

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of Hunters Hill
and show respect to Elders past and present.*



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“Bunk”

“History is more or less bunk”
HENRY FORD, Chicago Tribune, 1916

Australian women in World War Two

The term ‘home front’ covers the activities of the civilians in a nation at war.

Life on the home front during World War II was a significant part of the war effort and had a major impact on the outcome of the war. Women were mobilized to an unprecedented degree.

A shortage of male recruits forced the military to establish female branches in 1941 and 1942: the Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) in March 1941, the Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS) in October 1941 and the Australian Army Women’s Medical Service (AAWMS) in December 1942, and the Women’s Royal Australian Naval

Service (WRANS) in July 1942.

By 1944 almost 50,000 women were serving in the military and thousands more had joined the civilian Australian Women’s Land Army (AWLA) to combat rising shortages in the farming sector. Many of



these women were trained to undertake skilled work in traditionally male occupations in order to free servicemen for operational service. Women were also encouraged to work in industry and volunteer for air raid precaution duties or clubs for Australian and Allied servicemen.

The role of women in the economy also changed during World War II. Women entered roles which had traditionally been

limited to men, such as working in munitions factories, but received only 60 to 90 percent of men’s wages. But these were seen as jobs for the war, not for life.

Factories were frequently unhygienic, ill-ventilated, poorly lit places which lacked such basic facilities as canteens or separate women’s toilets. Often management refused to provide protective or properly sized clothing, such as women wearing men’s gloves which increased their risk of getting caught in machinery.

Women also became aware for the first time that the product of their labour was important to the economy and was vital for the lives of the fighting men. According to a West Australian munitions worker:

“You’ve got to put out a perfect bullet for the simple reason that they used them in the aeroplanes, and if it jams their guns, well it could kill all the men.

After all, if you’ve got a jammed gun you lose your aeroplane. But more importantly, you lose somebody’s brother, husband or son.” **Poster courtesy of Australian War Memorial.**

HAL MISSINGHAM AO

Hal Missingham was born in Claremont WA in December 1906, but lived most of his life in Hunters Hill. He studied art in Paris and London and was director of the Art Gallery of NSW from 1945 to 1971, the longest serving director until succeeded by Edmund Capon. He was also president of the Australian Watercolour Institute. Missingham oversaw expansion of the NSW Art Gallery, including establishment of the Captain Cook Wing, and brought Blockbuster international exhibitions to Sydney. He died in Perth in April 1994. **His sketch in the Community Art Gallery is of the 1953 NSW State Election at Hunters Hill Public School, opposite where he lived.**

From lipstick cases to cartridges

In Footscray there is a munitions factory where some years ago the harassed manager was seeking to make ends meet by manufacturing lipstick cases. Today that same factory, with its staff quadrupled and the machines roaring from daylight to midnight, is turning out thousands of rounds of ammunition a week – and the only lipstick cases to be found are in the hand bags of the 900 women and girls employed there.

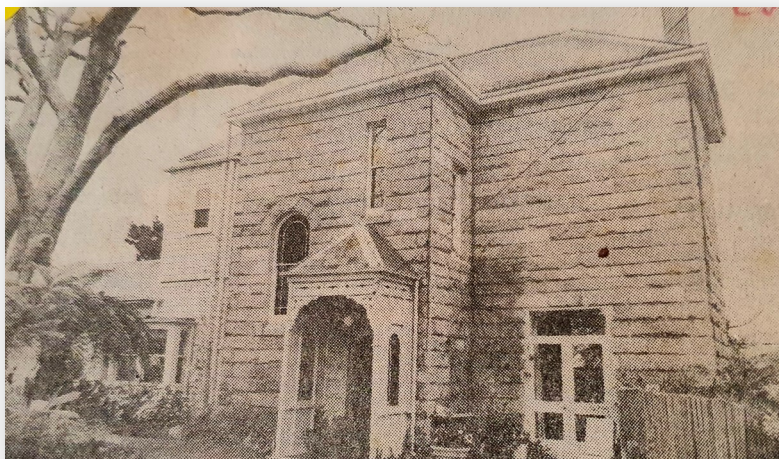
Munitions work offers one of the most important spheres of war-time service for women, and in Melbourne the number of women and girls who have found employment in this sphere runs into four

figures. By far the biggest contingent is employed at this small arms ammunition factory at Footscray. Of the personnel there, the proportion of men is only one in 20, but in 18 months the number of women has leapt from 200 to nearly 1000. Their job is the manufacture of the most common of all the ‘inventions of war’ – the .303’s used for the ordinary service rifle as well as the Bren machine gun. They work in two shifts, 6.30am to 3pm, and 3pm to 11.30pm. Some of the women are working because their husbands have enlisted; a few are widows of the last war, who worked in munitions then. **The Age, 31 January 1940**

Desperate gang at Hunters Hill

The burgling epidemic, which has been rife in Sydney and suburbs for some months past, has reached the riverside suburb of Hunters Hill in a virulent form. On Sunday morning, in the small hours, a party of desperadoes, numbering possibly three, paid a visit to the residence of Mr. T.M. Michelmores, and appear to have effected an entry by the windows without much difficulty. Once inside they proceeded to rifle the place. With extraordinary audacity they entered the bedroom where Mr. Michelmores was sleeping, and from the pockets of his clothes abstracted the keys of his cupboards and drawers, and annexed his loose cash. With the keys a thorough ransacking of the place was made, and the loot secured consisted of a quantity of plate, wearing apparel, etc. The retreat from here was made without disturbing the inmates of the house, and the burglars then made a call at Mr. E. Gommerson's residence. Some refreshments, consisting of

whisky and solids, were partaken of here, the inmates of the house being all unconscious of the gentry they were entertaining. A quantity of plate was annexed here and added to the swag, together with a number of small and valuable articles. The residence of Mr. Stanley Jeanneret next engaged the wanderers' attention, and a move was made towards it, one of Mr. Gommerson's chairs



being "borrowed," to stand on to reach the windows. Just as the chair was placed in position and one of the ruffians mounted it it gave way. The noise aroused Mrs. Jeanneret, who called her husband. He at once arose, and arming himself with a tomahawk, sailed in pursuit of his unwelcome visitors. It was at this time between 4 and 5 a.m., and quite dark. A little distance from the

house Mr. Jeanneret saw a man with a lantern, who made off at once. Looking around Mr. Jeanneret caught sight of another man, whom he hailed, at the same time calling to his brother. As he did so he heard the crack of a pistol and a bullet whizzed past his head. He ran after the would-be assassin, who turned after going a little distance, and fired another shot, the ball taking effect in the inner part of Mr. Jeanneret's right thigh. Pursuit was now hopeless, and the villains escaped in the darkness. Mr. Jeanneret is now under medical treatment, but it is believed that his wound, which is a severe one, will not result seriously. The police in the district are on the qui vive, but so far no trace has been gained of the murderous rascals. The way in which their work of plunder was effected proclaims them old and well-

practised hands in their nefarious vocation. *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express 14 July 1893.*

Picture: This house, Glenrock, 27 Glenview Cres, was occupied by a Mr C.F.M. Michelmores after 1890. He was the son-in-law of Charles Jeanneret. Was this the house that was burgled?

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Barefaced robbery at Hunters Hill

A robbery occurred on Tuesday night at Hunters Hill at the Rev John Jones' residence, the Eagles, Alexandra Street, which was of bold character.

After tea, one of the Misses Jones went up to her bedroom when she found to her surprise that chests of drawers had been ransacked and three gold brooches were missing. From Mrs. Jones' room two silver brooches had disappeared. As money in one of the open drawers remained untouched, it is surmised that the thief was alarmed. Constable Pilsbury has investigated the case. It is evident that they climbed up the verandah post which is partly screened by a tree and entered by the open window when it was hardly dark. Two strangers were seen in the road opposite Mr Jones' house at a quarter past six, and there seems little doubt that

they were the culprits: one kept watch while the other got into the house and effected the robbery.

Cumberland Mercury, Saturday 18 August 1894.

Picture: Rev John Jones and Mrs Jones at The Eagles, 57 Alexandra St Hunters Hill, 1892. Their daughter Harriett is on the balcony.

