* 34, no. 4 (December 2010): 513–25, https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2010.519310; Melanie Oppenheimer, '"The Best P.M. for the Empire in War"?', *Australian Historical Studies* 33, no. 119 (April 2002): 108.
[14] 'Appeal to Women', *Age*, 10 Aug 1914, 8.
[15] Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity*.

organisations in Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, and other parts of Europe.[16] When the AIF moved to France in 1916, the Australian Red Cross appointed as Commissioner Lt. Col. James Murdoch to oversee the Australian Red Cross depots in France and liaise with London and Australia.

In Australia, philanthropy constituted an important element of the civilian experience of war, as citizens mobilised on the home front. The fundraising organisations bridged the divide between the civilians' world and the soldiers' world.[17] Linking home front and fighting front, they constituted a transnational space. As the war progressed, Australians framed their philanthropy through nationalistic paradigms. Fundraising work was done under the banner of Empire, but concurrently with the growing focus on Australian national identity, there was a discernible desire that Australia's aid should be visible and recognised as Australian. As early as 1914, a letter from the president of the CRF, addressed to Lady Helen, thanking her for a cheque for five hundred pounds shows that the Australians were already sending aid directly to France, and that the French were aware of this aid, well before the Australian soldiers arrived there.[18]

Later in the war, an awareness of the desire by some members of the public to differentiate Australia's contribution from that of the British Empire prompted Lady Helen's comment, justifying to Illingworth why they were not sending all the Red Cross funds via the London office:

> These local societies like to send their money direct to France as they have the idea that, unless they do so, Australia does not get the credit for their gifts. I know this is a mistaken idea, but one has to give in to local sentiment.[19]

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[16] Melanie Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Volunteers in War* (Walcha, NSW: Ohio Productions, 2002), 44.
[17] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 94–101; Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (West Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1980); Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*; Bruce Scates, 'The Unknown Sock Knitter: Voluntary Work, Emotional Labour, Bereavement and the Great War', *Labour History: A Journal of Labour and Social History*, no. 81 (1 November 2001): 29–49, https://doi.org/10.3828/27516802.
[18] French Red Cross to Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, 7 Nov 1914, UMA RCNO 2015.0033 Unit 211. The letter is written in French and postmarked Bordeaux, to where the French government fled in the early part of the war.
[19] Munro Ferguson to Illingworth, 15 Jul 1918, ARCS 2015.0033, Unit 211, UMA.

Historians including Heather Jones have highlighted the dual nature of the philanthropic organisations, contrasting their nationalist role – supporting the war effort and stepping in to take on work which we would now expect governments to take on such as providing food, clothing and medical facilities to its soldiers – with the neutral role on the supra national level of the International Committee of the Red Cross.[20] Jones argued that throughout the belligerent countries, the primarily female mobilisation which underpinned wartime philanthropy was paradoxically both nationalistic, international, and transnational: it transcended and crossed boundaries, yet organisations operated firmly within their own national frameworks. In the Australian context, Oppenheimer argued that this nexus between humanitarianism and militarism was also demonstrated by the Australian Red Cross. The booklet *Australia at the Dardanelles* retelling the exploits of the Australians at Gallipoli for school children was published soon after the landings. The cover bears a distinctive image of the Anzac soldier landing at Gallipoli. As Oppenheimer points out, the special edition reprinted with the Red Cross symbol added to the cover and sold as a fundraiser on Australia Day, 30 July 1915, is evidence of the Red Cross's connection to 'overt nationalism and patriotism'.[21]

The participation of Australians in fundraising and charitable causes was extensive: Red Cross work crossed geographic and social boundaries. Women from a variety of backgrounds contributed and hundreds of local branches of the Australian Red Cross operated across the country, demonstrating an incredible level of activism and community involvement in supporting Australian soldiers abroad.[22] The Australian Red Cross raised almost five million pounds in funds in addition to the goods, voluntary labour and in-kind support it would provide.[23] The Munro Fergusons lent their patronage to numerous benevolent societies, including those set up for war work, and domestic causes such as orphanages and girls' homes. In addition, Lady Helen supported the French fundraising charities, providing the prestige of vice-regal patronage, as well as practical involvement.

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[20] Heather Jones, 'International or Transnational? Humanitarian Action during the First World War', *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 16, no. 5 (October 2009): 697–713, https://doi.org/10.1080/13507480903262702.
[21] Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Shaping the Legend: The Role of the Australian Red Cross and Anzac', *Labour History*, no. 106 (May 2014): 123–42.
[22] Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*; Scates, 'The Unknown Sock Knitter'; Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Volunteers in War*.
[23] Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Volunteers in War*, 49.

The aims of the local French fundraising organisations complemented those of the Australian Red Cross, but nevertheless competed for the public's attention and funds. This did not deter the many Australians who gave generously of their time, money and effort to multiple organisations. An element of self-identity was also at play. Australia's French residents displayed patriotic enthusiasm for the Entente powers and the Franco-British alliance, however, they did not want their identity to be subsumed entirely under the banner of the British Empire. Stuer noted that of foreign-born Australian residents, the French had one of the lowest rates of naturalisation, perhaps reflecting a desire to retain ties, or perhaps a reluctance to call themselves British.[24] Hence for a few, the ability to express their support for the war within a French organisation was welcome, particularly if their own family members were serving in the French army. The creation of self-identity was also an element for the many Australians who enthusiastically contributed to the work of the French Red Cross. Their engagement spoke to cultural and intellectual ideals of Frenchness which were already established prior to 1914. The concept of Frenchness in Australia was a product of the historic relationship between Britain and France which took on its own flavour and direction in the antipodean colony.[25] After 1914, the presentation of an idealised version of France became a powerful instrument in pro-war rhetoric, which the French fundraising organisations exploited effectively.

II. French fundraising begins in Australia

Fundraising for the CRF in Australia dates to the earliest days of the conflict. In Sydney, the *Courrier Australien* urged its readers to attend the *Grand Concert Patriotique pour la Croix Rouge Française* in October 1914.[26] The structure of French fundraising was still forming in the two major cities at this time. The French Australian League of Help (FALH) in NSW, was the first French fundraising organisation to be established in Australia, in December 1914. Its operations will be discussed in Chapter Six. In Melbourne in the early stages of the war Vice-Consul Homery instigated the French Relief Fund 'for French soldiers wounded in the war and their destitute families'.[27] A precedent had been set for consuls raising funds for French causes, such as the funds

[24] Stuer, *The French in Australia*.
[25] Bergantz, 'French Connection'.
[26] 'Pour la Croix-Rouge française', *Courrier Australien* 16 Oct 1914, 4.
[27] MAE428PO/1/48.

raised in Australia to aid the victims of the Great Flood in Paris in 1910.[28] Accordingly, Homery published appeals in the newspapers, carefully recording the steady stream of donations and acknowledging the donors by name in the press, as was usual practice. Many French names appear in the list of generous donors, which included businessmen and politicians. Concurrently and just as in the other Allied nations, public outpouring of sympathy for Belgium and her refugees meant that fundraising for Belgian causes was enthusiastically supported. The Belgian Consul-General had also begun collecting funds and over the course of the war, Australians also donated a great deal of money to the Belgian Relief Fund. Donations were sent either directly to the Consul, or via other organisations such as the Lord Mayor's Fund. The proceeds of a grand patriotic concert held in Melbourne in September 1914 were evenly shared between the French and Belgian relief funds. The concert included scenes from the life of Joan of Arc – but in case anyone questioned the wisdom of placing this defeater of the English in the concert, it was specified in the program that she was there 'only as the symbol of patriotism'.[29]

By November Homery was able to consolidate the donations and funds raised at the concert to send the first payment of £492 to France. In his report to the Ministry, Homery proudly explained that he had managed to unite the University of Melbourne French Club and the AF to organise the concert. This was no mean feat as they had been rivals in the past, disagreeing on French language teaching policy. (A conflict which will be examined further in Chapter Eight). The same report recounted in glowing terms the universal spontaneous francophilia which had broken out and, echoing the tragically misplaced but common optimism of this period, Homery expressed his hope that as a result, the balance of trade between Australia and France might now be adjusted in France's favour, as trading with Germany was forbidden.[30]

The success of Homery's French Relief Fund reached Paris and he received requests for assistance from several French charities. Thus, funds raised in Victoria were distributed to a variety of French charities: for lame soldiers, clothing for prisoners of war, and to provide hot baths for French soldiers at the front. In the early days, Homery sent financial aid directly to France, however goods were sent via the Australian Red Cross, who

[28] 'Paris Floods', *Herald*, 5 Feb 1910, 5.
[29] MAE 282PO/1/48.
[30] Homery to MAE, MAE 428PO/48.

organised the shipments. For example, in March 1915, Homery thanked Mrs. Goward for her generosity in collecting clothes for donation to the French Red Cross. He explained the growing need as the war was prolonged and advised her to contact the St. Kilda branch of the Red Cross, but also added that the items could be sent care of Madame Homery in Armadale who was collecting goods on the Red Cross's behalf. The Consul's French Relief Fund operated until March 1916 but would soon be eclipsed by the FRC Vic. One early description of the FRC Vic's origins shows the crystallising of like-minded people as Madame Crivelli 'aided by a number of Melbourne ladies who have feelings of affection and gratitude to France' began collecting goods. Homery was later described as having a 'retiring disposition' who 'felt the strain of public speaking'.[31] On the other hand, Charlotte Crivelli's strong social network, outgoing personality and privileged position, together with fierce French patriotism, were a recipe for success.

In all the belligerent countries, fundraising organisations in support of the war proliferated from the outset. The mobilisation of civilians in the war effort was a universal phenomenon, yet each country experienced its own individual social and political implications. A brief comparison with the response of Canada allows us to shine a light on what made Australia's situation unique. Canada, another wealthy self-governing dominion of the British Empire, could be divided into two societies: the English-speaking majority of the country saw itself as firmly British in origin and responded to the war in this paradigm. Its own Red Cross connected with Britain and the Canadian troops. Conversely, in the French speaking Quebec region, the relationship with *l'Hexagone* was a complicated one. The French Canadians retained resentful feelings towards mainland France, and considered she had cut them adrift after losing control of Canada. Nor were they fully recognised and appreciated by the Anglophone Canadians. Hence, this dichotomy led to a feeling by French Canadians that this was not their war. The English-speaking Canadians were drawn to expressions of patriotism through Britishness, whereas for the French Canadians, the initial enthusiasm swept up by a minority of elites for the French cause was not sustained.[32]

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[31] 'Death of French Vice-Consul' *Leader,* 21 Oct 1916, p 37.
[32] Alban Lachiver, 'Le Soutien Canadien-Français à La France Durant Le Premier Conflit Mondial à Travers l'action Du Comité France-Amérique de Montréal (1914-1918)' (Amiens, Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, 1994).

Conversely, as Ludovic Tournès has pointed out, American aid to France was not encumbered by any complicating third party relationships and the historical relationship had been positive. Direct aid from the USA to France took place from 1914 onwards, administered by the American Red Cross and financed by wealthy philanthropic organisations such as the Rockefeller Foundation. Its multiple and varied activities were located across the country and ranged from facilities for orphans and babies in Lyon, to the supply of equipment to military hospitals. As a result of the historical special relationship between France and America which dated from the revolutionary wars of independence, large sums of money were donated by wealthy Americans well before the USA's entry into the conflict.[33] By the war's end the American presence and monetary contribution was huge.

Despite Australia's distance, and well before the first Australian troops landed in France, Australian aid was being channelled to French causes separately and in parallel to the aid provided to its own soldiers. In Australia, many charitable organisations sprang up providing funds and goods for war causes, Australian, Allied and British, overseen by a centralised government body, the war chest, which monitored their good governance and issued collection permits. As the war continued, Victorians were presented with a dazzling array and choice of funds to which they could contribute, and in 1918 this prompted one correspondent to provide a resumé of the funds: 'as it appears that considerable confusion still exists in the public mind as to the number, scope and value of the different patriotic funds.' The correspondent went on to list the main funds and explain their structure and purpose, including: The Red Cross Victorian Appeal; The Australian Patriotic Fund; The Serbian Relief Fund; Belgium's Need; Lady Mayoress' Patriotic League; Australian Red Cross Society; YMCA; Croix Rouge Française; and the French Société d'Assistance Maternelle Fund.[34]

Other organisations not mentioned by our correspondent included the Australian Comforts Fund, and the Italian Red Cross, and causes ranging from relief for Syrians, Poles, and Armenians to funds for war horses and tobacco for soldiers. The calendar in each successive year of the war was chock-full of 'days' devoted to particular causes. Among these were 'Jack's Day', in aid of British Sailors, 'Our Day' for the British Red

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[33] Ludovic Tournès, *Sciences de l'Homme et Politique. Les Fondations Philanthropiques Américaines En France Au XXe Siècle.* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2011).
[34] 'National Funds', *Leader*, 23 Feb 1918, 42.

Cross, and Belgian Day, while the first Australia Day, held on 30 July 1915 raised funds for Australian soldiers wounded at Gallipoli.[35] The selling of buttons, badges and ribbons provided an outward demonstration of the purchaser's patriotism. The wearing of one's colours continued a centuries old custom, echoing the *cocarde* of the French Revolution and more recently used to great effect by suffragettes marching to demand votes for women in pre-war London. Scott's *History of the War in Australia* provides lists of the many patriotic funds and the amounts they raised, divided by state. The lists are testimony to the sheer number and range of patriotic funds. The complexity and structural differences of the funds makes it impossible to compare them simply by money raised, and while it is possible to make some comparisons, I am concentrating on the cultural aspect of the French funds, rather than their monetary value.[36]

The establishment of the FRC Vic provided a means of channelling aid directly from Australia to France, so that the provenance of the goods was visible. Moreover, the practical advantage of sending goods via Marseille rather than London meant that shipments arrived faster.[37] Goods were often sent on French boats too, simplifying procedures for transport, and saving costs. In April 1915 it was noted that the French residents of Australia had begun to direct their efforts towards their own separate approach:

> There are fetes of all kinds always happening – three this afternoon that I have tickets for, and goodness knows how many more. Most of them are in aid of the Belgian or other war funds. There were two nights of theatrical shows at the Athenaeum Hall […] to raise funds for the Belgians, and several other events. The Alliance Française and the French people generally have just started to work for funds for the French Red Cross and are organising different movements.[38]

[35] Ernest Scott, *Australia during the War* (Sydney: Angus, 1936), 882.
[36] Scott, *Australia during the War*.
[37] *Age*, 28 Apr 1915, 12.
[38] *Bendigonian*, 29 Apr 1915, 10.

i. Establishment of the French Red Cross Victorian Branch

The creation of the Melbourne branch was also the result of international personal connections: Charlotte Crivelli's sister, Suzanne Caubet, worked at the Buffon Military Hospital in Paris, and initially Crivelli had sent packages to her in late 1914 under her own initiative. The first shipment of goods for the French Red Cross to Paris had been delivered to Paris by René Crivelli. Leaving Australia in December 1914 to report to his French army unit, he was met at the station by his aunt Suzanne Caubet in January 1915. 'What a joy to open the parcels' she wrote.[39] But as the situation grew worse it was realised that much greater help would be needed. Thus, in March 1915 Charlotte Crivelli made a public appeal in the press. She included an extract of a letter received from her sister, acknowledging the 'gift of Red Cross goods sent by Melbourne ladies' and the grateful thanks from doctors at the Buffon Military Hospital where Caubet was administrator. Crivelli declared she would undertake to collect and send further goods as 'so far, no other help has been given by Victorians to the French hospitals'.[40] The doctors informed the generous donors that their benevolence had been distributed to English and Belgian soldiers at the hospital as well as French. Crivelli assured the readers of Melbourne's *Age* newspaper that she would welcome further 'donations to Paris (with the approval of the Vice-Consul for France) to the care of my sister, Madame Leo Caubet, who has been appointed by the French Government to provide necessities for English and Belgians as well as French wounded in the Buffon Hospital, and also Belgian and French refugees.'[41] Within a few days, Crivelli acknowledged the first responses to her appeal, and announced the patronage of Governor Sir Arthur Stanley and Lady Margaret Stanley as well as the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.[42] Lady Hennessy, the Lady Mayoress, was Honorary President of the Melbourne AF, and mixed in the same social circles as the Crivellis. Suzanne's ongoing letters to Charlotte reveal that her role at the Buffon Hospital required endless reserves of energy and emotional strength, as well as organisational skills. Suzanne was confronted daily with the misery of wounded soldiers, refugees, and orphaned children who arrived in Paris. She tended to the needs of wounded soldiers, obtaining food, clothing, and other necessary items such as crutches, and constantly

[39] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, Jan 1915, (actual date illegible), Michael Crivelli Collection
[40] *Age*, 17 Mar 1915, 10.
[41] *Age*, 17 Mar 1915, 10.
[42] *Age*, 23 Mar 1915, 8.

endeavoured to upgrade the hospital's facilities – funds from Melbourne helped to fund electric lights, and the painting of rooms.

Crivelli's appeals generated increasing public awareness and interest in the plight of the French. Consequently, a meeting at the Melbourne Town Hall on 12 April 1915 led to the public creation of the FRC Vic. The large gathering was presided over by Lady Hennessy and in attendance were Chief Justice Sir John Madden and Lady Madden, as well as Homery.[43] The speakers described the suffering of soldiers and civilians in France, and it was emphasised that French hospitals and therefore the French Red Cross was carrying the burden. Since the first shipment of aid had been sent directly to Paris some months previously, this meeting was now to officially pass on the thanks and to plan the next fundraising event. It was Doctor Marcel Crivelli who then announced the intention to establish a local branch and to elect the officers and committee. The Hennessys and the Maddens were strong supporters of France and the FRC Vic. They were both Catholic and elite, making them part of a minority, since members of Melbourne's establishment were likely to be Protestant, and Catholicism was frequently conflated with being Irish and poor. Lady Hennessy was a noted linguist and French speaker.[44] John Madden had been educated in France as a child prior to coming to Australia at age 13 and was fluent in French. The French school he had attended was in the Somme area, a fact which may have heightened his personal response to the German invasion of northern France.[45]

ii. Paris headquarters gives its approval

Official recognition of the FRC Vic came after the organisation had already begun operating under that name. But the organisation, if it claimed to represent the CRF in Australia, needed official approval, which required contacts and diplomacy. Suzanne Caubet met the CRF President de Vogüé and SSBM President d'Haussonville, arguing her case for the creation of an Australian committee. They in turn presented her plan to the MAE. 'Nothing can be presumed, and all these things take time', Suzanne wrote to

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[43] *Argus,* 13 Apr 1915, 9.
[44] David Dunstan, 'Hennessy, Sir David Valentine (1858–1923)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed 4 October 2017, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hennessy-sir-david-valentine-6640.
[45] Ruth Campbell, 'Madden, Sir John (1844–1918)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed 4 October 2017, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/madden-sir-john-7453.

Charlotte.[46] The meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall was on 12 April 1915, but official approval came later, when the Marquis de Vogüé wrote on behalf of the CRF in Paris, granting official recognition to the FRC Vic.[47] Nonetheless, there were rules associated with the bestowal of official status. Vogüé's letter outlined the conditions under which an overseas branch could be created. He emphasised that it was not usual practice to grant this permission, but due to the war, a scheme had been put in place permitting committees of the French Red Cross to be established in Allied countries if no prior organisation existed. The conditions stipulated that it must report directly to the CRF Central Committee in Paris, to which all money and goods collected must be sent. The local body was permitted to receive goods and money destined for other recipients, but these should be sent nonetheless via the central committee. In this way, the FRC Vic differed from the FALH in Sydney, which operated autonomously. In the early flurry of patriotism, Melbourne society ladies were much occupied in attending events for France, for Belgian and Serbian Relief funds, as well as the Red Cross and others causes, with plenty of singing, and renditions of national anthems of all the Allied countries. Patriotism could be expressed at social events while seeing and being seen. The business of sheer hard work for the patriotic funds would expand in due course.

iii. The FRC Vic Committee

The committee members of the FRC Vic were formed from a core group of Charlotte Crivelli's friends and acquaintances, drawn from Melbourne's privileged circles, while other committee members participated for varying periods over the course of the war. Some were the wives of prominent wealthy men, such as Margaret Mackinnon, whose husband Lauchlan (L.K. S.) Mackinnon was a prominent lawyer and part-owner of the *Argus* newspaper, and Muriel Le Barrois d'Orgeval, Australian-born wife of Pierre Le Barrois d'Orgeval, manager of the Melbourne branch of the *Comptoir Nationale d'Escompte*, the French bank which transferred a great deal of money from Australia to France in the following years. There was also Madame Bordeaux, wife of the French-born veterinarian, and Madame Artaud, of the St. Kilda French family whose son and nephew had joined the French army. Also on the executive committee were Doctor Helen Sexton and her collaborator Constance Blackwood who would continue their roles after

[46] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, 9 May 1915, Crivelli private correspondence, Michael Crivelli collection.
[47] Vogüé to FRC Vic, 29 Jun 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48

running the Australian hospital in Paris.[48] The position of secretary was filled by several women over the years. Only one man – Alured Kelly – took on the role for a time. (We will see more about him below.) A key member of the FRC Vic was David Norman Trenery, who remained constant as the treasurer for the duration. Trenery was a manager at the Atlas Insurance Company, and in 1913 had published a book called *Social Insurance and Australia*, but his role as the Honorary Treasurer of the FRC VIC added an additional purpose to his life. A sometime member of the AF, he was involved in the creation of the FRC Vic from the beginning and, when not at his desk at the insurance company seems to have spent all his time volunteering. Correspondence to him was addressed care of his Collins Street address, indicating that he carried out his role from his workplace. While important roles in the fundraising organisation were mostly held by elites, Trenery was in the camp of those who held down 'a day job' while making an enormous contribution, and his efforts did not go unappreciated.

III. French Cultural Imagery as a Marketing Tool

i. Soirées and Fetes - first official events

While collections for the CRF had been taking place for months, one of the first official fundraising events was held on 17 April 1915: a Children's Fete held at Ravenswood, the home of Susan Smith, a long-time friend of Charlotte Crivelli. It raised £300. The fete was organised by Hélène Crivelli, Charlotte's daughter, and Muriel d'Orgeval. The families had long standing connections: the d'Orgevals and the Crivellis had been instrumental in the establishment of the Melbourne AF. They now continued their associations, transferring their pattern of supporting worthy causes to the new cause which eclipsed the others.[49] The newly formed committee played to their strengths, immediately planning a musical soirée, just as they would have done for the purposes of light entertainment at the AF.[50] It would be the first of many such events. Held on 12 May 1915, it featured the singing of the Marseillaise by popular French tenor Napoleon Boffard, a long-time resident of Melbourne, whose rendition of *l'hymne nationale* become a regular fixture at French patriotic events. Distinguished guests included Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, Sir John and Lady Madden, and the consuls of France, Russia

[48] Hannah Steel, 'Une Héroïne Oubliée - L'expérience de Guerre de Dr Helen Sexton, Une Australienne à Paris 1914-1918' (Honours Thesis, Melbourne, University of Melbourne, 2018).
[49] Thornton-Smith, 'Paul Maistre, Vice-Consul'.
[50] *Argus*, 13 Apr 1915, 9.

and Belgium. Deemed a success, the event made a profit of £192. These early amounts contrast markedly with those achieved subsequently such as the cheque for £100,000 presented to the CRF by the people of Melbourne towards the end of the war (to be discussed in Chapter Eight). The growth and strength of French fundraising was underpinned by an increase in the number of volunteers and by the incredible efforts marketing of France and French causes. It can also perhaps be explained by the increasing desperation as the war continued prompting people to give more, as fundraising efforts grew more pervasive.

ii. 1915 Patriotism blends with fundraising

The operations of the FRC Vic blended fundraising with nationalism and propaganda, reflecting the nexus described by Jones: supporting the soldiers meant supporting the war effort.[51] In the same way, the work of the French fundraising organisations was not limited to purely humanitarian aims. Implicitly and explicitly its aims encompassed a campaign to win hearts and minds and maintain support for the war. In Australia, July 1915 witnessed Recruiting Week – a concerted effort by authorities involving public meetings and newspaper reports on the progress of the drive which published the names of new recruits. Coming in the wake of news finally reaching Australians about heavy losses at Gallipoli, it is an interesting coincidence that this event was scheduled in the same week as the French National Day, 14 July.

The proliferation of fundraising organisations engendered an equally extensive range of fundraising methods: musical and theatrical events, markets, pageants and parades were popular ways to combine patriotism, entertainment and raising money. Patriotic pageants were cultural events heavy with visual symbolism, and fused elements of religious processions, military parades and popular street carnivals, creating a space for the public to mingle with 'the impersonated images of secular saints of the Allied cause'.[52] Two events of 1915 demonstrate how the French fundraising organisations both contributed to, and benefited from, a heightened interest in French culture: the French Historic Pageant, held in July 1915, and the French Fete and Village Fair, held in December 1915,

[51] Jones, 'International or Transnational?'
[52] Veronica Kelly, 'Australia's First Belgian Day', in *A World of Popular Entertainments*, ed. Gillian Arrighi and Victor Emeljanow (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 137–49.

both exemplify how the aligned aims of nationalism, fundraising and propaganda were entwined with cultural representations of France.

Figure 4 The French Pageant of 14 July 1915.[53]

On 14 July 1915 concerts were held in cafés and restaurants throughout Melbourne to coincide with the French national day, with all proceeds going to the FRC Vic. The day included the huge 'pageant of old France' – which paraded through the streets of the city at midday and again later in the afternoon. Participants were dressed as characters from French history, ranging from Gauls and Romans to Louis XIV and Napoleon, and performed scenes such as the fall of the Bastille. Newspaper reports reveal no sense of irony at the inclusion of Napoleon as a major character, the language of the *Entente* was one of reconciliation of past conflicts. The roles of Napoleon and Josephine were played by Pierre Bellew and his wife, whose home had welcomed aspiring artist Louis Foulet before the war (Chapter One). Bellew cut a fine figure as Napoleon, seated on his white horse, accompanied by men dressed as officers of the *Grande Armée*. The image, taken as characters assembled near Parliament House in preparation for the parade, demonstrates the attention to detail and effort taken by the participants. The day culminated in a grand concert at the Melbourne Town Hall. The pageant's creative producer was Violet Teague, an Australian artist who had lived and studied in Belgium

[53] Violet Teague papers: SLV YMS 14726 Box 16

and exhibited in Paris. A fluent French and German speaker, Teague turned her artistic talents to *tableaux vivants* with both British Empire and French cultural symbolism. Teague's tableaux 'blended High Art and stage spectacle', which typically represented scenes from the life of historical figures or recreated historical events.[54] The French Historic Pageant was judged to be 'a remarkable spectacle'.[55] Every major building in the city, shops and offices, flew the flags of France and Australia. Homery was moved by this outpouring of admiration and affection towards France and wrote a long and detailed report to Paris. His report recounts the parade, the numerous *cafés chantants*, a sporting event held a few days previously, the demonstration by school children all wearing the French colours, the sums of money raised, and also gives an insight into the behind-the-scenes work involved in staging such an enormous event.[56] 'From the early hours of the morning, a veritable army of 2,000 women volunteers spread out through the streets of the city and began selling bouquets, cocardes and flags in the French colours.'[57] Homery's account explained the role of Trenery: 'the very soul of the movement'. As a principal organiser, Trenery had sacrificed his nights and weekends to the event, and had worked so hard that on the day he fainted from exhaustion and had to be taken home in a car. It was in this letter that Homery sent his first recommendation for Trenery to receive the *Légion d'Honneur.* Privately, Homery also expressed his dismay that the Governor General was not present at the official dinner in the evening. Munro Ferguson's message of support and regret for his absence was published in the press, and it seems that on this evening he was dining with Madame Nellie Melba at her country residence. Homery resented the choice on both their parts to spend the evening in this way, rather than choosing France.[58]

While raising funds, and cementing enthusiasm for the war, the July French pageant also had an educative purpose, reminding the people of Melbourne about 'the meaning of French history'. It was a history lesson particularly crafted to reinforce certain values, featuring the women of the revolution wearing the 'red cap of liberty', and even 'the humble Corsican officer of artillery French Emperor and destroyer of the rotten old

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[54] Anita Callaway, 'The Theatre of War', in *Violet Teague 1872 - 1951*, ed. Jane Clark and Felicity Druce (Roseville NSW: The Beagle Press, 1999).
[55] 'A Pageant of France', *Age*, 15 Jul 1916, 6.
[56] Homery to MAE, 16 July 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

European system', who evidently symbolised the triumph of plucky, small characters (nations) i.e. Belgium, against the might of archaic tyrannies, i.e. Germany.[59] Thus, French history and culture was repackaged to fit the need of the times. Such was also the case with the grand event held later in the year at 'Merriwa'.

iii. French Village Life: the Merriwa fete, December 1915

On 11 December 1915, a French Floral Fete and Village Fair was held in the gardens of 'Merriwa', the Toorak mansion of Mr and Mrs Rutter Clarke.[60] In Merriwa's expansive grounds on the banks of the Yarra River, a host of volunteers reproduced scenes from French Village life. Attended by 5,000 people, the event raised over £1,000, and proceeds were divided equally between the FRC Vic and the *Assistance Maternelle*. Among the attractions were stalls selling French style produce, a fortune teller, and events including a wedding, and the crowning of *La Rosière* – the virtuous maiden – a tradition dating back to medieval times. The French Village fair was conceived and designed by Madame Pierre Bellew, with assistance from theatrical professionals. Some of Melbourne's prominent citizens, French and others, played the part of the characters: Napoleon Boffard played the role of the mayor and Madame Homery manned one of the many stalls. The event was something 'distinctly new' and reproduced 'the curious old-world customs of France'.[61] Its re-creation of French village life drew on the appeal of French culture, a strategy which maximised the success of its fundraising. The performative nature of such events expressed a nostalgia for idealised French rural life, which some French émigrés had left behind years ago. For others, the French village was an abstract and slightly exotic notion. Characters such as a fortune teller, and the staging of a mock wedding which was presided over by a mayor conveyed an otherness, tapping into the fascination felt by many Australians towards France. English cultural and historical references also made an appearance at Merriwa: the programme included Morris dancing, while in the evening an Elizabethan-themed 'spectacle' written and directed by Violet Teague, *The Masque of Gloriana,* referenced moments of glory from England's past.[62]

Equally laden with symbolism was the programme for the Merriwa event. The illustration on its cover (Figure 5) depicts a striking allegory of France and its people. The work of

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[59] 'A Pageant of France', *Leader*, 17 Jul 1915, 49. 'Patriotic Efforts' *Age*, 8 Dec 1915, 10.
[60] 'French Floral Fete', *Argus*, 13 Dec 1915, 8.
[61] *Age*, 11 Dec 1915, 14
[62] French Floral Fete programme, MAE 428PO/1/48.

French poster artists was already known internationally, and many Australian artists had studied and lived in France before the war. This back and forth contributed to a familiarity with French cultural tropes. The image on the programme draws on the archetypal symbol of Marianne, the embodiment of France. As far as we know, the artist, Virgil Reilly, who was in the early stages of his career, had not travelled to France.[63] However, those who gave him the creative brief must have provided direction, and did acknowledge his contribution in the program. Marianne was, and still is, the quintessential emblem of France, her symbolism having evolved since the French Revolution in line with the changing political and social climate. As Maurice Agulhon explains, this symbolism took on a new importance in 1914. The allegory of a feminine republican France was contrasted with the masculine symbolism of autocratic states, personified by the Kaiser.[64] Marianne's Phrygian bonnet symbolised the liberal democracy for which France was fighting, a call for unity to left and right leaning sections of French society. Reilly's drawing represents all three elements of the French population which the Australian public is called to support: soldier, mother, child. The central figure of Marianne wears her red Phrygian bonnet with a contemporary hairstyle. A white bodice reveals her shoulders but modestly covers her breasts, and her skirt is patterned with tricolour stripes. She wears the traditional peasant footwear, *sabots*. Her eyes are downcast as she comforts a small girl who is clinging to her. Standing on the other side of her is the figure of a French soldier, with crutches and a neatly bandaged head, wearing the pre-1914 uniform, including scarlet trousers. This striking image is not reproduced in any other fundraising brochures that I have found. Later publicity material includes simpler representations of the Allies, usually with small coloured images of the flags. This was most likely to save money – the charities were always keeping an eye on their net profits.

[63] Virgil Reilly (1892-1974) had a long and productive career as a cartoonist, comic book artist and illustrator. Although not a prominent artist, Reilly is known to have produced other works for patriotic causes, such as a poster for Australia Day fundraising pageant (in Teague Papers SLV YMS14726 Box 3)
[64] Maurice Agulhon, 'Marianne En 14-18', in *Guerre et Cultures 1914-1918*, ed. Jean-Jacques Becker (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994).

Figure 5 Merriwa French Floral Fete program.[65]

iv. The Assistance Maternelle

The suffering and deprivation of orphans was just one of the disastrous consequences for civilian victims of the conflict.[66] Historians estimate that in France, at least one million children were made orphans.[67] Although the French government provided small allocations to needy women and children, it was really charities who took on most of the responsibility of caring for them. During 1914 and 1915 many such charities were established. The *Assistance Maternelle* was established in Paris in the early days of the war, and its aim was to help the thousands of single or destitute mothers who had flocked to the capital.[68] A quasi-private organisation, although under the control of the

[65] MAE 428PO/1/48.
[66] Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, 14-18 Understanding the Great War; Olivier Faron, Les Enfants Du Deuil - Orphelins et Pupilles de La Nation de La Première Guerre Mondiale (1914-1941) (Paris: La Découverte, 2001).
[67] Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau state there were 600,000 war widows in France in 1920, and at least 760,000 orphans. They clarify that Faron's figure of 1.1 million included the children of disabled veterans. Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Understanding the Great War*, 210.
[68] Catherine Rollet, 'The "Other War" I: Protecting Public Health', in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin. 1914-1919*, ed. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

government, it depended largely on private donations. These funds were among many in place to alleviate the enormous suffering of French civilians. When placed alongside the enormity of the suffering, Australia's contribution may have seemed a drop in the ocean, however, it was acknowledged at the time by the leaders of the French organisation, and more recently by French historian Catherine Rollet.[69]

The cause of suffering French mothers and babies was enthusiastically supported by many Australians, in all states. The aid sent to the *Assistance Maternelle* as well as to the *Association Nationale des Orphelins de la Guerre* or ANOG (War Orphans) fund, constitutes another sphere of transnational fundraising connections: direct communication between Paris and Melbourne led to the establishment of a branch of the *Assistance Maternelle* in Australia. The assistance provided under the badge of the CRF, while bearing a prestige label, did come with some restrictions, whereas funds and goods sent directly to Suzanne Caubet could be directed to whomever they chose. The Buffon and the Villiers hospitals in Paris, which benefited from the bulk of the first shipments, were military hospitals. However, Caubet was involved with many other organisations in Paris. As well as her work as administrator at the Buffon Hospital, she organised three external '*ouvroirs'*, workshops where women were employed in making bandages, clothing and supplies, and was on the committee of a war orphans charity.[70] Caubet soon identified a further French cause for Australians to support. The first direct appeal to Australians from French people had been via the heartfelt letter published by Charlotte Crivelli requesting goods and money for the military hospitals. Next came the plea for help for destitute mothers and babies, and orphans – civilian casualties of the war. In November 1915 Charlotte Crivelli announced that she would be coordinating fundraising in Australia for the *Assistance Maternelle*, as the officially appointed Australian Representative.[71] In Paris, Suzanne Caubet had received a visit in December 1914 from Madame Poincaré, wife of the French President and patron of the organisation, who took an interest in Caubet's work. During May 1915, Charlotte Crivelli and Caubet were already discussing the merits of obtaining the patronage of Madame Poincaré for their fundraising cause, recognising that it would add gravitas, and after some negotiating, they

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[69] *La Revue philanthropique* (Paris: Masson et Cie, 1918), http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6515631v; Rollet, 'The "Other War" I: Protecting Public Health'.
[70] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, 29 Jun 1915, Michael Crivelli collection.
[71] *Courrier Australien*, 25 Feb 1916, 4.

did obtain her patronage. The 1917 publicity brochure for the Melbourne branch of the *Assistance Maternelle* displays the prestigious patronage, and further illustrates the cultural transfers utilised by the French-Australians. (Figure 6). The brochure's cover illustration (Figure 7) is copied directly from an iconic 1915 French poster by Poulbot: '*Pour que papa vienne en permission'* publicising a fund to assist impoverished French soldiers. The original poster depicts a young boy dressed in miniature soldier's costume, selling buttons or trinkets to raise money, and beside him a young girl dressed as a Red Cross nurse holds a gift, presumably for her father when he can come home on leave. The image of needy and waif-like French children lent itself perfectly to the cause of the *Assistance Maternelle.* As the poster was used in Australia more than a year later, there was ample time for it to travel, although in whose suitcase it made the voyage is not known.

Figure 6 *Société d'Assistance Maternelle* Promotional booklet.[72]

[72] The brochure is undated but includes a letter from Madame Michel dated Feb 1917, MAE 428PO/1/48.

Figure 7 Poulbot, '*Pour que papa vienne en permission, s'il vous plaît.*'[73]

As a result of the connections between Paris and Australia, the work of both the FALH in Sydney and the FRC Vic was known in Paris, and in September 1915, Charlotte Crivelli organised for a letter from Madame Michel, President of the *Assistance Maternelle* and wife of General Michel, to be published in the Australian press.[74] According to Madame Michel, between August 1914 and August 1915, 37,085 children had been born in Paris. Of these, 34,000 passed through the hands of the *Assistance Maternelle*, which provided food, shelter, and medical care. The charity's Vice-President was Professor Pinard, a pioneering and enlightened doctor and public health advocate.[75] The personal links between Pinard and Australia derive from the links forged between Pinard and Doctor Marcel Crivelli within the Paris medical fraternity, as well as through the work of Suzanne Caubet in Paris. Pinard was a noted advocate for women's and children's health whose policies on support for single mothers were certainly ahead of their time.[76] Both the Sydney and Melbourne organisations raised funds for the *Assistance Maternelle*, and indeed collected funds from across Australia, and Sydney representatives Marie-Thérèse Playoust and Augustine Soubeiran, of the FALH, toured the operations of the *Assistance Maternelle* and the orphanages while in Paris during the war. (Their visits will be

[73] Fransisque Poulbot, '*Pour que papa vienne en permission, s'il vous plaît.* (so that papa can come home on leave, please), Gallica.bnf.fr/bibliothèque municipale de Rouen
[74] *Courrier Australien*, 26 Nov 1915, 4.
[75] Faron, *Les Enfants Du Deuil - Orphelins et Pupilles de La Nation de La Première Guerre Mondiale (1914-1941)*, 53. Faron calls him : un médecin célèbre, véritable pionnier de la puériculture.
[76] *La Revue philanthropique*.

discussed in Chapter Six).[77] The work of these charities had a marked effect on the reduction of infant mortality in France. Rollet argues that the financial contribution of Australian and American organisations was valuable, and actively 'helped to defend French children', and she notes that between 1914 and 1916, the FRC Vic sent a total of 208,700 francs to Paris, the equivalent of a year's budget.[78] A steady stream of letters of thanks, both from individual recipients and from Professor Pinard and other administrators, demonstrates appreciation of the assistance.

IV. Helping the Orphans of France

Professor Pinard and Madame Michel were on the committees of both the *Assistance Maternelle*, and the Orphans' Charity, the *Association Nationale des Orphelins de la Guerre* (ANOG). Contact between Australian donors and the mothers and orphans' charities was brought about by multiple strands of connection. Caubet's letter of August 1915 mentions that she has met with Madame Michel and discussed with her the idea of setting up a committee in Australia for helping children.[79] Michel was aware of Caubet's links to Australia and must have been conscious of the potential help which such a rich country could offer. Suzanne had reminded Charlotte that 'her' FRC Vic branch could only operate for the duration of the war and yet, after the war so much more help would be needed. It would therefore be useful to already have a vehicle through with to collect and send this help in the post-war period.[80] The ANOG had been established on 2 August 1914, with a head office in Paris and a home for children in Étretat on the Normandy coast.[81] During 1915 it established more orphanages in and around Nice and Cannes in the south of France. As men were mobilised and marched away, many thousands of motherless children were suddenly left with no one to care for them. The ANOG was the one of the largest of the many associations which existed to care for orphans during the war.[82] In October 1916 Pinard published an official testimony of support for the ANOG's work, explaining how the two associations worked in

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[77] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*, 128–29.
[78] Rollet, 'The "Other War" I: Protecting Public Health', 442.
[79] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, 8 Aug 1915, Crivelli private correspondence, Michael Crivelli Collection
[80] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, 7 May 1916, Crivelli private correspondence Michael Crivelli Collection
[81] Association Nationale des Orphelins de la Guerre, La Contemporaine, Collections BDIC/Guerre Mondiale 1914-1918/Propagande et Œuvres/ARCH0002
[82] Faron, *Les Enfants Du Deuil - Orphelins et Pupilles de La Nation de La Première Guerre Mondiale (1914-1941)*, 52–54.

cooperation with each other.[83] The *Assistance Maternelle*'s mission was to look after women in the period leading up to childbirth, and then in the following weeks or months. At the maternity hospitals, if mothers died and children became orphans, they would pass into the care of the ANOG. Michel and Pinard also took charge of sourcing wet-nurses for orphaned babies. The cause of French orphans was widely supported: the ANOG also wrote directly to Homery, and he sent money to them in 1916, including one cheque for £500 which came partly from his own fund, and partly from money raised by the FRC Vic. The ANOG contacted the Sydney French organisations too – the FALH adopted them as one of its major causes. The ANOG also wrote to the Melbourne AF in May 1916 as we will see in Chapter Eight.

i. French Week 1916

The prestigious circles in which Charlotte Crivelli moved were in evidence at the Matinee at Government House on Saturday 18 March 1916. The Munro Fergusons provided the garden and all the state rooms for the event, with proceeds going to the FRC Vic. Premium ticket holders paid ten shillings to have access to all the entertainments of the day, both indoors and out. The press noted the quintessentially French qualities that Crivelli embodied: 'the French flair for organisation and management'.[84] Homery also judged this an event worth recording, not least because it came with a photo of the gathered guests, of which he was one. In his files he carefully pasted the newspaper clipping, annotating it to show where he stood amongst the dignitaries. Guests were entertained in the garden by Shakespeare's *As You Like It* performed under a hot March sky, and by musical performances in the drawing room. Sir John Madden, who had published his admiration of 'noble and valiant France' officially opened the event, and then gallantly stood in the heat until someone noticed and procured him a chair. In addition to raising funds from the admission price, trinkets made by wounded French soldiers while in hospital were on sale. These had undoubtedly been sent by Suzanne Caubet. In August 1915 she had written to Charlotte: 'what do you think about this idea? When I have some money, I will purchase some items which have been made by wounded soldiers, there are some very

[83] MAE 428PO/1/48
[84] 'Vive La France', *Table Talk*, 23 Mar 1916, 8.

amusing ones, they make them out of tin plate. Pendants, jewellery, artistic rings… You could have them in stock to sell'.[85]

In June 1916 the FRC Vic's annual general meeting was held. In the first year of its operations, it had sent £20,000 to Paris. Committee members were elected and re-elected, but a notable departure was that of honorary secretary Alured Kelly along with his Belgian-born wife Elise. Kelly had been the General Manager of the Gaulois Tyre Company, whose French parent company Bergougnon had a major contract supplying the French army, and Kelly was being transferred to their London office. In early 1916 he had instigated a major fundraising appeal with the aim of providing ambulances for the French Red Cross. The appeal was highly successful, raising £7,250 – enough to purchase fifteen vehicles together with associated sterilisation equipment.[86] Kelly left Melbourne in June 1916, and stopped in Paris before taking up his position in London. He was welcomed in Paris by representatives of each of the three CRF societies: the SSBM, the UFF and the AFF, and toured hospitals run by each of the societies. He met de Vogüé at the CRF Central office and visited Suzanne Caubet. All expressed their thanks for goods and money sent from Australia and requested further help. In Melbourne in July 1916, a whole week was declared 'French week' to coincide with the French National Day.[87] Once again, multiple fundraising events were held, and the week was a huge success. The festivities culminated in an even more profitable reprise of the French Market Fair, this time at the Melbourne Town Hall, which raised about £8,000. Total receipts were £60,000, an extraordinary amount, far exceeding the sums raised in 1915. The success of Melbourne's 1916 French week reached the French newspapers: *La Croix* reported that it was expected to raise about 1.4 million francs.[88]

ii. Melbourne's 'Busy Bees'

Members of the FRC Vic committee who had also been on the committee of the Melbourne AF were accustomed to presenting French culture to an Australian audience, with theatrical and musical soirées held at the AF and in the salons of the cultured elites of the city.[89] However, these larger charitable events offered an opportunity for a wider

[85] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, 28 Aug 1915, Michael Crivelli collection *
[86] 'French Red Cross Society Victoria Annual Report' for year ending 30 Apr 1917, MAE 428PO/1/64
[87] *Argus*, 17 Jul 1916, 6.
[88] *La Croix*, 30 Jul 1916.
[89] Bergantz, 'French Connection'.

public to connect with a culture that was perceived as the preserve of the elite classes. Their popularity indicates a democratisation of francophile sentiment which accompanied *a priori* expressions of patriotism. Since Beaumont explored the question of feminist patriotism during the First World War, more recent scholarship has contributed to a greater understanding of the roles and experiences of women. Beaumont argued that for pre-war activist women, their alignment of feminism with pacifism was disrupted by wartime experience.[90] Others have argued that, while wealthy elites were commonly running the philanthropic organisations simply because they had the time and resources to do so, fundraising was just as much the domain of working-class women.[91] Similarly the French history of the CRF talks of the democratisation effect of mass participation in fundraising and benevolent funds, which had previously been an elitist activity. They describe it as part of a huge social change.[92] At the local level, the work of Melbourne's Busy Bees, women employees at the Port Melbourne Swallow and Ariell biscuit factory, exemplifies this phenomenon, and is emblematic of the vertical and horizontal connections which were forged within this period of social disruption. The letters in their 'war record' are evidence of people-to-people connections between French and Australians, i.e. individual connections, feeding into and strengthening the broader public narrative of pro-France and pro-war discourse.

The enthusiastic and patriotic Busy Bees workers contributed enormously to the patriotic funds. Photos in the album documenting their war work show mountains of comforts goods ready for dispatch.[93] Under the leadership of Miss Elsie Holmes, this group of about 300 women sewed, knitted and collected a vast amount of goods and funds for a range of patriotic charities – Australian, British and French. Their work is all the more admirable considering that they worked full time in the Port Melbourne factory. They packed and sent comforts packages to AIF soldiers at the front in New Guinea, Egypt, and France. Charlotte Crivelli moved in the same social circles as the owner of Swallow and Ariell, Frederick Thomas Derham. The workers adopted the French causes as their own, adding the *Assistance Maternelle* and the FRC Vic to their work. In 1917, 800

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[90] Joan Beaumont, 'Whatever Happened to Patriotic Women, 1914–1918?', *Australian Historical Studies* 31, no. 115 (1 October 2000): 273–86, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314610008596131.
[91] Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Volunteers in War*; Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity*; Scates, 'The Unknown Sock Knitter'.
[92] Pineau, Alauzet, and Lagrange, *La Croix Rouge Française: 150 Ans d'histoire*, 73.
[93] Swallow and Ariell Pty Ltd. (SA) 1869-1962, UMA 1961.0035, Unit 81

French soldiers proceeding to the front via Australia received Christmas parcels donated by the FRC Vic and packed by the Busy Bees.

The Busy Bees also provided goods and letters of comfort to French soldiers who came from the occupied zone. These were distributed via an Australian working with the CRF in Paris, Herbert Daly, who received information via the CRF on recommended recipients. [94] These were men from areas such as Lille and Tourcoing, who had had no contact with their families since the beginning of the war. Between 1914 and 1917 Daly spent two and half years in Paris distributing goods sent from Australia. Among the recipients in 1915 were the Gerbervillier Hospital in the Vosges run by Soeur Julie Rigard, and the St. Nicolas Hospital in Verdun, run by Soeur Célinie. Inside the packages of socks and clothing, food, chocolate and tobacco, the Busy Bees included letters of support and encouragement to the soldiers, often with their names and return address. The letters of thanks received from the French soldiers for help from so far away forms one fascinating part of the Busy Bees album, and are emblematic of a desire by ordinary people to express friendship between France and Australia.[95]

In the French army it was common for soldiers to acquire a '*marraine de guerre'* or war godmother. In the absence of a family member to send letters and parcels, this role might be taken on by a female friend or other contact. Clues in the thank you letters suggest that in some cases correspondence between the soldiers and their Busy Bee benefactors continued, so that friendships formed, their roles blurring with that of *marraines de guerre*. Hence the intriguing letter from Volmat Delphis, a young French soldier recovering in a military hospital in Grenoble, to the Vice-Consul in Melbourne, explaining that his friend had a *marraine de guerre* from Melbourne, who was apparently a wealthy woman. Delphis asked the Vice-Consul if he could organise for him to have one too.[96]

iii. Women helping women

As well as the support they provided to French soldiers, the Busy Bees were also heavily involved in the support for assistance sent to destitute French mothers and babies. Their

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[94] 'Central Depot Red Cross Society', *Punch,* 17 Aug 1916, 28.
[95] Colin Nettelbeck and Pauline Georgelin, 'Links across the World: World War I French Soldiers and Melbourne's "Busy Bees"', *History Australia* 15, no. 4 (December 2018): 657–73.
[96] Volmat Delphis to Vice-Consul, 19 Oct 1917, MAE 428PO/1/48.

album includes photos of two beds they had funded in a Paris maternity hospital, as well as letters of thanks from French mothers for baby clothes, which had been sent labelled 'with best wishes from your Australian friends'. It was Suzanne Caubet's idea to name the beds 'Port Melbourne' in acknowledgment of the Melbourne suburb where the Busy Bees' workplace was located. The connections created by this help were significant not only for the recipients, but also for the donors. The examples here demonstrate a less well-known layer of connection between Australia and France – that forged between women. In these letters we read of a desire by women to reach out to each other and to express a feeling of solidarity. While their individual experiences were vastly different, there was an awareness among the women of a commonality of experience. The women were all suffering as a result of the war and acknowledged the value of taking action to offset feelings of helplessness. The Melbourne women created care parcels for the French mothers which they named *sacs de joie* (bags of joy). Inside were carefully sewn and knitted layettes as well as soap, cloths, and other useful things. Each *sac de joie* contained a personal letter from the woman who had compiled the goods. Words of encouragement and affection were expressed between the women of France and the women of Australia.[97]

From the maternity hospital in Paris, Louise Fontaine wrote of her joy in receiving the 'both dainty and solid' baby clothes for her fourth child. She was a refugee from the Nord department, in the occupied part of France. Her husband had been wounded at the front, and she knew nothing of the fate of her family members left behind. Louise went on to say that, in accordance with the wishes of the Australian donor, she had named her new baby Louis. In what seems odd to the modern reader, the correspondence between the women in Melbourne and the women in France contained suggestions regarding naming of the French babies. Seemingly in agreement with those who distributed the aid, as well as with the mothers themselves, the Melbourne women drew up a list of common French first names, and so the note in each parcel included the preferred name chosen for the baby who would receive it. It is difficult to know whether the babies were in fact named according to the wishes, but perhaps it helped personify the images for the Australian women if they could imagine little Louis or little Madeleine wearing the booties they had

[97] The original letters from the French mothers have not been preserved. The Swallow and Ariell workers transcribed the letters, adding an English translation. It is these copies which are to be found in the album documenting their war work, in the Swallow and Ariell (S & A) archive, located at UMA, S & A, 19161.0035, Unit 81.

knitted. Madame Grenot, thirty years old, had two daughters and a husband at the front. She wrote her thanks to the Busy Bees from her temporary home outside of Paris, where she had gone with her other children, to be safer while awaiting the birth of her son, who she assured them would be named Robert. Monsieur B. Blanchard, badly wounded at Verdun, sent his thanks as a father for the parcel he received for his third child, a daughter who, according to the instructions, would be named Marguerite. 'Already the father of two boys, aged 6 and 3, little Marguerite has come to enlarge my small family, so your present could not have found anyone more worthy.'

Within the wide range of specific causes, people could choose the charity with the particular 'flavour' that appealed to them. Hence, while Alured Kelly's French Red Cross Ambulance Appeal offered a certain masculine interest, with its aim to purchase motor vehicles for men to drive, women from all social backgrounds and geographic locations felt called to help their French counterparts. Helen McBride of Melbourne informed Homery of her tennis club's decision to give their money to Madame Crivelli's fund 'because of the more definite mention of the women'.[98] Meanwhile from the tiny rural town of Boort, Shire Secretary Mr. Graham wrote asking Homery if the appeal for the *Assistance Maternelle* was genuine and worthy of support. With so many appeals, he wrote, 'while one cannot give to all, the most worthy can be chosen'. If it was indeed worthy, the council would be donating £5, while the local branch of the Red Cross, of which his wife was secretary, would contribute £10. 'It appeals to their members, most of them being mothers themselves.'[99] Women of a different social level organised an event at the grand country house 'Mintaro' on 19 April 1916: a fete arranged by Madame Crivelli to benefit the *Assistance Maternelle*. Mintaro was the country house of the Crivellis thus, the newspapers declared, there was certain to be a great gathering. Even a special train had been arranged to ferry the guests. As the event coincided with the Easter Weekend, the fete provided an opportunity for people to 'combine their own pleasure with practical sympathy for the soldiers of our wonderful ally, France.'[100]

On 8 August 1916 both Charlotte Crivelli and Homery addressed the French Red Cross afternoon organised by the Malvern Branch (a wealthy suburb of Melbourne) of the

[98] McBride to Homery 12 Aug 1916, MAE 428PO/1/48
[99] Graham to Homery 25 Feb 1916, MAE 428PO/1/48
[100] 'Women to Women' *Argus*, 9 Apr 1916, 12.

conservative Australian Women's National League (AWNL). The AWNL's motto '*pro Deo et Patria'* summed up their pro-war and pro-conscription stance. The AWNL had decided to combine their annual meeting with a demonstration of support for France. The seven hundred members who were expected to attend had already been actively engaged collecting. The special afternoon, the speeches, and of course a rendition of the *Marseillaise*, would further encourage them in their work 'for their bravest Ally who has saved Australia from falling into the hands of our principal enemy'. Crivelli announced that the first amount sent from Victoria to France was £16, but that the last amount was £60,000.[101] The attendees at the Malvern meeting typified the privileged circles in which Crivelli mixed. However, the message of support for France crossed all boundaries, those of class, as well as geographic. Australians made enormous contributions to support their fighting men abroad, and fundraising for French organisations constituted just one element among the many. During 1916 Crivelli travelled to rural areas of Victoria, making speeches to women's groups and accepting further donations.[102] A sense of solidarity between women is evident in correspondence between the Australian Red Cross and the FRC Vic, as the cooperation and coordination strengthened and developed over the course of the war. On 15 March 1917 Frederica Godfrey, secretary of the FRC Vic, wrote to Philadelphia Robertson, secretary of the Australian Red Cross, thanking her sincerely for 'a most handsome contribution of 10,000 pairs of socks, 1,000 pairs of underpants, and 2,000 handkerchiefs for distribution as the French Red Cross Society thinks fit.'[103] A friendly rivalry was occasionally evident between the two organisations, but springing from good motivations. The Australian Red Cross was envious of the FRC Vic's special deal with the French Shipping company *Messageries Maritimes* for free shipment of goods to France. Australian Red Cross secretary Robertson was not able to obtain a similar deal – it was only for the French.

The actions of Melbourne's French-Australians and francophiles, who mobilised their resources and networks for the benefits of French war charities, were an important French-Australian element of the home front response. In Melbourne, the first efforts to

[101] *Punch*, 17 Aug 1916, 32.
[102] *Wangaratta Chronicle*, 20 May 1916, 1.
[103] Godfrey to Robertson, 17 Mar 1917, MAE 428PO/1/64

help French war charities were instigated in 1914 by Vice-Consul Homery, however during 1915 the establishment of officially approved local branches of major French war charities meant that fundraising was undertaken by local French-Australians and those in their networks, who were frequently privileged and well-connected. The help provided by Australians to French soldiers through the CRF and its local branch the FRC Vic, and to French mothers and children, through the *Assistance Maternelle* and the ANOG was made possible by transnational connections between France and Australia, such as that between Charlotte Crivelli and Suzanne Caubet. To maximise the success of their fundraising, the Australian representatives of these organisations drew on well-known French cultural images for nationalistic and patriotic purposes. In this their activities were in-step with cultural practices and propaganda aims in all the belligerent nations – valorising their own and their allies' traits to engender support for the war. Their activities reveal the nature and extent of connections with France, and ideas about France in the Australian community. Whether as a cultural ideal, personified in a letter writer, or via a French themed fundraising occasion, these transnational connections, both real and imagined, played a role in strengthening support for the war. After the death of Jules Homery, and the interim period which followed, the arrival of the replacement Vice-Consul Henri Fliche in early 1917 coincided with the beginning of a turbulent and transformative period both for the war, and for Australian society. The next chapter will examine how the French fundraising associations in Australia developed and adapted during the latter half of the war, in a period which witnessed division and challenges in Australian society.

Chapter 5. Fundraising for the French in Melbourne 1916-1918

Throughout Australia, as French and francophone residents mobilised, they remained aware of the importance of image creation in fundraising work. The years 1916 to 1917 were a period of division and transformation in Australian society, marked by growing disillusionment, war weariness and emotional exhaustion. The social, political and sectarian divisions which had long been present bubbled over and religious affiliations were blurred with political views against the background of the conscription campaign.[1] During this period, French fundraising organisations continued to support French victims of the conflict, and continued to contribute to the public discourse underpinning support for the war. Chapter Four outlined how the French fundraising organisations were established and thrived thanks to the existence and extent of transnational networks, and the mobilisation of positive images of French identity and culture. The events presented in this next chapter illustrate a heightened awareness of the importance of public image creation on the part of those representing France in Australia. Hard work and unity of purpose were vital to their growing success in providing support for France and French causes among the public. However, private conflicts did arise between some of those involved, and tensions affecting society as a whole also affected committee members of the FRC Vic.

One such conflict occurred between Vice-Consul Homery and Charlotte Crivelli, as to the most appropriate way to carry out fundraising in the name of France, demonstrating the conscious and deliberate manner in which the image of France was utilised. A further episode reveals how wider religious tensions also affected the committee of the FRC Vic, as they discussed the implications of their public image when organising a religious commemorative event in Melbourne's St. Patrick's Catholic Cathedral. I use this event to consider the intersection between concepts of French identity and religion in light of the public discourse regarding Catholicism, which occurred in the context of the conscription debate. Finally, 1917 was also a transformative year for Melbourne's French community: after the sudden death of Homery in late 1916, Henri Fliche arrived in early 1917 to become the new representative of the French Republic in Melbourne. The French week celebrations of 1917 were an opportunity for cooperation and collaboration between the

[1] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*; Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*; McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*.

Melbourne French associations. The French consular archives provide a new perspective on this episode of French-Australian relations on the Australian home front, revealing how France's interests were presented and understood, and shed light on the role of the French fundraising organisations in influencing public sentiment.

I. Public and Private images

i. The importance of being recognised.

On 25 March 1916 Homery sent a cheque for 5,500 francs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, for the benefit of victims of the war. He explained that this sum would take the total to 92,000 francs raised by his French Relief Fund since the start of the war, but this would be the last payment. 'Not that sympathy for France has in any way diminished among the people of Melbourne', he went on, 'but since the establishment of a branch of the French Red Cross, donations are flowing exclusively to this very well-set-up organisation, with its powerful capabilities, thanks to the influential and energetic personalities who run it.'[2] Homery detailed the ever-growing amounts of money which the FRC Vic had raised, as well as the constant flow of goods to its vast warehouse in the city centre, where on most days more than fifty women, Australian and French, sorted and packed bandages and clothing for ill and wounded French soldiers. In this same letter, Homery was full of praise for the work of David Norman Trenery and Charlotte Crivelli. However, tensions could occur when so many strong-willed individuals were engaged in the enormous task of fundraising, and so much was at stake. There was not always a uniformity of opinion. A few months later, power struggles and what the Vice-Consul referred to as the 'incident provoked by Madame Crivelli' – arose as a result of protocol.[3] The Melbourne group had displayed confidence and practicality in declaring themselves as a committee of the Croix Rouge Française first, and asking permission later. Their confidence contrasts with Homery's diplomatic insistence on good form, and the Marquis de Vogüé's patrician style. The Marquis had both his head and his heart in the right place, and appreciated the Australians' assistance. During August of 1916, in the wake of the huge success of French week, it came to light that egos had been miffed. There seems to have been differing concepts of who was officially in charge of the FRC Vic. In May 1916 Charlotte Crivelli had sent a letter directly to Vogüé, which she had 'forgotten to

[2] Homery to MAE, 25 Mar 1916, MAE 428PO/1/48. *
[3] MAE 428PO/1/48 *

sign'. She lamented lack of communication and recognition from him, intimating that Trenery was receiving the credit, and naming other committee members who had worked just as hard. Her comment is perplexing, as Paris *had* expressed its gratitude. However, it seems the gratitude was not addressed to her, and correspondence had been sent to Trenery without being shown to her. A flurry of letters was needed to smooth ruffled feathers – Homery for his part was dismayed by her tactic. But it was also the question of who received the funds, and under which label they were sent which added complexity. Crivelli asked if the Central Committee could 'please turn a blind eye' as a shipment of goods was sent for the benefit of French sailors, a cause which was outside the FRC Vic's sphere.[4] For Homery, representing France's image and interests was not always easy, and his efforts to control or influence who spoke on behalf of France were not always successful.

Throughout 1915 and 1916 substantial amounts of money and goods were sent to the CRF in Paris. Numerous letters from the Marquis de Vogüé indicate both the extent of the items sent, and the sincere gratitude felt by the French. Vogüé's letter of 10 June 1915 acknowledged receipt of a cheque for £1,000 and a cable of the same date read:

> 'The noble city of Melbourne is as generous towards the wounded as her sons are brave in combat. The grateful Croix Rouge Française salutes her.'[5]

The September 1916 letter to French Prime Minister Briand, and signed by 'the French Colony of Melbourne, and friends of France' included well-known names: committee members of the AF Albertine Gay, Louise Dyer, Lamandé; successful businessmen Artaud, Weigall, Joubert; and some who listed their address as the Wool Exchange.[6] The letter requested the government to recognise the work of Trenery and award him the *Légion d'Honneur*. They pointed out 'the outstanding services provided by Mr. Norman Trenery, since the beginning of the war, as Treasurer of the French Red Cross committee of Melbourne.' The CRF Vic had raised more than two million francs in less than two years, and Trenery was responsible for organising the French Day of 14 July 1915, which raised 145,000 francs.

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[4] Charlotte Crivelli to de Vogüé 19 May 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48 *
[5] Vogüé to Trenery, 19 Jul 1915 MAE 428PO/1/48. *
[6] MAE 428PO/1/44.

Interestingly, however, there is no Crivelli signature on this, an omission which may indicate tensions. Rather mysterious is a note written across the letter which says: 'Duplicate: M. Homery did not wish to undertake to send this request. Mr. Chayet also declared that the Vice-Consulate should not send it. In these conditions the document was put into a stamped envelope addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris.'[7] Moreover, the letter's original date – September 1916 – was crossed out and overwritten by December 1916. Perhaps the French Colony and the Friends of France who signed the letter were overstepping the bounds of diplomatic protocol by contacting the ministry directly. The petition is also curious as Homery had already written to the Ministry in July 1915, earnestly recommending that Trenery be awarded the *Légion d'Honneur*.[8] However, the Ministry had replied in the negative, despite acknowledging Trenery's valuable contribution. The reason given was that the French government had suspended the bestowal of the *Croix de la Legion d'Honneur* for the duration of the war.[9] However, the minister did suggest granting to Trenery the *Médaille de la reconnaissance française* (Medal of French Gratitude), an award created during the war to specifically reward the contributions of foreigners to France, and given in Gold, Silver and Bronze categories.[10] Trenery's work was indeed recognised in 1919 when he was awarded the gold *Médaille de la reconnaissance Française*, while Charlotte was awarded the silver medal.[11] Mrs. Julia Trenery was also awarded the silver *Médaille de la reconnaissance*.

Recognition was also important to Vice-Consul Homery, who endured privately his growing frustration at being eclipsed by Charlotte Crivelli as the main fundraiser for France. In his letter of 1 August 1916, he thanked the minister for his acknowledgment of the funds sent, and especially for letting him know how these were distributed.[12] Up till now he had no idea, he wrote, which put him in an awkward position – other people had helped him out and he couldn't tell them this information. In a rather whining tone, he also appreciated finally getting some praise, as he and Madame Homery had devoted all their time to fundraising, organising, and setting up social events and activities to raise the funds. Homery assured the minister that he would, in due course, inform him of the

[7] MAE 428 PO/1/48.*'
[8] Homery to MAE, 16 Jul 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48.
[9] However, they could make exceptions- Holman was granted the Légion d'Honneur in Aug 1916.
[10] MAE to Homery, 4 Nov 1915,
[11] *Argus*, 7 Mar 1919, 6.
[12] Homery to Cambon, 1 Aug 1916, MAE 428PO/1/49

main contributors to this success, but reminded him that he had already mentioned Norman Trenery and Charlotte Crivelli, and recommended them for awards, Despite his personal feelings toward Crivelli, he had to admire her contribution. It is true that Homery and his wife had worked hard to raise money for France's war victims since the beginning, but Homery's role as Vice-Consul was surely a fulltime job which kept him busy, and it had been impossible to foresee how big the task of wartime fundraising would become.

ii. The importance of positive marketing

Homery was vigilant in his desire to present France in the best light. This need was reinforced when early in the war, he received notification from the British Government in London, via his superiors in Paris, that some dishonest individuals had set up a bogus fundraising organisation, claiming to be collecting money for France, but then pocketing the proceeds. He was warned to be on his toes and watch out for imposters. Hence, we should not be entirely surprised when he reacted warily to the arrival of Madame Margherita Valdi-Mellor, in 1916, who came to town in a flourish of speeches, performances, and fundraising activities, which perhaps eclipsed the fact that she was also visiting her parents in Geelong. Soon after arriving, she wrote to the press making impassioned and emotional pleas about the plight of orphans in France and offered to collect money for them. The editor of the *Geelong Advertiser* agreed to collect funds on her behalf, and to acknowledge the donations in its pages. In fact, the patriotic concert, held in Geelong on 27 June 1916 was a big success. Along with Napoleon Boffard, Madame Valdi-Mellor herself was a major draw at the French week concert of 1916.[13] Homery was nonetheless suspicious. Madame Valdi-Mellor claimed to come from Nice, and so he wrote to the Minister in Paris, asking him to investigate.[14] Who was this supposedly famous opera singer, was she really who she purported to be? 'She has left our shores with lots of money…' he wrote. After making his own enquiries, the Minster replied, assuring Homery that it was all above board. In fact, Valdi-Mellor had spent several years in Europe perfecting her craft, and reportedly had studied singing with Melba. Her French home was in Cannes, and upon her return she visited three orphanages near Nice which were run by the ANOG, taking parcels of clothing and funds which had been raised in Australia.[15] Valdi-Mellor's image of cultural elitism fitted in well with the

[13] 'Geelong's Gifts to The French Orphans', *Geelong Advertiser*, 1 Nov 1916, 4.
[14] MAE to Préfet 15 Sep 1916, Préfet to Minister 12 Oct 1916, MAE 428PO/1/45.
[15] *Geelong Advertiser*, 18 Nov 1916, 8.

marketing of herself as a success in Europe. And to her credit she used this in the service of the fundraising for France. However perhaps Homery should have read the social pages to find out her real identity.

> Madame Valdi-Mellor – before she was married in Europe she was Miss James, of Geelong – is to sing at the concert in aid of the French week appeal, to be held in the Town Hall on Monday night. Her appearance is eagerly anticipated. Many people are interested to see what she has learned while she has been in Europe. [16]

During 1916 a profusion of events was held in aid of the FRC Vic, the *Assistance Maternelle* and the ANOG. Newspapers published constant updates on the events held, who was in attendance, and occasionally what the ladies wore. Concealed rivalry existed during this time between the Vice-Consul and Charlotte Crivelli. In October 1915, Pierre Finaly the director of the ANOG had made a direct representation to the Vice-Consul asking for funds, and while Homery was able to provide them with some generous sums, he couldn't help noting in his response: 'I will do what I can within my humble means, although I am not confident of success. The generous inhabitants of this country for the most part give all their donations to our Croix Rouge and to the Assistance Maternelle.'[17] While Homery had been irked in 1915 about *who* was in charge of raising funds, correspondence in August 1916 reveals a difference of opinion about *how* to raise funds – specifically how France's image should be used.

In 1916 both Valdi-Mellor and Crivelli were fundraising for babies and orphans in France, with funds going to both the ANOG and the *Assistance Maternelle*. But Homery was not happy with the way Crivelli's emotional pleas for funds were affecting the image of France. Headlines such as 'Help the Helpless French' can't have helped.[18] In her August speech to the AWNL (Chapter Four) Charlotte had spoken of 'distracted mothers throwing their babies on to departing trains, giving them to the care of strangers, to save them from the barbarians as they overran northern France'[19]. When Crivelli asked Homery for his patronage for a planned fete at State Government House to aid the *Assistance Maternelle*, he wrote a sharply worded response, chiding her on the tone of

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[16] *Graphic of Australia*, 7 Jul 1916, 13.
[17] Homery to Finaly, 3 May 1916 MAE 428PO/1/48 *
[18] *Bendigo Independent*, 10 Jun 1916, 9.
[19] *Punch*, 17 Aug 1916, 32.

her appeals. He pointed out that Australia had already demonstrated enough generosity towards France, and had donated close to one and a half million francs for French soldiers. While France was grateful for sympathy and gifts, he went on, France did not hold out her hand for charity. 'France is not yet reduced to misery and begging' he argued.[20] He therefore refused to offer his patronage to the fete (The event was held in November, after his death).

But I suspect that it was only Homery who doubted Crivelli's methods. With a home-ground advantage, she knew her public and correctly judged that the generosity of Australians had not run out. The picture which Crivelli portrayed echoed that emanating from France. Artists such as Steinlen, Poulbot and others, had already created a myriad of images of orphans in their drawings and posters, representing the bitter reality and misery of their plight.[21] However, Homery did write about Charlotte Crivelli to his superiors that same month with a letter marked 'Strictly Private and Confidential'. He detailed that she had raised over five thousand pounds over the last year or so, but that he had expected her efforts would be limited to a discrete appeal. He complained that the French Week campaign was barely over when she had launched the next appeal, that she flooded the local press with harrowing reports of misery. The city was full of collection boxes and posters asking for money, and a Frenchman could not move without being questioned on the plight of the French babies. She did her country a disservice, he argued, representing France in the worst possible light, by exaggerating and even lying about how bad things were.[22] Crivelli's letter to the editor which appeared in the press that very day was perhaps the one which had provoked him. In it, she acknowledged funds received, and included an extract of a thank you letter from Paris:

> 'What we see is heartbreaking. Yesterday at the Baudeloque Hospital, Professor Pinard was horrified at the sight of a mother whose child had died from the sufferings it had gone through in the invaded provinces, and this unfortunate woman herself a victim of the German horrors, had just given birth to a child when her husband arrived from the front. […] Another poor woman all shaken by sobs, came in with two beautiful

[20] Homery to Charlotte Crivelli 16 Aug 1916, MAE 428PO/1/48. *
[21] Faron, *Les Enfants Du Deuil - Orphelins et Pupilles de La Nation de La Première Guerre Mondiale (1914-1941)*, 41–42.
[22] Homery to MAE, 23 Aug 1916, MAE 428PO/1/49.

> little boys, her husband had been killed, and she had just been told that soon she would be once more the mother of twins This poor woman did not know where to look for help.[23]

Homery's privately expressed resentment is in stark contrast to the letter he had published the previous year, in which he reassured the public that his and Crivelli's fundraising efforts were not in competition.[24] Homery was feeling the pressure of presenting the image of France to Australians. The thought of his country not being able to feed its own children and babies was shameful to him and added to his stress levels. Soon afterwards it really did become too much.

iii. Death of Homery and interim period

The Vice-Consul's sudden death, of a heart attack, on 16 October 1916 was a shock to all.[25] He was 46 years old, leaving his widow and stepdaughter. Popular and well liked, he was publicly perceived as a hard worker, having frequently represented his country at functions and patriotic gatherings. Many public buildings flew flags in tribute. The *Melbourne Leader* wrote that he would 'leave behind him an impression of quiet dignity and sterling merit.'[26] Sir David and Lady Hennessy expressed their deep regret. The close circle of associates working for the French cause were most likely unaware of Homery's dissatisfaction with his position in Melbourne. He felt the level of work and commitment that his position required warranted a more senior level in the diplomatic corps' pay scale. He also felt keenly slighted that, when standing beside the *Consuls Généraux* of other allied nations at important events, his title was merely Vice-Consul and therefore he was outranked. Instead, he claimed, his standing should have mirrored the importance of his country.[27] Following Homery's sudden death, Edouard Lauwers, the Consul-General of Belgium, took over as interim French consul until the arrival of Henri Fliche in April of 1917. Lauwers attended cultural and fundraising events, and spoke on behalf of the French Republic, making announcements for the next call up of young Frenchmen for military service. He made a speech in French at a soirée at the AF, in which he argued for the increased study of French by Australians.[28] Continuing the dual role, he also reassured

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[23] `French Mothers and Infants' *Argus*, 23 Aug 1916, 10.
[24] *Argus*, 20 May 1915
[25] 'Death of French Consul', *Argus*, 18 Oct 1916, 8.
[26] 'Death of French Vice-Consul', *Leader*, 21 Oct 1916, 37.
[27] Consular personnel files: MAE 394QO/781, Homery.
[28] *Punch* ,7 Dec 1916, 39; 'Study of French', *North West Post*, 28 Nov 1916, 2.

Australians that funds destined for Belgians would safely reach them, and not fall into the hands of the Germans.[29] The most significant French cultural event of his interim period was the event held in March 1917 to honour the French soldiers' defence of Verdun.

II. 1917

i. Religion and French identity: 'A touching discourse in the cathedral' for the heroes of Verdun

In March 1917, the FRC Vic committee organised a service of thanksgiving to be held in St. Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, Melbourne. The event was to honour the heroes of Verdun and express the gratitude of Melbourne's and indeed Australia's citizens, to the French soldiers who had taken part in this long and murderous chapter of the war. The battle of Verdun, supremely iconic in French national consciousness, had begun when the Germans made a surprise attack on 21 February 1916. In fact, it was not one battle, but a series of sieges and battles which took place over ten months, from February to December 1916 at the forts and strategic positions which surrounded the town of Verdun. A year previously, in March 1916, Melburnians had held a secular homage to the French defence of Verdun, but the decision to hold the 1917 commemoration in Melbourne's Catholic cathedral generated private conflict among the FRC Vic committee. This section considers how ideas about French identity, religion and conscription converged both in the planning of the event, and the event itself. The cathedral event sheds light on the FRC Vic committee's position as an intermediary between France and Australia. It demonstrates that the committee members paid careful attention to their organisation's public image, and that they were aware of the potentially divisive place of religion in Melbourne in 1917.

The two conscription referenda held either side of the event were the catalyst which exacerbated pre-existing sectarian tensions which 'had arrived in the luggage of Australia's British and Irish immigrants'.[30] The first referendum was held in October 1916 and the second in December 1917. The defeat of the bill in 1916 had led to the dissolution of the Hughes government and a general election which was held in May 1917. One of the perceived fracture lines was between religions: broadly speaking, within

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[29] *Herald*, 14 Dec 1916, 3.
[30] Peter Stanley, 'Suffering, Grief, Sectarianism and War Weariness', in *The War at Home* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2015), 207.

the realm of this debate Catholics were considered anti-conscription and therefore anti-Empire by the 'yes' campaigners. This was particularly the case in Melbourne, as coadjutor Daniel Mannix, who had been appointed to succeed Archbishop Carr, became progressively more outspoken in his opposition to conscription. In Australia, previous pro and anti-Catholic rhetoric had mostly centred around the Catholic church's attempts to obtain government funding for Catholic schools. Conflicts following the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising had also trickled through to Australia. The conscription debate took the divide to another level, as it became framed in the context of support for the war and patriotism. In a speech in Melbourne in January 1917, the soon-to-be-appointed Melbourne Archbishop Daniel Mannix referred to the war as a 'sordid trade war'.[31] NSW Premier Holman immediately responded, declaring his full support for the war, and challenging Mannix to provide evidence for such an assessment.[32] Prime Minister Hughes also vigorously condemned Mannix's speech.[33] Across the divide, the Socialists approved of Mannix's efforts to 'ventilate aspects of the war vitally affecting the common people'.[34]

The event in the cathedral which is the focus of this section contrasts with two other events held to commemorate the Battle of Verdun. On 6 March 1916, with the newspapers still reporting on the struggle for Douamont, several hundred citizens of Melbourne gathered at a public meeting in the town hall to express their appreciation of France's gallantry, and hear of her appalling sacrifices. The Melbourne meeting had been convened by the Lord Mayor, and suggested by businessman and member of parliament Edmond Jowett.[35] Emotive speeches were addressed to the crowd gathered 'to show its appreciation of the gallantry and indomitable pluck of our French ally – la belle France.'[36] Those present were reminded that France in her struggle against Germany was protecting Britain and by extension Australia. 'No people owed more to the French than the Australians', declared Senator Pearce, the acting Prime Minister.[37] The feelings of admiration and respect for France 'had been growing in our hearts for many months'.[38]

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[31] 'Cause of the War', *Bendigo Independent*, 30 Jan 1917, 2
[32] 'A Trade War', *Argus*, 30 Jan 1917, 5.
[33] 'Not a Trade War', *Ararat Advertiser*, 1 Feb 1917, 2.
[34] 'Archbishop Mannix', *Argus*, 1 Feb1917, 9.
[35] *Argus*, 2 Mar 1916, 7. *Age*, 3 Mar 1916, 7.
[36] Heroic France, *Age*, 7 Mar 1916, 7.
[37] 'France's Fiery Trial', *Argus*, 7 Mar 1916, 7.
[38] Age, 7 Mar 1916, 7.

The Melbourne meeting was exclusively a civil affair. By contrast, in Sydney later that year the French community held a requiem mass to pray for members of their own community who had been killed at Verdun. Among those who gathered at the French Church for the commemorative mass on 14 July 1916 were wool buyers who had been educated by the French Marist Brothers congregation, and it was Marist priest Father Piquet, chaplain to the French community, who presided. This solemn event was indicative of the strong Catholic identity of the French community, at a time when ninety percent of French people still identified as Catholic. In France, despite the law separating Church and State which the French Republic passed in 1905, Catholics saw nothing to prevent them from blending republican patriotism with their faith, nor did Protestants or Jews, under the *union sacrée*, 'a synthesis of religious and patriotic sentiments' which continued throughout the war.[39] When the Sydney French gathered to pray with their French priest, French identity was linked with faith and patriotism, and carried no negative associations. These two different public events show the range of the links between religion and patriotism in Australia against which we can place the 1917 St. Patrick's Cathedral event.

Pro and anti-conscription stances were based on an extensive and complex range of divisions, as well as religion. Where Irish Catholics are concerned, it was their over representation in the working class which made this dichotomy just as much class based as religion based.[40] The perceived link between sectarianism and the Conscription debate was less apparent in New South Wales than in Victoria: Sydney Archbishop Michael Kelly had been clearly pro-war in 1914. In Sydney, wool buyers and other successful businessmen formed a core of French Catholic establishment. In Melbourne too, there was a small proportion of Catholics who were wealthy and privileged. However, despite the presence of Catholic elites in the FRC Vic committee, and the many Catholics actively mobilised for the war effort, a certain 'taint' associated with Irish Catholicism remained. The association of some Irish Catholic nationalists with Germans during the 1916 Easter Rising had strengthened impressions of this supposed taint of disloyalty, even though many Irish people supported Britain. Governor General Munro Ferguson was firmly anti-

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[39] Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Understanding the Great War*, 117.
[40] Jeff Kildea, 'The Easter Rising and Irish Catholic Attitudes to the Conscription Debates in Australia, 1916-1917', *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 37, no. 2 (2016): 161–80; Robin Archer et al., eds., *The Conscription Conflict and the Great War* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2016).

Catholic and believed that Irish Catholics were inherently disloyal.[41] Hence, this 'one degree of separation' between Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson's close support of Charlotte Crivelli and the FRC Vic, and the Governor General's political views, required tact.

In France as Annette Becker argued, religion had a unifying effect, becoming a crucial method of coping with grief and fear by both the combatants and for their families left behind.[42] Becker described the unifying and ecumenical nature of the *Union Sacrée* as previously warring factions of society, political and religious, temporarily – and it was temporary – put their differences aside in order to combat the external enemy. Ties of religion, between French Catholics and German Catholics, and French Protestant and German Protestants were subsumed under the superior imperative of national identity. In his foreword to Becker's *War and Faith*, Ken Inglis discussed the dichotomy of Catholic France and Protestant Britain, resolved by 'the efforts of forgetting and remembering necessary to preserve the Entente Cordiale'.[43] But as Inglis explained, in England a complicated repositioning of the relationship between state and Religion was necessary. At the national level, the longstanding ties between Protestantism as the established religion and the nation state presupposed unity, despite the persistence of denominational divisions. For Britain the challenge was to disassociate English Protestantism from German Protestantism. Robert Tombs argued that religion was historically a paradigm in which the British and French framed contradictory images of morality in their perceptions of each other. Paradoxically the British considered the French either excessively in thrall to a hierarchical religion, or too libertarian (if they were not religious), whereas British Protestantism equated with 'freedom and individualism'.[44]

Similarly, the event in Melbourne, although just one case, demonstrated the necessity for national identity and religious identity to be reconciled. In Melbourne in 1917, questions of loyalty were added to the mix by the public declarations of Mannix. In some sections of Australian society, as Murray Goot's analysis demonstrated, support for the war and for conscription varied along class lines. Such support was stronger among wealthy and

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[41] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia* (Sydney: NSW University Press, 1985); Peter Bastian, 'Vice-Regal Intervention in Australian Domestic Politics: Ronald Munro-Ferguson and the ALP Split of 1916', *Labour History*, no. 114 (May 2018).
[42] Annette Becker, *War and Faith, The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998).
[43] Becker, xii.
[44] Tombs and Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy*, 448.

professional Catholics, with working class Catholics more likely to subscribe to the idea that the war was a war for capitalism, even though the proportion of Catholics as a percentage of the AIF largely corresponded to their proportion of the population. Britain's heavy handed and repressive response to the Easter Uprising exacerbated these divisions.[45] Peter Bastian also argued that Governor General Munro Ferguson played an active, partisan, and behind-the-scenes role in supporting the conscription policy of Billy Hughes. Munro Ferguson intervened to support moves against perceived Irish Catholic interests and had close ties to the Counter Espionage Bureau which was established by the Australian Government in January 1916 to monitor and counteract the operations of 'disloyal' groups.[46] However, the elite Catholic protagonists behind this event were a step removed from the archetypal Irish Catholic working-class Labor-voting 'type' which is identified with the anti-conscription movement in 1916 and 1917. Nonetheless, the CRF Vic committee members were sensitive to the potential for this religious dichotomy to interfere with their message and purpose. Despite the prevailing stereotypes, not all Catholics were working class Irish: the Crivellis' circle of friends included elite Catholics, such Pierre d'Orgeval, and High Court Judge Gavan Duffy and his wife Margot. The d'Orgevals had been married in St. Patrick's Cathedral, and one of the bridesmaids was Margot Gavan Duffy. In a sort of transposed-to-Australia 'union sacrée' religious divisions were temporarily cast aside for the March 1917 event held in Melbourne's St Patrick's Cathedral, but it had been a challenge. The focus of the event was firmly on Australia's connections to France, rather than Australia's place as a British dominion, and points to the desire for a stronger relationship between the two countries which would be formally expressed when the French Economic Mission came to Australia in 1918, as we will see in Chapter Eight.

During 1916 as the battles of the Western Front raged, Australians were reminded of concrete, physical links to the fighting at Verdun, as poilus who had left from Australia to join the colours sent back personal accounts, such as the poignant letter from Louis Crivelli (Chapter One), published in December 1916, in which he described meeting his

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[45] Murray Goot, 'The Results of the 1916 and 1917 Conscription Referendums Re-Examined', in *The Conscription Conflict and the Great War*, ed. Robin Archer et al. (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2016); Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 233–34.
[46] Bastian, 'Vice-Regal Intervention in Australian Domestic Politics: Ronald Munro-Ferguson and the ALP Split of 1916'.

brother René at the front and their experience of the taking of Douamont.[47] Charlotte Crivelli's privileged position allowed her to express her personal connection in a public commemoration, and thus make it a vehicle for a more generalised homage to France.

The resumé of the event's planning reveals differences of opinion regarding the implications of connecting pro-French patriotism and religion. Frederica Godfrey, secretary of FRC Vic, summarised the committee's position in the lead up to the event, and the perceived potential controversy arising from the FRC Vic holding their event at St. Patrick's cathedral.[48] In advance of their meeting on 26 February 1917, the committee had discussed a suitable way 'to commemorate the valiant French defence of Verdun last year'. Two propositions were made; one to hold a town hall meeting with speeches, and the other to hold a mass of thanksgiving in St. Patrick's Cathedral, to be organised by the FRC Vic. Although some members of the committee 'felt it would lead to difficulties', Godfrey explained that Madame Crivelli had already met with Archbishop Carr, and arrangements had been made, implying that she had made the proposition unilaterally. Several members of the committee protested that it was 'injudicious and likely to be prejudicial to the interests of the French Red Cross to associate ourselves with any religious body'. However, 'matters having gone so far' it was too late to cancel, so the committee requested that the name of the FRC Vic not be included on the official invitations. Trenery and Woolf were the two most vocal opponents, but all present 'felt strongly the undesirability of any identification of their committee with any religious denomination' Crivelli countered that she would be willing to form a small separate committee of her own to help organise the event, but she was not successful. Even (interim consul) Lauwers although sympathetic, refused to get involved. The FRC Vic committee discussed the options, wondering: 'Should the whole scheme be abandoned, with apologies to the Archbishop, in view of the extreme delicacy of the present situation, both political and otherwise?' However, the service had already been announced. Therefore, they wondered, should they entrust the scheme to Madame Crivelli, 'whose standing as Vice-President Victoria, and sole organiser of the *Assistance Maternelle et Infantile* in Australia, is beyond question'. As an individual, they suggested, her FRC position would be only one of her patriotic activities, and perhaps Crivelli might even arrange for the service to be held under the banner of the *Assistance Maternelle*, instead

[47] 'Taking Douaumont', *Weekly Times*, 23 Dec 1916, 34.
[48] Godfrey to the FRC Victoria Committee (undated), MAE 428PO/1/48.

of the FRC. These strong feelings are indicative of the religious differences, normally suppressed, between the committee members, which had been brought to the surface by external social influences.

The intercessory service was held on Sunday18 March and did indeed bear the badge of the FRC. 'As a tribute to the memory of the French soldiers who lost their lives in the defence of Verdun, the executive committee of the French Red Cross organisation has arranged for an intercessory service to be held in St. Patrick's Cathedral' ran the official announcement.[49] However, the committee had found a solution by extending the commemoration to many other churches. Across Melbourne both Protestant and Catholic churches had agreed to make a special mention of the defence of Verdun by the French army in their Sunday services.[50] This change meant that the event was no longer an exclusively Catholic homage to the French, thus assuring its acceptability. Mention would be made at St. Paul's Church of England Cathedral, as well as at St. Patrick's. However, the presence of the Governor General and Lady Helen Munro Ferguson at the Catholic event was significant given the social and political environment. Their attendance was of course the polite thing to do, and demonstrated a willingness to foster public perceptions of a unified front, despite their personal feelings, as well as the persuasive strength of Crivelli and the value of the FRC Vic's work.

In St. Patrick's Cathedral on that day, the Reverend J. Hearn, a chaplain who had just returned from the trenches in France, gave a 'touching discourse' for French and Australian soldiers. The church was crowded, and attendees included the Munro Fergusons, Lauwers the acting French consul, and numerous diplomats, members of the government and senior military men. Hearn spoke of the devoted and intrepid French and Australian soldiers 'whose dust lies comingled on the shores of Gallipoli and the battlefields of France'. One race was 'ancient and renowned' the other 'virile and young'. The décor of the cathedral was 'emblematic of the French'. 'The catafalque was covered with the French flag. At the foot of the catafalque was placed a French soldier's accoutrements, with a wreath of laurel and oak leaves […] also the Croix of the Legion of Honour.'[51] The thanksgiving service in the cathedral constituted a space of overlap where Catholicism and patriotism co-existed and flourished for the benefit of a higher

[49] 'Heroes of Verdun', *Argus*, 17 Mar 1917, 18.
[50] *Age*, 13 Mar 1917, 8.
[51] *Advocate*, 22 Mar 1917, 4.

cause: supporting the war and France. The service emphasised ties between Australia and France, and expectation that the common sacrifice would lead to a stronger relationship. It was into this environment that the new Vice-Consul for France, Henri Fliche, arrived.

ii. Arrival of new French Vice-Consul Fliche in Melbourne

As French Vice-Consul in Melbourne from April 1917 until 1919, Henri Fliche would prove to be popular in his role – unsurprising given the pervading atmosphere of francophilia. The AF committee organised an official welcome, including flowers for Madame Fliche.[52] The press noted his arrival, and a detailed resumé of his life was given by *Punch*. Several columns outlined his previous positions in Batavia, Guatemala and China, and his family background – including an intriguing story claiming that Fliche's choice of a diplomatic career had prevented him taking up the hereditary family post of Guard of the Forest of Compiegne.[53] Born in Montpellier in 1877, Fliche had a degree in Asian languages specialising in Chinese, although it seems he did not keep up his Chinese.[54] By the time he updated his personnel file in 1919, English was the only foreign language that he listed. A significant comment in his 1919 file can be found in the report by the incumbent Consul-General Campana who was by then Fliche's superior in Sydney. Campana wrote that Fliche had carried out his duties very diligently, but most importantly, that he had succeeded in creating an excellent personal relationship with the Governor General, which at times had been very useful for France. Munro Ferguson, upon learning of Fliche's departure, was full of praise for him, and expressed his regret at seeing him leave Australia.[55]

Of course, all this was in the future when Fliche arrived into the Australia of 1917 – a more fractured and traumatised society than that of 1914. In this 'worst year of the war' the initial wide-eyed enthusiasm had been replaced with determination and disillusion. Unlike his predecessor, who had unsuccessfully attempted to reform the Melbourne AF, Fliche did not start out with an agenda. He did not demonstrate the same desire to come in and change things, realising that the Melbournians had already established a well-functioning rhythm and pattern in their support for France. Nevertheless, he needed his diplomatic skills when commenting on France's attitudes to conscription, and when

[52] AF Minute book 4, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.
[53] *Punch*, 9 Aug 1917, 6.
[54] Consular personnel files, MAE 394QO-613 Fliche.
[55] Ibid.

maintaining the momentum of positive public opinion towards France and the war. An additional challenge for him was the delicate health of Madame Fliche, which must have taken up his time and energy. Madame Fliche died in November 1917, just months after their arrival. However, her health issues had not stopped her from fully participating in the successful events for the French national day in July.

iii. 1917 French National Day

The 14 July 1917 witnessed the traditional celebrations, by now firmly entrenched on the Australian calendar. All around the country the day was marked with patriotic displays. The French national day provides further examples of the appropriation of popular French national symbols such as Joan of Arc, as well as Napoleon, French peasants and French villages: recurring cultural motifs that were familiar to a wide public. In Melbourne the day was organised under the banner 'French National Day Appeal'. The President of the Appeal was the Lady Mayoress, and the Committee composed of the executive committees of the AF and the FRC Vic. The invitation to Fliche, was signed by both organisers – René Vanderkelen, and David Norman Trenery. Its letterhead read: 'French National Day Appeal' with sub-headings 'Les Orphelins de la Guerre – The French Red Cross Society – La Société Maternelle' indicating the three main beneficiaries of the funds raised. The day was divided into ceremonial, fundraising and cultural events: the morning ceremony, at the statue of Joan of Arc in the centre of the city; a Gift Afternoon at the Town Hall; and in the evening, a play '*Le Voyage de M. Perrichon*', a comedy which had proved popular when put on by the AF in pre-war times.[56] Victorian Premier Alexander Peacock gave a speech at the morning ceremony, and in the afternoon Prime Minister Hughes spoke and Madame Melba performed.

The AF and the FRC Vic had cooperated and jointly arranged the events. At its meeting in May the AF committee had discussed the idea of uniting with the FRC Vic to make the 14th July as successful as possible. The two organisations had agreed on a deal. Norman Trenery was present at the meeting, both as a member of the AF, and representing the FRC Vic. It was agreed that the FRC Vic would support the AF in putting on the play, and in return the AF would support the FRC Vic in its staging of the gift afternoon. The FRC Vic would appoint two delegates to the AF's 14 July soirée sub-committee, and the entire proceeds of this evening would go to the French orphans. In return the entire

[56] Vanderkelen and Trenery to Fliche, 12 Jun 1917, MAE 428PO/1/47.

proceeds of the Gift Afternoon would go to the FRC Vic. Trenery proposed that he represent the FRC Vic and René Vanderkelen the AF. [57] This meeting in 1917 demonstrated each organisation's acknowledgement of the risk of being in competition unless they consciously decided to coordinate their efforts. The program's plain cover indicates this unity of purpose. Its tone is simple rather than flourishing or self-congratulatory, resembling a mourning card with its black border. A small tricolour was placed in the corner, and the single legend: French National Day.

Figure 8 Melbourne's Joan of Arc Statue.[58]

The first event of the day was the ceremony held at the statue of Joan of Arc (figure 8) outside the Gallery and Public Library (now the site of the State Library of Victoria). The statue by Emmanuel Frémiet had been purchased in 1906 and delivered in 1907 on the French ship the *Dumbéa*. Its purchase, and its placement alongside the statue of St. George, provoked controversy at the time. Detractors questioned what sort of message it would send – Melbourne after all was a city of the British Empire. However, in due course the statue was appreciated for its artistic merit. Adopted as a symbol of the entente cordiale, it became the perfect rallying place to express solidarity with France.[59] The appeal of Joan of Arc had permeated through to Australia from France, and the statue's

[57] AF Minute Book 4, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.
[58] Melbourne's Joan of Arc Statue, photo by SLV staff photographer Sarah Kelly. Used with permission.
[59] Ted Gott, 'An Iron Maiden for Melbourne—the History and Context of Emmanuel Frémiet's 1906 Cast of Jeanne d'Arc - No 81 Autumn 2008', accessed 10 November 2018, http://latrobejournal.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-81/t1-g-t5.html.

addition to the Melbourne streetscape was timely. In France, the figure of Joan of Arc had taken on a renewed popularity and was widely referenced from the late nineteenth century onwards. Her symbolism was variously appropriated by republicans, nationalists and Catholics to suit their agendas. The nationalist and conservative writer Maurice Barrès wrote in 1914: 'she is the incarnation of resistance to the foreigner'.[60] Her cult grew even stronger during the war. Annette Becker described how Joan of Arc along with Therese of Lisieux, the Sacred Heart and the Virgin Mary, was the main focus of devotion among the French soldiers, and the fascination with Joan also spread to other Allied soldiers. Her importance as a unifying figure and a symbol of victory culminated in her canonisation in 1920.[61]

This enthusiasm was shared in Australia throughout the war. Joan of Arc was a recurring symbol in representations of France and the Allies' resistance to the invader and she was incarnated in plays, tableaux and pageants – sometimes seated on a real horse. Early in the morning on 14 July 1917, a large crowd including prominent French citizens gathered around Melbourne's statue of Joan of Arc. It had been decorated with the tricolor in 'rich silken ribbons', and the representatives of three organising groups laid laurel wreaths at its base. Lord Mayor Hennessy presided, and also present were military, diplomatic and political leaders. The series of 'stirring speeches' included one from Senator Pearce, the Minister for Defence, who declared that 'Joan of Arc still lived in the spirit which held back the hordes […] while Britain prepared her armies to save Europe'. He reminded all that 'France would have a hallowed memory for Australians, since so many of her sons were sleeping beneath her soil.' Other speakers mentioned the glory of France, and her contributions to science and literature.[62] Committee members and dignitaries assembled at the statue, demonstrating their position as leading citizens encouraging support for France. (Figure 9) Present in the group are Charlotte Crivelli and her co-vice president Anne Theyre A'Beckett Weigall, committee member Emma Artaud, the Hennessys, the Italian and Serbian consuls, Henri Fliche and his wife Marie-Louise, as well as the Fosters who had instigated the AF's French classes at Point Cook. (Chapter Three)

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[60] Michael Winock, 'Joan of Arc', in *Realms of Memory - Volume III: Symbols* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
[61] Becker, *War and Faith, The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*.
[62] *Age*, 16 Jul 1917, 6.

REPRESENTATIVE GROUP TAKEN ON FRENCH NATIONAL DAY AT THE BASE OF THE STATUE OF JOAN OF ARC, IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY GROUNDS.

Mrs. Theyre Weigall, Madame Artand, Signorina Eles, Mr. A. E. Oldham (Servia), Madame Henri Flicke, the Minister of Defence, Madame Crivelli, Mons. Henri Flicke (France), Sir David and Lady Hennessy, Sir William Irvine, Cavaliere E. Eles (Italy), Mons. E. Lauwers (Belgium), and others.

Figure 9 Group photo taken at Joan of Arc Statue.[63]

The Town Hall Meeting was judged a great success, with speeches by the Governor, the Prime Minister, Lady Hennessy as President of the AF, and Vice-Consul Fliche. The highlight was Nellie Melba's rendition of songs from three French composers, which added 'a touch of sparkle and brilliance'. She even helped to collect the envelopes which were left on each seat for the attendees' donations.[64] The evening's activity, the play, was 'happily chosen' as it was 'bright, amusing and easy of comprehension'.[65] The 1917 French National Day commemorations in Melbourne thus combined references to the recently created military link to France as well as the perennial role of French art and culture, familiar to the more educated and elite sections of society. Art, culture, fundraising and patriotism were again combined in support of the war when, in 1918 the *Salon des Poilus* exhibition tied these elements together under the banner of the FRC Vic.

[63] *Punch*, 19 Jul 1917, 37.
[64] *Australasian*, 21 Jul 1917, 39.
[65] *Punch*, 19 Jul 1917, 37.

iv. Australian Artists and French fundraising

Violet Teague, who had created the tableaux and directed the patriotic pageants, was among the many artists with a strong sense of connection to France, and who contributed their skills and their work in the service of the war. Teague's personal connection dated to the years she had spent travelling in Europe and studying art in Belgium. Her patriotic work was not confined to fundraising for France – she also contributed to the cause of Belgium and the Allies more broadly. However, in her role as a committee member of the FRC Vic, her artistic and creative contributions were significant. Many artists were engaged in Australia's official war art scheme, while some contributed to propaganda aims.[66] However, two events examined below illustrate Australian artists mobilising in the cause of the French fundraising organisations. Firstly, the exhibition held in Melbourne in November 1916 drew local and transnational elements of the relationship together: artists who had worked in France, and artists who were currently volunteering in France, such as Herbert Daly, melded with the specific French cause of the poilu.

> An exhibition and sale of pictures in aid of French soldiers in the enemy-occupied districts who have no friends to care for them, was opened yesterday […] Mr Herbert Daly, formerly of Melbourne, who has been in France almost from the beginning of the war, has taken the deepest interest in these lonely men, and has visited their sections, and given each a pipe, tobacco, and other comforts, which these splendid fighters have appreciated most thankfully.[67]

Daly himself sent 18 paintings which he had done in France, in the little spare time he had while working to distribute aid to *poilus*. Artists both noteworthy and less well known contributed. Pioneering Australian doctor Helen Sexton also donated some 'exquisite pieces of Chinese embroidery'.

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[66] Margaret Hutchison, *Painting War - A History of Australia's First World War Art Scheme* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Margaret Hutchison and Emily Robertson, 'Introduction: Art, War, and Truth – Images of Conflict', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 8, no. 2 (1 May 2015): 103–8, https://doi.org/10.1179/1752627215Z.00000000065; Emily Robertson, 'Norman Lindsay and the "Asianisation" of the German Soldier in Australia during the First World War', *Round Table* 103, no. 2 (April 2014): 211–31, https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2014.898505; Emily Robertson, 'A Much Misunderstood Monster: The German Ogre and Australia's Final and Forgotten Recruiting Campaign of the Great War', *History Australia* 13, no. 3 (2 July 2016): 351–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2016.1202345.

[67] 'For Our French Allies', *Argus*, 14 Nov1916, 3.

The 1918 *Salon des Poilus* (Salon of the Soldiers) Exhibition was organised by Violet Teague with the support of her fellow members of the Victorian Artists Society. The exhibition ran from 6 until 20 July 1918, and proceeds from the sale of the artworks were donated to the FRC VIC. Teague's work throughout the war exemplified the effort of artists who expressed their connection with France via pro-war patriotic activities. Teague had been an organiser of the Merriwa French Fete in December 1915, of the July 1915 French historical pageant. The *Salon des Poilus* catalogue features a plain monochrome cover, but with the exhortation 'Remember Mont Kemmel!' printed across the top.[68] The mention of this particular battle underlines the French focus of the artists who donated their works and their time to the fundraiser. Mont Kemmel, a strategic hill in Belgium was fiercely fought over during the 1918 Spring Offensive on the Western Front. It had been held by French soldiers, many of whom were massacred when the Germans eventually gained control of the hill in late April – at the same time as Australians were fighting at Villers-Bretonneux. The choice of Mont Kemmel as the emotional rallying cry clearly differentiated and branded the event as French-focussed. Violet Teague contributed many paintings for sale, and exhibited other works which were not for sale – notably the portrait of France d'Orsa Hunter, an Australian child born in 1916 just as his father had marched into the trenches in France, and named to symbolise a physical connection to France. Also featured was the work of Ethel Carrick. She and her artist husband Emanuel Philips Fox had lived and worked in Paris from 1905 – 1913, exhibiting at many Paris Salons.[69] Herbert Daly contributed a landscape: *Lac d'Annecy*. The work of French poster artists, such as Steinlen was also on display. Artists contributed their time and skills too: members of the public could pay to have their portrait painted, or that of their pets, while visiting the salon.

From 1916 onwards the French fundraising organisations based in Melbourne expanded their presence and increased their fundraising for French war causes. Well-connected and well-organised, the CRF Vic and the *Assistance Maternelle* became the principal conduits

[68] Salon des poilus: exhibition of pictures for sale in aid of the French Red Cross, opening 6th July 1918, the Athenaeum Gallery. Melbourne, State Library of NSW, https://search.sl.nsw.gov.au/permalink/f/1ocrdrt/SLNSW_ALMA2194482770002626

[69] Ruth Zubans, 'Fox, Emanuel Phillips (1865–1915)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fox-emanuel-phillips-6228/text10715

for aid flowing from Australia to French civilians and to sick and wounded French soldiers. The energetic leadership of Charlotte Crivelli and her fellow committee members inspired participation from ordinary people across the state and country, while transnational connections such as Suzanne Caubet in Paris, who identified worthy recipients and distributed the donations, maximised the organisations' effectiveness.

The French fundraising organisations were increasingly successful, and the CRF VIC, and the *Assistance Maternelle* became the principal vehicles for donations to France. The French Relief Fund which had been started by Vice-Consul Homery in 1914 ceased to operate in 1916. Intrinsically linked to their fundraising activities was their role as intermediaries representing France and French culture to Australians, and at times conflicts arose regarding the ideal way to represent France. The operations of the French fundraising organisations thus brought about a transnational flow of ideas about France, as well as goods and money. So far our focus has been on the Melbourne-based French fundraising organisations. However, in cities and town across the country large and small groups organised themselves to contribute goods and funds to France. The next chapter will provide a broader picture, examining how French fundraising organisations operated elsewhere in Australia, and will provide further insight into the activities of French-Australians on the home front.

Chapter 6. Further French-Australian connections on the home front

In December 1914, a 'large and enthusiastic meeting of French citizens' was held in Sydney, presided over by Consul-General Chayet.[1] At the meeting, the French residents resolved to form the French-Australian League of Help (FALH), and with the support of 'sympathisers with the French struggle', to provide assistance to the French Red Cross, and to French soldiers and their dependents. Across Australia, francophile philanthropists united with French-Australians to mobilise support for French causes. This chapter examines two aspects of the response by French-Australian in the civilian sphere. The first section examines the extent and nature of the transnational ties which supported the French patriotic funds: in most capital cities through the creation of local branches of the French Red Cross, and in New South Wales the French community's own response – the FALH. The FALH has been the subject of previous scholarly work, notably by Peter Brown and Jacqueline Dwyer, however, the phenomenon of French fundraising elsewhere in Australia has received little attention. Therefore, after first providing an outline of the FALH's operations, my analysis will focus on cultural perspectives and lesser-known aspects. It then traces the establishment of French fundraising organisations in other Australian states, whose operations influenced public perceptions of shared values between Australia and France and thus reinforced support for the war. In each case, transnational networks were a key part of the success of these organisations. These links to France would subsequently inform the broader public narrative regarding help for post-war reconstruction in France, and thus feed into the long-term French-Australian relationship. The second part shifts its gaze to another phenomenon in which French-Australians played a key part as transnational intermediaries: the regular visits by French soldiers based in New Caledonia, as they transited through Australia. The visits occasioned much discussion of French identity, and episodes of connection between civilian and military spheres, as local French-Australians, French people from the Pacific colonies and the metropole, and Australians combined to optimise the success of the visits and their effect on public opinion.

[1] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 Dec 1914, 11.

I. French fundraising elsewhere in Australia

i. New South Wales

Sydney was home to the largest French community in Australia and the centre of the wool trade, Australia's most important export to France. Sydney was also home to the Australian headquarters of French companies such as the *Messageries Maritimes* shipping line, while the *Courrier Australien* played a special role providing local and international news in French. In Sydney, the FALH was the first major fundraising body created by the French and francophone community, with the aim to provide direct help from Australia to France. The Sydney French drew on their connections in France, as well as on the support of prominent locals to create an independent organisation. Unlike the FRC Vic, the FALH did not report to any superior body, although it did establish its own Paris committee later in the war. At its formation in December 1914 the FALH declared its aims: to provide aid to the French Red Cross, to French soldiers and their families.[2] Particular mention was made of the keenly felt devastation in northern France, as many members of the tight-knit and successful community of Sydney wool-buyers were from the occupied region of France centred around the cities of Roubaix and Tourcoing. Among them were the Playoust family, ancestors of Sydney author and historian Jacqueline Dwyer. Dwyer's history of the Sydney French wool buying community highlights the role of wool buyers and brothers Georges and Joseph Playoust and their wives Marie-Thérèse and Blanche who co-founded the FALH, while several sons of Georges and Joseph served in the French army, including Jacqueline's father Jacques Playoust.[3] Francophile Premier William Holman, and Marie-Thérèse Playoust were the joint founding presidents, and other founding members were educators Augustine Soubeiran and Louisa Gurney, along with other prominent members of Sydney's French community.[4] The FALH, just like the FRC Vic was formed by a nucleus of active and committed French residents, many of whom had forged networks through business and public life as well as the AF, some holding leadership positions across organisations.[5]

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[2] *Courrier Australien*, 25 Dec 1914, 4.
[3] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*.
[4] Peter Brown, 'Augustine Soubeiran (1858-1933), Innovative Educator and Dynamic Secretary of the French-Australian League of Help', in *French Lives in Australia* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015); Peter Brown and Jacqueline Dwyer, 'The French-Australian League of Help: Restoring the Record', *The French-Australian Review*, no. 56 (Winter 2014).
[5] For example, Georges Playoust was the founding president of the French Chamber of Commerce, and President of the Sydney Alliance Française from 1917.

As Brown and Dwyer demonstrated, the public narrative regarding the founding of the FALH had been blurred over the years, and their detailed assessment charts the historiography and sets the record straight.[6] The role of Augustine Soubeiran had been prominently told, while the role of the founding members and her fellow committee members had been overshadowed. Soubeiran brought social and marketing skills to the role, and was crucial in its success, but she did not do so single-handedly.[7] As Brown points out, 'the fact that she was both French and a Protestant would no doubt have been in her favour in a society where religion was a feature of class', and the upper class considered French language studies an essential part of a proper upbringing. A teacher and an independent woman who had always supported herself, this differentiated Soubeiran from those women from the privileged classes.[8] In addition to her work behind-the-scenes, Soubeiran successfully publicised the work of the FALH in Australia and during her visit to France from November 1917 until October 1918. An article in the *Journal des débats politique et littéraires* in August 1918, entitled *The Dominions and the War*, described the remarkable help provided by the FALH which continued to flow to France, stating that the League was founded in Sydney 'thanks to the efforts of a French woman'.[9]

Taking advantage of personal connections, the FALH sent goods and money directly to the CRF in Paris and via its London Branch, as well as to targeted destinations. Suzanne Caubet, writing from Paris in February 1915, remarked on the lovely quality of woollen goods sent from the Sydney wool buyers, who had even sent a woollen gilet for General Joffre! Caubet promised to send it on to him on their behalf.[10] The FALH also actively supported the fundraising efforts of local fundraising organisations such as the Australian Red Cross, and sometimes this allowed the French-Australian community to represent their country and culture in patriotic displays. In February 1915 the Sydney branch of the Australian Red Cross organised a grand patriotic parade, which included floats representing all the Allies. The French floats were described in the *Courrier Australien.* The French contingent had been organised by Fred Niblo and Marie Segur. The Segur

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[6] Brown and Dwyer, 'The French-Australian League of Help: Restoring the Record'.
[7] Brown, 'Augustine Soubeiran (1858-1933), Innovative Educator and Dynamic Secretary of the French-Australian League of Help'.
[8] Brown.
[9] 'Les Dominions et la Guerre', *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, Paris, 20 Aug 1918, 1 https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k488715b.
[10] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, 11 Feb 1915, Michael Crivelli collection.

family was prominent in Sydney's French community: businessman Maurice Segur was president of the French Benevolent Society (*Société Française de Bienfaisance de la Nouvelle Galles du Sud*) and a member of the Sydney AF committee.[11] The parade included the French national heroine Joan of Arc, who had 'struggled victoriously against the invader', riding a white horse, and the representation of Liberty personified as Marianne 'for whom we are fighting this war'. The French group won first prize, with the British group coming second.[12] On 20 November 1915 an enormous patriotic event was held in Sydney: Allies Day. The FALH held a fundraising stall, with the stall holders all dressed in the costumes of French peasants. One can imagine them perhaps in plain cotton shirts, coarse woollen skirts or trousers, and caps or bonnets. Afterwards, the costumes were sent to France as a gift for the people. It is intriguing to wonder whether this was done, and who were the lucky, and perhaps surprised, recipients of these peasant costumes which had been lovingly created in distant Australia.[13] The trope of peasant children corresponds to the phenomenon explained by Robert Tombs, who argued that in late nineteenth century England, a growth in middle class wealth led to increased tourism to France, and the discovery of its picturesque rural villages. Consequently, the French peasant girl became an archetypal symbol of France.[14] Winter argues that nostalgia was prevalent in the wartime culture of major European cities of Europe, as rapid mobilisation and modernisation wrought by the war provoked a cultural push back, and inspired longing for a simpler and more predictable past.[15] Despite its distance, such cultural responses were also evident in Australia.

In July 1916 the FALH collaborated in a project to send not just goods and money, but also people to France. The NSW Branch of Australian Red Cross, supported by funding from the NSW Jockey Club, recruited a group of twenty-one Australian nurses to travel to France to work in French military hospitals.[16] The Bluebirds were so named because of their distinctive blue coats which formed part of their uniform. The FALH funded the

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[11] He was also the Sydney based agent for the Ballande trading company which traded between Noumea, Sydney and Bordeaux. He was the agent up until November 1915 when he was replaced by Maurice Pelletier.
[12] 'Le Défilé patriotique', *Courrier Australien,* 5 Mar 1915, 4.
[13] *Table Talk*, 30 Sep 1915, 30
[14] Tombs and Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy*, 447.
[15] Winter, 'The Practices of Metropolitan Life in Wartime'.
[16] Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Gifts for France: Australian Red Cross Nurses in France, 1916–1919', *Journal of Australian Studies* 17, no. 39 (December 1993): 65–78, https://doi.org/10.1080/14443059309387160; Irene Rogers, '"A Gift for France": The Australian Bluebird Nurses of the Great War', *French Australian Review*, no. 68 (Australian Winter 2020).

leather kit bags for each nurse. The French authorities had specified that the women must be able to speak French. Hence, when they travelled to France on the *Kanowna*, accompanying them was French woman, Josephine Niau, who provided French lessons on board ship. The lessons had mixed results. The ship docked in Alexandria en route, where nurse Nellie Crommelin attempted to converse with the French chambermaid at the hotel 'we tried some of our own poor attempts at the language, not very successfully.'[17] Once in France, the nurses were dispersed around the country, posted to French military hospitals, working as part of a French medical team. Thus, in addition to professional and personal trials, language posed a challenge for some of them, at least initially. As Crommelin settled into the hospital at Les Anderlys, she described her French as 'appalling' and was appreciative of lessons given to her by one of her patients, a zouave Algerian soldier, who was a schoolteacher before the war. When a French General came to inspect the hospital, she understood only a little of what he said. [18] Nevertheless, her letters soon describe detailed conversations with her French soldier patients and are peppered with French expressions.[19] Ultimately, the French military doctors praised the skills and dedication of the Australian nurses.

The operations of the FALH encompassed a multiplicity of French-Australian connections strongly built on business networks and transnational personal links. Among the several Vice Presidents of the FALH were Madame Puech, whose sons fought at Verdun, and Madame Elise Segur. Madame Segur also contributed to the French conversation classes set up by Chayet (discussed in Chapter Eight), to spread a better knowledge of French, and improved pronunciation by those who studied it. Demonstrating the importance of international networks, the first distributor of goods and money sent by the FALH was Madame Brasier de Thuy who was working with the London Branch of the French Red Cross. She and her husband were former Sydney residents, where he had represented the *Messageries Maritimes* shipping line.[20] Clothing for men women and children was among goods packed into wool bales and shipped to many French organisations such as the Blind Soldiers and the National Orphans' Association. In July 1916, the *Courrier Australien* reported that the FALH had collected

[17] AWM PR00065, Papers of Nellie Weston Crommelin, Crommelin to her mother, 20 Aug 1916.
[18] AWM PR00065, Papers of Nellie Weston Crommelin, Letter to Minard, 6 Oct 1916.
[19] AWM PR00065, Papers of Nellie Weston Crommelin, Letter to her family, 7 Nov 1916.
[20] Brown and Dwyer, 'The French-Australian League of Help: Restoring the Record'.

£30,583 in donations to date, and had received 700 pairs of socks to mark the 14th July. In addition, a recent shipment of goods sent on the *Mongolia* had included 4,000 articles destined for French soldiers, hospitals, women and children.[21]

Notwithstanding the FALH's continued collection and shipment of goods, the French residents of Sydney announced they would not carry out fundraising activities on the 14th July 1916. Instead, the French national day would be purely devoted to patriotic displays. The first of several events was a requiem mass at St. Patrick's – Sydney's French church. The church was draped in black mourning cloth, and the flags of France, Britain and Australia were displayed. With Consul-General Chayet among the congregation, parish priest Father Piquet led the prayers for the fallen, particularly the French-Australians who had died for their country, many of them from the wool buying community. A succession of events followed the mass. At the military parade of Australian soldiers in Moore Park, Chayet was among the dignitaries. Then came a town hall meeting with many patriotic speeches expressing admiration and gratitude to France, and confidence in eventual victory. Later, a luncheon at the Millions Club saw many speeches given in praise of France by the Lord Mayor, by Chayet, by Neville Mayman the President of the Committee of the *Fête Nationale* and others.[22] Finally, wool buyer Paul Lamérand spoke: 'Before the war, France was not properly known in Australia, or even in the world.' He explained that travellers reduced France to the frivolous images of 'gay Paree' where people went to enjoy themselves, but to that image was now added a weightier one:

> 'I am glad to see that, thanks to our good friends, Mr. Holman. Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Mayman, and many others, who, from the start, never lost a chance of praising France […] Australia has now changed her mind about our native land. She recognises that all along France has been doing her duty, that she has been, in fact, bearing the main weight of the war.'[23]

Later, as Mademoiselle Segur and Mademoiselle Puech performed the Marseillaise, representatives of the wool-buyers association handed a cheque for over £3,000 to

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[21] *Courrier Australien* 14 Jul 1916, 4.
[22] The Millions Club was a group of businessmen whose goal was to encourage an increase in Australia's (white) population.
[23] *Courrier Australien*, 21 Jul 1916, 1.

Madame Playoust, President of the FALH. Soubeiran was one of the speech givers. An evening concert ended the special day. The French-Australians expressed gratitude to Australian soldiers who were fighting in France, and appreciation for the widespread praise and recognition of their mother country. The *Courrier Australien*'s report of the day refers to similar scenes being carried out in other cities and towns around the country.[24]

1917 *Fête Nationale* in Sydney

France's Day was a major fundraising event in Sydney, and its success was largely due to the contribution of the Sydney Wool Buyers' Association. A French Village fair was one of the attractions – a widespread popular feature of patriotic fundraising entertainment. In 1917, from the largest to the smallest town, communities across Australia enthusiastically embraced the chance to celebrate the 14th July. In each place speeches echoed the dominant discourse of gratitude to France for saving Australia from German domination. And despite the date falling in the middle of winter in Australia, the chance to dress up as a French peasant was quite popular too. The France's Day French Village Fair held in Sydney featured some rather clichéd and condescending references to peasants which fitted the popular trope.

> 'The French Village Fair, which will be held by the Red Cross Society on France's Day at Macquarie Place, is being planned on lines to make it as realistic as possible. In many parts of France, the outbreak of the war only put an end to this annual festivity which satisfied the small craving for excitement of the simple peasantry. After the annual jollification which lasted one, two and sometimes three days they went back to their homes content to work the whole year through except for their precious Sundays, and an occasional religious fete. […] Charming little French peasant maids will clatter round in their sabots.'[25]

The fair featured 'typical booths presided over by well-known Sydneyites in costumes of the French provinces.' However, the peasantry was not only of the French variety – girls dressed as Welsh peasants also helped with the selling.[26] Shared historical links between

[24] 'Fête Nationale Française' *Courrier Australien*, 21 Jul 1916, 1-2.
[25] *Sun*, 1 Jul 1917, 12.
[26] *Sunday Times*, 24 Jun 1917, 15.

Sydney and France were invoked by the ceremony held on 14 July 1917 at the La Pérouse monument. About 2,000 people were present as wreaths were laid at the grave of Père Receveur, the chaplain of La Pérouse expedition, who had died in 1788 while at the Sydney settlement.[27]

As such large sums of money had been raised by the FALH particularly from the France's Day event, Augustine Soubeiran travelled to France in 1917 to oversee the distribution of the funds, remaining there until 1918. It was during this visit that a Paris Distributing committee of the FALH was created, whose members included Julie Siegfried, and politician and author Maurice Barrès as President.[28] Barrès conveyed messages of thanks from Paris in February 1918, mentioning the kindness shown to the French soldiers who had stopped off in Sydney on the *El Kantara*, and for the successful fundraising of 'France's Day'.[29] Notwithstanding the motivation to highlight her own role in the organisation, Soubeiran's communication and marketing skills clearly were effective in spreading awareness of the FALH and its work. *Le Figaro* noted 'the admirable Committee of the French-Australian League of Sydney, of which Mlle A. Soubeiran is the representative.' The FALH's gift this time was 2,500 francs for the charity run by the firefighters of Paris, which provided relief for families badly disadvantaged by the war.[30] *Le Temps* acknowledged the generous contributions for the *Oeuvre des Bons-Enfants* (children's charity) by the Americans and the FALH and Mademoiselle Soubeiran.[31] The connection between the Sydney charities and the French orphans continued into the 1920's.[32] The FALH was not the only conduit for donations to France. The ANOG contacted the Sydney branch of the French bank *Le Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris*, asking them to collect donations on its behalf.[33]

Paul Wenz

The French-Australian writer Paul Wenz was another prominent intermediary between his native France and his adopted home in New South Wales. Wenz had arrived in

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[27] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 Jul 1917, 6.
[28] Julie Siegfried – feminist, President of the French Council of Women, married to politician Jules Siegfried and mother of André Siegfried, geographer, historian and sociologist who visited Australia in 1918 with the French Economic Mission.
[29] 'Thanks from France', *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 Feb 1918, 5.
[30] *Le Figaro*, 7 April 1918, 3, BNF, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34355551z
[31] *Le Temps*, 5 May 1918, 8, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34431794k
[32] French-Australian League Records, 1917-1921, ML MSS 717, SLNSW.
[33] *Le Courrier Australien* 14 Jul 1916, 4.

Australia to represent his family's successful wool trading company Wenz and Co based in Reims, but decided his career lay elsewhere, and instead established himself as a grazier, in Forbes, NSW. Financially successful, he was able to also pursue his literary interests, writing short stories, serialised in a Parisian review and eventually novels. His trajectory as a bilingual and transcultural writer, and his links to the wool buying industry are the subject of existing studies.[34] Wenz was unique in his aim of presenting Australia – particularly the world of the outback and sheep and cattle stations – to a French readership through a literary frame, and his fiction was often based on his own lived experience. Similarly, during and after the war he added works based on his wartime experience, in literary form, and in letters and reports sent to Australia and published in the press. His letters to his lifelong friend novelist André Gide, provide a different perspective to those of the French-Australians who mobilised connections within Australia as well as between the two countries.[35]

Wenz and his Australian wife Hettie were keen travellers and in August 1914 they were in Northern France, nearing the end of an extensive European holiday. As a well-known French-Australian, spending the war in France and England as a civilian working for the French Red Cross, Wenz conveys his personal experience of events which loomed large in public narrative: firstly his account of the bombing and fighting at Reims in 1914; secondly his accounts of working for the French Red Cross, working as an interpreter, liaison officer, and hospital visitor illustrate his particular contribution and insights. Wenz's identity as a French-Australian informed his wartime volunteer work, so that he was particularly aware of, and focussed on, the Australians who came under his care.

Wenz's first-hand accounts of the bombing of Reims in 1914 created a sense of direct connection and immediacy for Australian readers. Wenz described his work assisting the wounded and using his car to help source supplies for the local military hospitals. He then described the bombing of the town, the arrival of the Germans and their short occupation, including his brother being held as a hostage, before the French retook the town. An

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[34] Maurice Blackman, 'Paul Wenz (1869-1939), French-Australian Writer and Grazier', in *French Lives in Australia*, ed. Ivan Barko and Eric Berti (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015); Maurice Blackman, 'Transculturalism and Hybridity in the French-Australian Writer Paul Wenz', *Explorations - French Australian Review*, no. 23 (December 1997); Marie Ramsland, 'War, Writing and the Wenz Family', *The French Australian Review*, no. 56 (Winter 2014).

[35] The letters between Wenz and Gide are included in the 1996 republishing of Le Pays de Leurs Pères. Paul Wenz, *Le Pays de Leurs Pères* (Boulogne-Billancourt: ALFA, 1996).

element of self-censorship with an eye on morale is apparent in his description of the battlefield after the Germans had left. The French dead looked so peaceful: 'some 50 or 60 little *piou pious* were lying as if asleep… not a sign on them to show they were not just resting.' But the German trench was 'horrible, terrible…. our seventy fives make ugly work.'[36]

In 1916 Wenz took on a new role as liaison officer with the British Committee of the French Red Cross, and also volunteered at Saint Dunstan's hospital and rehabilitation centre for blinded soldiers which he would use as inspiration for a collection of short stories, and for his novel *Le Pays de Leurs Pères (Their Fathers' Land*), a story about AIF soldiers written for a French readership.[37] The Wenz's often invited blinded Australian soldiers to dinner at their London flat. Hettie Wenz was no less active, volunteering at the Anzac Buffet in London, a welcome centre for AIF soldiers. She also distributed parcels sent from Australia for French soldiers, containing notes 'from your Australian friends', passing on letters from Australian girls to French girls.[38] The FALH sometimes sent parcels via the French Red Cross in London, it was likely the source of the goods which Hettie Wenz distributed. Maurice Blackman mused on the difficulty of labelling Wenz's fiction as either French or Australian, describing it as transcultural and hybrid, he concluded that it is both French and Australian.[39] Paul Wenz's wartime experiences linked his homeland and his adopted state of New South Wales. He and Hettie provided practical support to Australian soldiers, and distributed aid sent from Australia to the French Red Cross, while his letters and his published works encapsulate the hybrid space of his writing – presenting the French experience to Australians, and the Australian experience to the French.

ii. South Australia

French fundraising organisations were also established in the other major Australian cities. In late 1914 when René Crivelli boarded his ship for France, he was also carrying donations of goods and money from Adelaide friends. Caubet's letter of thanks to

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[36] *Australasian*, 29 May 1915, 40. *Piou pio*u is a diminutive term for soldiers
[37] Paul Wenz, *Their Fathers' Land: For King and Empire*, trans. Marie Ramsland (Exile Bay NSW: ETT Imprint, 2018); Wenz, *Le Pays de Leurs Pères*; Paul Wenz, *Bonnes Gens de la Grande Guerre*, 1918, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-35405883.
[38] Wenz to Gide, 19 Mar 1916, Wenz, *Le Pays de Leurs Pères*, 197.
[39] Blackman, 'Transculturalism and Hybridity in the French-Australian Writer Paul Wenz'.

Adelaide references her work at the Buffon Military hospital, where her English skills were appreciated:

> We have here 60 English among our patients (900 beds). What an amount of physical and moral fluttering, to comfort. I am glad to be able to speak English. The wounded English have found that I have a slight accent, and believe that I am Irish. I allow them to keep that idea, and I am a constant visitor to them. […] My nephew gave me the money you sent, which permitted my daughters to gratify their dearest wishes. They asked the wounded to choose what they would like best. All desired beefsteak and fried potatoes (beefsteak is a luxury in Paris now), cakes, etc. Last Sunday afternoon all who were able to help prepared a little feast.[40]

Although the French population of South Australia was small, French and francophile residents united to organise fundraising for the French Red Cross. Efforts were led by John Watson Canaway, who was both President of the AF and Consular Agent for France in South Australia. The Governor's wife, Lady Galway, was patroness. Lord and Lady Galway had married in London in 1913 and arrived in Adelaide shortly afterwards. From the outside they appear to have been an odd couple. He was reactionary and conservative, and provoked controversy during the war with inflammatory anti-German and pro-conscription views. Lady Galway was cultured, multi-lingual and erudite. She was half German, had lived in France, Germany and Switzerland and had previously been married to Baron Raphael d'Erlanger. As a French speaker, she encouraged the learning of French and supported the AF in South Australia. In her role as Governor's wife she was also President of the Australian Red Cross South Australian Branch. Lady Galway's leadership contributed to over £1,200,000 being raised for patriotic causes, and she was honoured by the French government with the *Médaille de la Reconnaissance*. [41]

When the AF held its Patriotic Meeting in Adelaide in August 1914, it was very well attended. 'Everything French is so popular at present owing to the war' began the report. Lady Galway spoke about the Red Cross, and what help was needed; Mr Canaway asked

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[40] *The Register,* 23 March 1915, 8.
[41] P. A. Howell, 'Galway, Marie Carola (1876–1963)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed 14 October 2019, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/galway-marie-carola-10273.

for contributions for the poor of France, and Madame Gautier 'made a speech on war in French'.[42] Also present at the meeting were two important members of Adelaide's French community: sisters Marie Lion and Berthe Mouchette. They were the originators of the money and gifts which Suzanne Caubet had received in Paris. Having arrived in Australia from France in 1881, these two talented Frenchwomen had already made their mark, most notably establishing Australia's first AF in Melbourne in 1890.[43] Through this Melbourne connection they were long-time friends and associates of the Crivellis – indeed Charlotte had studied painting with Berthe Mouchette – and they were in attendance at Charlotte's wedding to Dr. Marcel Crivelli in 1887.[44] They moved to Adelaide in 1892 and were instrumental in the creation of the South Australian Branch of the AF, in 1910. Mouchette and Lion were also intrepid travellers, and in early 1915 they returned to France, stopping to work for the Red Cross in Cairo en route. They spent most of that year volunteering at a military hospital in Paris, at Rue Molitor, Auteuil, where Lion worked on night shift. During this time, they made several visits to Caubet at the Buffon Hospital, where the money from South Australia had been used to buy extra food for patients.[45] Marie Lion and Berthe Mouchette returned from France in February 1916 and actively participated in fundraising activities, always with a French flavour, such as the 'Café Chantant' held in August 1916.[46] However, their principal activities remained teaching French, painting and drawing.

Other supporters of French language and culture in Adelaide who were present at the patriotic meeting were French teachers Miss Violet de Mole, and Madame Wait. Violet de Mole, the daughter of an establishment family, had studied at the Sorbonne from 1904 to 1906 and, returning to Adelaide with her diploma, she began her career as a French teacher. She was involved with the early establishment of the AF in Adelaide. Madame Wait, another foundation member of the AF of South Australia, was born in Nancy, and her husband was master of languages at a prestigious Adelaide school.[47] Another

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[42] *Critic*, 19 Aug 1914, 26.
[43] John Drury, 'Berthe Mouchette (1846-1928), Artist and Founder of the First Alliance Française in Australia, and Marie Lion (1855-1922), Artist and Writer', in *French Lives in Australia*, ed. Ivan Barko and Eric Berti (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015).
[44] 'A Wedding in The French Style', *Australasian* 8 Oct 1887, 7.
[45] Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, 7 Feb 1915, Michael Crivelli collection.
[46] 'A Café Chantant', *Mail*. 12 Aug 1916, 12.
[47] 'French Teacher Honoured', *Register*, 8 Dec 1913, 8 Dec 8 6.

prominent supporter was Frank Beaumont Moulden, Mayor of Adelaide and President of the AF.

Adelaide's major French Red Cross event for 1915 was 'Flag Day' held on 9 September, inspired by the French Flag Day held in Britain in July. In Adelaide it was impossible to hold the event in July to coincide with the French national day, as 30 July was reserved for the excitement of the first Australia Day, an important event on the fundraising calendar.[48] French Flag Day was marketed as a major cultural and fundraising event and the detailed publicity included plans for that well-known cultural motif – the French market. The public was instructed in advance what to expect: 'very few Australians really know what a French market is like'.[49] In an article promoting the event, the 'interviewer' exchanged a few words of French with Mr Canaway, then explained how the French market would be special. It would include the French delicacy: 'French fried chipped potatoes – really a delightful delicacy in their way.' It would also offer French style salads, all served by 'dainty damsels'.[50] For the adventurous, there would even be 'cooked snails and frogs – a Frenchman will prepare these à la Parisienne […] something quite unique.' Once again fundraising for the French was melded with the opportunity for cultural discovery, for local French people to present their traditions to a public who had never been quite so interested before.[51] What is sadly missing here is a personal assessment of the snails or the frogs by a member of the public. Did they enjoy them, and feel momentarily transported to France?

The public was clearly awakening to the fact that national identities and cultural stereotypes informed pro-war discourse, as evidenced by another correspondent who mused on how public opinion was being reshaped to suit the politics of the time: the reversal of France and Germany:

> 'Once Godless France is now on the side of the angels. Once mystic Germany flaunts the banner of Mephistopheles. The Anglo Franco alliance is a natural alliance of kindred sentiment. […] preparations are made for a French peasant market to be reproduced under the shadow

[48] The 26th January was celebrated in New South Wales as Anniversary Day. The current practice of a nationally celebrated Australia Day on 26 January dates to the 1930's.
[49] 'French Flag Day', *Mail,* 28 Aug 1915, 3.
[50] 'France's Dire Need', *Mail*, 4 Sep 1915, 10.
[51] 'French Flag Day', *Mail*, 4 Sep1915, 4.

> of the Boer war monument on North Terrace. Presently we shall affect a liking for French chipped potatoes and a number of other French delicacies, and practice our knowledge of French phrases. It will be more than a pleasant diversion — it will make us realise our brotherhood with the apostles of political brotherhood, who narrowly missed founding an Empire in America but in place erected a Temple of Democracy in the heart of humanity'.[52]

The dark reverse side of this coin was the treatment of German Australians, who constituted the largest group of non-Anglo-Irish immigrants. The 1911 census had counted 33,000 people who gave their place of birth as Germany, and many other were of German descent. South Australia was home to the largest population of German Australians, who were subject to discrimination, persecution and internment during the war.[53] Thus the identification of Germans with Mephistopheles, the Devil, is particularly telling in South Australia. After Adelaide's French Flag Day, Paul Cambon, the Ambassador for France in London, cabled his thanks to South Australians for their cheque for over £3,400 which he had passed on to the British committee of the French Red Cross.[54] In July 1916, Canaway appealed again to South Australians to 'come forward to the assistance of their gallant Allies', by donating to the French Red Cross Fund. Canaway explained that the fund was run along the same lines as those already established in Victoria and New South Wales.[55] It is not clear however if the funds were sent via the London committee of the French Red Cross, or directly to the Paris head office.

Melbourne and Sydney were able to schedule major fundraising events during July under the banner of French week, however, in South Australia 14 July 1917 would instead be the moment for a cultural and musical homage to France, arranged by the AF. In South Australia the main fundraising for 'France's Day' in 1917 took place on 16 November. It included a ubiquitous 'Button Day' to raise funds for the French, and Berthe Mouchette was listed as a button seller. The *Adelaide Mail* declared that 'as it is two years since a big effort was made on behalf of the French Red Cross, it is expected that a record will

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[52] 'Brave France', *Bunyip*, 10 Sep 1915, 2.
[53] Peter Stanley, 'Accepting: Casualties, Regulations, Internment', in *The War at Home* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2015), 159–62.
[54] 'French Red Cross', *Express and Telegraph*, 7 Jan 1916, 4.
[55] 'French Red Cross Fund', *Advertiser*, 5 Jul 1916, 8.

be established.'[56] The Red Cross Button Day festivities included marching bands and soldiers parading, in addition to stalls, and the Cheer Up Hut, decorated in French colours, was available for soldiers.[57] Trench art made by French soldiers was on sale, likely to have been acquired by Mouchette and Lion during their stay in Paris. Caubet regularly sourced souvenirs and trinkets made by wounded soldiers in the hospitals she visited, using funds raised in Australia to purchase the trench art. This provided soldiers with a supplementary source of income, and gave the French charities in Australia an opportunity to raise money. The France's Day event, led by the 'untiring and earnest' Lady Galway, presented an opportunity for the war weary public to congregate in a festive atmosphere, focussing their minds on a patriotic cause.[58]

South Australia's response to French fundraising was framed within the hierarchy of the AF and the coterie of the Consular Agent Mr Canaway. However, in April 1918 the citizens of Adelaide adopted the cause of the *Assistance Maternelle*. At the request of Charlotte Crivelli, Marie Lion and Berthe Mouchette became its official Adelaide representatives.[59] Later that year the Adelaide *Mail* published a letter of thanks received from Madame Michel, in the original French. The letter, expressing thanks on behalf of Professor Pinard, evoked the wonderful things sent from the Strathalbyn Sunday school which included toys and sweets, given by school children to their French counterparts. The letter sits amongst notices for the Trench funds working club, The Australian Flying Corps Comforts Fund and the Croydon Sock Club. Also reported was the exhibition of etchings by French artist, Gaston Balande, who had donated his pictures of the war to be auctioned for the FRC. Balande was described as 'one of the most eminent of the eight official war artists.'[60] Mouchette and Lion may have brought these etchings back from France with them. As they were artists themselves, it is feasible they were on the lookout for such items during their stay in Paris. Along with trinkets and trench art, the etchings were another example of the flow of objects, as well as cultural images, from France back to Australia. Pageants remained an effective vehicle for visual representations of French culture, and the perennially popular character of Joan of Arc reappeared in Adelaide's

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[56] '*Social Events', Mail,* 3 Nov 1917, 7.
[57] The 'Cheer Up Society' was a philanthropic group which provided comforts and facilities to soldiers who were on leave. (The War at Home: Peter Stanley)
[58] *Register,* 16 November 1917, 6. 'French Day', *Advertiser,* 17 November 1917, 8.
[59] *Mail,* 20 April 1918, 11.
[60] *Mail,* 2 Nov 1918, 9

Australia Day pageant in July 1918. The enormous parade featured hundreds of participants representing Australia, Britain, France and the other Allies. The float of Joan 'the soul of France' (figure 10) won the prize for 'most unique display'. Joan, 'mounted on her dapple-grey steed and clad in shining armour' was a dominating figure as she towered above the spectators and above her mounted escort who were dressed as French cavaliers of the fifteenth century. The float of Joan was greatly admired, and 'warmly cheered along the entire route.'[61]

Figure 10 Joan of Arc winning float, 1918 Adelaide Australia Day Pageant.[62]

As the war drew to its close, South Australians pulled out all stops for one final and glorious 'France's Day' Fundraiser. The whole month of December 1918 was designated for France, with Friday 6 December the 'Day' raising over £3,000. This time the pageant was celebrating victory as well as the Alliance. It featured a choice of eight different buttons for sale and culminated in a grand parade – 'a spectacular pageant representing France and her Allies'– in which 500 young people participated. Some of them were dressed in 'capes of tricolour with Napoleonic cockades' next came 'Breton peasants in typical romantic dresses, little boys representing Zouaves […] and little girls impersonating Breton fishwives, and 'boys in blue overalls represented munitions workers.'[63] Thus, the parade blended modern French characters with traditional. They were followed by others in costumes representing Belgium, the United States, as well as

[61] *Chronicle*, 3 Aug 1918, 10.
[62] State Library of South Australia PRG 280/1/9/262
[63] *Register*, 7 Dec 1918, 9.

Britain (with a reference to Nelson's *Victory*), and other Allied nations. Another highlight of the day was the auction of a French flag which had been autographed by General Pau and Colonel André of the French Economic Mission which by then was travelling through Australia.[64] Links between Adelaide and France were continued during the post-war period, as Lion and Mouchette headed fundraising efforts for the adoption and reconstruction of Dernancourt, a destroyed town in Northern France where Australians had fought, and which was singled out as a fundraising cause in just the same way Villers-Bretonneux had been by the Victorians, and Poilcourt by Sydney.

iii. Western Australia

The work of the FRC Vic, particularly the success of the July 1915 pageant, was widely reported in the Western Australian press, and its reputation inspired Perth philanthropist Lady Deborah Vernon Hackett to form a similar organisation. Lady Hackett, wife of politician and businessman Sir John Winthrop Hackett, was president of the Rose Club, a women's charitable organisation. It was through this club that she had already instigated fundraising for France. The club arranged a charity ball in aid of the French Red Cross in August 1915 and had also decided 'to undertake the making of garments for French peasant children, as many scraps of material could be utilised for that purpose'.[65] The French consular agent in Perth was Peter Michelides, a multi-lingual self-made man, who had made his fortune from tobacco. He also served as Honorary Consul for Russia and Greece. In June 1916 Michelides contacted Consul-General Chayet in Sydney on Lady Hackett's behalf, conveying her desire to form a local branch of the French Red Cross. Chayet contacted Paris headquarters on behalf of the Perth group, and the approval from Paris was granted, under the same conditions as those granted to the Melbourne branch. Homery and Norman Trenery provided details on the regulations governing the FRC Vic's operations.[66]

In August 1916 *The West Australian* reported on the recent meeting of the French Red Cross Western Australian Branch (FRC W.A.). Lady Hackett, the FRC W.A.'s president, had started undertaking work for the French Red Cross 'some time ago', in response to information she had received from France. Responding to this call for help for the French

[64] *Register*, 26 Nov 1918, 4.
[65] *West Australian*, 28 Aug 1915, 5.
[66] Correspondence between Chayet, Homery, De Vogüé from June and July 1916, MAE 428PO/1/48.

soldiers and military hospitals, Lady Hackett had 'immediately inaugurated the French Red Cross Society'.[67] The visit of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson to Perth on 7 July 1916 had spread interest and conferred legitimacy. As with the Melbourne branch, actual legitimacy came from Paris after the fact, but with appreciation along with the regulations.[68] The FRC W.A., just like its eastern counterpart, was determined to have its contribution recognised. By August 1916 the FRC W.A. had already shipped both goods and money to Marseilles. The FRC W.A. was careful to ensure its contributions went directly to France, and made 'a respectful protest' when they discovered that £500 which had been raised in Perth by the Australian Red Cross would be sent to France via the FRC Vic. It wasn't fair, the committee argued, when the money was raised as a result of their hard work that it should then be sent 'to swell the already large coffers' of the Melbourne Branch.[69]

An opportunity to help the French much closer to home presented itself on 23 June 1917, when the FRC W.A. joined with the French Consul in Perth, and the President of the AF to render assistance to a poor unfortunate French war widow. A certain Corporal Figuier who had been declared unfit for further service, was returning to Noumea with his wife, but en route they were shipwrecked off Perth. Corporal Figuier died after being rescued, while Madame Figuier, who spoke no English, was stranded in Perth. She was cared for by local francophiles until the French government could repatriate her.[70]

As in other capital cities, it was the French Red Cross local branches who assumed responsibility for welcoming and entertaining French soldiers as they stopped over in Australia on their way to and from New Caledonia. In December 1917 a contingent of French soldiers paraded through the streets of Perth, and the wives of the officers were entertained by Lady Hackett.[71] The same group of men, under Captain Sicard, was entertained in Adelaide and Melbourne, and their visits will be examined more closely below. Lady Hackett, just twenty-seven years old when the war broke out, had been married to Sir John Winthrop Hackett, forty years her senior and who died in 1916. She was awarded the *Medaille de la Reconnaissance Française* in recognition of her charity work. In 1918 she moved to Adelaide and married Sir Frank Beaumont Moulden, a

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[67] *West Australian* ,7 Aug 1916, 8.
[68] MAE 428PO/1/48.
[69] *West Australian*, 7 Aug 1916, 8.
[70] *West Australian*, 23 Jun1917, 8.
[71] *West Australian*, 17 Dec 1917, 8.

lawyer, who became Mayor of Adelaide and was appointed as consular agent for France in 1919. He too was honoured by the French government for his war work.[72]

iv. Tasmania

In Hobart, Tasmania, a sub-branch of the French Red Cross was set up in 1915, soon after the Melbourne branch. Tasmania did not have a significant French community – in the 1911 census, Tasmania counted 38 French-born people and amongst the French-born AIF soldiers, none was from Tasmania. However, a small but enthusiastic kernel of francophone and francophiles had established an AF in 1906, and a French consular agency was provided by William Burgess. It was Burgess who instigated the meeting on 4 June 1915 to form a local branch of the French Red Cross (FRC Tas), with Frances Edwards as President, and Mr. A. J. Kennedy as Secretary. Within the broad public pro-French sentiment, there are indications that some slight adjustment of outlook had been required. A moment of controversy occurred when, in June 1915, the Hobart City Council held a heated debate on whether to hold a fundraising day in aid of the French Red Cross on Waterloo Day, 18 June, the anniversary of Britain's glorious victory over Napoleon. As they negotiated through the pros and cons, one councillor declared he was totally opposed to any celebration of Waterloo Day at the present juncture. They 'would simply be insulting the French people, who were now their Allies, by celebrating their downfall at Waterloo.'[73]

The FRC Tas's 1916 report details that their first two containers of hospital goods and requirements were sent via the London Branch of the French Red Cross, but that numerous subsequent shipments were sent via their Melbourne counterparts, who generously paid the shipping charges from Melbourne to Marseilles. The goods were sent to a French military hospital in Toul (about 80 kilometres south of Verdun). The Tasmanian branch's policy was to include as many locally made items as possible, hence the recipients enjoyed Tasmanian jams, apples and biscuits, and woollen and sewn garments made by locals. A map of Tasmania was attached to the goods 'thus showing our friends in France where the goods are from, and also advertising our Island Home' wrote branch president Frances Edwardes. In this way a direct connection was established

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[72] Elizabeth Kwan, 'Moulden, Sir Frank Beaumont (1876–1932)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/moulden-sir-frank-beaumont-7808/text13419, published first in hardcopy 1986, accessed online 2 October 2019.
[73] 'Waterloo Day', *Mercury*, 9 Jun 1915, 3.

between the donors and the recipients. Letters of thanks were received from French soldiers, and a nurse in a military hospital.[74] The Tasmanians could never have predicted when and where their donations would arrive in France, hence the poignancy of the letter from Miss Roberts, supervisor of the Toul hospital. She described how she had been on leave in Paris in February 1916 and brought a case of goods back with her when she returned to Verdun on 21 February, the date when the battle began. She describes the soldiers arriving into her hospital, after being wounded at Douamont, and distributing the goods to them. Some of the soldiers had already fought in the north. 'When I told them the gifts came from Tasmania, they said they had fought near the Australians in Flanders'. Letters from the soldiers themselves were also received, in which they described their hardships, and their gratitude for the gifts. Reprising this connection to Verdun, the Tasmanians held fundraising events in February 1917 and 1918, on the anniversary of the great battle, called 'Verdun Day'. Items for sale included souvenirs of Verdun: examples of trench art which had been sent from Paris, and all profits went to the French Red Cross.[75] The Tasmanians were the only group to label their fundraising day for France as Verdun Day, although the battle for Verdun was universally known and used throughout Australia as a touchstone of French courage.

Tasmanians sent goods to France via the FRC Vic in Melbourne, however, they also used other direct channels. Tasmanian nurse Dorothy Duffy was working in a French military hospital and she had received and distributed aid parcels to the hospital in which she was stationed. Duffy had trained in Sydney, and was one of the 'Bluebird' nurses, the group of 21 Australian nurses who had been recruited by the Australian Red Cross and kitted out and funded by benevolent organisations in New South Wales.[76] In 1917 Duffy was stationed at a military hospital near Avignon, and appealed to her home state to send socks. The collection was undertaken by Tasmania's French Red Cross and sent directly to her for distribution to French soldiers in her care.[77] Another prominent French resident of Tasmania was Louis Drouet, who had first worked in the wine and champagne industry in Victoria, and in 1914 was the manager of Hobart's Cascade Cider Factory. Drouet had volunteered to re-join the French army in 1915, but at 49 years old he was declared too

[74] Tasmanian French Red Cross annual report for 1916, MAE 428PO/1/48.
[75] 'Verdun Day', *Mercury,* 25 Feb 1918, 3; 'Tasmania's War Effort', *Mercury,* 25 Sep 1919, 7.
[76] Oppenheimer, 'Gifts for France'.
[77] *Mercury,* 4 Feb 1918, 3.

old. Nevertheless, he and his Australian-born wife journeyed to France in 1915, visiting family in Epernay. Back in Australia in 1916 the Drouets became actively involved in the FRC Tas. The branch's report of July 1918 stated that Madame Drouet had organised parcels and cases of goods to be sent via Paris to the Hospital Number 4 at Epernay, where perhaps her own relatives were volunteering. Thus, the transnational networks created by French settlers at the other end of the world led to direct channels of help from Australia to France.

The Tasmanian Branch was still active in 1919 when on 5 February it made an application to raise further funds for French relief.[78] The President, Mrs. W. H. Burgess, Treasurer, Mr. R Edwards, and Hon. Secretary Mr. A. J. Kennedy, declared that the French Red Cross Fund had been operating since July 1915, and that to date it had collected more than £11,000 in cash. With the war over, it was necessary to gain permission for further fundraising. Indeed, when the Paris Central office of the Croix Rouge Française granted its permission for the Melbourne branch to be established, it clearly stipulated that those outside France could only operate under its name for the duration of the war. Hence in the closing stages of the war, and in the post-war period, French fundraising would carry on under other labels, as its aims evolved from helping soldiers at the front to contributing to post-war reconstruction.

v. Queensland

A branch of the French Red Cross was also established in Queensland, following the model already set up in other states: a small group of local French-Australians, the French consular agent and interested citizens carried out fundraising for France. Space will not permit a detailed study of its operations, however what is noteworthy are the circumstances of its creation. In November 1915, Alured Kelly, secretary of the FRC Vic, made a business trip to Queensland as the representative of the French Gaulois Tyre Company, and expressed his dismay that there was no specific French fundraising organisation established in Queensland. It was Kelly's letter published in the local press, and his opening donation of five pounds which instigated the Queensland organisation, led by French consular agent Arthur Carter, and French-Australian businessman A. Giraud.[79] The Queensland branch continued to collect funds for France until 1919.

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[78] 'Patriotic appeal by French Red Cross Society, Tasmania' NAA, A2487, 1919/3386.
[79] *Brisbane Courier*, 24 Nov 1915, 7.

II. French and New Caledonian soldiers in Australia - Local and transnational intermediaries

i. Reframing a complicated relationship

During the war, French soldiers and sailors based in France's South Pacific colonies transited through Australian ports on their way to and from the front, and their many visits provided another context through which ideas about French identity were articulated and reframed in Australia. French-Australians were closely involved in providing hospitality to the soldiers, acting as cultural and linguistic intermediaries. The presence of French soldiers and sailors on the streets of Australian cities during the war caused great interest and was widely reported. These visits bring up many aspects of the French-Australian relationship during the war: linking civilian and military aspects, incorporating cultural imagery and questions of identity, as well as fundraising and propaganda aims. The visits are also particularly interesting to consider within the context of Australia's historically complex relationship with New Caledonia, informed as it was by entangled colonial and convict histories. Images of France and Frenchness were articulated against the backdrop of the regional relationship, and within the context of Australia's own colonialist society and its White Australia policy, but these concerns were cast aside in the public narrative of the visits. The French regiments consisted of men of European and South Pacific origins. They were referred to both as French soldiers because they were indeed part of the French army, and as New Caledonians, because in 1914 Noumea was declared the centre for mobilisation for the French Pacific region. Men from Tahiti, the New Hebrides or Wallis and Futuna also trained in Noumea before proceeding to the front. The visits of the French soldiers presented Australians with a vision of racial diversity which potentially unseated their perceptions of what it meant to be French. Although the visits provided an opportunity for Australians to challenge stereotypes associated with their Pacific neighbour, the opportunity was not taken. In the hierarchy of stereotypes, the image of France was the more important, hence problematic elements of the relationship with New Caledonia were massaged to suit the times. This section will first provide an overview of the visits to Australia by the French soldiers between 1915 and 1918, before analysing them more closely to illustrate ways in which the relationship was reframed, and the role of French-Australians as linguistic and cultural mediators. Local French-Australians acted as intermediaries, both in an individual capacity and through organisations such as the AF or the French Red Cross committees. They joined with other

public organisations such as local Australian Red Cross branches and the YMCA to provide hospitality for the visiting French soldiers. Finally, I will link the visits of the French soldiers to the broader issue of pro-war propaganda and pro-conscription rhetoric, showing how the presence of the French soldiers on Australian soil was used to emotive effect to influence public opinion.

Briony Neilson has described the historical relationship between Australia and New Caledonia during the nineteenth century as 'geographically close, yet ideologically distant': informed by a background of regional rivalries, yet with close geographic and trade ties, while Aldrich argued that 'alternately warm and chilly relations between Australia and France' during the nineteenth century were largely due to commercial rivalries in the South Pacific.[80] Australia's own narrative of tension was independent of the Franco-British relationship, as Australian foreign policy concerns did not always align with those of its mother country. During the nineteenth century the French policy of deporting convicts to New Caledonia had introduced a new element with specific connotations in Australia. Recent scholarship has highlighted that convictism became a source of fear and distrust on the part of Australians, as the perceived threat from escaped convicts filled the Australian public with dread.[81] The Australian colonies, separate as they were prior to 1901, were unanimous in their opposition and disdain towards convictism and thus it became one strand in the unifying movement towards federation.[82] New Caledonia was also perceived as a threat to the White Australia Policy, and thus by extension to the British colonial project in Australia. When Japanese and Chinese immigrant workers were imported to New Caledonia as a cheap source of labour, Australians were already demonstrating collective amnesia about their own use of South Pacific Islanders as indentured labour in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Despite historic tensions on a wider scale, trade relations meant there was regular movement of people between New Caledonia and Australia. Australians were accustomed to the visits of French ships, a function of Australia's strategic location on trade routes linking France

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[80] Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific*, 202; Briony Neilson, '"Moral Rubbish in Close Proximity": Penal Colonization and Strategies of Distance in Australia and New Caledonia, c.1853–1897', *International Review of Social History* 64, no. 3 (December 2019): 445–71, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859019000361.

[81] Alexis Bergantz, '"The Scum of France": Australian Anxieties towards French Convicts in the Nineteenth Century' (Australian historical studies, Great Britain: Taylor and Francis, 2018), 150, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=edsbl&AN=vdc.100062192747.0x000001&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=s2775460.

[82] Neilson, '"Moral Rubbish in Close Proximity"'.

with its South Pacific colonies.[83] However, after August 1914 the arrival of the French soldiers highlighted the proximity of French South Pacific colonies as a regional manifestation of the Entente Cordiale. A regional rival was now a regional ally.

The first ship to transport French reservists from New Caledonia and Australia, in late August 1914 was a P and O steamer, the *Malwa*. However, in March 1915 the arrival from France of the *Sontay* provoked widespread interest. The *Sontay* was the first French mail steamer to visit Australia since the monthly service between Marseilles, Australia and Noumea was discontinued after the outbreak of war.[84] The *Sontay* returned to Australia a few weeks later, docking in Sydney on 30 April. On board was the first large contingent of New Caledonians reservists to call through Australia on their way to the front, and their arrival was much anticipated. Sydney residents were determined to offer a suitable welcome to these troops 'from the nearest colony of the great Ally'.[85] The *Sontay* and her cargo of French soldiers stopped in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth and were enthusiastically feted. Over the following years, multiple visits took place. Ships belonging to the *Messageries Maritimes* line, and French warships such as the *Kersaint*, ferried soldiers to France for active service, and returned to New Caledonia with wounded soldiers, some of whom would remain there permanently, and some who would return to the front once recovered. Also making the journey were soldiers granted home leave or furlough. In 1916 the *Gange* made two trips: the first in March carried wounded French soldiers back to New Caledonia and the second in October transported French soldiers on leave. A group of forty wounded soldiers stopped off during April 1917 on their way to Noumea to recuperate, and returned in June on their way back to France. Their visit was eclipsed by the even bigger group of around eight hundred soldiers who visited Sydney and Melbourne in late 1917, then several more over the course of 1918, continuing until 1919, as New Caledonian and Pacific based French soldiers were finally repatriated. During these visits, the soldiers' physical presence provided a real and tangible connection to the French army and by extension to France. Thus, when newspaper headlines referred to the visits as *France in Australia* – not French *people* in Australia – they expressed the idea that the nation itself was embodied via their presence.[86] Within

[83] Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific*.
[84] *Age*, 23 Mar 1915, 6
[85] *Daily Telegraph*, 15 March 1915, p 6.
[86] *Argus*, 6 May 1916, 18

this complex relationship it was necessary to reframe stereotypical images, moulding them to the needs of the alliance.

ii. Welcoming the New Caledonians

When the French soldiers stopped off in Australia on their way to and from New Caledonia, French-Australians naturally acted as intermediaries, assisting in the provision of hospitality. Reports of the visits were laden with image projection, myth making and stereotypes, whose functions were threefold. Firstly, the persistent image of French soldiers as noble and brave Allies was constantly reiterated. However, the image of what a French soldier looked like challenged preconceived notions and dark-skinned colonial soldiers needed to be fitted into this category, even though paradoxical to Australia's settler colonial mentality. Secondly, the local representatives of France and the French-Australian community played a key role in the provision of hospitality to the French soldiers, which reflected their image as linguistic and cultural intermediaries, creators of a transnational space which brought the two countries together but in a local sphere. Thirdly, both French and Australians presented images of their own cultural identity to each other, choosing tropes which they considered would please the other.

The visits were the ideal opportunity to cement positive images and newspapers played their part in conveying what the 'noble and brave Ally' looked like. In May 1915 the men from the *Kersaint* thronged the beauty spots of Sydney. In their bright blue and red uniforms (before the change to horizon blue) they were 'debonair and light-hearted'. *Punch* noted: 'The French soldier always walks in the sunshine, shuns the drab and gloomy, and courtesy is one of his national assets.'[87] Many descriptions frame the New Caledonians through familiar lenses, noting for example those sons of wealthy colonists who had been educated in Australia. Nonetheless, the 'most unusual' sight of French soldiers with complexions bronzed by the sun provoked curiosity and interest.[88]

Initial recruitment from the Pacific Colonies targeted French citizens, who could be Europeans or Creoles, although some indigenous volunteers were also present. It was not until early 1916, following heavy losses, that the government officially began mobilisation of indigenous recruits.[89] 'André', a half-French half-English New

[87] *Punch*, 6 May 1915, 31.
[88] 'French Soldiers', *Sunday Times*, 16 May 1915, 1.
[89] Chantal Antier, 'Le recrutement dans l'empire colonial français, 1914-1918', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 230, no. 2 (2008): 23–36, https://doi.org/10.3917/gmcc.230.0023; Sylvette

Caledonian who had lived in Australia and was completing his French military training wrote to Australian friends about the new policy. 'Kanakas are now being allowed in the French army' he wrote, describing his training alongside natives, and the busy preparations for departure.[90] The eventual arrival of dark-skinned soldiers provided an opportunity for Australians to challenge stereotypes and question prejudices, however, accounts of the visits reveal no perceptible adjustment to the generalised racism of the time.[91] Newspapers drew attention to the multi-racial aspect of the visitors, yet also focussed on the common humanity. Reports displaying a mixture of condescension and friendliness conveyed the exotic nature of otherness, which provided genuine interest to Australia's predominantly British society. The *West Australian* noted the significant cultural curiosity which these men aroused: a considerable number of them had 'dark skin.'[92]

There was more opportunity to get to know the French soldiers when some of them spent three weeks in Sydney during July 1917, convalescing in a Red Cross Home while awaiting berths on a ship to New Caledonia. The group of twenty which included several New Caledonians and Polynesians was profiled in language which expressed affection and admiration, but also paternalistic tones. The soldiers were part of a group travelling to New Caledonia for a variety of reasons: some were taking home leave to which they were entitled, some were posted for colonial duty, others would be returning permanently as they were wounded. Some were recipients of the *Croix de Guerre*. They were both European and native, including 'Kanakas and New Hebrideans'. Observers were struck by the variety and colour of their uniforms, which added to their exotic look. Some of the soldiers had originally left France on board the *Gange*, which was torpedoed in April 1917 off the coast of Tunisia after leaving Marseille. Rescued and sent on their way the men were given whatever uniforms were available, including those of the colonial army of North Africa, so were not all dressed in standard horizon blue. One of them, a Tahitian

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Boubin-Boyer, *De La Première Guerre Mondiale En Océanie : Les Guerres de Tous Les Calédoniens, 1914-1919*, 2001; Sylvette Boubin-Boyer, 'La Nouvelle-Calédonie Dans La Grande Guerre | Mission Centenaire 14-18', 2013, https://www.centenaire.org/fr/espace-scientifique/societe/la-nouvelle-caledonie-dans-la-grande-guerre.

[90] 'Kanakas to serve France', *Herald*, 18 Mar 1916, 12.

[91] The term 'Kanaka' was widely used at the time, as a pejorative label referring generally to inhabitants of the Pacific Islands, particularly in the context of labour imported into Australia. 'Kanak' or 'Canaque' is the French term used by New Caledonian indigenous people in modern times, and is used in the context of self-definition in opposition to European settlers.

[92] *West Australian*, 11 Dec 1917, 4.

was described as tall, good-looking and graceful, while another had 'black eyes and frizzy hair'. The writer was not sure if he was from New Caledonia or the New Hebrides, nonetheless, he had fought bravely for France, and loved his mother, as evidenced by the gifts he was taking her.[93] Another soldier profiled in detail was Private Raymond Surleau, a dispatch runner who had been awarded the Croix de Guerre. Surleau's father had lived through the siege of Paris, a label whose bestowal signified French fortitude and courage.[94]. In a society where 'race' was considered a very real division between people, and carried with it a range of connotations, the Australian public was reassured that the dark-skinned soldiers could also be categorised as noble and valiant, as long as they were wearing the French uniform. This close up view of the multinational nature of the Allies allowed Australians to imagine themselves as part of a coalition even bigger than the British Empire, yet also anchored the relationship to the region, thus combining local and global scales.

Prejudices notwithstanding, French-Australians, francophiles, and the organisations to which they belonged were understandably eager to welcome and look after the visiting Frenchmen. In Sydney, the FALH, and elsewhere the French Red Cross committees cooperated with groups such as the YMCA, the Red Cross, motoring groups, and local government and military representatives to provide charity in the form of gifts and comforts packages, and hospitality such as picnics, luncheons, soirées, musical entertainment and sightseeing trips. French-Australians acted as linguistic intermediaries: The AF frequently supplied interpreters for the visiting soldiers, and from the great to the humble, the skills of French speakers were called upon. In May 1916, the Governor General drew on his 'intimate knowledge of France', to plan outings, while members of the FALH and any Red Cross Voluntary Aid who could 'talk French well' accompanied the men.[95] French soldiers visiting Sydney in 1915 were 'delighted to be able to converse with so many strangers in their own language.'[96] Language signified connection in public as well as private settings. There are many instances where Australians, as well as French people, made speeches in French to symbolise the warmth of the relationship, but also for practical reasons, allowing the French soldiers to understand. In Sydney in July 1918

[93] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 Jul 1917, 8.
[94] *Richmond Guardian*, 11 Aug 1917, 6.
[95] *NSW Red Cross Record*, Vol. 3 no. 6, Jun 1917, 37-39
[96] *Sunday Times*, 9 May 1915, 13.

NSW Governor Davison addressed the veterans in French, comparing their valour to 'Napoleon's Time' and Lieutenant Michelet responded similarly, while on another occasion the Governor General addressed the visitors in French.[97] The choice of French, for both generous and practical reasons, also evokes the era of French as the chief language of diplomacy, with the implication that it was a fitting skill for men of high social standing. The class divide was also evident, when elite French Sydney citizens hosted a dinner for the French officers at the leading French restaurant Paris House. [98]

In late November 1917 the contingent of eight hundred French soldiers commanded by Captain Sicard spent a week in Melbourne on their way to the front, where they paraded in the city centre and were entertained at parks, beaches and grand houses. During the trip to Wattle Park, school children lined the roads, waving flags. One journalist wrote: 'The French recruits' hard, coloured visages were hardly suggestive of emotion yet they were visibly affected by the welcome.'[99] The soldiers' journey by train to Healesville, a picturesque town in the hills east of Melbourne, was an undertaking requiring much planning. The press reported that 'half of them were Frenchmen, and half were swarthy islanders from Tahiti and the Loyalty Group.'[100] Local military commander Major Butter organised the event with the help of the AF, the YMCA and the FRC Vic, and Butter's extensive report of the day is glowing with praise for its success.[101] The YMCA provided the catering, the Melbourne AF supplied fourteen interpreters. Two trains transported the troops, the officers, a band, and civilian representatives to Healesville, where they enjoyed food, music, football, swimming in the river, and interacting with locals. Afterwards, the representatives of the local French organisations wrote to Major Butter, thanking him on behalf of Captain Sicard, who had asked them to pass on his thanks. It is significant that they had been requested to do this by Sicard, and in doing so became intermediaries between the Australian Army and the French Army, a necessary role perhaps for language reasons if he did not speak English, and perhaps also because he assumed them to represent the French side of the relationship, acting as unofficial local representatives of France.

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[97] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 Jul 1918, 10.
[98] 'Le diner français', *Courrier Australien*, 19 May 1916
[99] *Age*, 1 Dec 1917, 15.
[100] *Age*, 30 Nov 1917, 7.
[101] Visit of 4th Contingent of Colonial French Troops, NAA: MP367/1, 552/1/110.

On 1 December 1918 the eight hundred French soldiers who had paraded through Melbourne and visited Healesville left on the *El Kantara*. Before they left, they were presented with Christmas parcels, which Captain Sicard promised to distribute at the appropriate time. Although Australians had frequently received letters of thanks from French soldiers at the front, this time they were supporting men they had seen and spoken to, thus the feelings of charity and connectedness became much more immediate. The parcels containing biscuits, cigarettes, chocolate and more, were from the French citizens of Melbourne and various other charities, and were assembled by the women of the Busy Bees. The *Leader* noted that Charlotte Crivelli and Helen Sexton inspected the goods before they were given to the French.[102]

Some common threads are evident in the welcoming events which indicate the image that Australians wanted to convey about themselves in this pivotal period of the French-Australian relationship. Apart from the natural beauty of the country, Australians presented their own indigenous people's culture in carefully curated moments, such as the attendance of Aboriginal people at an event in which boomerang throwing was demonstrated and the French soldiers invited to have a try. The event symbolises an intersection of colonialism, as indigenous Australians were offered as a cultural curiosity to the visiting indigenous New Caledonians. At the opposite end of the scale were the pretensions by the Melbourne AF who offered a cultural soirée for the French soldiers. As well as entertainment, this event reflects the self-image of the AF as arbiter of high French culture. However, the French soldiers included some Tahitians who could 'barely understand' and yawned throughout the performance. We can only speculate as to whether this reflected more on the performers or the audience.[103] Another recurring image was the sense of connection with France's past articulated by the presence of veterans of the Franco-Prussian War. In Adelaide, Sydney, and Melbourne, visiting French soldiers were introduced to local French residents who had fought in, or who lived through, the Franco-Prussian war. When the New Caledonians stopped in Adelaide in June 1917, François Pinard, an old French resident who had fought in the war of 1870 was brought out to greet the visitors in French. The local citizens seemed proud to produce their own token veteran. Similarly in Sydney, the presence of an old woman who had lived through

[102] *Leader*, 1 Dec 1917, 38
[103] *Graphic of Australia*, 7 Dec 1917, 27.

the siege of Paris lent the event an extra layer of meaning.[104] The implied intention was to present Australia as a place where French history was known and valued, and symbolically connect 'past history' to the history that the world was living through at that moment. Moreover, in evoking the heroes of 1870, Australians confirmed to the visiting French soldiers and to themselves that the republican values of France were present and respected in Australia.

In Perth, at their lunch reception at Government House hosted by Lady Hackett, the French soldiers sang *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* in Tahitian. The spread of the popularity of this song from British troops to the French, was judged proof of the 'ubiquity of the British flag'.[105] The soldiers sang this song at their outing in Healesville too. The choice of this song reflects its huge success generally, while its translation into Tahitian, and performance in Australia by French soldiers is a microcosm of the multi-lingual and multi-national nature of the conflict. Above all, its deliberate choice, as the newspapers were eager to spell out, was taken as a compliment, a symbol that the French soldiers held the Allies in high esteem, as evidenced by their appropriation of the quintessentially British song. Hence it became a public relations exercise by the visiting Frenchmen, as well as mere entertainment.

iii. French visitors encourage recruitment

Recruitment officials recognised the opportunity for local and overseas French identities to combine in encouraging enlistment and support for the war. At the recruitment stand in Sydney's Martin Place, visiting French soldiers added their voices to those urging Australians to enlist. In April 1917, sixty 'fighting Frenchmen' and a band added to the atmosphere. In the presence of Consul-General Chayet, who also spoke, two French officers made speeches expressing gratitude to the heroes of Pozières and Bapaume, while Australian officials extolled the bravery of the French.[106] In July and August 1918, a group of one hundred soldiers returning to New Caledonia on furlough stopped at Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. The speeches from this visit reflect the more optimistic mood as victory appeared possible, but also the desperate lack of men after years of slaughter. In Adelaide, the men were taken to the beach one day, and to Gawler in the

[104] *NSW Red Cross Record*, Vol. 3 no. 11, Nov 1917, 23.
[105] 'Vive La France!' *West Australian*, 11 December 1917, 4.
[106] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 Apr 1917, 8.

wine-producing region the next. Emotive speeches evoking glory, valour and brotherhood set the tone, and the Cheer-up society provided a generous lunch. In a comedic parallel to the linguistic experiences of the AIF in France, the Gawler newspaper noted that communication relied on small talk and hand actions. Locals were amused by the replies of the soldiers who had eaten their fill: 'eatee all day, no more'.[107] The French soldiers continued on to Melbourne where they paraded through the city and then travelled to Sydney by train. Three soldiers were reported missing when the train reached Albury, they were located and travelled on later.[108]

Once in Sydney, they participated in a combined march of French, Italian and AIF soldiers. It was described as 'one big army' and the French received a 'rapturous welcome'. Addressing the crowd, Defence Minister Pearce declared there was room for many more Australians.[109] Acting as interpreter for the French contingent was Marechal du Logis Raymond Thevenet, who was born in Noumea, educated in Sydney and had worked as a wool buyer in Sydney. Thevenet had been an active member of the Sydney French community, and had served on the committee of the AF alongside Georges Playoust and other wool buyers, before leaving for the front in February 1915.[110] Thevenet was scheduled to speak at the recruiting stand in Martin Place on 1 August 1918, but illness kept him at home. Instead, acting French Consul Marcus introduced Captain Aucher, a Sydney resident who was a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war and a French teacher, as the principal speaker. Aucher spoke of Joan of Arc, of miracles, and exhorted Australians to realise they were living in a paradise compared to the French. He was harsh in his comments to Australian men present: 'why do I see so many around me who should be in khaki?' Instead he would appeal to their better halves, the women, asking 'why are the petticoats braver than the trousers?' and exhorted them to emulate Joan of Arc. [111] He also spoke of his son, an AIF soldier wounded at Gallipoli. However, the atmosphere became more light-hearted as Captain Aucher used his platform to offer a free French lesson to intending recruits. They could use French to 'make love to French

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[107] *Bunyip*, 26 Jul 1918, 2.
[108] Lt. Cornet to Fliche, 29 Jul 1918, MAE 429PO/1/50.
[109] *Daily Telegraph*, 31 Jul 1918, 8
[110] *Sun*, 7 Feb 1915, 17. Thevenet was later appointed as an Australian government wool appraiser, a situation which allowed ongoing employment for many French wool buyers when post-war exports to France had not yet resumed, as the entire post-war wool clip had been promised to Great Britain. *Mercury*, 18 Oct 1918, 4. Dwyer 'Flanders in Australia'.
[111] *Daily Telegraph*, 2 Aug 1918, 6.

girls' he said, and then went on to explain the correct pronunciation of 'Foch', to much amusement. Familiar tropes are bound up in this episode: that of Aucher's son the Gallipoli veteran and second-generation migrant, while Aucher is the popular and witty Frenchman, the hero of 1870. Also standard are his expression of optimism regarding the ongoing French-Australian relationship, and his re-telling of the story of Joan of Arc to inspire potential recruits.

Although the visiting French soldiers universally provoked public displays of patriotic unity and good will, some negative interactions did occur. In Adelaide, Australian soldier Herbert Anderson was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment for robbing Gaston Buisson of one pound while drinking in a bar. Moreover, when caught the next day Anderson was fraudulently wearing a Croix de Guerre, which he claimed a French soldier had given him.[112] The old spectre of escaped New Caledonian convicts at large reappeared in 1916 when convict Lancien Maffon absconded in Melbourne while being transported to prison in Noumea.[113] Among the soldiers parading through Melbourne in late 1917, at least some may have had intentions of disappearing into the crowd. Missing for a day, twenty-one-year-old Tahitian Tuko William reappeared in time to sail with the *El Kantara*. But Harry Williams and Albert Boelae were not located for two days, and when found declared that they had accidentally missed embarkation. They were obliged to travel to Perth under the custody of Australian military police, and after the three-day train journey, they were safely delivered to Captain Sicard. [114]

The visits of French troops from New Caledonia provided Australians with a different view of their 'gallant ally'. They constituted a physical, tangible element of the French-Australian relationship, underpinning the perception that the French ally was someone close to home, not merely a distant presence on the other side of the globe. Despite the enthusiasm of the welcome, the contact with New Caledonians did not have any enduring impact on Australia's official racist policies, nor did it fundamentally change people's suspicion or disdain for their dark-skinned northern neighbours. Where the long-term relationship, and lasting perception are concerned, it was the news from France, and the impact of the Australians fighting in France which overshadowed the local connections. However, these visits were not without significance. At the time they engendered a great

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[112] *Register*, 24 Jul 1918, 9.
[113] 'French convict escapes', *Argus*, 8 Jan 1916, 17.
[114] MAE 428PO/1/50.

deal of enthusiasm, and can be viewed not only as vehicles for the expression of pro-French sentiment, but also as another form of patriotic entertainment, the kind of activity which allowed people a few moments of distraction and respite, yet remain within the realm of supporting the war. French and French-speaking Australians played an important role in creating this connection, utilising their language skills and their French-Australian organisations, in partnership with other community organisations, to valorise the image of France.

III. 1919: Closing Stages

On 1 May 1919, a letter to the editor of the Melbourne Argus announced the closure of the FRC Vic.[115] President Mrs Katie Cabena, wife of the new Lord Mayor, and Treasurer David Norman Trenery praised the generosity of Victorians. It had been 'a special honour to be an official and fully authorised branch of the parent society in France'. During their four years of operation they had raised £250,000 in cash and goods for France and her 'gallant soldiers', and Australians were 'now known in France as people of exceptional sympathy and generosity', creating 'a lasting link of mutual affection and admiration between France and Australia'. In its yearly accounts for 1917 – 1918, the Australian Red Cross recorded that it had handed over to the FRC Vic the amount of more than £10,000 pounds, as well as gifts of clothing worth more than £6,000.[116]

In April 1919 Frederica Godfrey, Secretary of the FRC Vic wrote to the Secretary of the Australian Red Cross. They were closing the office, complying with the conditions of their operations. The French organisation expressed its 'very warm thanks' to its Australian counterpart for the help 'so freely given in the cause of France.'[117] In Sydney, the FALH continued operating for another year, and re-formed briefly during the second world war, in collaboration with Charlotte Crivelli, to again send support to France.[118] As a separate specifically French organisation, it had played a special role in conveying images of France and the French in Australia. It had given French and francophile Australians the opportunity to frame their response to the war through channels which bypassed the reporting structure of London and the Empire, defining a separate identity,

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[115] 'French Red Cross Society', *Argus*, 1 May 1919, 3.
[116] Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society, Victorian Division, Fourth Annual Report and Balance Sheets, 1917-1918, 2015.0029, Unit 15, UMA.
[117] ARCS, 2015.0033 Unit 211, UMA.
[118] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*.

even while working alongside them in close cooperation. The links to France also meant that some recognition was granted for the efforts of these 'friends of France'. Charlotte Crivelli gained recognition for her support for France, through fundraising and publicising causes, as well as sending four sons to the French Army. In Melbourne hers was the most recognised face of fundraising for French war charities, even if many other individuals contributed to the success. [119] Crivelli and her fellow committee members were awarded the French government's *Médaille de la Reconnaissance*, an award created during the war to specifically acknowledge the contribution of civilians to France.[120]

i. Recognition in France

The support given by Australians to French causes was publicly recognised in France, and while many appreciative letters and speeches may have contained a self-interested element, the gratitude expressed in the *Philanthropy Journal* should be considered genuine.[121] This monthly publication existed before the war – it was not created simply in response to the wartime philanthropy but most certainly acquired an increased significance, reporting on all matters philanthropic for and by those who were directly involved. In February 1918, the Annual General meeting of the *Assistance Maternelle* was held in Paris, and the proceedings were reported in the June 1918 edition of the journal. Speeches were made on various topics relating to maternal and infant health, public health and the Society's future plans. Towards the end of the meeting, Professor Pinard, who had already delivered a speech earlier, rose again to address the meeting. 'Ladies and Gentlemen' he began. 'I must apologise for forgetting to mention two important matters which I should have mentioned earlier.' He first expressed his gratitude to the Mayors of Paris, and directors of maternity hospitals, upon whose cooperation, support and goodwill the success of the Society's work depended. This should not be taken for granted, he emphasised. Next, he mentioned the Society's financial situation:

> 'You have listened to our treasurer's report and the presentation of our accounts. You will have noticed that at one point, we were staring into an empty coffer.
>
> Why then was this coffer refilled, and how?

[119] 'Patriotic Funds', *Leader*, 23 February 1918, 42.
[120] *Argus*, 7 March 1919, 6.
[121] *La Revue philanthropique*.

> Well, I must declare loudly before all assembled: it is to Australian help that we owe this. (loud applause). This is what saved us! When all of us had made the greatest of sacrifices, and were staring in despair at the demise of this office of the Protection Maternelle et Infantile, our resurrection came from Sydney and Melbourne. I say again, our survival is due to Australian help.' [122]

In April 1919 Charlotte Crivelli obtained authorisation from the Australian government to continue her work for France. She stated that help was needed for crippled, blind and consumptive soldiers, for women and babies, and orphans. Vice-Consul Fliche had asked Crivelli to continue her work, and many ladies had expressed their desire to keep up the sewing parties. Crivelli explained that she would not be making appeals for funds, but rather would quietly continue the 'work circles' sewing clothes and preparing articles, and that any funds collected would be used for the purchase of material and to transport the parcels. [123] Crivelli's application reveals much about the social connections which had been created by the FRC Victoria's fundraising work. It demonstrates that Australians retained their strong feelings of duty towards France, an awareness that Australians' support for France was not confined to military participation. It also speaks of the need for mutual support and comfort which these 'work circles' would have provided to women, so important in the aftermath period, when the trauma was still raw. The long-term implications of these connections inform the modern-day French-Australian relationship. In the post-war period, Charlotte Crivelli and Suzanne Caubet also played a key role in the fundraising by Victorians for the reconstruction of the Somme village of Villers-Bretonneux, and Victoria's adoption of the town, in which Australian soldiers had fought in April 1918. During the war, cultural imagery, icons and myths and their connection to national identity were a key feature of the operation of the fundraising organisations. In Australia they included symbols of Empire, nationalistic imagery such as Australia Day with its wattle and native fauna icons, as well as images of the Belgians and the Allies more broadly. As this chapter shows, the French fundraising organisations constituted one more layer in this layer cake of identity expression, illustrating how

[122] *La Revue philanthropique*, 279. *
[123] Application for permission to continue work done by former French Red Cross Society of Victoria as war relief work, NAA, A2487, 1918/4827

Frenchness was perceived in Australia, and how this reflected the French-Australian relationship more broadly.

For French-Australians on the home front, the main response was fundraising specifically for French causes: for French soldiers at the front, for wounded French soldiers, and for suffering civilians, mothers, children, and orphans. The establishment of the French fundraising organisations fulfilled a need to express French identity, patriotism, and connection with France. Additionally, many French-Australians were part of the humanitarian response in France, and were able to use their bilingual skills, and their transnational links, to further the cause of providing aid from Australia to France. French-Australians responded to the war, individually and through their organisations, by harnessing local and international networks. Across all levels of society, perceived connections to France were expressed in public activity. For so many people, France had become a place of grief and trauma, the place where their loved ones had died or been irreparably damaged physically and psychologically by war. Despite this, in parallel, there persisted perennial idealised images of France and Frenchness. Press-ganged into service during the war, these ideals were offered in the public realm as a justification for all the suffering. Thus, French culture was mobilised in Australia to maximise the success of the war charities. Paradoxically, the clichés helped maintain support for the war – which itself caused so much suffering. References to the greatness of France, through her history, her food, her cultural values, strengthened the public's will to continue. French-Australians contributed to this mobilisation as individuals, and through organisations based on transnational and local connections. The success of the French patriotic funds drew on horizontal and vertical networks, so that members of the privileged classes and the not-so-privileged found a common cause. They operated within the framework of large organisations, yet their activities and the manner in which they influenced the public discourse corresponds to a 'bottom up' dynamic, or what Annette Becker and Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau called 'spontaneous mobilisation.'[124] In contrast, a 'top down' mobilising of minds also influenced Australian public opinion, and the next section of the thesis will analyse how French government representatives and transnational institutions incorporated soft power in their dealings between France and Australia. This will be

[124] Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Understanding the Great War*, 110.

framed through three examples: the diffusion of pro French government propaganda; the efforts of the AF to continue its policy of cultural diplomacy and finally the way in which the French Economic Mission in Australia in 1918 tied up military, philanthropy and propaganda threads, combining them with its primary stated aim to improve economic ties between Australia and France.

Chapter 7. Pro-French Propaganda in Australia

Wartime propaganda is a phenomenon whose meaning has evolved over the past century, and a concept which has been the focus of a great deal of study by cultural historians. Landmark studies by John Horne and Alan Kramer, and Annette Becker, analysed the implications of First World War atrocity propaganda for the longer term twentieth century history. They showed the links made between the public narrative and understanding of atrocities committed during the First World War, with widespread reluctance to believe in later atrocities, genocide and the holocaust.[1] However, as Horne has explained, during the First World War, the term propaganda retained its neutral sense: 'simply the attempt to persuade others of a particular cause or point of view'.[2] In Australia, emotive stories, which Horne classes as 'manipulative propaganda', began to circulate from the early days of the war, with a focus on German atrocities, the dehumanisation of the enemy, and the image of 'poor little Belgium'. As the war continued, the courageous and noble character of France was a constant theme. France as a beacon of intellectual and artistic excellence remained, but images of France and Frenchness became complicated – they were no longer limited to cultural soirées, and the latest fashion. Australians viewed France as a source of woe and tragedy, as well as inspiration. Images of France were a crucial element in promoting fundraising for the war effort, encouraging civilians to give generously of their time, effort and money to support the machine of war. While the AF, the FRC branches in Victoria and other states, and the FALH in New South Wales were the most visible French organisations in everyday society they were not the only actors in this effort. This chapter argues that other vectors for mobilising pro-French sentiment were also operating. Certain key individuals played a role in the dissemination of pro-French propaganda, such as Vice-Consul Homery, Doctor Marcel Crivelli, Melbourne University French Professor Maurice Carton, and NSW Premier William Holman, and their public pronouncements and private correspondence can be contextualised within France's propaganda and information policy. The Melbourne consular archives reveal examples of

[1] John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices Rouges 14-18 France et Belgique Occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010); Annette Becker, *Messagers du désastre - Raphael Lemkin, Jan Karski et les Génocides* (Paris: Fayard, 2018).
[2] Horne, 'End of a Paradigm?'

Homery's action both on his own account, and in his encouragement of others, to maintain the right message.

In Australia propaganda and news of the war was carefully controlled, supplied via government approved agencies and official war correspondents, and sent through official channels. Its dual nature reflected its twin aims: positive articles in praise of the British Empire and her soldiers which minimised details of death and disaster, designed to inspire optimism, and conversely, negative articles focussing on German 'barbarism' aimed to dehumanise the enemy.[3] The screening of newsreels provided an additional source of information seen for the first time during the war. As in other countries, photographs, art, and cartoons formed an important part of the culture of propaganda.[4] Australia had its own official war correspondent in Charles Bean, but war news came from a range of other sources, much of it funnelled through London for those in the 'British' world. The lines between war news and propaganda were sometimes blurred, as was the case with the London based Reuters newsagency.[5] However, despite the dominance of the British Empire focus, it is significant for the present study that the French state also aimed to influence public opinion in Australia. The French government also actively observed the conscription debate, hoping to influence public opinion in support of the policy. The interest taken by France in Australian domestic politics constitutes a little-known facet of French 'behind-the-scenes' influence and connection to Australian public discourse. Local French people and francophiles supported efforts by the French state to disseminate the desired image of France, and their actions and speeches were judged and commented upon by French government, demonstrating the flow of ideas and information which informed Australian public opinion about France and the conduct of the war. This chapter and the one which follows explore the interventions and interest by France in Australian public opinion as a form of soft power. Joseph Nye coined the term 'soft power', although the concept itself has existed for a long time before it was named. [6] Nye defined soft

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[3] Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*, 4:190–92.
[4] Robertson, 'Norman Lindsay and the "Asianisation" of the German Soldier in Australia during the First World War'; Hutchison and Robertson, 'Introduction'; Emily Robertson, 'Propaganda and "Manufactured Hatred": A Reappraisal of the Ethics of First World War British and Australian Atrocity Propaganda', *Public Relations Inquiry* 3, no. 2 (1 May 2014): 245–66, https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147X14542958; Robertson, 'A Much Misunderstood Monster'.
[5] Peter Putnis and Kerry McCallum, 'Reuters, Propaganda-Inspired News, and the Australian Press During the First World War', *Media History* 19, no. 3 (1 August 2013): 284–304, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2013.817836.
[6] Joseph S. Nye, 'Public Diplomacy and Soft Power', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (1 March 2008): 94–109, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699.

power as 'the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment'. He explains that soft power is created through a country's resources and that 'the resources that produce soft power arise in large part from the values an organization or country expresses in its culture. Through mobilising soft power, governments reach out to the public to influence opinion, in contrast to communication with diplomats and foreign officials.'[7] Jan Melissen further explored the concept of soft power, arguing that 'image cultivation and propaganda are age old activities, but the First world War crucially brought in 'professional image creation across national borders.' [8]

Annette Becker and Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau's analysis of propaganda in France described a structure which provides a useful model for comparison. They argued that propaganda operated as a horizontal as well as a vertical process. It was not only imposed by governments – top down – but also functioned in a decentralised manner, a 'spontaneous mobilisation'.[9] As we saw in Chapter Four, the FRC branches in Australia drew on positive images of France to support their fundraising work, using traditional and recognisable symbols such as music, food, plays, and idyllic villages as cultural resources that were mobilised in a particular cause. Such mobilisation of culture fits within the horizontal category. However, propaganda in support of France was not merely a locally generated spontaneous activity, born out of the patriotic zeal of the French-born citizens. France's official propaganda organisations transmitted information and images to the Australian public, as indeed they did to all parts of the world – to both Allied and neutral countries, forming part of the 'top down' operation of pro-French propaganda in Australia. In Melbourne, Consul Homery was the first point of contact and conduit for disseminating information from and to the French Government.

I. Maurice-Carton and the reports of German atrocities

Important early anti-German propaganda involved the reporting of German atrocities against civilians in Belgium and occupied France, and images of the barbaric and cruel 'Hun'. This was just as true for Australia as in Europe. Stories recounted by French and Belgian refugees reached the public in both Allied and neutral countries. While the

[7] Nye.
[8] Jan Melissen, *Wielding Soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingandael, 2005).
[9] Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Understanding the Great War*, 109–11.

violence against civilians in the occupied zones was real, caricatures of the enemy, and sensationalist reporting were useful tools. Such propaganda was pivotal in creating national unity and consensus regarding the need to fight.[10] As in Britain and France, numerous reports of German atrocities were reported in Australia.[11] While a steady stream of dispatches continued from the official press bureau in London, another source of information about the German atrocities was the French state propaganda organisation. In March 1915, Maurice-Carton wrote to Homery asking for more copies of 'the big report' on German atrocities, as the two copies he had recently received were being read by the law professor and the history professor, and there were many members of the teaching staff eager to read it.[12] The Bryce Report, more well-known to the British public, was released in May 1915 and reproduced internationally. However, Maurice-Carton was referring to the French government official report, published in March 1915.[13] Multiple copies of the French report reached Australia through the consular representatives. Hence although Australia's principal source of information and propaganda was via the British government, from the early days of the war direct connections were also established between France and Australia. In June 1915, the New South Wales Government Gazette confirmed that Holman had received a copy of the French government's report. The Government believed that 'a perusal of the document would illustrate the criminal nature of the aggressions.'[14] Moreover, despite the confronting nature of the content, they recommended that women be allowed to read the report, 'in order that they may fully realise the nature of the cause in which the men of Australia are called upon to fight.'[15]

The multiple arms of French state propaganda and control of information evolved over the course of the war. From early 1915, departments were created, expanded and reorganised under the *Bureau d'Information Militaire* which was established by the

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[10] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 46–51; Becker, *Les Cicatrices Rouges 14-18 France et Belgique Occupées*; Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial*.
[11] 'German Barbarism', *Age*, 27 Aug 1914, 8.
[12] Maurice-Carton to Homery, 10 Mar 1915, MAE 428PO/1/48
[13] Les atrocités allemandes en France : reproduction intégrale illustrée des rapports présentés à M. le Président du Conseil par la commission instituée en vue de constater les actes commis par l'ennemi en violation du droit des gens. (Décret du 23 septembre 1914) / [signé : Georges Payelle, Armand Mollard, Georges Maringer et Edmond Paillot] ; illustrations de Maurice Leroy, Paris, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32513076p Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed 3 October 2018
[14] 'Conduct of the German Army in France', *Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales*, 2 Jun 1915
[15] 'Conduct of the German Army in France'

Ministère de la Guerre in February 1915. Within this structure, the *Maison de la Presse*, under the direction of Philippe Berthelot, was responsible for releasing approved information to the French and foreign press, and monitoring press censorship.[16] Reporting to the *Maison de la Presse*, the *Section Photographique de l'Armée* (SPA), which soon expanded to include the *Section Cinématographique de l'Armée* (SCA), was created in the spring of 1915. It was a somewhat belated response to the German official propaganda program, which was much further advanced in its use of images as part of an overall information program. Under the joint direction of the War Ministry and the Foreign Affairs Ministry, one of its official policies was to send information to France's 'agents and friends abroad'.[17] In January 1917 the SPA and the SCA merged to form the *Section Photographique et Cinématographique de l'Armée* (SPCA).

As part of its global reach, the French government's direct point of contact was its official representatives. In April 1915 the *Bureau de la Presse* section of the MAE contacted all French diplomatic representatives, requesting information and advice. It began by stating that as France was in a war to fight for the cause of all free people, the MAE acknowledged the great importance of the dissemination of military, political and economic information. A brief resumé of the current system followed, outlining the three methods used to send information: official communiqués, by telegram (tending to be hourly updates on military situation); radio-telegrams – sent daily from Lyon, and of a more general nature; and the Havas news agency, which had a contract to send news updates to foreign recipients. The MAE wanted to know how effective these three methods were and how quickly news that was sent arrived on the other side of the world. Most importantly, how quickly did the information appear in the local press, it being understood that this was the most effective way to convey such information to a large audience. [18]

The MAE also wanted to know how propaganda was working for the allies and for Germany, to enable it to properly set up an effective French system. 'How successfully are the communiqués sent by our British and Russian allies reproduced?', they asked their consular representatives. 'Finally, in as much detail as possible, please let us know what

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[16] Claude Bellanger, ed., *Histoire Générale de La Presse Française*, vol. Vol 3, de 1871 à 1940 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972).
[17] Hélène Guillot, 'La section photographique de l'armée et la Grande Guerre', *Revue historique des armées*, no. 258 (2010).
[18] The Havas news agency was the first news agency in France and later became Agence France Presse.

methods the Germans are using in your country to spread their information.'[19] Homery's reply presented Melbourne as a city somewhat parochial and narrow in its outlook, only receiving and publishing news from London, wearing the blinkers of Empire. He explained how the press system in Australia worked, and that all communiqués were usually sent via the UK censor.

> Since the very start of the war, all the Australian newspapers have followed an agreement with the Australian government to only publish news which has been sent via their London correspondents. All news is received by telegraph, after being carefully examined by the British censor. Thus, the Melbourne public is kept up to date on all the latest events and particularly on the news from the various theatres of war, in just the same way as the British public. As this news is of course destined for a British colony, a privileged place is reserved for the detailed reproduction of weekly reports from Marshal French. They can be rather excessive in tone, different from our more sober communiqués. However, to be honest I must say that French communiqués also take their rightful important place alongside the British. The accompanying commentaries highlight our country's important role in this gigantic struggle and give full credit to France's admirable courage. [20]

While France's valiant nature was appreciated, the locals 'only published English news, and only read English newspapers'.[21] Homery's view of the somewhat skewed nature of the English dominated press was highlighted in a press clipping across which he had scrawled his own exasperated comment: '*c'est l'Angleterre qui a sauvé Paris*!' (It's England who has saved Paris!) The offending article was an account by Victorian Catholic Bishop Patrick Phelan who had visited France both before and after the war began. Phelan described France's unpreparedness for war in July and contrasted it with the unity and resolve he observed in October. He commented that the war had melded Britain and France, noting the gratitude of the French to the British for 'stepping in at the critical moment […] if it had not been for the British the Germans would undoubtedly have got to Paris'. Given Europe's distance, the pronouncements of anyone who had been, observed and returned were eagerly received in Australia.[22] Homery did indeed have a point regarding the Empire-centric nature of Melbourne society. Australia's vision of

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[19] *Propagande, communications officielles* MAE Circular, 15 Apr 1915, MAE 428 PO/1/45.
[20] Homery to MAE, 14 Jun 1915, MAE 428 PO/1/45 *
[21] Homery to MAE, 14 Jun 1915, MAE 428 PO/1/45.
[22] 'France Was Unprepared, Declares Bishop Phelan', *Herald*, 16 Mar 1915, 1.

itself as British has been well documented. However, as he was only reporting on the Melbourne scene, it was not his place to report on Sydney's French language newspaper *Le Courrier Australien*, nor did comment on the successful German language press which had served the German immigrant communities in South Australia.[23] Moreover, news did come through from other sources, but in wartime anything of a military nature would have gone through the British censor first, even if it was a French communiqué. [24] It was in this context then that Australia took its place among the nations which would need a complementary source of news, and this is where the *Maison de la Presse* came in.

II. The *Maison de la Presse* in Australia

By 1916 the communication with 'agents and friends abroad' by the SPA had reached out to Australia. Homery's 1916 file 'films, photographs and official war publications: Doctor Marcel Crivelli' indicates some of the ways that official representations of France were carried out in Australia. Within this file, is an intriguing letter which bears a handwritten note by Homery at the top of the page: copy of a letter sent to Doctor Crivelli.[25] In the letter the director of the *Maison de la Presse* approached Crivelli asking him to act on their behalf, to publish photos in Australian newspapers. The SPA had heard 'indirectly via Professor Pinard about the zeal with which Crivelli spread French ideas in Australia, making them available to a wide public, to the great benefit of our country'. The SPA had immediately thought of co-opting Crivelli, and enclosed a collection of sample photographs, promising to send more if required. Slides which could accompany public talks were also offered. The SPA also asked Crivelli for 'any advice you can provide regarding our service, such as to how to enrich our current collections, or anything regarding French life in general which you feel would be of particular interest to Australians.'[26]

As we saw in Chapters Four and Five, the link to Professor Pinard was established via Suzanne Caubet in Paris, who transferred funds raised in Australia to the CRF and the *Societé Maternelle*, of which Pinard was a director. It has not yet been possible to discover why and how Homery had a copy of this letter, nor to find Crivelli's response to the letter.

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[23] Volkhard Wehner, 'The German-Speaking Community of Victoria between 1850 and 1930: Origin, Progress and Decline' (PhD, Melbourne, University of Melbourne, 2017).
[24] A French Communiqué, *Australasian* 12 Sep 1914, 32.
[25] MAE 428PO/1/49.
[26] Maison de la Presse to Crivelli, 20 May 1916, MAE 428PO/1/49 *

However, he clearly did agree to the request. In late 1916 Doctor Crivelli had begun to translate and distribute information from the French government: 'a number of pamphlets, translated from the French, which deal with German atrocities, German aims and ambitions, and so forth.' Their publication 'throughout the Commonwealth' would support recruiting drives.[27] Both photos and films were a central part of the SPCA's toolkit, and French official war films were shown in Melbourne and Sydney during May 1916.[28]

In September 1917, the SPCA sent 29,000 photographic proofs to over twenty countries – allied and neutral – in every continent. For that month, 934 were for Great Britain and her colonies – a more detailed breakdown not given. However, also for that month the SPCA noted twenty-five photo albums had been sent to Australia.[29] '*La Défense de Verdun*' was one of a series of SPCA albums compiled with different themes (others included the Battle of Champagne, and an Italian focussed album). Doctor Crivelli's own copy of the album (figure 11) has been amalgamated into a larger album featuring official photos of the French army: a soldier on leave, a telephone post at the front, French soldiers at the Salonika front, or French artillery. [30]

Figure 11 Crivelli's copy of *La Défense de Verdun*.[31].

France's diplomatic posts were the principal vehicle for diffusing the SPCA's material. A series of French war photos sent to Australia from the SPCA was published in Australian newspapers in late 1916 and early 1917, each time acknowledging the source

[27] 'Recruiting for Army, *Herald*, 19 Dec 1916, 10.
[28] 'French War Films', *Sunday Times*, 21 May 1916, 16. *Age*, 15 May 1916, 9.
[29] 'Rapport sur la Création, le Fonctionnement, Les Résultats, de la Section Photographique et Cinématographique de l'Armée, Octobre 1917', Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, 80/074/02
[30] The French Army. Photographic Documents., 1916, State Library of Victoria.
[31] The French Army, photographic documents, 1916, SLV.

of the photos as Homery. A feature in *Table Talk*, bears the headlines '*Dieu et mon Droit - Guerre à Outrance*' – and 'interesting pictures from the French Fighting Front'.[32] The French language motto of the monarchs of the United Kingdom, conveys a double meaning - referencing the authority of the King and Empire, and the implication that the French are also fighting on the side of God, and right. The concept of fighting a 'holy war' against the godless Germans was pervasive in France.[33] The headline may also be an ironic criticism of the Germans, alluding to their motto '*gott mit uns'*- God with us. *Guerre à Outrance* referred to all-out war or unlimited war, waging war relentlessly until the last man. It was carried out by both sides; however, the expression was used in propaganda contexts to imply that it was only the policy of the German army. The expression was mentioned in Australian newspapers alongside phrases such as 'right against might', and one journalist labelled it as the German way of making war: showing no mercy and deliberately targeting civilians to wear down one's enemy.[34] Therefore it is for the reader to decide who are the godly and who are the ungodly. The photos show a French soldier on the front at Verdun; a captured German observation balloon; and a French soldier's funeral. '*With our French Allies*' included images to inspire and reassure such as French guns ready for the front, French soldiers being entertained by an Alsatian family in traditional costume (reminding readers of Germany's annexation of Alsace in 1870) and a visit by King George to the front.[35] Photos of Russian and French soldiers training side by side were intended to convey the strength resulting from the successful cooperation of the Allies.[36]

The photos of the French and the Russians were placed alongside an article in favour of conscription – a nice complement to Homery's pro-conscription opinions, which he shared with both his superior in Sydney and NSW Premier Holman.[37] Holman was considered a key ally and his public pronouncements on France were noted and reported by Homery in Melbourne and by Chayet in Sydney. On 24 September 1915 Holman made a speech to the Sydney University Union, outlining many reasons why civilisation was indebted to France, and giving a somewhat revisionist view of German culture and

[32] *Table Talk*, 14 Sep 1916, 8.
[33] Becker, *War and Faith, The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*.
[34] 'Work and Play and War', *Argus*, 9 Jan 1915, 4. 'Enemy Tactics', *The Methodist*, 2 Jan 1915, 7.
[35] *Australasian*, 16 Sep 1916, 57.
[36] *Herald*, 6 Sep 1916,
[37] Donohoo, 'NSW Premier William Holman and the "Inexhaustible Interest of French Affairs"'.

history. Holman's pro-French speech was widely reported in the press and was reprinted for distribution.[38] Chayet was impressed and subsequently collaborated with Holman to organise the printing of extra copies. Chayet wrote to Homery reminding him of the speech's value for France, and advised that he would organise for 500 copies to be sent to Melbourne, to be distributed to all the societies, members of the French community, and all others who would be interested. [39]

The change of consul after Homery's death introduced a change of energy and change of priorities. The French and francophile community had settled into a pattern – organisations and networks had been established. By contrast, Australian society was experiencing upheaval and conflict, on the home front, as well as collective trauma as losses rose tragically in this 'worst year of the war'.[40] During this time, it seems Doctor Crivelli operated as an unofficial assistant to the French government. It would have been a natural extension of his eminent position in the French community. During the interim period, Belgian Consul Lauwers took on the French consular duties. Lauwers' letter to Foreign Minister Aristide Briand named Doctor Crivelli as the main individual worthy of receiving the government's latest promotional brochure. Briand had sent copies of a monthly review called *France Maroc*. Lauwers thanked him for this publication which showed the beauty of French colonies. He assured him that the copies would be distributed to worthwhile recipients, such as the University, the Library and Doctor Crivelli, 'who devotes himself untiringly to promote all French propaganda'. [41]

In France all sections of society united to fight the total war - artists, writers, intellectuals and ordinary people mobilising to form the '*union sacrée'*.[42] In the same way, a cross section of French society was recruited to contribute to the propaganda program.[43] Berthelot's notes on the running of the propaganda program describe the elaborate systems in place in many countries. From Sweden to Brazil to the USA, films and books would be part of the cultural toolkit which France's agents used to spread and curate the right images, with even the actors of La Comédie Française considered to be part of the

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[38] Holman, W. A. (1915). Our debt to France: an address to the Sydney University Union on Friday, 24th September 1915 *Daily Telegraph*, 25 Sep 1915, 8.
[39] Chayet to Homery 10 May 1916, Homery to Chayet May 1916, MAE 428PO/1/45
[40] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*.
[41] Lauwers to Briand 19 Feb 1917, MAE 428PO/1/47 *
[42] Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914-1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[43] MAE 10PA-AP/1 Berthelot

machine during their tour of Brazil. While this file particularly mentions neutral countries, a note on strategy is pertinent. One of the propaganda unit's official policies was the use of doctors as agents in overseas countries.[44] Doctors were considered as ideal representatives for France overseas. They were likely to have been educated in France, attended a French medical school, and therefore would be well connected. That they could attend scientific conferences would provide them with networking opportunities. Moreover they were trusted professionals. The prominent position of Doctor Crivelli in Australian society and his deep patriotism seems to have made him an ideal candidate.

III. Homery on Verdun and conscription

Australia's conscription debate was the subject of international discussion at the time. John Conor compared attempts to introduce conscription in Australia with that of other Anglophone countries in which it was introduced – New Zealand, Canada, Great Britain and the USA.[45] His analysis of the 'English-speaking conversation on conscription in the First World War' deepens our understanding of transnational influences, showing that debates in Australia were influenced by, and in turn had an influence on, those in other countries.[46] However, the fact that France also took an interest in the debate, and at times intervened in the conversation, remains an unexamined aspect. In July 1916, French fundraising and propaganda aims were entwined in an emotive speech by Homery, which was delivered at 'a country fair' in Victoria as part of French Week fundraising. For those assembled to listen, the Homery's physical presence stood for the connection to France itself, and underscored the message of his words – that the reason the war was being fought was for France and all that France symbolised. Homery evoked the heroic soldier of Verdun – whose glory, self-sacrifice and endurance echoed the familiar phrases commonly used in the press. At patriotic events and recruiting drives, speeches to inspire enthusiasm for the war were common, but Homery's speech – by a Frenchman, about France and in support of French fundraising causes, constituted a specific French point of connection. French engagement in the conscription debate was evident in August 1916 when Homery sent a report to Paris, relaying Billy Hughes' policy on conscription, and the contents of a speech Hughes had made at Melbourne Town Hall soon after returning

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[44] Ibid. Usage de Médecins à l'étranger comme agents de propagande.
[45] John Connor, 'Why Was It Easier to Introduce Conscription in Some English-Speaking Countries than in Others?', in *The Conscription Conflict and the Great War*, ed. Robin Archer et al. (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2016).
[46] Archer et al., *The Conscription Conflict and the Great War*, 7.

from Europe. The French closely observed the conscription debate, and the consul made clear his support of the policy. Homery used the press to reply to a question that he had been asked repeatedly: does France send its conscripted soldiers to fight overseas? Homery's explanation of compulsory army service in France painted a picture firmly in favour of conscription, and he was subsequently chastised in the press for 'interfering', in domestic affairs, and 'butting in where he had no business'. [47] As Damousi pointed out, the Australian historiography of the conscription debate has focussed more on analysing the agenda of the no campaign and the reasons for its success in defeating each of the conscription referenda, and less scholarship has addressed the motivations of the pro-conscription lobby.[48] The interest shown by French representatives such as the consuls, and their attention and intervention in the debate reveal a layer of transnational influence which has not been considered before.

IV. Holman's 1917 journey and speech

In Sydney, Holman's love of France and the French language was well known. His devotion to France was recognised when he was awarded the *Legion d'Honneur* in June 1916.[49] Such devotion was not to be taken for granted. His open and frequent pronouncements on the glory of France contrast with the absence of such speeches by the Premier of Victoria, Alexander Peacock. As Holman prepared in 1917 to travel to England and Europe, Chayet made sure to provide a suitable introduction for him to the French government. He wrote to inform the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Holman's journey, and suggested that an official welcome, as cordial as possible, would enable members of the government to thank him appropriately for 'the beneficial influence he has had on his compatriots, drawing them intellectually closer to France.' Chayet praised Holman's role as a defender of France.

> Holman has constantly been very generous in his expressions of affection towards France, and of admiration for her institutions. But it is especially since the outbreak of the war that the francophile attitude of this statesman has been confirmed. At a time when most Australians showed little sympathy for France, when the press kept quiet about the

[47] 'Army Service in France', *Age*, 7 Oct 1916, 12; 'Vice-Consul's interference', *Evening Echo*, 7 Oct 1916, 2; 'A Consul Corrected', *Truth*, 14 Oct 1916, 8.
[48] Archer et al., *The Conscription Conflict and the Great War*, 93.
[49] Donohoo, 'NSW Premier William Holman and the "Inexhaustible Interest of French Affairs"'.

> success of our armies, and from the newspaper reports one would think it was only the English who were doing anything, Mr Holman had the courage to denounce the public's ignorance and reveal to his compatriots France's huge part in the struggle against a mutual enemy.[50]

Holman was well received in France, and his travels were documented in detail in the Australian press. President Poincaré met with him and officially conveyed France's thanks for support given by New South Wales, acknowledging its contribution in both men and goods. Holman had also been closely involved with the FALH's fundraising in aid of France.[51] While in France, Holman also toured the front, where he was injured by a random German shell, suffering concussion, bruising and shock.[52]

In November that year, having returned from Europe, Holman gave a speech at the Institute of Journalists. The speech, referred to as 'startling', 'striking' and 'depressing' was reproduced in all the newspapers. He was now better informed about the course of the war and spoke about the terrible losses suffered by France during the Nivelle offensive. He claimed that, according to a source in London, the situation was so desperate that France was almost at the point of separating itself from the allies and making a separate peace with Germany. He quoted casualty figures too, claiming that 70,000 men had been killed in the recent offensive, and that as of mid-1917 during his visit to France, French casualties of the war so far totalled 2.5 million.[53] In an urgent cable marked 'secret', Chayet informed his superiors in Paris about the speech. He was clearly rattled, calling the speech 'deplorable' and asked for advice on how to deal with the situation. Should he comment on the declaration? 'The French people in Sydney have been very affected by the speech', he wrote. 'How much will this speech damage the reputation of France, and what can be done?' [54]

Holman's 'depressing' speech was described thus by one newspaper:

> Mr. Holman, at the luncheon given in his honour by the Institute of Journalists last Friday, gave a pessimistic survey of the war position,

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[50] Chayet to the MAE 17 Apr 1917, MAE 139 CPCOM/9 *
[51] Brown and Dwyer, 'The French-Australian League of Help: Restoring the Record'.
[52] *Argus*, 13 Jun 1917, 9. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 Jul 1917, 13.
[53] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 Nov 1917, 14.
[54] Chayet to MAE, 13 Nov 1917, MAE 428PO/1/9 *

> and held out but little hope of a crushing defeat of the enemy. ‘When I landed in England,' said Mr. Holman, 'it was on the eve of the great defeat of the French on account of their too precipitate advance on the Hindenburg line '. Mr. Holman said that it involved losses of 70,000 men to the French. He afterwards learned that just before then there had been a definite suggestion that the French Government were considering the question of making a separate peace.[55]

It is significant that this speech was made in the middle of the ongoing heated public debate on conscription. Holman’s declaration on France’s terrible position surely would have been calculated to spur people to action, persuade more men to enlist and for voters to vote ‘yes’ to conscription. Holman was a skilful politician and knew how to appeal to his audience. While his dominant motivations were patriotism and francophilia, it is interesting to contrast a speech he made to ‘working men’ also with the aim of encouraging recruitment and support for the war effort.[56] In this tract, he answered a series of questions purportedly addressed to him by working men on the conduct of the war. He appealed to their British identity as the way to encourage enlistment. ‘What has the worker got to fight for?’ was the question. ‘Freedom and the Australian way of life’ was the answer. Equality, the education system, the right to vote, and ‘his mother tongue’, stated Holman, implying English and the culture that went along with that. On this occasion, there was no mention of France as a reason why Australian workers should enlist. Nevertheless, it was Holman’s special place as a friend of France which allowed him to make his controversial speech and which gave it added significance. Holman’s speech may have echoed back to London. On 14 November, the speech was linked (in the Australian press at least) to a question asked in the British Parliament about the French making a separate peace proposal to Germany.[57]

Did it perturb the French, as Chayet supposed? Chayet had noted that the Sydney French community was upset by Holman’s speech, but curiously there is no reference to it in the *Courrier Australien* even though the speech was extensively reported in other newspapers. Perhaps they wished to avoid alarming their French readers. However,

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[55] ‘Depressing influences’, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 Nov 1917, 8.
[56] ‘Of interest to the worker’, Papers relating to William Arthur Holman, 1915-1922, AH62/5, ML, SLNSW.
[57] Peace Moves, *Grafton Argus and Clarence River General Advertiser*, 14 Nov 1917, 3.

Maurice-Carton of the University of Melbourne was one perturbed Frenchman who conveyed his displeasure to the public. Maurice-Carton's scathing retort to Holman's speech sparked a war of words in the press. He argued that Holman's speech contained 'some strange revelations' and questioned the casualty statistics: 'no matter how carefully you may scrutinise the records in hand, no trace of the defeat is to be found' While Maurice-Carton did accept that General Nivelle was responsible for the great loss of men, he would not entertain talk of defeat.

> General Nivelle was deprived of the supreme command because he was too lavish with his men's lives. This incident is probably the one referred to by Mr. Holman, but between this and a defeat there is a great difference. [58]

'France is not done yet', he continued. He questioned the motives of this 'much travelled politician', who was eager to impress the audience with his own importance. Such talk was 'galling to Frenchmen, who know what their country has suffered'.[59] The same day, Maurice-Carton's criticism was printed in the Sydney press, which referred to him as 'an outspoken Frenchman'. [60]

Holman's response the next day accused Maurice-Carton of 'fault finding' and being 'unnecessarily anxious to find cause for offence'. Displaying some clarity, he speculated that perhaps both men were at a disadvantage, each responding only to partially reported facts in the press. Maurice-Carton was responding to a newspaper report of Holman's original speech, while Holman claimed he had not read the whole of Maurice-Carton's criticism of him. (In fact it was faithfully reproduced in the Sydney press). Holman defended his use of the word 'defeat', that it was in no way intended to diminish the glory of the French army. He repeated the casualty figures, as being 'best estimates' and explained the motivation for his speech was purely love of France: 'my own humble tribute of admiration to the heroic spirit of the nation'. [61]

In his final return lobbed back to Holman, Maurice-Carton again expressed his unwillingness to accept the casualty figures: 'as I said before, no record of the losses mentioned is to be found anywhere. I am quite ready to believe that Mr. Holman is a

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[58] Mr. Holman On the War, *Argus*, 14 Nov 1917, 11.
[59] Ibid.
[60] 'Holman And War', *Sun*, 14 Nov 1917, 5.
[61] 'Fault-Finding' *Sun*, 15 Nov 1917, 4.

friend of France, though I must say he has a strange way of showing his friendship.'[62] Ironically it is Maurice-Carton's unquestioning attitude which appears disingenuous to a modern reader. Idealism coloured his willingness to believe the official government line, even while being aware that propaganda meant suppressing the negative news and highlighting the positive. Holman on the other hand, consummate politician as well as francophile, was readier to confront reality and use it to advance his beliefs. Having visited the front, he had some idea of the horror and carnage and was clearly better placed to comment on the situation. Maurice-Carton and Holman each held important positions in their respective French communities. Each felt keenly responsible for maintaining positive perceptions of France, and they were both able to draw on their positions in society to achieve this. That Chayet and Maurice-Carton were both so hyper-sensitive about Holman's speech indicates how much they considered was at stake both in Australia and in France during 1917. Despite Chayet's moment of panic, Holman's deep-seated love of France was nonetheless soon displayed again when he put on a welcome for the French troops travelling through Sydney in November 1917 (seen in Chapter Six). Amid patriotic speeches and much cheering, Holman praised the 'gallant French' and Consul-General Chayet proposed a toast to the health of Mr and Mrs Holman. [63]

In June 1917, while Holman was in France, High Commissioner Andrew Fisher was also there, meeting and organising with French officials, and planting the seed for what would become the French Economic Mission. The enormous propaganda value of the French Economic Mission's visit to Australia would surpass anything previously dreamed of. In April 1918 the new Vice-Consul Fliche was already indicating that the focus of propaganda was now economic – pro-French public sentiment was by now assured. His 'propaganda' file included an announcement to the press headed 'To replace German and Austro-Hungarian Articles by French goods'. In accordance with the stated aim of the French Economic Mission, which was to improve the balance of trade between Australia and France and open up Australian markets to French goods, Fliche's announcement advised any Australian firms and agents wishing to sell French goods after the war that they should contact the French foreign trade bureau in Paris via the French Consulate. Before the French Mission had been created, the French government was aware of the importance of maintaining its positive image to maintain support for a costly war. French

[62] 'Mr. Holman and France' *Argus*, 20 Nov 1917, 8.
[63] 'French Troops', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Nov 1917, 14.

newspapers reported on the conscription debate, and the French government continued to monitor attitudes towards recruitment in Australia. When the French Economic Mission visited Australia in late 1918, one of its aims was to foster support for enlistment. As we will see in the next chapter, the Mission's leader, General Pau, sent a detailed report back to Paris about Australians' attitudes towards the war, conscription and enlistment.

Throughout the war, interactions between the French government, its representatives in Australia, and prominent members of society occurred with the aim of disseminating a certain idea of France that would support the aims of official war propaganda. Their pronouncements and concerns, expressed both publicly and privately, officially and unofficially, provide a window into the importance of how images of France were 'curated' in the context of the war. The consuls in Melbourne and Sydney both monitored and influenced the way ideas about France were expressed, forming an additional strand of influence, separate from the British one. Why did France care what people in Australia thought? Australia's position as a dominion of the British Empire meant it would follow British foreign policy. However, there were certain specific elements of Australia's position which were of interest to France. Australia was a major producer of wool, a trade which had been important to France prior to the war and which it hoped to continue.[64] Australia differed from France in that pacifism and anti-war sentiment could be more openly expressed, although surveillance and suppression of the pacifist minority intensified after 1916, with the introduction of the Unlawful Associations Act.[65] Australia's soldiers fighting on the Western Front were volunteers, and in the context of the conscription debate which continued throughout 1916 and 1917 visions of gallant French soldiers were a strategic tool in keeping people 'patriotic' and motivated. The discourse created by French propaganda in Australia, expressed both publicly and privately, reveals another side of the French-Australian relationship during the war.

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[64] Jacqueline Dwyer, 'Ahead of Their Time: The French Economic Mission to Australia 1918', *The French Australian Review*, no. 59 (Australian Summer 2016): 30–54; Robert Aldrich, 'La Mission Française en Australie de 1918: l'Australie et les relations franco-australiennes au lendemain de la guerre', in *Les Français et l'Australie: Voyages de découvertes et missions scientifiques de 1756 à nos jours* (Nanterre: Université de Paris X Nanterre, 1989), 295–306.
[65] Catherine Bond, *Law in War* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2020); Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*, 4:181–84.

Chapter 8. Soft Power and cultural diplomacy

The Alliance Française (AF) and the French Economic Mission, which made an extensive tour of the country in late 1918, were two officially constituted entities which further illustrate how soft power and cultural diplomacy functioned to support the cause of France in Australia. One a *Mission civilisatrice* and one a *Mission économique*, both linked French culture with patriotism. Although both organisations have received previous scholarly attention, this chapter builds upon the existing scholarship by drawing on the French archives to complement the Australian sources and expand upon previous work. The chapter recontextualises the roles of the AF and the French Mission as vectors of the French universalist promotion of its culture. The AF, an intrinsically French organisation with a global mission to extend French language and culture, was founded in Paris in 1883 and had spread to all four corners of the globe by 1914. Previous studies of the AF in Australia have focussed on its origins and development in the pre-war period but have not focussed on its operations during the war. This chapter sheds new light on the role played by the AF within the sphere of war-time cultural diplomacy. Focussing on Melbourne and Sydney, it analyses how the AF's role, contributions, and influence evolved during the war. In each case, the consul intervened to take control, and in Sydney the consul appropriated many of the AF's functions with his own cultural diplomacy.

The second focus of the chapter is the French Economic Mission: a temporary entity, yet for a short time it was the public face of the French government manifested in Australia and a powerful public focus. The Economic Mission is examined here within the scope of the thesis, focussing on social and cultural aspects which were entwined with the Mission's primary economic aims. The cultural diplomacy practised by the consuls in Melbourne and Sydney, as well as the aims of the French Mission demonstrate a transnational dialogue between Australia and France at an organisational level, as representatives of France observed and assessed how French identity was expressed and understood in Australia, influencing public sentiment and the relationship between the two countries.

I. The Alliance Française: Language as culture as influence

We have seen how the French fundraising organisations positioned themselves as cultural mediators, presenting positive images of France. However, the AF was an already-present

transnational organisation whose mission was to disseminate French language and culture. This section focusses firstly on the Melbourne AF, which was the first AF in Australia, founded in 1890, and then contrasts the situation of the AF in Sydney which was founded in 1899. In each city, conflicts occurred between the AF's local members, its head office and the French consuls. The mission of the AF sprang from a singular aim, but interpretations and applications of its purpose evolved with central direction from Paris, and influence from branches run by local members responding to local conditions. On both a micro level, through its members and on an organisational, macro level, the AF's operations reveal the influence of the French state, through the consuls in Sydney and Melbourne, and from the mother organisation in Paris, weaved together with locally received ideas about France and French culture. These two case studies illustrate the significance of this organisation as a mouthpiece for France's *mission civilisatrice* and demonstrate how the official French policy of language diplomacy was implemented in Australia.

Despite tensions between locals and Paris-based actors, and the resurfacing of past conflicts in Melbourne, the AF formed part of the overall strategy to maintain support for France internationally. The AF's main purpose – teaching French – became linked to patriotism and cultural diplomacy in the context of the war effort. After outlining the origins of the AF, and the policy of language diplomacy this section will focus on how the policy played out in the two major AF branches, Sydney and Melbourne. In each case the consuls had an agenda, and attempted to exert control over the AF in their respective cities. Homery attempted to reform the Melbourne AF, proposing to sack the committee – composed of women – and replace it with one entirely composed of men; and Chayet systematically worked towards the weakening of the Sydney AF. Chayet put his own imprimatur on the method of spreading French cultural influence, separately to the AF. He achieved this in three different cultural spheres, through music, books and his own language classes. Barko described the actions of Chayet during his period (1911-1918) as 'systematic sabotage' of the Sydney AF, as he gradually created rival organisations which carried out the functions traditionally provided by the AF. Both the Sydney and the Melbourne cases explore official policies and personal motivations in the application of soft power through cultural means.

i. Origins of the Alliance Française

The AF was created at a meeting in Paris on 21 July 1883 when French diplomat Paul Cambon, Pierre Foncin and other prominent men met in Paris.[1] Their common goal was to increase French influence abroad through the teaching of French language and culture. Cambon held the position of Resident General of Tunisia and Foncin, a professor, geographer and historian, was an inspector general of education. Foncin was the AF's acknowledged founder, its first secretary general and then president until 1914. Foncin's vision melded colonial aims with educational aspirations. The creation of the AF responded to several perceived needs: re-establishing the prestige that France had lost through its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, and strengthening the influence which France feared would wane due to its decreasing population. Moreover, the AF's cultural strategies were linked to commercial outcomes.[2] While initially focussed on furthering French influence in North Africa and the Levant, its vision soon broadened, and it initiated the policy of the propagation of the French language in the colonies and abroad. In 1899 Foncin noted two different objectives of the AF, according to the needs and societies of the countries in which it operated – sometimes running French schools, in other countries focussing more on cultural and literary functions. In 1914, Jules Gautier replaced Foncin and was president of the AF until 1919. Gautier had been head of the Ministry of Public Education, and Director of Secondary Education, demonstrating the close link between the government ministries and the AF.[3] However, the AF was not, of itself, a governmental instrument, though it is more one today. One of the AF's early responses to the war was the publication of a bimonthly '*Bulletin de Guerre'*. Gautier announced the Bulletin's purpose: to inform its readers truthfully about the origins, causes and progress of the war, and about France's position, and affirmed that the AF 'remained faithful to its program of human progress through the spread of the French language'.[4]

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[1] Ivan Barko, 'The Foundation and Early History of the Alliance Française of Sydney', *Explorations*, no. 26 (June 1999); Ivan Barko, 'L'Alliance française : les années Foncin (1883-1914). Contexte, naissance, mutations', *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, no. 25 (1 December 2000), http://journals.openedition.org/dhfles/2948; Maurice Bruézière, *L'Alliance Française : Histoire d'une Institution* (Paris: Hachette, 1983); Janet Horne, '"To Spread the French Language Is to Extend the Patrie": The Colonial Mission of the Alliance Française', *French Historical Studies* 40, no. 1 (February 2017): 95–127, https://doi.org/10.1215/00161071-3686068.

[2] Horne, '"To Spread the French Language Is to Extend the Patrie"'.

[3] François Chaubet, 'L'Alliance française ou la diplomatie de la langue (1883-1914)', *Revue historique*, no. 632 (2004): 773, https://doi.org/10.3917/rhis.044.0763.

[4] Quoted in Bruézière, *L'Alliance Française : Histoire d'une Institution*, 82. *

ii. The AF in Melbourne

The Melbourne AF was founded in June 1890, just a few years after the organisation's establishment in Paris in 1883.[5] The idea was first suggested in 1888 by Mauritian immigrant, Monsieur Astruc.[6] However, the French Consul considered Astruc's non-European origins to be problematic and responsibility was passed first to Astruc's employer the francophile solicitor Joseph Woolf. It was agreed that Woolf would convene a men's committee, while Berthe Mouchette would convene the women's committee. When Woolf was unable to carry out his part due to illness, the full responsibility was passed to Mouchette, who is recognised as the founder. For this reason, in its early years the Melbourne AF was ruled by a 'comité des dames'.[7] Mouchette founded the AF with teaching in mind. However, after she left Melbourne for Adelaide in the early 1890's the AF's focus shifted away from pedagogy although it continued to oversee examinations and award prizes. The AF in Melbourne during the pre-war years functioned as a forum for the expression of French culture in the antipodes, but more significantly, functioned as marker of social class. The women of the committee, many of them the wives of wealthy members of Melbourne's establishment, used the AF as a vehicle for social and cultural events which enhanced their standing and advertised their refinement. They considered it their role to be the arbiters of French culture, although not all were French. During this period Charlotte Crivelli played an active role, as committee member and president. Nettelbeck described the AF's early iteration as 'an essentially elite club where wealthy and powerful people, largely of English background, came to indulge themselves in the pleasures of elevated culture'.[8] Dramatic conflicts occurred in Melbourne during 1907 and 1908 when Consul Maistre clashed with local establishment ladies over the running of the AF. Bergantz's and Thornton-Smith's studies both traced this period in detail, concluding that during its early days in Australia, the AF emerged as a contested space, in which various perennial questions arose regarding its management and its policies. Should it be run by men or women? Whose influence should hold sway – its members or the French government representatives, in other words the consuls? Should

[5] Nettelbeck, *The Alliance Française in Australia*; Thornton-Smith, 'Paul Maistre, Vice-Consul'; Barko, 'The Foundation and Early History of the Alliance Française of Sydney'; Bergantz, 'French Connection'.
[6] Monsieur Astruc's first name is unknown.
[7] Thornton-Smith, 'Paul Maistre, Vice-Consul'; Drury, 'Berthe Mouchette and Marie Lion'; Bergantz, 'French Connection'.
[8] Nettelbeck, *The Alliance Française in Australia*.

it be controlled by local French people or Australians? Should its focus be pedagogical, or cultural and social? Should the committee consist of teachers or simply cultured francophiles? Should the French teachers be native speakers temporarily imported from France, or would local French teachers suffice? When Maistre challenged the AF committee over its lack of academic rigour, they resisted his attempts to remove them.[9] It should be noted that the camp which opposed Maistre's attempts at reforming the Melbourne AF was led by Charlotte Crivelli and her well-connected circle of friends from Melbourne's establishment.[10] After 1908 Charlotte Crivelli was not involved in the AF committee, but remained active in charitable work and the Melbourne social scene, as well as being the mother of seven children.

A further complication sprang from the sometimes-strained relations between the AF Committee and Maurice Carton. He had been firmly in the pedagogy camp and had waxed hot and cold towards the AF prior to the war. During the events of 1907 and 1908 Carton had taken Maistre's side in the battle for influence over the AF committee.[11] His relationship with the AF was often prickly, lurching between antagonism and indifference – Maurice Carton shared the Consul's disdain for the academic standards of the AF but was reluctant to actively intervene to help raise the standards, as this would have increased its competitiveness. [12] The Melbourne newspapers of the day were full of advertisements for private French language tuition, so the AF and University were not the only sources, but were in their own league as official institutions. Maurice-Carton played a role in the ongoing tensions between the pedagogical and cultural functions of the AF, featuring in the 1908 drama, and again when similar fault lines appeared – although this time not in public – when Homery tried to reform the AF in 1915.

iii. Homery's attempt at reforming the Melbourne AF in 1915-1916

In early 1915, Homery followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, embarking upon a plan to reform the Melbourne AF and change the composition of its committee. He must have been aware of the previous reform attempt made by Maistre which resulted in that diplomat's recall to Paris, and possibly the end of his career. The event was probably known within the diplomatic circles to which each belonged, and Homery had access to

[9] Bergantz, 'French Connection'.
[10] Bergantz; Thornton-Smith, 'Paul Maistre, Vice-Consul'.
[11] Bergantz, 'French Connection'.
[12] Bergantz.

the Melbourne Consulate's files on the affair. More significantly, the correspondence shows that Homery personally knew AF President Jules Gautier, and hence may have arrived in Australia with the intention of checking on the operations of the local branch. History repeated itself. Just as in 1908, a tightly knit social circle which made up the committee of the Melbourne AF, closed rank around its President, Lady Hennessy. However, Homery's efforts were partially successful – the Melbourne AF committee was shaken up, and men took over some of the positions held by women. More significantly, the episode demonstrates that the head office of the AF continued to take an interest in its far-off Melbourne branch, and that the AF's operations throughout the world remained a valued element of the overall policy to foster support for France through cultural and linguistic means. Homery's actions and private correspondence are all the more fascinating as Lady Hennessy (at that time still Mrs. Hennessy – her husband was knighted in 1915) had been awarded a silver medal by the AF central committee. Homery presented the medal to her in a very public ceremony in November 1914, at which both she and he made speeches in French.[13] Hennessy had been awarded the medal following the recommendation by Rosa Aarons, who visited Paris in 1914 and met members of the AF Paris Executive.[14]

Homery first outlined his plans for reform to Gautier in June 1915.[15] Since arriving in Melbourne eighteen months previously, he had been closely observing the AF, and had concluded that the women were not doing a good job. They were perhaps even having a negative effect. The AF was 'headed for destruction'. [16] Homery compared the Melbourne AF unfavourably to its Sydney counterpart, which he concluded was successful as it was run by men. His first step in reform then, would be to remove all feminine presence from the AF Committee.[17] While he agreed it might be necessary to persuade Lady Hennessy to stay on as a figurehead, as she was popular, he suggested the other women be relegated to sub-committees, such as library or events. Gautier replied, encouraging Homery and expressing his total support for the plan, although advising him to act diplomatically. Addressing him as 'my dear consul and former student', he wished him luck with all that he was doing to defend the good name of France.

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[13] *Australasian*, 21 Nov 1914, 40.
[14] AF Minute Book 3, MS 12711 Box 3554, SLV.
[15] Homery to Gautier, 15 Jun 1915. MAE 428PO/1/47.
[16] Ibid *
[17] Ibid. *

Homery had by now discussed his plan with Maurice-Carton, who agreed with the need for reform, but was reluctant to get involved. He was doubtful it would work: he had seen six consuls come and go, he explained, each one wanting to do the right thing, but ultimately such plans were bound to fail, as no consul had been able to resist succumbing to the power of the 'cliques'. Maurice-Carton went on to criticise the Melbourne AF. At their soirées, they did all kinds of things apart from the program of the AF in France, that is the *propagation de la langue française*. Their lectures were not well chosen, and moreover, they were delivered by Swiss people and Mauritians. They listened to music that was not French, including German music, and they even spoke English at their gatherings! Finally, Maurice-Carton claimed the Melbourne AF's exams were administered by incompetent people, an assessment probably coloured by his tendency to exaggerate.[18] Homery had meanwhile presented his plan, and its approval by Gautier, to the AF committee. He spoke first to Lady Hennessy then to other key members individually on 9 February, apparently telling each that the others approved. The AF's minutes report that Lady Hennessey was not happy when she realised he was attempting to remove them by stealth, and took it as a personal offence. 'She has not only given so much service to the Alliance, but also has made superhuman efforts to aid the cause of France.'[19] The AF committee demanded that he explain himself. Homery replied that the outbreak of war and the ensuing widespread outpouring of sympathy for France in all the English-speaking countries, had provided the ideal moment for him to take action, and to widen the reach of the AF. He denied wanting to dissolve the committee, declaring his only aim was its more efficient functioning. Forsaking his plan, he promised to support the future work of the AF.[20]

In his subsequent letters back to Paris, Homery informed Gautier of the aftermath. 'My efforts to save the AF from the languor that is killing it were, I regret, unsuccessful. Persuading the committee to replace themselves with men seemed difficult but not impossible, but then I came up against the stiff resistance of the President, and they turned on me.'[21] Homery was more positive in June: his attempts to reform and reinvigorate the Melbourne AF had shaken up the committee, and had forced it to reflect. He in turn

[18] Homery to Maurice-Carton 10 Feb 1916; Maurice-Carton to Homery 11 Feb 1916, MAE 428PO/1/47.
[19] AF Minute book 3, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.
[20] Homery to AF Secretary Kyriazopoulos, 26 Feb 1916, MAE 428PO/1/47.
[21] Homery to Gautier, 12 May 1916, MAE 428PO/1/47 *

acknowledged he had expected too much of them in asking them to resign. However, recent vacancies had led to 'more capable' men taking positions, as well as an additional fifty new members. Most notably, the new secretary was René Vanderkelen, whose contribution to the Melbourne AF continued for many years.[22] In this episode, both Homery's and Gautier's comments indicated their agreement that the war provided a new context for reform of the local AF, and an opportunity to make the most of the benevolent feelings towards France and the French, by furthering the policy of *diplomatie de la langue*.

Among the characters involved in this tug between the social and pedagogical function of the Melbourne AF was Rosa Aarons, whose sister Irma Dreyfus had sided with Vice-Consul Maistre during the troubled period of 1907-1908. Dreyfus was in the opposite camp to the Crivellis. It was she and Maurice Carton who at the time had been identified as members potentially capable of providing academic level French, native fluency and teaching experience to the ranks of the AF's committee. Dreyfus was a French teacher and during the 1890's she had attempted to steer the Melbourne AF towards more rigorous teaching practices. By the time of the 1907-1908 clash she had returned to Paris. Moreover, it was Dreyfus who had been in Paris when the earlier intrigues were going on, and she had informed Maistre of Charlotte Crivelli's behind-the-scenes power play when she called on her Paris contacts to have him recalled. Rosa Aarons remained in Melbourne and was the AF's librarian. The sisters remained in close contact, and they exemplify the influence of individual transnational connections. In April 1916 an intriguing newspaper article was published commenting on the worth and performance of the AF's Melbourne branch.[23] Published anonymously just after things had 'settled' at the Melbourne AF, the article begins by describing the many successful cultural and linguistic schemes operating in France 'to foster a closer relationship between the women of Britain and France'. Such exchanges included the benefits gained by French nurses learning about 'British character' by working alongside British nurses, while further examples included an early version of an educational exchange program. A woman running a school in Passy would 'get English students, and send French students to England in exchange'. The anonymous author then lamented the failings of the Melbourne AF. It had 'struggled for many years to foster interest in France and its

[22] Homery to Gautier, 21 Jun 1916, MAE 428PO/1/47.
[23] 'Many Schemes Unite', *Herald*, 4 April 1916, 5.

literature', but now the opportunity had come for its 'triumphal hour' and the writer expressed hope that Australians would come forward and demonstrate their support and friendship to France by supporting the AF. All this talk of the right moment for the AF to strengthen its relevance strongly echoed the sentiments privately expressed by Homery in his correspondence with Paris. It is difficult to say if the article was written by Homery, or as a response to him. Given that Homery had been uncharitable, even scathing at times about the women of the AF committee, the article's discussion of women's cultural exchanges is interesting when considered in the context of women having more opportunities than ever before to engage in public life because of the war. At this time, Irma Dreyfus continued to operate her own Franco-British exchange program in Paris: the *Alliance littéraire, scientifique et artistique Franco-Britannique*.[24]

In 1916, as the Melbourne AF grew in popularity, Astruc became its librarian, sharing the role with Aarons. Many newspaper columns commented on the growing popularity and importance of learning French which was engendered by the war. *Table Talk* described Astruc of the AF as 'a scholarly and devoted enthusiast' and praised his skill in this 'most elegant of languages' and his support for the AF's aspiring students. [25] It was Astruc who had arrived in Australia years earlier with the idea of founding an AF, but was not permitted to, as he was from Mauritius.[26]The AF's establishment of French classes for soldiers, which we saw in Chapter Three, enlarged its role, providing it with a serious purpose. Homery's correspondence with Paris about his attempts to reform the Melbourne AF demonstrate that while the war continued, the official French policy of language diplomacy was also maintained. The 1915 episode provides a window into attitudes of government representatives towards the policy, and how it should be implemented to enhance support for France's military effort, while keeping in sight the long-term goal of maintaining the prestige of French language and culture.

iv. The Melbourne Alliance Française and Fundraising

In its capacity as a French organisation, the AF also mobilised its networks for fundraising. The committee drew on its skill at planning social events, hence from the outset, concerts, cinematographic evenings, musical soirées, and the occasional raffle,

[24] *Le Temps*, Paris, 04 Apr 1914, 1.
[25] *Table Talk*, 27 Apr 1916, 7.
[26] An example of the racism of the time, and perhaps a recognition by the French diplomats of the White Australia Policy. Nettelbeck, *The Alliance Française in Australia*.

were transformed into fundraising opportunities. The collaboration in September 1914 between Homery, Maurice-Carton and the AF to raise funds for the French Relief Fund was, as Homery had proudly written, an achievement. The AF conducted its own fundraising activities in the early years of the war, donating money to the FRC Vic and other causes. Somewhat overshadowed by Charlotte Crivelli's success, and with a hint of bruised egos, the AF had no choice but to cancel its concert planned for March 1915 when the committee realised Crivelli had already planned one for the same week.[27] However, from 1916 the AF and the FRC Vic collaborated more closely on events, notably coordinating efforts for French week. Throughout, the figure of Lady Hennessy was important: as President of both the CRF and the AF, and as the only person who was on both committees, she played a mediating role. In May 1916, the AF was contacted by the ANOG (Chapters Four and Five) which had also contacted Homery asking for donations. Although the AF had contributed to the CRF and the *Assistance Maternelle*, through cooperating in large scale events as well as holding its own smaller ones, in 1916 it adopted the French orphans' charity, and held regular fundraising events. In July 1916, the AF reported that they had 'received information from Paris that help is urgently needed for hundreds of little children whom the war has made orphans.' One particular response to the needs of France showed that charitable acts did not preclude enjoyment, as 400 card players united for a 'bridge and card soirée', to raise funds for the orphans, at which sweets, cigars and 'war trinkets from France' were sold. The organisers of this event were the committee members of the AF, assisted by Madame Homery, and including Rosa Aarons.[28] The press noted Aaron's achievements had been honoured in France as well as Australia. Aarons was 'an earnest worker for the French Red Cross' and 'an active member of the Alliance Française de Victoria' who had recently received the honour of a decoration from the Académie des Beaux Arts, Paris, and was one of the energetic helpers who made such a success of the patriotic bridge party.[29]

In February 1917 the Melbourne AF received official permission to operate as a charity for French war causes.[30] During 1917 and 1918 the AF actively continued its support for French war orphans, holding their own events, and soliciting funds, such as the £250 they

[27] AF Minute book 3, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.
[28] *Australasian*, 22 July 1916, 35.
[29] *Herald* 25 July 1916, 5.
[30] AF Minute book 4, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.

received from the State Schools Patriotic Fund. AF secretary René Vanderkelen announced in January 1917 that £750 was in hand, and more funds were raised via the successful French Week in July. In mid-1918, and after having supported the ONAG for over two years, the Melbourne AF was contacted by Fliche with a request from a different orphans' war charity: the *Oeuvres Françaises des Orphelins de la Guerre.* The new orphans' fund was the officially approved government organisation, and the AF adopted it as the main recipient of its fundraising. The exact circumstances behind this change were not publicised in Australia, but in December 1918, the French newspapers buzzed with the arrest of the two directors of the ONAG for fraud, and Suzanne Caubet sent word from Paris to Charlotte Crivelli that the directors of the ONAG were being pursued by police.[31] In early 1919, the AF received a letter confirming that the ONAG had been dissolved by court order.[32] The amounts of money which the Melbourne AF raised from the Australian public were rather small when compared with the achievements of the FALH, or the FRC Vic. The likely reason is that fundraising, although worthy, was auxiliary to the AF's main purposes (both official and unofficial), so would never be all-absorbing. Moreover, the FRC Vic and the FALH were purpose-built entities with dynamic and focussed leadership, and they had already created a strong presence. Nonetheless the Melbourne AF's contribution to fundraising was a natural and worthy element of its response.

Rivalries and tension notwithstanding, Maurice-Carton's war years were busy serving the cause of France, supporting the efforts of both Consuls – Homery and then Fliche – while running the University's classes and exams, convening the University's French Club. There was a thawing of the relationship between Maurice-Carton and the AF during the second half of the war, as he became a member and attended committee meetings in 1917 and agreed to support the AF's fundraising efforts for French orphans. In August 1917 Maurice-Carton delivered a series of lectures about France, to raise funds for the AF's French Orphans charity. (He had delivered public lectures in 1916 to raise funds for the FRC.) But a telling demonstration of Maurice-Carton's change of heart towards the AF is the review of his entertaining performance alongside other AF committee members to present the play '*Les Précieuses Ridicules*'.[33] Acting alongside René Vanderkelen, his

[31] Suzanne Caubet to Charlotte Crivelli, note from E. Michel 18 Dec 1918, Michael Crivelli collection.
[32] AF Minute book 4, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.
[33] *Age*, 19 Aug 1918, 8.

performance provoked 'shrieks of laughter' – a testimony to his ability to put conflicts aside in the cause of France.

v. Melbourne Alliance Française 1916-1918: a period of growth

From mid-1916, the AF rejuvenated its sense of purpose. In addition to taking on the cause of the orphans' charity, Lady Hennessy reintroduced French conversation classes in August 1916. The conversation sessions were staffed by the French members of the AF, who offered their services for the benefits of students and lovers of 'la belle langue'.[34] The classes would 'satisfy a long-felt want', claimed *Punch,* as many people could read and understand French quite well, but lacked fluency.[35] By September 1917 the committee reported an increase in members, and such good attendance at events that a larger venue was needed.[36] Another strand of the French Government's ongoing policy of cultural diplomacy linked Melbourne to Paris in March 1917, when the Melbourne AF was the beneficiary of a gift of books for its library.[37] The policy was articulated at the *Congrès Nationale du Livre* which was held in Paris in March 1917.[38] The national convention for the book and publishing industry, presided over by Pierre Decourcelle, President of the French Writers' Association (*Société des Gens de Lettres*), also had a message regarding books as part of French Cultural Diplomacy. President Poincaré, in his speech to the congress, assured those present that writers and publishers too, had a part to play in fighting for the liberty of France, calling them 'intellectual warriors'.[39] Poincaré declared that high quality French books would add to France's international prestige, counteract German influence, and make France more loved abroad. Messages were sent to French diplomatic posts at the behest of Ducourcelle, to identify where, to whom, and what kinds of French books could be sent, to transform policy into practice. Fliche deemed the Melbourne AF library would be the most appropriate recipient.[40] This policy to distribute books as part of cultural diplomacy, even in the midst of war, demonstrates how far-flung and varied applications of France's soft power policy were.

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[34] AF Minute book 3, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV; *Table Talk*, 10 Aug 1916, 29.
[35] *Punch*, 17 Aug 1916, 31
[36] AF Minute book 4, MS 12711 Box 3554 SLV.
[37] *Herald*, 5 Mar 1918, 9.
[38] The Congrès du Livre brought together government and private organisations with the aim of promoting French cultural influence through books. The inaugural session was held at the Sorbonne on 11 March 1917 in the presence of the French President and many government ministers. 'Le Congrès du Livre', *Excelsior*, 12 Mar 1917, 2.
[39] *Excelsior*, 12 Mar 1917, 2. *
[40] MAE 428 PO/1/47.

Despite Australia's distance, such policy was probably already informed by future considerations of post-war influence and trade, and also reflects France's long-term aims for more comprehensive trade with Australia, a policy which had intensified with the growth of the wool trade from the late nineteenth century.

When Mrs Foster approached the Melbourne AF in November 1916 to set up language classes for soldiers, it was no longer in the 'state of languor' which had been lamented by Homery. The *Herald* mused that for the 'gifted woman, rich in accomplishments' putting her knowledge of French to practical use would be gratifying when perhaps she had been observing the contributions of more 'domestic types' who had been 'ministering to the everyday needs of soldiers'.[41] The implication was that knowledge of French was, at least temporarily, more than just an accomplishment for refined ladies. In fact, more men than women were counted among the AF's volunteer teachers, but Mrs Foster – a woman – is credited with creating one of the French phrase books which were made available to those proceeding to France.[42] The AF in Melbourne retained its penchant for plays, soirées, and card afternoons, while carrying out such events under the banner of fundraising. In other words, the AF committee continued doing what it knew best. However, from 1916, its response to the request for help from French orphans, and its establishment of French language classes for soldiers signify a growing sense of serious and practical purpose. Homery's active interference had demonstrated that the AF was a point of transnational transference of ideas and influence and that it had a role to play in the wider effort to strengthen support for France.

II. Cultural diplomacy in Sydney

In Sydney, it was Consul-General Chayet whose actions reveal the machinations of cultural diplomacy. Chayet positioned his influence as an alternative to the AF, as questions of language and culture took on added significance within the wartime context. Ivan Barko analysed the Sydney AF's early history, using Australian sources. He traced its establishment by French Consul Biard d'Aunet, its fluctuating evolution, and its uncertain fortune during the Chayet period using Australian sources.[43] This section builds upon Barko's work by examining documents in the French diplomatic archives which expand our understanding of Chayet's motivation and link his actions to wartime

[41] 'Soldier's Wife Leads', *Herald*, 16 Jan 1917, 4.
[42] *Western Mail*, 9 Feb 1917, 38.
[43] Barko, 'The Foundation and Early History of the Alliance Française of Sydney'.

priorities. While the public announcements of the AF available through the press of the day tell part of its story, there are no AF archival sources available for the AF Sydney in either Australia or Paris, so we cannot know its response to Chayet's policy. If not an overtly contested space, as in Melbourne, the Sydney AF's situation was a challenging one during the First World War, thanks to Chayet's curious intervention during his tenure as Consul-General. The Sydney AF's first iteration was as a library, inaugurated by Biard d'Aunet in 1895. In 1899 it broadened its status under impetus from Biard d'Aunet and with the approval of Paris became a full Alliance. Its fortunes, size and purpose waxed and waned during the following years. In its early years it strongly identified with the original aims of the AF as outlined by Foncin, and focused on teaching French language and literature. Although Foncin reoriented and broadened the AF towards social and cultural aims, the influence of Biard d'Aunet meant the Sydney AF initially retained its pedagogical focus. However, over the ensuing years the emphasis of pedagogical versus cultural aims each held sway at different times.[44]

In its outlook, the Sydney AF differentiated itself from its Melbourne counterpart. It was run by men, whereas women dominated the Melbourne AF. The Sydney AF was more open to all, whereas the Melbourne AF was exclusive and elitist, and its focus was on social occasions. While not openly opposed to the AF, Chayet's actions wore it down, such that it reverted to its former status as a mere library. Over his period of tenure, Chayet replaced all the AF's functions with his own rival organisations which took over the roles the AF had previously fulfilled: providing talks and lectures, conversation soirées, and French music concerts.[45] It is curious that in Melbourne in 1915, Homery was comparing the AF unfavourably to its sister organisation in Sydney, even as its functions were being eroded and its membership numbers dwindling.

Chayet took up his post as Consul-General in Sydney in November 1911. Soon after, for inexplicable reasons, he evicted the AF's library from the consular rooms, where it had been housed since its founding in 1899. Over the following years, Chayet created the '*Société de conférences en langues modernes*' (April 1913), the '*Institut de conversation française*' (April 1915), and the French Music Society (June 1915). Barko concluded that Chayet was motivated by a spirit of egalitarianism, as the organisations he created were

[44] Barko.
[45] Barko.

provided free to the public and run by volunteers, but that the destructive nature of his actions were not fully explained. While remaining *Président d'Honneur* of the AF, as was customary, Chayet could count on allies and friends in Sydney's French community to implement his vision for the role of French language and culture.

i. Chayet's intervention in French language learning

Chayet penned a lengthy report to his superiors in Paris in September 1917 outlining his establishment of the *Institut de Conversation Française* two years earlier, made possible with the support of NSW Director of Education Carmichael, and NSW Premier Holman. Chayet noted that the recent introduction of the 'direct method' of language teaching in the NSW school system, championed by Carmichael, was already producing results, but Chayet regretted that there was no suitable setting in which members of the public could practise French conversation once their schooling was finished. Without such an opportunity, those who had learned French would lose their fluency. To remedy this, Carmichael had intervened to obtain rooms, and sessions took place every week. They began with a lecture or talk in French, given by Chayet or another French person. The talks were followed by informal conversation in smaller groups led by a volunteer native French speaker. While Chayet was delighted with the fluency obtained by those who attended the sessions, he noted another important outcome, and one which was more strongly linked to the purpose of language diplomacy.

> The numerous talks I have given there have allowed me to address a multitude of questions about current issues, and to destroy a great number of absurd or malicious prejudices which were being spread about France. In this environment I have succeeded in creating a distinctly francophile atmosphere.[46]

Chayet's ability to take personal control of the conversation group clearly had greater consequences than merely a more widespread knowledge of French. It allowed him an effective and subtle means to engage with and influence the public discourse about France. What were the 'absurd and malicious prejudices' being spread about France? It is likely they included pessimistic or defeatist talk, of the kind for which Chayet had reproached Premier Holman (Chapter Seven). Chayet noted moreover that the success of

[46] Chayet to MAE, 27 Sep 1917, MAE 139CPCOM/21. *

his *institut de conversation française* had inspired the creation of numerous similar French conversation groups, thus furthering knowledge of French, and the accompanying influence.

ii. Music

Chayet continued to muse on the possible methods for bolstering French cultural influence. Another of the cultural functions which the AF had previously carried out was to present French culture via its music. However, Chayet was dissatisfied with the way this was done and took it upon himself to create an alternative organisation. In July 1915 he made a lengthy report to the French government on 'Music in Australia' in which he argued that a greater effort ought to be made to support and encourage more people to play and listen to French music. He began by praising the musical talents of Australians, many of whom, particularly the women, could play an instrument and had lovely voices. However, their enthusiasm for music was not matched by an appropriate level of training, due to Australia's distance from the cultural hubs of Europe. Chayet hoped the recently opened Sydney conservatorium, which was headed by a Belgian, would remedy this, but the problem remained that despite the animosity which Australians felt towards Germans, German music was more popular and widely known than French music. This was not surprising, he opined, as most music teachers in Australia were German. Chayet described his ongoing efforts to promote French composers, and listed several. He then asked for the French government's support in his quest by sending him a selection of recordings by these composers. While he realised that this was perhaps not the best time to make demands upon the financial resources of the government, he felt sure that the resulting increase in orders for French music by the Australian public would compensate for the expense. But quite apart from the financial question, Chayet was certain that this was an eminently patriotic endeavour, and its potential to strengthen French influence in this country, especially if at the expense of German cultural influence, would make the expense worthwhile. The Minister considered Chayet's request, but declined to send records.[47] However, Chayet was not dissuaded by the Ministry's reluctance. He found an ally in Monsieur Aengenheyster, the Australian agent for Playel pianos and other French manufactured musical instruments. Chayet, Aengenheyster and other friends of French

[47] Chayet to MAE 28 Jul 1915; MAE to Chayet, 29 Sep 1915, MAE 139CPCOM/129.

music gathered in October 1915 to inaugurate the French Music Society.[48] It was attended by a mix of French and non-French Sydney residents, and it continued to operate throughout the war. Although the society certainly championed the cause of French music, German composers also remained popular.[49]

In conclusion, both the Sydney and the Melbourne consuls were keenly aware of the importance of cultural diplomacy as one of the soft power tools available to them, and they both interacted with the AF in a way which indicated they wanted to put their own personal stamp on how this was achieved. In Sydney, the AF operated in a diminished role during the war, but was gradually reinvigorated after the Sydney wool buying community took a more active role after 1917, and after Chayet left Sydney for his next posting in 1918.[50] In Melbourne, Homery was partially successful in shaking up the AF, and the men who took on committee roles helped steer it – alongside equally talented and capable women – on its evolutionary path, particularly as it re-engaged with teaching French and took on serious and worthy causes.

III. The French Economic Mission to Australia

The French Economic Mission to Australia (hereafter called the Mission) was convened by the French Government, in response to an invitation by the Australian Government. Composed of experts in various economic and political fields, the Mission's extensive tour of Australia in late 1918 had three main aims: to strengthen positive ties between France and Australia and encourage recruitment; to discuss matters pertaining to French and Australian interests in the South Pacific; and most importantly, to develop and improve commercial relations between the two countries. The Mission was also charged with conveying the French government's thanks for Australia's contribution of both men and funds for the war effort. Following the Mission's return to France, three reports were produced. The first was written for public and general readership, and an English translation was published in 1919.[51] The English version was received with great interest in Australia.[52] A second, confidential report was written for the French government; and

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[48] 'Pour la musique française', *Courrier Australien*, 29 Oct 1915, 4.
[49] *Newsletter*, 9 Jun 1917, 5; 'Musical Notes', *Sunday Times*, 21 Oct 1917, 17
[50] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*.
[51] French Mission, *The Economic Relations Between France & Australia. Report of the French Mission to Australia (September - December 1918)* (Paris: Roseberry Press, 1919).
[52] Fliche wrote to the Minister on 19 Feb 1920, requesting extra copies of the report, commenting that the Mission's visit had left a profound impression on Australians, and the report was a hot topic. MAE428PO/1/52.

a third report, called the Thomsen report, described social conditions, labour relations and trade unions in Australia. The reports constitute a rich source of observations about Australian society, culture and politics.

Aldrich's 1989 analysis of the French reports provided the socio-political context, and what was at stake for each party.[53] A key aim for France was to redress the balance of trade which was skewed strongly in Australia's favour. France was the second biggest importer of Australian wool and hoped to open new export markets in Australia, replacing Germany's pre-war position as a source of manufactured goods. The French also hoped to negotiate the status of the New Hebrides, which they jointly controlled with Great Britain under the power-sharing condominium. Australia's concerns included its post-war security in the Pacific region, the eventual carving up of former German colonies and the rise of Japan as a regional power. Dwyer's study also drew on Australian press reports and sources, providing a good overview of the Mission's extensive itinerary.[54] More recently, Nettelbeck has investigated the important role played by the Mission's intended leader, Albert Métin, in making Australia known in France. Despite Métin's sudden death while en route to Australia, his influence and legacy informed and helped shape the Mission's form. However, when considered in the perspective of the will to cement ties, the Mission has a further significance when considered in the context of what came before and what came after. Reframing it in this time continuum, I want to address two elements of the Mission which have not been the focus of previous scholarship, but which connect to the enquiry of this thesis. Firstly, to reframe the visit not just as a failed economic venture, but as part of the 'years long' project of propaganda. Conversely, projecting forward, through the Mission's connection to fundraising by Australians for France, it played a role in the impetus for fundraising and reconstruction which continued after the war, and that aspect has significance for our modern-day relationship with France.

After providing an overview of the Mission's origins, aims and its composition, this section will consider two aspects of the Mission's visit to Australia which incorporated soft power elements: firstly, that the Mission's intended outcomes aligned with those already familiar to the Australian public, and the work done by French and francophile Australians to support the image of France, and secondly how its presence reinforced

[53] Aldrich, 'La Mission Française en Australie de 1918'.
[54] Dwyer, 'Ahead of Their Time'.

support for French war charities. The Mission strengthened French-Australian connections, engaged with recruitment efforts, and connected with Australian fundraising for France through the FALH and the French Red Cross.

i. The Mission's creation and aims

The French Economic Mission was first suggested at a meeting held in June 1917 in Paris, when Andrew Fisher, Australian High Commissioner to Great Britain, visited France at the invitation of the French government, incidentally, while Holman was on *his* official visit to Paris. Fisher was taken on a tour of the French Front and he also visited Australian soldiers.[55] While in Paris, Fisher met the French Ministers Étienne Clementel (Minister for Commerce and Industry) and André Maginot (Minister for the Colonies) and discussed the idea of a visit to Australia by French representatives. Both Ministers were enthusiastically in favour, declaring it would be a 'rare opportunity for obtaining mutual benefit now and in the future'.[56] The tone of subsequent correspondence was optimistic, with assumptions expressed that out of the tragedy of war a good outcome might also be achieved: a closer relationship between Australia and France, which would redress the uneven balance of trade between the two countries. Australia's economy was based on primary produce, most of which it exported to Great Britain, its principal trading partner. Australia's trade with France was largely based upon wool exports, and France was Australia's 'second best customer' for its wool. However, the balance of trade skewed in Australia's favour, as the value of luxury goods which Australia imported from France was far lower.[57] France was eager to re-set the balance in its favour after the war. Moreover, before the war Australia had traditionally maintained a more favourable balance of trade with Germany than she did with France, importing more manufactured goods from Germany than from France. During the war Australia had begun to replace Germany by Japan and the USA as the major source of manufactured goods and France was keen to reverse this trend. Further, France suffered from Australia's protectionist policy which favoured Great Britain but penalised other nations.[58]

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[55] *Argus*, 11 Jun 1917, 6.
[56] Cable from Fisher to Hughes, 14 Jun 1917, MAE CPCOM/9.
[57] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*.
[58] Aldrich, 'La Mission Française en Australie de 1918'; Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific*; French Mission, *The Economic Relations Between France and Australia*.

ii. The Mission's composition

The members of the Mission were selected for their expertise in the range of fields in which the Mission was interested, such as agriculture, wool, mining, and industrial relations. Clemenceau appointed academic and former Minister for Labour Albert Métin to head the Mission. Métin's knowledge and insight were expected to be an important factor in the Mission's success. [59] Personally acquainted with Hughes, and with Holman, Métin had made an extensive study tour of Australia in 1899, leading to the 1901 publication of *Le Socialisme Sans Doctrines,* a study of Australian social and economic development. Before leaving France on 23 July, Métin and other members of the Mission visited Australian soldiers at the front and met General Monash. It was not long after the Australian victory at Hamel, an event which Métin included in the two articles he wrote about Australia which appeared in the leading daily French newspaper *Le Petit Parisien.* As Nettelbeck argues, the publication of Métin's two articles on 26 July and 12 September 1918, constituted a deliberate campaign to alert his compatriots to the significance of the Mission, and should be viewed as reflecting the official French government policy.[60] In July 1918, the Mission first stopped in London before leaving for Australia, where Métin had talks with Hughes. Métin also contacted R.H. Illingworth, Director of the French Red Cross's London Committee, to obtain details on Australian donations to French war charities. Illingworth informed Métin that around half a million pounds had been donated, as well as immense quantities of goods and clothing.[61] While the Mission's members were in San Francisco en route for Australia, Métin died unexpectedly, which provoked sorrow in Australia amongst those who knew him well, and consternation regarding the future of the Mission.

In addition to representatives from the commercial sphere, the delegation included two military representatives: General Paul Pau, and Commandant d'André, Aide de Camp to the General. When Métin died General Pau was named Head of Mission, although André Siegfried, as General Secretary, took over the practical leadership of the Mission.

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[59] Aldrich, 'La Mission Française en Australie de 1918'; Colin Nettelbeck, 'French Awareness of Australia: The Role of Albert Métin (1871-1918)', *French Australian Review,* no. 64 (Australian Winter 2018); Dwyer, 'Ahead of Their Time'. These authors all discuss Métin's role, with Nettelbeck's study of Métin the most detailed.
[60] Nettelbeck, 'French Awareness of Australia: The Role of Albert Métin (1871-1918)'.
[61] Illingworth to Métin, 26 Jul 1918; Métin to Illingworth, 27 Jul 1918, ARCS, 2015.0033, Unit 200, UMA.

Siegfried had been a friend and colleague of Métin, and had separate links to Australia as his mother, Julie Siegfried, was on the Paris committee of the FALH. Other members were Henri Corbière, an agricultural expert; J. T. Meadows Smith, who had been honorary British Consul in Paris, appointed by the British and Australian governments to accompany the Mission; Louis Leclercq-Motte, a wool expert with links to the French-Australian woolbuyers; and Marcel Mathieu, a silk manufacturer in Lyons. Georges Bader was appointed Secretary to the Mission. Bader knew Australia well and had gained his knowledge of export and trade working at French bank *Comptoir Nationale d'Escompte* in Melbourne, then for wool company Wenz and Co in Sydney. Bader was later appointed by the French government to act as Commercial agent for France. Finally, Paul Thomsen, and Adolphe Hodée, who toured Australia in early 1919, represented trade union interests.

iii. Itinerary

The Mission arrived in Sydney on 11 September 1918, and visited each state and capital city, and many regional towns before finally departing on 21 December. Australian government and local officials had been planning for the visit for a year, and the itinerary was extensive and meticulously planned. The Mission's schedule included private discussions with representatives of government, business and industry, official functions and dinners, and visits to mines, factories, farms and agricultural establishments. The Mission's members spoke to ordinary workers, as well as business owners, in capital cities and small towns, and everywhere they were feted, cheered and treated to renditions of *La Marseillaise*.[62] One exception to this pattern occurred when workers in Broken Hill demonstrated outside the Town Hall meeting to show their support for the Bolshevik revolution. As the public face of the French government, the Mission was the focus of emotional outpourings, at large-scale staged public events, and at smaller meetings. The Mission's aims explicitly included cementing connections with Australia as well as gathering as much information as possible about economic and social conditions in Australia, which it was hoped would contribute to a flourishing and mutually beneficial trade relationship after the war. The Mission's aims therefore overlapped with, and built upon, the efforts of individuals and organisations who had attempted to shape and define French identity in Australia over the previous four years. As the Mission toured the

[62] Dwyer, 'Ahead of Their Time', 45.

country, representatives of the local French communities participated in welcoming ceremonies, making speeches in French and taking their places alongside the guests of honour. In Brisbane, returned AIF soldier and Frenchman Gontran de Tournouer delivered the welcoming speech on behalf of the returned soldiers who formed a guard of honour, and Monsieur Giraud represented the French residents of Queensland.[63] In Sydney, the Playousts were among the prominent local French people who joined Chayet and Holman in welcoming the Mission's members at a grand reception. Dwyer also notes the participation of Augustine Soubeiran, who had recently returned from Paris. She was appointed by the French Mission to tour NSW on its behalf, and convey the official thanks from the people of France for the aid provided by the people of Australia.[64]

iv. Creating connections

The Mission arrived in Melbourne on Friday 11 October and was accorded an immense official welcome. A sense of immediacy, and frank expression of emotional response, is evident in the lengthy cable which Pau sent to his superiors in Paris in late October. He reported on the Mission's reception, and seemed genuinely moved by the scale and emotional welcome accorded by the Australians.[65] The public was accustomed to patriotic events and displays of solidarity with its allies, but events such as that held in Melbourne were on a truly grand scale. Thousands of people, including an estimated 12,000 school children, lined the streets to witness the procession through the city, while thousands more gathered outside Parliament House to listen to the speeches. Schools were closed for the day to allow the children to attend, and city workers too were given time off to attend. Maurice-Carton had helped the citizens of Melbourne to prepare. From July to September 1918, he and other professors delivered a series of lectures about France, aimed at educating the public in anticipation of the Mission's visit. Maurice-Carton had also specially trained the select group of several hundred school children who were chosen to sing the French national anthem on the steps of Parliament House.[66]

Australian media reports of the Mission's visit were copious and overwhelmingly positive. This was no accident – the head of the Australian Press Club wrote to the Mission affirming that its members would do everything in their power to convey the visit

[63] *Darling Downs Gazette*, 24 Sep 1918, 5. *Daily Standard*, 25 Sep 1918, 4.
[64] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*, 232–37; Dwyer, 'Ahead of Their Time'.
[65] MAE 428PO/1/52.
[66] *Age*, 10 Jul 1918, 8.

and aims of the Mission in a positive light. The Mission's progress and reception were reported in France too. A full page spread in Paris weekly magazine *L'Illustration* appeared in April 1919 included two photos, one showing crowds greeting the Mission in Perth, and another showing their encounter with local aborigines.[67] General Pau reported extensively on the range of people with whom they came into contact, from flag-waving school children, returned soldiers who formed guards of honour, local French residents and dignitaries giving receptions and dinners, as well as the government and business representatives who formed the core purpose of the Mission's visit. From the extensive newspaper coverage, it seemed that the whole of Australia wanted to personally greet the French visitors. The Mission's officials represented the human face of France, and their presence was a tangible manifestation of solidarity. Such people-to-people connections constitute a lesser reported element of the visit, and one which must have been particularly significant to those in rural towns.

v. The Mission overlaps with recruitment campaigning:

As they visited Australia in late 1918, the Mission's members could not have known that the Armistice would soon be signed. French-Australian military connections, and solidarity between allies were prevailing themes of speeches and events. Pau and Commandant d'André habitually wore their uniforms and Pau's status as a war hero was often evoked – he had lost an arm in the Franco-Prussian war. The opportunities for ceremonial events alongside Australian soldiers underpinned one of the Mission's stated aims, to shore up enthusiasm for recruitment. Pau reported that on numerous occasions he had spoken with the families of Australian soldiers who had died in France, and that these conversations left him deeply touched.[68] When the Mission visited the mining town of Broken Hill in November 1918, the manager of a local mine communicated with Pau about two of its workers, Jack Sprott, and Stanley Pike. Like so many other bereaved families, the parents of Sprott and Pike knew only that their sons were buried 'somewhere in France', and General Pau had undertaken to make enquiries on their behalf as to where the men were buried.[69] On many occasions, returned soldiers formed guards of honour, such as when the Mission visited a timber-producing town outside of Perth (Figure 12). Commandant d'André shook the hand of each soldier, personally thanking them on behalf

[67] Les Anzacs et La France, *L'Illustration*, 26 Apr 1919.
[68], Pau to Minister, MAE 428PO/1/52.
[69] MAE 428PO/1/52

of France.[70] For the returned soldiers, it must have been an emotional experience, to be once again standing alongside the French, and to be recognised by the visiting French delegates.

Figure 12 Commandant d'André inspecting Australian returned soldiers.[71]

Pau's lengthy report from Melbourne to Paris in October 1918 detailed attitudes towards recruitment and conscription, noting that public opinion towards conscription was divided along political, class and religious lines. The failure of the two referenda meant conscription policy was 'buried', and as it was a domestic political issue, the Frenchmen had agreed not to discuss it in public. Instead, in agreement with Acting Prime Minister Watt and Defence Minister Pearce, they decided that the best way to support recruitment was by referencing Australia's common cause with France in its fight against German tyranny, and France's courage and suffering. Pau's report included the Mission's activities and impressions so far, including observations on politics, politicians and labour relations. He concluded that Labor working class people were anti-Hughes. On conscription, Pau repeated the prevailing narrative about Irish Catholics and the war: 'the Irish Catholic element, which usually votes with Labor, supports the propaganda of the

[70] *West Australian*, 28 Nov 1918, 6.
[71] French Commandant d'André inspecting Australian returned soldiers guard of honour, at Jarrahdale, WA, AWM P03236.351.

extremists, and the militant Irish often express anti-English and defeatist sentiments.'[72] Notwithstanding the assessment of Irish Catholics as disloyal, some members of the Mission displayed their Catholic identity, when they attended mass at Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral, and when General Pau visited the Sacré Coeur Catholic Girls Convent school run by the same French order of nuns who had educated his mother.

vi. The Mission overlaps with fundraising

On Saturday 12 October 1918 the French residents of Melbourne gave their own formal welcoming reception for the French Mission. On the organising committee were René Vanderkelen and Joseph Chaleyer, who had organised the guest list. Pau's presence as head of the Mission presented further opportunity to combine patriotic displays and fundraising, as he was also President of the Croix Rouge Française. The gala reception in Melbourne drew together representatives from Melbourne's French organisations as well as numerous dignitaries. The Belgian community was also represented: Mr Lauwers the Consul for Belgium spoke on behalf of the AF. The occasion was a chance for the French-Australian organisations to be recognised and to thank those who had worked so hard on their behalf during the war. Pau praised the AF's work in extending knowledge of the French language, this work for the benefit of France, which in time past had been 'misunderstood and calumnied'.[73] A highlight of the proceedings was the presentation of a cheque for £100,000 by the FRC Vic. It had been collecting for the previous few months but delayed sending the money to France in order to present the cheque personally. Pau gratefully accepted the money on behalf of the CRF parent organisation, and cabled CRF headquarters immediately after the reception to inform them of the cheque. In a patriotic gesture, the French bank agreed to send it to Paris with no costs. The Melbourne AF held its own separate cheque presentation ceremony in December 1918, when Commandant d'André was the guest of honour at its final cultural event for the year, a theatrical and musical soiree. The cheque for 23,000 francs was to aid French Orphans, and the AF reported that it had previously raised 86,000 francs for French war charities.[74] In December 1918, as the Mission was about to leave, Pau announced to Acting Prime Minister Watt the French government's decision to create the post of French trade representative. At that meeting, and in an act of nice symmetry, General Pau presented a

[72] MAE 428PO/1/52 *
[73] *Age*, 14 Oct 1918, 8.
[74] *Australasian*, 14 Dec 1918, 51.

cheque for one thousand pounds from the French government for Australian war widows and orphans, in gratitude for the welcome accorded to the Mission.[75] The Mission's journey around Australia continued, with many other meetings and events, until its departure from Sydney in late December.

vii. Outcomes of the Mission

As the Mission left Australia, the flurry of reports and negotiations reveal genuine optimism on both the Australian and French sides, but the Australian policy of protectionism and application of tariffs remained an insurmountable obstacle, and most of the hoped-for outcomes did not materialise. Despite the goodwill it engendered, the Mission was ultimately unsuccessful, in terms of its economic aims, and the hopes were not translated into official government policy. For France's part, the French were not able to expand their exports to Australia, and balance of trade remained in Australia's favour. General Pau's cables from Melbourne to Paris noted potential complications due to disagreements in Australia between the supporters of free trade, calling for equal tariffs to be put in place for all Australia's trading partners, versus protectionism. Australia continued to grant most favoured nation status to Great Britain and tariffs on French imports persisted. Another hindrance to successful future trade between Australia and France was lack of shipping, as many of the Messageries Maritimes ships on the France to Australia route had been sunk. Despite meetings between the Mission and representatives of the French shipping line, the lack of sufficient and reliable shipping continued to frustrate French and Australian businessmen in the decade which followed.

One concession granted to France was the renegotiation of wool contracts. Australia had promised the entirety of its wool export to Britain for the duration of the war and for one year after. However, France was eager to obtain Australian wool to help restart the industry of its woollen mills, located in the devastated region in the north of France. An agreement was reached to apportion a certain amount of wool which was stocked already in England, to be sent to France, until wool sales to France recommenced in 1920.

The Mission demonstrated a desire on the part of both countries to extend their relationship beyond the War and build on it to establish bilateral relations. It also demonstrated France's growing recognition of Australia as an independent entity with

[75] Pau to Minister, 21 Dec 1918, MAE 428PO/1/56.

which to negotiate separately from Britain.[76] However, as Nettelbeck pointed out, the most significant result was the establishment of trade representatives of each government in each other's capital cities. Clive Voss was appointed as Australian trade representative in Paris in 1919, and Georges Bader, who was one of the members of the Mission, was appointed trade representative for the French government in 1921.[77] Repeated attempts during the 1920's to reinvigorate French-Australian trade were unsuccessful. However, as Nettelbeck argues, the establishment of bilateral commercial representation resulting from the French Mission should be viewed as part of the long-term evolution of the French-Australian relationship, and that the appointment of Clive Voss led to an important presence in France representing Australia's interests, a presence which has not been sufficiently recognised.[78]

The connection of the French Mission with French fundraising organisations had implications for long-term connections between Australia and France. Although the economic aims of the Mission did not come to fruition, the visit cemented the association between fundraising and patriotism, and Australians were given to believe that their fundraising for France was valued. The perception of being recognised and appreciated is noteworthy, as it strengthened the resolve of Australians to continue fundraising for France a little longer, particularly via post-war adoption of French towns, and contributions by Australians to their reconstruction. Thus the effects of the Mission can be linked to what Romain Fathi termed 'the economy of gratitude' which sowed the seeds of the modern day relationship.[79] Charlotte Crivelli and Suzanne Caubet played a key role in establishing Victoria's post-war relationship between Victoria and Villers-Bretonneux, which has evolved in modern times as a strong symbol of connection between the two countries.

One intriguing postscript to the Mission's visit concerns the souvenirs they took back to France. The French delegates left Australia not only with many expressions of goodwill but also with animals. While in Melbourne, the Australian Government had presented General Pau with the gift of a horse – a charger.[80] On 13 March 1919, Fliche passed on

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[76] Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific*, 280.
[77] Colin Nettelbeck, 'Beyond the Sheep's Back: World War I and Its Aftermath in the Development of an Economic Relationship between Australia and France' (French-Australian Shared Histories, Paris, 2018).
[78] Nettelbeck.
[79] Fathi, *Our Corner of the Somme - Australia at Villers-Bretonneux*, 42.
[80] *Age*, 16 Oct 1918, 10.

some important news to his minister. General Pau's horse was to be loaded on the steamship *Arabien* bound for Bordeaux, and by the same ship, to be loaded in Fremantle, would be Monsieur Corbière's kangaroos. The animals would be cared for by 'a trusted and experienced officer'.[81] The fate of the kangaroos and the horse after their sea voyage is unknown.

Pau, in his foreword to the Mission's report, re-iterated the aims of the Mission: 'the establishment of closer ties than before, and especially of closer commercial relations.'[82] With our modern cynicism and the benefit of hindsight, the road to these closer ties was clearly a long and winding one. Dwyer rightly argued out that the Mission was ahead of its time, pointing to Siegfried's forward-thinking suggestions for exchange programs between French and Australian Universities, and for the creation of tourist agencies to facilitate travel to France by Australians, concepts which are familiar today.[83] However, in other ways the Mission was quintessentially *of* its time, and the knowledge, opinions and emotions it conveyed encapsulated the idealised version of the French-Australian relationship of the time. For Australia's part, the vision of a separate relationship with the French was a step on the pathway of evolving national identity, a path which had been steered off its previous course by the war. Even so, as Australia dipped its toe in the water of independent identity, it did so within the constraints of its position within the British Empire. As Aldrich argued, Australia was in no doubt that to maintain its precarious position as a 'white' and European country in Asia, it needed the support of a superpower, be it Britain or the USA.[84]

Observing the emotive pro-France rhetoric expressed over the course of the war makes it difficult to believe there was ever a voice raised to say a negative word about France. However, diving deeper into the archives shows that France kept a watch on its image-making strategies, even in far off Australia. Australia was geographically distant, yet, with its men fighting and dying in France, its citizens mobilised to provide money and goods to France, and its government contemplating its future policy on tariffs and trade, it was worth keeping an eye on. Both examples, the AF and the Economic Mission, reveal

[81] MAE 428PO/1/52
[82] French Mission, *The Economic Relations Between France and Australia*.
[83] Dwyer, 'Ahead of Their Time'.
[84] Aldrich, 'La Mission Française en Australie de 1918'.

that on a government level, an organisational level as well as on a personal level, representatives of France were playing a part in the rhetoric. Their patriotic words and gestures helped shape Australian ideas about France, and about the relationship which existed, and the relationship which they hoped might exist, between Australia and France.

Conclusion

From the sailors at the docks to the society ladies at their soirées, from the struggling workers to the successful businessmen, the French in early twentieth century Australia were a varied lot. French identity in First World War Australia was a multifarious and contested concept which took on a greater significance as a result of the war. Although French-born people made up a small proportion of Australia' population, their actions, and the impact of their response, constitute a little-known yet important element of Australia's Great War experience.

My quest to define what it meant to be French in Australia during the First World War has uncovered transnational connections and networks which linked French people and Australians, and a wide range of people who influenced the discourse. My research has explored the question keeping in mind the two interconnected concepts of French-Australian relations and French identity. French-Australian relations fit within the paradigm of transnational history and are exemplified in the flow of objects, ideas, money and people between Australia and France which the thesis has explored. Relationships and connections informed and, in turn were informed by, French identity which could be externally projected, or personally expressed. Using French archival sources has allowed this thesis to examine Australia's wartime history from a different perspective, revealing transnational influences which played out in public and private spheres. The analysis of responses and experiences in both civilian and military spheres reveals that French identity was defined in a variety of ways and on multiple levels, in public and private domains. It was shaped by influences from above and from below, and had implications at the individual, collective, and national levels. The ways in which French cultural images were mobilised by French-Australians and by those in their close and extended networks constitutes an important part of Australia's social and cultural history.

The variety of French and Australian sources used in my research, including diaries, newspapers, government documents and official and personal correspondence, has allowed me to incorporate a micro historical approach into a broad transnational perspective. The French consular archives provided a rich source of material which has not previously been examined by Australian historians of the First World War. Throughout this thesis, the small scale, the individual stories and experiences, have

helped to illustrate the wider picture. The stories of the less well-known actors combine with, and complement the dialogue played out on the larger stage, between high-profile members of society. All combine to demonstrate how French identity was projected in Australia – by whom, and for what purpose.

In the first section of the thesis, Chapters One to Three, we saw how Australia's participation in the conflict thrust the concept of French identity into the spotlight in unprecedented ways, and the first people to be affected were young men of military age. The responses and experiences of French-born men who were resident in Australia at the outbreak of war reveal the range and complexity of opinions regarding French identity. The young men – and some not so young men – of military age who were considered to hold French nationality, whether they had been born in France or not, were compelled to consider the implications of French identity for them. Moreover, their choice to fulfil their French military obligations or not provoked reactions by their families, community members and by officials, revealing the ongoing discourse around national identity, citizenship, and naturalisation. These men were individuals, yet sometimes they also served to embody 'types': the artistic Frenchman, the gallant and heroic ally, the consummate cook. The men from Australia who fought in the French army also personified a link between the countries, such as when French soldiers from Australia who fought at Verdun published their letters in the Australian press, cementing feelings of connectedness to the French struggle.

Nationality and identity were further explored in Chapter Two through the Frenchmen who avoided their French military service obligations and instead joined the AIF. Understanding the diversity of this cohort, and suggesting reasons for their choice, sheds light on the nature of the French-Australian community, on the complexity of nationality and allegiance, and further adds to our knowledge of the AIF's composition and the experience of its members who were not part of its Anglo-Celtic ethnic heritage majority. When French citizens joined the AIF, they were doing so against the orders of the French government, and against the wishes of the Consul. Homery's letters to some of them reveal that pleading and persuasion were the few methods available as French law could not be enforced in Australia. However, when French citizens were required to register as aliens under the wartime legislation, this provided a new potential avenue to locate the recalcitrant. The AIF also counted French speakers in its ranks who had attained language skills through a variety of pathways. Chapter Three focussed on the role of French

language for the AIF soldiers and analysed the various ways in which their skills informed and affected their experiences. Such skills provided a level of engagement and communication with civilians in France and with French soldiers which set them apart. French language skills in the civilian and military spheres overlapped on the home front, with French-speaking Australians teaching French to AIF soldiers, organising and delivering classes, and writing and distributing French phrase books.

The second section, Chapters Four, Five and Six, explored how French-Australians, and their francophone and francophile networks mobilised French cultural identity in a variety of ways, combining images of French identity and culture with patriotic and fundraising aims to support Australia's war effort by maintaining support for France. On the home front, the French-Australians responded by utilising their local and international networks to create French fundraising organisations. The French fundraising organisations fulfilled not only humanitarian aims, sending money, clothing, and all kinds of goods to France; their operations bound fundraising to patriotism and propaganda, and thus they functioned as vehicles for transnational cultural mobilisation. French-Australians acted as intermediaries, enabling valuable transnational connections between the two countries, underpinning support for the war, and influencing how Australians viewed themselves as allies of France. Direct people-to-people links were established, enabling feelings of connectedness between Australians and French soldiers, and between Australians and French civilians, such as when Australian women sent care parcels to destitute mothers in France, adding a meaningful and unique dimension to Australia's wartime philanthropy. The French fundraising organisations made use of popular forms of public entertainment such as fetes, parades and concerts, which they re-appropriated with a French flavour. Such events constituted a space in which the public performed their patriotism through engaging with French culture. Channelling aid directly to France allowed Australians to frame their response in a way that was 'not British', and thus this episode reveals glimpses of Australia's process of national identity creation.

Chapter Four shows how this was carried out in Melbourne. In early 1915, the dynamic and well-connected Charlotte Crivelli, aided by a committee of prominent citizens, instigated the French Red Cross Victorian Branch, and adopted charities for French mothers, babies and children. Local branches of French war charities operated successfully in Australia thanks to transnational links, mobilising connections between French and Australians at the local level, and between the two countries. A crucial point

of connection was that between Crivelli and her sister Suzanne Caubet in Paris. Caubet was a vital hub: she transferred goods and money received from Australia to numerous beneficiaries, and introduced the Australians and the aid they would bring to the French Red Cross and other war charities.

Chapter Five focussed on the period from 1916 onwards, when Australian society was subjected to social and political conflict. As the disaster of war intensified, so too did the response, and the French fundraising organisations became increasingly effective in their aims. However, privately expressed tensions and conflicts arose regarding the best way to project the image of France, indicating an awareness that much was at stake. Homery privately expressed his dismay at the way that Charlotte Crivelli was projecting France as a nation reduced to begging for help. Yet the appeals on behalf of French mothers and babies struck a chord particularly with Australian women. Against the backdrop of the conscription conflict the association of Frenchness with Catholicism posed potential problems, however the FRC Vic's committee members overcame challenges, and the religious ceremony to honour the French soldiers of Verdun was a potent symbol of Australia's support for France.

French fundraising organisations also operated in Australia's other cities. In Sydney, the French community's response was the FALH, while in other cities local branches of the French Red Cross were established. Just as in Melbourne, transnational networks and connections were utilised, and French cultural symbols were incorporated into fundraising events. French-Australian connections were created and manifested in other domains on the home front. When French soldiers based in New Caledonia transited through Australian ports, local francophones helped to welcome and entertain them, and acted as interpreters. The visits by French soldiers engendered feelings of comradeship and were a focus for expressing French identity. However, reactions to the French colonial soldiers reveal how prevailing white colonialist attitudes needed to be rearranged, or temporarily set aside.

The third section of the thesis, Chapters Seven and Eight, investigated how soft power and cultural diplomacy were carried out in Australia. The message of pro-French propaganda played an important role in underpinning support for the war in Australia. 'Bottom-up' cultural mobilisation informed the public's perceptions of France, linking love of France and patriotism. However, a 'top-down' influence was equally at play, driven by French official intervention, directed and monitored by the French consuls in

Sydney and Melbourne, and bolstered by prominent local French-Australians such as Doctor Marcel Crivelli and Fernand Maurice-Carton in Melbourne, and Holman in Sydney. The French government included Australia in its extensive list of countries to be monitored, ensuring the correct message was projected. Official French reports of German atrocities, photographs and films made by the SPCA, and newspaper reports helped achieve this end. If doubts were expressed, such as Holman's concern over French casualty reports in 1917, or 'unpatriotic' anti-conscription rhetoric, then doubts would be quickly assuaged.

Cultural diplomacy and propaganda were important tools used to foster positive images of France, strengthen support for the war, encourage recruitment and intervene in favour of conscription. Both Homery in Melbourne, and Chayet in Sydney undertook cultural diplomacy and demonstrated their belief in France's *Mission Civilisatrice* when they intervened to steer the influence of the AF in each city: in Melbourne Homery attempted to transform it, while in Sydney Chayet took personal charge of creating rival organisations which would fulfil the role of the AF. In each case the policy of cultural diplomacy was visualised through a long-term lens. Although their approaches differed, the common aim of both men was to assure the continuity of France's cultural influence, so that it was strengthened rather than destabilised during the conflict. The Melbourne AF expanded its engagement with patriotic activities, melding its pre-war focus on social and cultural events with fundraising for French causes, and contributing its members' language skills towards teaching French to Australian soldiers and providing interpreters for visiting French soldiers.

The French Economic Mission led by General Pau carried out an extensive tour of Australia in late 1918. The purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities for closer ties between Australia and France after the war, and it combined economic aims with the patriotic aims of shoring up support for the war, encouraging recruitment and thanking Australia for its participation. The delegation received an enthusiastic welcome almost everywhere it went. As head of the Croix Rouge Française, General Pau was presented with cheques from local French fundraising organisations. In the long-term, enthusiasm from both sides could not outweigh the negative impact of Australia's protectionist trade policy, however the Mission encapsulated many aspects of the French-Australian relationship as it was envisaged at the time.

French-Australian transnational connections spanning the great distance between the two countries, and also operating within Australia, were a key factor in the mobilisation of French cultural identity in Australia for war aims. This cultural mobilisation played a part in multiple domains: influencing patriotic, pro-war discourse, fundraising, encouraging recruitment and intervening in the conscription debate. When Paul Wenz described the bombing of Rheims for an Australian audience, or when a letter from one of the Crivelli sons at Verdun was published, French-Australians influenced the wider discourse. Influence came not only from individuals but also from interventions at the national level. The visit of the French Economic Mission, with its explicit aim of encouraging recruitment, can be recast not as a discrete intervention by the French government in Australian affairs, but within the wider context of official French interest in Australian policies.

Considering the different ways that French identity was projected prompts questions of identity-making in wartime society and demonstrates to what extent Australia's experience corresponded to the complex and multi-level model proposed by Winter. One surprising finding which the research revealed was the extent and manner in which French identity was contested and discussed, and also the range of people who took part in the conversation. The question of French identity examined in this thesis reveals a paradox: the essentialist labelling inherent in wartime identity-making contrasts with the diversity of French identities – of real people – who are revealed in the archives.

In many different forums, from humorous articles in the newspaper, to interventions by the French state, correspondence between France's diplomatic representatives and Australian officials, there is evidence of a continuing dialogue in the public and private sphere, on many levels, regarding how French identity should be projected. Letters, speeches and newspaper reports indicate that the public was aware that their attitudes were being re-configured by the rhetoric. When the councillors of Hobart reconsidered how to celebrate Waterloo Day, when Hartnell wrote that since the beginning of the war he had 'learned to love the French', and when the good people of Adelaide ate snails à la Parisienne to demonstrate their patriotism, they signalled their awareness of this phenomenon. In the same way, members of the public were prompted to re-imagine their image of heroic Frenchmen when they encountered French colonial soldiers from the South Pacific. The projection of French identity occurred on an organic, spontaneous level, resulting from generalised stereotypes already present in public consciousness, as

well as from a deliberate broad orchestration. The wide variety of French identities which have been examined in these pages reveals a paradox between the complexity of reality and the projected, essentialised tropes of French identity.

The role of French language is another of the themes explored in this thesis. French language skills framed identity and resulted in both soldiers and civilians creating connections which influenced their wartime experience and that of others. In September 1914, Courtney anticipated that French speaking soldiers would be useful in the AIF, and indeed French skills informed the experiences of Australian soldiers on the Western Front in a variety of situations: French teacher Alan Chisholm worked in intelligence and as an interpreter; Cornelius Searles, a baker, connected with the family who housed him; while Edwin Huck got to know French soldiers beside him in the trenches. In Australia, French speakers played an intermediary role acting as interpreters for the visiting soldiers from New Caledonia. However, there remains an aspect of communication which the limitations of this thesis necessarily excluded: a study of the interactions between French and Australian soldiers which includes the perspective of the French interpreters who were posted to Australian units. A more in-depth study which took into account the role of interpreters and liaison officers would add a further chapter to our understanding French-Australian connections on the Western Front.

The AF also played an intermediary role, creating connection through language. During this period both the Sydney and Melbourne branches faced challenges. However, the AF and its members contributed to French Australian relations on several levels: they organised French classes for soldiers and aviators, held fundraising events, and acted as interpreters. Meanwhile the AF did not relinquish its role as a forum for cultural social soirées for genteel members of society. My research has identified various individuals who contributed to the AF during this time, such the French teachers who taught at the Central Flying School. Melbourne's AF marked its 130th year in 2020. It has long been an iconic emblem of relations between France and Australia, and the study presented here of its operations during the Great War could be expanded upon and contribute to a larger, full-length history.

French-Australian relations during the war are naturally most often conceptualised through the well-documented history of the Australian participation on the Western Front, where approximately 295,000 AIF soldiers served and 46,000 were killed. In contrast the French-Australian relations examined in this study provide a different perspective.

Dynamic transnational exchanges influenced the narrative around French identity which was part of Australia's war culture, and understanding how that took place, provides a new facet to Australia's World War I history.

The French-Australian relations that were mobilised, created and strengthened during the war influenced the post-war relationship. One of the notable avenues – though not the only one – through which this relationship was expressed was through Victoria's post-war aid to Villers-Bretonneux. Understanding the response of French-Australians and the creation and operation of French fundraising organisations thus has implications for understanding Australia's long-term relationship to France. The links between Australia and France which were eventually created through the reconstruction of Villers-Bretonneux have been significant in Australian national identity and mythmaking, although as Fathi pointed out, the importance accorded to Villers-Bretonneux has been variable.[1] Charlotte Crivelli played a crucial role in the establishment of the Victorian fund for Villers-Bretonneux, and in Melbourne's adoption of the town. Less well-known are the French-Australian connections which contributed to success of the fund at the outset, with Suzanne Caubet as the French representative. During the 1920's the adoption, and the fund, became controlled largely by Frank Tate and the Victorian Education Department, as Wade and Fathi both detailed.[2]

In the immediate post-war period, conflicting policies and Australia's prioritising of its place in the British Empire, meant that the trade relationship did not advance in the way that many hoped, despite the appointment of trade representatives in each country. Over the intervening century the relationship has experienced occasional rocky patches.[3] Within the strong and vibrant modern-day relationship, Australia's First World War participation remains one of the frames through which French-Australian relations are envisaged today. The visit to Australia in May 2018 by French President Emmanuel Macron referenced First World War commemoration in ceremonies and speeches. Shared memory of the First World War is one of the areas for cooperation identified in the joint statement of enhanced strategic partnership between Australia and France, first signed in

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[1] Fathi, *Our Corner of the Somme - Australia at Villers-Bretonneux*.
[2] Wade, '"By Diggers Defended, by Victorians Mended"'; Fathi, *Our Corner of the Somme - Australia at Villers-Bretonneux*.
[3] Nettelbeck, 'Beyond the Sheep's Back: World War I and Its Aftermath in the Development of an Economic Relationship between Australia and France'; Colin Nettelbeck, 'French-Australian Relations: Towards an Historical Perspective', *French Australian Review*, no. 57 (Australian Summer 2015).

2012 and updated in 2017.[4] The statement declares 'Australia and France are drawn together by their history, values and common aspirations for a secure and more prosperous future.' The wording of this sentence, excepting perhaps the mention of history, would not have looked out of place in the Australia of 1918. Within the more recent geo-political climate, the French-Australian relationship is framed through ties in the Indo-Pacific region, with the appointment in October 2020 of former French ambassador to Australia, Christophe Penot, to a newly created position: Ambassador to the Indo-Pacific. Australia is seen as one of France's key partners in this regional policy.[5] Reflecting then on shared memory of the First World War as one of the pillars of the relationship, this research moves beyond the iconic yet limited frame of Villers-Bretonneux to contribute to a more complex understanding of this shared history.

[4] https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/france/Pages/joint-statement-of-enhanced-strategic-partnership-between-australia-and-france

[5] https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/france-escalates-china-push-appoints-ambassador-for-indo-pacific-20201012-p5647f.html. (accessed 14 October 2020).

Appendix: Translations

French original of translated passages.

Chapter 1

p. 24 ils n'oseront plus s'appeler français.'

p. 25 Ils se sont dérobés à leur devoir envers leurs Pays (sic)

p. 26 La présente lettre vous sera remise par le jeune Chaleyer René, qui appartient à une famille des plus honorable de Melbourne […] et qui a tout quitté ici, famille, position, et le pays où il est né.

Vous pouvez être assuré que ses chefs directs lui feront le plus bienveillant accueil et s'efforceront de lui faciliter ses débuts dans la vie militaire. D'autre part, j'aurai moi-même pour lui la sollicitude particulière que méritent les jeunes gens qui ont tout quitté pour faire leur devoir et qui éloignés de leur famille ont besoin de sentir qu'ils ne sont pas complétement isolés, et que l'on s'intéresse à eux.

Laissant de côté toute autre considération, quitte son pays de naissance pour aller faire si loin son devoir de Français

p. 40 Re circula no 21188K du 23 Oct - pours certains mobilisés venus des pays étrangers des permissions pourraient être accordées à ceux de nos mobilisés…. à l'appui de leur demande d'un certificat de loyauté.

Chapter 2

p. 58 N'a pas rejoint son corps. Déclaré insoumis en temps de guerre le 21 Octobre 1916

Chapter 3

p. 79 Et, de ce commerce aussi familial que journalier, sous les obus, naissait une réelle et sincère sympathie. Australiens et tirailleurs placés à la « suture » des armées franco-britanniques, connaissaient toute l'importance de leur mission. […] De cette

situation, naissait un sentiment de sécurité et de réconfort bienfaisant.

Chapter 4

p. 126/127 Quand je recevrai l'argent que penserais-tu si j'achetais des objets fabriqués par des blessés. Il y en a de très amusants. Ils font avec des boîtes en fer blanc, des pendentifs, des bijoux, des bagues mi-artistiques. La Croix Rouge à Melbourne pourrait avoir un stock d'objets à vendre.

p. 127 Mais on ne peut rien présumer… tout cela demande du temps.

Chapter 5

p. 135 Non pas que les sentiments de sympathie de ce pays pour le nôtre n'aient en rien diminué d'intensité…mais depuis que nous avons établi ici une branche de la Croix-Rouge française, le flot des dons et souscriptions se porte tout entier et exclusivement à cette œuvre, très fortement organisé, et disposant de moyens d'action extrêmement puissants, grâce aux personnalités actives et influentes qui la dirigent.

p. 135 incident soulevé par Mme Crivelli

p. 136 vous voudrez bien fermer les yeux sur cette petite infraction aux règlements

p. 136 La noble cité de Melbourne est aussi généreuse pour les blessés que ses fils sont vaillants dans le combat. La Croix Rouge Française reconnaissante la salue.

p. 137 Duplicate: M Homery n'a pas voulu se charger de l'envoi de cette requête. Mr Chayet également avait déclaré que le vice consulat n'avait pas à s'en occuper. Dans ces conditions, le document m'a été mis sous enveloppe affranchie à l'adresse du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Paris.

p. 139 Je m'efforcerai de répondre à cet appel dans la mesure de mes faibles moyens, bien que je doute fort du succès de mes efforts, les

souscriptions des généreux habitants de ce pays étant offertes à peu près exclusivement à notre Croix Rouge, et à l'œuvre de l'Assistance Maternelle et Infantile.

p. 140 La France n'en est pas encore réduite à la misère et à la mendicité.

Chapter 6

p. 191 Vous avez entendu M. le trésorier faire le tableau de notre situation financière, et vous avez pu constater qu'a un moment nous avions vu le fond de notre caisse.

Pour quoi donc cette caisse s'est-elle remplie, et comment ?

Ah ! Je dois le proclamer bien haut devant notre Assemblée: c'est au secours australien que nous le devons. (vifs applaudissements.) C'est lui qui nous a sauvés ! Alors que tous avaient consenti les plus grands sacrifices et que l'on entrevoyait avec désespoir la fin de l'existence de cet Office central de la Protection maternelle et infantile, la résurrection est venue de Sydney et de Melbourne. Encore une fois, je le répète, c'est le secours Australien qui nous a fait vivre !

Chapter 7

p. 199 Tous les journaux de ma résidence, se sont, dès le début même de la guerre, tous engagés d'accord avec le Gouvernement australien, à ne reproduire dans leurs colonies que les nouvelles qui leur seraient câblés par leurs correspondants de Londres. Tout ce qui est télégraphié après avoir passé au crible de la censure anglaise, est ainsi porté à la connaissance du public de Melbourne qui est très exactement et fidèlement tenu au courant de tous les évènements actuels, quels qu'ils soient, et notamment de la marche des opérations sur les divers théâtres de la guerre. Dans ces correspondances, destinées à une Colonie britannique, une place privilégiée est, comme de juste, réservée à la reproduction en détail des rapports hebdomadaires quelques peu redondants et si différents de ton de nos sobres communiqués, du Marechal French,

mais je dois à la vérité le dire que les communiqués français y tiennent néanmoins le rang qui doit leur revenir, et que les commentaires dont ils sont accompagnés mettent bien en évidence le rôle prépondérant de notre pays dans cette lutte gigantesque et rendent pleinement justice à son admirable vaillance.

p. 200 Enfin nous vous serions reconnaissants de toutes les indications que vous pourriez nous fournir touchant notre service, tant sur l'enrichissement des séries existantes que sur les sujets touchants notre vie nationale qui pourraient intéresser plus particulièrement l'Australie.

p. 203 qui se dévoue sans compter en faveur de toutes les œuvres de propagande française

p. 205/206 Mr. Holman n'a cessé […].de prodiguer ses marques de sympathie pour la France et d'admiration pour ses institutions. Mais c'est surtout depuis le début de la guerre que l'attitude nettement francophile de cet homme d'Etat s'est affirmée. Alors qu'une grande partie de la nation australienne nous témoignait peu de sympathie, que les journaux taisaient systématiquement les succès de nos armées, et qu'à les lire il eut semblé que seuls les Anglais faisaient quelque chose, Mr. Holman eut le courage de dénoncer en public leur ignorance et leur mauvaise volonté et de révéler à ses compatriotes la part immense que prenait la France dans la lutte engagée contre l'ennemi commun.

p. 206 je vous prie de me faire savoir si je dois relever ladite déclaration et en case d'affirmative de vouloir bien en attendant d'envoyer des instructions à cet effet colonie française très impressionnée.

p. 213 Elle reste fidèle à son programme de progrès humain par la propagation de la langue française.

Chapter 8

p. 216 en pleine voie de décomposition et menace ruine

le renouvellement du comité de direction duquel il conviendrait d'éliminer tout élément féminin.

p. 217 Mes démarches… pour redonner à l'Alliance Française de Victoria la vitalité qui lui manque et de la sauver de la maladie de langueur dont elle se meurt. Je regrette d'avoir à vous annoncer le résultat infructueux de mes efforts…[les dames du comité] à signer leur propre déchéance, à se retirer volontairement devant un nouvel élément directeur masculin… toute difficile que fût la tâche, elle ne m'a pas apparu insurmontable. Je me suis heurté à la résistance opiniâtre de la Présidente, qui est la femme du Lord Mayor de Melbourne, et toutes les dames se retournèrent alors brusquement contre moi.

p. 222 (Poincaré) : 'les soldats de la pensée française'.

p. 225 Les très nombreuses conférences que j'y ai faites m'ont permis d'aborder une foule de questions d'actualité et de détruire un grand nombre de préjugés absurdes ou malveillants qui avaient cours sur la France, et j'ai réussi à créer dans ce milieu une atmosphère nettement francophile.

p. 233/234 L'élément catholique irlandais, qui depuis plusieurs années vote en majorité avec le parti travailliste, soutient la propagande des extrémistes ; les militants irlandais tiennent fréquemment des propos anti-anglais et défaitistes.

RÉSUMÉ DE THÈSE EN FRANÇAIS

'*Pour Noble et Vaillante France*' – les identités Franco-Australiennes, les relations Franco-Australiennes pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale

Mots-clés et résumé de thèse

Abstract :

La recherche porte sur les relations franco-australiennes pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale. A l'aide d'une approche transnationale, elle étudie l'expérience des soldats français résidant en Australie à la déclaration de la guerre, et les interactions entre Français et Australiens tant en France qu'en Australie. Dans le contexte de la Première Guerre Mondiale, les communautés françaises en Australie ont été perçues différemment et leur rôle dans la société a été souligné et transformé, ce qui les a soudainement mises en valeur d'une façon nouvelle et unique. Cette étude vise à identifier les réseaux d'influence, à analyser la nature des relations et interconnexions sociales, politiques, culturelles et linguistiques, à découvrir comment ces relations ont influencé l'effort de guerre australien, et comment elles ont été transformées en retour par la guerre. Le fait de se fonder sur des sources françaises comme australiennes procure une perspective nouvelle sur cette période cruciale de l'histoire des relations entre la France et l'Australie.

Mots clés : Première Guerre Mondiale ; Histoire Transnationale; Australie ; Histoire culturelle ; Relations franco-australiennes.;

Key words: First World War; Transnational history; Australia; Cultural History; French-Australian relations.

‘*Pour Noble et Vaillante France’* – les identités Franco-Australiennes / les relations Franco-Australiennes pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale

Introduction

Prologue

En juillet 1918, l’homme d’affaires de Melbourne Monsieur W.A. Hartnell est inspiré d’écrire une lettre au Vice-Consul français Henri Fliche. En faisant un don de 25 livres sterling à la grande collecte de fonds pour la France à l’occasion de la fête nationale française, Hartnell exprime ses émotions envers la France. Dans la lettre, il se décrit comme un homme ordinaire, mais aussi quelqu’un qui s’intéresse à l’histoire. Il réfléchit sur les siècles de conflit entre la France et la Grande Bretagne, mais il note que ces guerres ont toujours été marquées par le respect et la galanterie. Hartnell fait l’éloge des Français : « une race très cultivée, artistique et sensible », et il déclare « j’ai toujours admiré votre peuple, mais au cours de la guerre j’ai appris à les aimer ».[1]

La Grande Bretagne entre en guerre le 4 août 1914, et par conséquent, l’Australie, en sa qualité de dominion, est aussi en guerre. Dès le début, l’Australie promet son soutien complet. Les voix de désaccord sont pour la plupart submergées par l’immense expression générale de loyauté et d’affection pour la ‘mère patrie’.[2]

La mesure dans laquelle la Grande-Bretagne soutiendrait la France aux termes de l'Entente Cordiale reste quelque peu incertaine, lorsque que les dominos tombaient et les puissances européennes se mobilisaient. Cependant, après une indécision initiale, la Grande-Bretagne fait sa déclaration de guerre, officiellement en réponse à la violation allemande de la neutralité belge.[3] En Australie, l’Empire britannique et ses raisons d’entrer en guerre restent centrales dans le discours patriotique. Les manifestations patriotiques dès le début de la guerre se focalisent surtout sur l’Empire et sur la Belgique, et plus généralement sur les Alliés. Pourtant, avec la progression de la guerre, la France prend une place de plus en plus importante comme justification pour continuer la guerre. Déclarer son admiration et son amour pour la France équivaut être patriote, et la francophilie qui est normalement le domaine des élites se répand dans le pays.

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[1] Hartnell to Fliche, 10 Jul 1918, MAE 428PO/1/50.
[2] Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Crows Nest, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin, 2013); John Connor, Peter Stanley, and Peter Yule, *The War at Home*, vol. 4, The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[3] Robert Tombs and Isabelle Tombs, *La France et Le Royaume-Uni: Des Ennemis Intimes* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012).

En juin 1915, Chief Justice Sir John Madden, juge à la Cour Suprême de Victoria, en appelle au public dans le plus grand journal quotidien de Melbourne. Il annonce une énorme collecte de fonds pour la Croix Rouge Française qui aura lieu le 14 juillet. Le public sera appelé à soutenir la France. Dans sa lettre, il fait l'éloge de la France – *our comrade, noble and valiant France* – et des Français, qui sont courageux et se sacrifient au nom de la liberté.[4] Madden raconte la destruction de l'industrie française, la perte de villes dans la zone occupée, et la souffrance et les sacrifices des Français. Il conclut que « le chagrin et la douleur de notre camarade la noble et vaillante France » seront atténués par la connaissance que même les Australiens, le peuple le plus éloigné du monde, offrent leur gratitude et leur affection aux Français. Ce langage dithyrambique est typique des expressions affectives de patriotisme qui sont omniprésentes dans les pays alliés dès le début de la guerre, et que l'on trouve à la fois dans les discours officiels et les discours non-officiels.

Les lettres de Madden et de Hartnell attestent de la rhétorique émotive et patriotique répandue pendant la guerre. Hartnell était sûr d'avoir compris ce qui était un Français, et son opinion reflétait les idées reçues de l'époque. Pourquoi pensait-il que les Français étaient très cultivés et artistiques ? Comment avait-t-il appris à aimer les Français ? Les expressions utilisées par Hartnell correspondent aux images, clichés et stéréotypes communs. La manière dont ces clichés ont été diffusés, par qui et dans quel but est une des questions que nous examinons dans les chapitres suivants.

Introduction Générale

Cette thèse examine l'identité franco-australienne et les relations franco-australiennes pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Elle a pour but de comprendre comment les Français et les francophiles d'Australie ont réagi à la guerre, et comment l'identité française a été conçue et mobilisée en Australie. Pendant cette période clé pour les relations entre les deux pays, l'identité française s'exprime à travers les connexions entre Français et Australiens, dans des domaines civils et militaires.

[4] France's Appeal, *The Argus*, 25 June 1915, p. 8. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1527000.

La période de la Grande Guerre est très importante pour l'histoire des relations entre les deux pays. A l'idée de la France comme pays de culture, de littérature, de style et d'intellectualisme s'ajoute l'image d'un pays de souffrance, de courage, de traumatisme. La France, pays de fascination lointaine deviendra un lieu concret pour beaucoup plus d'Australiens, avec leur expérience de souffrance dans les tranchées. Néanmoins c'est dès le début de la Guerre que l'image de la France acquiert une importance plus grande, bien avant l'arrivée des troupes australiennes en France. Les relations entre la France et l'Australie ne sont pas cultivées uniquement en France, mais aussi en Australie grâce aux Français et francophones, et leur réseaux locaux et internationaux. Au cours du conflit, ils joueront un rôle dans l'évolution des relations franco-australiennes, et dans la diffusion de l'idée de la France. Cette étude vise à comprendre quelle était la situation pour les Français alors résidents en Australie. Notre analyse des sources françaises et australiennes révèle le rôle important joué par les franco-australiens et leurs réseaux dans la mobilisation de la culture française. Les archives françaises qui informent ce travail fournit une perspective transnationale à cette mobilisation culturelle, et améliorent notre compréhension de l'expérience de guerre de l'Australie.

Pour répondre à cette question nous utilisons deux approches, de façon croisée : l'histoire culturelle et l'histoire transnationale. L'histoire culturelle analyse les pratiques et les symboles qui permettent aux hommes et aux femmes de conférer un sens au monde. Elle s'intéresse à une large gamme de sujets, de la culture populaire à la culture savante.[5] Même si elle existe depuis longtemps, l'histoire culturelle s'insère dans l'historiographie de la guerre de façon transformative dès les années 1990.[6] Jay Winter et Antoine Prost retracent l'évolution de l'historiographie depuis l'histoire diplomatique et militaire, jusqu'à l'histoire économique et sociale, et enfin le tournant culturel. Le corpus s'est récemment agrandit et les historiens cherchent aussi à expliquer les expériences affectives, le deuil, la commémoration, et le rôle des arts plastiques.[7] Les approches culturelles s'intègrent avec les autres approches, les unes informent les autres.

[5] Peter Burke, *What Is Cultural History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).
[6] Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *Penser la Grande Guerre - un essai d'historiographie* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2004).
[7] Heather Jones, 'As the Centenary Approaches: The Regeneration of First World War Historiography.', *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 3 (2013): 857–78, http://dx.doi.org.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/10.1017/S0018246X13000216.

L'expérience des civils est également soulignée. Bart Ziino et Joan Beaumont sont parmi les historiens australiens éminents qui ont retracé l'historiographie australienne, et montré l'importance de lier les expériences des soldats au front avec celles des civils pour mieux comprendre le conflit.[8] Plus récemment, John Horne développe le concept de la mobilisation culturelle. Selon Horne, si les hommes, l'argent et les ressources sont mobilisés pour faire la guerre, il est aussi essentiel de mobiliser les esprits.[9] C'est à travers les institutions et les pratiques culturelles que les esprits sont mobilisés.[10]

Les représentations et l'identité faisant partie de l'approche culturelle, le concept d'identité proposé par Jay Winter est également très utile pour notre étude.[11] Winter propose trois niveaux d'identité : premièrement, l'identité individuelle, que chaque personne crée et qui reflète la relation entre l'individu et la société à laquelle il appartient. Deuxièmement, l'identité collective : souvent en temps de guerre, c'est la nation. L'identité collective exprime l'altérité, crée en opposition à un 'autre'. Cela peut être l'ennemi, mais Winter donne aussi l'exemple des civils en opposition aux soldats au front. Le troisième niveau est local, c'est souvent la ville ou le quartier. Les identités sont donc complexes et comptent de multiples aspects. Mais en temps de guerre, les identités sont réduites à l'essentiel, et les stéréotypes sont abondants. Winter souligne aussi l'aspect 'performatif' des identités, ainsi que la présence de nostalgie pour un passé idéalisé.[12] Les multiples niveaux d'identité, la nostalgie et l'idéalisme sont présents dans la mobilisation de la culture française en Australie, et font l'objet de notre analyse dans les chapitres suivants.

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[8] Joan Beaumont, 'Remembering Australia's First World War', *Australian Historical Studies* 46, no. 1 (2015); Bart Ziino, '"Total War" in Australia: Civilian Mobilisation and Commitment, 1914–18', in *Australians and the First World War*, ed. Kate Ariotti and James E. Bennett (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 165–82, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51520-5_10; Bart Ziino, 'The First World War in Australian History', *Australian Historical Studies* 47, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 118–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2015.1021820.

[9] John Horne, ed., *State, Society and Mobilisation in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[10] Jay Winter, 'Cultural Mobilization: Henry Moore and the Two World Wars', in *A World at War, 1911-1949 : Explorations in the Cultural History of War*, ed. Catriona Pennell and Filipe Ribiero De Meneses (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 19.

[11] Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, vol. 2-A Cultural History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[12] Winter and Robert.

Le deuxième élément de notre cadre théorique est l'approche transnationale, qui est concernée par les flux de personnes, d'idées et de cultures à travers les frontières. C'est le cadre idéal pour examiner les relations entre les communautés françaises et australiennes de l'époque. Les Franco-Australiens deviennent le microcosme à partir duquel analyser les transferts culturels et l'histoire croisée. Selon la définition de Pierre-Yves Saunier, l'approche transnationale comprend l'analyse des connexions culturelles, sociales, économiques, idéologiques entre groupes réels ou imaginés.[13] Saunier explique que l'histoire transnationale comporte une structure dynamique de connexions, réseaux et circulations qui mènent aux relations entre individus et communautés. Les relations entre groupes sont marquées par l'alignement, où les acteurs agissent ensemble pour une cause commune, ou par la mobilisation, où un groupe inspire un autre à l'action. Cette notion d'influence dynamique fait l'écho des théories de transfert culturel de Michel Espagne.[14] John Horne note que l'approche de l'histoire culturelle doit tenir compte non seulement des représentations, mais aussi de l'expérience et des actions. L'expérience est formée par les actions et par les représentations, Elle est produite par le croisement d'idées et d'actions. Ces deux éléments sont cruciaux pour répondre à notre question centrale : comment l'identité française – une idée – et les relations franco-australiennes – exprimées par des actions – se croisent, et s'informent les uns les autres. En s'interrogeant sur l'identité française en Australie, cette thèse note sa nature complexe et sa diversité. Ses différentes manifestations se trouvent dans des différents aspects des connexions franco-australiennes pendant la guerre, et les multiples contextes dans lesquels l'identité française était conçue et utilisée, par exemples dans les contextes militaires, civils, diplomatiques, et dans le domaine public et le domaine privé.

Pour notre étude, l'identité française est parfois un fait spécifique, par exemple dans le cas des jeunes hommes de nationalité française, dont les noms apparaissent sur une liste des mobilisables. Cela peut être aussi un concept plus général, ce qui est le cas dans les sociétés de bienfaisance. Celles-ci incorporent les symboles culturels français pour renforcer le sentiment de connexion des Australiens envers la France, et inspirer la générosité qui se manifeste en donations d'argent et de biens pour la France. L'identité

[13] Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[14] Michel Espagne, 'La notion de transfert culturel', *Revue Sciences/Lettres*, no. 1 (18 April 2013), https://doi.org/10.4000/rsl.219.

française s'exprime aussi de façon plus abstraite, dans la notion puissante d'un idéal selon lequel la France est l'Alliée noble de la Grande Bretagne et de l'Australie.

Effectivement, dans chaque domaine il existait beaucoup d'opinions divergentes et variées concernant l'expression de l'identité française. La question qui se pose donc concerne les éléments qui définissent un groupe ou une communauté – qui décide ? C'est pour cette raison que les groupes français et francophones d'Australie, et plus spécifiquement de Melbourne, sont un sujet complexe et fascinant. Dans son étude des Français en Australie dans l'avant-guerre, Bergantz affirme que la culture française était le domaine des élites, des lettrés et des artistes, et non pas un concept partagé par le grand public.[15] Pour Bergantz, la francité était une forme de capital culturel et social, utilisée pour exprimer le statut social et le bon goût. La présente étude s'interroge sur l'évolution de cette considération, et affirme que dans le contexte de la guerre, les enjeux se transforment pour les Français en Australie, ainsi que pour la France elle-même, qui observe attentivement les activités et les déclarations en Australie.

L'originalité de cette recherche se trouve dans son utilisation des archives françaises ainsi qu'australiennes pour dresser le portrait de l'Australie en guerre selon une nouvelle perspective. Cette étude constitue donc une nouvelle façon de comprendre les relations-franco-australiennes dans cette période clé. Nos recherches montrent d'une façon inédite le rôle crucial que les relations franco-australiennes ont joué dans la société australienne de l'époque. Nous découvrons à travers les archives dans quelle mesure ces relations ont pour effet de motiver les Australiens dans leur soutien de la guerre. De plus, le présent travail révèle l'importance de l'identité française dans la mobilisation culturelle australienne. Plus généralement, nous traitons les questions de nationalité et patriotisme en guerre, questions qui ont des conséquences pour les gens ordinaires mais qui influencent aussi le discours public au sujet de la guerre.

Dans le cadre théorique de l'histoire transnationale, les personnages étudiés dans cette thèse se croisent dans les aires de connexions. Les représentants diplomatiques français,

[15] Alexis Bergantz, 'French Connection: The Culture and Politics of Frenchness in Australia 1890-1914' (PhD, Canberra, Australian National University, 2015).

les civils, les bénévoles, les infirmières, les sociétés de bienfaisance, et les soldats, tous nous présentent des exemples du transfert de biens, d'objets, d'argent, de personnes, et d'idées entre l'Australie et la France. En examinant notre sujet du point de vue militaire comme civil, nous élargissons notre perspective des Français en Australie pendant le conflit. Nous utilisons ainsi un nouveau prisme pour examiner les notions de nationalité et patriotisme.

Les archives principales utilisées

Cette étude s'appuie sur une grande variété d'archives australiennes et françaises. Parmi celles-ci, les archives diplomatiques du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Nantes et à La Courneuve (MAE) sont très importantes. Les archives de la Courneuve contiennent la correspondance entre le Consul General à Sydney, le Vice-Consul à Melbourne, et le Ministère à Paris. Les archives du vice-consulat de Melbourne, qui ont été retrouvées après plus de quarante ans sont des ressources précieuses. En 1940, les archives des postes consulaires de Melbourne et de Sydney avaient disparu pendant la fermeture soudaine de ces deux bureaux. La redécouverte de celles-ci dans un garage de la banlieue de Melbourne, et leur transfert à Nantes est une histoire fascinante.[16] Même si d'autres études existent qui s'appuient sur les archives consulaires de Melbourne, (on note en particulier la thèse de doctorat d'Alexis Bergantz qui s'intéresse à la période d'avant-guerre) cette étude est la première à utiliser ces archives pour une investigation approfondie de l'histoire australienne pendant la Grande Guerre.[17] Ces archives, incluant une grande quantité et variété de correspondances, témoignaient d'une communauté française active et engagée, même si peu nombreuse, et permettent l'identification des acteurs de tous les rangs de la société – les privilégiés ainsi que les individus qui seraient autrement oubliés par l'histoire. L'usage des archives du MAE pour examiner l'histoire sociale, culturelle et politique de l'Australie pendant la Grande Guerre est un aspect innovatif du présent travail.

[16] Colin Nettelbeck, 'The Consul's Treasure', *Explorations*, no. 7 (1988): 19–23.
[17] Bergantz, 'French Connection'; Alexis Bergantz, 'Mapping the Consul's Treasure: A Discussion and Guide to the French Consular Archives', *The French Australian Review*, no. 61 (Australian Summer 2017); Alexis Bergantz, 'The Culture and Politics of Frenchness in Australia (1890-1914): Reflections on a Research Project', *The French Australian Review*, no. 62 (Australian Winter 2017).

Il faut noter qu'à cette époque, Melbourne est toujours la capitale de l'Australie. Le vice-consul évolue donc dans le milieu du pouvoir politique et social. Pourtant, c'est à Sydney qu'est installé le poste du Consul Général de France. Les Français à Sydney sont un peu plus nombreux, et leur colonie est centrée autour des représentants commerciaux. Il est regrettable que les archives de Sydney soient perdues. Néanmoins, une très bonne étude existe au sujet d'un groupe de Français à Sydney. Les acheteurs de laine constituaient un effet une petite mais importante colonie française, et c'est la descendante d'un de ces hommes d'affaires qui s'est appuyée sur les lettres et journaux intimes de sa famille pour raconter cette histoire.[18]

Notre étude se base donc largement sur l'expérience de Melbourne, mais ne s'y limite pas. Les archives du MAE révèlent les réseaux et les personnages clés, et donc servent comme point de départ pour informer les recherches ultérieures. De plus, de riches archives australiennes sont disponibles. Parmi elles, les Archives Nationales Australiennes (NAA) et les archives numérisées de la National Library of Australia (NLA) y compris les journaux numérisés sur le site Trove – l'équivalent australien de Gallica.[19] Les archives australiennes et françaises nous permettent donc d'étudier les expériences des deux côtés, dans une approche transnationale.

Cette thèse ne relève pas de l'histoire militaire, ni diplomatique, même si ces approches sont intégrées au sujet, mais l'accent porte plutôt sur l'histoire sociale et culturelle. Elle examine le développement des connexions et relations, et des représentations de la France et des Français. Elle comprend des éléments de biographie et de micro-histoire, examinant les expériences de gens ordinaires pour nous donner un aperçu des perceptions mutuelles. Elle vise à exposer les réseaux horizontaux et verticaux par lesquels l'idée de la France est transmise avec une importance réimaginée. La question d'identité française est centrale.

[18] Jacqueline Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia: A Personal History of Wool and War* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017).
[19] https://trove.nla.gov.au/

Notre question s'insère dans l'historiographie australienne selon de multiples axes. D'abord, elle répond au dialogue au sujet de l'identité australienne, qui est fortement liée à la première guerre mondiale. C'est peu de temps auparavant, avec la fédération des colonies en 1901, que l'Australie devient une nation indépendante, même si elle garde son appartenance à l'Empire britannique. En 1914, dans une atmosphère farouchement patriotique, une grande partie de la société montre son soutien, son dévouement envers 'la mère patrie' – on n'oubliera pas le fait que la grande majorité de la population a des origines britanniques. Néanmoins, depuis le 19e siècle, les hommes des antipodes s'interrogent sur leur identité nationale, phénomène lié à l'évolution en faveur de la fédération des colonies qui forment la nouvelle nation en 1901. Des 1915, les traits d'un caractère typiquement australien sont décrits par les journalistes qui accompagnent les troupes australiennes aux Dardanelles. L'idée d'un type australien est proposée par Charles Bean, qui deviendra journaliste-correspondant au front, puis historien officiel après-guerre. Son travail s'oppose à celui de Scott, qui affirme que les Australiens sont tous des Britanniques qui ont transplanté leurs racines dans la terre du nouveau pays. Pendant les décennies qui suivent, les historiens et le public acceptent les deux versions de cette histoire. C'est dans les travaux plus récents que l'historiographie met en cause ces origines. Cette dichotomie entre identités – britannique ou australienne – est exposée par Holbrook entre autres.[20] L'Australie est loin d'être la seule colonie dans laquelle la guerre suscite cette expérience. Jay Winter observe, d'une perspective plus globale, l'espace habité par les soldats coloniaux, une sorte d'espace intermédiaire, où ils faisaient partie de l'effort impérial tout en établissant une identité nationale.[21] Notre enquête propose une autre façon de s'interroger sur l'évolution de l'identité australienne. Si la plupart des Australiens de l'époque s'identifient à 'la race Britannique', on s'aperçoit aussi d'une tendance à se différencier, de mettre en valeur des traits, et une nationalité Australienne. De la même façon, les Franco-Australiens, malgré leur patriotisme et ferveur, se différencient aussi. Nous allons voir que leur réponse est souvent définie en opposition à l'identité Britannique. C'est une des raisons pour lesquelles les Français et les francophones d'Australie créent leurs propres sociétés de bienfaisance, et ne se

[20] C. E. W. Bean et al., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918.* (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1921-1942., 1921); Ernest Scott, *Australia during the War* (Sydney: Angus, 1936); Carolyn Holbrook, *Anzac - The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney: New South, 2014); Marilyn Lake et al., *What's Wrong with ANZAC* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).
[21] J. M. Winter, *Remembering War : The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century.* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 2006), 158.

limitent pas aux sociétés au profit des soldats australiens et britanniques comme la Croix Rouge Britannique ou Australienne. La Croix Rouge Française comité de Melbourne envoie les colis directement au port de Marseille pour qu'ils soient ensuite distribués aux sociétés de bienfaisance françaises, non seulement parce que c'était la route la plus directe, mais aussi parce que, en évitant les ports anglais, cela leur permet une distribution directe de l'aide, qui conserve son étiquette australienne.

L'historiographie australienne de la Grande Guerre évolue avec le développement de l'histoire sociale, et les approches de la micro-histoire. Dans le contexte du *memory boom*[22], pour répondre au désir de mieux comprendre les histoires personnelles des combattants, et de vraiment connaître ces hommes, des travaux sur les troupes multiculturelles dans l'AIF ont été menés. Une image révisionniste d'une AIF multiculturelle est présentée par plusieurs historiens dans des ouvrages dédiés à des groupes ethniques. Les profils des « diggers » allemands, suédois, juifs, et russes sont esquissés, ainsi que la présence, longtemps mal connue, des troupes indigènes dans l'armée australienne.[23] Il est donc évident que même profondément britannique, la société australienne n'est pas monoculturelle. Néanmoins, une étude approfondie sur les Français dans l'AIF reste à faire.

Une autre considération nous mène aussi à cette étude. De nos jours, la commémoration de la Grande Guerre constitue un des liens entre la France et l'Australie, et la mémoire partagée constitue un champ officiel dans le partenariat stratégique entre les deux pays. Cette mémoire se focalise bien sûr sur les anciens champs de bataille du front occidental. Cependant, les archives nous révèlent une autre dimension de cette relation, et en permettent une compréhension plus grande. Les archives nous permettent de suivre ces deux pistes parallèles, qui reflètent en fait le travail effectué par le consul de France. D'une part, obligé de remplir son rôle de représentant du ministère de la guerre, il s'occupait du recensement et de la mobilisation des Français dans sa juridiction. D'autre

[22] Winter, *Remembering War*.
[23] Jeff Kildea, *Anzacs and Ireland* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2007); John Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2003); Elena Govor, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History* (Sydney: UNSW Press in association with National Archives of Australia, 2005); Mark Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs: Jews in the Australian Military* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2017).

part, sa participation à la société locale fournit un trésor de correspondances qui révèle les activités de la colonie française ainsi que les attitudes des Australiens envers les Français et la France.

Les historiens australiens, comme leurs collègues internationaux, ont souligné l'intérêt de relier l'expérience de guerre des civils, au front domestique, à celle du front combattant, pour mieux comprendre comment les sociétés ont été transformées par les bouleversements sociaux et politiques.[24] Beaucoup d'entre eux ont noté le phénomène de l'implication massive des civils dans les organisations philanthropiques et l'implication sans précédent des femmes dans la sphère publique par le biais du travail bénévole. Cette thèse examine ce phénomène à travers le cadre transnational des connexions franco-australiennes. Cet aspect de l'histoire australienne, pour laquelle les archives françaises révèlent une riche source d'informations, n'a pas été examiné par les historiens de la philanthropie australienne en temps de guerre. Nous examinons également les relations franco-australiennes dans le contexte de la propagande pro-guerre et du débat sur la conscription, une question qui a divisé la société australienne à partir de 1916. Robin Archer et Sean Scalmer montrent que le conflit sur la conscription est un élément majeur de l'expérience de guerre de l'Australie. Le conflit laisse des traces sur la société d'après-guerre. À deux reprises, les relations franco-australiennes recoupaient avec le conflit de conscription - soit en étant influencées par celui-ci (chapitre cinq), soit en tentant de l'influencer (chapitre sept). De cette manière, le présent travail met en valeur l'expérience australienne sur le front domestique, en analysant l'utilisation d'images et de stéréotypes culturels français, ainsi que l'intervention officielle française dans ces conversations publiques.

Notre analyse répond à l'appel de l'historien australien Bart Ziino, qui plus récemment s'est interrogé sur la nécessité de mieux comprendre comment l'Australie a tenu. Ziino affirme que malgré de nombreuses histoires culturelles, l'historiographie australienne de

[24] Beaumont, *Broken Nation*; Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*; Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (West Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1980).

la Grande Guerre est toujours focalisée sur l'aspect militaire.[25] Selon Ziino, l'histoire de l'engagement des civils est un travail qui reste incomplet. Comment les civils en Australie ont-ils tenu ? Les historiens australiens l'attribuent souvent au pouvoir coercitif de l'État. Pourtant, prenant comme point de départ les théories d'Annette Becker et Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Ziino se pose la question : est-ce qu'il existait en Australie, tout comme en France, une culture de guerre ?[26] La perspective nouvelle offerte par cette thèse montre que la mobilisation de la culture et de l'identité françaises a joué un rôle important dans la culture de guerre australienne.

Cela nous mène à une question qui se pose toute au long de cette étude : qui étaient les Français résidant en Australie? Comment définir les sujets franco-australiens et francophones de cette étude ? Au fur et à mesure de cette recherche, nous nous apercevons d'une multiplicité, et d'une variété d'identités françaises – francophones comme francophiles. L'idée d'identité double, parfois ambiguë se révèle parfois dans les attitudes tant au niveau personnel, qu'officiel. C'est la situation particulière des Français d'âge militaire résidant en Australie qui font leur choix concernant l'armée qu'ils souhaitent rejoindre. Parmi eux, on trouve des hommes nés en France qui pourtant ne parlent pas le français, et ne tiennent pas de loyauté envers la France. En revanche, on trouve de jeunes hommes nés en Australie qui parlent couramment le français, qui ont la nationalité française, et qui prennent le rôle d'interprète ou officier de liaison au front. Evidemment, il y a des zones grises. La question s'applique aussi dans certains cas aux individus qui se déclarent 'amis de la France', et qui s'impliquent dans la diffusion de la culture et de l'image de la France. C'est le cas pour les soixante-et-onze personnes qui en septembre 1916 signent une pétition adressée à Aristide Briand, Président du Conseil et Ministre des Affaires Etrangères. Elles lui demandent la Légion d'Honneur pour l'Australien David Norman Trenery, en reconnaissance de son travail énergique pour la Croix Rouge Française. Nous allons découvrir cet épisode dans le chapitre cinq, mais il faut noter que les signataires se désignent comme 'la colonie française de Victoria, et les amis de la France' et que moins de la moitié d'entre eux sont nés en France. Pourtant, ils se

[25] Bart Ziino, '"Total War" in Australia: Civilian Mobilisation and Commitment, 1914–18', in *Australians and the First World War*, ed. Kate Ariotti and James E. Bennett (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 165–82, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51520-5_10.
[26] Annette Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Retrouver La Guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

considèrent dans une position de faire des demandes au gouvernement français – soit à cause de leurs amitiés, de leurs relations commerciales ou culturelles, soit grâce au travail qu'ils avaient fait pour les sociétés de bienfaisance au compte de la France. Nous ne nous limitons donc pas à ceux nés en France, une étude plus élargie nous permettant d'inclure certains individus qui s'identifient comme français.

La présence française en Australie remonte aux premiers voyages des Européens dans ce pays et à l'histoire des rencontres entre explorateurs et colonisateurs britanniques et français. Au XIXe siècle, les immigrés français faisaient partie de ceux qui voyageaient de toutes les régions du monde à la recherche d'aventure ou d'une vie meilleure. Bien qu'ils soient moins nombreux que les autres groupes d'immigrants, les migrants français en Australie exercent une grande variété de professions, contribuent au développement de nombreuses industries et leur contribution est importante. L'analyse démographique d'Anny Stuer est une source utile.[27] Stuer conclut que les Français émigraient principalement à titre individuel et ne s'établissaient pas en groupe, contrairement à d'autres grands groupes d'immigrants. Beaucoup d'entre eux étaient des individus entreprenants venus en Australie, animés par un esprit individualiste. La colonie française de Sydney, centrée autour du commerce de laine est une exception. En dépit de cet individualisme stéréotypique, on trouve à Sydney l'établissement d'une Chambre de commerce française, un journal quotidien *Le Courrier Australien,* et une société bénévole : La Société de Bienfaisance Française, qui témoignent d'une communauté française dynamique. A Sydney, tout comme à Melbourne, des réseaux formels et informels se développent, fondés sur les intérêts culturels. Les institutions scolaires et religieuses sont aussi présentes, avec leurs liens à la France.

La relation entre la France et l'Australie pendant le dix-neuvième siècle reflète celle entre la France et la Grande Bretagne : alternant parfois l'hostilité et la méfiance, et parfois l'admiration et l'affection. Pourtant, la relation est compliquée par les rivalités coloniales dans le Pacifique du Sud, grâce à la proximité géographique de l'Australie et la Nouvelle-

[27] Anny P. Stuer, *The French in Australia* (Canberra: Department of Demography ANU, 1982).

Calédonie. Les routes commerciales et maritimes qui reliaient l'Australie et la France aux antipodes formaient une autre sous-strate de la relation.

Plan et résumé des chapitres

La thèse est divisée en trois sections. Chaque section examine la question d'un secteur différent de la société. La première partie est consacrée au domaine militaire, la deuxième à la réponse des civils, et la troisième est focalisée sur l'influence des acteurs gouvernementaux et des organisations. Dans la première partie, qui traitera de l'aspect militaire, nous suivons trois axes principaux, en fonction de trois catégories de mobilisés français et francophones en Australie. En premier lieu, nous examinons les profils de ceux qui ont combattu sous les drapeaux français ; deuxièmement, nous analysons les Français – c'est-à-dire les citoyens français – qui se sont enrôlés dans l'armée australienne, et finalement nous considérons le rôle des francophones dans l'armée australienne.

Dans la deuxième partie, nous traitons le front domestique et la réponse des civils. Comment et pourquoi les civils français d'Australie ont-ils créé leurs propres organisations spécifiquement françaises ? Cette mobilisation des civils dans les grandes villes de Sydney et de Melbourne témoigne de réseaux transnationaux qui contribuent au succès de ces organisations. De plus, la participation des Australiens francophiles illustre dans quelle mesure ceux-ci faisaient partie des réseaux d'élites locales. Pourtant le travail des bénévoles pour les organisations caritatives de guerre est loin d'être limité aux élites. Les classes moyennes y participent aussi. Si nous organisons les deux premières parties de l'étude en deux mouvements, le côté civil et le côté militaire, il faut reconnaître que ceux-ci sont étroitement reliés. Dans des familles franco-australiennes, les jeunes hommes partent au front, et les parents s'impliquent également – parfois en participant aux sociétés de bienfaisance.

Dans la troisième partie, le champ de l'enquête s'élargit. Nous examinons le rôle de grandes organisations transnationales telles que l'Alliance Française, et de l'État français, pour influencer l'opinion publique. La propagande et la diplomatie culturelle sont aussi des armes dans ce conflit total, et la Mission Economique Française en Australie de 1918

est contextualisée dans ce prisme, pour montrer son but non seulement économique mais aussi patriotique et socio-culturel.

PREMIÈRE PARTIE : LES SOLDATS FRANÇAIS ET FRANCOPHONES DE L'AUSTRALIE

Chapitre 1 Appelés sous les drapeaux – les mobilisés français de l'Australie

Le premier chapitre est consacré à la mobilisation de jeunes Français appelés sous les drapeaux depuis l'Australie. Grace aux archives françaises, il est possible d'identifier les soldats franco-australiens et comprendre les parcours de leurs vies. Notre examen des profils des jeunes mobilisés donne un aperçu plus élargi et plus profond de la population française d'Australie ainsi que de la société australienne. Le processus de mobilisation nous révèle le rôle des représentants diplomatiques français en Australie. De plus, les interactions entre le consul et les autorités australiennes militaires et politiques, et la correspondance avec le gouvernement français présentent un nouvel aspect des relations franco-australiennes, et des attitudes officielles et personnelles entre les deux pays. Évidemment, les soldats qui quittent l'Australie pour participer à cette guerre meurtrière ont des points en commun avec tous les combattants : la souffrance, le traumatisme psychologique et physique. Ce sont les expériences de guerre déjà bien étudiée par d'autres historiens.

Nous nous intéressons aux questions d'identité. Bien évidemment, les soldats franco-australiens font preuve des multiples niveaux d'identité proposés par Winter. L'identité individuelle se transpose et s'exprime en parallèle avec l'identité collective. Cette première partie de la thèse nous permet de nous interroger sur ces idées parfois contradictoires et conflictuelles d'identité.

I. La population française en Australie

Les Français résidant en Australie au moment de la Guerre n'étaient pas nombreux. Des travaux existants ont retracé la vie de quelques-uns d'entre eux. Les archives diplomatiques du consulat sont des sources précieuses qui permettent de les identifier de façon nouvelle, et d'appréhender la variété d'idées à propos de l'identité et de la citoyenneté. Ce sont non seulement les jeunes hommes nés en France qui sont mobilisés, mais aussi ceux désignés comme citoyens français. Toute de suite la question de

nationalité se complique, parce que la nationalité française était aussi accordée à ceux nés en Australie d'un père français.

L'Australie de l'époque est une nation d'immigrants qui sont pour la plupart d'ascendance britannique ou irlandaise. Les Français sont peu nombreux, et par contraste les habitants d'origine allemande sont plus nombreux. Le recensement de la population australien de 1911 compte 2.876 personnes nées en France résidant en Australie : 1.973 hommes, et 903 femmes. Les immigrants français sont répartis dans toutes les villes et toutes les régions, Ils sont représentés dans le secteur rural, dans l'agriculture et la production vinicole. Mais c'est surtout dans les villes de Sydney et de Melbourne qu'ils sont présents, où il existait de petites colonies d'hommes d'affaires, privilégiés, urbains ainsi que des travailleurs dans le commerce, et la restauration. Le commerce de laine constitue un élément très important et donc les acheteurs de laines, représentant les sociétés françaises, sont très connus en Australie. Les Français en Australie sont donc très variés. Parmi les mobilisés se trouvent des privilégiés, parfois très connus dans la société australienne, et parfois des inconnus. De telles différences auraient-elles influencé leurs choix et leurs expériences ? Le recensement énumère la population aussi selon leur âge : et cela nous permet de calculer qu'environ 900 des hommes de naissance française auraient été d'âge militaire. Dès que la guerre est déclarée, ce sont ces jeunes hommes qui sont tout de suite concernés. En outre, les interactions entre les acteurs français et australiens qui sont concernés par la mobilisation révèlent l'aspect transnational. Non seulement les hommes, mais aussi les idées et l'information sont transférés entre pays et communautés.

II. Le rôle du consul, le recensement et la mobilisation des jeunes Français.

Les représentations diplomatiques françaises sont présentes en Australie depuis le 19e siècle.[28] En 1914, la France est représentée par le Vice-Consul Jules Homery à Melbourne, et son supérieur à Sydney le Consul Général Alexandre Chayet. En octobre 1916 Homery meurt subitement d'une crise cardiaque. Il est remplacé par Henri Fliche. Les responsabilités des consuls sont multiples. Parmi elles : la mobilisation des jeunes recrues. Quelles étaient les obligations de service militaire et comment ont-elles été

[28] Colin Thornton-Smith, 'Paul Maistre, Vice-Consul and Later Consul for France in Victoria, 1886-1898, 1901-1908', *The French Australian Review*, no. 17 (December 1994): 3–47.

appliquées en Australie ? Même si résidant à l'étranger, les jeunes hommes de 20 ans étaient obligés de faire leurs 3 ans d'armée, tout comme leurs compatriotes dans l'hexagone. Le consul garde les tableaux de recensement pour identifier chaque année ceux qui sont susceptibles de faire leur service militaire, en temps de paix comme en temps de guerre. Cette exigence s'appliquait même à ceux qui étaient déjà naturalisés australiens. Pour les Français résidants à l'étranger, il existait parfois la possibilité d'un sursis, qui est pourtant supprimé dès la mobilisation générale de 1914. Au sein de ce groupe, il semble que certains étaient venus en Australie pour échapper au service militaire, et ensuite déclarés insoumis, mais quand la guerre est déclenchée, la plupart ont répondu à l'appel aux armes avec enthousiasme, ou avec un sens du devoir et dévouement à leur patrie.

Pourtant, parfois la question se pose : quelle patrie ? Et le choix se présente pour quelques-uns de ces hommes – dans quelle armée s'enrôler – australienne ou française ? Les tableaux de recensement, rédigés par le consul, fournissent des indices et nous permettent d'identifier ces jeunes hommes – ceux qui sont partis sous les drapeaux, ainsi que ceux qui ont refusé, ou qui ont choisi de s'enrôler dans l'armée australienne. Les archives consulaires révèlent la variété de personnes, les mobilisés des grandes villes (même si les documents pour les mobilisés de Melbourne sont plus nombreux que pour ceux de Sydney) ainsi que pour les Français résidant hors de Melbourne dans les zones rurales. Elles apportent de riches informations sur les immigrants français, leurs professions, leurs familles, leurs trajets dans la vie, et les circonstances qui les conduisent aux Antipodes. De cette façon les archives permettent de découvrir et faire revivre ces Français résidant en Australie, quelques-uns connus, quelques-uns peu connus, chacun avec sa propre notion d'identité.

Une analyse de quelques-uns des mobilisés illustre une grande variété de profils et situations. La correspondance et les articles de journaux révèlent les attitudes des officiels et des individus en ce qui concerne l'identité et la nationalité française. Leurs exploits sont souvent publiés dans les journaux quotidiens. Les Crivelli sont une famille importante dans la colonie française de Melbourne. Le Dr Marcel Crivelli était le médecin en charge des examens médicaux des recrues, et les déclarait 'bons pour le service militaire'. Mme Crivelli, sa femme, dirigeait la Croix Rouge Française Comité de Melbourne. Parmi leurs sept enfants, quatre fils sont partis comme soldats dans l'armée

française. Les lettres et les journaux intimes de ces jeunes hommes constituent un autre fil du récit. Les lettres qui racontent Verdun vécu par ces jeunes diplômés de l'Université de Melbourne témoignent d'une multiplicité d'identités nationales. Les Crivelli n'étaient pas les seuls à écrire des lettres du front français, lettres publiées dans les journaux et donc à destination d'un grand public.

III. Un devoir sacré

i. La mobilisation

Le télégramme arrive dans le bureau du Vice-Consul le soir de dimanche 2 août 1914. La guerre est déclarée et il doit prendre les mesures nécessaires. Dès le lendemain, et pendant toute la guerre, les notices apparaissent dans les journaux australiens, qui appellent les jeunes Français à se rendre au consulat. A partir d'août 1914, les navires des Messageries Maritimes font escale en Australie et transportent les Français d'Australie vers la France. Très vite les petits groupes de mobilisés partent à bord des navires qui sont souvent en provenance de la Nouvelle Calédonie.

ii. L'Amnistie d'août 1914

Dans la correspondance du consul, on trouve plusieurs cas d'insoumis ou déserteurs. Leurs histoires individuelles montrent l'autre face de la médaille, et un aperçu plus large de la mobilisation des Français de l'Australie, ainsi que la façon dont les obligations de service militaire étaient appliquées. Au début de la guerre, l'amnistie est déclarée pour les insoumis, et ceux qui en profitent représentent un autre groupe de Français, peu connus. Les amnistiés signent une déclaration, s'engageant à se présenter, et à se rendre en France dès que possible. Souvent ce sont des marins déserteurs. Leurs histoires, et leurs identités, seraient inconnues sans ces documents qui font partie des archives consulaires.

iii. Les premiers départs

Parmi ceux dans le premier contingent se trouvent des hommes d'affaires de Sydney, les acheteurs de laine, Présent aussi est un matelot réserviste Léon Bazin, originaire du Havre, qui habite en Australie depuis 1902, et dont la femme est australienne. Tous sont transférés aux régiments coloniaux. Le départ des réservistes français est souvent annoncé

dans la presse australienne. A leur arrivée en France, ils seront souvent mutés dans d'autres régiments. En même temps, commence le recrutement des volontaires pour l'Armée australienne – The Australian Imperial Force (AIF). L'officier chargé de l'organisation du régiment de Melbourne écrit au vice-consul, et lui demande d'identifier quelques Français qui peuvent servir d'interprète. L'officier australien, Courtney, estime qu'environ huit ou dix Français seront nécessaires pour accompagner les forces expéditionnaires australiennes. Mais le vice-consul répond vivement que le devoir de chaque Français est sous les drapeaux de sa patrie.

iv. Bon pour le service militaire

Comment la mobilisation est-elle appliquée en Australie ? Les tableaux de recensements de jeunes recrues sont dressés par le consul, qui est en communication avec les bureaux de recrutement en France. A Melbourne, les recrues doivent se rendre chez le docteur Crivelli pour l'examen médical, et ensuite sont déclarés « bons pour le service militaire ». Parfois il s'agit des jeunes hommes de citoyenneté français mais nés en Australie, et ceux-ci expriment leur devoir parfois sous les drapeaux, et parfois en refusant le service militaire pour s'enrôler comme volontaire dans l'AIF. Ce choix ne conforme pas à la loi française, mais vers la fin de la guerre en 1918 une loi sera promulguée qui permet de servir dans une armée alliée.

v. Des marins insoumis

Plusieurs marins se rendent au vice-consulat de Melbourne en 1914. Ils ont quitté leur navire après de longs voyages, dans l'espoir de se réinventer dans un pays nouveau. Insoumis, ils se rendent pour régulariser leur situation et partent pour le front. Mais il y en a quelques-uns dans les environs qui se cachent pour éviter la mobilisation.

vi. Un artiste français

Le cas d'un jeune Français, l'artiste Louis Foulet est particulièrement révélateur des clichés associés à l'identité française. Très populaire à Melbourne en 1913 et 1914, Foulet se voit d'abord accordé un sursis, afin que le service militaire n'interrompe pas sa carrière d'artiste. Les habitants de Melbourne, sont pour la plupart ravis qu'un artiste français prenne leur ville comme sujet de ses tableaux. Les Français sont, après tout, une race très artistique ! Plus tard, sa mobilisation, son départ, et ses aventures au front sont racontés

dans les journaux pour ses amis et son public, qui attendent son retour après la guerre. Pourtant il se marie en France et ne reviendra plus en Australie.

Beaucoup de lettres écrites par les soldats franco-australiens sont publiées dans la presse australienne. Les expériences de guerre qu'elles racontent créent une sorte de connexion entre le public australien, et les soldats français, et renforcent le sentiment de solidarité avec la France. Parmi ces soldats se trouvent des universitaires, des hommes d'affaires, et des cinéastes, ce qui nous permet de constater la grande variété de profils.

vii. Une famille patriotique : les Crivelli

Une famille franco-australienne dont l'influence est très importante est les Crivelli. Le père, le docteur Marcel Crivelli, prend sa place dans la société la plus distinguée de la capitale. Madame Charlotte Crivelli est la fondatrice du comité de Melbourne de la Croix Rouge Française. Parmi les sept enfants Crivelli, les quatre fils aînés partent sous les drapeaux. Tous les quatre sont universitaires, citoyens français, même si nés à Melbourne. L'aîné, Georges, devient aérostier. Le deuxième, Louis, est médecin et son unité prend part à la bataille de Verdun. Le troisième, René, est dans l'artillerie. Le quatrième, Marcel, a 18 ans en 1918. Il part pour la guerre assez tard, mais passe quelques mois au front avant l'Armistice. En 1919 il sera interprète pour le Premier Ministre australien Hughes, lors de sa visite à Paris pour la conférence de paix. Ils envoient des lettres qui décrivent leur expérience de la guerre. Ces lettres sont publiées dans les journaux australiens, et servent à encourager le patriotisme et le sentiment pro-français chez les Australiens.

IV. La complexité des doubles allégeances.

i. Des rapatriement difficiles : Emile d'Assonville et Joseph Foray.

Dans certains cas, le fait d'être à la fois français et australien comporte des difficultés. Nous analysons une expérience franco-australienne, dans le cadre des sorties de guerre, celle des frères d'Assonville. Modestes 'garçons d'hôtel', les d'Assonville ne correspondent pas aux clichés des Français élégants, artistiques ou intellectuels. Pourtant ils partent pour faire leur devoir patriotique. Le cas d'Emile d'Assonville nous révèle l'aspect tragique d'une double nationalité. Fait prisonnier de guerre, il rentre en Australie avec une blessure à sa main droite qui l'empêche de travailler. Le vice-consul français,

malgré ses démarches auprès du département de rapatriement australien, ne réussit pas à obtenir une pension pour d'Assonville.

Pour les soldats français dont le domicile est à l'étranger, il n'est pas toujours évident d'obtenir une permission. Il faut se munir d'un certificat de loyauté, rédigé par le consul, pour prouver la fiabilité de sa famille. Le pauvre Joseph Foray, soldat dans l'Armée de l'Orient en Salonique, essaie à plusieurs reprises d'avoir la permission de retourner chez son oncle et sa tante, sa seule famille, à Melbourne.

Chapitre 2 Les Français dans l'AIF (Australian Imperial Force)

La nature parfois conflictuelle d'identité pour les Franco-Australiens se révèle dans les expériences des soldats de naissance française qui se sont enrôlés dans l'AIF. Ce chapitre nous montre d'avantage la diversité des identités franco-australiennes, ainsi que les idées de nationalité, et de citoyenneté. Les archives principales pour ce chapitre sont les documents militaires des soldats australiens, qui se trouvent numérisés sur le site des archives nationales australiennes (NAA), sous la cote B2455. Lorsqu'une recrue s'engage dans l'AIF, il remplit un formulaire qui s'intitule l'Attestation Paper – la feuille d'attestation. Ces fiches militaires australiennes comportaient une question concernant la nationalité et le lieu de naissance qui permet d'identifier tous ceux qui ont déclaré être originaires de France. De plus, les certificats de naturalisation et les certificats d'enregistrement des étrangers, également dans les NAA, fournissent des informations supplémentaires.

Pour ce qui concerne les règlements australiens, la grande différence est que l'AIF est une armée de volontaires. Au début de la guerre, la loi exige que la recrue soit 'un sujet britannique' ou sinon, un sujet naturalisé. En fait, la citoyenneté australienne n'existait pas encore – signe de l'appartenance de l'Australie à l'empire britannique. Beaucoup d'étrangers avaient hâte de se faire naturaliser, mais cette exigence n'est pas toujours appliquée, et de toute façon, moins strictement au cours des années, quand les recrues deviennent moins nombreuses.

Selon les feuilles d'attestation, environ 170 hommes ont déclaré être nés en France. Parmi eux plusieurs étaient en fait des Britanniques dont les parents étaient de passage en France. Notre analyse des profils de ces hommes montre à quel point la question de nationalité et d'identité était parfois compliquée, ce dont les études de cas particuliers de soldats font preuve. Ces jeunes hommes nés en Australie mais considérés par le gouvernement français comme citoyens français partent sous les drapeaux français. D'autres, nés en France, partent dans l'AIF. De plus, les archives du consulat de Melbourne nous fournissent des cas supplémentaires. Ce sont les hommes nés en Australie et donc considérés comme australiens, mais qui sont également inclus dans le recensement des Français mobilisables, grâce à leur père français. La correspondance entre les représentants de gouvernements français et australiens, et ces individus, illustre la variété d'opinions sur qui était français, et quelles en étaient les obligations.

Dans ce chapitre nous nous intéressons aussi aux motivations du choix entre l'armée australienne et l'armée française. Parfois motivés pour des raisons positives, comme un sentiment de loyauté et d'appartenance envers leurs pays adopté. Parfois, on constate un désir d'échapper aux obligations françaises. Mais parfois, il s'agit d'un choix purement pratique : les soldats australiens étaient mieux payés que les poilus.

I. L'identité et la citoyenneté

Notre analyse des profils de ces 170 individus nés en France montre une variété énorme de personnalités et d'expériences. Des travaux récents ont étudié la nature multiculturelle, pas le biais de groupes ethniques et Karen Agutter explore l'histoire des soldats non-britanniques dans l'AIF par le prisme de l'immigration.[29] Mais jusqu'à présent une étude approfondie des franco-australiens dans l'AIF n'a pas été faite. Les sources complémentaires françaises nous permettent une considération plus exhaustive, et révèlent aussi la présence d'autre soldats francophones, mais nous nous concentrons dans ce chapitre à ceux de naissance française, ainsi que de nationalité française.

[29] Karen Agutter, 'Foreign-Born Soldiers in the AIF: Australia's Multinational Fighting Force', in *Australians and the First World War: Local-Global Connections and Contexts*, ed. Kate Ariotti and James E. Bennett (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2017), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unimelb/detail.action?docID=4947268.

II. L'individualisme des franco-australiens

Dans son analyse démographique des Français en Australie, Anny Stuer note qu'en général, les Français se marient avec des Australiennes. Elle note aussi que dans la période d'avant-guerre, les Français d'Australie sont plus vieux – beaucoup d'entre eux arrivent dans les années 1890. On peut constater les effets de ces deux faits dans notre analyse des profils. Dans notre groupe, plusieurs ont plus de 45 ans. Est-ce que donc par patriotisme qu'ils s'enrôlent dans l'AIF ? Dans l'armée française, les classes plus vieux ne sont mobilisées que plus tard. De plus, nous avons identifié des individus qui sont réclamés par la France, mais qui sont nés en Australie. Ce sont donc les fils des immigrants français venus pendant les années 1890. Nous donnons l'exemple d'Henri Lamandé, dont le père Ambroise est homme d'affaires à Melbourne. Importateur et exportateur, il est représentant en Australie pour la maison de cognac Prunier et pour le champagne Louis Roederer. En 1908 Ambroise est nommé *Conseiller du Commerce Extérieur* par le gouvernement français. La famille s'intéresse aussi à la vie culturelle française de Melbourne, et tous sont très actifs dans l'Alliance Française.

Au moment de son appel sous les drapeaux, Lamandé, avec cinq autres jeunes hommes, n'est pas présent pour son examen médical. L'absence de ce groupe, qui montre un refus de l'obligation militaire, provoque l'ire du Docteur Crivelli, qui écrit son mécontentement au Vice-Consul : c'est la honte pour la communauté française - 'ils n'oseront plus s'appeler Français'.[30] Lamandé combat en France avec les Australiens. Sur sa feuille d'attestation il se déclare 'citoyen français' même si né dans le Victoria. Henri est aussi importateur – de motocyclettes. Motard passionné, il participe à la course de 100 kilomètres pour motos en 1910. Est-ce que c'est son individualisme qui influence son choix de partir volontaire avec l'AIF ?

La présence d'ex marins français dans l'armée australienne est aussi notable. Peut-être ont-ils pu se refaire une nouvelle vie en Australie, pour laisser derrière eux les difficultés économiques et sociales. D'autres encore prend l'opportunité de ce retour en France obligatoire et inattendu pour se réinstaller dans leur pays de naissance. Parmi eux Pierre

[30] Crivelli à Homery, 16 Nov. 1914, MAE428PO/1/48

Marie Gueno, 20 ans, qui avait quitté son navire en Australie, et se réinstalle chez sa mère après la guerre, ou encore Charles Join qui s'enrôle en 1918. Sa femme était restée à Binic, et le couple est réuni après la guerre. Mais Leon Piollet n'avait aucune envie de rentrer en France. Ayant vécu au Brésil avant d'arriver en Australie, il préfère le climat chaud, et fait une demande d'être affecté au *Camel Corps* avec l'armée australienne en Palestine. Nous ne pouvons que formuler des hypothèses sur les choix de ces hommes, en l'absence de témoignage concret. Mais leurs histoires fascinantes éclairent la présence des Français dans l'AIF, et leur diversité.

III. Refuser le service militaire

Dans le cas où un Français refuse son service militaire, le Vice-Consul a plusieurs outils : il peut essayer la persuasion, ou menacer de mauvaise publicité. Mais en Australie, la loi française n'est pas valable. Le cas de Jean Bordeaux est intéressant. Vétérinaire âgé de 45 ans, il a déjà fait son service militaire dans sa jeunesse. Il est désormais maître de conférences à l'université, et il n'a aucune envie de partir pour le front. La véhémence du langage utilisé contre lui par Homery est surprenante. Pourtant, Bordeaux ne part pas.

La loi d'enregistrement des étrangers (1916) 'Aliens Registration Law' est promulguée en Octobre 1916. Alors que la presse australienne quotidienne faisait sans cesse l'éloge des Français comme alliés nobles, courageux, dignes, et culturellement élégants, chics, et intellectuels, néanmoins les Français sont traités exactement comme tout autre étranger, et doivent s'enregistrer auprès de la police dans leur quartier. Plusieurs sources témoignent de ce paradoxe : documents gouvernementaux, correspondance du consulat, articles de presse, y compris des lettres adressées aux journaux par les Français qui expriment leurs réactions à cette loi. De plus, le fait que les Français sont obligés de s'enregistrer fournit au Consul-General une liste supplémentaire de Français résidant en Australie. Y trouvera-t-il les coordonnées des insoumis récalcitrants ?

Chapitre 3 Les soldats francophones dans l'armée Australienne

Ce chapitre vise à analyser un autre domaine militaire où la langue française joue un rôle important, en examinant des soldats francophones australiens qui ont contribué à l'effort

de guerre grâce à leur compétence linguistique. Il montre comment la langue fonctionne comme point de contact.

Quelle était la contribution des soldats francophones ? Les soldats français n'étaient pas les seuls à contribuer pour leurs compétences en langue française. Alors que la guerre se poursuivait, d'autres soldats australiens avaient la possibilité de cultiver leur compétence linguistique. Comme officiers de liaison, interprètes, ou enseignants de français, leur contribution s'insère dans l'histoire plus large des relations franco-australiennes. Parmi eux se trouve A.R. Chisholm, interprète et officier de liaison, et qui après la guerre deviendra professeur de français à l'Université de Melbourne.

Cette partie s'insère dans deux champs d'étude qui explorent l'histoire culturelle de la guerre. Premièrement, les études sur les soldats britanniques et leurs croisements avec les Français. Dans l'armée britannique, les langues sont cruciales pour maintenir la coalition, et pour les échanges entre soldats et civils.[31] Deuxièmement, pour le contexte australien, les historiens pour la plupart soulignent le manque de connaissance linguistique typique du soldat australien, un manque qui faisait partie de son identité. Nous allons au-delà de ce stéréotype pour illustrer d'une manière plus complexe les compétences des francophones dans l'armée australienne, où et comment ils ont appris le français.

I. Les soldats australiens francophones

Comme nous l'avons vu, les feuilles militaires de soldats australiens indiquent leur lieu de naissance. Mais, il faut nous appuyer sur des sources circonstancielles pour identifier d'autres membres de l'AIF qui parlent français. Nous en avons trouvé beaucoup d'exemples, d'une variété de milieux sociaux et culturels. Même s'il est impossible de quantifier les soldats francophones de l'AIF, dans cette section nous présentons quelques exemples. Il est évident que parmi les diggers se trouvaient des soldats qui parlent déjà le français, avant la guerre. Comment et dans quelle mesure leurs compétences linguistique

[31] Craig Gibson, *Behind the Front: British Soldiers and French Civilians, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Elizabeth Greenhalgh, *Victory Through Coalition* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Franziska Heimburger, 'Fighting Together: Language Issues in the Military Coordination of First World War Allied Coalition Warfare', in *Languages and the Military*, ed. Hilary Footitt and Michael Kelly (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Franziska Heimburger, 'Mésentente Cordiale? Langues et Coalition Alliée Sur Le Front de l'ouest de La Grande Guerre' (Doctoral Thesis, Paris, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2014).

informent-elles les expériences de guerre de ces hommes ? Dans l'armée australienne, ils ne sont pas nommés interprètes. Franziska Heimburger explique que c'est les Français qui fournissent les interprètes, tandis que les Britanniques francophones sont souvent affectés aux services de renseignement ou de liaison. Ceci est aussi le cas pour plusieurs francophones australiens, dont Alan Rowland Chisholm.

i. Alan Rowland Chisholm

Alan Rowland Chisholm est connu pour sa carrière d'universitaire et comme spécialiste international de la poésie symboliste française. Il était déjà professeur de français avant la guerre, et il parlait couramment le français et l'allemand. Ses lettres, témoignages et journaux intimes se trouvent aux archives de l'université de Melbourne. Ils décrivent son travail dans la section de communication, aux postes d'écoute, où il doit transcrire et traduire les messages. C'est un homme sensible et intellectuel, et ses interactions avec les Français qu'il rencontre sont pleines d'affection et de perspicacité. Vers la fin de la guerre il est affecté au Service d'Education de l'AIF ou il dirige les cours de français pour les soldats australiens.

ii. Les soldats australiens et les soldats français dans les tranchées adjacentes.

La contribution des soldats francophones est importante, tant pour communiquer avec les civils, que lorsqu'ils se trouvent à côté des poilus. Entre mai et août 1918, les poilus et les *diggers* se rejoignent dans un secteur nommé le Poste International. Les Australiens occupent les tranchées à l'extrême droite de la ligne britannique dans le secteur d'Amiens. Les soldats français dans les tranchées voisines sont parfois des soldats coloniaux, de la division marocaine, ce qui nous mène encore à réfléchir sur le concept d'identité. Un des soldats de l'AIF est Joseph Georgelin, breton d'origine, qui a vécu d'abord à Jersey avant d'immigrer en Australie. Ce qu'il a en commun avec les marocains c'est la langue française.

Pendant cette période, les soldats français et australiens combattent ensemble, et s'entre aident. Même si les interprètes sont présents, c'est aussi les officiers de liaison et les francophones qui contribuent à la communication de manière informelle. Des soldats australiens originaires de Nouméa sont parmi eux. Le Lieutenant Fred Tindale sert

d'exemple. Son père australien est directeur dans la compagnie du gaz de Nouméa. Fred est né et a grandi à Nouméa. En avril 1918, lors de la bataille du Bois de Hangard, Tindale s'occupe de maintenir la liaison avec les troupes françaises. Plus tard il reçoit la Croix de Guerre.

Le Lieutenant Colyer est aussi francophone. Diplômé de l'Université de Sydney, professeur dans la vie civile, Colyer s'entend très bien avec l'officier français du régiment voisin. Mais, un jour lorsqu'il rentre des lignes françaises aux lignes australiennes il est tué, selon le rapport de la Croix-Rouge il était dans les premières lignes 'comme interprète.'.[32]

iii. Comprendre le français pour sa sécurité personnelle

De nombreux récits témoignent de la valeur des compétences linguistiques, non seulement pour la bonne communication, mais aussi parce que cela peut sauver la vie. Comprendre l'avertissement donné par les hôtes dans un cantonnement au village, ou encore comprendre les 'mots de passe' en faisant la relève avec les troupes françaises en première ligne.

II. « une aubaine pour les hommes » apprendre le français avant de partir[33]

En Australie, comme en Angleterre, les petits manuels de la langue sont produits en grande quantité. Apprendre le français est désormais reconnu être très utile. Les francophones australiens s'engagent avec l'aide de l'Alliance Française et d'autres individus pour l'enseignement du français aux soldats qui partent pour le front. Le Gouverneur-General note la valeur de ce travail, au profit des soldats.

i. Les manuels de poche : Easy French for Soldiers

[32] AWM 1DRL/0428 Red Cross Report
[33] "A great boon to the men". YMCA Field Secretary R. Cameron to French Red Cross Melbourne, 16 Feb 1917, MAE 428PO/1/64.

C’est grâce aux réseaux des francophones d’Australie que la rédaction et la distribution d’un manuel de poche du français à l’usage du soldat est produite, en plusieurs éditions. Le manuel *Easy French for Soldiers* se vend d’ailleurs au profit de la Croix-Rouge Française. Il est utilisé aussi dans les camps d’entraînement dans plusieurs villes du pays, où les cours de français sont dirigés par la YMCA.

ii. Des cours de français organisés par l’Alliance Française

L’Alliance Française établit son premier comité à Melbourne, en 1890, mais en 1914 l’Alliance est présente dans toutes les grandes villes d’Australie. Une étude plus approfondie des activités de l’AF se trouve dans notre chapitre 8. Mais dans ce chapitre nous examinons les contributions pédagogiques de l’Alliance pour les soldats.

En 1916 la YMCA de Perth fait appel à l’Alliance Française, pour donner les cours de français. L’Alliance donne son appui également pour la production de manuels avec des exercices et des listes de vocabulaire utile, destines à être utilisés dans les cours. La même chose se produit à Melbourne. Les cours, organisés par l’AF, sont donnés par des professeurs, des bénévoles, des francophones. Effectivement c’est Mrs Mary Foster, la femme d’un officier de l’État-Major australien qui est l’instigatrice du programme. Membre du comité de l’AF de Melbourne, Mrs Foster propose son idée au comité en novembre 1916.

Les cours de français sont donnés non seulement au grand camp militaire de Melbourne, mais aussi à la Central Flying School, site d’entraînement pour les futurs aviateurs australiens, qui les apprécient beaucoup. Pour eux, une connaissance du français est considérée utile « au cas d’une atterrissage inattendu dans un secteur non-britannique ». Nous n’avons pas la liste complète de professeurs de français, mais le cas de Monsieur Paul Fahoury est intéressant. Né au Liban, c’est un chrétien syrien. Sa mère est française et son père est assyrien. Les services d’intelligence australiens se renseignent sur lui, et sont finalement satisfaits que Monsieur Fahoury ne pose pas de danger à la sécurité australienne. Mais l’épisode est révélateur de la société raciste de l’époque, où toute personne qui n’est pas de race dite ‘blanche’ risque subir des contrôles et des interdictions.

L'organisation des cours révèle des changements d'attitude envers l'enseignement du français. Avant la guerre, l'AF de Melbourne est reconnue comme une institution pour les élites, plutôt un cercle social pour les femmes riches, ou elles peuvent montrer leur culture et leur raffinement. En mettant l'accent sur la pédagogie, elle élargit son rôle, même en gardant les soirées musicales et littéraires.

III. Apprendre et enseigner le français dans l'AIF en France

Sur le front occidental, les soldats australiens sont au contact de la langue française dans de nombreux contextes, formels et informels. Bien sûr, leurs attitudes envers l'apprentissage linguistique sont aussi variées que les individus. Pourtant, nous nous fondons sur quelques études de cas, pour répondre à la question : comment les expériences de guerre des Australiens sont-elles influencées par leur capacité de communication ? Nous considérons les liens entre une connaissance de la langue, et l'identité des soldats.

i. Apprendre le français

Parmi les nombreux lettres et journaux intimes, nous avons choisi le journal intime du soldat Cornelius Searles. Searles est boulanger, et continue sa profession dans l'armée. Son expérience évolue en fonction de son métier et son affectation. Comme boulanger, il n'a pas la même vie que les soldats en première ligne. Pourtant, la guerre est là – Searles est témoin du bombardement de Calais, par exemple. Searles est installé à Calais, où il est affecté au 3e Australian Field Bakery. Grace à son long séjour dans la ville, il fréquente une famille locale, les Waeles. Son journal intime raconte ses visites chez les Waeles, dont le fils est soldat aussi. Searles fait un grand effort pour apprendre le français, pour communiquer avec la famille. L'affection qu'il ressent pour Monsieur et Madame Waeles est pour Searles aussi une opportunité de se sentir humain, et de maintenir une connexion à la vie normale, même si entouré de la destruction de la guerre.

ii. Enseigner le français – The AIF Education Service

Les soldats francophones dans l'AIF ont aussi joué un rôle comme professeurs de français. Parfois ils enseignent la langue dans des situations informelles, et parfois dans les milieux formels. Un exemple important est le Service d'Education de l'AIF. Beaucoup

de soldats australiens francophones ont ainsi enseigné le français à leurs camarades. Parmi ceux qui ont contribué on trouve Chisholm, déjà professeur expérimenté, et d'autres dont la seule qualification était d'être locateur natif. Le Service d'Education est établi dans la deuxième moitié de 1918, faisant partie de la grande entreprise de rapatriement des soldats australiens. 185.000 soldats se trouvent à l'étranger : 95.000 en France ou en Belgique, et 60.000 au Royaume Uni. Le Service d'Education se charge de l'entraînement, de la formation et de l'enseignement des soldats, leur offrant des cours vocationnels, académiques et professionnels.

Avec toute une gamme de cours techniques et pratiques, le français est également enseigné. Il faut donc trouver des professeurs de français parmi les soldats australiens. Beaucoup de publicité est faite pour encourager les soldats à s'enrôler dans des cours. Cela les empêche de s'ennuyer au moins, en attendant leur rapatriement. Mais il faut se rappeler aussi que le français fait partie de ce que l'on considère à l'époque « une bonne éducation ». Les cours de français sont offerts pendant la période d'attente, quand la plupart des soldats australiens passent l'hiver de 1918-1919 en Belgique, aux environs de Charleroi. Le français est également enseigné à bord des navires qui finalement transportent les soldats en Australie en 1919. Les cours contribuent énormément à la réussite du programme de rapatriement.

Chisholm est chargé d'organiser les cours de français en Belgique. Il doit trouver des professeurs, des salles de classes, et s'occuper du programme d'enseignement. Les professeurs de français sont parfois difficiles à trouver. Les universitaires sont parmi les premiers à être rapatriés, pour leur permettre de reprendre leurs études en Australie. Les officiers qui parlent français sont souvent obligés de garder leurs positions d'autorité. Mais un professeur qui est très enthousiaste est le Sergent Mulvaney, ancien professeur de français d'avant-guerre. Dans l'annonce pour les cours de français, il explique les avantages de parler le français. Cela peut mener à des expériences intéressantes (avec les femmes on peut imaginer). De plus, affirme-t-il, le français est 'le champagne des langues européennes'.[34]

[34] Australian Imperial Force (1914-1921), *The Digger : Australian Bases France. AIF.*, 16 Mar 1919 (Le Havre, France, 1918), 2.

Même si les soldats australiens étaient obligés d'apprendre le français pour communiquer avec les autochtones dans les villages, pendant leurs périodes de permissions, ou encore pour communiquer avec les soldats français en temps de combat, apprendre le français vers la fin de la guerre portait des avantages aussi. Le fait de faire des études servaient de préparation pour la vie civile : une sorte de démobilisation culturelle.[35]

D'autres soldats encore ont profité du Service d'Education non seulement pour améliorer leur français, mais aussi pour se perfectionner. Quelques-uns, déjà francophones, s'inscrivent à des cours à la Sorbonne. Emile Deville, soldat Franco-Australien dont le père est commerçant de laine, s'installe à Mazamet pour apprendre le délainage – le traitement de peaux de moutons.

Le Capitaine Adcock, Australien polyglotte, se marie avec une Belge à la fin de 1918. Il a eu beaucoup d'occasions de pratiquer le français pendant la guerre. Comme officier, il fait la liaison entre ses unités et les Français. En 1919 il se rend à Grasse pour apprendre les techniques de la parfumerie, qu'il utilisera à son retour en Australie.

[35] Romain Fathi and Bart Ziino, 'Coming Home: Australians' Sorties de Guerre after the First World War', *History Australia* 16, no. 1 (2 January 2019): 5–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2018.1558078.

DEUXIÈME PARTIE : LA REPONSE DES CIVILS - LE FRONT DOMESTIQUE

Chapitre 4 – Les sociétés de bienfaisance françaises à Melbourne 1914-1916

Introduction :

A partir de 1914, les sociétés de bienfaisance et les fonds patriotiques foisonnent, néanmoins, grâce aux réseaux et connexions familiales avec la France, les Français en Australie fondent leurs propres sociétés. Une société de bienfaisance telle que la Croix Rouge Française (CRF) constitue un exemple parfait d'organisation transnationale.

Dans le domaine civil, un élément important est celui des liens et des réseaux locaux et internationaux autours des sociétés de bienfaisance. Cela représentait pour beaucoup d'Australiens la possibilité de travailler avec des Français, d'aller en France comme assistant bénévole ou bien infirmier ou médecin. Donc, outre l'histoire bien connue des milliers des soldats australiens qui sont allés en France pour combattre, c'est souvent dans le cadre de ces sociétés que les connexions se formaient.

Au-delà des réseaux et connexions franco-australiens que nous examinons dans cette partie, nous nous intéressons à la mobilisation culturelle qui est un aspect clé des opérations de ces sociétés. Tout au long de la guerre, les collectes de fonds sont organisées au profit des œuvres de guerre pour la France. Une caractéristique importante de ces évènements se trouve dans l'utilisation des mythes et symboles culturels français. Il est évident que les sociétés de bienfaisance française qui opèrent en Australie ont une double fonction: non seulement le transfert de biens, d'argent, et de personnes vers la France, mais aussi représenter les notions d'identité nationale française, de culture française, et de patriotisme, aux Australiens.

La CRF de Melbourne profite de l'image de la France pour donner une allure culturelle aux fêtes et autres grands évènements patriotiques qu'elle organise. Certes, l'organisation de journées spéciales est répandue, et pratiquée par les autres sociétés de bienfaisance. De plus, elle reflète un phénomène qui existait déjà en France et en Angleterre. Néanmoins, ces journées spéciales à la française sont non seulement une opportunité de

collecte de fonds, mais aussi de diffusion de culture française. La question qui se pose donc est de savoir quelles représentations culturelles sont diffusées et pourquoi. Quels concepts culturels ces évènements révèlent-t-ils ?

Ce chapitre s'intéresse donc à ces représentations culturelles : leur forme, leur réception par le public, et leur rôle dans le discours pro-guerre et pro-français. Des personnages comme Napoléon, Jeanne d'Arc, et les paysans français sont là pour symboliser les qualités et valeurs françaises, comme le courage et l'héroïsme.

Les archives du MAE à Nantes sont particulièrement riches en ce qui concerne l'établissement et le fonctionnement des organisations caritatives françaises pendant la guerre. Les archives de la Croix Rouge Australienne constituent une ressource complémentaire utile. De plus, les lettres écrites par Suzanne Caubet à sa sœur Charlotte Crivelli sont très révélatrices.[36] Caubet travaille comme bénévole à l'hôpital militaire Buffon à Paris, tandis que Charlotte fond et dirige les sociétés de bienfaisance françaises à Melbourne. Elle inspire à son tour la création de sociétés dans les autres villes d'Australie. Elles fournissent une autre optique qui nous permet de mieux comprendre les motivations personnelles de ces deux femmes et leur énorme travail.

Avec son siège principal à Melbourne, la Croix Rouge Australienne, toujours à ses débuts, fonctionnait d'abord sous l'étiquette de sous-bureau (local branch) de la Croix Rouge Britannique, et opérait sous la direction de la femme du Gouverneur Général, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson. En même temps, la Croix Rouge Française avait sa représentante locale dans la personne de Mme Charlotte Crivelli, et un comité composé d'autres personnes éminentes. A Sydney, les Français se réunissent pour créer la French Australian League of Help. Comment ces deux groupes fonctionnent-ils en tant que structures qui ont galvanisé la communauté française et les francophiles australiens ? Comment cette structure est-elle un cadre pour l'expression de sentiments patriotiques ainsi que d'identité ? Les réseaux officiels et non-officiels entraînent de nouveaux types de contact et une connaissance mutuelle plus élargie, entre les pays mais aussi au niveau des

[36] Correspondance personnelle, collection privée Michael Crivelli

individus. Un résultat de leurs opérations sera la participation et la contribution de ces organisations aux projets de reconstruction de villages français « adoptés » par certaines villes australiennes après la guerre – des connexions qui perdurent aujourd'hui.

Les sociétés de bienfaisance représentent non seulement un domaine important de connexion entre les Français et les Australiens, mais elles constituent aussi un champ de croisement entre les expériences civiles et militaires. De plus, pour les différents groupes impliqués, français et australiens, elles fournissent un cadre dans lequel exprimer leurs opinions au sujet de l'identité française les uns aux autres.

i. Le contexte historique des sociétés de bienfaisance

Nous retraçons les grandes lignes de la création de la Croix Rouge par Henri Dunant à la Conférence de Genève en 1864, ainsi que la création de la Croix Rouge Française. Elle repose sur trois organisations : la Société de Secours aux Blessés Militaires (SSBM), l'Association des Dames Françaises (ADF) et l'Union de Femmes de France (UFF).[37] En 1907, ces trois organisations se réunissent sous la bannière du Comité Central de la Croix-Rouge Française, tout en restant distinctes. Elles doivent coopérer en temps de guerre, selon leurs statuts.

En Australie, c'est Lady Helen Munro Ferguson qui fonde la Croix Rouge australienne, dès son arrivée en Australie en 1913. Elle avait déjà été impliquée dans la fondation de la Croix Rouge dans son pays natal, l'Ecosse. Au début, la Croix Rouge australienne est un sous-comité de la Croix Rouge britannique, et donc fonctionne dans une structure impériale. Les dons australiens sont également envoyés en France par les soins du Comité Britannique de la Croix-Rouge Française, à Londres. Pourtant, il arrive parfois que les dons australiens se perdent dans l'immensité de l'effort britannique. Par conséquent la création de liens directs entre l'Australie et la France est un avantage.

[37] Frédéric Pineau, Virginie Alauzet, and Benjamin Lagrange, *La Croix Rouge Française: 150 Ans d'histoire* (Paris: Autrement, 2014).

Les comités de bienfaisance fondés par les Franco-Australiens font partie d'une large offre d'organisations caritatives pour soutenir la guerre. Les Australiens font aussi des collectes de fonds pour les Belges, les Syriens, les Arméniens, les soldats et les marins britanniques, ainsi que pour beaucoup d'autres causes spécifiques. En 1914, le Vice-Consul Homery crée un fond de secours français pour les victimes de la guerre, qui reçoit beaucoup de souscriptions. Pourtant, ce sont les sociétés fondées par Charlotte Crivelli qui vont connaître plus de succès : les comités locaux de la CRF, de la Société Maternelle et Infantile, et de l'Association Nationale des Orphelins de la Guerre.

ii. La création et fondation de la Croix Française Comite de Melbourne (CRF de Melbourne)

Une famille française de Melbourne, les Crivelli, inspire la création de la CRF de Melbourne. A Paris, la sœur de Charlotte Crivelli, Mme Suzanne Caubet, travaille dans l'administration à l'Hôpital Buffon, une dépendance de l'Hôpital Val du Grace. C'est un des fils Crivelli qui, mobilisé en 1914, transporte avec lui des cartons de biens à destination de la Croix Rouge Française. Les cartons seront délivrés aux soins de sa tante. Au début de 1915, cette connexion devient officielle avec la création d'un comité de CRF à Melbourne. Mme Crivelli est l'ancienne Présidente de l'Alliance Française du Victoria. Son mari le Docteur Marcel Crivelli compte parmi ses patients l'ancien Premier Ministre et des membres du gouvernement australien. Leur milieu social, très en vue, contribue au succès de l'organisation. L'autorisation officielle sera accordée plus tard, après les faits, par le President de la CRF, le Marquis de Vogüé. Caubet réussit aussi à obtenir le patronage de Madame Poincaré pour les sociétés de bienfaisance en Australie.

Les lettres écrites par Suzanne Caubet sont souvent publiées dans la presse australienne. Elles décrivent la situation pour les soldats blessés, les difficultés d'obtenir toutes les nécessités, et expriment la reconnaissance des destinataires de l'aide australienne.

iii. Le CRF comité de Melbourne et la mobilisation culturelle française : Faire des collectes de fonds à la française – les journées françaises et semaines françaises

L'opération de la CRF de Melbourne profite de connexions verticales et horizontales Dans le sens vertical, c'est un contexte dans lequel les élites et les représentants du gouvernement côtoient le grand public, y compris les membres des classes ouvrières. Les

connexions horizontales opèrent à l'échelle locale, entre communautés ainsi qu'à l'échelle internationale. Dans les cercles sociaux des Crivelli sont comptés les riches et les privilégiés de Melbourne, ainsi que les membres éminents de la colonie française australienne. Les grands réseaux d'amis et de gens motivés par leur patriotisme et leur affection pour la France se réunissent pour monter des évènements au profit de la Croix Rouge Française. Pour les riches philanthropes, cela offre la possibilité de faire une contribution, de montrer leur patriotisme dans un milieu culturel.

Les grandes maisons élégantes dans les quartiers riches de la ville accueillent ainsi des concerts, des soirées ou encore des fêtes pour les collectes de fonds. En décembre 1915 cinq mille personnes assistent à une grande fête à la française qui a lieu à *Merriwa*, un grand domaine à côté de la rivière. Dans le vaste domaine de *Merriwa*, la reproduction d'un village français présente des scènes de la vie traditionnelle : le marché, avec des produits dits 'français', et le couronnement d'une rosière. Il y a même un mariage français villageois, avec dans les rôles des mariés et du maire des francophones. Le programme pour la fête à *Merriwa* est aussi évocateur, avec son image d'une Marianne qui aide un soldat français blessé, et un enfant.

Les symboles culturels français sont mis en avant au grand défilé au centre-ville de Melbourne à l'occasion de la fête nationale française, en juillet 1915. Le thème du défilé est une reconstitution historique : les scènes de l'histoire de France y sont présentées. Le metteur en scène du tableau vivant est Violet Teague, artiste australienne qui a vécu et étudié en Belgique. Membre du comité de la CRF de Melbourne, elle se dévoue tout au long de la guerre aux causes patriotiques. La journée est marquée par une expression universelle de solidarité avec la France. Des milliers de personnes assistent au défilé qui allie patriotisme, spectacle, collectes de fonds avec pédagogie – parce que le public va apprendre quelque chose sur l'histoire française en même temps.

Au cours de la guerre, la liste d'organisations caritatives soutenues par les Australiens devient plus longue. A la Croix Rouge Française s'ajoutent la Société d'Assistance Maternelle et Infantile, et les Orphelins de Guerre.

iv. Aider les orphelins de France

D'autres sociétés de bienfaisance françaises sont également soutenues depuis l'Australie. Sous la direction de Charlotte Crivelli, et de ses collègues, des comités sont établis pour aider La Société Maternelle et Infantile, et l'Association Nationale des Orphelins de la Guerre (ANOG). Il y a des règles strictes concernant les collectes de fonds au nom de la Croix Rouge Française, mais sous l'étiquette de ces autres organisations caritatives, il y a plus de liberté dans la distribution des sommes d'argent et les biens envoyés à Paris aux soins de Suzanne Caubet. De plus, l'idée d'aider les femmes françaises plaît beaucoup aux femmes australiennes.

Les transferts culturels sont évidents dans la brochure de publicité pour La Société d'Assistance Maternelle, publiée à Melbourne en 1917. En couverture se trouve l'image dessinée par Poulbot, pour son affiche « Pour que Papa vienne en permission, s'il vous plait » de 1915. Les petits gamins de Poulbot sont parfaits pour inspirer la sympathie des Australiens.

A Paris, Madame la Générale Michel et le Professeur Pinard sont membres des comités de l'Assistance Maternelle, et de l'ANOG. Ils sont tous les deux des connaissances de Suzanne Caubet, et d'ailleurs il existe une connexion entre Pinard et le Docteur Crivelli par la fraternité médicale de Paris. Les deux organisations caritatives font une contribution importante pour soutenir les femmes, souvent laissées sans moyens, et les enfants, dont presque un million sont faits orphelins par la guerre.

En 1916, toute une semaine est consacrée au profit de la France, et de multiples évènements ont lieu. Encore une fois, la fête foraine et le marché français ont un grand succès. La Semaine Française est aussi notée dans la presse française.

Le travail et l'engagement des femmes sont aussi analysés dans ce chapitre. Dans les archives de l'Université de Melbourne se trouve un album de photos et de correspondance d'un groupe de femmes qui s'appelaient les « Busy Bees». Ces femmes, ouvrières dans une usine de biscuits, ont fait énormément de travail bénévole pour soutenir les troupes, australiennes comme françaises, et aussi les civils. Des colis et des lettres avec des

messages de soutien, sont envoyés par ces femmes à destination de jeunes mamans sans ressources dans les maternités de Paris.

Les Busy Bees envoient également les colis aux soldats français qui viennent des régions envahies, et qui n'ont pas de soutien, leurs familles étant sous occupation allemande, et parfois disparues. Encore une fois le désir de former des connexions personnelles, et d'exprimer l'amitié entre l'Australie et la France est évidente. Des lettres de remerciements très touchantes, écrites par les soldats français pour remercier des cadeaux des Australiens, se trouvent dans les archives de l'Université de Melbourne. A la même époque, une lettre écrite au consul par un soldat demande : « mon ami a une marraine de guerre du Victoria, pourriez-vous me trouver aussi une marraine de guerre ? » Cette marraine de guerre, serait-elle une Busy Bee ? Ces lettres représentent un autre élément de connexions personnelles entres Français et Australiens.

D'autres colis, destinés aux soldats français sont aussi envoyés. Herbert Daly, l'agent représentant australien à Paris pour la Croix Rouge, les distribue aux soldats français au front qui n'ont pas de soutien – ceux des pays occupés, et donc sans nouvelles et sans contact avec leurs familles. Il complète les colis en ajoutant des pipes, fabriquées sur mesure, et estampillées en or *don des Australiens*.

Le maire d'un petit village dans le Victoria écrit au vice-consul. Il lui demande son opinion sur la valeur de la société maternelle et infantile. Est-ce qu'un don est conseillé ? Le maire organise un comité local de bienfaisance, qui peut offrir dix livres sterling, et la femme du maire appartient à un comité de la Croix Rouge Australienne, organisé pour la plupart par les femmes. Elles aimeraient vraiment verser une somme de cinq livres pour soutenir les femmes françaises. En effet, affirme le maire, c'est surtout l'aspect féminin de cette organisation caritative qui les attire.

Chapitre 5 Les sociétés de bienfaisance française à Melbourne 1916 - 1918

Les années 1916 à 1918 sont une période de transformation dans la société australienne. Dans le contexte du débat sur la conscription, les divisions produites par les différences religieuses, politiques, ou sociales sont plus marquées. Ce chapitre analyse les activités

des sociétés de bienfaisance par le prisme de deux épisodes. Dans le premier, il s'agit d'un conflit sur la question de comment il faut représenter la France au public australien. Dans le deuxième, nous considérons l'influence des tensions religieuses sur le comité de Melbourne de la Croix Rouge Française. La dichotomie entre Catholiques et Protestants est un autre motif de dissension au sein du comité. L'épisode nous permet de nous interroger sur les liens entre religion et identité.

I. Les images publiques et privées.

i. L'importance de la reconnaissance

Le thème de la reconnaissance officielle révèle des conflits au sein de la colonie française. Dans son rapport pour le ministre, au début de 1916, Homery décrit les succès de Charlotte Crivelli et ses collègues à collecter des fonds. Ce sont des personnes dynamiques qui ont beaucoup d'influence, écrit-il. Le fond de secours français créé par Homery n'est plus en opération, les Australiens versent tous leurs dons aux organisations caritatives organisées par Crivelli et ses comités. Pourtant, le succès leur apporte du prestige, et Homery est à la fois admiratif et jaloux.

Un groupe qui déclare être 'la Colonie Française et les Amis de la France' envoie une lettre directement au Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Aristide Briand, à Paris. [38] L'envoi de cette lettre semble ne pas respecter le protocole. Le même problème semble avoir lieu dans la correspondance entre le bureau central de la CRF à Paris, et les représentants en Australie, mais les mésententes sont bientôt démêlées. Homery se plaint aussi au ministère de sa position inferieure de vice-consul, tandis que ses homologues dans la capitale sont d'un rang plus élevé.

ii. Le conflit 'secret' entre le vice-consul et la CRF de Melbourne.

Homery reste vigilant après avoir été averti de l'existence d'une organisation caritative frauduleuse en Angleterre. Il a des soupçons à l'égard d'une chanteuse d'opéra qui arrive à Melbourne, et il écrit en France pour vérifier l'identité de la femme en question. Mais elle est honorable et donne des concerts au profit des orphelins français. Ensuite, c'est en faisant de la publicité pour les collectes de fonds pour les femmes et les enfants de France

[38] MAE 428PO/1/44 Lettre du 31 septembre 1916

qu'un conflit se produit entre Homery et Charlotte Crivelli. Malgré son admiration pour elle, Homery est très fâché par les images qu'elle présente dans la presse. Pour Homery, les appels faits au public australien sont excessifs. L'Australie a déjà versé un million et demi de francs pour les soldats français, dit-il. De plus, continue-t-il, Madame Crivelli inonde la presse avec ses demandes et ses images d'une France réduite à la misère et la mendicité'.[39]

iii. La mort du vice-consul Homery

Après sa mort, Homery est remplacé par Monsieur Lauwers, le consul Belge, en attendant l'arrivée d'un nouveau Vice-Consul. C'est pendant cette période intérim qu'auront lieu des commémorations importantes pour les héros de Verdun.

II. 1917

i. La Croix Rouge Française de Melbourne, la religion et la commémoration

Dans cette section, nous examinons le contexte d'un évènement qui eut lieu dans la cathédrale de Melbourne : une cérémonie de reconnaissance pour les héros de Verdun. En mars 1916, une réunion solennelle publique a lieu à l'Hôtel de Ville de Melbourne. [40] Cet évènement est non-religieux. Des centaines de citoyens s'assemblent pour écouter les discours des hommes politiques, qui expriment leur admiration pour la France. La participation de jeunes Français de Melbourne à ces batailles, crée un lien direct et cette réunion sera un forum pour l'expression d'émotions.

C'est en mars 1917 que la proposition d'une commémoration plus grande, et de nature religieuse, devient une controverse, qui révèle des idées sur la religion, la commémoration, et le patriotisme. En 1917 la question de religion présente ses propres controverses grâce au débat sur la conscription et la place des Catholiques irlandais dans celui-ci. Quelle est l'implication du comité de la CRF de Melbourne dans ce débat ?

Pour comprendre la signification de cet évènement il faut noter le contexte politique et social. Le premier referendum sur la conscription a lieu en octobre 1916, et le deuxième en décembre 1917. Tous les deux échouent, mais suscitent beaucoup d'acrimonie. La

[39] Homery to MAE, 23 Aug 1916, MAE 428PO/1/49
[40] 'The French at Verdun.' Age, 3 March 1916, p. 7.

plupart des Catholiques en Australie sont d'origine irlandaise. L'archevêque de Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, récemment nommé, est irlandais aussi. Dans la période qui suit l'insurrection de Pâques 1916, les Irlandais d'Australie sont soupçonnés de manque de loyauté à l'Empire Britannique. Mannix se mêle à la question, déclarant que la guerre est une guerre pour le commerce, et les socialistes sont d'accord avec lui. De plus, beaucoup de Catholiques soutiennent le parti travailliste qui est contre la conscription. Étant un intermédiaire entre la France et l'Australie, comment le comité de Melbourne de la Croix Rouge Française se présentera-t-il ? Ce problème se révèle dans un document qui raconte les désaccords entre les membres du comité. Madame Crivelli organise avec l'archevêque une messe commémorative dans la cathédrale catholique de Melbourne, pour les soldats de Verdun, dont ses propres fils. La messe sera sous l'étiquette de la CRF. Mais d'autres membres du comité, des Protestants, ne veulent pas s'associer à la religion et surtout pas au catholicisme.

Le problème est finalement résolu par une révision de la cérémonie : la messe prévue est remplacée par une cérémonie religieuse de reconnaissance, ce qui permet au Gouverneur General Munro Ferguson et sa femme d'être présents. Comme représentants en Australie de la Couronne Britannique, ils sont farouchement protestants. Mais Lady Munro Ferguson est très engagée dans le travail pour les sociétés de bienfaisance, y compris la Croix Rouge Française.

Le Révérend Hearn, qui vient de rentrer du front occidental où il a été aumônier dans l'AIF, fait un discours touchant. En France, et à Gallipoli, le sang australien et le sang français sont mélangés pour toujours, ce qui renforce les liens entre les pays, déclare-t-il. La cathédrale est décorée avec des symboles et des drapeaux français et australiens, pour symboliser cette fraternité.

ii. L'arrivée d'un nouveau vice-consul

Henri Fliche arrive à Melbourne en avril 1917. L'année 1917 est désastreuse pour l'Australie – au front, les Australiens subissent des pertes terribles, et en Australie la société est marquée par les tensions sociales et des grèves. Fliche reste diplomatique dans ses approches, il est populaire. Pourtant il s'engage dans les questions politiques comme

la conscription. Il fait tout ce qu'il peut pour encourager l'engagement des Australiens dans la guerre.

iii. La fête nationale française à Melbourne en 1917.

En juillet 1917 deux sociétés franco-australiennes, l'Alliance Française de Melbourne, et la CRF de Melbourne, coopèrent à l'organisation d'une *journée française*. En fait, dans toutes les villes du pays, le public se mobilise pour faire de grandes collectes de fonds. Les motifs français bien connus, comme Jeanne d'Arc, Napoléon, les villages français ou encore les paysans français sont des éléments communs à ces évènements. A Melbourne, les bénéfices seront partagés entre la Croix Rouge Française, Les Orphelins de la Guerre, et La Société Maternelle. La journée inclut des évènements cérémoniaux et culturels, ainsi que des collectes de fonds. La coopération entre l'AF et la CRF de Melbourne est notable : une certaine rivalité existait entre quelques-uns des membres. Mais puisque la situation est grave pour la guerre et pour la France, mieux vaut être unis que rivaux.

Le quatorze juillet 1917 commence par une réunion de personnes notables de la ville de Melbourne, autour de la statue de Jeanne d'Arc qui se trouve en centre-ville. Les membres du comité de la CRF de Melbourne, les consuls des pays alliés, et des dignitaires sont présents à ce lieu symbolique. Le Brigadier Foster, et sa femme qui a initié les cours de français pour les soldats sont aussi dans le groupe. Plus tard le concert de Nellie Melba est très apprécié. Elle chante des chansons écrites par des compositeurs français. Le soir, une pièce de théâtre, *Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon,* un favori des spectateurs francophones de Melbourne, est un divertissement très apprécié. La pièce est 'gaie, amusante et facile à comprendre'. Les célébrations du quatorze juillet 1917 combinent des aspects militaires, culturels, et artistiques pour articuler les liens avec la France. Les liens militaires sont nouveaux, tandis que l'art et la culture françaises ont une importance constante pour les élites de la société australienne. En 1918, l'art, la culture, et le patriotisme s'unissent aux activités caritatives dans l'exposition du Salon des Poilus

iv. Les artistes s'engagent pour les collectes de fonds au profit de la France.

Violet Teague est parmi les artistes australiens qui montrent leur attachement à la France. Teague contribue par ses talents artistiques et créatifs aux œuvres de bienfaisance au

profit de la France. De plus, elle fait partie d'un groupe d'artistes qui montent une exposition en novembre 1916 à Melbourne. L'exposition montre des aspects locaux et transnationaux des relations franco-australiennes. Des artistes actuellement en France, ou qui avaient vécu en France présentent leurs tableaux. Des tableaux, des dessins, des affiches par les artistes français comme Steinlen, et d'autres objets d'art seront tous vendus au profit des poilus français. L'ingénieur Herbert Daly est un artiste amateur qui travaille en France pendant la guerre comme bénévole pour la Croix Rouge Française. A Paris, il distribue les colis qui sont envoyés d'Australie pour les soldats français. Daly envoie dix-huit de ses tableaux, des paysages qu'il a peints pendant son séjour en France. La femme médecin Docteur Helen Sexton, qui a établi l'hôpital militaire australien à Paris, envoie aussi des objets à vendre. Des œuvres d'Ethel Carrick sont aussi exposées. Carrick et son mari Emmanuel Philips Fox sont des artistes renommés australiens qui avaient vécu en France entre 1905 et 1913.

Chapitre 6 Autres connexions Franco-Australiens sur le front domestique

Bien que les archives nous donnent une richesse d'informations sur le cas de Melbourne, il est possible de tracer les activités dans les autres villes, grâce aux archives locales, et aux journaux anciens. Afin de brosser un portrait plus complet, dans ce chapitre nous élargissons notre regard pour examiner les relations franco-australiennes dans les autres régions et les autres villes capitales de l'Australie. Ce chapitre cherche à découvrir dans quels autres domaines, et quels autres lieux les relations franco-australiennes se manifestent, sur le front domestique. La première partie est focalisée sur l'établissement de sociétés de bienfaisance dans les autres villes. Nous identifions les Français et les francophones et leurs réseaux, ainsi que des liens transnationaux qui sont créés et exploités. Les philanthropes francophiles se lient avec les Franco-Australiens dans l'établissement et l'opération de ces sociétés. Dans plusieurs contextes, les Français et les Australiens se croisent, et les concepts d'identité nationale et culturelle sont exprimées. Les valeurs partagées entre la France et l'Australie sont souvent citées, et la culture française est liée au patriotisme. Le cas de Sydney est déjà le sujet du travail de Jacqueline Dwyer et Peter Brown, mais des études pour les autres villes d'Australie restent à faire. Néanmoins, nous analysons la communauté française de Sydney d'une perspective plus large, en identifiant des acteurs divers, et en nous focalisant sur des aspects liés à notre thème de mobilisation culturelle. Nous traçons d'abord les grandes lignes de

l'établissement de la ligue Franco-Australienne (the French-Australian League of Help : FALH) et puis nous analysons les cas pour les autres villes.

La deuxième partie du chapitre est consacrée à un autre champ de connexion, qui découle des visites de soldats de régiments coloniaux du Sud Pacifique. Depuis leur base en Nouvelle-Calédonie, ils font escale dans les ports australiens. Les visites ont suscité de nombreuses discussions sur l'identité française et des épisodes de connexion entre les sphères civile et militaire. Souvent, les Australiens francophones jouent un rôle intermédiaire, pour accueillir les soldats français. Tous les groupes concernés coopèrent pour optimiser le succès des visites, et leur effet sur l'opinion publique.

I. Les sociétés de bienfaisance française dans les autres villes de l'Australie

i. La Nouvelle Galles du Sud

C'est à Sydney que se trouve la plus grande communauté française. Sydney a son journal français : *le Courrier Australien*, et des sociétés françaises ont leurs sièges à Sydney, comme la compagnie maritime *Les Messageries Maritimes*. Le commerce de laine est le commerce le plus important entre la France et l'Australie. Les acheteurs de laine de Sydney sont très actifs dans la communauté française de Sydney. Ils sont particulièrement touchés par l'invasion du nord de la France, car beaucoup d'eux sont originaires de Roubaix et de Tourcoing, centre d'industrie lainière en France. La FALH est la première société consacrée à soutenir les Français, elle est fondée en décembre 1914. Le livre de Jacqueline Dwyer retrace l'engagement des Français de Sydney, y compris celui de ses ancêtres acheteurs de laine, les Playoust, à fonder la FALH.[41]

La FALH opère comme une société indépendante, même si inspirée par des œuvres de secours déjà en opération en Europe. Cependant, dans les autres grandes villes australiennes, des sous-comités de la Croix Rouge Française, à l'instar du comité de Melbourne sont établis. Le comité de la FALH est composé de Georges et Joseph Playoust et leurs épouses Marie-Thérèse et Blanche, les éducatrices Augustine Soubeiran et Louisa

[41] Dwyer, *Flanders in Australia*.

Gurney, et le Premier Ministre de la Nouvelle Galles du Sud, le très francophile William Holman. D'autres hommes d'affaires et citoyen éminents y sont aussi engagés.

La FALH organise beaucoup de grands évènements pour les collectes de fonds. Notons l'exemple de la journée spéciale en 1915 *Allies Day.* La FALH monte des kiosques qui vendent des produits français. Les vendeurs et vendeuses sont tous vêtus en costume de paysans français. Le cliché des paysans français est très populaire et très répandu. Le cliché est repris pour la fête nationale en juillet 1917. Une fête foraine française est reproduite en plein centre de Sydney, avec des jeunes femmes déguisées en paysannes françaises, portant des sabots. Les liens historiques entre la France et l'Australie sont aussi évoqués ce jour-là, lors d'une cérémonie au monument de La Pérouse. Deux mille personnes assistent à une cérémonie auprès de la tombe du Père Receveur, aumônier de l'expédition La Pérouse. Un grand défilé patriotique à Sydney en 1915 comporte les personnages symboliques de Jeanne d'Arc, qui représente la lutte contre l'envahisseur, et Marianne, qui incarne la liberté.

En 1916, la FALH a collaboré avec la Croix Rouge Australienne pour envoyer un groupe d'infirmières en France. Le groupe d'infirmières est surnommé les 'Bluebirds' en raison de leurs manteaux bleus. La FALH finance les paquetages pour chacune, et une Française est engagée pour leur enseigner le français pendant le voyage en France. Les infirmières travaillent dans les hôpitaux militaires français où elles sont appréciées pour leur compétence médicale.

Le cas de Sydney montre la valeur des réseaux transnationaux. La première distribution de fonds et de biens envoyés de Sydney est effectuée par Madame Brasier de Thuy, qui travaille auprès de la Croix Rouge Française (Comité de Londres). Les Brasier de Thuy sont d'anciens résidents de Sydney, où Monsieur était l'agent des Messageries Maritimes. Ils sont bien connus à Sydney. La FALH aura plus tard son comité de Paris, qui rend compte à Sydney, et qui se charge de distribuer les fonds en France. Au total une somme de plus de £300,000 est récoltée par les résidents de Sydney, à laquelle il faut ajouter de nombreuses caisses de biens qui sont envoyées pour aider les soldats, les femmes et les enfants de France.

Les Français de Sydney sont pour la plupart des Catholiques, mais la religion n'a pas le même effet divisif qu'à Melbourne. Une messe de requiem en 1916 pour commémorer les résidents de Sydney tués à Verdun est très sobre et marquée par le deuil partagé avec la France.

ii. L'Australie Méridionale

En Australie Méridionale (South Australia), des femmes renommées, les sœurs Berthe Mouchette et Marie Lion, font partie de la petite communauté française qui travaille pour mettre en valeur la langue et la culture françaises. Artiste, et fondatrice de l'Alliance Française de Melbourne en 1890, Berthe Mouchette s'installe ensuite à Adelaïde. Avec sa sœur, elle est professeur de français et d'art plastique.

Berthe Mouchette, ancienne résidente de Melbourne, est aussi l'ancienne professeur d'art de Charlotte Crivelli, et elle connaît Suzanne Caubet aussi. Il existe d'ailleurs d'autres liens d'amitiés entre les dames françaises d'Adelaïde et celle de Melbourne. Par conséquent, en 1914 des colis et d'argent sont envoyés à Suzanne Caubet de la part de ses amis d'Adelaïde. Parmi les résidents francophones d'Adelaïde qui se mobilisent pour les causes Françaises figurent John Watson Canaway, agent consulaire français et président du comité de l'Alliance Française. De plus, la femme du Gouverneur est Lady Galway, une dame cultivée et polyglotte. Elle encourage l'apprentissage du français, et son travail au profit des œuvres de guerre est considérable. Un évènement culturel monté à Adelaïde est révélateur. Au marché français, les résidents d'Adelaïde vont découvrir la gastronomie française. Les pommes frites à la française, les escargots et les cuisses de grenouilles à la Parisienne seront préparés par un chef français. Les découvertes culturelles sont liées au patriotisme. Il est évident que le public se rend compte que les identités nationales et les stéréotypes informent les discours en faveur de la guerre. L'opinion publique est reformulée pour convenir aux exigences politiques de la guerre. Toute admiration pour l'Allemagne, doit être remplacée par l'admiration pour la France, déclare un journaliste d'Adelaïde. Et c'est en mangeant des frites, et en pratiquant nos phrases françaises, que nous allons faire preuve de notre amitié pour la France, déclare-t-il.

Berthe Mouchette et Marie Lion voyagent en France en 1916, et passent une année à travailler comme bénévoles pour la Croix Rouge. A leur retour, elles apportent des gravures réalisées par un artiste français, pour ensuite les vendre au profit des organisations caritatives françaises. De plus, elles apportent des objets fabriqués par les poilus qui de ce que l'on appelle l'art des tranchées. Ces objets sont aussi vendus au public australien, et l'argent reçu est ensuite retransmis en France, sous forme de biens achetés ou de fonds envoyés. De tels transferts font partie du mouvement transnational occasionné par la guerre, qui touche les personnes bien loin de la France. Les gens d'Adelaïde sont aussi très généreux envers l'Assistance Maternelle, et en 1918 Mouchette et Lion sont nommées représentantes officielles de cette organisation. Mouchette et Lion sont aussi très impliquées dans les efforts d'après-guerre pour la reconstruction de villages en France. Par exemple, la ville d'Adelaïde verse beaucoup d'argent au village de Dernancourt.

iii. L'Australie Occidentale

En Australie Occidentale, à Perth, les expressions de solidarité avec la France sont dirigées pour la plupart par la femme du Gouverneur, Lady Hackett – francophone et francophile. L'agent consulaire français, Peter Michelides, est aussi impliqué. Même s'il y a très peu de Français à Perth, il existe aussi un groupe de francophones et l'Alliance Française de Perth est active. Ils organisent dès 1915 des œuvres de secours pour les Français, souvent sous la direction de Lady Hackett qui est une grande philanthrope. En juin 1916 Michelides se met en contact avec le consul-général Chayet à Sydney. Il exprime le désir de Lady Hackett de former un comité de la Croix Rouge Française à Perth. Après les communications entre l'Australie et le bureau centrale de la CRF à Paris, l'accord est donné pour la création d'un comité local, sous les mêmes conditions que celles du comité de Melbourne. La CRF comité de Perth tient à envoyer les colis directement à Marseille, où ils seront reconnus sous l'étiquette de l'Australie Occidentale.

En juin 1917, les francophones ont l'opportunité de montrer leur solidarité avec les Français d'une façon plus directe. À la suite d'un naufrage, un officier de la marine française est noyé, alors que sa femme, étant également sur le navire, est sauvée. La communauté francophone de Perth s'engage à s'occuper de cette femme infortunée qui

ne parle pas anglais, en attendant son rapatriement en France. En décembre 1917, c'est Lady Hackett avec les francophones de Perth qui accueillent les soldats français en escale à Perth.

iv. La Tasmanie

En Tasmanie, il y a également très peu de Français. Pourtant, un sous-comité de la Croix Rouge Française est fondé, sous la tutelle du Comité de Melbourne. Les francophiles de Tasmanie se montrent aussi très enthousiastes vers les œuvres de secours pour la France. Pourtant, un épisode témoigne de l'ajustement d'opinion publique qui est en train de se faire : en juin 1915 les conseillers de la ville d'Hobart ont un débat très animé au sujet de la date pour la grande collecte de fonds : ils se demandent si le 18 juin est une date acceptable, puisque le 18 juin est aussi 'Waterloo Day', une date commémorant la victoire des Anglais sur les Français. Le choix de cette date serait certainement une insulte aux Français qui sont désormais nos alliés, décident-ils.

Les Tasmaniens tricotent des chaussettes, et fabriquent de la confiture, pour remplir de grands colis à destination des soldats français blessés. Les caisses contiennent uniquement des produits d'origine tasmanienne, comme des pommes, ou des produits de laine. Les membres du comité tiennent à ce que les destinataires soient conscients de l'origine de cette générosité. Les colis, dans des grandes boîtes en bois, sont marqués avec l'esquisse de la carte de la Tasmanie, est le message : amitiés de la part de vos amis tasmaniens. Des lettres de remerciement de la part des infirmières et des soldats témoignent des connexions directes établies par les dons. La directrice de l'hôpital militaire de Toul décrit les souffrances des soldats français. Ceux-ci sont contents de recevoir les colis australiens, en ajoutant qu'ils ont déjà combattu aux côtés des Australiens dans la Somme. Cette volonté d'être reconnu par les alliés si lointains fait écho à une tendance plus large en Australie pendant la guerre, celle d'être reconnu séparément et ne pas être submergé et anonyme dans l'immense Empire Britannique.

Une infirmière tasmanienne a également un rôle notable. Dorothy Duffy est une des 'Bluebirds', les infirmières volontaires qui sont équipées et envoyées en France comme 'un cadeau pour la France '. Elle travaille dans un hôpital militaire français, et tenant

compte de ses origines de la Tasmanie, fait un appel de son propre compte pour les choses nécessaires. Les Tasmaniens sont généreux, et font une grande collecte de biens à destination des soldats qui sont soignés par Duffy. Notons aussi l'exemple de Louis Drouet, un résident français en Tasmanie qui travaille pour la brasserie Cascade, grande productrice de bière et de cidre à Hobart. Avant de s'installer à Hobart, Drouet était d'abord vigneron dans le Victoria. C'est un Français originaire d'Epernay. Drouet et sa femme s'engagent tous les deux à envoyer des colis pour un hôpital à Epernay, où il est bien probable qu'un des leurs travaille, peut être comme bénévole. C'est ainsi que les liens transnationaux opèrent d'un bout du monde à l'autre.

v. Le Queensland

Dans le Queensland, c'est grâce à l'intervention d'un Victorien que le comité de la Croix Rouge Française est établi. En novembre 1915 Alured Kelly qui est le secrétaire du comité de la CRF de Melbourne, fait un voyage d'affaires au Queensland. Kelly est agent pour une société française de pneus. Lors de sa visite il se rend compte que les sociétés de bienfaisance françaises ne sont pas encore en opération, comme dans les autres régions du pays. Avec l'encouragement de Kelly, et à l'instar des autres villes, l'agent consulaire et les Français et francophones de Queensland s'organisent pour créer leur société.

II : Visites des soldats français coloniaux du Pacifique

Au cours de la guerre, les soldats des régiments coloniaux du sud-Pacifique ont fait de nombreuses escales en Australie. Les visites des soldats et des marins français dans les villes australiennes provoquent beaucoup d'intérêt. Dans toutes les grandes villes d'Australie, les soldats français du Pacifique sont fêtés chaleureusement par la population.

Les soldats font escale lors de leurs voyages entre la Nouvelle-Calédonie et la France, dans les deux directions : en premier lieu, vers la France, pour le front, mais ensuite de retour vers le Pacifique, soit parce qu'ils étaient blessés, ou parce qu'ils avaient droit à une permission. Cette section analyse les visites des soldats, et s'interroge sur la façon dont leur présence contribue à une reformulation des idées. Nous analysons aussi le rôle des Franco-Australiens comme intermédiaires culturels et linguistiques. Finalement nous

notons l'implication des visiteurs français dans les efforts d'encourager le recrutement en Australie.

Les soldats du Sud Pacifique sont mobilisés et basés en Nouvelle-Calédonie. Ils y font également leur entraînement, même s'ils sont originaires d'autres colonies françaises dans la région : ils viennent aussi de Wallis et Futuna, de Tahiti, ou de Vanuatu. Les régiments coloniaux sont en fait composés de soldats indigènes et de soldats faisant partie de la population blanche coloniale – les Européens. Nouméa est le centre de mobilisation du Groupe d'Armée du Pacifique, donc lors de leurs visites en Australie on les appelle souvent 'les Néo-calédoniens'. Néanmoins, ce sont des soldats de l'armée française, et donc nous utilisons les deux termes Néo-calédoniens et Français pour les désigner.

i. Des relations compliquées.

Les visites des soldats coloniaux du Pacifique doivent pourtant être contextualisées dans le fond social économique et politique. La Nouvelle-Calédonie est à proximité géographiquement de l'Australie, pourtant, de point de vue idéologique, les deux sont bien loin l'un de l'autre. Pour les Australiens, la Nouvelle Calédonie est associée aussi au bagne. La déportation pénale un aspect de l'histoire australienne qu'ils préfèrent oublier à cette époque-là. Nous notons l'histoire de la rivalité entre les colonies, parce que pour l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Calédonie fait preuve des ambitions coloniales de la France. Celles-ci sont en compétition avec l'Empire Britannique, et d'Australie elle-même après la Fédération qui crée le nouveau pays en 1901. Ces ambitions donc sont potentiellement négatives pour l'Australie, qui est très consciente de sa précarité de nation 'blanche' dans la région asiatique. La présence d'ouvriers japonais et chinois en Nouvelle-Calédonie semble pour l'Australie être une menace à la politique de l'Australie Blanche 'The White Australia Policy', qui vise à exclure les populations d'origines non-européennes. La White Australia Policy est fondée sur l'idée que les 'blancs, européens' sont supérieurs, et elle vise ainsi à protéger les travailleurs australiens de la concurrence.

Les Néo-calédoniens sont à la fois des 'noirs' mais aussi des Français. L'accueil qui leur est offert montre donc un côté contradictoire et paradoxal, et les Australiens, au moins pour un peu de temps, sont obligés de reconfigurer leur opinion.

ii. Accueillir les Néo-calédoniens

Beaucoup d'articles de presse décrivent les soldats néo-calédoniens, et les stéréotypes positifs et négatifs sont nombreux. Leurs traits dits 'français' sont énumérés dans de nombreux articles dans les journaux australiens. Ils sont nobles et courageux, gais et charmants, beaux et élégants. Les traits qui soulignent leur altérité sont aussi présents : on décrit leur peau noire, leurs cheveux crépus, et même leurs visages qui ne montrent pas beaucoup d'émotion. Ils ont l'air exotique, mais en même temps on souligne l'humanité en commun. La condescendance, l'affection, d'admiration, et la fascination sont ainsi exprimés.

En mai 1915, le navire le *Kersaint* fait escale à Sydney, et les soldats qui sont à bord affluent sur les sites touristiques de Sydney. Dans les rapports, on souligne leurs liens avec l'Australie : parmi eux il y a des fils des colons français riches, qui ont fait leurs études en Australie. Pourtant, on remarque qu'ils sont très bronzés. André, un soldat mi-anglais mi-français originaire de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et qui a fait ses études en Australie, raconte sa mobilisation à un ami australien. Il commente que les indigènes sont 'désormais permis dans l'armée française'.

En juillet 1917, un groupe de soldats français passe trois semaines à Sydney, dans une maison de convalescence, en attendant un navire pour les rapatrier. Quelques-uns sont blessés et d'autres sont en permission. Cela permet beaucoup de rencontres. Parmi eux, il y a des indigènes et des européens. Une journaliste raconte son interview avec un jeune soldat qui vient 'peut-être des Nouvelles Hébrides ou peut-être de la Nouvelle Calédonie.' Il a la peau noire – mais, raconte le journaliste, il apporte avec lui un cadeau pour sa maman, et donc aimer sa mère fait de lui un être honorable. Les soldats à la peau noire sont donc nobles et vaillants, eux aussi, pourvu qu'ils portent l'uniforme français.

Les franco-australiens, et les francophones australiens jouent un rôle clé. Ils sont particulièrement impliqués : ils sont souvent utilisés pour être interprètes. La connaissance du français est très utile pour créer les connexions, soit en public, lorsque des discours pour accueillir les soldats sont faits en français, soit pour les rencontres individuelles. En 1915, tout bénévole qui parle bien le français est appelé à se présenter pour accompagner les soldats.

En novembre 1917, un grand groupe de 800 soldats arrive en Australie. Ils feront escale à Sydney, Adelaïde et Perth. Pendant leur séjour à Melbourne, toute une gamme d'évènements sont montés pour les accueillir et les divertir. Ils font un grand défilé en centre-ville, et on leur fait visiter les plages, les parcs, et les grands domaines. Pour les transporter à Healesville, un joli village dans les collines à l'est de Melbourne, deux trains sont réservés. Pour la réussite de la visite, une importante organisation est nécessaire. C'est le commandant local militaire qui s'en occupe : le Major Butter. Le YMCA a assuré la restauration, l'AF de Melbourne a fourni quatorze interprètes. Les trains ont transporté les troupes, les officiers, une fanfare et des représentants civils à Healesville, où ils ont apprécié la nourriture, la musique, le football, la baignade dans la rivière et les interactions avec les habitants. Par la suite, les représentants des organisations locales françaises ont écrit au major Butter, le remerciant au nom du capitaine Sicard, l'officier commandant français. Sicard leur avait demandé de transmettre ses remerciements. Sa requête montre le rôle intermédiaire entre l'armée australienne et l'armée française joué par des Franco-Australiens. Ce rôle est sans doute nécessaire peut-être pour des raisons linguistiques, si Sicard ne parle pas anglais, mais témoigne aussi d'un rôle comme représentants locaux non officiels de la France. Avant de partir, les 800 soldats reçoivent des colis : un cadeau de noël pour chacun. Les colis sont faits par les femmes Busy Bees. Si les bénévoles australiens ont déjà reçu beaucoup de lettres de remerciement de la part des destinataires français, cette fois les connexions sont plus réelles et la reconnaissance est plus immédiate.

Leurs visites sont aussi l'occasion pour les autochtones d'exprimer leur patriotisme, mais aussi leur culture. Les Australiens se présentent aux Français : parfois des exemples qui troublent, lorsqu'ils se servent d'aborigènes pour exprimer des traits particuliers de l'Australie. Une cérémonie aborigène est montée pour le divertissement des visiteurs

français, mais on se rappelle qu'à cette époque-là, les Australiens indigènes n'ont pas de droits de la citoyenneté dans leur propre pays. Deux aspects du colonialisme qui convergent sont ainsi mis en évidence.

Cependant, les Australiens francophones se montrent aussi désireux de montrer leur culture. A l'Alliance Française de Melbourne, une soirée culturelle avec une pièce de théâtre est offerte aux Néo-calédoniens. Les Australiens ont peut-être des prétentions. Pourtant, dans l'audience se trouvent des soldats tahitiens, qui baillent pendant la présentation, et semblent 'ne rien comprendre'. Est-ce la faute des soldats, ou des acteurs ?

Une connexion entre l'Australie et l'histoire de la France est aussi mise en valeur. Dans la population française d'Australie on trouve des personnes âgées, qui ont combattu dans la guerre de 1870, ou qui ont survécu au siège de Paris. Quand on les présente aux soldats français, c'est un symbole de la valeur accordée par les Australiens à l'histoire française. Cela fait preuve que les valeurs républicaines sont reconnues et respectées. Les soldats français tiennent à faire une bonne impression aussi – en chantant la chanson de guerre très populaire de l'époque 'It's a long way to Tipperary' en langue tahitienne.

iii. Les visiteurs français encouragent le recrutement australien

Les soldats français, ou plus précisément les officiers, ajoutent leurs voix pour encourager le recrutement en Australie. Il faut se rappeler que l'armée australienne est formée par le recrutement volontaires. Après les années de pertes, il devient de plus en plus difficile d'attirer de nouvelles recrues. En avril 1917, au bureau de recrutement en centre-ville de Sydney, une fanfare et une soixantaine de soldats français sont là, et le Consul-General Chayet donne un discours. Deux officiers français expriment leur reconnaissance aux soldats australiens, qui sont les héros de Pozières et de Bapaume. Les officiels australiens font l'éloge du courage des français. En juillet 1918 l'atmosphère est plus optimiste pendant la visite d'une centaine de soldats français. Les discours patriotiques les accompagnent. Pour les Australiens c'est l'opportunité de voir l'Allié héroïque de près. A Sydney, le Capitaine Aucher, ancien combattant de la guerre de 1870 et professeur de français, résident de Sydney, s'adresse à la foule. Il parle de son fils qui est soldat de

l'AIF, blessé à Gallipoli, il parle de Jeanne d'Arc, de miracles et d'héroïsme. Il exhorte les jeunes hommes présents de s'enrôler dans l'armée. Finalement il donne de petites leçons de français, en concluant que pour les soldats australiens, la capacité de parler français apportera du succès auprès des femmes en France.

III. 1919 – La fin des sociétés de bienfaisance françaises

En mai 1919, le comité de Melbourne de la Croix Rouge clôt ses comptes. Pendant leurs quatre années d'opération ils ont collecté plus de 250.000 livres sterling pour la France. A Sydney, la FALH a collecté une somme de £300.000.[42] En tant qu'organisation distincte spécifiquement française, elle avait joué un rôle spécial dans la transmission d'images de la France et des Français en Australie. Elle avait permis aux Australiens français et francophiles d'exprimer leur réponse à la guerre dans un cadre français, et non pas dans la structure hiérarchique de Londres et de l'Empire. La France est reconnaissante envers ces 'amis de la France', et beaucoup d'entre eux reçoivent la Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française. Finalement, les efforts des sociétés de bienfaisance sont aussi reconnus à Paris, par le Professeur Pinard. Dans un discours à l'occasion de l'assemblée générale de la Société d'Assistance Maternelle et Infantile, il affirme que c'est grâce à l'aide fournie par les Australiens que les sociétés de secours aux femmes et enfants ont survécu.

[42] Ces montants ne comprennent pas les sommes envoyées par l'intermédiaire de La Croix Rouge Française Comité de Londres, ni de la Croix Britannique. L'énorme variété des sociétés rend un calcul exact très difficile.

TROISIÈME PARTIE : 'Soft Power' l'influence non-militaire de la France

Cette partie a pour but d'exposer et analyser comment la France a exercé un pouvoir en Australie grâce à la propagande, et à des organisations non-militaires. C'est à travers des individus, des institutions et des organisations gouvernementales que la France s'insère dans le domaine de la propagande, des représentations. Cette activité vise à soutenir l'opinion publique positive, pour soutenir l'Alliance et l'effort de guerre, mais aussi avec un œil vers l'après-guerre, et le positionnement de la France dans le commerce australien. La diplomatie culturelle a aussi son influence, sous la direction de certains acteurs. Le concept de *soft power* est proposé par Joseph Nye, pour expliquer la capacité d'un état à influencer un autre par des moyens non-militaires et non-coercitifs.[43] Nous allons voir qu'à cette époque clé pour les relations franco-australiennes, le gouvernement français dispose de plusieurs outils.

Chapitre 7 La propagande pro-française en Australie.

Ce chapitre vise à montrer que la propagande en Australie ne provient pas uniquement de Londres. Des lignes de communication directes entre les ministères concernés et les représentants français locaux révèlent les méthodes employées pour la diffusion de la propagande. Nous analysons le réseau de coopération et communication entre le Docteur Marcel Crivelli, Isidore Maurice-Carton, maître de conférences à l'Université de Melbourne, et le Vice-Consul, pour assurer la bonne diffusion des messages pro-français. Les intersections entre la publicité, la création d'images publiques, et la propagande constituent un sujet intéressant. Dans le domaine public et privé, le gouvernement français diffuse son message en Australie, par les images et les textes, et par les discours publics. En même temps, il surveille l'opinion publique. Nous montrons que la diffusion de la culture française n'appartient pas uniquement au domaine des sociétés de bienfaisance, aux concerts et fêtes, mais qu'elle est aussi liée aux intérêts du gouvernement français.

[43] Joseph S. Nye, 'Public Diplomacy and Soft Power', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (1 March 2008): 94–109, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699.

La propagande de guerre est le sujet d'études récentes par les historiens culturels de la guerre. Nous notons le travail de John Horne et Alan Kramer, ainsi que celui d'Annette Becker, qui exposent la véritable existence des atrocités allemandes envers les civils. Ils soulignent les liens entre la dénégation des atrocités de 1914, qui sont mises en question dans les années 1920 et 1930, et les difficultés plus tard de convaincre le monde des faits de la Shoah.[44] De plus, le travail d'Annette Becker et Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau nous fournit un modèle utile pour analyser l'influence française et le fonctionnement de la propagande. La propagande fonctionne verticalement lorsqu'elle est imposée par le gouvernement, mais la propagande spontanée fonctionne de façon horizontale.[45] Toutes les deux sont en opération en Australie.

L'intérêt et l'intervention par la république française dans les affaires politiques australiennes reste un sujet inexploré par les historiens. Les archives nous mènent dans les coulisses des relations entre la France et l'Australie. Effectivement, cet aspect de la relation constitue un élément important de l'histoire culturelle australienne de la guerre.

I : Maurice-Carton et les rapports des atrocités allemandes

Au début de la guerre, la propagande anti-allemande se focalise sur les atrocités allemandes envers les civils en Belgique et dans la zone occupée de la France. En Australie, comme dans les autres pays alliés, les rapports des atrocités allemandes et les récits des réfugiés français et belges sont racontés au public. La violence contre les civils était bien vraie, mais des caricatures de l'ennemi et des reportages sensationnalistes sont utilisés pour créer l'unité nationale et renforcer la volonté de combattre. Les rapports des atrocités sont régulièrement envoyés de Londres. Mais en Australie on reçoit aussi des rapports de la part du gouvernement français. En mars 1915 Maurice-Carton, maître de conférences à l'Université de Melbourne, demande au Consul Monsieur Homery d'autres copies du rapport français sur les atrocités allemandes. Bien que le rapport Bryce, préparé pour le gouvernent britannique, soit aussi en circulation en Australie, le rapport français est recherché par les collègues universitaires de Maurice-Carton.

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[44] John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices Rouges 14-18 France et Belgique Occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010); Annette Becker, *Messagers du désastre - Raphael Lemkin, Jan Karski et les Génocides* (Paris: Fayard, 2018).
[45] Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, *14-18 Retrouver La Guerre*.

La politique étrangère française pour ce qui concerne la propagande et la diffusion d'informations à l'étranger est organisée pour la plupart par le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (MAE), mais aussi par le Ministère de la Guerre. A travers les organisations comme le Bureau d'Information Militaire, la Maison de la Presse et la Section Photographique de l'Armée (SPA), la France surveille et contrôle la diffusion d'informations en France aussi qu'à l'étranger. La SPA est élargie en 1917 pour devenir la Section Photographique et Cinématographique de l'Armée (SPCA). C'est dans ce but que le MAE écrit au vice-consul en 1915. On demande à Homery de décrire et d'évaluer les effets de la propagande française en Australie, et de mesurer son succès par rapport aux efforts de propagande des Allemands. Le MAE s'informe sur tous les moyens utilisés, ainsi que sur le fonctionnement de la presse en Australie.

II : La Maison de la Presse en Australie

Une politique de la SPCA est de communiquer avec les agents et les amis de la France à l'étranger. C'est ainsi donc qu'en 1916 la Maison de la Presse, qui fait partie de la SPA, se met en contact avec le Docteur Marcel Crivelli à Melbourne. La SPA explique avoir choisi Crivelli en raison de sa réputation. Il est connu déjà à Paris, et en fait c'est le Professeur Pinard qui les a informés du patriotisme de Crivelli. (Nous avons déjà vu ce lien entre Crivelli et Pinard dans les chapitres quatre et cinq.) Crivelli accepte la proposition de la SPA, et donc vers la fin de 1916 il s'est déjà mis à la traduction et à la diffusion d'informations de la part du gouvernement français. Les brochures qu'ils traduit ont pour sujet les atrocités allemands, les buts de guerre des Allemands, et les ambitions allemandes. Ces brochures étaient censées avoir un effet positif sur le recrutement en Australie.

Les films et les photos sont aussi distribués en Australie. Les films de guerre français sont projetés dans les cinémas à Melbourne et à Sydney. De plus, des albums de photos sont envoyés en Australie. Cela fait partie du programme à grande échelle qui est en opération dans tous les continents, dans les pays neutres et alliés. En septembre 1917, par exemple, 25 albums sont envoyés en Australie. Parmi eux, l'album qui s'intitule *La Bataille de*

Verdun, qui est l'exemplaire personnel de Crivelli, se trouve dans les archives de la State Library of Victoria.[46]

Les photos de guerre envoyées en Australie sont aussi publiées dans les journaux australiens. Leur provenance est citée 'de la part du vice-consul Homery'. Les photos sont choisies pour mettre l'accent positif sur les activités des soldats au front, et renforcer l'alliance. Nous notons un détail du programme de la propagande française à l'étranger élaboré par Philippe Berthelot.[47] Il affirme que les médecins français à l'étranger sont des agents potentiellement très utiles : ils sont bien connectés dans leurs pays aussi qu'en France, et ils ont le respect de leurs communautés, ce qui fait du Docteur Crivelli le candidat idéal.

III : Intervention du Consul Homery sur Verdun, et la question de la conscription en Australie

La conscription est une question qui fait polémique et divise la société Australienne de façon traumatisante de longue durée. Joy Damousi affirme que dans l'historiographie du débat sur la conscription, ce sont surtout les voix contre qui sont le plus examinées par les historiens. Les Français ont aussi leurs idées, et leurs opinions. Dans les autres pays du monde, y compris la France, l'évolution du débat, et les résultats des deux plébiscites, attirent l'attention. En Australie, Homery entre dans le débat, par les discours publics et par les lettres dans la presse. L'intérêt porté par la France sur ce sujet est un aspect de l'histoire qui n'est pas bien connu. En juillet 1916, Homery s'adresse à une grande foule, réunie dans une ville de campagne dans le Victoria. La propagande et le patriotisme sont les thèmes de son discours. Il évoque la gloire des soldats de Verdun, et souligne que l'Australie participe à la guerre pour aider la France. La présence physique du consul symbolise une connexion concrète avec la France. Dans son rapport au ministère à Paris, Homery explique les raisons pour soutenir la conscription. Dans les journaux australiens, Homery donne l'exemple de la France, qui exige le service militaire à l'étranger de la part des conscrits. Il est ensuite critiqué par un correspondant, qui dans sa réponse, déclare que la France ne doit pas se mêler dans les affaires politiques domestiques.

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[46] The French Army, photographic documents, 1916, State Library of Victoria.
[47] Directeur du Cabinet du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères. Il a créé la Maison de la Presse

IV. William Holman : son voyage en France en 1917, et son discours.

Le Premier Ministre de la Nouvelle Galles du Sud (New South Wales : NSW) est William Holman. Holman est connu pour sa francophilie, il est très engagé dans la communauté française de Sydney. En 1917, les réactions à ses discours, publics et privé, sont révélatrices. Elles témoignent de l'attention accordée par le gouvernement français, ainsi que par certains membres de la communauté française d'Australie, à l'image de la France. En 1917, il se prépare à voyager en France et en Grande Bretagne. Chayet tient à lui assurer un accueil chaleureux à Paris, ce que Holman mérite, selon Chayet, à cause de l'influence très positive qu'il a eue sur ses compatriotes, en les rapprochant intellectuellement de la France. Même si dans le passé les Australiens n'ont pas été positifs envers la France, Holman reste fidèle, explique Chayet. A Paris, Holman rencontre Poincaré, et fait un tour du front, où il est blessé par un obus, et souffre d'une commotion cérébrale.

En novembre 1917, à son retour d'Europe, Holman donne un discours, qui est ensuite reproduit dans tous les journaux. Désormais plus informé de la vraie situation de la guerre, il parle des pertes terribles subies par les Français, et de l'échec de l'offensive Nivelle. La situation est si désespérée, déclare Holman, que la France est presque prête à négocier une paix séparée. De plus, il cite les chiffres de pertes : 70.000 Français tués dans l'offensive récente. Le discours est décrit comme déprimant et choquant. Chayet envoie tout de suite à Paris les détails du discours. Il se plaint que la colonie française de Sydney a été très impressionnée par le discours 'déplorable' de Holman, et demande les conseils de son ministre.

Ce qui donne une importance plus grande au discours de Holman, c'est que le pays est en plein débat sur la conscription. Reconnaître les pertes françaises sert donc à souligner l'importance d'aider la France, soit par le recrutement, soit par l'aide financière. Certes, sa position d'ami de la France lui donne le droit de parler plus franchement. Mais le discours de Holman provoque une forte réaction de la part de Maurice-Carton, et il s'ensuit une guerre de mots. Maurice-Carton accuse Holman de pessimisme. Holman répond qu'il a été motivé uniquement par son amour pour la France. Finalement l'épisode

est résolu, mais il montré à quel point les esprits sont passionnément animés à l'égard de la France.

A la même époque, pendant que Holman est en France, le Haut Commissionnaire australien Andrew Fisher est en visite à Paris. Dans les réunions avec les officiels français, il planifie la future Mission Economique Française en Australie. Les deux pays sont conscients de l'importance économique de l'après-guerre. L'image positive de la France reste très importante, mais la propagande est liée également aux intérêts économiques futurs.

Chapitre 8 – *Soft Power* : La diplomatie culturelle française et la mission économique française en Australie de 1918

Dans ce chapitre nous analysons le rôle de deux institutions officielles qui sont créés pour représenter la France en Australie, l'une avec une mission civilisatrice, l'autre avec une mission économique. La Mission Economique en Australie (La Mission) est une organisation de courte durée avec des buts spécifiques, et l'Alliance Française (AF) est une société à long-durée dont l'influence est toujours en croissance aujourd'hui. Toutes les deux ont des objectifs qui sont liés à la culture et le patriotisme.

I. L'Alliance Française et la diplomatie de la langue

A part les organisations constituées explicitement pour l'effort de guerre, les organisations déjà en existence sont obligées de repenser leur position et leur contribution. A vrai dire, le consul veille à ce que l'Alliance Française de Melbourne devienne une organisation plus efficace et plus utile au service du gouvernement français. Ses efforts pour réorganiser l'AF ne sont pas une nouveauté, et en fait c'est à l'instar de son prédécesseur qu'il fait cet essai. L'AF de Sydney est un organisme efficace et respecté, mais celle de Melbourne s'intéresse pour la plupart aux cafés concerts, aux soirées musicales, et n'est pas appliquée dans sa mission de diffusion de la langue. Même si le consul ne réussit pas à reformer l'AF, la correspondance à cet égard entre la France et l'Australie révèle comment et dans quelle mesure l'AF est censée de jouer un rôle dans le soutien de l'effort de guerre. En effet, les comités de l'AF, et de la Croix Rouge Française de Melbourne ont des membres en commun, et se croisent souvent pour les collectes de fonds en faveur des sociétés de bienfaisances françaises.

La première partie de ce chapitre analyse deux épisodes qui révèlent l'importance accordée à la diplomatie de la langue, même en temps de guerre. A Melbourne, les efforts du vice-consul pour réformer le comité révèlent l'importance accordée à l'influence de la diplomatie culturelle, pendant qu'à Sydney, le consul-général a sa propre manière d'effectuer la politique de diplomatie culturelle. En prenant contrôle des fonctions qui relèvent normalement de la responsabilité de l'AF, il s'impose dans la diplomatie culturelle d'une manière très efficace.

Chacun avait ses propres priorités et ses propres buts, mais même si les actions de Chayet à Sydney et d'Homery à Melbourne sont exécutées d'une manière différente, dans les deux cas il est évident que la langue française est un outil crucial pour renforcer l'influence française.

i. Les origines et les buts de l'Alliance Française

L'AF et fondée en 1883, par Pierre Foncin et d'autres notables.[48] L'idée de Foncin est le produit des ambitions de colonisation et des aspirations à l'éducation. Elle a pour but le rayonnement de la langue et de la culture française, d'abord dans les colonies, et plus tard dans le monde entier. Foncin est le président de l'AF jusqu'en 1914 quand il est remplacé par Jules Gautier. Dans le Bulletin de Guerre qui est publié par l'AF en 1914, Gautier affirme que l'AF 'reste fidèle à son programme humain par la propagation de la langue française.'[49]

ii. L'Alliance Française à Melbourne

L'Alliance Française de Melbourne est le premier comité à être fondé en Australie, en 1890. Ses premières années d'opération sont considérées comme un succès. Pourtant, pendant la première décennie du siècle, elle montre des tendances qui trouble le consul français de l'époque, Maistre. A cause de la nature spécifique de ses origines, l'AF de Melbourne est dirigée par un comité de dames, qui sont francophiles et francophones,

[48] Ivan Barko, 'L'Alliance française : les années Foncin (1883-1914). Contexte, naissance, mutations', *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, no. 25 (1 December 2000), http://journals.openedition.org/dhfles/2948; François Chaubet, 'L'Alliance française ou la diplomatie de la langue (1883-1914)', *Revue historique*, no. 632 (2004): 763–85, https://doi.org/10.3917/rhis.044.0763; Maurice Bruézière, *L'Alliance Française : Histoire d'une Institution* (Paris: Hachette, 1983).
[49] Bruézière, *L'Alliance Française : Histoire d'une Institution*, 82.

mais qui sont également pour la plupart des membres des classes supérieures. Pour ces dames bien connectées, l'AF sert de cercle sociale et culturelle plutôt que d'organisation pédagogique. Cela provoque déjà en 1908 un grand drame, lorsque Maistre tente de réformer la composition et la nature du comité de l'AF. Mais ses tentatives ont peu de succès.

iii. Homery tente de réformer l'Alliance Française de Melbourne

Dès son arrivée à Melbourne à la fin de 1913, Homery semble bien s'entendre avec le comité de l'AF. Mais il observe son fonctionnement et formule des projets de reformation, tout comme son prédécesseur. La correspondance révèle que Homery est l'ami de Jules Gautier. En 1915, Homery écrit à Gautier et se déclare peu satisfait de la composition et du travail du comité de l'AF. Il souhaite que des hommes fassent partie du comité. Homery reçoit l'encouragement de Gautier, qui lui conseille quand même d'agir de façon diplomatique. La pertinence de cet épisode est évidente dans un commentaire d'Homery qui déclare ses motivations : quand la guerre a éclaté, il a voulu tirer profit de l'immense sympathie pour la France pour valoriser la fonction et l'influence de l'AF. Mais Homery ne prend pas compte de la popularité de la Présidente Lady Hennessy, ni de la détermination des membres du comité. Finalement il n'y a que quelques changements dans la composition du comité, mais l'AF est revigorée.

Une remise en cause des aspects pédagogiques et socials de l'AF est aussi en évidence pendant cette période. Au cours de la guerre, l'AF élargit son champ d'activité. Des 1916 elle est en coopération avec la CRF de Melbourne pour les évènements à plus grande échelle, et les collectes de fonds. La période 1916-1918 est une période de croissance et d'énergie pour l'AF de Melbourne. Un autre aspect de la diplomatie culturelle est révélé par un épisode de 1917. La bibliothèque de l'AF reçoit beaucoup de livres, envoyés par le gouvernement français. Ce don fait partie d'un grand projet articulé à l'occasion du Salon du Livre à Paris en mars 1917. Le President Poincaré s'adresse aux membres de la Société des Gens de Lettres, leur assurant que les livres ont un rôle important dans le combat pour la France, et que les écrivains et les éditeurs sont 'les soldats de la pensée française.'[50]

[50] *Excelsior*, 12 Mar 1917, 2.

II. La diplomatie culturelle à Sydney

i. L'intervention de Monsieur Chayet dans l'enseignement de la langue française.

Le consul général Alexandre Chayet arrive à Sydney en 1911. Au fil des années, il crée ses propres organisations pour exécuter les rôles qui sont normalement de la responsabilité de l'AF. D'abord, l'AF, qui avait sa bibliothèque dans les locaux du consulat, est expulsée par Chayet en 1911. Dans les années suivantes, Chayet crée la Société de Conférences en Langues Modernes en avril 1913, et l'Institut de Conversation française en avril 1915. Le consul organise les cours de conversation, des soirées, des conférences, et des causeries. De cette façon, il assume un plus grand contrôle, au détriment de l'Alliance Française de Sydney, du rôle de la diplomatie de la langue. Non seulement la langue et la littérature sont concernées mais aussi la musique française avec la création de la Société de la Musique française en juin 1915. Si les actions de Chayet appartiennent à un projet qui pré-date la guerre, leurs conséquences atteignent une importance plus marquée dans le contexte de la guerre.

Chayet s'intéresse beaucoup aux nouvelles méthodes d'enseignement de langue : la méthode directe. De plus, il constate que les anciens étudiants de langue française à Sydney ne parlent pas couramment le français. Même s'ils sont de bons étudiants, ils n'ont pas d'opportunité de pratiquer la langue avec des locateurs natifs. D'où sa décision d'organiser les cours et les soirées.

L'intervention de Chayet a pour résultat non seulement le rayonnement de la culture française, mais permet aussi de mieux contrôler la diffusion du message pro-français. Dans son rapport au ministre, il raconte la réussite de son programme. Il explique comment sa présence personnelle lui permet d'être en contact direct avec le public, et d'influencer l'opinion:

> Les très nombreuses conférences que j'y ai faites m'ont permis d'aborder une foule de questions d'actualité et de détruire un grand nombre de préjugés absurdes ou malveillants qui avaient cours sur la

> France, et j'ai réussi à créer dans ce milieu une atmosphère nettement francophile.[51]

Les nombreux participants qui s'associent à ce projet, ainsi que les nombreuses rencontres interculturelles qui ont lieu, nous donne la possibilité de mieux connaître la communauté française dynamique de Sydney de cette époque.

ii. La musique comme élément de diplomatie culturelle

Présenter la culture française à travers sa musique est un autre aspect du projet de Chayet. Il déplore le fait qu'en Australie la musique allemande est mieux connue et plus appréciée que la musique française. Il n'est pas satisfait de la façon dont l'AF effectue la promotion de la musique. Dans son rapport détaillé il propose son projet au Ministère. Pour rendre la musique française plus connue en Australie il suggère que le ministère envoie en Australie une grande quantité de disques des compositeurs français. Il admet que peut-être ce n'est peut-être pas le bon moment pour faire des demandes sur les ressources financières du gouvernement, mais il estime que ce projet est 'éminemment patriotique'. Le ministère refuse. Pourtant, avec la création de la Société de la Musique Française, Chayet s'allient avec des francophones amateurs de musique, et des soirées et des concerts sont organisées pour mettre en valeur la musique française.

Ces deux épisodes à Melbourne et à Sydney montrent encore le rôle joué par la culture française. Les deux consuls s'engagent à la mobilisation de la culture, chacun avec ses propres méthodes d'action, chacun se rendant compte de l'importance de cette mobilisation culturelle pour soutenir la France en guerre.

II . La Mission Economique Française en Australie : 1918

Ces connexions plus complexes, plus compliquées, plus élargies se voient confirmées par l'arrivée de la Mission Economique Française, une délégation d'hommes d'affaires et d'hommes politiques qui font un grand tour de l'Australie en 1918.[52] Le visite de la Mission a pour but d'améliorer le bilan du commerce entre la France et l'Australie après la guerre. Les représentations culturelles sont désormais utilisées au service des

[51] Chayet au Ministre, 27 sep 1917, MAE 139CPCOM/21.
[52] Jacqueline Dwyer, 'Ahead of Their Time: The French Economic Mission to Australia 1918', *The French Australian Review*, no. 59 (Australian Summer 2016): 30–54.

considérations économiques. Même si les historiens s'accordent sur le fait que cette mission fut un échec en termes purement économiques pour la France, il est évident que les résultats ne se mesurent pas uniquement en termes économiques. Si l'on considère l'effet sur le grand public d'avoir un héros militaire – le Général Pau (il est décrit comme un héros souvent dans la presse locale) et des VIP qui font le tour du pays et qui s'intéressent à tout, la Mission renforce les attitudes positives envers la France et les Français. Nous n'analysons donc pas la visite de la Mission Economique Française en termes économiques, mais en la reliant à notre question principale, à savoir comprendre comment les Français d'Australie ont réagi à la guerre, et comprendre son rôle dans la mobilisation de la culture française.

Deux aspects clés de Mission montre la portée du *soft power*. D'abord, les résultats souhaités de la Mission s'alignent sur ceux déjà connus du public australien : le travail accompli par les Français et les Australiens francophiles pour valoriser l'image de la France. Deuxièmement, la présence de la Mission cimente le soutien aux sociétés de bienfaisance de guerre françaises. Les deux buts sont liés étroitement aussi parce que le General Pau est le Président de la Croix Rouge Française.

Robert Aldrich analyse le contexte socio-politique, et les enjeux pour les deux pays.[53] Un objectif principal pour la France est de corriger la balance commerciale. Le partenaire de commerce le plus important pour l'Australie est la Grande Bretagne. Pourtant, en tant que partenaire secondaire, c'est le moment pour la France de profiter de l'esprit d'amitié et de coopération engendré par la guerre. Grâce au commerce de laine, le taux d'exportation d'Australie vers la France est beaucoup plus élevé que celui de l'importation. De plus, dans le marché de produits de luxe, et de produits manufacturés, ce sont les États-Unis et l'Allemagne qui, avant la guerre, avaient le plus fort taux d'exportation en Australie. La France souhaite donc redresser la balance. La politique de protectionnisme de la part de l'Australie rend la relation commerciale plus complexe aussi. Pour des raisons politiques, l'Australie impose les tarifs qui sont beaucoup plus favorables à la Grande Bretagne

[53] Robert Aldrich, 'La Mission Française en Australie de 1918: l'Australie et les relations franco-australiennes au lendemain de la guerre', in *Les Français et l'Australie: Voyages de découvertes et missions scientifiques de 1756 à nos jours* (Nanterre: Université de Paris X Nanterre, 1989), 295–306.

qu'aux autres pays. Les trois rapports rédigés par la Mission à son retour en France sont des sources riches d'observations et d'informations sur la société, la culture et la politique australiennes de l'époque.

i. La Création et les buts de la Mission

La Mission Economique trouve son origine dans une réunion à Paris en juin 1917. Andrew Fisher, Haut Commissionnaire auprès de la Grande Bretagne, est invité en France par le gouvernement français. Vers la fin de 1917, le gouvernement donne une invitation officielle à la France. La Mission est composée d'experts dans des domaines variés. La Mission a trois buts principaux : renforcer les liens entre les deux pays et encourager le recrutement ; discuter les intérêts et les ambitions de chacun dans le Pacifique du Sud ; et développer et améliorer les échanges commerciaux. Un autre but est de remercier les Australiens pour le soutien militaire et financier de la France.

L'Australie et la France se montrent optimistes et expriment leur volonté de négocier un accord sur le commerce. La France est un grand acheteur de laine, mais la balance commerciale est en faveur de l'Australie. Les Français n'ont pas grand succès à vendre leurs produits en Australie. Les produits de luxe sont parmi ceux visés, ainsi que les vins et spiritueux.

Les Français espèrent également négocier le statut des Nouvelles-Hébrides, qu'ils contrôlent conjointement avec la Grande-Bretagne dans le cadre d'un condominium. Les préoccupations de l'Australie comprennent sa sécurité d'après-guerre dans la région du Pacifique. Elle s'inquiète du contrôle futur des anciennes colonies allemandes et de la montée en puissance du Japon en tant que puissance régionale. Les liens entre la Mission et l'opinion publique australienne sont aussi très en évidence. La Mission compte observer et surveiller l'opinion publique et en même temps l'influencer, à travers les discours, et les réunions avec les représentants officiels et le grand public.

ii. Sa composition

Clemenceau choisit comme chef de Mission Albert Métin, ancien ministre du travail et député. Métin connaît très bien l'Australie, pour avoir fait un tour du pays en 1899 il

publie en 1901 *Le socialisme sans doctrines*, son étude sur la législation sociale et la condition des ouvriers en Australie. Très conscient de l'importance de renforcer les relations franco-australiennes, Métin publie deux articles dans les journaux parisiens, pour informer le public français de la valeur des liens avec l'Australie. Le représentant militaire de la Mission est le Général Paul Pau, et son aide de camp est le Commandant d'André. Les intérêts commerciaux sont représentés par : Henri Corbière, un expert agricole; J. T. Meadows Smith, qui avait été consul britannique honoraire à Paris, nommé par les gouvernements britannique et australien pour accompagner la mission; Louis Leclercq-Motte, un expert en laine qui a des liens avec les acheteurs de laine franco-australiens; et Marcel Mathieu, un fabricant de soie à Lyon. Georges Bader est secrétaire de la mission. Bader connaissait bien l'Australie et avait acquis ses connaissances en matière d'exportation et de commerce en travaillant à la banque française Le Comptoir National d'Escompte à Melbourne, puis à l'entreprise de laine Wenz et cie à Sydney. Bader a ensuite été nommé par le gouvernement français pour agir en tant qu'agent commercial pour la France. Enfin, Paul Thomsen et Adolphe Hodée, qui voyagent séparément en Australie au début de 1919, représentent les intérêts syndicaux.

iii. son itinéraire

En route pour l'Australie, les membres de la Mission font escale à San Francisco. Pendant leur séjour, Albert Métin meurt subitement. À la mort de Métin, le général Pau est nommé chef de mission, bien qu'André Siegfried, en tant que secrétaire général, prend la direction pratique de la mission. Siegfried avait été un ami et collègue de Métin et avait des liens séparés avec l'Australie car sa mère, Julie Siegfried, faisait partie du comité parisien de la FALH.

La Mission arrive à Sydney le 11 septembre 1918, et fait un grand tour, visitant toutes les villes capitales, et de nombreuses petites villes régionales avant de repartir le 21 décembre. Le gouvernement australien et les responsables locaux prévoient la visite depuis un an, et l'itinéraire est vaste et méticuleusement planifié. Le programme de la Mission comprend des discussions privées avec des représentants du gouvernement, des entreprises et de l'industrie. Partout, ils sont fêtés, à des cérémonies publiques et des dîners officiels. Ils visitent les mines, les usines, les fermes et les établissements agricoles.

Les membres de la Mission discutent avec des travailleurs ordinaires, ainsi que des chefs d'entreprise, dans les capitales et les petites villes.

iv. La Mission renforce les connexions franco-australiennes

Partout, la Mission est accueillie chaleureusement, avec une seule exception, quand les mineurs à Broken Hill manifestent pour montrer leur soutien de la révolution bolchevique. La grande cérémonie d'accueil à Melbourne le 11 octobre est énorme : des milliers de personnes descendent dans les rues, et environ 12.000 écoliers sont rassemblés pour regarder le défilé. Devant le bâtiment du parlement australien, des centaines écoliers chantent la Marseillaise : ils ont été entraînés par Maurice-Carton. Le professeur d'université a également préparé les gens de Melbourne, en donnant une série de conférences sur la France et son histoire. Les rapports de presse sont tous positifs au sujet de la Mission et sa visite. La Mission fait également l'objet de comptes rendus dans la presse française. Pour les Australiens, les membres de la Mission représentent le visage humain de la France, la présence concrète de l'Allié si loin, et du pays où ses fils, ses maris, ses frères, sont morts.

v. La Mission et les campagnes de recrutement

Les Français sont très conscients du fait que le service militaire n'est pas obligatoire en Australie. Encourager l'engagement volontaire est donc un but important, qui va avec les remerciements pour l'engagement militaire de l'Australie qui a déjà été fait. Pau et d'André portent habituellement leurs uniformes, et les anciens combattants australiens sont souvent présents aux cérémonies. Les liens militaires sont ainsi soulignés. Pau s'entretient avec beaucoup de familles de soldats australiens morts en France, il se déclare très ému par ces conversations. La conscription n'est plus une possibilité, et Pau s'accorde avec le Premier Ministre suppléant Watt le fait que la façon la plus efficace d'encourager le recrutement est de mettre l'accent sur la cause commune de la France et l'Australie : c'est-à-dire combattre la tyrannie allemande, et aussi de souligner la souffrance et le courage de la France. Dans son rapport, Pau décrit la situation politique en Australie, et fait mention de la perception de manque de loyauté de la part des Catholiques irlandais.

vi. La Mission et les collectes de fonds au profit de la France

A Melbourne, une réception d'accueil est offerte à la Mission par la communauté française. Les représentants de toutes les sociétés francophones sont présents, et la

communauté francophone est aussi présente. Monsieur Lauwers fait un discours de la part l'Alliance Française. La CRF de Melbourne présente un chèque de £100.000 à la CRF. Le General Pau, en tant que Président de la Croix Rouge Française, en informe tout de suite le siège à Paris. L'AF de Melbourne présentera aussi un chèque à l'occasion de leur dernière soirée culturelle de l'année, en décembre 1918. Le Commandant d'André accepte le chèque pour les orphelins de la guerre. C'est aussi juste avant le départ de la Mission que Pau annonce au Premier Ministre suppléant Watt la création d'une agence commerciale française à Sydney.

vii. Les résultats de la Mission

Du point de vue économique, la Mission n'est finalement pas une réussite. Une succession de communications entre la France et l'Australie fait preuve de l'optimisme réel de la part des deux pays. Pourtant la politique du protectionnisme reste un obstacle insurmontable, et les changements souhaités ne sont pas transformés en politique officielle. Malgré la bonne volonté engendrée par la visite de la Mission, la France ne réussit pas à accroître ses exportations vers l'Australie, et la Grande Bretagne garde son statut privilégié.

Un autre problème qui empêche le succès du commerce futur est l'absence de navires. Beaucoup de navires de la ligne Les Messageries Maritimes ont été coulés pendant le conflit. En dépit des nombreuses réunions entres les agents de la ligne maritime française et les officiels australiens, ce manque de navires reste un problème pendant la décennie suivante.

Néanmoins, une concession importante est accordée à la France : la renégociation des contrats de laine. L'Australie a déjà promis sa production entière de laine à la Grande Bretagne, pendant la guerre, et pour un an après. Mais la France souhaite obtenir la laine australienne, pour rétablir l'industrie de laine dans les régions au nord de la France qui étaient dévastées par l'occupation. Les nouveaux contrats permettent à la France de faire une répartition avec l'Angleterre de la laine qui est déjà envoyée . De plus, les éleveurs australiens acceptent d'expédier immédiatement vers la France 40.000 balles de laine.

Un des résultats importants de la Mission est la nomination d'agents commerciaux dans les deux pays. Clive Voss est nommé représentant commercial australien à Paris en 1919,

et Georges Bader, qui était l'un des membres de la mission, est nommé représentant commercial du gouvernement français en 1921. La Mission constitue un élément important dans l'histoire bilatérale des deux nations.

La visite de la Mission encapsule aussi la version idéale des relations franco-australiennes, rêvées, même si peut être chimériques. Mais, le lien de la Mission française avec les organisations françaises de collecte de fonds avait des implications pour les relations à long terme entre l'Australie et la France. Bien que les objectifs économiques de la mission n'aient pas abouti, la visite a cimenté l'association entre la collecte de fonds et le patriotisme, et les Australiens ont été amenés à croire que leur collecte de fonds pour la France était appréciée. La perception d'être reconnue et appréciée est à noter, car elle a renforcé la volonté des Australiens de continuer un peu plus longtemps la collecte de fonds pour la France, notamment via l'adoption de villes françaises d'après-guerre et la contribution des Australiens à leur reconstruction.

Pour l'Australie, la vision d'une relation séparée avec la France fait partie aussi de l'évolution de l'identité nationale. Mais l'Australie reste consciente de sa précarité comme pays européen dans la région asiatique, et pour cette raison elle a toujours besoin d'un puissant protecteur, soit la Grande-Bretagne, soit les États-Unis.

Conclusion

Les Français résidant en Australie pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale sont très variés. Ce sont des marins au port, des dames cultivées et riches à leurs soirées, des ouvriers, des hommes d'affaires. A partir d'août 1914, ce sont aussi des soldats, ou des organisateurs de collectes de fonds au profit de la France. Dans le contexte de la guerre, la France prend une place beaucoup plus importante en Australie, et l'identité française aussi. Une question centrale de cette étude est de comprendre ce que voulait dire être français en Australie pendant la guerre.

Les sources françaises du MAE a permis d'examiner l'expérience de guerre des franco-australiens, ainsi que des Australiens plus généralement, et de comprendre les relations franco-australiennes de l'époque d'une perspective et d'une façon inédites. Nous nous appuyons aussi sur les journaux, la correspondance, et les journaux intimes qui nous permettent également d'identifier qui étaient les Franco-australiens.

Nous avons découvert comment les images de la France ont été mobilisées et dans quelle mesure ces images font partie de la mobilisation culturelle en Australie pendant la guerre. L'identité française était projetée et exprimée dans beaucoup de contextes, et par beaucoup d'acteurs, d'individus et de groupes. Pour comprendre cette mobilisation culturelle transnationale, nous nous interrogeons sur les acteurs qui sont impliqués. Qui est concerné, comment et pourquoi cette mobilisation culturelle se fait-elle? Nos sujets sont les Français, les francophones, les francophiles et leurs réseaux. L'identité française est aussi exprimée par des organisations officielles et par l'État français. Le concept de francité, et les obligations et les implications d'être français sont des idées de provenance locales et de l'étranger. On s'aperçoit aussi que les Australiens sont conscients de cette mobilisation culturelle – même si le terme n'existe pas à l'époque.

L'approche transnationale comprend l'idée de relations dynamiques, dans lesquelles l'identité française s'exprime par les actions, les connexions, les réseaux, qui permet le transfert d'objets, de personnes, d'idées. Nous considérons la question d'identité française aussi de la perspective des représentations culturelles, des symboles, des images. Si les stéréotypes et les clichés sont longtemps présents dans les interactions entre

Français et Australiens (et Britanniques) elles deviennent plus importantes dans le contexte de la guerre. Elles sont mobilisées dans le contexte de la mobilisation culturelle plus générale. Nous considérons le paradoxe dans l'usage de ces stéréotypes, en les analysant et les contrastant avec les identités de personnes 'réelles' que nous avons identifiées dans nos recherches.

Notre recherche est focalisée non seulement sur les Français, mais aussi sur les francophones et les francophiles qui sont liés par les réseaux d'amitié et d'influence. Ils sont aussi très impliqués dans la diffusion de l'image de la France, ou de la langue française. Ils s'engagent et expriment leur qualité de francophones et de francophiles de multiples façons, soit comme professeurs, soit comme interprètes, dans le cas de Chisholm ; soit comme artistes qui se considèrent comme liés à France dans le cas de Violet Teague ; soit comme l'homme politique Holman qui fait tout son possible pour renforcer les liens franco-australiens.

Les différents cas d'étude présentés dans ce travail montrent des façons parfois extrinsèques et parfois intrinsèques d'exprimer cette identité française. Dans la première partie nous avons considéré la question d'identité française et francophone dans le contexte militaire. On voit les exigences légales qui sont imposées aux jeunes hommes d'âge militaire. Ils sont désignés comme Français – en fonction de leur citoyenneté, qu'ils soient nés en France ou nés en Australie, mais font leur propre choix entre l'armée française et l'armée australienne.

La deuxième partie est focalisée sur les civils, et analyse les relations transnationales qui existent à l'échelle locale et à l'échelle internationale. Les réseaux existent entre la communauté française d'Australie avec les Australiens, mais aussi entre les Franco-Australiens et leurs nombreux contacts en France. De plus, nous avons découvert l'importance des voyages entre les deux pays. A part des énormes transferts de soldats australiens en France, nous avons vu d'autres aspects – des navires qui transportent les biens et l'argent en France, pour donner un aperçu des civils qui voyagent en France : les infirmières, les artistes, les écrivains, les bénévoles. De même, les visites des soldats coloniaux constituent un autre domaine d'interactions transnationales entre les civils

australiens et les Français. Leurs visites donnent la possibilité aux Australiens d'exprimer leurs idées sur l'identité française, mais aussi de mettre en cause les stéréotypes qui font partie des idées reçues. Mais finalement ils ne prennent pas cette opportunité.

Dans la troisième partie, nous avons analysé comment le *soft power* était appliqué en Australie. Nous avons vu l'exemple de la diffusion de la propagande en Australie par divers moyens : l'État français, qui observe et s'informe de l'opinion publique en Australie, et qui envoie les films, les photos, des rapports pour diffuser son message et renforcer l'Alliance. Le chapitre sept explique que ce n'est pas uniquement la Grande Bretagne qui diffuse et contrôle le discours public au sujet de la guerre, mais les transferts d'informations sont aussi dirigés par l'État français, ou par ses agents en Australie.

Deux organisations officiellement constituées ont aussi influencé la représentation et la diffusion des images de la France, et des Français, en Australie. L'Alliance Française a pour mission de diffuser la langue et la culture française. D'après les deux épisodes que nous avons analysés, la diplomatie culturelle est un but important aussi en Australie. Le vice-consul à Melbourne et le Consul-General à Sydney s'engagent très activement, chacun à sa propre manière, afin d'assurer cette mission culturelle en Australie. Pour eux, la guerre est le contexte idéal pour valoriser la diffusion de la culture française en Australie. La visite de la Mission Economique s'insère aussi dans le domaine du *soft power*. Outre la mission principale de renforcer les échanges commerciaux, on notera les missions de propagande, et les buts militaires et philanthropiques.

Les contributions des francophones dans l'armée australienne, et l'importance des compétences linguistiques font partie de notre première section. Une étude plus large de la francophonie dans l'AIF serait très intéressante à faire, mais dépasse le cadre du présent travail. Certes, les Français dans l'AIF représentent le groupe le plus large de francophones, mais des Belges, des Calédoniens, des Suisses, y étaient présents aussi. Toujours dans le domaine de compétences linguistiques, et de la communication, il serait très intéressant de faire des recherches au sujet des interprètes qui étaient affectés à l'armée australienne, et dont les fiches se trouvent aux archives du Service Historique de la Défense à Vincennes.

De plus, l'Alliance Française, examinée dans cette étude vient de fêter ses 130 ans en Australie en 2020. Ici nous nous concentrons uniquement sur la période 1914-1918, mais les présentes recherches pourraient être élargies et faire partie d'une étude plus globale de l'histoire de l'Alliance Française en Australie.

Ce travail a étudié comment et dans quelle mesure l'expression d'identité française, et les liens entre la France et l'Australie font partie de l'expérience de guerre des Australiens. Il vise à comprendre d'une façon plus complexe cet influence sur les relations bilatérales pendant le conflit. De nos jours, les relations bilatérales entre les deux pays sont très dynamiques, même si au cours du siècle dernier il y a eu des moments difficiles. La coopération sur la mémoire partagée de la première guerre mondiale est un des points du partenariat stratégique entre la France et l'Australie, signé en 2012 et mis à jour en 2017.[54] Nous souhaitons avoir contribué par le présent travail, à mieux comprendre l'histoire des relations franco-australiennes pendant la guerre.

[54] https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/france/Pages/joint-statement-of-enhanced-strategic-partnership-between-australia-and-france

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