



CEW Bean Prize Citation - 2017

Mr David Woolley

‘Not Yet Diagnosed: Psychiatric Casualties during the Kokoda Campaign, 1942’

Honours, University of NSW (Canberra Campus)

David Woolley’s thesis is a well-structured and insightful study of a complex issue on the psychological impact of operations during the Kokoda Campaign. Exploring one aspect of a larger campaign, the work is deliberately narrow in scope in line with the normal practice of theses of this length. This has produced a focused study on the incidence of psychological casualties, attitudes toward them, and a comparison of such cases between AIF and Militia units.

David Woolley correctly asserts that in 1942 there was ‘no universally applied definition or means of describing breakdown in combat’ – something shared by all belligerents in World War II. This lack of a set of standardised criteria made the identification, classification, management and treatment of psychological casualties a very challenging and problematic process for military authorities. There were tensions between the attitudes of senior officers and medical staff in that the former often refused to acknowledge such conditions occurred, and the latter who cared for their patients. Given the current high profile of mental health issues within the military, this work is a timely contribution to that discussion, framed in the context of a well-known historical campaign.

David Woolley’s work explores a facet of combat that rarely features in histories of Australian forces *in* war. While most existing works in this area tend to focus on treatment of psychological injuries after discharge or out of the combat zone, this thesis is an important contribution for focusing on Second World War Australian incidences of psychological cases *in* theatre. David Woolley’s thesis is a worthy recipient of the Honours division of the CEW Bean Prize.