

Grief, Loss and Controversies – German First World War Memorials

Martin Bayer

Saturday 13 October 2018
12.00 pm public talk
BAE Systems Theatre
Australian War Memorial

TALK



More than two million German soldiers died in the First World War. Trying to understand a lost war and all its consequences is different from remembering great sacrifices that brought victory. In Germany, no common narrative could be established, as explanations for the loss were disputed among political factions. This is also reflected in the variety of some 100,000 war memorials that were erected. Some memorials expressed grief and remembrance; more nationalistic ones tried to prepare for the next call to arms, especially after the Nazis gained power. After 1945, the First World War became overshadowed by the Second World War and the Holocaust. Many memorials became rededicated to the later war, and there are still open controversies over some memorials' placement and message.

Martin Bayer

Martin Bayer holds a Master of Peace and Security Policy Studies (IFSH/University of Hamburg, Germany) and a BA in War Studies (King's College London, UK) besides vocational training as a photographer (Lette-Verein Berlin, Germany). Among other publications, he is the author of the First World War centenary study for the German Federal Foreign Office, *Not just on Flanders Fields – The First World War as Topic of International Cultures of Commemoration*. Having founded www.wartist.org, he gives lectures on topics such as the cultural dimensions of war, and organises art exhibitions. During 2015–18, he took part in an Australian–German research group on the contemporary commemoration of the First World War.



His exhibition *Germany's dead: loss, grief and remembrance* with photos of German First World War memorials can be seen at the Australian War Memorial, Captain Reg Saunders Gallery, until 2 December 2018.

history@awm