

Marks of War

War Neurosis and the Legacy of Kokoda

John Raftery

Marks of War challenges the myth that veterans returning from major conflicts re-adapt to their former life without difficulty. At a time when Australian forces are again involved in major international conflicts, its message is very pertinent.

Marks of War explores the long term outcomes of one of Australia's most crucial engagements in the Pacific during World War Two, the Kokoda Trail campaign. The story weaves the rich strands of the personal narratives of veterans into the broader tapestry of the history of war neurosis and war-related stress. It draws out the inner legacy of traumatic memory that shaped individual lives over time. While the majority of veterans survived and prospered, others were damaged. Every soldier was marked in some way. A second theme explored is the medical and psychiatric ideas and practices that framed the treatment of psychological casualties during service and in later years. The dominant medical opinion was that the casualties of war presented 'nothing new to medical science' – consequently, the toxic effect of battle was undervalued and veterans were largely denied the opportunity to make sense of their experience.

This book will appeal to anyone seeking a greater understanding of the long-term effects of traumatic stress, and in particular the thousands of Australians whose father or grandfather was involved in World War 2.

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*This is a graceful and meticulously researched book ... The richness of its material is exceptional ...
we discover the lives of flesh and blood men, not clinical abstractions.*

ALLAN YOUNG, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

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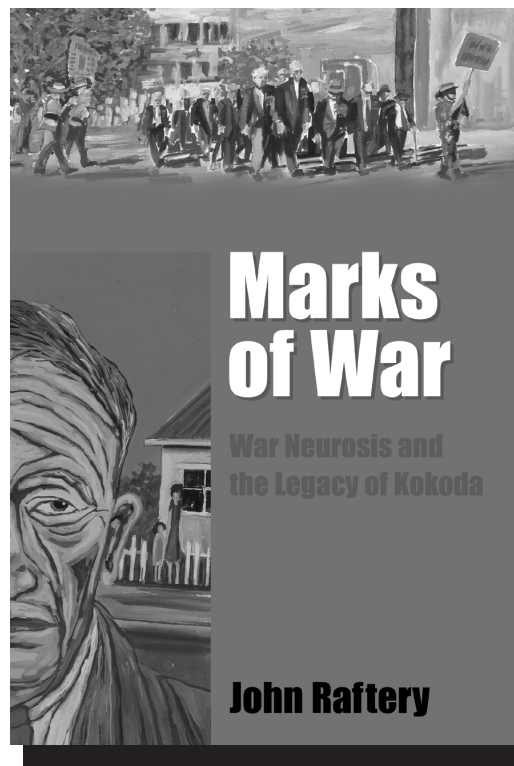
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