



Militaristic and ambitious, by the 1880s Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany had acquired an overseas empire including a 3,000 kilometre cordon of Pacific islands marking the Coral Sea's northern boundary, linked by powerful wireless stations and Admiral Graf von Spee's navy.

Did Australia have reason to fear Germany's Pacific power? Most definitely yes argues Dr Bruce Gaunson, having examined the views of competent analysts at the time and dramatic evidence from the Kaiserreich's records supporting those pre-1914 analysts.

Thus long before the AIF fought the Germans in Europe, Australians defied the Kaiserreich in Papua, Rabaul and on the seas, leading to the ultimate defiance on the Western Front.

The lecture will cover aspects of this epic struggle, why so many fought, the purpose behind their sacrifice, and how the AIF crowned its ordeals with a series of superb victories in 1918 which helped break the Kaiserreich.

Dr Gaunson has been a teacher, author, academic and intelligence analyst in Britain and Australia, he has a PhD in history and is the recent author of *Fighting the Kaiserreich: Australia's epic within the Great War (2018)*.

Time and Venue: Saturday, 6 April 2019, 2:00pm – 3:00pm, Goulburn Room, Level 4, City of Sydney RSL, 561-567 George Street, Sydney. Admission is free of charge but a gold coin donation would be appreciated.



Biography

Dr Gaunson was Head of History at Sydney Grammar School for thirteen years, and is now an independent historian and author.

Along with decades of researching and teaching history, he has used history's analytical methods to produce national Intelligence assessments, and has also published books in Britain, the USA and Australia.

Leaving a different path, he pursued history vigorously. Returning to the University of Queensland, he secured First Class Honours in History and won the university's Travelling Scholarship. This enabled a Ph.D. in Britain on World War II's imperial issues. Then came his first book, *The Anglo-French Clash in Lebanon and Syria 1940-45*. Having also resumed teaching, he became Head of History at Norwich School (founded 1547) and in those years he led Norwich students on First World War encounters in the Ypres Salient and the Somme.

Having taught and made welcome changes in Norwich's History Department, he came home to teach young Australians – but no Head of History posts appeared. In Canberra, however, he became the West Europe analyst at the Office of National Assessments, and relished covering German aspects of the Cold War settlements in 1989-91. A year on, he was Head of History at Sydney Grammar School. And here he found another First World War link: many private letters written by old boys at the front. These enriched his 1998 book *College Street Heroes*, the story of 1,765 old boys serving overseas in the Great War.

Dr Gaunson's current book, *Fighting the Kaiserreich*, gives Australian readers (for the first time) two books in one: Australia's own 1914-18 saga, and an over-arching narrative of the Great War. Both show us that the Western Front was where the Diggers fought Australia's hardest and greatest campaign – against the Kaiserreich. And the sources of thirteen countries support and enrich reliable accounts of great events and memorable people caught up in this war. There is also strong evidence, from long-neglected archives, which should alter some public myths about Australia's struggle with the Kaiserreich.