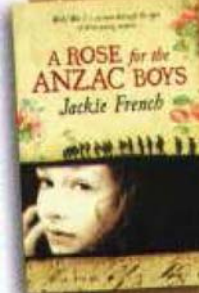




# REVIEWS

▶▶ Our Fiction Editor Julie Redlich reviews special books for Anzac Day

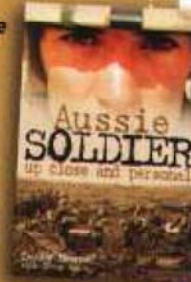


▶▶ *A Rose For The Anzac Boys*, by Jackie French, HarperCollins, rrp \$15.99. In 1915, 16-year-old Midge is a New Zealand girl at school in England who decides with her friends to set up a canteen behind the front line in France. This is a warm tribute to the thousands of women volunteers who served so courageously.

Extraordinary women in extraordinary times. We must remember them.

▶▶ *Aussie Soldier: Up Close And Personal*, by Denny Neave with Craig Smith, 12 Parasols, rrp \$34.95.

A selection of stories combined with extracts from diaries and letters home that reflect the values held by our armed forces. From World War I to the present, it shows the spirit and mateship that makes them what they are. For Grandpa or Dad, certainly, but it's one for everyone, whatever their age.



"I didn't fancy having to rescue an obstinate tourist stuck in a creek bed. Now I'm just enjoying your company." He grinned. "Tell me again, those directions."

"Why would I invent that awful Mitchell Springs road?" She paused. "It's almost as if Grandpa didn't want me to find his old home."

They drove on silently. Then Andrew spoke. "If you look to the left, by that large red river gum – that's my corner boundary."

She followed his gaze. "Look! Over there! Beyond the tree. That cottage. Please stop."

"It's just a burnt-out ruin."

"But it overlooks the creek. There's a pepper tree by an outhouse. It looks fine from here."

"I'll show you." Andrew turned off the motor and she scrambled out to join him.

"How long since anyone's lived here?"

"Not for years. There was a huge bush fire in the early 1950s. It killed 11 people, including the owners of this place, the Johnsons. They were sheltering in the house.

The fire changed direction and they were trapped. Their son had their only car and he was away somewhere."

"That's terrible." Sally followed Andrew across the narrow stone bridge over the creek. "Grandpa probably knew them."

"The relationship might have been closer," Andrew said. "I remember – the son's name was Tom. Tom Johnson. Switch the names: Tom Johnson – John Thomson. The dates are about right."

Sally stared at him. "Grandpa? Are you suggesting Grandpa was the son?"

"What do you think?"

"I don't know. But if ... if it was Grandpa, that might explain the weird directions. He didn't want us to find the farm. It would stir up too many painful memories. But why did he go to the city and change his name?"

"Think about it. His parents were dead. The farm – his livelihood – was destroyed. He was only young ..."

"And he would have felt guilty. His parents, with no car, unable to escape." Sally shivered. "His neighbours might have blamed him, too: for having the car, for not being there."

"So he changed his name to hide his identity," Andrew said.

"It fits, doesn't it? Poor Grandpa! He could have told us. We would have understood."

They wandered around the ruined farmhouse. Sally paused and looked around.

"It's just as he described it: the cottage, as it would have been ... the countryside.

At least he had happy memories."

She turned to Andrew. "You said something earlier about food."

He smiled. "Yes, then I'll show you around the winery. You can tell me more about your grandfather – and about yourself. Maybe over dinner?"

"And your etchings?"

"Etchings?"

"Yes, I have to have some excuse, or my mother will never believe me."

"Ah, of course ... etchings," Andrew said.

"Would watercolours in the gallery do?"

"I would think so."

There were some very nice landscapes ...

BY SUSAN FAIRBANKS

**IT'S JUST AS HE DESCRIBED IT ... THE COTTAGE ... THE COUNTRYSIDE'**