

[A view of the facade of the State Library of New South Wales, intercut with shots of old books and photo albums.]

[War stories. Our stories. Your stories.]

[Youth In War. A line of soldiers silhouetted against the sky.]

[Tracy Bradford, Head of Manuscripts, State Library of NSW.]

[TRACY BRADFORD]

0:08 – 0:24 In 1918, as the First World War was coming to an end, the principal librarian, WH Ifould, embarked on a very active collecting campaign to purchase the diaries and letters of men and women returning to Australia from the war. And that became known as the European War Collecting Project.

[Several old, handwritten notebooks.]

[MAN]

0:25 – 0:27 "By the time we reached the camp, we were dead beat."

[A series of war photographs - soldiers with full kit marching past abandoned carts. A man asleep in a rough bunk. Another man sitting in the doorway of a low shelter made from sandbags.]

[MAN]

0:28 – 0:34 "Then we were attached to our barracks - plain wooden barracks and wooden bunks, with damp straw racks for mattresses."

[TRACY BRADFORD]

0:35 – 0:46 In our collection here in the State Library, our youngest diarist that we're aware of is Keith Harris, who was 15 years old, and he actually was captured and taken to Germany as a prisoner-of-war at the age of 15.

[A photograph of a very young man in uniform, and a sketch of prisoners within a barbed-wire enclosure.]

[MAN]

0:46 – 0:56 "Then the Huns marched us to the bath house, clipped our hair as close as possible. The rest of the hair on our body was burnt off by a chemical like blue-grey paint."

[TRACY BRADFORD]

0:57 – 1:02 Ifould saw that there was an important need to collect this material for future generations.

[Douglas Marks - enlisted at age 19. An old book titled 'Army Book 152 - Correspondence Book - Field Service'.]

[Malcolm Donaldson - nephew of Colonel Douglas Marks.]

[MALCOLM DONALDSON]

1:04 – 1:12 He's an uncle I didn't know but know most of, because from a little boy I was told the story of Uncle Doug.

[A sepia-toned photograph of Douglas Marks.]

[MALCOLM DONALDSON]

1:12 – 1:22 He went in with a commission to the First World War, joined the 13th Battalion, and he was the second wave coming into Gallipoli on that particular night.

[MAN]

1:23 – 1:28 "We recovered 100 rifles and about 25,000 rounds with our little party alone."

[Will Davies, author of 'The Boy Colonel'.]

[WILL DAVIES]

1:30 – 1:36 Douglas Marks' diary follows his life on a day-to-day basis right through the war - through his wounding, through the battles.

[Photograph of soldiers and artillery.]

[MAN]

1:37 – 1:44 "Snow on the ground made my hands very cold and the exertion made me cough up a lot of blood. From here on, things just hazy."

[MALCOLM DONALDSON]

1:45 – 1:50 He went through both Gallipoli and the Western Front. But he came...he came home.

[Will Davies stands under an umbrella near the sea. It's raining and the distant headland is shrouded in fog.]

[WILL DAVIES]

1:51 – 1:58 It was a blustery day on the 25th of January, 1920, when Douglas Marks came here, to Palm Beach, with his family.

[A newspaper headline referencing a 'war hero' and a grainy reproduction of Douglas Marks' photograph.]

[WILL DAVIES]

1:58 – 2:06 He noticed that a woman was struggling in the surf, so he took off his coat and shoes and dived into the undertow and was lost.

[MALCOLM DONALDSON]

2:06 – 2:09 Her body recovered. His body never recovered.

[WILL DAVIES]

2:11 – 2:18 Nothing is better, nothing is more graphic, nothing is more profound than what you get through personal diaries.

