

# Europe's wartime tragedy inspires teenage author

## Kiri pens Holocaust tale

Peter Bodkin

AT an age when most young people's heads are full of the triumphs and tribulations of their teenage years, local schoolgirl Kiri English-Hawke has been labouring over her first novel, exploring the pain and desperation of war.

Kiri, a year 10 student at Manly's Stella Maris College, will shortly have her debut work, *The Handkerchief Map*, published through Ace Press.

The 16-year-old's book is set in Europe at the end of World War II and deals with the weighty subject matter of the Holocaust and the war's aftermath.

Kiri agreed the themes she explored were unusually substantial for a teenage author, but said the ideas had emerged from her fascination with the period.

"(My family) have a lot of friends who were affected by the Holocaust, and have experienced that," she said.

The book tells the interweaving stories of three characters, of German, Russian and Jewish backgrounds, imagined through their letters, as they come to grips with their separation and isolation.

"It's about how they all find ways to survive the war," Kiri said.



Manly schoolgirl author Kiri English-Hawke, 16, will publish her first book (inset) this month, about the Holocaust.

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Inspiration for the novel came from her background research and conversations with friends and family members, she added.

"I was in Europe last year, and I went to all of the places that were in that book.

"I'm bizarrely connected with all these people who were in-

involved with (the war). I like hearing people's stories ... it doesn't impact you until someone actually tells you something, and you can see them considering it and thinking about it."

The young writer, who is also a champion rower, said the book had taken about three years to

complete, although much of that time had been consumed with story changes.

"I'm always writing stuff, but not necessarily anything that I'm likely to finish," she said.

"I write a lot of songs as well, because they're easier, and shorter."