

FLESH IN ARMOUR

A Novel

Leonard Mann

New Introduction by Janette Turner Hospital

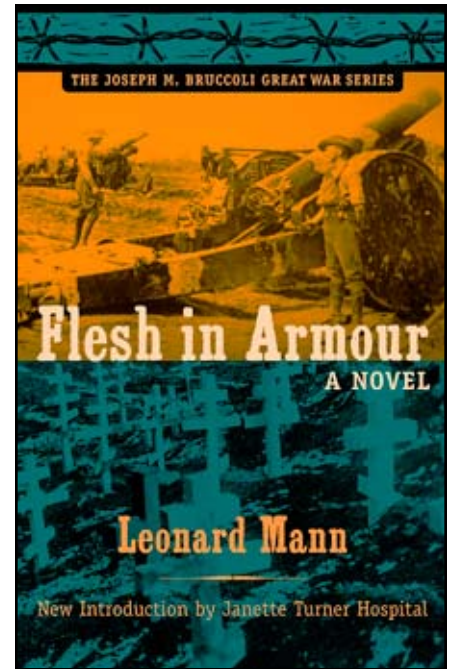
Leonard Mann privately published his first novel, *Flesh in Armour*, in Melbourne in 1932, after he was unable to place it with a publisher in Australia or England. The novel was an immediate success, and Mann was subsequently awarded the Australian Literature Society's gold medal for outstanding book of the year. The book's merits then established, it was republished in England and Australia in 1944.

Drawn in part from the author's combat experience in France during World War I, *Flesh in Armour* is an exploration of the lives of soldiers in the Australian Imperial Force from the Ypres campaign in 1917 until just before the Armistice. The novel follows the actions and evolving attitudes of three soldiers in the same battalion—a naive and handsome raw recruit eager for combat, a schoolteacher whose intellect and anxiety have led to disillusionment, and a courageous warrior-hero who remains undaunted by battle despite being wounded. The novel bears an unmistakable Australian point of view, particularly in its wry sense of humor in spite of the dark subject matter and in its vehement disdain for British commanders.

Nearly 420,000 Australians enlisted during World War I, and more than half were killed, wounded, or captured. The conflict was the most costly in Australia's history. In the fates of his protagonists—one dies valiantly, one dies in an abject and mentally unhinged state, one survives—Mann pays tribute to the sacrifices of his countrymen and reminds readers of the unforgiving test of character found in war then and now. This edition features a new introduction by Australian-born writer Janette Turner Hospital, who inserts the book into the historical context of AIF combat experiences and chronicles Mann's military service in the war and literary career thereafter.

The Joseph M. Brucoli Great War Series • Matthew J. Brucoli, series editor

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Leonard Mann (1885–1981) served in the Australian Imperial Force during World War I and with the Department of Aircraft Production in World War II. He wrote seven other novels.

Janette Turner Hospital is the Carolina Distinguished Professor of Literature and Distinguished Writer-in-Residence in the Department of English at the University of South Carolina. She is the author of several collections of short fiction, a novella, and eight novels—most recently, *Orpheus Lost*.

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