

Editorial

One hundred years ago, in 1916, Aotearoa/New Zealand held inaugural Anzac Day services to acknowledge the first anniversary of New Zealand soldiers' ill-fated Gallipoli landings. Sixty-two Anzac days later, members of the Auckland Women's Action Group participated in Anzac commemorations by laying a wreath in remembrance of the women raped and killed during times of war. The relationship between women and the nation at war is complex. It is easy to posit warfare and its remembrances as celebrations of masculinity, where women are victims, pacifists, and mothers at war with the masculinist nation itself. But women also participated in World War I (WWI). New Zealand women participated as nurses, knitters, and bakers, while women abroad participated in other ways, as lovers and, more controversially, as prostitutes. While Aotearoa/New Zealand commemorates the centennial of involvement in WWI, 1914–1918, this special issue seeks to unravel aspects of New Zealand women's participation in, and relationship with, WWI. As such, it speaks to the history of New Zealand's war nurses, the sexual reformer Ettie Rout, the Anzac biscuit and its legacy, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, as well as the commemorative sculptures of Helen Pollock. It thus spans the home front and the war front; the past and the present.

Hilary Lapsley joins with Hannah Clark and Sarah Christie in this issue to remind us that nurses offer balance to a masculine Anzac legend. In Lapsley's article on WWI nurse Caroline Wise, *Outing Auntie Cal: War stories, hidden histories, and family conversations*, Lapsley offers insight into the tensions between family history and the history of female sexuality. In this article, Lapsley provides engaging windows into the journey of genealogy, keeping within her sights an alternative narrative for understanding women and WWI: was Auntie Cal a lesbian? Hannah Clark's article draws on the diaries of three New Zealand-trained professional nurses involved in WWI: Louisa Higgins, Mildred Salt, and Fanny Helena Speedy. In so doing, Clark provides us with insight into the experiences of New Zealanders at war within an imperial framework, and also into the history of women at the intersection of warfare, nursing, and post-Victorian gendered experience. As Clark notes, while soldiers' diaries regularly featured in Anzac mythology, comparatively speaking, nurses' diaries have been silenced. Sarah Christie provides a nuanced understanding of the sinking of the *Marquette*, a British transport ship that was torpedoed in 1915, resulting in the death of, among others, ten New Zealand nurses. Critically engaging with memory and commemoration, Christie demonstrates that sacrifice and bravery were gendered, where accounts of the women's deaths were used to further contemporary platforms, be they platforms of imperialism or nursing professionalism.

Nadia Gush revisits the work of WWI prophylactic advocate Ettie Rout in *Negotiating fraternal gender lines in World War One: Ettie Rout, venereal disease, and the female brother*. Gush draws on theorist Jacques Derrida and the principle of the 'woman enemy' to interpret Rout's work for safe sex between soldiers and prostitutes. From this perspective, Rout's work becomes a radical, gendered strategy of female inclusion within the fraternity of brothers in arms.

Our two commentaries redirect our attention to the 'home front', and to two types of war work that continued on long after WWI came to a close: biscuit baking and anti-war protest.

In an 'open letter', Joanna Cobley implores us to consider the significance of Anzac biscuits to women's wartime history, suggesting that this type of cultural heritage could well warrant inclusion in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's intangible cultural heritage list. Cobley reflects on the biscuit's history, symbolism, and significance to contemporary New Zealanders. Celine Kearney and Megan Hutching provide us with reflections on the history and contemporary foci of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in New Zealand. Kearney and Hutching draw on the idea of 'intelligent compassion' as a means of unpacking the work of an organisation that locates women as diametrically opposed to militarism.

Finally, this special issue dedicated to women and the nation at war, offers a series of reviews. Robin Woodward's review of Helen Pollock's contemporary commemorative sculptures provides insight into Pollock's beautiful response to the gravity of WWI and its enduring impact on New Zealanders. Pollock was active within feminist art circles in the 1980s, and her recent work explores themes inspired by her father's participation in WWI. Claire Gooder also reviews Jane Tolerton's revised book, *Ettie Rout: New Zealand's safer sex pioneer*.

Collectively, these papers offer a feminist re-visioning of the significance of WWI, demonstrating the complexities, nuances, and contradictions inherent in the relationship between women and the New Zealand nation at war. My thanks are extended to contributors for their poignant insights, and also to the collective behind the *Women's Studies Journal* for providing the forum in which alternative narratives such as these can take shape.

Dr Nadia Gush, guest editor