

## The Boat Home

It was 1918 and the war was over. William felt nothing. He was scarred both physically and emotionally. He tried not to think back to Gallipoli and Turkey; he didn't want to. He was lying down on his bed, a torn dusted blanket lay beside him. It was more for comfort than for warmth. He stared purposelessly at the ceiling; it was white, stained with dots of black, along with scratches and dents. The boat was a simple vessel and nothing too fancy. Its small, tightly packed rooms gave him no privacy as other blokes with a bed in the same room came and went, probably trying to occupy themselves, to make the time go quicker. At the start of the trip it was exhilarating. They were going home and although they had lost so many mates, and for some people family, it had been the jolliest time yet. Now, not so much, although putting aside the sea sickness and the bad memories, it was comforting to know that the people who lost their lives would never be forgotten, for they fought and lost their lives for our country.

The sounds were tumultuous. Men and family shouting and waving as well as blinding glistening hints of light reflecting off rising sun badges pinned to the side of the slouch hats. All William could do though, was stand there, holding onto the railings with anticipation. His eyes scanned back and forth, searching for family or at least someone he knew. His eyes fell upon a figure and his heart dipped. He stared at the figure, shock, disbelief and happiness surrounding him. The person had sparkling blue eyes and wore a colourful dress, brown hair brushed her dress's collar. It was his Mum. She smiled, her happiness and joy lighting up his world. There she was, standing right there. All he had to do was get off the boat. He might be hating himself for crying as he threw his arms around her, but everything would be normal. Not really the normal he once knew. He would view the world differently now and he knew that wasn't going to change. For William he would never forget his mates, his companions. Left behind in the fields. But as Australians, we will remember them always.

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