

CAIRNS  
ART  
GALLERY

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15 MAR –  
15 JUN 2025

**WAR QUILTS**

*THE ANNETTE GERO  
COLLECTION*

ARTWORK LABELS

# Lucy CARROLL

## ***Soldier On***

2013

cotton, silk, tulle, assorted threads,  
Swarovski beads, hand-dyed,  
machine-pieced, free motion quilted

Private collection

***Soldier On*** is an interpretation of the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, by the contemporary quilter, Lucy Carroll. The Roll of Honour is a reflective space, and the placing of a poppy - the official emblem of remembrance - beside it is a poignant act which connects us to those fallen soldiers through the generations.

***Soldier On*** is also the name of a charity founded by soldiers to help other wounded soldiers.

## **Maker unknown**

Prussia

## ***Intarsia with soldiers***

c.1760-1780

wool, hand-sewn, intarsia

The Annette Gero Collection

**Its purpose unknown, this quilt from Hesse features rows of soldiers at the top and a military band at the bottom.**

**The initials J.S.J. refer either to the maker or the person for whom the quilt was made, originating from the period of Frederick II (1712-86). Known as Frederick the Great, the achievements of his reign include patronage of the Arts and of the Enlightenment in Prussia, and his final success against great odds in the Seven Years' War.**

# **Samuel SADLOWSKI**

## ***Prussian Army quilt***

c.1806

wool made from leftover scraps of Napoleonic era military uniforms, hand-sewn, no backing

The Annette Gero Collection

**Signed S.S., E.W.S., this quilt was brought to Australia by a Silesian family in the 1880s and was made by their forebear of five generations past, Samuel Sadlowski.**

**Sadlowski was a tailor in civilian life and lived in Soldau (near Danzig) but while in the Prussian Army during the Napoleonic War, he was taken by the French. As a Prisoner of War he sewed officers' uniforms and from leftover scraps he created three quilts. This surviving one is said to be his best.**

**The storyboard at the bottom illustrates a popular German children's song, *Fox, you've stolen the goose*.**

## **Maker unknown**

England

## ***Lion quilt***

1760s

intarsia, hand-made, appliqué centre, wool

The Annette Gero Collection

**Likely to have been made by tailors during the period of George III, the symbolism of the central animal may be a joke played on this monarch because of his presumed madness. The quilt displays an extraordinarily difficult pattern of intarsia (inlaid) pieces.**

## **Maker unknown**

India or England

### ***A soldier's patchwork with incredible border***

c.1855

felted wools taken from uniforms, hand-sewn, hand-applied bead work, textural layered appliquéd border

The Annette Gero Collection

**Embroidered textural layers and bead work feature in this mosaic patchwork quilt. The regimental colours are those of the felted-wool uniforms of England's 37th Regiment of Foot, with flags in the middle baring the emblem of the regiment. A highlight is the border composed of remarkably detailed appliquéd hearts, diamonds and flowers.**

## **Michael ZUMPF**

London and Bohemia

### ***The Intellect and Valour of Great Britain***

c.1870

wool from Victorian military and naval dress jackets, silk embroidery threads

The Annette Gero Collection

**Quilts made by inlaid piecing are extremely rare, and how this early technique of Prussian origin migrated to later English quilts such as this intricate example, remains a mystery.**

**The central panel is finely worked with a scene at the House of Commons showing Disraeli, Gladstone and a large gathering of military and political statesmen in a colonnaded interior beneath a portrait of Queen Victoria.**

**Using extremely small pieces of fabric, a tailor made this reproduction of a print of a painting called *The Intellect and Valour of Great Britain* by the English artist, Thomas Jones Barker (1815-82), who specialised in military personnel and the Crimean War. Britain was approaching the 'golden age' of its empire during this era. The rich range of coloured fabrics were drawn from regimental dress uniforms of the nineteenth century.**

## **Sgt. Malcolm MACLEOD**

India

### ***Mid-Victorian regimental bed rug***

before 1868

wool, mostly uniform fabrics, inlaid, with embroidery, hand-sewn and embroidered

The Annette Gero Collection

**The exceptional embroidery and inlay skills required to make this quilt belonged to Sgt Malcolm Macleod.**

**Completed in India whilst with the 72nd Duke of Albany's Own Highlanders, his workmanship garnered a medal at the international fair known as the Glasgow Industrial Exhibition of 1865-66.**

**The central square documents in meticulous embroidery Sgt Macleod's rank, his regiment's colours and area served, namely, 'E. Indies '65'.**

**The famous Duke of Albany's 72nd Own Highlanders were sent to fight in multiple battles, including in Pondicherry, India, against the French in 1781. From 1858 to 1865 the regiment was again posted to India during the 'Indian Mutiny' of 1858. They earned honours for fighting in South Africa, Russia and in south and central India in the 19th century.**

## **Maker unknown**

Silesia

### ***Quilt with inlaid chessboard***

mid 1800s

woollen cloth, inlaid technique, hand-sewn

The Annette Gero Collection

**The patchwork of this quilt is made from military uniforms with a central chequerboard square surrounded by geometric patches. These pieces are inlaid, butted together and overstitched from the back.**

**The chessboard in the middle may substantiate the theory that these quilts were travelling games boards; in officers' circles of the eighteenth-century chess was recommended as a strategic exercise.**

## **Maker unknown**

India

### ***Beaded soldier's quilt***

c.1869-1870

fulled wool, beading, hand-sewn

The Annette Gero Collection

**Countless decorative beads enhance this military quilt. Since many Indian textiles featured beads and mirrors, perhaps this technique came from the region in which the regiment was stationed.**

## **Maker unknown**

Crimean War

### ***19th-century Soldier's hexagon patchwork quilt***

Late 1800s

wool from uniforms, hand-sewn

The Annette Gero Collection

**Made by a soldier, hexagon patches of red, navy and cream felted wool are featured in the central concentric design and striped border of this quilt. The sewing has not been executed with any special skill, suggesting the soldier may have stitched it while recuperating in hospital.**

## **Maker unknown**

Britain

### ***Intarsia quilt made by a British sailor***

1800s

wool felt, probably uniform fabric, hand-sewn with embroidery and appliqué

The Annette Gero Collection

**It is known that a sailor made this highly embellished quilt aboard a British ship. He must have sailed widely to present symbols of the American flag and shield, the British flag, an Australian kangaroo, a Canadian beaver and varied compass stars shown in several inner borders.**

**The scalloped outer edges bear appliquéd letters spelling the four seasons, all made from tiny round fabric sections cut out from buttonholes.**

**Although when found it was accompanied by a newspaper article describing how the maker gave this quilt to his aunt in Connecticut, sadly its provenance was destroyed in a flood.**

## **Maker unknown**

Crimea

### ***'From Brother to his Sister' Crimean War signature quilt***

1854-1860s

hand-embroidered, woollen military uniforms

The Annette Gero Collection

**This example is rare because soldiers' quilts seldom survived with any provenance or history. Out of the abject theatre of war, a quilt could represent an expression of love from the hand of the maker to family members.**

**Here a dedication from a soldier to his sister is modestly stitched with embroidery thread: 'A present to my sister Mary from her brother John'.**

## **Maker unknown**

India

### ***Patchwork intarsia with no seam allowance***

1860-1890s

wool, hand-sewn

The Annette Gero Collection

**An outstandingly intricate quilt, the centre is surrounded by a multitude of tiny diamond pieces followed by a boarder of stars, then the middle border of tumbling blocks followed by more diamond borders. Every seam is covered by a tiny strip of braid. Due to its complexity, it was probably made by a regimental tailor whilst the British were in India.**

## **Maker unknown**

England

### ***Flag quilt of the 38th Regiment of Foot***

c.1815

intarsia, hand-pieced, silk embroidery, wool

The Annette Gero Collection

**This quilt shows many of the wars fought by the 38th (Oxfordshire) Regiment of Foot, a light infantry regiment of the British army in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The embroidered flags most likely represent the places in which they fought or are flags of the armies they conquered. There are also four panels depicting English scenes at each edge and a tribute to Queen Victoria.**

**The 38th Regiment of Foot notably served in the American War of Independence and the Peninsula Wars.**



## **Maker unknown**

Germany or England

### ***Greek or Phoenician Galley***

c.1850

intarsia, hand-sewn, wool

The Annette Gero Collection

**Ancient Greek and Phoenician boats carried the carved symbol of an eye to protect sailors, who believed the boat would see around obstacles. It is probable this intarsia was made by a sailor.**

## **Maker unknown**

France

### ***Harlequin intarsia quilt from the Napoleonic War era***

c.1810

intarsia, hand-pieced, woollen Napoleonic war uniforms

The Annette Gero Collection

**The partial provenance of this quilt can be traced to an antique shop in Cumbria in the far north-west of England, where it was described as a Prisoner of War quilt from an old country house.**

**The quilt's blue fabrics match the trousers of Napoleonic Cavalry Regiments, the reds and whites from Infantry Units. Red silk on the back edges came from the lining of officers' coats.**

**The reason for choosing Harlequin as the quilt's central motif is unknown. One could speculate that the famous theatrical character simply inspired the maker, whether as a comic stage character or because of his outfit adorned by vibrant triangular patches.**

## **Maker unknown**

Persia

### ***Intarsia worked Persian Rasht Embroidery***

c. 1880s

intarsia, hand-stitched, cotton embroidery, wool

The Annette Gero Collection

**The city of Rasht in northern Iran developed a unique style of embroidery for the Safavid court, executed by male embroiders in professional workshops. They often used cut-out pieces of felted flannel wool from military uniforms as the inlays, stabilised by outlines of chain-stitch embroidery.**

**This rare example features one thin surface that is reversible from the back, and a very similar work is held in the Metropolitan Museum Collection in New York.**

## **Maker unknown**

India

### ***Soldier's patchwork with many stars***

1860-1880

hand-sewn, beading, wool

The Annette Gero Collection

**Each of the many stars in this quilt has a tiny wool disk stitched to the centre, left over from buttonholes punched into military uniforms. Dress uniforms worn by various regiments stationed in India provided the many shades of colour.**

# **Abel PERKES**

India or Egypt

## ***A British Raj soldier's quilt***

c.1875

hand-sewn, woollen uniforms

The Annette Gero Collection

**No fewer than 21,000 pieces of colonial British uniforms make up this quilt, each square measuring one inch (2.5 cm). A note with this quilt stated:**

***Wool Quilt - 1875 made by my great-great-uncle named Abel Perkes, who... gave it to his sister (great-great-grandmother) in England.***

***It was made in India and Egypt of colonial British uniform swatches. It was then brought to Canada and then the USA by my mother's family. It was given to my grandmother (my mother's mother) - who gave it to me.***

***My mother's family immigrated from England to Canada thence to the USA. They came from a long line of Methodist ministers.***

# **Mr W Fist**

England

## **Crimean patchwork**

1869

Crimean woollen uniforms, hand sewn

Courtesy of Mary Christian-Bailey

**The Australian connection with this quilt came when its maker, William Fist, was discharged after his service in the Crimean War and came to Australia with his quilt. He was actually chosen to represent Crimean War veterans in 1920 for a presentation to the visiting Prince of Wales in Melbourne. A letter that came with the quilt was headed ‘Soldier As Seamstress’ and read:**

***Mr W. Fist of Richmond Australia. An Army Veteran since the year 1869 in fashioning a table cover of Military Cloth showing all the colours of the Regiment to which he was attached. 9th Lancers. 16th Lancers and the 19th Hussars.***

***This cloth is worked in 32 inches square & is made up of 5,593 half-inch pieces. The Foundation is in Emerald Green Cloth which is an Effective Foil to the Scarlet. Blue and Yellow Several Fair Fingers offered to help, but the Veteran went on with his task alone & unaided.***

**Mr Fist wears the Red and White Riband of the Indian Mutiny & these colours are given a prominent place in the [patchwork] Cover.**

## **Maker unknown**

America

### ***Vietnam and Korea epaulette quilt***

c.1980

epaulettes appliquéd onto cotton fabric, machine sewn, stuffed with cotton, hand-quilted, cotton floral backing

The Annette Gero Collection

**This visually striking quilt is designed with repeated motifs of fabric. The epaulettes are all post-World War II from the Korean War (June 25, 1950-July 27, 1953) and the Vietnam War (November 1, 1955-April 30, 1975).**

**The quilt is very heavy and warm, suggesting it originated from a northern state of America.**

## **Maker unknown**

### ***The Red Cross quilt***

c.1940s

cotton, machine-pieced, hand-quilted

The Annette Gero Collection

**This quilt was made to raise money for the war effort in America. The American Red Cross chapter of workers in World War II made many quilts for the Red Cross to be sent to Britain, France and the Low Countries.**

**Other signature quilts were made for fund-raising, with each signature embroidered for a donation. Another organisation sending quilts was Bundles for Britain, with the motto, 'A bundle of quilts for every bomb'.**

## **Maker unknown**

England or Canada

### ***Woollen signature quilt***

1892

wool, hand-sewn, no back, hand-embroidered

The Annette Gero Collection

**Possibly made during the Boer War as a fundraising quilt, 49 blocks contain eight signatures each - 384 in all. The central crown of metal wire, beads and velvet is surrounded by the words: “May God’s Richest Blessing Rest upon this Effort. 1892”.**

## **Maker unknown**

Queensland, Australia

### ***Log cabin quilt army uniforms***

c. 1940s

wool scraps including army uniform fabric, hand-pieced and tied, stuffed with an army blanket

The Annette Gero Collection

# **Sarah (Sadie) Elizabeth CAMPEY**

New South Wales, Australia

## ***Wagga quilt filled with WWII children's cardigans***

c.1940s

curtain fabrics filled with children's cardigans knitted in the 1930s and during WWII

The Annette Gero Collection

**Sarah (Sadie) Elizabeth Campey was born at Lara, Victoria, in 1908, the second of eight children. During the Depression her family was forced to walk off their property. Times were tough.**

**During World War II, Sadie, married with two small daughters (born in 1938 and 1942), learnt how to make do. As well as growing her own vegetables and raising chickens, she knitted and sewed all her daughters' clothing and even made her own hats.**

**Sadie was always thrifty and never threw anything out. In the 1950s she made wagga quilts for her children. Thanks to the family tradition of never throwing anything out, one of these waggas is still in existence today.**

**This wagga, with a cotton seersucker cover filled with carefully tacked together children's cardigans and jumpers provided the warmth for many years.**

## **Maker unknown**

Barraba, New South Wales, Australia

### ***The Butcher's Wagga quilt 'Shortage of blankets in WWI'***

c. 1914

wool, two layers of army blankets, backed with hessian bags from sausage meal

The Annette Gero Collection

**Wagga quilts like this are typical of bed coverings made during World War I when there was a shortage of real blankets.**

**This quilt was made by the wife of a butcher early in her married life in country New South Wales from two layers of old World War I army blankets. It remained in the family and used by the next generation until it surfaced in 1986 between the bed springs and mattress of an old bed.**

**The backing fabric consists of hessian bags in which sausage meal was purchased, a logical piece of fabric to use by a butcher's wife.**

## **Maker unknown**

Germany

### ***Military quilt (with 9600 pieces)***

1800s

hand-sewn, inlaid technique, woollen uniforms

The Annette Gero Collection

**Meticulously made from 9600 individual pieces of fabric, this quilt is a true intarsia, in that behind every one-centimetre square there is no seam allowance. Each block is butted together and overlapped by hand from the back. Was it a soldier or a tailor who had the time to make such a quilt from military fabrics?**



## **Maker unknown**

Australia or America

### ***World War I khaki uniform crazy quilt***

c.1914-1918

woollen khaki uniform fabric, machine-pieced and tied. Khaki cotton on the back

The Annette Gero Collection

**This is a most unusual quilt, made from many World War I khaki woollen uniform materials. Some uniforms were more worn than others. The entire quilt is machine pieced but every crazy patch design is different. It is not known whether a military tailor, a soldier or the mother of a soldier made this quilt.**

**Of the colour, Khaki is an Indian word meaning 'dust' in Urdu. It became apparent to armies that being dressed in a bright red jacket with white sashes crossing diagonally to the waist gave a target point in the middle of the chest for advancing enemies. Khaki was invented in the 1840s but was not used exclusively for uniforms until World War I.**

**During the Indian Mutiny of 1857 many British regiments took to staining their white tropical uniforms with tea leaves or other makeshift dyes in order to camouflage them.**

## **Red Army Uniform**

The Annette Gero Collection

## **Medal - Glasgow Industrial Exhibition of 1865-1866**

The Annette Gero Collection

## **Tools - 3 small hammers, boxes of pins**

The Annette Gero Collection

## **Other photographic boards**

The Annette Gero Collection

# **AUSTRALIAN WAGGA QUILTS**

**Out of necessity when materials were scarce, a particular kind of utilitarian quilt was made in Australia. Known as the 'wagga', it traditionally consisted of multiple layers of jute (hessian) bags sewn together. It also utilised calico sacks, recycled clothes, fabric scraps and old blankets.**

**The name 'wagga' is linked to the Wagga Lily flour sacks made by the Murrumbidgee Co-operative Flour Mill in the town of Wagga Wagga, NSW. During the period of the mill's establishment in 1890, the name 'wagga rug' emerged, along with 'Murrumbidgee blanket'. The flour mill was presumed to offer disused wheat and flour bags for people to use.**

**From the first known waggas of the 1890s, the tradition continued into the 1950s throughout the two World Wars. Despite innovations, wagga quilts always upheld the 'make do' philosophy of using recycled materials close to hand: for farmers on the land, it was flour or wheat bags, and for a family, old clothing stitched together.**

# **Medal presented to Sergeant Malcolm MACLEOD**

1865

bronze

The Annette Gero Collection

**In 1865 Sergeant Malcolm MacLeod entered his ‘bed rug’ in the Glasgow Industrial Exhibition where it won this medal, attesting to his exceptional workmanship and outstanding embroidery of regimental colours, scrolling designs, urns overflowing with flowers, and the distinctive Highlanders headgear with long, black tail feathers. The catalogue entry listed this textile as:**

*Item 619. Fancy Bed Rug by Malcolm MacLeod, colour-sergeant, 72nd Highlanders, Stirling Castle.*

# **‘Huswiff’ World War I military sewing kit**

c.1914

The Annette Gero Collection

**Sewing kits such as this are rolls of fabric containing needles, threads and buttons, etc., issued to all military personnel, particularly soldiers and sailors. The tradition started with the Battles of Hastings and continues to this day.**

# ***Make Do and Mend* booklet**

1943

Prepared for the Board of Trade by the Ministry of Information, London, Great Britain

The Annette Gero Collection

**During the Second World War, this booklet was available in Great Britain to offer hints on “making do” in the face of wide shortages. It was designed to help families make clothing last, to renovate children’s outgrown clothes so they were not wasted and “to make do with the things you already have instead of buying new”.**

## **Red coat (British Army)**

Date unknown

The Annette Gero Collection

**‘Red coat’ or ‘Redcoat’ is a term used to refer to British Army soldiers because of the red uniforms formerly worn by the majority of regiments. From the late 17th century to the early 20th century, the uniform of most British soldiers, (apart from artillery, rifles and light cavalry), included a madder red coat or coatee. From 1870 onwards, the more vivid shade of scarlet was adopted for all ranks, having previously been worn only by officers, sergeants and all ranks of some cavalry regiments.**