Smiths in Stasiland: Archival Reminders of an Uncomfortable Australian Past

Dr Peter Stanley
Head, Centre for Historical Research, National Museum of Australia

Tuesday 14 September 2010, 5.30-7pm
McDonald Room, Menzies Building, Fellows Road, ANU
Refreshments will be served following the lecture
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Dr Peter Stanley is currently researching Australia’s Great War through the experience of people with the family name Smith, and German–Australians called Schmidt. Through diaries, letters, memoirs, family histories and official records, a different history of the Great War emerges that contrasts to the interpretation usually offered. It is a history of an officious ‘Military Intelligence’ bureaucracy which insinuated its way into many aspects of wartime life. It’s also a history of paranoia and persecution reaching into every part of Australian society.

In this lecture, Dr Stanley will talk about his research and what it suggests about the Australia of 1914-18 and also about our values today, as we approach the centenary of the Great War.

Dr Stanley is the Head of the Centre for Historical Research at the National Museum of Australia. He is one of Australia’s most active military social historians and has published over 20 books, mainly in the field of Australian military social history. His books include Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia 1942, Men of Mont St Quentin: Between Victory and Death, A Stout Pair of Boots: A Guide to Australia’s Battlefields, Quinn’s Post: Anzac, Gallipoli, and Commando to Colditz. His latest book is Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny, Murder and the Australian Imperial Force.