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The filmmaker’s words cut through to a truth about the killings that more distanced academic observers often miss, no doubt because re-enactment was central to his film project. A killing spree must involve some sort of madness. But we must not allow that to obscure our understanding of the settler objective of clearing the country of traditional-living Aboriginal people. As Kelly also pointed out: ‘After that massacre, [Aboriginal] people got pushed away. Station owners got their land, and the miners got their gold, and we shifted onto government settlements’. The Coniston Massacre was a calculated act in a long tradition of frontier killings, not a moment of madness.

Murray as a participant in two conflicts

It is possible that Murray’s AIF experiences shaped his actions in Central Australia. However, it is far more likely that his nine years as a frontier policeman steeped him in local attitudes that had been around for nearly a century. It was these attitudes, expressed by 19th-century police officials and 20th-century settlers alike, that led him and his party to view his bailiwick as a zone of conflict and struggle for resources. If we fail to consider the frontier attitude, the Great War threatens to frame our understanding of warfare. The terrain, circumstances and objectives were very different in Europe and Australia. Almost no similarities existed between the two conflicts, yet in different ways, each profoundly shaped Australia’s 20th century. The fascinating aspect of Murray’s case is that the two conflicts he participated in have a markedly imbalanced representation in present-day understanding. The Great War has become a much-mythologised conflict, whereas frontier conflicts feature very little in public discourse, education or commemoration. With a clear-eyed view of the aftermath of the First World War and frontier violence, however, we can come to a better historical understanding of both conflicts.

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REMEMBERING THE RESILIENT

Joan Beaumont

On 5 February 1931, Harold ‘Pompey’ Elliott, who had commanded the 15th Brigade of the AIF during the First World War, returned from his city office to his home in the Melbourne suburb of Camberwell. He handed his sister-in-law, Belle, the insurance policies for his children and some share certificates, saying she might need the money. Later that night, Elliott was found in the kitchen, his head in the oven. The air was full of gas and he was semi-conscious. Some days later, he was admitted to the Alfred Hospital, in the hope that this might prevent his making another suicide attempt. Elliott stayed there almost a month, and then came home; but on 22 March he was readmitted to a private hospital in Malvern. The staff there were supposedly on ‘suicide alert’, but Elliott somehow kept hold of his shaving gear. At 4.25 the following morning, he was found with a razor blade embedded in a deep gash near his left elbow. He had died of blood loss.

Later that year, in December 1931, Charles Hawker, a South Australian who had fought with the British Army on the Western Front, stood for the federal parliamentary seat of Wakefield, which he had first won in the 1929 electoral landslide that brought down the government of SM Bruce. Once re-elected, Hawker was appointed Minister for Markets and Repatriation (a portfolio renamed Commerce in 1932). He later resigned from the ministry over the issue of whether parliamentarians’ salaries should be reduced (he thought
they should) but remained prominent in federal politics. His war wounds had left Hawker with only one eye, nerve damage in one arm and partial paralysis from the waist down, but he travelled widely across remote areas of Australia, Europe, Russia, China and Japan, to keep informed on rural, national and international developments. By the late 1930s, Hawker was considered to be a potential successor to Prime Minister Joe Lyons. However, he was killed as a passenger in a plane crash in late 1938, near Mount Dandenong in Victoria.

On 18 November 1933, a third veteran of the First World War, and recipient of the Victoria Cross, Hugo Throssell, rewrote his will while his wife, the renowned author and radical activist, Katharine Susannah Prichard, was travelling in Moscow. The following morning, at first light, Throssell removed his Webley revolver from its harness and loaded it with a single bullet. Still in his pyjamas, he sat in a chair on the back veranda of his home in rural Western Australia and shot himself in the temple.

Two of these three narratives are well known. The deaths of Elliott and Throssell attracted considerable publicity at the time they occurred, since both men were celebrities during the First World War and well-known public figures in the post-war era. Ninety years later, both men continue to figure prominently in the national narratives of war, as represented in the Australian War Memorial. Hawker, by contrast, is relatively little known, except perhaps in his home state of South Australia where an electorate is named after him (though this is no guarantee of fame). Yet Hawker’s post-war life spoke of remarkable resilience. Why, then, has his story of post-war adjustment, which by many criteria seems to have been extraordinarily successful, attracted less attention than the succumbing of Elliott and Throssell to what we would now call post-traumatic stress? Furthermore — and this is a far more intractable question — why was it that the man who, in a physical sense at least, was left with the most traumatic legacy of war, proved ultimately to be the more resilient?

Life histories

The search for answers to these questions must begin with the life histories of these three men. Elliott had a somewhat impoverished and troubled childhood, living on a selection near Charlton, Victoria, where the family struggled to make a livelihood from the harsh Australian environment. His father was frequently absent, having an insatiable wanderlust, and when Elliott was only eight years old, his older brother became criminally insane, possibly because of a personality change that resulted from a fractured skull. The family’s financial position was transformed when Elliott’s father struck it lucky on the Western Australian gold fields, but then, tragically, one of Harold’s sisters suicided after a bout of severe influenza. Harold ultimately became a brilliant, prize-winning student at the University of Melbourne, was a champion athlete, and graduated as a lawyer. He served in the militia and with the 4th Victorian (Imperial) Contingent in the South African war of 1899–02 and was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Elliott was 36 years old when he volunteered for the First World War. Wounded on the first day of the landing at Gallipoli, he soon recovered to take charge of a battalion during the August 1915 offensive. On the Western Front he commanded the 15th Brigade from 1916 to 1918, including at the catastrophic battle of Fromelles in July 1916. So distraught was he at the pointless loss of life in this diversionary action, that he greeted the survivors with tears streaming down his face. In later actions, Elliott gained the reputation for being a brilliant, if idiosyncratic, commander, able to respond rapidly to changing tactical situations, and to deploy his troops
effectively. Willing to take considerable—even foolhardy—personal risks while commanding at the front, he became a household name among the troops and the population at home. However, Elliott also gained a reputation among his superiors for poor judgment, undiplomatic candour about British troops and a lack of emotional control. Hence, in May 1918, he was not given command of a division when the leadership of the Australian Corps was reorganised. This ‘supersession’, as he called it, was an injustice which ‘colored all [his] post war life’.4

On his return to Australia, Elliott became a prominent advocate for returned soldiers: providing free legal advice; raising funds for, and unveiling, war memorials; working to establish Anzac Day as a semi-sacred annual rite; and taking a leadership role in the RSSILA. His legal practice was re-established without difficulty, and he became President of the Law Institute of Victoria in 1927. He also stood successfully as a Nationalist senator for Victoria in 1919; and in 1927 finally gained the divisional command (3rd Division) that had eluded him in 1918.

Throssell, in contrast to Elliott, had a secure childhood, his father, George, being a short-lived premier of Western Australia and a prosperous landowner and merchant. Though forbidding and remote, George was also an indulgent father, and his children lacked nothing material. Hugo was adored by his five sisters and gentle mother. He was 29 when he volunteered in Western Australia for the 10th Light Horse. He first served at Gallipoli where he was in the fourth line of the disastrous charge at the Nek. Some weeks later, Throssell won the VC when he led his men in a frenetic hand-to-hand exchange of bombs with the Ottomans at Hill 60. This action, in which he was wounded, made him, like Elliott, a national celebrity. While recuperating in Australia in 1916, he made a triumphal tour to promote recruiting. As his son, Ric, later recalled: he made ‘a stirring figure in polished riding boots, breeches, Sam Browne and the emu feather-tufted slouch hat, the modest purple tab of the Victoria Cross on the left breast of his tunic’. He ‘only had to appear for enlistments to improve’5 Prichard, too, later recalled, that ‘If we dined in town, I could hear the whispers going round: “Throssell, VC.” and crowds collected to cheer us as we passed’.6 Returning to the battlefront in 1917, Throssell saw out the war in the Palestine campaign. Being wounded at Gaza in April 1917 and catching malaria in the Jordan valley, he spent much of the last year of the war in hospital.7

After the war, Throssell had sufficient private means to settle on a property outside Perth and to raise capital for speculative land purchases. By virtue of his VC, he enjoyed a privileged status within the community of ex-servicemen. However, this asset was compromised when Throssell announced at a Victory Parade in July 1919 that his experience of the horrors of the war had made him a socialist. At a time of rampant anti-Bolshevik sentiment, this meant that Throssell, like Prichard, came under the surveillance of ASIO. As the Australian economy slipped into depression in the late 1920s, Throssell’s debts mounted. Much of the property he had bought with borrowings from the banks remained unsold; and his tenants were unable to meet their rental payments. In April 1931, he was retrenched from his position at the Discharged Soldiers’ Settlement Board, supposedly because of budget cuts. Throssell then invested in a series of increasingly wild speculative ventures: oil exploration in the state’s northwest; prospecting for alluvial gold near Coolgardie; and staging a major rodeo-style event—only to find that he could not recoup his costs because regulations forbade charging an entry fee on Sundays. When he committed suicide shortly after, on the back of his will he wrote ‘I have never recovered from my 1914–18 experiences, and, with this in view, I appeal to the State to see that my wife and child get the usual war pension’. They did, but it was of little consolation. Prichard, who read the news of her husband’s death in a British newspaper, wrote years later:
I went overseas ... on the understanding that Jim [Hugo] would do nothing while I was away to make me regret leaving him. It was a terrible mistake ... I had absolute faith in him and don't know how I survived the days when I realized I would never see him again. The end of our lives together is still inexplicable to me.  

Throsell's son, then a child of 11, was likewise bereft:

It was not possible that a man I loved so much could have wanted to die. He couldn't have. He could do everything. He couldn't have wanted to leave me by myself. ... How could he have wanted to leave us? We were so happy, the three of us.

Hawker was considerably younger than Elliott and Throsell — only 20 years of age — when he volunteered for the war. A scion of a wealthy South Australian pastoralist and Mepino stud breeder, he had an idyllic life in a family that had sufficient wealth to travel and fund his education at Geelong Grammar. Hawker was studying at Cambridge when war broke out. Deeply infused with imperial sentiment, he joined a British regiment, the 6th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry. The first injury that he suffered was at Loos, in September 1915; it was here that he lost his left eye and suffered nerve damage in his left arm. By most standards, his war service would have ended then. However, after 14 operations, Hawker insisted on being sent back to the front. He suffered his second, more grievous wound at Poelcappelle in late 1917. Although his paralysis suggested that he would never walk again, after further surgery, and with relentless personal determination, Hawker managed to walk with leg irons and sticks. Before returning to Australia he went back to Cambridge in a wheelchair and graduated with a high second-class honour. Back home, he took courses in forestry and botany, assumed an active role in managing family properties in the mid-north of South Australia, learned to drive a specially adapted car, and took on leadership roles in the RSSILA. Ultimately, as mentioned, he had a successful political career as a member of successive Nationalist/United Australia Party governments.

Resilience

It is difficult for the historian to explain the seeming differences in these men's ability to cope after the First World War. The term 'resilience' is now regularly appropriated in popular discourse and across a wide range of disciplines, and eludes easy definition and measurement. In the natural sciences, where the term originated, 'resilience' describes 'the capacity of a material or system to return to equilibrium after a displacement': that is, the process whereby a substance will 'bounce back' to its original shape. However, in the social sciences 'resilience' has come to be understood more as a complex process of adaptation and change, especially after personal loss and trauma. In this sense it is often applied to both social systems and individuals. So far as individuals are concerned, then, resilience has been defined as the means by which 'effectiveness in the environment is achieved, sustained or recovered despite adversity' or 'the fact of maintaining adaptive functioning in spite of serious risk hazards'.

The question that continues to challenge scholars across disciplines is what mix of personal attributes and societal variables enables some individuals to maintain this adaptive functioning, while others exposed to similar stimuli do not. And what explains why certain individuals, who might seem to have the qualities required for resilience, ultimately prove more vulnerable than others? Beyond this, how do we measure 'success', given that much of the discourse about resilience is subjective in its assumptions about preferred outcomes?
Within a vast field there is some consensus that resilience can be jeopardised by a standard field of ‘risk factors’. There is an often-observed correlation in children, for example, between persistent delinquent behaviour and ‘a multi-problem milieu’ such as parental criminality, poor parental supervision, cruel, passive, or neglectful attitudes, erratic or harsh discipline, mutual conflict, large family size, and socioeconomic disadvantages. Yet none of this is inevitable or predetermined, and the degree to which risk factors impact upon a particular individual is highly variable. Moreover, the impact of stressful or risk situations can clearly be moderated by protective factors: that is, variables that enable individuals to adapt more successfully to trauma than they might otherwise have done. Among these, it has been argued, are the temperament and personal attributes of individuals: their cognitive skills and their reflectiveness when confronted with new situations; and their capacity to remain positive in relation to others. Then, there is family environment – the warmth, sense of cohesion and support that this provides – and systems of social support – caring agencies and community organisations, including religious institutions. Indeed, religion has been suggested as having the potential to moderate the relationship between stress and depression and trait anxiety.

Beyond this, it has been argued that individuals seem able to be resilient if their life experience has some sense of coherence: that is, if the stimuli confronting them make cognitive sense ‘as information that is ordered, consistent, structured and clear—and, hence, regarding the future, as predictable’. Moreover, resilience can be facilitated if experiences are manageable, in that individuals are able to mobilise resources, either by having direct control over them or by accessing them by various means. Finally, coherence is achievable when an experience is meaningful: that is, when ‘life makes sense emotionally ... [and] at least some of the problems and demands posed by living are worth investing energy in, are worthy of commitment and engagement, and are challenges that are welcome rather than burdens that they would much rather do without’.

Elliott, Throssell and Hawker: Trauma and resilience

Returning now to Elliott, Throssell and Hawker: self-evidently, their traumatic experience of war constituted a grave risk factor for each man. Each of the three endured several years of warfare, including exposure to enemy fire, direct participation in armed combat, and witnessing the death and wounding of fellow soldiers and civilians. Each was wounded several times, while Elliott and Throssell carried an additional burden of personal bereavement, in that both lost brothers during the war. For Elliott this was the third sibling to die across his lifetime. Throssell memorably found his brother, Ric, among the wounded after the infamous charge by the 10th Light Horse at the Nek in August 1915, by whistling a tune that was secret to them. But at the second battle of Gaza, in April 1917, where Hugo was wounded in the thigh and foot, Ric was killed. As his namesake nephew would later write:

There could be no more adventure in [the war for Hugo] when Ric was killed ... The strange joy of battle that sustained him at the Nek and Hill 60 and inspired the men who fought with him died after the Gaza action. There were no more ‘great charges’ in his diary; no inspiring anecdotes.

Elliott, for his part, learned of the death of his brother at the height of the third battle of Ypres, at the very time that he also received the devastating news of the failure of his business partner in Australia. He wrote to his wife, Kate, on 2 October 1917:
Poor old Geordie [his brother], I saw him dead so white and
gigid and still and his loved ones left behind him. And we have
buried him so far from home amongst strangers to him. ... I
cannot tell you what I went through that night. After I knew
that Geordie had died I would have gladly welcomed a shell to
end me.22

Given the paucity of medical records, we lack precise information
as to how the physical and emotional traumas of war affected each
man’s mental health after the war. Throsell’s Department of Repa-
triation file details his physical problems after the war: recurrent
attacks of malaria, headaches, shortness of breath and, inability to do
sustained hard work.23 At various points during the 1920s, medical
officers also noted that Throsell was ‘restless and nervous’, ‘depressed’,
and subject to ‘mental excitability’ and sleeplessness. Soon after the
war he was granted a 50 per cent pension, which was later reduced
to 30 per cent, and then raised in 1923 to 40 per cent. His suicide in
1933 was deemed by Repatriation officials to be ‘war-related’.

Elliot’s medical file is relatively sparse and records that his gen-
eral health was considered ‘good’ at the time of his demobilisation in
1919.24 Elliot himself, however, admitted privately that he had mental
health issues in the immediate aftermath of war. In correspondence
with his family in early 1919, he said that he was suffering ‘fearful hits
of depression’ and ‘fits of the blues’, while feeling ‘listless and helpless
— nervous breakdown due to war strain’.25 Elliot’s later behaviour
suggests a man whose emotional state became increasingly fragile in
the decade after the war. He could not resist raising the matter of his
‘supersession’ in federal parliament; and in the late 1920s he con-
ued to harass, by mail and in public, those whom he held responsible
for his lack of promotion. Some of his former commanders became
‘deeply concerned’ at his inability to let this grievance go. As General
Sir John Monash wrote to him in September 1929:

I have myself felt that the affection and confidence of the men
of the AIF was worth a great deal more to me than any empty
honors. This same affection and confidence you have enjoyed
in rich measure ... After all, you commanded a celebrated
Brigade during the period of its greatest successes ... Is it not
a great thing to have lived to play such a role in the greatest
war in History? Then why worry as to the verdict of posterity
upon so brilliant and soldierly a career?26

When Elliott finally suicided in 1931, he was judged by Repatriation
to have been depressed and ‘temporarily insane’ — though his
death was also judged to be war-related.27

Hawker, in contrast, seems to have retained robust mental
health after the war. No detailed official record of his health seems
to be extant, but the National Library of Australia holds the corre-
spondence between many of Hawker’s acquaintances and his sister
(and biographer) in the early 1960s.28 Although these witnesses
were unlikely to have voiced criticism, it is striking how, without
exception, they were in awe of Hawker’s ability to remain posi-
tive, good-humoured and gregarious in the face of often exu-
rating and chronic pain.29 Hawker’s career in the early post-war years,
Corporal W Hughes, later recalled that when having his back mass-
aged, Hawker would ‘never swear like a trooper. He knew how
to bear pain ... with a smile too, though you knew he was suf-
ferring [he] used to mutter, “Nil desperandum”’.30 There seems
to have been only one occasion when Hawker manifested any sign of
depression; this was when he had to lie in hospital on a water mat-
tress for seven months, so sensitive was his body to movement in
his vicinity. But even then, according to one account, he spent his
time learning Greek!31 Hawker himself conceded that he consid-
ered suicide when he was ‘first hit’ in 1917. Lying on the battlefield,
knowing he was partially paralysed, for hours before being brought
in by stretcher-bearers, he considered taking a packet of morphia tablets that he always carried. 29

However subjective such a conclusion may be, it seems that Hawker was blessed with a temperament that acted as a ‘protective factor’. His battles with injuries did not retard his development, but seem rather to have operated as ‘catalytic agents of resistance, or of more constructive responses’. 30 He became a quintessential over-achiever, developing his upper body strength so that he could swim, ride horses (mounting the saddle without help), climb ladders to boats unassisted, drive a specially adapted car, change flat tyres, and so on. Fiercely independent, and spurning sympathy, he would rather fall than accept help from others. Typically, he judged whether his mobility was improving by counting the number of times he fell when climbing the hill behind his property, North Bungaree, using two walking sticks! 31

What, then, of the other ‘protective factors’, beyond temperament, that might have assisted these men’s adjustment to post-war life? All seem to have had strong support from their families, at least in the first years after the war. Elliott’s disrupted childhood and personal losses were presumably countered to some degree by the warmth of his own extended family. At the heart of this was his beloved wife, Kate, his ‘sunshine lady’, and his two children to whom he gave ‘boundless love and support’. 32 Throssell’s marriage to Prichard was initially very passionate: they had ‘a strong physical connection’ and their early days together were remembered by Prichard as ‘halcyon’, full of ‘gay camaraderie’. They adored their only son, Ric. 33 However, the marriage became strained during the Depression years as Prichard despaired of Throssell’s increasingly risky financial ventures. 34 Hawker, in contrast, never married. He told Hughes, that he was determined ‘to allow nothing with women to go on too far because he was not going to be a burden on any woman or take advantage of her natural sympathy’. 35 However, he had a supportive family, including a father who followed his career with interest and a sister whose devotion to him was such that she wrote his biography in order that a new generation of Australians could have their hearts ‘quickened by his story of courage’. 36

Beyond their families, each of Elliott, Throssell and Hawker had well-developed systems of social support. As we have seen, all were prominent in veterans’ advocacy and professional and political organisations. We do not know how much, in Throssell’s case, this was compromised by his stand in 1919 on socialism. Prichard believed that this was the reason he lost his role as soldiers’ representative on the Discharged Soldiers’ Settlement Board. 37 Politics and also leadership roles brought their stresses as well as their rewards. As the Great Depression set in, Elliott was distressed that he could do little to help returned soldiers thrown out of work; and was maddened by the deflationary policies adopted by the Labor government of James Scullin, including its decision to abolish the compulsory military training scheme in 1929. Hawker, meanwhile, had his own battles over government policy, that led to his resignation from the ministry.

It is impossible to do more than speculate about another protective factor: namely, the degree to which life seemed coherent, purposeful and invested with meaning. This variable is intrinsically beyond measurement. Suffice to say that Elliott’s biographer notes only that Elliott was ‘favourably disposed to the doctrines and rituals of the Presbyterian church’. 38 Hawker, in contrast, was known to have had a strong Christian faith. One of his cousins recalls him having ‘a great sense of God’. He would sing hymns with children ‘all the way home from an expedition. He sang at the top of his voice “Onward Christian Soldiers” and other hymns’. 39 Perhaps Throssell’s socialism might have provided a comparable teleological framing of his life, but it seems more likely that it was passion for Prichard that originally inspired this commitment. It may be an
overstatement to say, as does one of Throssell's biographers, that
Prichard 'went to work on him ... strongly influencing his possibly
weakened mind'; but his infamous Victory Day speech was written
with her assistance and Throssell remained on the margins of Prichard's
activism in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{13} We can only speculate as to whether
Throssell experienced cognitive dissonance as he tried to reconcile
her passionate anti-war stance (a result of her brother’s death) and
his own status as a decorated war hero.

As for the capacity to mobilise the resources to make life man-
geable, here we need to distinguish between different phases in the
post-war decade. Initially, all three men seem to have benefited from
reasonable financial security, which facilitated their transition to
civilian life. Hawker particularly benefited from having the finan-
cial means to access expert medical interventions in London, and to
recruit a full-time carer and chauffeur who accompanied him back
to Australia. However, when economic recession hit Australia in the
late 1920s and early 1930s, Hawker suffered significant financial
loss with wool prices collapsing and the sheep stock of his prop-
erties dropping from 37,000 to 9000 over the five years of drought
and Depression.\textsuperscript{14} In 1933 he had another financial
reverse when fire destroyed much stock and fencing on his property. Throssell’s
losses at this time, as we have seen, were ruinous. Elliot’s financial
position, in contrast, seems to have been secure, although, according
to one of his advisers, this was not how he saw it.\textsuperscript{15}

More significant perhaps than their financial situation was the
way in which both Throssell’s and Elliot’s health deteriorated in
1930–31. In 1931 Throssell started to have considerable pain in
his right eye because of a small fragment of metal embedded in his
cornea. He suffered regular headaches, and then, when organising
his rodeo in 1933, broke two bones in his foot when it was crushed
by a horse. In his last years, Elliot was plagued with nightmares,
ghastly flashbacks and tormenting memories of the many young
men who had died under his command. This led him, in July 1930,
to launch a very public and trenchant critique of the ineptitude of
those responsible for the battle of Fromelles. His blood pressure
rose, he suffered from diabetes and then experienced a severe head
injury while horse riding. Was he also, one wonders, haunted by the
memories of the earlier trauma of his sister’s suicide?

Ultimately then, these three case studies confirm the complexi-
ties associated with any discussion of resilience. Clearly, it is a state
that cannot be predicted against any template of variables, however
useful the insights of psycho-social categories such as risk and pro-
tective factors might be in framing our analysis. Rather the journey
of adaptation to trauma, and the creation of a new ‘normal’ in the
post-war years, was highly individualised, shaped not only by socio-
economic influences but also by inherently unquantifiable variables.
Moreover, these three case studies suggest that resilience was not a
fixed state. Although Elliot and Throssell killed themselves in the
eyear 1930s, both had more than a decade of what appears to have
been productive life - at least if we judge them against some possible
indicators of ‘successful’ adaptation to trauma, such as stability in
personal relationships, the capacity to make a living, and the ability
to maintain a family and perform community service. Whether they
might have maintained that stability without the Great Depression
is a key question. In his final suicide message, written no doubt with
his family’s entitlements to his pension in mind, Throssell blamed
his war service, but it seems that he also saw suicide as the only
means of escaping from his financial catastrophe. Prichard opted for
a similar mix. She wrote to Repatriation in 1934:

Nervously and physically, my husband’s magnificent
constitution was impaired as a result of war service ... but I
resent the idea that his mind was ever in any way deranged.
He feared that that it might become so. ... I consider that
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his 'grateful country' made it impossible for my husband to live. He thought he had to die to provide for his wife and child.48

Almost certainly, then, the war and the Depression need to be viewed as two interconnected stressors, with the economic crisis denying life, once again, of any element of predictability and manageability. It seems to have unleashed the psychological damage of the war in an arguably more intense form, since that trauma had not been resolved by psychiatric treatment. It is a conclusion that is given some weight by the fact that the highest rate of male suicide in the twentieth century – 28.1 deaths per 100,000 – was recorded in 1930, the first year of the Great Depression, not in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. Later research into PTSD also confirms that a second or later negative life event can impact severely on already traumatised individuals, making them less able to cope and 'more likely to develop chronic trauma symptoms'.49

Remembering the resilient

Of the three men considered here, it is notable that Elliot and Throssell, but not Hawker, find a place in the national shrine of war memory, the Australian War Memorial. Elliott, who is described in the Memorial as 'one of the best-known characters of the AIF', is commemorated in the gallery devoted to the First World War in a portrait by WB McGuinness, a boot, complete with a bullet hole, that Pompey was wearing when wounded at Gallipoli, and the uniform in which he conducted the recapture of the French town of Villers-Bretonneux in 1918. His boot also features in educational materials developed by the War Memorial.49 Throssell is profiled in the Hall of Valour devoted to winners of the Victoria Cross. His display includes his medals and Webley Mark IV service revolver – although it is left ambiguous as to whether this was the actual weapon that he used to kill himself.

The prominence given to these two men in these Memorial galleries is not surprising. After all, this is a memorial and museum dedicated to Australians at war, and both men had distinguished military careers in the AIF. Elliott, moreover, is closely identified with two of the battles that have acquired especial prominence in recent Australian war commemoration, Fromelles and Villers-Bretonneux. Hawker, on the other hand, served with the British Army; he was wounded for much of the war and his reputation rested on his post-war political career, not his wartime military one.

More telling, however, is the prominence given to Throssell in a recent Memorial exhibition, 'After the War'. Here his portrait sits under the banner: 'What if your wounds are not visible?' A nearby display includes a poster advertising a public lecture by Throssell on the Light Horse, photographs from his marriage, a statement by the man who found Throssell after his suicide and Prichard's letter to Repatriation cited above. The caption briefly summarises Throssell's wartime service, and then describes how he struggled 'with the memories of the war, the loss of his brother Eric ... and the horrors of fighting on Gallipoli and in Gaza'. It concludes by citing his suicide note. Notably, Throssell's financial struggles in the Great Depression are not mentioned. The possibility that his suicide note might have been written with the intent of securing his family's pensions is ignored. The nexus between his war trauma and his suicide is assumed to be direct.

This representation of Throssell's death, and the relative obscurity of Hawker, speak to the much-documented phenomenon in the collective memory of war: the dominance of the trope of victimhood and trauma. As historian Christina Twomey has put it, when post-traumatic stress was identified as a medical condition some three decades ago, the traumatised individual gained a new 'cultural prominence':

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[PTSD] in effect put in place 'the event' as the defining reason for the experience of trauma and transformed the sufferers of trauma from slightly suspect individuals to legitimate victims. In light of these changes to ideas about trauma and victimhood, the suffering of soldiers in war and the potential for them to be traumatised by it became a central trope in the public discussion of Anzac. ... it is the suffering of veterans, their psychological fragility and the horrors they have witnessed that provide an important, if not an exclusive, framing device.59

There were, of course, many veterans of the First World War whose stories accord with this framing. As the work of Alistair Thomson, Marina Larsson, Bruce Scates, Melanie Oppenheimer and Kate Ariotti in particular has demonstrated, there were countless men whose post-war lives were blighted by the traumas, physical and mental, they suffered during the First World War. Many were, to use Marina Larsson's term, 'shattered Anzacs'. Only two years after the war ended, some 90,000 ex-servicemen - or about a third of survivors - were receiving some level of war disability pension. By 1938, the number of recipients had risen to 257,000; 77,000 of them were incapacitated soldiers and 180,000 were dependants. In the late 1930s, there were still 1600 men in hostels and homes for the permanently incapacitated and around 23,000 outpatients in repatriation hospitals each year.51

However, the life story of Hawker suggests that these statistics of disability and trauma should be complemented by a greater sensitivity to evidence of resilience. We need not see this as a matter of oppositions. As Elliott's and Throssell's lives show, even those who might be considered as ultimately victims of the war could manifest for years the capacity to adapt and live productive lives. The stories of soldier settlement documented by Bruce Scates and

Melanie Oppenheimer also reveal how men who were often profoundly damaged by the war could, at least for a time, respond to the huge challenges of farming often unproductive plots of land in the harsh Australian environment. It is more, then, a matter of balance. The rich archives of the correspondence between veterans and the Department of Repatriation almost inevitably will lead historians of the future to focus on morbidity and mortality - questions that are, of course, of utmost importance in understanding the long-term legacy of the First World War. But, as Stephen Garton observed in 1996, the repatriation archive, by its very nature, is 'more likely to be a repository of complaint than compliment' - or one might add, resilience. Hence, though the task of recovering the voices of the silent may be difficult, and notions of resilience imprecise, we need to acknowledge that for many survivors of the First World War this was a more appropriate framing of their post-war life than victimhood.