

BOOKS

civilian nurses to the fore. The work of nearly 300 New Zealand nurses during the war is almost unknown in Australia and Rees places them firmly within the ANZAC context. He devotes a chapter to the moving story of the sinking of the allied troopship *Marquette*, which resulted in the deaths of 10 New Zealand nurses and a lifetime of trauma for many more who survived.

From the personal records of many of these women, Rees has written a moving and personal story. He charts the course of the war for women such as Elsie Cook, married to the son of former Australian prime minister Joseph Cook, who served overseas to be close to her husband Syd, and Alice Ross King, who met and became engaged to Lieutenant Harry Moffitt overseas, only to suffer enormous loss when he was killed at Fromelles. None of the women who elected to serve overseas, either to be close to a loved one or for the sake of adventure, returned home unscathed. Rees's insightful and readable book makes it clear that their efforts and sacrifice need to be viewed in the same terms as those of ANZAC soldiers.

ELIZABETH STEWART

Combat medic: an Australian's eyewitness account of the Kibeho massacre

Terry Pickard
Big Sky Publishing,
2008, \$29.95



Just before ANZAC Day 1995, a small number of Australian soldiers, including Terry Pickard, were at Kibeho refugee camp as part of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. At this place they witnessed the killing by Rwandan troops of at least 4,500 civilians as part of the newly-installed Rwandan government's policy of forcibly closing camps that it claimed were providing sanctuary for individuals implicated in the previous year's genocide that had killed about 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu in 100 days.

In this book Pickard provides an honest, emotional and revealing account of the massacre and its traumatic effect on him. Then a sergeant in the Royal Australian Medical Corps, the author recounts the horrific experience of the Australian and

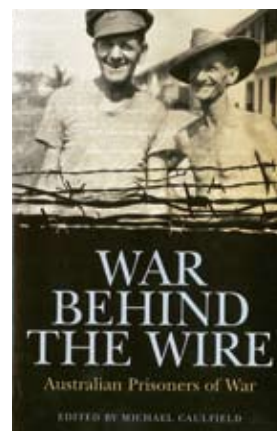
Zambian peacekeepers at Kibeho, whose officers made the difficult decision not to open fire on the Rwandan soldiers and so protect the refugees. Had they done so, the small number of peacekeepers would probably have been overwhelmed and the soldiers would have continued killing civilians. As well, the Rwandan government would have almost certainly demanded the withdrawal of the entire UN mission.

The Kibeho experience resulted in Pickard being affected with post-traumatic stress disorder, and he does not hide the devastating effect this illness has had, and continues to have, on his life. *Combat medic* will find its place alongside the other published Australian eyewitness accounts of Kibeho.

JOHN CONNOR

War behind the wire: Australian prisoners of war
Edited by Michael Caulfield

Hachette Australia,
2008, \$35



Several years ago Michael Caulfield set out with the ambitious task to interview Australia's surviving veterans of the First World War through to those who have recently returned from current deployments. Having conducted thousands of interviews in the intervening years, the fruits of Caulfield's labours are now in full season.

What is now his third book from this vast archive of wartime memories, Caulfield's latest is a collection of thematic vignettes from Australian prisoners captured during the Second World War and Korean War. The former prisoners tell their stories in their own words, providing a harrowing and confronting narrative of what life was like behind barbed wire.

It's a shame that all of Australia's First World War prisoners had died before Caulfield took on this project, as their voices and experiences are a glaring omission from this otherwise full suite of prisoner memories. He is, however, to be commended for including nurses and civilians captured by Japanese forces during the Second World War: they are so often overlooked by historians mainly concerned with the capture and imprisonment of combatant forces.

Although it does not offer anything

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