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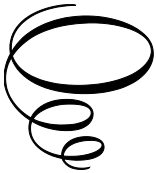
Loyalty, Patriotism, Contribution

By

Dzavid Haveric

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



A History of Muslims in the Australian Military from 1885 to 1945: Loyalty, Patriotism, Contribution

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FOREWORD

Dr Dzavid Haveric's history of Muslims defending Australia is the latest in a growing sub-genre of Australian military history which arguably began with Dr Bob Hall's *The Black Diggers* of 1989. The phenomenon of what might be called 'Ethnic Anzac History' is now well established, with important studies of Australian service personnel of, for example, Russian, Chinese, German, Jewish, and especially Indigenous and Irish ancestry. Dr Haveric's book contributes to a line of enquiry which has established beyond doubt that while the great majority of Anzacs – to use the shorthand for those who have served Australia in war – were of Anglo-Celtic ancestry, other ethnic groups served in uniform.

Their presence is both symbolic and significant: symbolic because they allow many of the ethnic communities which constitute the modern multicultural nation to claim a connection to a major strand in Australia's national identity, and significant because their very presence challenges the easy assumption that all Anzacs were Anglo-Celtic and Christian. Indeed, their desire to serve and be accepted through military service proved to be a theme running through the dozens of individual stories and biographies he has unearthed and recorded in this book, often for the first time.

I became aware of Dr Haveric's research several years ago in my capacity as then General Editor of the Australian Army History Series. In conversation, and then in reading successive drafts of his manuscript, I realised both what a difficult challenge he had set himself, but also how he was tackling the enquiry with tenacity and energy. Simply locating or identifying Muslims in Australian uniforms entailed wide-ranging research using a vast range of sources across the nation: this was not a project which could be completed from a desk-top computer (though that also proved to be a boon, demonstrating yet again the value of the Trove newspaper database). One of the most frustrating aspects of Dr Haveric's research was the assumption that Muslims had not served Australia. Whether from their being excluded or their not wishing to volunteer, this assumption proved not to be true.

Muslims were not invisible; though they were well-hidden until Dr Haveric uncovered them. His patient, diligent research has contended with careless or inconsistent spelling and the imperfections of records which were not expected to extend to unfamiliar names or indeed religions beyond

Christian denominations. All historians need to understand the languages of the past, whether unintentionally judgmental or offensive or not, and he has employed the lexicon of prejudice to discover "Afghans," "Hindoos," "Lascars" or "Sepoys" in places in which no one had expected them to be found. In this Dr Haveric has been researching 'against the grain' of Australian society and politics, in that for much of the period of his research Australia maintained a 'White Australia' policy. While the presence of Muslim Anzacs confounded the policy, their seeming invisibility confirmed its effect.

For fifty years, the White Australia policy has been an historical artefact of a very different nation. Just as Muslims served in the military forces raised by Australia, and especially those in the world wars, so Muslims continue to serve Australia, with perhaps two hundred members of the Australian Defence Force identifying as Muslim today. They especially, but all those who appreciate the complexity of the social composition of Australia's defence services, have reason to appreciate Dr Haveric's heroic research in illuminating this aspect of Australian military and social history.

Hon. Prof. Peter Stanley
UNSW Canberra

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I am especially grateful to Professor Peter Stanley for reviewing my manuscript, for his support and valuable suggestions. I am also thankful to many academics: Vicki Snowdon for editing, Dr Jonathan (Jack) Ford for military terminology proofreading; Dr Bruce C. Wearne and Barbara Peek for pre-editing my manuscript; Professor Salih Yucel, Professor Mehmet Ozalp, Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO, Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Professor Ismail Albayrak, Dr Moya McFadzean, Deborah Tout-Smith and Senad Voloder for their support and encouragement; Dr Ian G. Weeks for his encouragement; and Dr Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Dr Ray Kerkhove, Dr Neville Buch, Dr Rod Pratt and Dr Ross Keating for their consultations.

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Dzavid Haveric

ABBREVIATIONS

AANS	Australian Army Nursing Service
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AMF	Australian Militia Forces
ANZAC	Australia and New Zealand Army Corps
AWAS	Australian Women's Army Service
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AWOL	Absent without official leave (without intent to desert)
AWT	Australian Water Transport Company
CAC	Civil Aliens' Corps
CCC	Civil Constructional Corps
Coy	Company
HMAT	His Majesty's Army Transport
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
MN	Merchant Navy
NAA	National Archives of Australia
POW	prisoner of war
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RSL	Returned and Services League, Australia
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RTA	Royal Thai Army
USN	United States Navy
WAAAF	Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force

INTRODUCTION

> *What these men did nothing can alter now. The good and the bad, the greatness and smallest of their story will stand … for their nation, a possession forever.*[1]

Australian Muslims and their descendants can rightfully take their place among the many "human pillars" who have upheld and defended Australia's freedom, integrity and democracy. This is especially reflected in the military service they have rendered, securing their place in the nation's epic. However, their contributions to the Australian military forces are largely unknown, unlike accounts written about Muslims in the British and Indian armies plus other Allied armies.

The lack of awareness of the Muslim military contribution to the defence of Australia cannot be attributed solely to Western indifference– "it was more the global lack of interest from the grassroots Muslim community that caused it."[2] In Australia, the belief that Australian Muslims did not contribute is a common prejudice by some, both Muslim and non-Muslim. This pioneering book is written out of a conviction that Muslims must rediscover their forgotten Australian heritage of their contribution to the Australian military forces. That heritage is grounded in their loyalty and patriotism to Australia and their contribution to its military history, despite the fact that commemoration of the Muslim role in Anzac has been largely absent from popular consciousness.

The book is framed to emphasise the Australian Muslim military contribution in social and historical terms rather than from an Islamic theological context and presents a broad account. It fills gaps in the Australian historical narratives in general and in its social-military history in particular, reflecting on the ways Muslims in Australia have contributed to the nation's rich and diverse military past. The book surveys unique socio-historical and cultural-religious aspects of their identities, along with their Islamic and multicultural virtues, the challenges and experiences they faced while serving within the emerging military environment, as Muslim migrants or those born in Australia, thereby revealing their *Australianness*.

Deriving from small, dispersed and disadvantaged minority groups, these Australian Muslims and their descendants from many different ethnicities, sects, cultures and languages – Asian, European and Middle

Eastern backgrounds – were settled or born in Australia. Most of them are Sunni but there is also a significant minority of Shi'ites and smaller numbers of Bektashis, Ahmadis, Alawis and Druze.[3] While their attachment to Australia has become deeply rooted, their affiliation to religion differs; some are more devoted, while others are secular in their outlook and lifestyle. Similar to other minorities, migration, war, persecution, the search for employment or trade, or the general pursuit of a better way of life have been the main reasons for their arrival.[4] The words "Australian Muslims" (and Anzac Muslims) are used in that order rather than Muslim Australians by following common examples across the world, such as Turkish Muslims, Indian Muslims, British Muslims, Bosnian Muslims, Egyptian Muslims and Iranian Muslims, clearly giving preference to the country they lived and the forces they served. In a geographical context, Australian Muslims are mentioned as European or Asian Muslims.

The book starts from the late decades of the 19th century with the arrival of British Indian and Afghan ex-soldiers in Australia, many with a high reputation of fighting for the British Empire. These early Muslim settlers displayed their loyalty to the newly federated Commonwealth of Australia and some of their descendants would serve in the Australian military. By the mid-20th century, Muslims from various ethnic backgrounds in Australia already lived in small numbers as multi-ethnic Muslim religious entities.[5] However, their past in Australia has often been marked by the struggles many immigrants face, as well as social exclusion and efforts to obtain recognition for their status as citizens. For example, at that time, generally in Australian society and its institutions, including the military forces and even by some Muslim adherents, Muslims were mistakenly called "Mohammedans."

This book focuses on the contributions of Australian Muslims within the Australian military in the Great War and the Second World War. It also reveals that Muslims had served with colonial contingents in Sudan and South Africa, documenting that they were part of the Australian military from its earliest time. During the world wars, Muslims enlisted in the Australian military forces, joining other Australians to defeat common enemies. They fought and died alongside British, New Zealand, Indian and other Allied troops within the Imperial multi-racial, multicultural and multi-faith armies. In the Great War, about twenty Muslims gave their service in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in the trenches on the Western Front, with a couple of them in the Gallipoli campaign. During the Second World War, their numbers were probably more than two hundred. They fought against the Axis powers in the Australian Army, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Merchant Navy (MN).

Although they were predominantly servicemen, several servicewomen of Islamic background are also recorded. Those who fought in the Australian military forces held rank in various units and many took part in significant conflicts.

In particular, the historical analysis has kept in mind the 20th century's turbulent culmination in the two world wars that resulted in massive destruction. There were massive conflicts and many decisive battles across continents, loss of soldiers' lives, wounds and disease, the exodus of many people, concentration camps, suffering and deaths of innocent people of diverse backgrounds, including an unprecedented holocaust against the Jewish people. To defeat their enemies, the British Empire and from 1931 the British Commonwealth of Nations, including the Commonwealth of Australia, along with its allies were part of a "great world force," which gave "humanity hope to return to reason" by a restoration of peace, freedom and democracy.[6]

This book is based on publicly available archival sources, websites, newspaper articles, academic journals and literature as well as interviews conducted across Australia. Field trips were undertaken between 2019 and 2021, visiting local Muslim communities and mosques, meeting descendants of the Muslim soldiers and representatives of Returned Services' Leagues (RSLs), holding discussions with scholars in related fields, as well as consulting the National Archives of Australia, the Victorian Archives Centre and libraries, including the National Library of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, local war memorials and cemeteries, army museums and historical societies. Evidence collected from field trips included remarks about Muslim migrants and their descendants serving in the Australian military forces, their photos, diaries, postcards, letters, booklets, images of plaques and headstones as well as important stories that continue to be handed down from one generation to the next.

The research involved significant cross-examination of the identities of the Australian Muslim service personnel along with their descendants. This helped to throw light on their ethno-cultural-religious invisibility and elucidated their supposed unknown contribution to the Australian military forces. The cross-examination of their identities involved considering Muslim multi-ethnicity and its cultural-sectarian diversity; finding Muslim names and/or surnames and Muslim affiliation recorded in their attestation papers along with the names of their next of kin; searching their service records at the National Archives of Australia, tracking their names on the roll-of-honour lists and recording their headstones or memorial plaques; gathering remarks from their descendants or friends; tracing their ethnic ancestry through *Trove* and other databases, identifying their country of

origin with a predominantly Muslim population or their common professions, discovering old articles about them, their families and communities and digging up newspaper commentaries that mention their ethno-religious identities during enlistment.

A range of narratives explore how Australian Muslim service personnel demonstrated their loyalty, patriotism and contribution. As the narrations show, Australian Muslims and their descendants were loyal to their adopted country, fighting for it and the Empire. As law-abiding subjects ("citizens"), the loyalty of Muslim soldiers occurred not only through a narrowly defined religiosity, but also through their patriotic dedication to their adopted country and their allegiance to the Empire. Those Muslims who served in the Australian military forces were seen primarily as "patriotic citizens-soldiers" of Australia and within the British Empire/Commonwealth as "true citizens of the Empire." Muslim personnel in the Australian forces were "enhanced to feel that they belong to Australia," and over time "to think of themselves as Australians and Australia as a separate nation."[7]

The book unveils valuable stories from an Australian Muslim perspective on the experience of Muslims within the Australian military forces. It highlights the Muslim struggle to enlist because of the impact of the White Australia Policy and recruitment selection regarding their ethnicities and religion, but also their gradual inclusion within the Australian military forces where they found a profound sense of equality. The Australian Muslim community's support behind Muslim soldiers was encouraging in their enlistment to join the Australian military. Thus, the book discloses how they perceived the relationship between war and religion and how they were perceived by their Australian peers and their Muslim communities for their loyalty, patriotism and contribution.[8] Exemplary individuals are given special mention, during the times of their pre- and post-military service, but most importantly, highlighting their service and the roles they played in contributing to Australia's defence. Stories about them, modelled within several battle highlights and military circumstances, reflect their courage, grief and suffering but also their mateship, pride and cheerfulness in victories. Together with their service records, the empirical data and social-military stories constitute a comprehensive narrativisation of a process and collective experience by which Muslims also enhanced their identity as Australians.

In fact, the Australian military forces had a significant impact on the lives of Australian Muslims and their descendants; thus, the book documents, through its multicultural lens, how these soldiers' stories are inextricably interwoven with Australia's history. By doing so, it contradicts the prevailing myth that Muslims in Australia did not play their role in those

parts of Australian military history because of their small numbers or religious belief. In the past, there has also been misinterpretation of the concept of the wars by some Muslim scholars, possibly influenced, at least in part, by the circumstances of the time in which they lived.[9] The contemporary Islamic way of thinking in the West and knowledge of Muslim military contributions in non-Muslim armies has been increasingly recognised as an important facet of the social life of Western societies, including Australia.

In Islamic doctrine, however, serving in predominantly non-Muslim forces is justified by the jurisprudential principle of necessity (*darura*).[10] It is nonetheless legitimate for a Muslim to foreswear on the grounds of principle any active aid to a Muslim force and promise not to engage in activities that damage their non-Muslim state's activities of self-defence.[11] Australian Muslim service personnel, men and women, have no other choice but to take an active part at a time when their existence, their fellow citizens and/or the country is threatened – "the issue in allowing fighting is in the presence of aggression, not difference of religion."[12] Muslims living in Australia are "forbidden from striking against a non-Muslim country" [Australia] or "helping the Muslim country fighting their homeland"[13]– "joining the army in a non-Muslim state [is] a matter of necessity" and "it is unwise to advise Muslims living in a non-Muslim [secular] state not to join the army."[14]

Islam allows fighting against fellow Muslims if they are aggressors and other means of restoring peace and justice have failed. Such military combat is permissible in the face of aggression[15]–it is a "fight for [the] country of their citizenship over and above any potential complicating ties of Muslim solidarity."[16] The risk of being obliged to take up arms against Muslim brethren also exists in the Muslim world, which can be demonstrated by recent wars between Muslims. Whether a Muslim will rather fight in a Muslim army that is unjust or a non-Muslim army that is just, they will ultimately choose justice. It is because, in Islamic doctrine, war is allowed to drive away aggression as the last resort for establishing peace– "otherwise there will be much injustice in the world if good people were not prepared to risk their lives for the righteous cause."[17] Muslims in a non-Muslim army can see themselves not as waging war against fellow Muslims, but protecting themselves from enemies who claim to be "Muslim"– "even though they claim to be Muslims, they are enemies to Islamic principles."[18]

These principles are equally important if Australia is under attack from another non-Muslim country. It is equally permissible for Australian Muslims to contribute to self-defence efforts against aggression from that non-Muslim country.[19] Australian Muslims are allowed to serve in the

Australian military forces to "fight wars against non-Muslim enemies that are legitimate and ethical." They are not allowed to fight in a war of aggression that is "unlawful and unethical."[20] So, for Muslims to go to war, they must do it for the right motive–"the intent of the soldier [is] all important–'to bring justice, or for self-defence.'"[21] Defence of their homeland and their fellow citizens is a duty of Muslim soldiers and can be part of their religion–"Islam requires Muslims to defend not only Muslims, but also Jews and Christians"[22] and followers of other faiths. They should fight together with their Australian co-patriots regardless of their creed, belief or non-belief, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, or cultural observance to protect their country and its citizens.

The likelihood of recruitment to become an Australian soldier, airman or sailor can be also contemplated independently of Islamic theology.[23] Not all Australian Muslims in the forces were practising their religion. Some non-practising Muslims were pragmatic about serving in the Australian military, inspired by affection for the people and country where they were living, believing in their wellbeing and human values. In Islam, the value of religion also lies in inward persuasion of mind and heart, which cannot be achieved by pressure. Such a flexible stance of "there is no compulsion in Islam" with Australia's freedom of religion, gave secular Muslims options to choose their conviction even within the forces. Defence service can be a point of time when people consider "who they are, what they believe and stand for."[24] Therefore, duty and inner conviction must always harmonise.[25]

In the past, for practising Muslims, a spiritual aspect was an integral part of their life, but there was a lack of Muslim chaplaincy (an *imam*) in the forces. For most non-Muslim soldiers, the role of army chaplains was important and well-understood in Australia and the Empire. Australian soldiers going into battle found a Christian priest and/or a rabbi ready to minister to them.[26] Often, soldiers who were ministered to by chaplains had never thought of religion in civilian life, but found in this a source of consolation and strength.[27] However, due to the small number of Muslim soldiers, an imam was not usually engaged for their spiritual service nor was there usually any warrant of special provision for separate Muslim foods such as happened in the MN. Hence, they were challenged to adapt their religious belonging within the broader non-Muslim deployment of the forces.

This absence of an imam caused Muslim soldiers to feel discomfort, which was compensated by the solidarity of non-Muslim soldiers and shared mateship. But this did not just miraculously happen; rather, it was a result of the earned efforts of Muslims fighting side by side with other Australians. Through their commitment to the war cause, they endured spiritual and/or

psychological uneasiness for the sake of the greater interest–a betterment of Australia and its people. At the same time, gradual interfaith development had a profound impact on social cohesion and solidarity through the challenges, hardships and sufferings of the war. The soldiers' interfaith and intercultural encounters provided deeper harmony across different religions and cultures in their commonalities, enhancing their loyalty and shared patriotism. It was an active cooperation in which allegiance to ethnicity, creed, sect and culture were subject to the principle of "service above self."

It was a Muslim patriotic dedication that could overcome any hardships they faced due to the White Australia Policy. That policy had a deep impact on honourably discharged Muslim soldiers who should have had full rights of citizenship and felt somewhat neglected when the binding national ANZAC narrative emerged in the context of its ethno-cultural diversity. Consequently, denial of the relevance of Muslim identity seems to have influenced the opinions of many in society, and because Muslim soldiers tended to keep their heads down and avoid any crossfire, Muslim loyalty and contributions to the Australian military forces were less noticed.

Muslim loyalty to Australia implies abiding by its laws, dedication to fundamental Australian values, and protecting and defending Australia. Their loyalty and patriotism to Australia became grounded in their love for the country, which is an attribute encouraged in Islam. From an Australian Muslim viewpoint, patriotism is love for the country, loyalty and devotion to it, the desire to prosper in a collective way, in one's community and in society at large. Loyalty to Australia also requires a citizen to display no hypocrisy as there are three signs of a hypocrite: "when he speaks, he lies; and when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is charged with a trust, he is unfaithful."[28] Since loyalty is a great quality, Muslims, over time, displayed this attribute by establishing genuine faithfulness to Australia. Muslims should be "the tree of loyalty; love is his/her fruit; a just witness to this statement are his/her actions."[29]

A distinct Australian war experience was also one in which "war brings together people," civilians and militaries of different nationalities and religions,[30] including their encounters overseas. During their military service in the Great War, Muslim soldiers came together with their Australian comrades to mutually show their reverence for the places of their deployment–the ethic of the forces included orders to respect civilians, religious buildings and native customs.[31] For instance, on 8 December 1917, the soldiers of the 10th Light Horse Regiment, who had fought in Palestine against the Turks, would come to ascribe reverence to the Holy City of Jerusalem and its sacred buildings of *all* Abrahamic religions, which are of historical significance, also symbolising religious sentiment–"the feelings

of Christians, Jews, and Muslims were equally respected."[32] The soldiers had encounters with the native people of Egypt, such as those in Abou Hammad village, where they showed their respect and even rescued them.[33]

In the Second World War, Australian soldiers maintained an ethic of respect for Muslim civilians, their faith and worship, such as when a group of Australian soldiers were honoured guests at Muslim religious ceremonies in an ancient Muslim graveyard in the Middle East– "a scene none of the Australians is ever likely to forget." Reportedly, they also visited local mosques in countries such as Malaysia or India, where they happened to be before or after their duties. In 1941, Australian soldiers entered a Malay Mosque by taking off their boots, met the native people and a local imam who recited the Qur'an. An Australian airman on leave in Delhi, India, also met a Muslim worshipper, who read the Qur'an in Jumma Mosque, standing next to him with reverence.[34] In Jerusalem, the soldiers, after donning felt slippers, visited the magnificent Mosque of Omar and al-Aqsa Mosque.

Such experiences of the military ethic nowadays would encourage greater appreciation for the Australian military among young Muslims. Meanwhile, the Australian military is further along in accepting an army custom of Muslim chaplaincy. The engagement of an imam for Muslim soldiers is receiving prominence in several Western countries and it is considered that this scheme could be expanded to promote devotional services for Muslim military personnel. In the Australian Army, chaplains are recruited from the faiths that are represented by the Religious Advisory Committee to the services. Besides a number of chaplains and rabbis, its multi-faith context includes, the Hindu, Sikh, *Muslim* and Buddhist faith groups, serving together to ensure all service personnel and their families, regardless of religious affiliation, have access to chaplaincy support.[35] The Australian model of chaplaincy is not exclusively Christian, so it is found to be "good to talk chaplain to chaplain" among those of the various religions.[36]

The significance of an individual's belief or culture has its impact on the character and capacity of a soldier to cope with challenges unique to the military environment. In particular, combat raises important questions related to the use of force, self-sacrifice and the threat of death or wounds– "these issues are of a spiritual concern for all military personnel," including Muslims. By its nature, chaplaincy in the Australian military is a "challenging and demanding vocation"[37] whose spiritual role describes the "responsibility of speaking into soldiers' lives and into the chain of command."[38] Chaplains engaged in the Navy, Army and Air Force support the spirituality of sailors, soldiers and airmen, and assist in maintaining their

physical and mental health so they can, as a priority, "serve their Commander and the nation."[39]

Military chaplains, including an imam, should be able to assist them on these matters, including "counselling and a ministry of presence".[40] It is said, "the imam is an armour of protection."[41] The role of an imam in the military is focused on the religious aspect of Muslim service personnel, helping them in their spiritual needs and wellbeing, counselling and officiating when Islamic rites are held. He plays an important part in intellectual life[42] and in interfaith relations with service personnel of Christian or Jewish backgrounds and other faiths. Another key priority of an imam in the military is engagement in interfaith dialogue and building links between Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and all branches of the Islamic faith.[43] Muslim chaplaincy might also support military cooperation and social cohesion with those who have no faith.

For practising Muslims serving in the Australian military, besides praying, the most common and vital daily aspects of the faith are eating halal food and wearing a headdress. Once a year, it is the time of Ramadan, the month of fasting that is a required observance. Following the dietary requirements, which is strongly recommended, Islam requires Muslims to eat halal food and are prohibited from eating pork. Muslim service personnel are also forbidden from consuming alcohol, regardless of the quantity. These restrictions keep Muslims healthy, but it is also a test of obedience to religious practices.[44] The forces' acceptance of and respect for different religious expressions become evident with examples of *turbans* and *hijab* (head coverings) being worn by some Muslim personnel.[45]

This book reveals the names, service numbers, ranks and other related military records of these Australian Muslims and their descendants, by noting their inclusion with their fellow soldiers within the historical timeframe of their service. The aim is to provide historical insights into their contribution and selfless sacrifice. Muslims who served in the Australian military forces considered it to be an obligation, an unavoidable responsibility, a call to obedience and loyalty, and a form of self-defence. Even more, some Muslim advocates believed that members of the Muslim minority groups could have been even more loyal to Australia if they had been offered more opportunities, since they would have been prepared to make greater sacrifices than even some members of the mainstream community.

However, there were also those who refused to fight. They had various reasons and convictions for doing so, but still felt loyal and patriotic to Australia. For some, their deep spiritual convictions, believing in the power of non-violence, underpinned such commitment to endure danger and

hardship. Despite their consideration that going to war was illegitimate as they instinctively saw it as *déjà vu*–as a repeated bloody cause of sorrow, destruction and obliteration–their patriotism, even without wearing a military uniform, supported the Australia war cause in diverse ways. For instance, many Muslim civilians, women and men, were deployed as a labour force in various units such as the Civil Aliens' Corps (CAC) and Civil Constructional Corps (CCC) or volunteered in the Red Cross or hospitals and patriotically raising funds within their communities. These dedicated Australian Muslims from diverse ethnic communities included community workers, religious representatives, various volunteers and professionals–people from practically all walks of life. Thus, their individual and collective contributions to Australian history are also worthy of appreciation.

The epic legacy created the ANZAC spirit and national pride to which Muslims also contributed. This has continued to have a profound effect on Australians. At the same time, the Australian Army remains a well-respected institution whose evolutionary manner also means multicultural inclusion and equality–all eligible Australians willing to serve were welcomed into the Australian forces, irrespective of their ethnic origin, culture, religion, secularism, gender and sexual orientation. In recent time, Australian Muslims may find new challenges in the forces by maintaining their identities, especially in the context of their cultures and opportunities for serving in this institution that accepts and respects their religion and social values.

Overall, like Australian military personnel in the past, Australian Muslim servicemen and -women also put Australia before all other individual, cultural and religious considerations. Their cultural or religious individualities are nowadays part of the Australian forces' secular framework. This framework equally comprises their joint multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-faith and secular aspects in maintaining and defending national freedom, integrity, security and democracy. United in an Australian spirit in which all people are created equal and deserve honour, Australian Muslims are committed to advancing the values they have lived and died for in defence of the country. Such a virtue of Muslim loyalty, defence and responsibility to the nation, apart from representing a moral way of thinking and acting, are qualities that find full justification in the organised wellbeing of Australian society.[46]

By answering the call to service in this way, they formed a pathway to further social integration as Australia emerged with a new social, political and legal framework, and so became fully involved in the lifeblood of the nation. The readiness of all Australians, including Muslims, to protect and

defend their country is part of a cohesive amalgam and a guarantee for the future, following the splendid history of their predecessors. Yusuf Peter Louis Bladen (Yusuf Bladen-Pryor), an Australian poet, who served in the RAN, after moving to Turkey in 1984 and embracing Islam, bestowed "fame on his nation," when he said:

> There have been a lot of chapters (though we're nationally young)
> Full of courage, in our history to date;
> Some like Anzacs have been celebrated; same are still unsung;
> But their spirit is the same; Man helps his mate![47]

It is said, "a living nation is alive because it never forgets its dead."[48] The best way to maintain Australian Muslim memories of their contribution to the military history is to share it in a united spirit with all Australians. As such, this book is a reminder that all Australian soldiers, regardless of their creeds, ethnicities, cultures, belief, gender, class and occupation contributed to defending their country and its values. We Australians also owe a lot to these forgotten soldiers, their commitment and sacrifice, including the Australian Muslim service personnel.

Notes

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[11] Ibid., 241.
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CHAPTER 1

FORMER BRITISH INDIAN AND AFGHAN SOLDIERS IN AUSTRALIA

In Australian history, only one Muslim ex-soldier's arrival in Australia preceded the arrivals of former soldiers from India and Afghanistan. He was Oodeen (William O'Deane), a Malayan Drum Major of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, whose ancestors hailed from the Ambon Islands (Indonesia). He was a non-commissioned officer captured by the British in 1815 during the siege of the Kingdom of Kandy and sentenced to death due to his service to the Kandyan monarch. However, his sentence was commuted to transportation to New South Wales in accordance with the wishes of the Sri Lankan Malay Regiment. He was then among soldiers who were trained by the British into loyal troops. Afterwards, Oodeen was described as a man of "dark complexion, almost black," who appeared to be intelligent through his Malay dialect and some degree of English, also having some experience serving with the British military. He was accompanied by his family, making Australia their new home.[1] Oodeen was promoted as a Constable of the Government Domain, then as an official government interpreter, giving advice as Australian authorities made decisions regarding the visitors from South East Asia. Another aspect that would have made Oodeen an attractive choice was his religion, especially knowing that the Macassans were Muslims and his presence demonstrated British tolerance for Muslim traders from Makassar.[2] When the Macassans approached in their armed *prahus* (fishing boats) to dock in Raffles Bay, Oodeen accompanied the Fort Commandant and acted in a mediating capacity for the arrivals. While leaving the bay, the fishing boats fired their guns and cannon in the Fort fired in return, acknowledging the salute for their departure. For his service, Oodeen became a well-respected member of society and continued to serve as an interpreter, mainly for *lascars* (sailors or militiamen). The Malay and Sri Lankan communities in Australia regarded the Drum Major as an "early Muslim pioneer,"[3] whose arrival started an important chapter of Australian history.

By this time, military units from the Australian colonies had become involved in British Imperial conflicts in the Sudan in 1885, and in South Africa from 1889, there had already been a migration of Indians and Afghans to Australia. Among them were soldiers who had fought in wars for the British army (and against it), whose soldiery goes back to the Afghan Wars in 1838–42 and 1878–81.[4] These ex-soldiers from both sides of the war frontiers came to Australia as single men to work as cameleers, hawkers, labourers, herbalists, small shop owners and *imams* (Muslim clergymen). Most of them were originally from Punjab or other parts of the Indian subcontinent (India and Pakistan) or Afghanistan, while a small number were from Iran, the Middle East and Turkey. They belonged to a variety of clans or tribes, sects and cultures that usually shared one common and binding characteristic–the Muslim faith. The fact that many encountered British military garrisons in India may have contributed to their decision to depart for Australia, tempted as they were by adventure as much as the lure of money.[5] They learned there that "Australia is a prosperous country."[6]

Field Marshal Frederick Sleigh Roberts, a celebrated British general, regarded these men as being among the most "warrior like" and India was "the nursery of our best soldiers,"[7] the region from where such "martial fighters" could be recruited. From the wake of the Indian Uprising of 1857, such a view of Indians as a martial race was widely held among military officials in British India and it is seen in their preference for brave and well-built Sikhs, Gurkhas and Muslims who were ready to be employed in military combat.[8] An Australian veteran from Brisbane, Sir G. T. Cruickshank, who was one of those iron men who coloured the pages of history by his involvement in a famous march from Kabul to Kandahar, also recalled that "the Afghans are brave men and great fighters," "the sensation of fear is unknown for them" and "they throw their shoes, turn to the east, and bow down and pray, utterly regardless whether the bullets rained round them."[9] Their soldiering was the only profession likely to carry any respect with it in their country.[10]

Those Indians and Afghans who fought alongside the British were recruited as mercenaries, either after the British occupied Afghanistan or during campaigns across the North-West Frontier Provinces. They would make such service known to the British colonialists who were recruiting in Australia. Others who fought against the British remained silent about their backgrounds during their years in Australia.[11] The arrival of Indians and Afghans to the Australian colonies brought entirely new ethnic groups who then became part of the Australian social landscape. For instance, in 1894, many of the Afghan ex-soldiers, or fighting men of their tribes, settled in

Coolgardie.[12] In Australia, generally, the Afghans and Indians were peaceful settlers and mainly in the outback, becoming known as "Ghans," "Hindoos," "Lacars" or "Mohammedans" (Muslim). Another early term applied to them was "Sepoys," signifying Indian infantrymen; however, the term "Afghan" for Indian and Afghan cameleers became a commonly adopted designation.[13]

Along with the inland exploration and the economy's reliance on the cameleers, life for them became hard.[14] The establishment of Afghan settlements in Australia marked the beginning of their long-term struggle for recognition but their identities were largely ignored and their rights denied. The 1911 and 1921 Commonwealth censuses indicate that, under Australian law, Indians and Afghans were classified as British subjects or British Indians rather than "aliens." Despite being "subjects of the British Crown," they were forced to fight for their rights in Australia.[15] In public gatherings the ex-soldiers would say, "We have all served in British regiments," but their patriotic claims were largely unheard and their social status ignored.[16] In 1903, several Indian and Afghan Muslims of Perth, on behalf of their 500 compatriots in Western Australia, wrote a letter to Lord Curzon of Kedleston, a Viceroy and reappointed Governor-General of the Empire of India and its Dependencies, complaining that their rights were being ignored. In their humble petition, one of their points stated that:

> Many of your petitioners have been soldiers in the Imperial Service of Great Britain, some settled in this State and also married European wives.[17]

Some of those Afghan and Indian ex-soldiers, who fought under the British military command, usually in the infantry and cavalry regiments, then settled in Australia. They included Gool Mahomet (also known as Gul Muhammed), a veteran and esteemed settler, born in Afghanistan near Kabul. He was a soldier, serving in the infantry regiment of the Punjab Frontier Force, under Major-General William McBean.[18] Bejah Dervish served as a cavalry trooper in the Indian Army at Kandahar and Karachi under Lord Robert, attaining the rank of sergeant.[19] Gool Mahomed served in the Punjabi's Frontier Force in Vaughan's Rifles, an infantry regiment of the British Indian Army. Another Gool Mahomed, whose Afghan name was Abdul Khalik, served in the second Afghan War under Lieutenant-General Lord Herbert Kitchener, about whom he "was always loud in his praises."[20] Bye Khan, a Pathan from Peshawar (Pakistan), fought in Vaughan's Rifles with the British Army.[21] Fatte Allie Khan, as a boy of fifteen years, took part in Lord Robert's march to Kandahar.[22] Faiz Muhammad, from an aristocratic Afghan family, served in the transport service for the British Artillery in the Abyssinian (Ethiopian) War as *jemadar* (a rank used in the

British Indian Army). He also carried out government harbour works in Karachi.[23] Jimmy Chedu (Chejju) Khan, whose son Roy would serve in the 2nd AIF, fought in the Indian Army.[24] Peer Muhammad and Nameth Khan of Oodnadatta fought for the British in the Boer War as part of the Indian contingent.[25] Adam Khan Banoori, also a Boer War veteran, fought for the British Army with the Indian contingent.[26] Glamallie Khan served in the Punjabi Light Horse as part of the Cavalry Reserve in the British Indian Army.[27] Brothers Morbine and Delail Perooz fought in Punjabi's Vaughan's Rifles with the British Army.[28] An Indian, Kiam Deen, served three years in the Sepoy Regiment. Like other Sepoys, he was recruited from the native population of India by the European colonial powers.[29] Husain Shah served in the British Army in India for twelve years[30] and Saleh Charlie Saddadeen, who "frequently wore treasured old pieces of the uniform," was a camel man for Lord Roberts' new transport corps on the march to Kandahar.

Abdul Kaus lived a long life and was known as an Afghan cameleer from Kandahar, whose descendants would serve in the Australian military forces in both world wars. He had fought in the Indian wars. He came to South Australia with the first camel teams serving in early Australian exploration. He always politely explained that he was a "Mussulman" or "Mohammedan," having respect for Christianity and other faith traditions. He remembered the second Afghan War and the relief of the besieged British forces in Kandahar by General Roberts. He also recalled that at that time "the British authorities collected 10 rupees from each of the businessmen in the native bazaars to finance the war."[31] Kabell Mockbell was a Turkish merchant attached as a military cadet under Lord Cromer, a British administrator and diplomat, in Egypt.[32] Ram John Conn (Khan), born in the Muslim town of Inrah in Goograh, India, joined the East India Service as a marine and served in the 11th Battalion of the 2nd Regiment of the Bombay Army.[33] Dil Khan, an Afghan copper prospector, was known as an "old soldier."[34] The father, grandfather and great-grandfather of Cass Mahomet, a soldier in the 1st AIF, also served in the Indian Army.

Other significant figures of this time were Mahomet Allum, a well-known herbalist in Australia who, during the second Afghan War, traded horses for the British Army[35] and Nathoo Mahomed (Nazar Mohammad), born in India of a Turkish family, was instrumental in starting Perth Mosque.[36] He owned a factory that made soldiers uniforms, police tunics and police uniform suits in Aberdeen Street, Perth. His products showed his great skill in embroidery with gold and silver lace. Over the door of the factory was the sign: "Nathoo Mahomed, civil and military tailor."[37] There was also Mahomed Baksh, an Indian oculist, "attached" to the Australian Militia Forces (AMF),[38] whose medical skills were widely recognised.

Cameleers, such as Haji Mulla Mehrban, Abdul Wade and Bejah Dervish, have left a legacy from assisting the Australian military as they were the major breeders of camels in Australia that would be shipped to the Imperial Camel Corps in the Middle East. The Afghan word *hoosta*, by which the camel was ordered "to kneel or to rise," was introduced and transformed in Australia into "hoosh" or "whoosh," which would universally be used by the Corps.[39]

Among those who also came to settle in Australia were lascars from British India such as Khawaja Muhammad Bux of Perth whose genealogy traced back to the "scribal classes serving Royal Imperial officers" and Khan Zada of Broken Hill.[40] The term "lascar" referred to their shipping engagement but it also means "a class or group of armed men, an army" or "the crew attached to an artillery piece."[41] Numerous lascars were employed in the British Mercantile Marine. They served before and during the wars as assets for Australia, "playing an important part in the Empire's shipping."[42] Their crews, often composed of British Indian (Bengali) Muslims, sometimes joined by Arabs and Malays, frequently arrived at Australian ports. The lascars, "born in the tradition of masts and yards," were trained and disciplined seamen with nautical skills and experience. Some lascars made multiple trips between Australia and the British Isles serving under "Europeanised or culturally ambiguous [Muslim] names."[43] They transported various cargoes, including troops, weapons, munitions and camels. Because of their considerable contribution they earned high praise from British naval officers and Australian authorities.[44]

This first generation of Muslims were not successful in their attempts to enlist in the 1st AIF. Apart from the few who served in the Sudan and Boer wars, only a couple of them would enlist in the 1st AIF. They worked for many years and when, due to their age, they retired, some would spend the rest of their days in Australia, while others returned to their homeland. Some of their descendants would, as loyal soldiers, serve in the Australian military forces.

Notes

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