



Newsletter No. 4, November 2022

Welcome to the fourth issue of the MLHWG newsletter! In this issue you can find out what some of our members have been up to over the past year.

2021/22 MLHWG workshop program

The Military Labour Working Group has run four workshops since our last newsletter. If you are interested in joining the workshop, have an idea for a workshop theme, or wish to present your work-in-progress, please contact the workshop organisers, Jeongmin Kim (jeongmin.kim@umanitoba.ca) and Lawrence T. McDonnell (lmcd@iastate.edu). All workshops are held on Zoom and we do our best to coordinate the huge variation in time zones of our members!

19 November 2021 *Concepts of military labour history*, presented by Pratyay Nath

25 February 2022 *Visual sources/analyses of military labour (paintings, photographs, drawings, film, cartoons...)*, no presenter, everyone discussed their own source

24 June 2022 *Gender and military labour*, no presenter but based on readings by Fia Sundevall and Jeongmin Kim

11 November 2022 *Intimacy in military labour, broadly defined*, no presenter, joint discussion.

That concludes our workshops for the year, but we are developing some ideas for 2023, so stay tuned and hope to see you there!



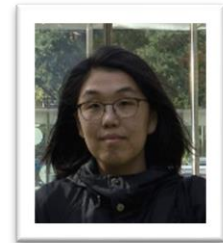
24 June 2022 workshop on gender and military labour



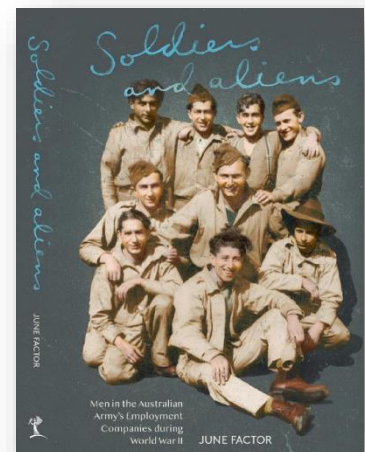
Member Research Reports

New publications

Jeongmin Kim has published "[Base Money: U.S. Military Payment Certificates and the Transpacific Sexual Economies of the Korean War, 1950–53](#)" in the *American Historical Review*, 127, no. 2 (June 2022). In the article, she discusses how US Military Payment Certificates (MPCs) became a common currency in local economies during the Korean War. By tracing how the military notes, which were supposed to be only valid within the US bases, became a global money as they moved across sexual black markets in Korea and Japan, she brings the sexual economies of war and base to the fore of the analysis of US military expansion abroad during the early years of the Cold War.



June Factor published [Soldiers and Aliens](#), an engrossing book about four thousand Australian soldiers in World War II who never fired a weapon. Their work was essential to the war effort, but as ‘aliens’ – non-British subjects – they were soldiers without guns. Scholars and peasants, musicians and factory workers, communists and royalists, of many religions and none, they all laboured under standard Army regulations, wearing army uniform, living in tents and huts, loading and unloading trains, working on the wharves, cutting timber and transporting goods. They raised money for good causes, and talented individuals and groups gave public concerts and theatre performances. At war’s end, some ventured back to a war-ravaged Europe; many stayed in Australia and enhanced this increasingly multicultural country.



Research on the move: A Fulbright year in the US

Olli Siitonen is writing their PhD in history on wartime killing at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Olli spent a year in Texas and Washington DC on a Fulbright scholarship and travelled to San Francisco to meet researchers who aim to help traumatized military veterans.

[Vietnam Center and Archives](#) at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX, is titled as the largest Vietnam War archives in the world. I was there for five months browsing through their collections of interviews and created a dataset of 700 transcribed and digitized interviews.



In Washington DC, I landed a desk in the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress working with the

[Veterans History Project](#) collections collecting

narratives of American veterans and digitising and transcribing letters. I highly recommend this place if you are dealing with LOC materials. Pro tips, they provide fellowships for up to 11 months if you've already got your PhD. Interested? Let me know and I can try to connect you to the right people at Kluge or the Veterans History Project.



Olli in Washington DC. In fear of demonstrations, they closed First Street and barricaded the Supreme Court for the summer of 2022.

At the end of my year, I travelled to San Francisco to meet members of an interdisciplinary research group at the SF VA hospital. They are developing psychiatric treatment for veterans who are suffering

from moral injury related to their personal experiences of violence. I hope to work with them in the future as they wish to know more about the historical and cultural context of wars.

Conferences and workshops

Alexandros Touloumtzidis presented a part of his ongoing PhD dissertation to the "[The Great\(er\) War of Military Occupations in Europe: Antecedents, Experiences and Legacies](#)" conference, held from 23 until 25 June, at the Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society (Cegesoma), in Brussels. The title of the presentation was "The British Military Occupation of Greek Macedonia: Approaching its Development through the Organisation of Public Works and Labour Relations in Salonica and in the British Military Sector". In the presentation, he argued that the British Salonika Force (BSF), as one of the two biggest forces that could create, reproduce and be the dominant regulator of labour relations in Greek Macedonia, was able to establish and consolidate its occupation in the region. The case of British military occupation in Greek Macedonia during WWI is of particular importance, as British presence and activities were taking place in an officially neutral state, with no authorisation to impose power over civilians through open force or mobilisation. Thus, the extraction of labour



Alexandros presenting his paper in Brussels



from civilians through contracts became one of the most effective tools for BSF, to consolidate its occupation and power over a large mass of population, and through which it easily maintained order in its military sector in Greek Macedonia. Through this presentation, Alexandros tried to provide more empirical data to reinforce the use of the analytical category of labour for the analysis of military occupations, while he also discussed the issue of free or coerced labour within the framework of a military occupation.

From 20 to 22 June 2022, MLHWG members **Fia Sundevall** and **Christine de Matos**, along with colleagues Anders Ahlbäck and Julia Heinemann, met at the University of Vienna to work on their special journal issue project, “Gender, War and Coerced Labour”. The special issue will be published in the journal *Labor History* in 2023, and is connected to the [Intersecting Marginalities](#) Working Group in the [Worlds of Related Coercions in Work](#) (WORCK), a [COST Action](#) project.



Working hard in Vienna, from left to right: Julia, Fia and Anders, with Christine's laptop

Getting to know our group members

One of our newest WG members is Cody Davis, so we asked him to introduce himself and share something about his research.

My name is Cody Davis and I am a PhD candidate studying at the [University of New England](#) under the supervision of A/Prof [Richard Scully](#) and A/Prof [Nathan Wise](#). My research looks at the experiences of married British, Canadian, and Australian soldiers who served abroad during the First World War



through examining their correspondence with their wives to construct what I termed an epistolary history of emotions. I commenced my PhD in April 2019 and have been studying full-time ever since, with some breaks owing to my work with the Australian Army Reserves and the general interruptions afforded by COVID-19. The focus of my research first began with my Honours project in 2018, in which I completed a case-study of three married British soldiers, looking at how they wrote of their wartime experiences with a focus on three key themes: duty, intimacy, and violence. My research provided a strong foundation for what has become my PhD thesis topic. The expansion of the research focus to include Canadian and Australian soldiers allows for a comparative analysis of the recruitment efforts throughout the British world and allows for the deepening of our understanding of the effects of distance and combat on the maintenance of soldiers' domestic, civilian identities. Through their letters, soldiers provided insight into their own personal understandings of their sense of authority, duty and responsibility as husbands, demonstrating the interplay between marriage, marital identity and military duty in a world at war.

The study of married soldiers from the British world provides a unique insight into the complexity of the civilian armies that fought between 1914-1918, and particular emphasis can be placed upon notions of necessary labour and the married man's clashing of domestic and military loyalties that framed his decision to enlist. Men's position as the dominant breadwinner within the British family was challenged by the outbreak of the First World War. As the war consumed an ever-increasing amount of people and materials, the British, Canadian, and Australian armies faced increasing manpower demands that eroded the unique status of married men as being wholly exempt from military service. By November 1918, the British, Canadian, and Australian armies had enlisted and conscripted (in the case of Britain) approximately 1.5 million (30%), 106,000 (22%), and 66,000 (16%) married men respectively. Their contribution was significant but was far short of the presence of married men within the continental European powers whose militaries had commenced the war with systems of conscription. The presence of married men within British armies revealed an influential reordering of the prioritizations within contemporary conceptions of masculine identities with military service gradually being asserted as the apex of manly expression. Married men, in efforts to conform to these new wartime orders, often chose to enlist, transforming their breadwinning roles within the household and physically removing them from their families. What followed were continuous efforts by these men to sustain their position within the households while simultaneously fulfilling their commitments as soldiers.

The documents that I examine are predominantly the correspondence these soldiers had written themselves, revealing a more immediate and raw sense of their emotional priorities in almost real time as events occurred. The letters and postcards soldiers sent home to their families were their primary form of communication and would constitute what has been dubbed the 'marriage via correspondence'. Within these letters, soldiers wrote about their daily experiences, the effects of military life and combat, and attempted to retain their status as husbands and fathers through offering advice on sustaining the households, discussing parenting and finances, and maintaining their emotional link with home. Navigating the frictions that arose between pre-war notions of domestic and paid labour within



marriage and marital identities flowed through the letters that soldiers wrote as they sought to combine their new military roles with their responsibilities as husbands and fathers. The collections of letters I have accessed come from archives located in Britain, Canada and Australia, and include the prominent archives of the Australian War Memorial, the Canadian Letters and Images Project archive, the Imperial War Museum, and the Liddle Collection of the University of Leeds, as well as published materials and private archival materials published online.

I look forward to contributing to and being a part of the Military Labour History group and speaking with and learning from all of you. Thank you.

If you would like to introduce yourself to the Group and share something of your research in the next newsletter in 2023, get in touch (christine.dematos@nd.edu.au)

Mailing list and Facebook group

We would like to remind everyone receiving this newsletter that the Working Group has a mailing list and a Facebook group for communication. Please feel free to use these channels of communication, for example distributing calls for papers for workshops and conferences within the field of military labour history.

To be added to the mailing list, please e-mail Olli Siitonen: olli.siitonen@helsinki.fi.

To join the Facebook group, make a request here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/militarylabour/>.

Coordinators' emails

Please feel free to contact the coordinators if you have any questions:

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