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ABSTRACT

This paper examines select USA-Australian military relationships and defense agreements; the parallel experiences of gold mining; and some biogeographical exchanges between the two nations.

Keywords: *Historical links, World War 2, NASA and space, gold rushes, botanical and zoological exchange*

This paper examines selected connections between two countries located on opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean, Australia and the United States of America. Instead of delineating such obvious physical similarities as comparisons of area and climate, or such apparent cultural and political parallels as English-speaking and increasingly multicultural democracies, it focuses on commonalities around three broad themes. *Guns* indicates military and defense-related scientific cooperation, reflecting the locational axis of these two Pacific Rim countries in opposing hemispheres; *gold* linked Australia and the United States during the mid-nineteenth century, leading in both countries to comparable geographic trends of rapid population increase, wealth creation, and technology transfer, while also creating an important legacy of distinctive, preservation-worthy cultural landscapes; *gums* considers a few interesting biogeographical exchanges between the United States and Australia, some beneficial and others environmentally detrimental. Not surprisingly, many of the links in these three categories relate closely to California, a clear result of the western location of the state.

Guns—the Battle of the Coral Sea and Its Consequences

Two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Australia declared war on Japan. On 19 February 1942, the Japanese dropped their first bombs on Australia in an air raid on the city of Darwin (Ward 1977). Subsequent bombings, and the damage to shipping inflicted by Japanese submarines, caused great alarm

among the Australian population, since most Australian troops were at that time overseas in Europe, fighting with British forces to defeat Hitler. The fall of "impregnable" Singapore to the Japanese forces, just four days prior to the Darwin raid, seemed to portend imminent invasion of the Australian continent by the "yellow hordes."

The specter of Asian invasion had haunted Australians since the former British colonies united in 1901 to form the Commonwealth of Australia. Concern increased in 1902 when Britain entered into a treaty with Japan and escalated again in 1905 when Japan destroyed the Russian fleet at the Battle of Tsushima. Australian Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, who warned of "yellow aggression," arranged with President Theodore Roosevelt for a visit to Australia during the global circumnavigation of the United States Navy flotilla, comprising sixteen battleships and 14,000 men (Macintyre 1999). They entered Sydney Harbour on 20 August 1908 to a rapturous welcome from 200,000 spectators (Figure 1). The Australian press christened the American ships the "Great White Fleet," a name referring to the gleaming paintwork.[1] During one week there, followed by a week in Melbourne and

Figure 1.—Great White Fleet entering Sydney Harbour, August 1908. New South Wales State Archives. Creative Commons.

in Albany, this American visit was celebrated with "a saturnalia" of banquets, parties, parades, picnics, and speeches (Figure 2). The affection was apparently mutual, as more than two hundred American sailors deserted in Australian ports (Ward 1977). Despite the obvious security needs of an island nation, the Royal Australian Navy was not established until 1911, when it comprised one battle cruiser, three cruisers, and three destroyers.

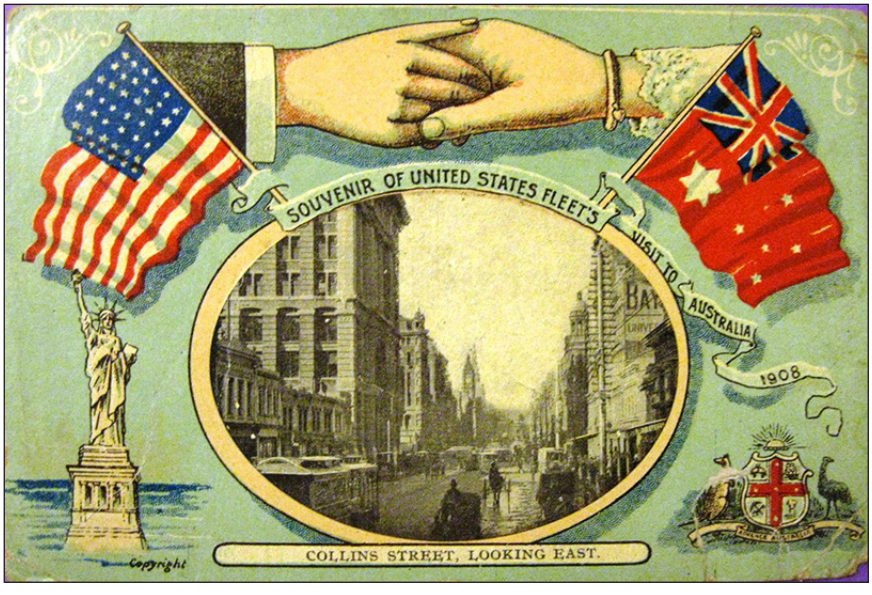

Figure 2.—Souvenir of Great White Fleet visit to Melbourne, 1908. National Library of Australia, courtesy Kaye Nicholson.

In December 1941, Australians trembled anew when Japan entered the Second World War. Seeking protection from the United States, Prime Minister John Curtin gave an historic New Year's message, declaring "Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom…" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 December 1941; (Ward 1997, 248). Over the ensuing five years, some one million American servicemen were stationed in Australia. American troops there, as in Britain, were described as "overpaid, oversexed, over here," and friction with locals occurred (Ray 2017), but the Australian nation did recognize its debt to these men. As Blainey (1974) noted, "without the intervention of American

military strength in 1942 Australia would probably have been invaded by Japan." Today, many younger Australians have little understanding of the role of the United States as protector and "savior" of the Australian way of life.

In April 1942, General Douglas MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the South West Pacific Area, assuming formal command on 18 April, shortly before the Battle of the Coral Sea (4–8 May 1942). Although losses were incurred on both sides, this battle proved to be the turning point of the war in the Pacific. The subsequent Battle of Midway, in June 1942, was a decisive defeat for the Japanese navy. People in tropical North Queensland still remember the Coral Sea battle with gratitude, because it was so close to their home region; some have claimed they could hear the guns blazing. A related part of the importance of the battle was the propagation throughout the year of 1943 of an infamous story concerning the "Brisbane Line," a supposedly secret American plan to abandon northern and western Australia to the invading Japanese, and to defend only that part of Australia south of a line from Brisbane to Adelaide (Burns 1998). Commemorative Coral Sea ceremonies are held each year in small coastal towns like Cardwell. On the fiftieth anniversary of the battle in May 1992, new memorials were dedicated in Townsville, Mackay, and Adelaide, while a memorial museum opened in Bowen (Figure 3). The seventy-fifth anniversary was celebrated in Sydney, and in 2013 the Australian Mint produced memorial Battle of the Coral Sea coins in silver and in gold.

Postwar Australia was a remote country with a small population, and in 1951 Prime Minister Robert Menzies warned that the country "could not survive a surging Communist challenge from abroad except by the co-operation of powerful friends" (Macintyre 1999). Thus Australia, New Zealand, and the United States became signatories to the ANZUS Treaty, or Pacific Pact, acknowledging the need for continued protection by the United States against attack from any foreign power (Figure 4). Tanter (2018) described the seven decades of the Alliance as shapeshifting from a guarantee against Japanese re-militarization to an imagined bastion of the Western world during the Cold War, then a niche in the global war on terror, and now a role in the U.S.-led *containment revenant* against China.

While Australia's southern hemisphere location and huge, empty desert areas became a vital part of space exploration, many Australians felt they were a target for hostile nuclear attack, and the "special relationship" became controversial when Australian troops were called to action in the Korean War (Ward 1977). Even greater protests were heard in the 1960s when troops

Figure 3.—Commemoration of Coral Sea 50th anniversary, 1992. R. Sumner.

Figure 4.—Signing of ANZUS treaty, 1951. Australian War Memorial.

were required for Vietnam and conscription by lottery was introduced; fifty thousand Australian troops fought in Vietnam between 1968 and 1972. Australian troops were later also deployed to the Persian Gulf, Somalia, East Timor, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The fiftieth anniversary of the ANZUS defense treaty was celebrated with special emphasis. Australian Prime Minister John Howard was actually in America for this purpose when the terrorist attacks occurred in New York in September 2001. Consideration of House of Congress Resolution 217, a Tribute to the U.S.-Australia Relationship and Recognizing the fiftieth anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty, was delayed; on October 16 it passed by a 413-1 vote (H. Con. Res. 217).

Military and scientific links were further forged between the USA and Australia during the 1960s as the "space race" led to establishment of a number of sites for the NASA Deep Space Network. Their first overseas deep-space tracking station was constructed in 1960, at the former Woomera Rocket Range in South Australia.[2] For the Mercury project, another station was built at Muchea, Western Australia. This was important to the flight made by John Glenn in the *Friendship 7* capsule in February 1962, when residents of the city of Perth turned on all lights so the city would be visible by night. The illumination was repeated in 1998 when Glenn returned to space aboard the shuttle *Discovery*; he declared "I think it looks even more beautiful now than it did 36 years ago" (C-SPAN 1998). Another West Australian station at Geraldton (1963–1974) was used for the Gemini project.

The Deep Space Station at Tidbinbilla, near Canberra, opened in 1965, soon joined by the nearby stations of Orroral Valley and Honeysuckle Creek. Other United States military communications bases in Australia, such as Northwest Cape (Western Australia), Pine Gap (near Alice Springs), and Nurrungar (South Australia), are download stations for satellite information; they operate under a veil of "national security" which gave Australians cause for concern during the years when nuclear warfare between the superpowers seemed a distinct possibility.

Probably best known is the one-thousand-ton Parkes Radio telescope in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), which was featured in the film *The Dish*, about the television broadcast of the Apollo 11 moon landing in 1969 to an audience of some 600 million viewers. Several events led to Honeysuckle Creek being the source of those images of Armstrong's first footsteps on the moon beamed out to the waiting world (Sarkissian 2001). The Goldstone station in California was connected with both Parkes and the nearby Honeysuckle Creek installation (NASA) (Figure 5). The installation

at Orroral Valley supported the 1975 USA-USSR Apollo/Soyuz meeting of astronauts and cosmonauts. It was not till 2018 that Australia established its own space agency.

Figure 5.—The "dish" at Honeysuckle Creek, now re-located to Tidbinbilla. Courtesy Jerry Everard, Canberra.

Gold in California and Australia

Prior to the California Gold Rush of 1849, gold had been discovered in several places in the Australian colonies. Perhaps the best-known case was the discovery in 1844 by the Reverend W. B. Clarke. When Clarke showed his find to the Colonial Governor, George Gipps, he was told: "Put it away, Mr. Clarke, or we shall all have our throats cut" (Macintyre 1999). But in 1849, when six-thousand optimistic gold seekers left Australia for the ten-week voyage to San Francisco, Governor Fitzroy decided to offer a reward of 10,000 pounds to the first man to discover gold in New South Wales. That reward was claimed in 1851 by Edward Hargraves, a genuine forty-niner who had spent a year at the California gold diggings (Bateson 1963; Monaghan 1966). After no apparent success in California, he returned to Australia late in 1850, sought out landscapes near Bathurst that reminded him of California gold country, and indeed found alluvial gold. Hargraves reportedly declared: "This is a memorable day in the history of New South Wales, I shall be a baronet, and my old horse will be stuffed, put in a glass case, and sent to the British Museum!" (Macintyre 1999). The discovery of gold in the colonies was welcomed, as thousands of immigrants now rushed to the Australian goldfields of New South Wales and Victoria. In the decade 1851–1861 the colonial population grew from 430,000 to 1,150,000. The richest goldfields were in Victoria, which in that decade grew from 77,000 to 540,000 residents (Macintyre 1999). The rush moved on to New Zealand, to Queensland, and by the 1890s to Western Australia. Many of the gold seekers were Americans, and there was great excitement in the Colony of Victoria in 1865 when the Confederate ship "Shenandoah" put in to Melbourne for repairs, with hope of recruiting men for the cause. More than seven-thousand colonists visited the ship on a single day; after a controversial encounter with the governor, they left with more than forty new recruits (Chaffin 2006).

The technology of gold mining was similar on both sides of the Pacific, and the modes of extraction shaped the landscape in similar ways. Early individuals seeking alluvial (placer) gold used shovel, pick, and pan. Soon the cradle (or rocker) and the larger "long Tom" came into wide use for stream and valley mining locations in California, and this technology was rapidly transferred to the Australian goldfields (Figure 6); dry blowing was adopted in areas of water shortage, especially in Western Australia. When surface gold deposits were exhausted, groups of miners dug timbered shafts to mines up to thirty meters below ground, raising the dirt with a windlass and bucket.

Figure 6.—Long Tom at Bendigo, 1857. Walter G. Mason. National Library of Australia.

To finance mining the deeper deposits, by the 1860s public syndicates were formed in both California and Australia, since hard-rock and deep-lead mining required large investments in heavy equipment, including machinery such as boilers, dams, winding machines, and stamp mills. Pneumatic drills, dynamite, safety cages, and pumping machinery were also required as mines were sunk deeper. Cyanide, zinc, mercury, and arsenic used in various ore-treatment processes left colorful but noxious tailings piles, which still mark the cultural landscapes of parts of California and Australia today (Scott 1971). In California, hydraulic mining for gold was more important, and more environmentally devastating, than in drier Australia. A great stream of water was directed through a monitor, a giant nozzle, toward a cliff face, to bring down the "dirt" into sluices. The abundance of water in the streams of the Sierra Nevada foothills enabled this cheap method of extraction, which between 1852 and 1884 led to a complete reconfiguration of the Sacramento River and the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta (Mount 1995). Tremendous flooding in the Central Valley, resulting from immense sediment loads, led to the construction in the 1860s of numerous levees, compounding the problem. River channels gradually became perched streams, and in 1875 the Yuba River broke through its levees yet again, causing devastation in Yuba City and Marysville. Political and legal action over the next decade led to a

cessation of hydraulic mining in California. At the close of the nineteenth century, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertook the task of dredging the rivers and building a system of levees for flood control. More than 1.5 billion cubic feet of mining debris was washed into the Central Valley during the boom decades of hydraulic mining in the Sierras, with forty percent of the load from the Yuba River (Mount 1995). The most striking of the California hydraulic mining landscapes has been preserved at the Malakoff Diggings State Park. Dredging for gold also left its mark on the landscape along the Feather, Yuba, American, and Tuolumne Rivers.

Transport in Australia's "golden era" also owed much to America. In 1854 four young Americans, Freeman Cobb, John Murray Peck, John B. Laniber, and James Swanton, established a carrying business between Melbourne and Sandridge (Port Melbourne), soon extending to the Victorian goldfields, and eventually into a network of routes throughout eastern Australia. Peck, the leader, had been employed by Wells Fargo in California, but the Australian company took the name Cobb and Co. They used the best horses and imported Concord coaches from America, as well as American drivers; the heavy Concord coach took its name from the city in New Hampshire. It used through-brace suspension, slinging the coach on leather straps instead of steel springs, to give passengers a more comfortable ride over rough dirt tracks and to prevent injury to the horses. Californians are still familiar with these same coaches from Wells Fargo Bank advertising. In the popular book *Roughing It*, Mark Twain wrote a humorous account of a ride he had made on the Overland Trail in 1861, describing the coach as "a great swinging and swaying cage, of the most sumptuous description—an imposing cradle on wheels…drawn by six handsome horses" (Twain 1913). Using similar equipment and business practices, Cobb and Co. quickly gained the reputation of being fast and reliable (Figure 7). The company eventually built its own coaches in Australia, but the last Cobb and Co. coach ran in Queensland in 1924.

The Golden Age in Australia, as in California, was a time of unparalleled excitement and tremendous growth and prosperity. One important American who caught the end of this era was the young mining engineer Herbert Clark Hoover (1874–1964), who spent a brief year in Kalgoorlie in 1897, making a fortune for his British employers—and himself—when he advised purchase of the Sons of Gwalia mine; this rich mine remained in production till 1963 (Figure 8). In both countries people now look back at those times with wonder and often with nostalgia. In Australia, the gold period

Figure 7.—Chinese passengers leaving for the diggings by Cobb & Co. coach, Castlemaine. State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection. Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 8.—Sons of Gwalia mine, Western Australia. Public Domain.

saw the formation of the sentimental national concept of egalitarianism known as "mateship" that remains part of the culture to the present day; this was not a component of the Californian experience. In fact, few Australian miners made their fortune, but worked long hours for low wages. However, their skills proved valuable as many of them fought in the trenches in World War I, and "digger" became the common term of address for an Australian soldier.

In contrast to the Californian experience of coastal cities, Australia today has a legacy of elegant inland cities, funded on the wealth of gold, still full of rich examples of opulent Victorian architecture, particularly in the State of Victoria. Californian gold towns are picturesque but have lost importance as functional regional centers. The most striking comparison is that of the California ghost town of Ballarat and the prosperous Australian city of Ballarat.

A final note on gold in Australia follows a circuitous path of connectivity, which will appeal to geographers who know that the highest peak in Australia is Mount Kosciusko (2,228 m/ 7,310 ft). This unusual Polish name was bestowed by the explorer Paul Strzelecki, in honor of his compatriot Thaddeus Kosciusko (1746–1817), a hero of the American Revolution who subsequently fought for Polish independence. In Philadelphia, the National Parks Service maintains the house where Kosciusko lived, and his bust is dis-

played in the Capitol in Washington, D.C.; and there are Kosciusko County in Indiana and the city of Kosciusko in Attala County, Mississippi. It was Strzelecki's claim that he was actually the first to discover gold in Australia, in 1839 near Hartley, NSW. In 1845 he published a report on minerals of New South Wales, but Governor Gipps had told him to "keep the matter secret for fear of the serious consequences" that would occur if the general public heard that gold had been found, so Strzelecki never received the reward (Scott 1918, 206–7).

Gums—Some Biogeographical Links Between Australia and the United States

When the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization sent a group of forestry experts from twenty-four countries on a Eucalyptus Study Tour of Australia in 1952, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, R. G. Casey (later Lord Casey), described these trees with the phrase "Australia's most dramatic export" (Stivens 1962). Gum trees, or the genus *Eucalyptus*, which contains 569 known species, are endemic to Australia, but the eucalyptus has been successfully introduced to many foreign locations, with some two hundred species being grown on other continents. Eucalypts are now widely found in Arizona, New Mexico, and Florida, while in California they are so numerous that many residents believe they are native trees. The gold rushes sparked a great demand for timber, but there is debate over who planted the first eucalyptus seeds in California—W. C. Walker of San Francisco in 1853, or perhaps Captain Robert H. Waterman in Suisun Valley (Santos 1979). There were many proponents of the eucalyptus in California, and they soared in popularity partly because of the sparse native tree vegetation found in many southern and inland regions. James Lick enthusiastically planted eucalypts on his San Jose property; Albert Workman, an Australian, or perhaps an Englishman who had spent time in Australia, planted eucalypts on his Canoga Park ranch in the early 1870s, as did Ellwood Cooper and J. L. Barker, both of Santa Barbara County. As chairman of the California Board of Forestry from 1886 to 1888, Abbot Kinney launched a program that resulted in the planting of thousands of eucalyptus trees. By the first decade of the twentieth century, as the demand for hardwood continued to grow in California, the state experienced a eucalyptus boom. Large plantations were created with expectations of profitable timber harvests in a short time, but ultimately the problematic properties of working the wood were revealed, and most of the trees were eventually used for firewood. Some of

California's agricultural landscapes still feature stands of mature eucalyptus planted as windbreaks, a practice that continues to the present. There are at least one hundred eucalyptus species growing in California (Santos 1997; Doughty 2000).

The second genus which dominates the Australian flora is the acacia, with 772 native species. Some of these have become popular in home gardens in America, although they can also spread invasively; two species are actually listed as noxious weeds in California, *Acacia melanoxylon* (black acacia) and *Acacia paradoxa* (kangaroo thorn). Yet another notable Australian tree is the swamp paperbark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), which now covers half a million acres in the Everglades, earning it a place on the United States Federal Noxious Weed List. Some Los Angeles freeways today are edged with silky oak trees (*Grevillea robusta*).

A controversial botanical exchange took place in the opposite direction with the large-scale introduction into Australia of *Pinus radiata* (Monterey pine), a tree native to the central coast of California (Figure 9). Industrial forestry developed after the Australian Forestry Council in February 1965 recommended a doubling of the area annually planted to softwoods for the following thirty-five years (*Yearbook of Australia* 1973). Native forests were cleared and radiata pine planted extensively in New South Wales, Victoria, and southeastern Queensland. By 2000, two-thirds of Australian tree plantations were softwoods, with *P. radiata* comprising seventy-four percent of the total area of softwood species, or 716,540 hectares (1.7 million acres). There was also some contention and opposition to the replacement of native

Figure 9.—*Pinus radiata* plantation. "Pesky Pines". http://arborage.com.au/2019/03/15/pesky-pines. Used with permission.

forest with exotic monoculture, which transformed not only the landscape but the associated fauna of Australia's Eastern Highlands. *Pinus radiata* is now regarded as a significant environmental weed in Victoria and South Australia, and as an environmental weed in New South Wales, the ACT, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia.

In drier parts of Australia, other exotic species were planted, including slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) and Caribbean pine (*Pinus caribbaea*) in Queensland, and maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) in Western Australia. However, there has recently been an increase in the area of hardwood plantations of native eucalyptus species, which are more environmentally responsible (Gessel, Turner, and Lambert 1999). By 2001 *Eucalyptus globulus* accounted for two-thirds of the hardwood plantation area in Australia (Gessel, Turner, and Lambert 2001).

In the early twentieth century, another introduced American species, the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia spp.)*, spread invasively throughout inland Australia, turning once-productive farmland into sterile waste until the successful introduction of the *Cactoblastis* insect from America. These indefatigable beetles chewed their way through the prickly thickets and saved the farmers. No wonder the citizens of the small town of Boonargo in 1936 erected the Cactoblastis Hall in grateful memory (Figure 10); this heritage structure is the only known building erected to an insect (*Queensland Heritage Register*).

Figure 10.—Cactoblastis Memorial Hall (Queensland Heritage Register 2006).

Turning to the animal world, it is clear that Australia suffers severely from feral animals brought to the continent by Europeans; camels, cats, dogs, goats, buffalo, and others wreak havoc on native species (McKnight 1995, 36). America played a small part in the import of

the infamous and deadly cane toad (*Bufo marinus*). Imported to North Queensland in 1935 from Hawaii, but native originally to South America, the poisonous cane toad spread throughout tropical Australia. A much happier introduction took place in the reverse direction; every California schoolchild learns how the introduction of the Australian ladybug in 1889 saved the orange orchards as it stopped insects preying on orange trees (Dolton-Thornton 2016).

Consideration of agricultural exchanges between California and Australia must include the importance of a pair of Canadian immigrants, the Chaffey brothers, William and George. In response to California's complicated water ownership laws, a mixture of riparian rights and other legal restrictions, they conceived the idea of a cooperative "Agricultural Colony," where water would be allocated to each farm according to its size. After success with the Etiwanda colony, inland from Los Angeles (now the city of Rancho Cucamonga), they developed the city of Ontario as a model colony in 1882 (Alexander 1928). The Chaffeys took their successful program to Australia in 1887, where they established the irrigated agricultural towns of Mildura and Renmark. Things went badly financially, although these two towns are today thriving agricultural centers. The company of Chaffey Brothers Ltd. went into liquidation in Australia in 1894; William returned to the United States in 1897 and undertook further irrigation projects here.

Conclusion

This survey has sought only to highlight some of the important political, military, scientific, and technological links, the historic associations in nineteenth-century gold mining, and a few historic biogeographical exchanges between Australia and the United States of America. It could have extended to the realm of sporting activities, including golf, baseball, cricket, tennis, swimming, yachting, and boxing. Another conspicuous area of interaction is the film industry, with many Australians starring in American movies, and an increasing number of American movies being filmed in Australian locations. The USA is Australia's largest foreign investor, and trade provides an important link. Tourism from the USA is an important sector of the Australian economy, particularly since the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, and the introduction of larger long-range aircraft on U.S.-Australia routes. The much larger role of American influence on Australian culture is a wholly separate investigation.

Notes

1 The name is also a reminder of the openly racist views of Australians at that time. The young CEW Bean (1908), newly hired by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, wrote a welcome poem declaring the people of both Pacific countries to be "of one stanch Northern race." When the fleet departed, WE Vincent's poem declared the "true fraternal cheer" of "brothers of the blood" in their "crimson kinship."

2 In 1946 the site was established for the Anglo-Australian Project, and rockets were designed and tested. In the 1960s–70s, the "Space Race" led to the Woomera range participating in the Mercury and Gemini programs.

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