## CEW Bean Prize Citation - 2015

## Dr Kate Ariotti

*'Coping with Captivity: Australian POWs of the Turks and the Impact of Imprisonment during the First World War'*

## PhD, University of Queensland

The experience of Australians held captive during the Great War remains relatively new territory in terms of research into the First AIF. Captivity may occupy an uncomfortable space in Australia's military history of the Great War, yet it was a part of that history. This is particularly the case for the men who were held prisoners of the Ottomans. Kate Ariotti's thesis, then, is part of a new and welcome expansion of an historical focus to include the intersection of Australian and Turkish military history. Interrogating the existing POW historiography, based largely on the experience of Australians in the Asia-Pacific War, the author examines the POW experience that included the difficulties of the transition from combatant to prisoner (seen as an emasculating experience, especially for those captured by an 'alien' culture), the subtlety of prisoner responses to captivity (setting to rest any notion that the men's reaction was simply a passive one), the loss of hope and identity for some, conditions in the camps, the use of prisoners as labour and responses to Ottoman culture (underpinned by racism). More significantly, Kate Ariotti examines the totality of the POW experience by providing the social and political contexts for Australians held as POW by the Ottomans. The support networks, changing attitudes at home towards the 'Turks' during the war, the links between those held in captivity and the families and 'fictive kin' who worried and waited on the home front, adjustments for the POWs on return, and the shaping of repatriation responses and memoirs after the war, provide a rich history of the men who were prisoners of the Ottomans. The thesis reflects extensive archival research along with a thorough grasp of the secondary supporting literature and is a worthy recipient of the CEW Bean Prize for Military History.