

Ernst Muster (1886-1952)

Ernst Muster, the son of Johannes and Anna Zuber Muster was born in the canton of Berne, Switzerland. As a child he tended the family's cattle in the mountain parish of Lutzelfluh –a job he loathed. In Switzerland, he did 15 months compulsory service in the artillery. He first visited Australia as a crew member (kitchen hand) in the cruise ship *Bremen* in 1910. Dec 1911, he jumped ship 'Koenigin Luise' in Sydney. On settling in Footscray, he found work as a butcher at Angliss Meatworks. In 1913, he married Karen Lovig (1884-1956), daughter of Robert Lovig, a South Melbourne "marine dealer". The couple had two children named Karen and Ernst.

Ernst Muster was a naturalized Australia. Even so, on the outbreak of the Great War, some work mates suspected him of being a German and treated him cruelly. Thanks to wearing a heavy woollen coat, he survived the ordeal of being locked in the meatworks cool room. In 1917, Muster enlisted for the first Australian Imperial Force. His record identifies him as Ernst Muster, 31 years, living with his wife at 46 Newell Street, Footscray. He was a Roman Catholic, but signed as being Church of England, as his Norwegian father-in-law was a protestant.



Ernst Muster in uniform, 1917



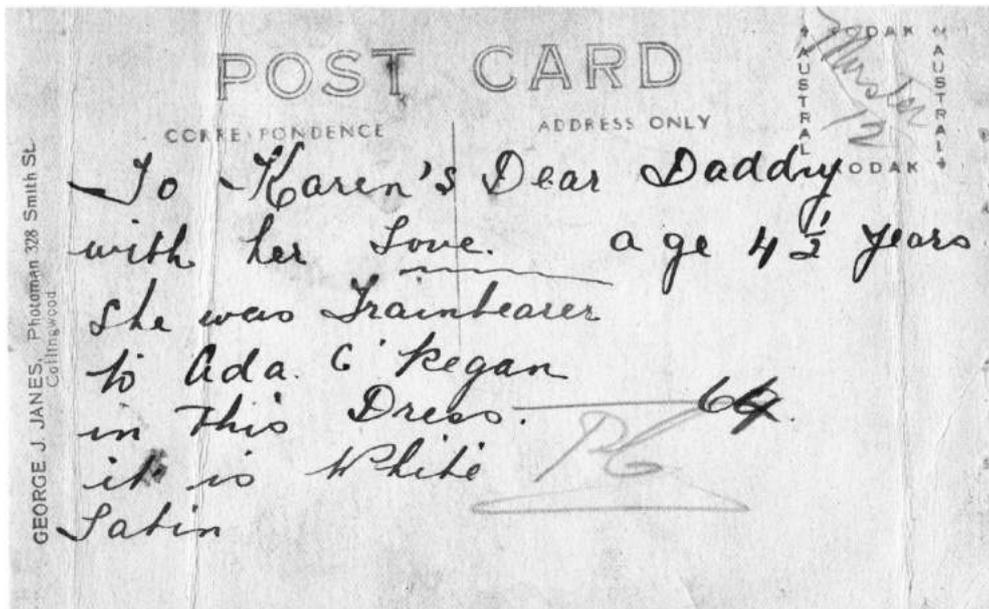
Ernst Muster with his wife and daughter, both named Karen



Ernst Muster in uniform 1914-18, annotated by his son Ernst Leslie Muster



Post card of Karen Muster (jnr) as flowergirl to Ada O'Regan



Verso of Karen Muster post card

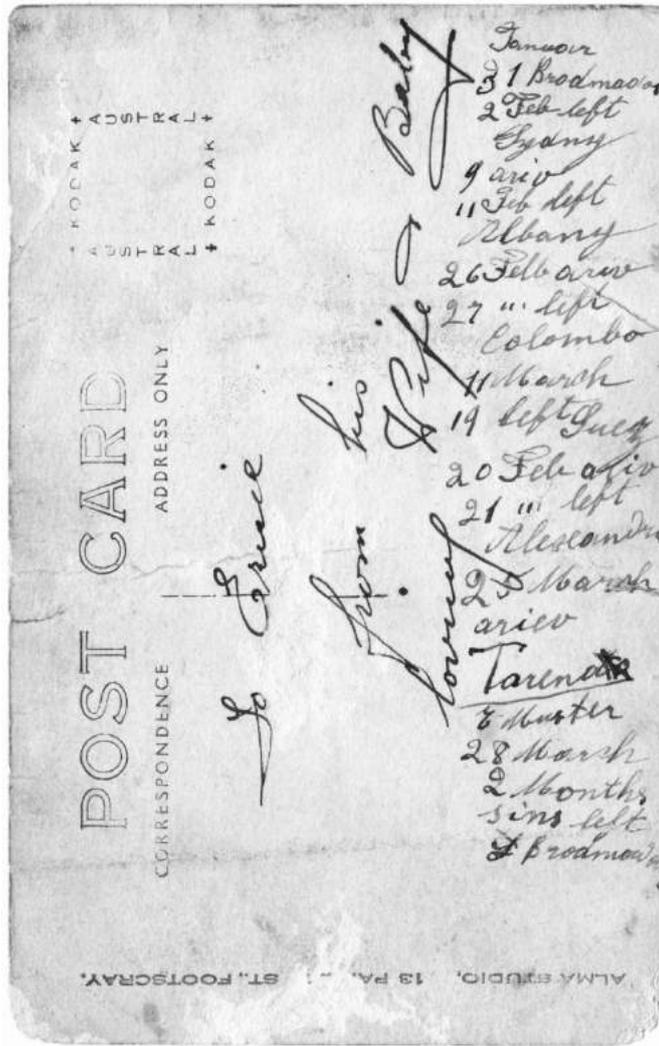
As a private, Muster trained at Broadmeadows, then embarked on the *Wiltshire* with the 8/39th Battalion, sailing from Sydney to Southampton, England. While serving in France in 1918, he was victim of a gas shell. At the Chichester hospital, he was treated for gas poisoning and subsequently invalided out of the army. He sailed home on the *Ascanius* in April 1919. A plaque at the Springvale Cemetery recognised that he died through war-caused illness in 1952.



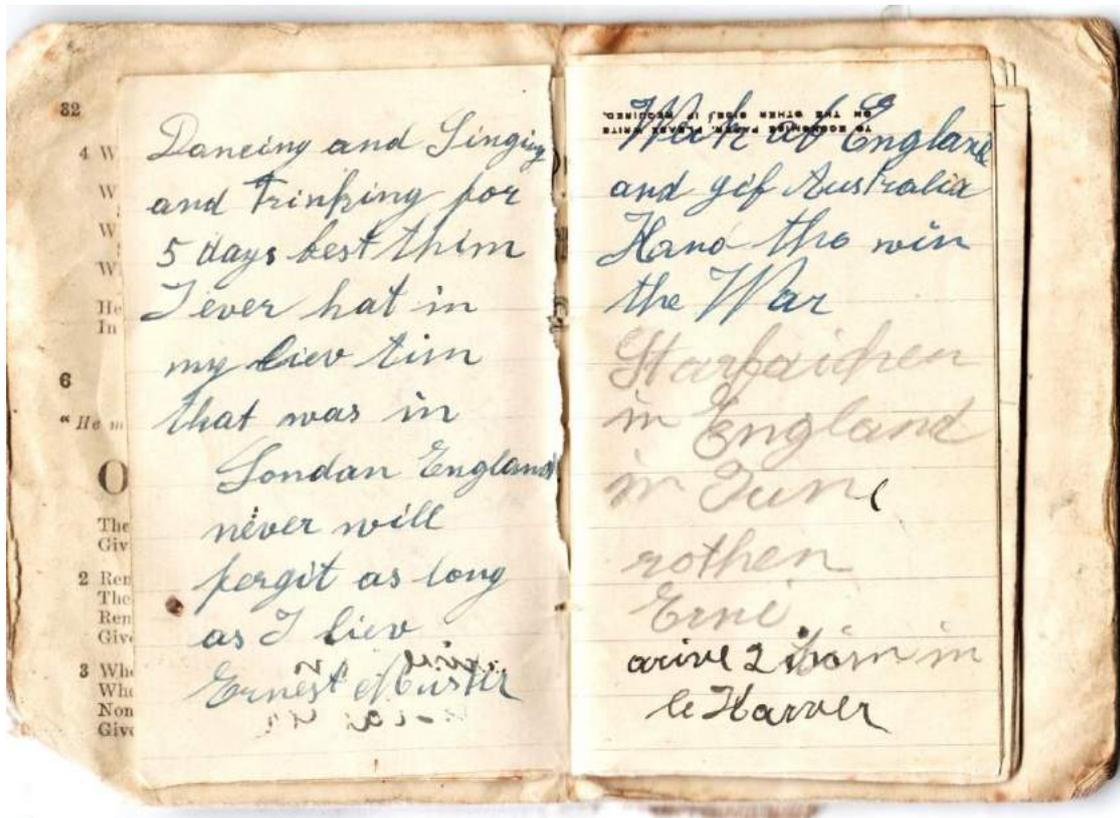
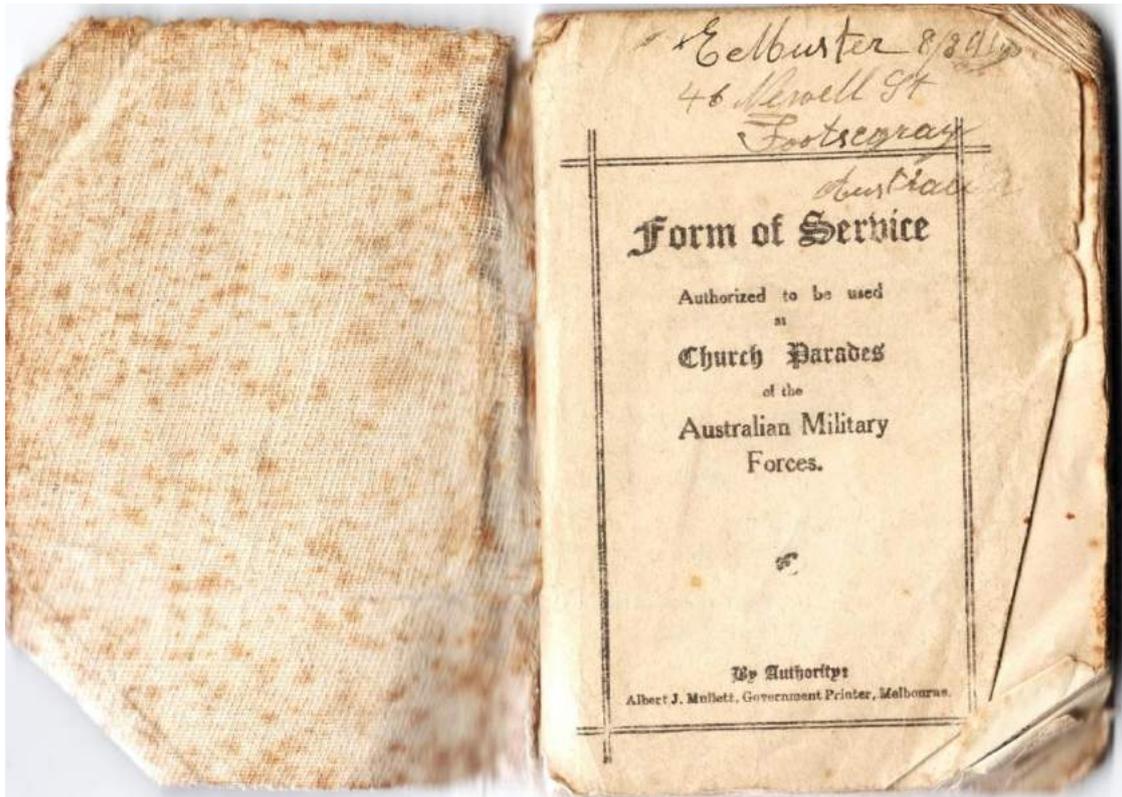
Broadmeadows training camp, 1917 (Ernst Muster centre)



Ernst Muster is in middle-ground group, to left of upright rifle (unknown location)



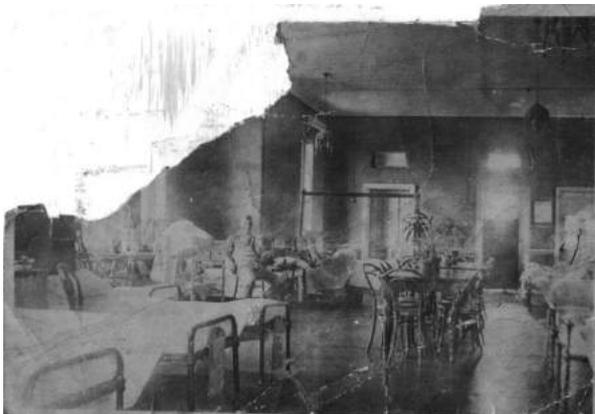
Post card "28 months sins (Ernst) left Broadmeadows"



Rough translation: "Dancing and singing and drinking for 5 days – best time I ever had in my life time that was in London England. Will never forget as long as I live, Ernest Muster"



During the war, Ernst Muster met up with his brother Emil Muster who worked as a chef in France.



Ernst Muster was treated for gas poisoning in 'Graylingwell' Chichester which was converted to a war hospital from 1915 -1919



*Muster home at 6 Cowper Street Footscray
Central figures are Karen Muster and her husband and son,
both named Ernst. Maternal Grandmother Lovig is on far left.*

The house at 6 Cowper Street was bought by Emily Lovig in 1915. Her daughter Karen purchased it from her in the early 1920s. The address has been home to three generations of the Muster family. Ernst Muster's granddaughter has kindly made his war memorabilia available to the society for this project.



THE CITY OF
FOOTSCRAY

HONOURS
FOR BRAVE

This is to Certify that
Ernst Muster:

Served the British Empire in the Great War for the sacred cause of Freedom, Liberty, and Justice, and is entitled to and duly accorded the thanks and appreciation of the Mayor, Councillors, and Citizens of the City of Footscray.

Signed on behalf of the Mayor, Councillors, and Citizens.

Alberta Harris
Mayor

John Gent
Town Clerk

Dated 12-8-19

IN FREEDOM'S
CAUSE