

Brush with battle

A trip to WWI sites has inspired a moving exhibition

Jacqui Taffel

LAST year, Amanda Penrose Hart found herself looking at a potato field in Belgium. To most eyes, it looked unremarkable, a bare, brown, furrowed expanse of dirt. For her, it was the place her grandfather's brother died in the trenches in WWI. He was 20.

Penrose Hart, an artist at Darlinghurst's King Street Gallery on William, was part of a group who visited the French and Belgian battle grounds where 42,000 Australian soldiers perished.

The work they created from this trip is showing at Sydney's Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, which reopened on October 20 after significant extensions, with a ceremony attended by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

The 12 artists in *Salient: Contemporary Artists at the*



Western Front include Idris Murphy, Wendy Sharpe and Steve Lopes, who won this year's Gallipoli Art Prize.

One of Penrose Hart's large works is of Corbie, an important crossing on the Somme River for Australian troops. It hangs opposite

Amiens from *Blangy-Tronville* by Arthur Streeton,

painted in 1918. The two works, created 100 years apart, show the same area from different directions.

Brad Manera, the Anzac Memorial's senior historian and curator, has lead many tours to WWI sites. The usual questions he gets are about trench positions, artillery barrages or particular battalions.

Accompanying a group of artists is quite another experience. "These guys were saying, 'This is probably close to where Streeton set up his easel.' It's a very different way of navigating the battlefields."

Penrose Hart also hadn't heard the military term "salient" before this trip. It refers to a bulge in the battle into enemy territory, where troops are surrounded on several sides and vulnerable. The salient at Ypres in Belgium, where her great-



Amanda Penrose Hart with her work *Mouquet Farm*, where many Australian soldiers died, part of the *Salient* exhibition; (left) with Brad Manera at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. Pictures: John Appleyard

uncle died, was one of the bloodiest of WWI, with allied troops surrounded by Germans on three sides.

"Less than 20 per cent of those who died in the Ypres salient have known graves, as the mud swallowed them," says Manera.

However the exhibition is

not about war, says Penrose Hart, but capturing the landscape and its moods 100 years on. This contemporary response sits alongside the Anzac Memorial's original artworks, such as the beautiful and moving Rayner Hoff sculpture, *Sacrifice*.

"For our work to be in here with that piece is such a privilege," she says. On November 11, to mark 100 years since WWI ended, the memorial hosts the State Remembrance Day Service and an open day for visitors.

Until February 17, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, free, salientwesternfront.com



Woollahra Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Notice of Development Decisions Issued by Council

Development decisions have been made for the following applications:

DA0133/17/1 8 Wiston Gardens DOUBLE BAY

Demolition of existing dwelling & the construction of new part 3 part 4 storey dwelling house with a new swimming pool

DA0398/14/2 46 Derby Street VAUCLUSE

Delete condition C.1(b)

DA0571/14/7 16 Cross Street DOUBLE BAY

Additions of new operable louvre pergola, new planters, part raised roof, new roof light and external louvre (facing Knox Lane) to Unit 13

the woollahra **small sculpture prize**

