



RESERVE BANK
OF AUSTRALIA

Before Sunset

The Bank & World War I



*His Future
is in Your hands!*



James Northfield (Australia, 1887–1973),
His Future is in Your hands! Buy Peace Bonds,
colour lithograph, circa 1918.

James Northfield Heritage Art Trust ©

14/2310 (Detail on booklet cover)



Bank staff and soldiers outside the Commonwealth Bank's Military Branch at the AIF Depot, Liverpool, New South Wales, 30 April 1915.

PN-000260

COMMONWEALTH BANK INF^{RY}
LIVERPOOL. 30/4/15

Before Sunset: The Bank & World War I

Soon after the Commonwealth Bank of Australia opened in 1912, it was called upon to perform a vital role as the nation's central bank. During the years of World War I (1914–18), the Bank was required to manage the raising of funds for the war effort, and to ensure the payment of service people in foreign countries, among other duties. Under the leadership of its Governor, Sir Denison Miller (1860–1923), the Bank fulfilled these responsibilities, and raised £257, 719, 989, exceeding by almost £48, 000, 000 the goal it was set.

The Commonwealth Bank continued to develop its role as the nation's central bank until 1960, when the Reserve Bank of Australia was established. The Reserve Bank is the custodian of archives that record the Commonwealth Bank's involvement in World War I. The sample of documents, photographs, posters and ephemera shown in the exhibition illustrates its role during the war.



Lindsay Goulding, a seven-year-old boy, dressed as a War Loan Bond for a Red Cross fundraising fete, Northwood, New South Wales, March 1918. Established nine days after the outbreak of World War I, the Australian Red Cross provided key medical supplies and equipment to Anzac troops during the war and assisted the servicemen on their return.



Still image from film footage of Denison Miller, Governor of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, laying the foundation stone of the bank's headquarters, Martin Place, Sydney, 14 May 1913.
(National Film and Sound Archive Title #100778)

War Loan Bonds

Early in 1915, the British Government began to feel the financial pressure of the war and requested that the Australian Government finance its share of the war effort. The Government decided to raise loans from the public and the Commonwealth Bank was entrusted with managing the operation on its behalf. The Australian public helped to finance the war by lending their money in exchange for War Loan Bonds, which they could later redeem with interest. The sale of the bonds was intended to 'save brave lives, to shorten the war, and to ensure victory and peace'.

W.A. Watt, Treasurer, March 1918.

Opposite: Examples of War Loan Bond stamps, which were used to assist in saving sufficient funds to acquire a War Loan Bond.

06/9586



The applications for the War Loan Bonds demonstrate the range of people who either purchased the bonds or had them purchased on their behalf. The Bank's sample of applicants for bonds includes a drover, a schoolboy, a dentist and a sanitary contractor.



War Savings Certificate for £5.
NP-002484/59

Unlike the War Loan Bonds, the War Savings Certificates allowed more flexibility in their terms of redemption.

COMMONWEALTH SAVINGS BANK
10 APR 1918

FORM OF APPLICATION No. 1027

Commonwealth of Australia Sixth War Loan, 1927.
4th Issue 4 1/2 Per Cent. 5 Per Cent.
5% 1927 Price of Issue-Par. Price of Issue-Par.

To the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Bonds have not previously been issued or issued Ascribed

I hereby apply for £10 Treasury Bonds of Commonwealth of Australia Initials HN Date 10/4/18
Title 10 Interest 5
(Stake not applicable to not required) 4 1/2 per cent. War Loan, 1927 5 per cent. War Loan, 1927

according to the Prospectus of the 18th February, 1918, and hereby agree to pay instalments due thereon according to the terms of the Prospectus.

The sum of £ 10 being the amount of the required deposit (namely, 10 per cent. of amount applied for), is enclosed herewith, to be paid in payment of Instalments.

*If no payments are made beyond the deposit, the whole is liable to be repaid and the instalments are paid in to the bank, or all or as at the discretion of the bank.

Drawers who practice their authority from the Commonwealth Bank are empowered to make cheques payable to the Loan, but are not authorized to receive payments of Deposits or Instalments. The application, together with the Deposit or Instalments, should be lodged by the drawee, or person allowed to any like State Savings Bank or Money Order Post Office.

Signature Hector Richard Knudson in full Name of Applicant in full Hector Richard Knudson
Occupation Schoolboy
Communications to be addressed to Mr Knudson, Glen Innes, New South Wales
(State St., Box, or Shop)
At Glen Innes
Date April 10 1918
Cheques should be crossed "Not Negotiable"

If Treasury Bonds are required, state below the number and denominations which are desired. (Bonds are prepared to hold these Bonds for sale outside on your behalf, free of cost, and will also receive interest thereon as would come to your Bank account.)

NUMBER OF BONDS.	
<u>Five</u> @ £10 = <u>£ 50</u>	@ £50 = <u>1</u>
@ £100 = <u>1</u>	@ £500 = <u>1</u>
@ £1,000 = <u>1</u>	Total, <u>£ 50</u>

If it is desired that Bonds should be held for sale custody, fill in this Form.

We desire these Bonds to be held for sale custody by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia at its Bank Branch on my account, and the interest credited to my account at our

Signature HN

A Form for use by Employers when applying on behalf of their employees will be found on the back hereof.

Application for a £10 bond from the Sixth War Loan for Hector Knudson, schoolboy of Glen Innes, New South Wales, 10 April 1918.

07/2674

Save & Serve

The construction of the Commonwealth Bank's headquarters in Sydney was completed in 1916. By this time, the Australian Government had requested that the Bank manage the sale of War Loan Bonds on its behalf in order to raise funds for the war effort. The Bank devised theatrical ways of promoting the sale of the bonds, staged in front of the new building.



To promote the Sixth War Loan, Tank Week was held from 3 to 10 April 1918. It featured a model of the Mark IV tank, which is shown here in front of the Bank's headquarters in Martin Place. PN-001744



For Freedom, Have You bought a War Loan Bond, John Sands Ltd poster, Sydney. PN-001653



A model destroyer was erected in front of the Bank's new building in Martin Place. It was the focal point of the Seventh War Loan, launched on 16 September 1918. The ceremony took place on the bow of the ship and guns were fired.

PN-001773.



£1 banknote, 'Rainbow' or 'Emergency' Note.

NP-003971

A special £1 banknote was produced after the outbreak of World War I, owing to the shortage of banknotes. It became known as the Rainbow Note because of its colourful appearance.



Unissued 5 shillings banknote.

NP-003960

A 5 shillings banknote was planned in 1916 as the price of silver rose and risked exceeding the value of the silver content of the 5 shillings coin. The threat abated and the banknote was not issued.

Diggers at Home & Abroad

During the course of the war, the Bank liaised with the Defence Department to ensure efficient payment to members of the Australian forces. The Bank opened branches at military training camps, and banking facilities were made available to those serving overseas.

Many of the Bank's employees enlisted in the armed forces, and they wrote to the Bank's Governor, Denison Miller, who had a close relationship with his staff. They shared a sense of the significant role that the Bank would develop as a national institution and, even from the battlefields, they were keen to hear of the Bank's progress. One of Miller's correspondents was Ernest Hilmer Smith, who wrote a number of letters describing his experiences from the frontline at Gallipoli and in France. Smith was 36 years old and Superintendent of the Commonwealth Bank's Hobart branch when he enlisted on 21 August 1914.



Australian soldiers at the Commonwealth Bank of Australia's branch, Australia House, London, 1917.

PN-000270



Australian soldiers and Bank officers outside the Commonwealth Bank of Australia's premises, New Broad Street, London, 1916.

PN-000293

1915
 AUSTRALIA
 20th June 1915
 20

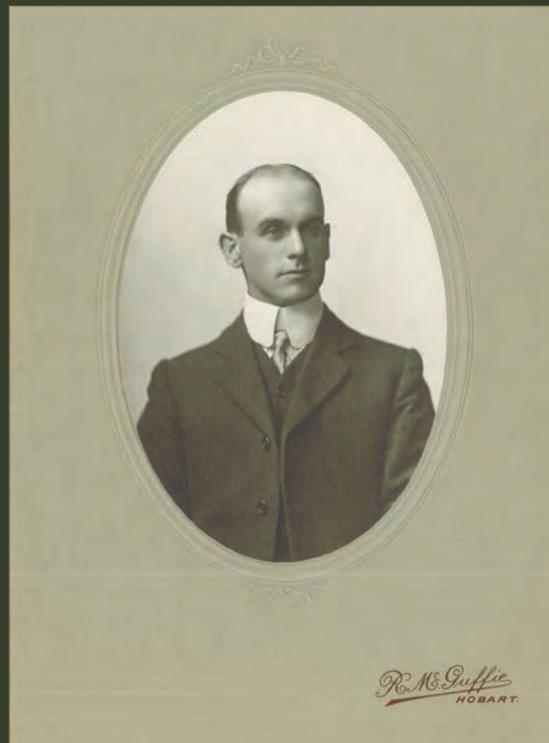
Ernest Hilmer Smith
 Gallipoli, Pen
 Dear Genl Miller
 27/6/15

To the Governor
 Commonwealth Bank of Australia - Sydney
 Dear Sir - I am writing my last letter to you and have
 seen many nights and had some weeks of fighting -
 The Turk troops, of which we form part, are on the
 night of the position of defence. We are about 600 yds or
 from the sea by night, the description given to
 our living place, is situated at about an altitude of
 200 ft above sea level, and looks out seawards on the
 Islands of Imbros and Lemnos, the position are
 hardly what can be described as pleasant but very fine
 is wonderfully cheerful and the health generally is good. We
 have been in the trench line now for some weeks continuously
 and have done a tremendous lot of digging in addition
 to fighting. The hills are covered over just a mass of undrains
 trenches and parapets. None of the matter but touch with
 the members of the Bank staff whom I met in Egypt.
 One of the Hobart Branch was wounded in the field but
 I have not yet heard how he is progressing. I should
 like to the Hobart branch joined the 12th Bz presently since
 the 25th April I have been in command of the 12th Bz and
 have been promoted to the rank of Lieut Colonel. I find
 that the position of a Battalion in action is not
 even more than that of a company. Hanging a company Band
 the Battalion however is doing very well and we are not
 looking forward to the day when we will advance.
 We are continuously under shell fire at a grand point
 it is a bombardment here by the H.M.C. - each day
 will shoot and heard the shells from the British front.
 Nothing the effort of the shells from our line was
 are enjoying the whole of the front and shell fire.

Ernest Hilmer Smith, letter to Denison Miller, Governor of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, written from Gallipoli, 27 June 1915.

06/24823

For transcriptions of all Ernest Hilmer Smith's letters, see the Reserve Bank's online exhibition, 'From Bank to Battlefield': www.rba.gov.au/Museum/exhibitions/from-bank-to-battlefield.



Photograph of Ernest Hilmer Smith, Superintendent of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia's Hobart Branch. Smith enlisted on 21 August 1914, at the age of 36, and sent letters to the Bank's Governor, Denison Miller, recording his experiences fighting at Gallipoli and in France.

PN-001328

Anzac
Gallipoli Pen (Peninsular)
near Gaba Tepe
27/6/15
To the Governor
Commonwealth Bank of Australia – Sydney

Dear Sir, since writing my last letter to you I have seen many sights and had nine weeks of fighting – The Third Brigade, of which we form part, are on the right of the section of Defence. We are about 600yds in from the sea. My “dugout”, the descriptive name given to our living places, is situated at about an altitude of 300ft above sea level, and looks out immediately on the Islands of Imbros and Samothrace.

Our conditions are hardly what can be described as pleasant but everybody is wonderfully cheerful and the health generally is good. We have been in the firing line now for nine weeks continuously and have done a tremendous lot of digging in addition to fighting.

The hills we occupy are just a maze of underground tunnels and fire pits. I have rather lost touch with the members of the Bank staff whom I met in Egypt. Brooke of the Hobart Branch was wounded on the first day. I have not yet heard how he is progressing. Chambers also of the Hobart Branch joined the 12th Bn recently. Since the 25th April I have been in command of the 12th Bn and have been promoted to the Rank of Lieut. Colonel.

I find Sir that the worries of a Battalion on active service are even more than those of managing a Savings Bank. Our Battalion however is doing very well and we are all looking forward to the day when we will advance. We are continuously under shell fire. It's a grand sight to see a bombardment. Recently the HMS ... came close into shore and heavily bombarded the Turkish fortifications. Watching the effect of the shells from our lines was awe inspiring. The whole of the position shelled was one mass of fire. It's hard to imagine how anyone could live through it. Yet on the first day we had a similar experience for eight hours and

although we suffered very heavily a good % of us escaped, how it was I do not know.

Personally I had some miraculous escapes. My clothing & equipment was perforated in no less than six places. One learns rapidly however, the art of this warfare and does not waste much time in not taking precautions. The main thing is to get underground if you want to live.

There are very many items of interest I would like to describe to you but unfortunately censorship has not yet been raised. We hear very little news about the war and have to be content by reading news some weeks old. I hear occasionally from Mr Douglas & other members of the Staff and am pleased to know that the Bank is still making good progress. We are unable to state yet the probable date of our return but all sincerely hope it will be before Xmas.

Our first week of service here was one that none of us are likely to forget. Landing at 4 am on the 25th April we were kept exceedingly busy for over a week, in beating off the Turks, who are by no means an enemy to treat lightly. We had a slight cessation of hostilities for about two days and then at it again. The final effort so far was made by the enemy on the 18th/19th May when he fought for all he was worth, but failed to dislodge us.

It is estimated that there were 7000 casualties in these two days, so you can imagine the vigor with which the attack was made. We were fortunate in having a good strong position and our Machine Guns & Rifles did great damage, in 250 yds we buried over 200 Turks, and got many wounded into our lines. My Hd Qtrs after the battle more resembled an auction room than anything else. We had articles of equipment, rifles, Coppers, tents, belts, crockery, trinkets and all sorts of articles which were collected at night-time from the valley on our front.

I have no more paper with which to continue so will postpone giving further news till more paper arrives. Wishing yourself and members of the Staff all happiness & prosperity – Believe me – Sir –

Sincerely yours,
E. Hilmer Smith Lt. Col. of 1

Temples of Peace

At the end of World War I, the Commonwealth Bank began to manage and promote the sale of Peace Bonds on behalf of the Australian Government. The sale of the bonds assisted the resettlement of the ex-servicemen; schemes for their training and employment were begun, and houses were constructed throughout Australia.

Prime Minister Billy Hughes delivered a speech to promote Peace Bonds at the 'Temple of Peace' in Martin Place, Sydney, on 13 September 1919. This occasion was the Prime Minister's first visit to Sydney in some 16 months, having been in England, and at the Paris Peace Conference and signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Someone in the crowd handed him a bulldog, which can be seen in the photograph. Designed by the same architects as the Commonwealth Bank, Herwald and John Kirkpatrick, the temple was used as a speaking platform to promote the Peace Bonds.



Prime Minister Billy Hughes, promoting Peace Loans from the 'Temple of Peace', Martin Place, Sydney, 13 September 1919.

PN-001802



Demonstration of carpentry and joinery for ex-servicemen, Martin Place, Sydney, during the Second Peace Loan, August to September 1920.

PN-001815



Still images from film footage of the Melbourne opening of the Peace Loan Campaign, advertising training available to ex-servicemen, circa 1920.

(National Film and Sound Archive Title #56444)



Jacka. He kept his Pledge, You Buy Peace Bonds, artwork for handbill advertising Peace Bonds, prepared by E.B. Studios, Sydney, circa 1919.

PN-001666

Albert Jacka (1893–1932) was the first Australian in World War I to be awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery during the Gallipoli campaign. He also received the Military Cross for his actions in the battle of Pozières, France. Jacka became a national hero, who seemed to represent the Anzac spirit in his unaffected character.

Returning Home

On their return to Australia, ex-servicemen were assisted in learning trades and finding employment. In Martin Place, Sydney, different trades available to ex-servicemen were demonstrated in a series of booths known as 'Diggyville'. At the Melbourne opening of the Peace Loan Campaign, floats advertised trades including panel-beating, bag and trunk making and cycle repairs.

The reduction of manpower in Australia during the war years contributed to the decline in building. Before the war ended, the Australian Government began to plan for the housing requirements of the returning servicemen, nurses, and munition and war workers. The Bank acted as the agent of the War Service Homes Commissioner in purchasing and building houses on behalf of ex-service people, and a system of loans was organised for those applying for the houses. The Bank purchased 5,179 houses and built 1,777 new homes. Regional variations in style and choice of materials may be observed in the houses built in Australia's different states.



Ex-servicemen assisting in Mr B Holt's garage, Watersleigh, New South Wales, assisted by the Repatriation Department, n.d.

PN-001826



'Simpson's Poultry, Late A.I.F. [Australian Imperial Force]', assisted by the Repatriation Department, 1920.

PN-001820

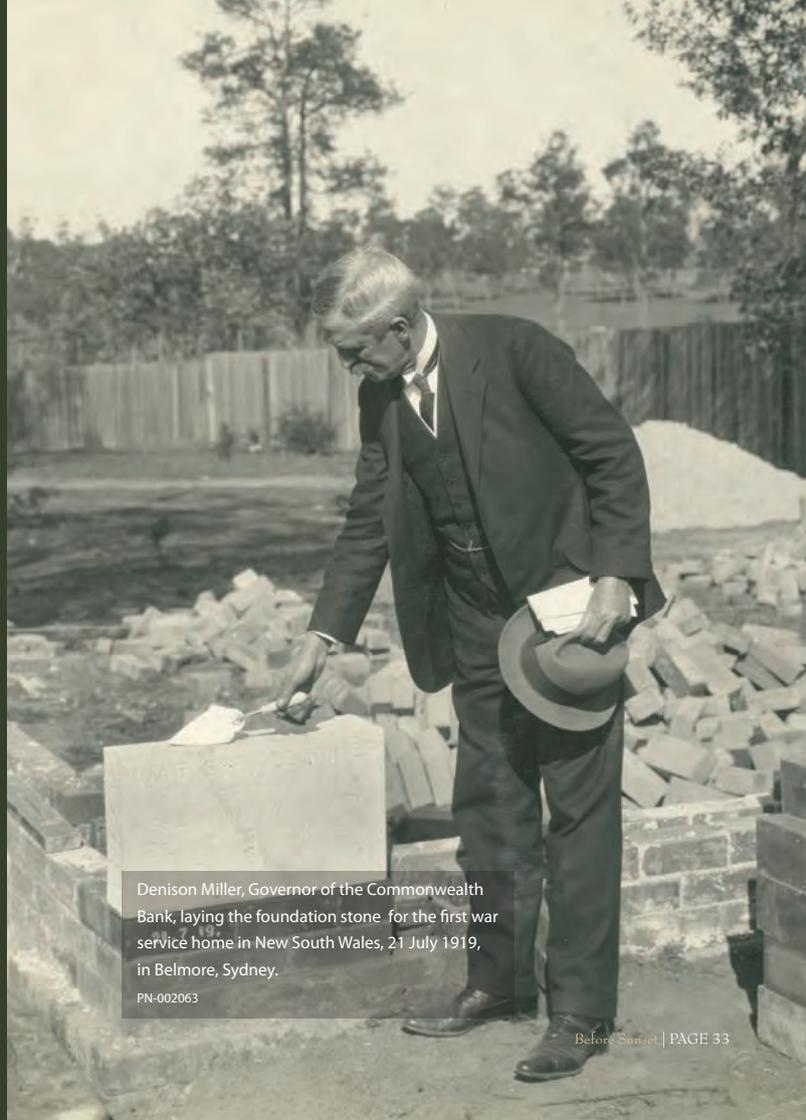


The first war service home in New South Wales, 32 Kennedy Avenue, Belmore, August 1919. The foundation stone laid by Denison Miller may be seen in the bottom, left-hand corner of the facade.

PN-002069

The design selected provided for a brick dwelling consisting of two bedrooms, dining room, kitchen, laundry, bathroom, pantry, linen press, front verandah, tiled roof, sewerage, and electric light. Included in the contract were porcelain enamel bath, concrete tubs, copper and stove, path to front door and fencing. The contract price was £ 500, and the time occupied in the building was 35 days.

C.C. Faulkner, *The Commonwealth Bank of Australia*, John Sands Ltd, Sydney, 1923.



Denison Miller, Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, laying the foundation stone for the first war service home in New South Wales, 21 July 1919, in Belmore, Sydney.

PN-002063



War service home, Waterdale Road,
Ivanhoe, Victoria, 1919.

PN-002093



War service home, Wilga Avenue,
Kensington Gardens, South Australia, circa 1919.

PN-002081



War service home, Three Mile Scrub Road,
Ashgrove, Brisbane, circa 1919.

PN-002077



War service homes at Park Grove Road,
Hobart, circa 1919.

PN-002087



Well Boy, You've done your Bit. What will Australia do for You? Buy Peace Bonds, E.B. Studios, colour lithograph, circa 1918.

14/2311



Haig. He kept his pledge, You buy Peace Bonds, E.B. Studios, colour lithograph, circa 1918.

Field Marshall Douglas Haig (1861–1928) commanded the British Expeditionary Force from 1915 to the war's conclusion.

14/2312



Still image from film footage of aircraft advertising Peace Loan Bonds. The planes were flown by pilots who had been trained during the war. (National Film and Sound Archive Title # 2530)

Before Sunset: The Bank & World War I

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Curated by the Reserve Bank of Australia

Curator and author of booklet: John Murphy

Booklet design: Kelly O'Brien

Exhibition Design: Freeman Ryan Design



Still image from film footage of troops departing for World War I in front of the Fitzroy Stevedoring Company, Woolloomooloo, Sydney.

(National Film and Sound Archive Title # 45988)

*I find Sir that the worries of a Battalion on active
service are even more than those of managing
a Savings Bank.*

– Ernest Hilmer Smith to Denison Miller, Governor of the Commonwealth
Bank of Australia, 27 June 1915, Gallipoli Peninsular.

Museum of
Australian Currency Notes

**Open Monday to Friday
10 am to 4 pm**