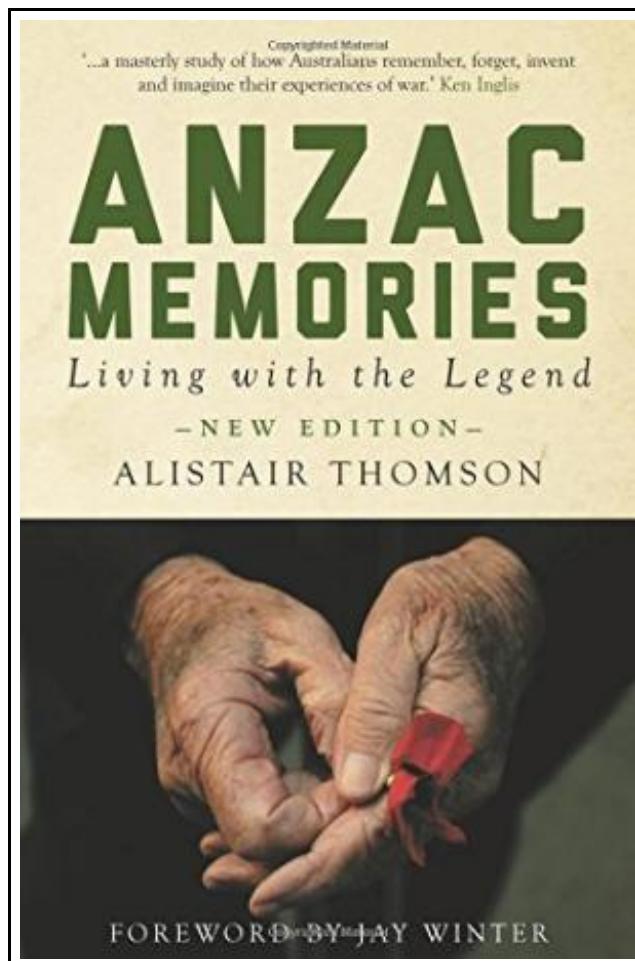


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Monash University Publishing, Australia, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 2nd edition. 231 x 155 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. What is taboo in any family or in any society is never fixed. And neither is that body of family information which everybody knows but no one talks about. Mental illness is one such subject, and it created a kind of fence around one central element of Thomson's work in the 1980s - his grandfather Hector's story. He has had the courage to take that fence down and use a range of sources to enter the no man's land of suffering and isolation which was a part of his grandfather's life, and perforce, that of his grandmother and the young child who became his father. When the first edition was in preparation, Alistair Thomson's father objected strenuously to any mention in the book of his father's (Alistair's grandfather's) mental illness; reluctantly Alistair agreed to leave out the subject. We can understand why the author's father, himself a soldier, felt so strongly. The images were too hard to bear for the man who was a young boy in the 1930s, living through very, very hard times with his disturbed father after his mother's death. Now, afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, but still able to read the text, he gave his son permission to tell the story. And it is a compelling and important one. From that story, we see the price families and in particular wives paid for the multiple wounds men brought home with them from war. What the second edition shows was the sheer force of survival in his grandmother Nell, who had not only the handful of two small boys to raise, but a damaged husband to...

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