IN TWO ARMIES:
THE EXPERIENCES OF TWO SALVATIONISTS
IN THE FIRST AIF 1914-1918

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Commissioner William McKenzie's work as a chaplain in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) is fairly well known in Salvationist circles, his work achieving legendary status both during and after the Great War.[1] Lesser known is the contribution of his fellow Salvationist, Chaplain Benjamin Orames, who gave distinguished service for much of the war. The work of The Salvation Army in supporting the war effort in various wars, through its huts and canteens bearing the iconic Red Shield logo, has also been recognized.[2] However, Salvationists not only served in the support services during World War One but also as enlisted men in the AIF itself. This article explores the experiences of two Salvationists in the ranks during the war.

Salvationists were part of a small group of men in the AIF who could claim membership in two armies. A good many officers and men from the regular army and the militia enlisted in the AIF, thus technically also belonging to two armies simultaneously. The AIF was a force raised specially for the war, and officially separate from the regular army and the militia, which by law could not be used in overseas conflicts. Officers could, for example, hold commissions in the Regulars and in the AIF, often holding different ranks in each. Nevertheless, for all practical purposes, they were members of the Australian Army, with a single, undivided loyalty. On the other hand, Salvationists, while sincere and committed to their responsibilities in the temporal sphere, had a principal loyalty to the army that claimed their spiritual allegiance, The Salvation Army.

Officially, 666 Salvationists joined the AIF, an ominous-sounding number for biblically-minded people, fortunately tempered by the fact that such official statistics are notoriously unreliable. One Salvationist historian noted that some men had trouble persuading often religiously-ignorant recruiting officers that such a denomination existed. Other recruiters simply wrote "C of E" for anyone who answered "yes" to being Protestant, showing a marked indifference to the nuances of Protestantism, where both some Anglo-Catholic Anglicans and many non-Anglican Protestants were upset at being labelled as "Protestant" or "Anglican" respectively.[3] Methodist clergy were on record on a couple of occasions claiming that official figures severely underestimated the actual number of Methodists enlisted, while one unfortunate atheist who asked to be listed as "no religion" on his attestation papers was annoyed to find his identification tag stamped "Presbyterian". What he apparently did not realise was that the enlisting officer had put "Presbyterian" on his form, despite his

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Author's note: should any reader have access to a diary or letters of a Great War Salvationist in the AIF, I would really appreciate the opportunity to read it/them. Contact me at daniel.reynaud@avondale.edu.au

[1] Daniel Reynaud, *The Man the Anzacs Revered: William 'Fighting Mac' McKenzie, Anzac Chaplain*, (Warburton, Vic: Signs Publishing, 2015).; Daniel Reynaud, "The legend of William McKenzie", *Lucas*, (2:7, June 2014), 7 – 36.

[2] John Bond, *The Army that went with the boys: A record of Salvation Army work with the Australian Imperial Force*, (Melbourne: Salvation Army National Headquarters, 1919).; F. A. McKenzie, *Serving the King's Men: How the Salvation Army is helping the nation*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918).; "Serving the Armed Forces," https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-story/our-history/serving-the-armed-forces/, accessed 24 May 2019.; "History," https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/rsds/history/, accessed 24 May 2019.

[3] Daniel Reynaud, *Anzac spirituality: The first AIF soldiers speak*, (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2018), 18 – 20.; Bond, *The Army that went with the boys*, 151.; William Maitland Woods, letter, 21 February 1916, OM74-101-18, (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland).

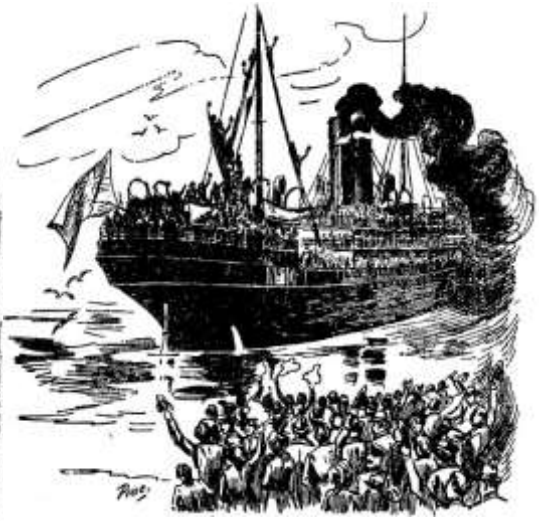
Illustrations from Charles Richard Pike's
"The reminiscences of a returned soldier" which appeared in *The war cry,* 1917[4]



Pike reading his Bible at the Broadmeadows Camp



Pike giving his testimony at a Salvation Army tent meeting at the Camp



Troops leaving for overseas service



Australian soldiers travel by richshaw in Alxandria, Egypt



Pike and two other Australian soldiers climb a pyramid, Egypt



Australian soldiers on parade near the pyramids, Egypt



Pike ready to land at Gallipoli



Pike in action at Gallipoli



Pike and others resting from the front, making roads at Gallipoli

[4] Charles Pike, "Reminiscences of a returned soldier", *The war cry*, (Melbourne, 7 July 1917), 2.; (14 July 1917), 2.; (21 July 1917), 2.; (4 August 1917), 2.; (11 August 1917), 2.; (18 August 1917), 2.; (25 August 1917), 2.

request.[5] The net effect of such haphazard data recording is that there were almost certainly more than the stated number of Salvationists in the AIF. In researching the spiritual experiences of the AIF, this author has read the diaries and letters of around 1,200 men and women, in the process stumbling upon the writings of two Salvationists in the ranks, Charles Richard Pike and Leslie Morris, whose experiences as members of two armies form the core of this study.

Pike served two separate stints in the AIF, first enlisting on 23 November 1914 in the 6th Battalion 2nd reinforcements, and being repatriated to Australia in October 1915 because of his wounds. He re-enlisted on 28 March 1917, serving for another two years in the 5th Battalion before returning in July 1919. Pike was one of the Salvationists initially enlisted under another religion. The 19-year-old baker's driver had "Methodist" written as his official religion during his first enlistment, though his account of his war service, published in *The war cry* over two months in 1917, show that he was a Salvationist.[6]

Pike was involved in the landings at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915, and soon after, his unit was transferred to Cape Helles to support the British offensive at the 2nd Battle of Krithia, where he became one of the many casualties in the botched attack. A bullet wounded him in the right forearm and upper arm on 8 May 1915 at Cape Helles, cutting a nerve and rendering his hand useless. He was evacuated to Malta and then England, but doctors reported that the wound led to "great wasting of muscles and [he] has not been able to raise the wrist. No power in grip at all." Surgery reattached the nerve, and he was promised some strength in his right hand after perhaps a year. With his earning capacity officially judged to have been cut by three quarters, he was repatriated to Australia and discharged as permanently unfit, and awarded a disability pension.[7] Clearly his former profession of driver was no longer viable, and he trained as a Salvation Army officer, for he still retained "an aggressive fighting spirit", being posted to Wangaratta as a cadet in May 1916.[8] But he also experienced a better-than-expected recovery, for in March 1917, he reenlisted in the AIF from the township of Numurkah, north of Shepparton, requesting training as an NCO, leading to the cancellation of his pension. This time, his profession was listed as "Salvation Army Officer," and his religion as "Salvation Army". He was eventually assigned to the 5th Battalion, and served in France during 1918, bouncing between the rank of private and the temporary and acting rank of corporal, a not uncommon phenomena as soldiers transferred between postings.[9]

It was at the start of this second period of service that Pike published a serial account in *The war cry*, "Reminiscences of a returned soldier", of his first term of service, commenting particularly on the tensions arising from his commitment to two separate armies, spiritual and temporal. The account begins with his induction into the training camp at Broadmeadows. That first night sharing a tent with noisy fellow recruits, he struggled for the resolution to read his Bible. "It was my usual custom at night to read a chapter from the Bible before retiring," he noted, "but the fellows were laughing and joking among themselves, and I had a struggle in my mind whether I should read my chapter or not. At last I pulled out my Testament and commenced to read. I saw the others look at me, and I felt my face getting hot, but I read my chapter, and then prayed, after which I turned in."[10]

[5] "Our Chaplains at the Front," *The Methodist*, (Australia, 17 April 1915), 13.; *The spectator*, (Melbourne, 23 October 1914).; Jack Sommers, Letter, 31 January 1915, MLMSS3012, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).
[6] https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8017651, accessed 13 May 2019.; Pike, "Reminiscences", (7 July 1917), 2.
[7] https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8017651.
[8] "The Salvation Army," *Shepparton news*, (Victoria, 15 May 1916), 6.
[9] https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8017651.
[10] Pike, "Reminiscences," (7 July 1917), 2.

Almost inevitably, this display of religiosity did not go down well with his companions, especially when he "determined not to mix with them in things that I thought were not quite above board…. I came in for a fair amount of chaff; they would try and upset me on every possible occasion, call me a 'wowser,' and a good many other fancy names."[11] Having found his courage, Pike took no offense nor counter-action to the ribbing, and it was not long before "they got tired of indulging in it, and soon they made me feel that they trusted and respected me. I regularly read my Bible and prayed."[12]

The impact of Pike's spiritual stand took an unexpected turn a couple of weeks into his stay, when one night "one of them asked me why I didn't read aloud. I told him I would be delighted to do so. I then read the chapters aloud for his benefit." Others in the tent also listened in, but some were upset at the public reading of the Bible. "Those who wanted to listen would tell the others to go outside till it was finished if they didn't like it." This led to what Pike described euphemistically as "lively scenes at times". Resistance was worn down until all but one stayed for the reading each night. This man "was particularly against Bible-reading and praying". Pike continued his narrative to its climax. "Well, one night he came in and asked me if I had read yet. I told him I had. He then seemed so disappointed that I told him I would be pleased to read it again if he would like it. He said he would, so we had that chapter over again. He was a regular attendant at the nightly reading after that."[13]

Pike's experience was not unique; other Christians received much the same treatment of initial mockery, followed by a growing respect, though few could claim his success in turning an entire tent (probably about 8-12 men) into willing listeners of the Word. The Presbyterian Thomas Alcock was one who read his Bible publicly as a deliberate witness, finding it difficult to concentrate because of the noise, and once being punched in the face by a drunken soldier while reading a Christian newspaper. He also noted that to pray "required some moral courage in front of the other men," but he continued his personal habits of devotion, and concluded, "the men … always respected my resolution, also the fact of saying grace before meal". Soon after, a tent-mate wrote him a note affirming his spiritual integrity.[14] A Church of Christ soldier recorded similar stress when choosing to pray in a tent full of bad language, and a similar tolerance once he made no big deal of it.[15] Indeed, one official historian of the AIF noted that, "Real soldiers were tolerant…. Provided a man did his job to the best of his ability, he could express himself in the manner he pleased."[16]

Nevertheless, Pike found his spiritual integrity under continuous assault. On the transport ship, even with the support of church services and religious sing-songs which gave him "a great uplift", he found "many temptations", but credited God's grace for overcoming them. Part of the problem was the lack of spiritual friends, though he became good friends with a non-Christian who was a "splendid sort of chap".[17] By the time he got to Egypt he was worn down. He wrote at length on the issue:

> It was while I was in Egypt that I had the hardest time with the devil that I ever experienced…. Perhaps I wasn't at all times in the camp what God would have had me be, but I never let the devil conquer me to any large extent. Away from all parental influence, all the religious effect is

[11] Pike, "Reminiscences," (7 July 1917), 2.
[12] Pike, "Reminiscences," (7 July 1917), 2.
[13] Pike, "Reminiscences," (7 July 1917), 2.
[14] Thomas Henry Alcock, n.d., Diary 2, 5, 7-8, 19, Diary 3, 20-22, MLMSS 1609, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).
[15] Percy Ellesmere Smythe, Diary, 11 May 1915, PR 01463, (Australian War Memorial Archive).
[16] Arthur Graham Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services, 1914-1918 Volume III – Special problems and services*, (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1943), 144.
[17] Pike, "Reminiscences," (21 July 1917), 2.

> a cold form of service that doesn't nourish one's spiritual life – and with everything dead against a man living a Christian, it took much prayer and faith to keep one on one's spiritual feet, but I testify to the fact that although I was very much shaken at times God's grace was sufficient for me.[18]

Pike experienced continuous pressure to join in with his group and drink – "be sociable for once" he was told on one occasion when reviving old friendships from his pre-conversion days. He was called a wowser for not drinking, but he just managed to stick to his guns and felt relieved to have stood up to pressure, opting for a lemonade in the face of a renewed round of mockery.[19] Interestingly, he did not mention his co-religionist Chaplain, William McKenzie, in Egypt, despite the high profile of this charismatic chaplain who sought out Salvationists across all units, and who took services for the 2nd Brigade, in which Pike served.[20]

Having resisted, sometimes barely, various temptations, Pike reflected on holiness in a characteristically Salvationist way. Sitting atop the tallest pyramid near Cairo, which he had climbed with his brother and a friend, he pondered on what he could see. Below him was a land that resonated with biblical significance with the stories of the Israelites, and the refugee holy family, and he wondered why "the holiest place in the world, seemed to be the most devilish". He concluded, "When I saw the power of Satan around me, it made me all the more determined to conquer him in myself".[21] Meanwhile, newly returned to Australia, in March 1916 he gave his testimony at a Harvest Festival, speaking "very assuredly of the power of God to keep from sin while at the front",[22] an assurance that seemed stronger on recollection than at the point of need.

Again, Pike's experiences were common to Christians in the AIF. Others noted the social pressure ramped up on young men removed for the first time from the supportive Christian networks of family, church and friends, and with the threadbare support of formalized church parades on Sundays, and forced to stand alone for their beliefs and practices. "We have a good deal to stand up against," wrote a teetotal young Baptist officer, "but everybody knows where we stand and they respect us accordingly."[23] However, many buckled under the pressure of the teasing, which could reach the level of verbal bullying, or worse. A Methodist Home Missionary in the ranks, George Henry Davies, fought a constant war against the corrupting influence of the Army, where, "Many a boy started doing and saying things since joining the army".[24] Presbyterian army doctor Wilfred Evans lamented the deleterious effect of military service on men, noting that it didn't make them more religious, "but on the contrary makes many forget the influences under which they lived their former ideals and has in an alarming number of cases an undermining influence on their morals".[25] One very youthful lieutenant, formerly a theological seminary student, was noted to have taken up showy drinking, swearing and smoking in an unconvincing attempt to fit in.[26] On the other hand, too forceful a moral stand could backfire and a couple of soldiers identified the preachy moralizing of "wowseristic Salvationists" as especially offensive as they appeared to assume the men had no moral standards at all. For all that, one of those diarists was unabashedly enthusiastic about Chaplain

[18] Pike, "Reminiscences," (28 July 1917), 2.
[19] Pike, "Reminiscences," (28 July 1917), 2.
[20] Reynaud, *The Man the Anzacs revered*, 86.
[21] Pike, "Reminiscences," (28 July 1917), 2.
[22] "Able to Keep at the Front", *The war cry*, (Melbourne, 18 March 1916), 12.
[23] Eric Harding Chinner, Letter, 2 April 1916, 1DRL0200, (Australian War Memorial Archives).
[24] George Henry Davies, Diary, n.d. circa 1916, 2DRL0789, (Australian War Memorial Archives).
[25] Wilfred Evans, Letter, 6 December 1916, 2DRL0014, (Australian War Memorial Archives).
[26] Sydney Robert Traill, Diary, 4 June 1918, 2DRL0711, (Australian War Memorial Archives).

McKenzie, praising him repeatedly despite the fact that his sermons pulled no punches on moral issues. It wasn't morality per se that provoked opposition, but the way in which it was presented.[27]

Pike's ability to resist the powerful social pressure to conform to patterns of behaviour against his religious principles was boosted by the friendship of likeminded comrades. "One thing that helped me was my chum. We were both trying to serve God, and we were a great help to each other, our salvation helped to draw us closer to each other – I believe we would have died for one another."[28] Again, the testimony of other Christians backs up Pike's experience that a close Christian friend, or better still a small community of Christian friends, was often the difference in helping men to stand up to pressure. Frederick Eales Brown found his faith severely tested by his war experiences, but a Bible study group helped revive his spirit.[29] Troopships often provided a stable social group of supportive Christian fellowship over several months. One man spent an hour a day talking on serious issues with a Salvation Army captain, while another helped form a Bible class on a ship to combat the blasphemous language of their mates and their own lax spiritual state.[30]

Ironically, Pike realized that while men may have mocked him, they also trusted him in preference to their drinking buddies. He was frequently given men's money when they went on leave, with "over twenty pounds belonging to them pinned up in my trousers' pockets", as they felt their wealth was safe with him. He also attributed his superior military skills in target shooting to his clean lifestyle, leaving him with "a steady hand and a clear eye".[31]

Another characteristically Salvationist concern was Pike's repeated desire for the salvation of those around him. Thrilled by the hearty nationalistic cheers of Australian soldiers, he added, "I would think what a glorious thing it would be if they were all converted and with such hearty voices sang the praises of God".[32] Reflecting on the "filth and revelry" of Egypt, he prayed "that God may take me and use me and give me power to break down some of the enemy's fortresses".[33] Once at the front, he used the shock of death all around to "tell the boys that they will need a Friend when they cross the river, and they need Him now".[34]

Pike recorded instances of religious consciousness in battle, something that is relatively rare in surviving war writings.[35] Before landing he spent a wakeful night praying and thinking of home, feeling that "God was very near to me". He submitted his future and fate to God's will.[36] Once ashore, he "knelt down and thanked God" for preserving his life on one occasion, while several near misses from snipers and shells prompted statements that "God preserved me".[37] Before the attack at Cape Helles where he was wounded he committed himself to God. He "began to feel a bit cocky" as he advanced unwounded while others dropped around him, but soon after was hit in the arm. Making his way back safely under heavy fire, he felt yet again that God had preserved him.[38] Shocked by the

[27] Archie Barwick, Diary, 22 July 1917, MLMSS 1493, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).; Theodore Wright, Diary, 16 September 1916, *The eager soldier: An Australian journalist's account of his life and the Great War*, (West Lakes, SA: Seaview Press 2007).; Reynaud, *Anzac spirituality*, 199-200.; Reynaud, *The man the Anzacs revered*, 1-2, 83-87.
[28] Pike, "Reminiscences," (28 July 1917), 2.
[29] Frederick Eales Brown, unpublished manuscript, MSS1360, (Australian War Memorial Archives).
[30] Frank Jones, "Letters from the front", *Launceston examiner*, (Tasmania, 15 May 1918), 7.; John Davison Wilson, Diary, 10 March 1916, MLMSS3057, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).
[31] Pike, "Reminiscences," (4 August 1917), 2.
[32] Pike, "Reminiscences," (21 July 1917), 2.
[33] Pike, "Reminiscences," (28 July 1917), 2.
[34] Pike, "Reminiscences," (18 August 1917), 2.
[35] Reynaud, *Anzac spirituality*, 146.
[36] Pike, "Reminiscences," (11 August 1917), 2.
[37] Pike, "Reminiscences," (18 August 1917), 2.; (25 August 1917), 2.
[38] Pike, "Reminiscences," (1 September 1917), 2.

death of his best friend from typhoid fever, Pike found the sorrow drew him closer to God, "and helped me to the resolution which I have now made", to become a Salvation Army Officer.[39]

At the front, he also saw a different attitude from the men around him towards religion that would appear to justify the old clichéd aphorism that there are no atheists in foxholes. In the two weeks he spent on Gallipoli, he noticed,

> … that men are not ashamed to pray when they get in the firing line. I knew some men who acknowledged that they had never prayed in their lives before, but they prayed then. Afterwards, when I was in a hospital, a lady came to visit us one day, and in the course of conversation asked how many of us there were who had not prayed on the peninsula. In that ward there were sixteen boys, and they all owned up that they had at times prayed to God to preserve them.[40]

Others recorded similar sentiments when newly arrived at the front. An unnamed officer in Pike's Battalion claimed that "many men" took up the practice of prayer, with a number of them being baptized and confirmed at Gallipoli.[41] A Presbyterian in the 5th Battalion wrote of being shocked into prayer, "a thing neglected of late I regret to say", after viewing the shattered remains of men after a bombardment at the Gallipoli landings in April 1915.[42] Others noted an increase in Bible reading, church attendance, hymn singing and prayer when a battle loomed.[43]

Had Pike spent longer than two weeks at the front during his first spell of military service, he might have noticed that this upturn in religiosity did not tend to last over time. Fatalism often replaced faith, even among Godly men, as religious behavior proved no advantage in temporal survival. "A day of prayer but I've lost faith in the Church and its lessons", wrote one discouraged soldier. Another reflected that, "There is no evidence that God is any nearer to the men at the front than anywhere else", while a stretcher-bearer noted after carrying in a wounded man wearing religious medals, "alas! charms, beliefs or creed play no part in man's preservation during war, bloody war". Aubrey Wiltshire, a battalion commander and son of a minister, wrote bitterly in his diary after a bloody battle, "And God laughed", while a surgeon wrote, "And contrary to what we all anticipated, the imminence of death and uncertainty of life on active service does not make men think more of religion and its consolations".[44] Even a man of such apparent rock-like faith as Chaplain William McKenzie entertained religious doubts and fatalism at his lowest points in 1917.[45] It would be interesting to have Pike's reflections on his lengthier service on the Western Front in 1917-18, and compare his conclusions with his earlier ones.

Nevertheless, Pike's writing highlighted the areas of conflict for Salvationists in the AIF, largely shared with their evangelical brothers across denominations. They felt the pressure of social intimidation to neglect personal devotions, especially as Army life lacked the capacity to provide private space, and similarly struggled to maintain personal standards of purity in language and action under the relentless pressure of the vulgar influences in which they were immersed. Their best

[39] Pike, "Reminiscences," (8 September 1917), 2.
[40] Pike, "Reminiscences," (18 August 1917), 2.
[41] "Religion on Gallipoli", *Melbourne weekly times*, (Victoria, 25 March 1916), 8.
[42] Richard Keith Phillips, Diary, n.d. circa 25-26 April 1915, PR04143, (Australian War Memorial Archives).
[43] Thomas James Richards, Diary, 24 April 1915, 2DRL0786, (Australian War Memorial Archives).; Samuel Erickson, Diary, 23 July 1916, privately held.; Francis William Rolland, *Presbyterian banner*, (Australia, February 1916).; 'Religion on Gallipoli', 8.; Samuel Jabez Richards, Diary, 20 June 1915, MLMSS2908, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).
[44] John Thomas Hutton, Diary, 6 January 1916, MLMSS1138, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).; Brown, manuscript, 22 December 1916.; Richards, Diary, 3 May 1915.; Aubrey Roy Liddon Wiltshire, Diary, 20 September 1917, MLMSS3058, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).; Evans, Letter, 6 December 1916.
[45] Daniel Reynaud, Carolyn Rickett, and Paul Bogacs, "Beyond telling: Narrating trauma in the wartime writings of Great War Chaplain William McKenzie" *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*, (Vol. 10: Iss. 1, 2016), 52.

protection was the support of other Christians who could offer the fellowship needed. Pike's Salvationist outlook is also reflected in his pursuit of personal holiness and in a deep concern for the salvation of others. The juxtaposition of Pike's two army loyalties was made overt at the end of his final instalment:

> After I arrived home I was brought before the Medical Board, and they concluded that my arm would never be fit for active service again, so I have been discharged from the Military Army, and now I am in the other – that which has God as the Captain and Leader, The Army that is fighting a long, hard, and continuous battle against sin and the devil.
>
> I have done my bit for my King and country, and now I am determined to do what I can for the King of kings. I have resolved to put my all into this fight – my mind, body, soul. I want to humbly offer everything I have got to Him, to be used for His service.[46]

It is ironic that his better-than-expected recovery led him to trade The Salvation Army for a second stint in the AIF, in which he was serving again by the time his reminiscences were published in *The war cry*.



The Salvation Army Wangaratta Corps Band 8 November 1916.
Corps Officer, Lieutenant Pike (back row, centre, holding the Bass)[47]

The second Salvationist diary encountered was that of Leslie Morris, whose war diary from July 1916 to January 1918 is in the Mitchell Library collection of the New South Wales State Library.[48] His enlistment papers record his profession as "Salvation Army Officer", signing up in Surry Hills on 6 December 1915 just shy of his thirtieth birthday. Morris was assigned to the Medical Corps, serving for some time in the 1st Australian Light Horse Field Ambulance in Palestine, holding

[46] Pike, "Reminiscences," (8 September 1917), 2.
[47] Photograph courtesy of The Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Melbourne.
[48] Leslie Morris, Diary, MLMSS 2888, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW).

the ranks of Driver and Corporal at times. It is possible that Morris requested a posting in the Medical Corps, a branch some chaplains helped Evangelicals to join who wished to serve their nation but were reluctant to take up arms.[49] Somehow, in the course of his service, The Salvation Army lost touch with their officer, for Brigadier A. S. Arnott wrote to the AIF administrators requesting Morris' address in October 1916. Morris was discharged in September 1919, but rather than returning to The Salvation Army, less than a year later he re-enlisted for service with the military forces occupying the former German New Guinea, serving at Rabaul as a medical orderly in the Medical Corps for a further two years. Curiously, this time his papers listed his religion as "C of E".[50] It is not known whether this reflects an actual shift in Morris's religious affiliation, or was an intentional or unintentional error.

Morris' writing is in many ways in contrast to Pike's. While the latter produced a memoir for publication tailored for a Salvationist readership on the spiritual challenges facing a Salvationist in the Australian Army, Morris' writing was more conventionally a diary, yet at the same time it was far more expressive and analytical than most Anzac diarists. He was a vivid writer, producing striking descriptions of scenes and events. Yet, like Pike, he did more than merely chronicle, constantly striving to bring out the bigger picture behind events with a didactic turn that could veer into the moralistic. His observations were studded with lengthy biblical references which flowed naturally from a deep knowledge of the Bible. At times, his war experiences came second to the many pages devoted to his interaction with biblical stories in whose setting he found himself. It appears that the immediacy of the biblical settings of Morris' war experiences outweighed the war itself. Even when his surroundings were not strictly biblical, Morris' deeply spiritual mindset was drawn to religious reflection. His social critiques, while not unusual among the rank-and-file in the AIF, were probably influenced by his down-to-earth Salvationist religious outlook.

Morris was contemptuous of military incompetence and stupidity, particularly of "our Officers in this Unit [who] are absolutely the most selfish and self-centred of any Unit". He thought these qualities were more evident in the Medical Corps due to it being officered largely by young doctors with no military background.[51] Finding his unit's horse-drawn wagons tangled in the narrow streets in Jerusalem after his officers got lost, he wrote at length his opinion of them, using Pauline cadences drawn straight from Ephesians 3:18:

> Oh the depth, and breadth, and height, the width and circumference, the richness and fertility of the brains of the Army. By some strange brain-kink, some curious and fearful contortion of the mental processes, which should give brain specialists in the future a wide field for study, we always seem to be doing something wrong, something absurd, something so childishly and futilely stupid it would amaze an infant.[52]

A long piece of "grousing" attacked the monopoly of the best accommodation in Cairo by the "nickel plated snobocracy", with hotels now "sacred to stars, crowns, crossed swords, etc., and other symbols of high rank (though not always high mental capacity)", forcing a fellow soldier to observe, "Oh well, there are always the brothels".[53] Morris added:

[49] Chaplains' reports, 1 June 1915, 1 September 1915, *Victorian independent and journal of the Congregational Churches*, 117, 172.
[50] https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=7986965, accessed 13 May 2019.
[51] Morris, Diary, 3 April 1918.
[52] Morris, Diary, 23 February 1918.
[53] Morris, Diary, 23 April 1918; 18 January 1918.

> The injustice of it rankles a bit. But it is always the same. Any extreme will be gone to, to secure the acme of comfort possible for Officers, and likewise, any ridiculous addleheaded regulation that help to harass and make uncomfortable the life of the soldier, quickly finds official approval and sanction. This too, in that most erroneously styled "democratic" army of Australia. Of course, we know that things like the above are the result of decisions of the English "heads", and are disliked accordingly.[54]

While condemning English officers for their "ludicrous ideas of class distinction", he had a high opinion of the ordinary English "Tommy" (unlike many of his fellow Australians), though he shared the usual Australian high regard for the Scots.[55]

His pen turned caustic after an order prohibited the wearing of shorts in the oppressive heat of Palestine, sarcastically observing that,

> … it is quite 'propah – y'know for the lowah-ordahs' to be deprived of any little comfort they may possess. Billjim [the generic nickname for the Australian soldier] must get his satisfaction and comfort from the indisputable fact that the war will be considerably shortened by these energetic and common-sense methods.[56]

Two days later he skewered the officers in witheringly satirical language:

> This is no less than a desperate, prolonged, and enervating struggle with the burning question of short wearing by men. The endurance, courage and resource displayed by the Authorities has been commendable in the extreme. There are whispers of several decorations as a result.[57]

Similarly, when officers were lavish in their use of water while the men were restricted to pitiful amounts, Morris attacked the attitude of the brass, though not without simultaneously reflecting that "there was nothing I abhorred so much as the class-cry in any shape or form". He decried the behaviour where "Patriotism is not helped, but red raggism and deep class hatred gets a mighty leg-up", recognising that any complaints from the men would be badged as either "An isolated case" or, if from a larger group, "treason and mutiny… [which] is plainly conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline. We must make an example."[58]

He also attacked the snobbery of Australian civilians who valorised the AIF in France but were patronising of those serving in the Middle East. One gravely wounded Light Horseman received a pair of socks from the Comforts Fund, accompanied by a note that read, "I hope these socks reach some brave hero in France, and *not* a cold footed shirker in Egypt". While admitting the greater intensity of the fighting in France, Morris noted the bravery of the men in battle and the unique hardships endured in the arid landscapes of Sinai and Palestine.[59]

However, Morris was no socialist revolutionary, proving himself a sound Empire man to the end, in much the same way as Chaplain William McKenzie.[60] He emphasised his faith in the British Empire and was "glad and proud" that "never even in her darkest and most unpromising hours during this war", when other Britons were "always ready to decry what she has done", was he doubtful of ultimate victory. When peace was declared, he admitted to "a great deep solemn pride," claiming, "Victory is ours now, and with clean hands, and calm clear minds, and a stern justice tempered with

[54] Morris, Diary, 18 January 1918.
[55] Morris, Diary, 18 January 1918.
[56] Morris, Diary, 18 April 1918.
[57] Morris, Diary, 20 April 1918.
[58] Morris, Diary, 13 September 1918.
[59] Morris, Diary, 18 January 1918.
[60] Reynaud, *The man the Anzacs revered*, 60.

a pleasing quality of mercy, the Allies are settling affairs to the satisfaction of a long-anguished and blood-weary world".[61]

He was also a patriotic though not uncritical Australian, with a sense of superiority over others, in this case the Jews, typical of his AIF colleagues. Reflecting that if Australia had existed at the time of the Exodus, "Infinite Wisdom would surely have transported His chosen people there", he was glad He didn't as, despite the "spineless asininity … ignorance and incompetence" of Australia's politicians, he believed they were "preferable to an invasion of the class of 'Chosen' that exist here".[62]

However, even his trenchant social observations take a back seat to his religious ones. The first extended piece of religious writing is unusual, for while it began with a reflection on the Egypt of the biblical Joseph's time, leading him to wonder, "is there any spot in this land that is *not* rich in historic interest!", he quickly moved to a discussion of his visit to the mosque in Ismalia. After describing the "curious" rituals required to enter the mosque and observing the worshippers bowing in prayer, he turned to evaluating the experience, observing that, "To the eye there is every appearance of real humility and true worship, but history sadly contradicts the effect produced, and a very casual acquaintance with your Arab proves the metal base. It does not seem to produce the genuine religious article."[63]

But before it could descend into a diatribe against Islam, Morris broadened his palette to include the behaviour of Christians:

> But then, one might say, what religion taken as a whole, does turn out a really creditable article. A great majority of these followers of Mohamet are the greatest rascals unhung, but what of that?, do not the same conditions prevail in the countries which are nominally Christian? The English, French, German, Russian, Italian, and Spanish speaking races, together with a host of others, are nominally Christian, but there are many thieves and swindlers, many extortioners and [illegible], many adulterers and murderers.
>
> Many a smug faced business man has filled his pockets, and built his fortune on the tears and blood of sweated workers, but he may yet be a pillar and member of a so called Christian Church. So perhaps it is prudent not to judge your Hussein or Achmed too harshly, or to criticize his religious tenets from the standpoint of the Article Produced.[64]

As a Salvationist, Morris was perhaps better equipped to critique the lapses of Christian nations than many of his fellow Christians, as much of the work of The Salvation Army at the time was focused on correcting the failures in righteousness and morality so rampant in Western society.

Morris also recorded several more incidents of the culture of "Mohammedanism", including a frenzied ritual from the followers of an Islamic teacher, and the procession after a wedding. The latter drew him once again into biblical reflection.

> The scene reminded me of the Scripture story of the ten virgins where the Bridegroom went forth to meet the Bride, except that it had been modernised by the carrying of Acetylene lights in place of oil lamps. How little in this old, old hoary land has the march of progressive civilization in the world affected it. Still men can be seen with the rudest of ploughing instruments, and the unequal yoke spoken of in the Scripture can also be often seen, a camel and an ass yoked together. Still, in the old way, in the villages most grind their grain between an upper and nether millstones.[65]

[61] Morris, Diary, 12 March 1918; 27 November 1918.
[62] Morris, Diary, 12 March 1918.
[63] Morris, Diary, 16 September 1916.
[64] Morris, Diary, 16 September 1916.
[65] Morris, Diary, 16 September 1916.

Four months later, Morris was declaiming over his time in Egypt, a nation that had seen the extremes of glory and shame, poverty and wealth, joy and sorrow. "Egypt," he wrote,

> the land the prophets cursed, and that has seen, to her cost, so many of those grim prophecies fulfilled, leaving in their wake a waste of buried cities, and barren lands a land given over to Mahommedanism and base practices, and yet is a clarion voice in the ears of all men who will hear, proclaiming the truth of Christianity, and the Scriptures. What a land it is, but it is getting monotonous.[66]

What most moved Morris' pen were the frequent biblical associations of his movements in Palestine. He wrote repeatedly and at length of biblical events that occurred in places he passed through or stayed in. Around Bethlehem and Jerusalem he did some intensive though sometimes hasty religious tourism, even volunteering to attend a Catholic service as being the only means of seeing the interior of the Church of the Nativity.[67] Other places evoked for him the stories of Samson and Delilah, David and Goliath, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, the two biblical Deborahs, Samuel and Elijah, the Mount of Temptation, Jericho and Herod. There is a hint that perhaps his spiritual fervour had waned of late, for his record of the valley where David faced off with Goliath carried the note, "And now I have stood, if not at the place, at least in the vicinity, and I felt all the old interest revive".[68] He could also find humour in some associations, as when he compared Jacob's pillow of stones with his own at El Enab where "we beat Jacob all to ribbons, for we had [an] entire bed of stones".[69]

Not surprisingly, it was Bethlehem and Jerusalem that had the greatest impact on him. On seeing Bethlehem for the first time from a low rocky hilltop, he wrote lyrically of:

> the Cradle of Christianity, the City where the Messiah was born, where, to a nation groaning under the tyranny and oppression of the Roman yoke, and waiting in its darkness and bondage for the dawning of the morning of Deliverance, He came, as a helpless Babe, for whose Mother, in her hour of travail, there was found no room in the inn, and who, perforce had to turn aside into a cave used to shelter the cattle of those who stayed at the Khan. A beautiful church, the Church of the Grotto stands over the place today.[70]

His mind ran through a roll-call of other notables associated with the town, including Rachel, Ruth and David. "What a host of sacred memories hover round this place," he wrote, adding that "a host of glorious recollections come crowding upon one, as he gazes. I do not think anyone could look upon this city unmoved. He must be strangely hardened and indifferent if he could."[71]

His response to the Via Dolorosa showed how deeply he was moved, walking a path "made sacred for all time by reason of the fact that along this way, bearing His Cross, the sublime Saviour of Man, Kingly even in his humiliation, trod His sorrowful way to Calvary. Of the feelings which dominate one on visiting such places as these it is hard to speak; Awe, Joy, Wonder, and a sense of deep reverence and love, all these are present, and more, but they are too deep and full for expression."[72]

It did not take Salvationist convictions to appreciate the Holy Land. Many soldiers commented on the rich spiritual history of Palestine, even if they had no religious convictions of their own. One Light Horseman wrote home of some lectures by a Chaplain "on the biblical history of the country

[66] Morris, Diary, 18 January 1917.
[67] Morris, Diary, 25 February 1918.; 17 March 1918.
[68] Morris, Diary, 16 February 1918.; 17 February 1918.; 25 February 1918.; 6 September 1918.
[69] Morris, Diary, 7 March 1918.
[70] Morris, Diary, 19 February 1918.
[71] Morris, Diary, 19 February 1918.
[72] Morris, Diary, 25 February 1918.

we are now crossing…. Had I been able to write this when those lectures were given, the account would have been much more interesting."[73] Another was given a guided tour of Jerusalem by an Oxford-educated chaplain who had "the history of the Holy Land off to the letter; it was most interesting, I can assure you, and it fully bears out the old history of the Bible. When a fellow sees all these places it makes him think very seriously."[74] Yet Morris' response to Palestine was in a league of its own in regards to biblical connections, and the diary reflects both a profound knowledge and a devout belief.

Morris could wax lyrical in describing nature, and an extended description of a wild storm segued into a spiritual analogy of unusual force. "A fierce unrest, tumultuous spirits ride in the gale," he wrote, "shrieking their way through the hills to that bare and desolate region where surely on such a night as this, the Spirits of all the Great Army of lost Souls might congregate and hold riotous carnival together, the region of the Dead Sea." He continued:

> Devils that stir men to deeds of oppression and violence, fiends that sow in men's hearts, the lust of pride and power that leads to war and bloodshed, sweep fiercely and exultingly by on the wings of the gale to the trysting place holding high carnival over the bones of the piled up dead, and counting those who shall fall on red fields to-morrow and howling through the barren hills, in cruel derision over those who are out wounded to-night, exposed to their fury and power. A wild, wild night, typical of the War Spirit that holds the world in its grip, wringing it to an agony of blood and tears that knows no staying. Ride on in your chariots of wind and storm and tumult ye evil spirits and rejoice for this is your hour, and the storm of darkness. And yet mayhap the world that tomorrow's sun will rise on will hold on to be better for thy passing, a world cleansed and purified by the very fury of thy passing. And so, we remember no good and perfect thing can come to us without sorrow, and tears, and pain.[75]

Morris' gift for language extended to writing poetry, of which there are a number of examples at the end of his diary. They all are poems dealing with spirituality. One, in best Salvationist style, is a defence against the condemnation of other Christians for having no formal creed. In it, Morris argued that creeds too often "Are full of their own conceits", concluding

I haven't a creed that a Church would own
But I reckon the Lord of Love
Will open the Gate, if a chap lives straight
And find him a place above.[76]

Another was a moralistic tale of a boy who bitterly regretted ignoring his mother's gift of a Bible before he went to war, apparently based on a conversation with a soldier he met.[77] A third contrasts the spiritual legacy of Palestine with its modern reality, a land of flies, fleas, scorpions and other pests. Its final stanza reads,

The Holy land's a golden place
To read about in books
But Billjim covered in its grime
Just sees it as it looks
There ain't no milk and honey
Corn and wine is out of date

[73] Verner Gladders Knuckey, Diary, 30 August 1916, PR03193, (Australian War Memorial Archives).
[74] Harry George Harding Permain, "Letters from the front," *The Pingelly leader*, (10 October 1918), 1.
[75] Morris, Diary, 15 March 1918.
[76] Morris, Diary, 25 June 1917.
[77] Morris, Diary, 24 June 1917.

And time here only stirs the chords
Of hate, and hate, and hate.[78]

Two other poems speak also of a measuring of present behaviour in the light of eternity, reflecting the Salvationist sense of urgency over salvation. In the first, titled "The Christian Soldier to his Soul", he anticipated "Life's great Sunset", where, "Though the Sun go down for ever/I have his unfailing Grace". In the other, he pondered on the sad fate of those who came to war as Padres but lost their faith and their morals along the way.[79]

While Salvationists in the AIF were genuine in their profession of loyalty to King and Empire, they also faced conflicting loyalties with their commitment to Christ and The Salvation Army. Even some non-Salvationists saw the differences between the two, one soldier writing with a mix of the facetious and the wistful, "I don't know how many times I wished that it had been The Salvation Army that I had enlisted in, instead of the A.I.F."[80] Life in the AIF tested men of faith, often to their limits. Chaplain William McKenzie faced this in various ways, such as when he was offered the tempting command of a combat Company on the grounds that he "was too good and valuable a man to be a *Padre*".[81] Pike was the most overt in outlining the challenges to his covenant as a Salvationist posed by his oath to King George, noting the constant pressure to conform to popular standards of language and alcohol use in the AIF that almost overcame his resistance, but finding practical help particularly through fellowship with other Christians, and maintaining a focus on holiness and evangelism. While Morris appeared more robust through his writings, there are hints of recognition of spiritual challenges at times, especially in his poetry. On the other hand, Morris, though less overtly concerned with evangelism and morality, demonstrated a more proactive Salvationist personal approach to life in the AIF, seeing the world through his spiritual-moral lens and making the most of the serendipitous opportunities to make the Bible come alive through engagement with locations of biblical narratives. It required commitment, courage and faith, but life in the two armies simultaneously could be an enriching experience.

[78] Morris, Diary, 23 July 1917.
[79] Morris, Diary, March 1916.; 12 April 1917.
[80] George Binney, "Letters from the Front," *Queensland times*, (Brisbane, 18 July 1918), 6.
[81] Reynaud, *The man the Anzacs revered*, 87-88.