



**THIS WEEK**

# Surviving the devastation

## POZIERES

By Scott Bennett

Publisher: Scribe

RRP: \$36.95

Review: Nina Valentine

POZIERES was both a victory and a failure, with 23,000 casualties suffered to gain a few metres of French soil.

The Anzacs, mostly raw recruits, would be exposed to “prolonged and murderous artillery and machine-gun fire”, making Gallipoli seem pale by comparison.

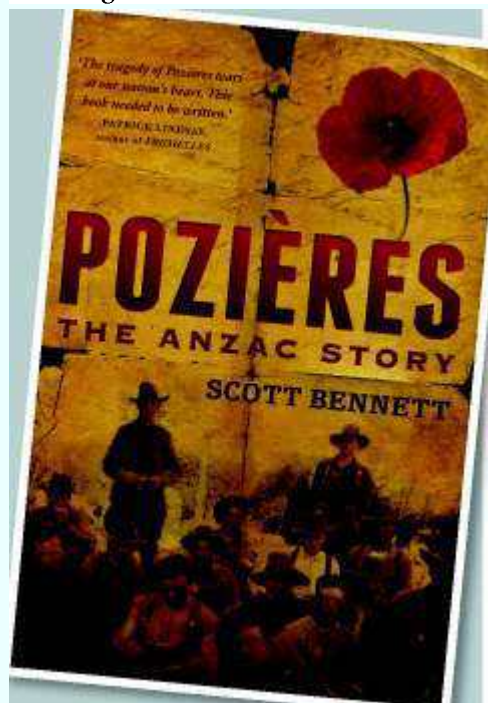
This ridge on a barren plain had to be taken at all costs, so wave after wave of men flung themselves at the well entrenched Germans.

The mortars which were to prepare the way fell silent 20 minutes before the attack was due to begin – they had run out of ammunition – so without covering fire, our soldiers were sitting ducks.

This devastating battle, as seen from letters, diaries, photographs and official accounts, is the basis for this account.

It differs from many histories because Scott Bennett writes of individual soldiers, including his great uncle who enlisted at the age of 14, making this human tragedy so much more real.

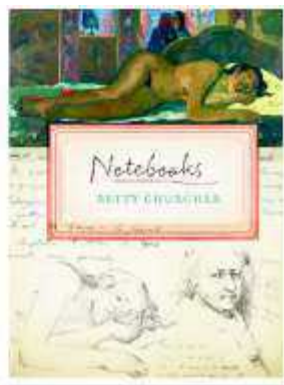
Some of the myths about the Anzacs are blown away by the truth of Pozieres, but this new wind has brought with it the knowledge that war is never the answer – no one wins in reality – as it is all about surviving the devastation.





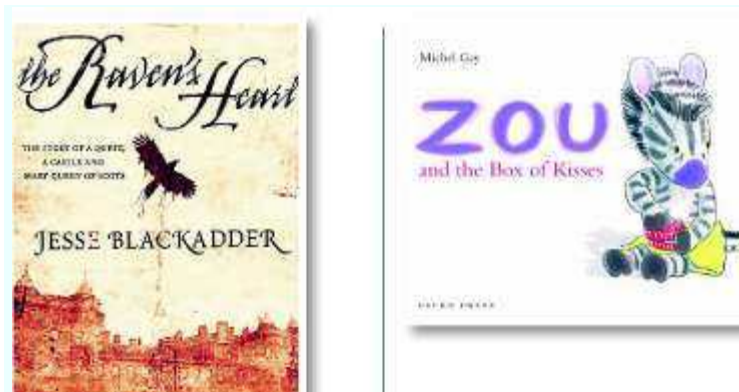
**I'LL WALK ALONE**  
 By Mary Higgins Clark  
 Publisher: Simon & Schuster  
 RRP: \$32.99  
 Review: Nina Valentine

ALEXANDRA, better known as Zan, is a gifted interior designer, whose marriage has failed. Her son, Matthew, was abducted from Central Park in New York while he was being cared for by a young babysitter. In three years, there has been no sign of him, nor have the police any idea of where he might be or why he was snatched. Zan has not given up hope that he is still alive somewhere and that he will be returned to her. By chance, photos appear of that time at that place, with a woman walking away with a small boy in her arms. That woman appears to be Zan, so suddenly she is accused of kidnapping her own son. So there's the plot, and the solving of it all, takes the reader on a scary roller-coaster ride, whizzing from one short chapter to the next, anxious not to miss one breathless change of speed.



**NOTEBOOKS**  
 By Betty Churcher  
 Publisher: M.U.P.  
 RRP: \$44.99  
 Review: Frank Nolan

WHEN Betty Churcher started primary school in Brisbane in 1936, she discovered that while her classmates could out-run, out-jump and out-spell her, none could out-draw her. Her natural talent for drawing has been a wonderful asset throughout her career. When her eyesight began to fail in 2003, it was her ability to draw which helped her to commit to memory pictures which she most wanted to hold in her mind's eye. She made one last trip to London, Paris, New York, Madrid and Rome to visit great galleries, view her favourite paintings, and make drawings and notes to help her remember them. *Notebooks* is a record of that trip and Churcher writes with clarity and humility as she leads the reader to discover intimate details of the paintings and experience their exquisite beauty.



**THE RAVEN'S HEART**  
 By Jesse Blackadder  
 Publisher: Fourth Estate  
 Review: Nina Valentine

WITH research into the family name, Jesse Blackadder turned up some riveting material and she has used it here to great effect. Mary Queen of Scots was tall and slender and often dressed as a man to check on her subjects in the streets of Edinburgh. Knowing this led Jesse Blackadder to have Alison Blackadder work her way into the Queen's favour, because she had been masquerading as a boy for many years in order to evade the law. Alison's burning ambition was to win back the family fortunes, and its traditional seat of Blackadder castle, and she was prepared to go to any lengths to achieve this lofty aim. Of course there were bound to be problems aplenty, but with many clever twists and turns, Alison sets about her quest, using her friendship with the Queen to maximum effect, and maximum peril.

**ZOU AND THE BOX OF KISSES**  
 By Michel Gay  
 Publisher: Gecko Press  
 RRP: \$14.99  
 Review: Joan Steinman

ZOU, a little zebra, is worried about going on school camp as he will miss his mum and dad. But his wise parents pack him a box of kisses, small pieces of paper which his mum and dad have kissed. He has one for each night and one for each morning and a few to spare. But on the first night, Zou shares his kisses with a little zebra that is badly missing its mum and dad. Then the other little zebras each want a "lolly kiss". Soon there are none left but Zou has made lots of friends and is too excited about the camp to miss his parents. This is an endearing picture story book about Zou's first night away from his parents. It is reassuring that he finds he can cope on his own. This is heart-warming story for children from kinder age, and would be great fun to read aloud.