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Marina Larsson. *Shattered Anzacs: Living with the Scars of War.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009. 320 pp. $35.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-921410-55-0.

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Public Commemoration, Private Pain: Families and Wounded Warriors

Since 1916, the heroism and sacrifice of fallen Australian and New Zealand soldiers is remembered and commemorated each year on Anzac Day. In *Shattered Anzacs*, Marina Larsson explores how Australian men who survived the war, but came home with physical, psychological, and emotional trauma, were reintegrated into their families, their communities, and their state. In the decade following the end of the First World War, Australians celebrated their nation's contribution to the war effort by memorializing the "manly and independent" Australian soldier (p. 92). This hypermasculine Anzac legend did not, however, reflect the experience of the ninety thousand men disabled by the war. By no measure self-sufficient, these "damaged" Anzacs lived interdependently with families who shouldered the burden and the cost of war disability without recognition. In *Shattered Anzacs*, Larsson seeks to "bare the struggles and negotiations of ordinary Australian families whose lives were forever transformed" by the return of their disabled and war-weary husbands, fathers, and sons (p.18). This previously untold story of the impact of war disability on family relationships and kin networks exposes the unpaid and unrecognized labor of the family and challenges the idea that the First World War ended in 1918. For disabled veterans and their families, Larsson argues, the economic and social costs of the war lasted long after the armistice and contradicted the Anzac legend of manly independence perpetuated in popular discourse and public commemoration.

Shattered Anzacs will be useful to scholars in a variety of fields and adds to not only the already sizable body of work on the war, but also disability, family, and war studies, as well as recent cultural histories that focus on the broader memorialization of the war.[1] In many ways, Larsson's volume straddles and connects multiple historiographies, even as it takes the scholarship in new directions. While much attention has been paid to the reintegration of soldiers into the body politic, the significance of the Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act of 1917 as a cornerstone of the nation's welfare state, the paid and voluntary work of women in the First World War, and the unpaid labor of Australian women who cared for disabled family members both during and after the war has been overlooked until now. Disabled veterans received little monetary assistance from the welfare state, and, in the shadow of the Anzac legend, their sacrifices were virtually forgotten. So, too, were the efforts of their families, particularly their wives and mothers, to care for them. Using oral histories, letters, newspaper articles, and government documents, *Shattered Anzacs* tells the story of the private cost of war disability. Larsson reminds us that soldiers are not only individuals with a public identity and bonds to the nation but also individuals with private identities and relationships within families. It was in the realm of the private that the majority of disabled Anzacs received daily care, and it was their families who negotiated and struggled with the long-term effects of the war.

Chapter 1 analyzes the way family members and wounded soldiers negotiated their worries about disablement before demobilization, and the second chapter continues this discussion to consider how families responded to the wounded man's condition after he returned home. Building on earlier studies that focus on the "public" meanings of the veteran's return, Larsson's study brings attention to the dynamics of reintegration into the "private" realm of family and kinship relationships. This, of course, was not always a smooth transition. Correspondence between family members and disabled men, Larsson contends, reveals that the burdens for the family began long before the soldier's return. In addition to the psychological and physical accommodations that needed to be made, families and the wounded veterans faced economic difficulties, as employment opportunities for the

physically or psychologically impaired were scarce.

In chapter 3, Larsson examines more closely the economic impact of war disability on the family. Although the Department of Repatriation offered some financial assistance, making ends meet often involved creativity and hardship. Throughout Australia, in urban as well as in rural areas, the survival of a veteran and his "dependents" often relied on kin networks and multiple family members' labor and wages. Using oral histories, letters, and official documents, chapter 4 exposes some of the strains that men's war disability placed on women and children. Family dynamics changed irrevocably as mothers, wives, sisters, and children struggled to provide for the family and care for disabled relatives. Despite the obvious and multifaceted distress of many Australian families who petitioned for assistance, the Department of Repatriation continued to espouse an ideology of manly independence in pamphlets and correspondence with the families, blatantly ignoring their economic plight. Charities and organizations, such as the Friendly Union of Soldiers' Wives, Mothers and Sisters, gave families broader community support, as, unlike the Australian government, these groups recognized the interdependence of family members and took responsibility for their welfare. In this way, the voluntary work of charities and the private, unpaid labor of families subsidized the infant welfare state by caring for the wounded warriors of the First World War.

In chapters 5 and 6, Larsson turns her attention to how families sought care for shell-shocked and tubercular veterans. Families used the term "shell shock" to denote any kind of psychological problem, because it was a "unifying term that indicated the sufferer was a soldier, not a civilian" (p. 152). This empowered families to seek treatment for their loved one in a veteran's hospital where, it was generally held, sufferers received better care. For many shell-shocked men, institutions became a second home for occasional treatment or respite care. Some disabled Anzacs, however, were abandoned by families and left in institutions to be cared for by the state. The same was true of tuberculosis. The disease was often contracted in the trenches of WWI but did not reveal itself immediately. These veterans and their families faced not only the illness but also the problem of proving that the tuberculosis was war-related. Because tuberculosis was transmitted through sputum, veterans could potentially transmit the disease to their families, thereby disabling their loved ones. Even when shell-shocked or tubercular veterans were institutionalized, families suffered the social stigma attached to mental illness and tuberculosis, and many found themselves ostracized in their communities.

By the 1930s, many of the veterans were middle aged and faced new health issues, as did those family members caring for them. In chapter 7, Larsson investigates the experiences as families faced the changing yet continued burden of war disabilities, as well as the devastating effects of the economic depression. To a certain extent, for these families, the war never really ended. The final chapter looks at the way families grieved for their disabled soldiers when they died, sometimes decades after the war. While those families who had lost loved ones in battle could find some consolation in the Anzac Day commemorations that celebrated the heroism and sacrifice of Australia's men, this simply was not the case for the families of those soldiers who returned from the war "shattered." For these families, there was no public purpose for or even acknowledgement of their private losses. As Larsson carefully notes, nearly a century after the war, the oral histories collected for this study often reflect a need to value and memorialize those disabled family members in private and well as in public. *Shattered Anzacs* gives voice to these families, bringing them back into the narrative of Australia's experiences during the war and after.

Larsson has added a fascinating and important book to the ever-growing body of literature on the First World War, disability, and the family in Australia. By using the family as a lens to explore the experience of disability, Larsson has aptly shown that many more Australians experienced the wounds of war than the official accounts suggest. For a large section of the population, the war did not end in 1918 but continued into the 1920s and the 1930s and beyond. Moreover, Larsson's study is an important reminder that even as nations mourn their war dead and welcome home their heroes, they must also remember to accommodate and care for the thousands of soldiers who return psychologically, emotionally, or physically disabled.

Note

[1]. For example, Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), chap. 7.

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