

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN IN WAR

Investigating the experiences and changing roles
of Australian women in war and peace operations
1899 – Today



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



CONTENTS

Introduction for teachers

Using the resource in the classroom
Integrated learning activities guide
Curriculum guide
An alternative thematic approach

4



UNIT 1 Australian Women in the Second South African Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902)

INVESTIGATIONS:

- 1 Who were the Australian Boer War nurses?
- 2 What was the nature of the war experience of Australian nurses in South Africa?
- 3 What other major roles did Australian women have in the Boer War?

13



UNIT 2 Australian Women in World War I (1914–1918)

INVESTIGATIONS:

- 1 What were the experiences of nurses and other medical workers during the war?
- 2 How were women involved in the war on the home front? Was this involvement unifying or divisive?
- 3 What were the continuing impacts of war after 1918?

25



UNIT 3 Australian Women in World War II (1939–1945)

INVESTIGATIONS:

- 1 What new service roles were open to Australian women?
- 2 What impacts did the war have on Australian women's home front roles and experiences?
- 3 Did the war change the roles and status of Australian women?

39



UNIT 4 Australian Women in British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) and the Korean War (1946–1953)

INVESTIGATIONS:

- 1 What were women's main roles and experiences in BCOF?
- 2 What were women's main roles during the Korean War?

65



UNIT 5 Australian Women in the Vietnam War (1962–1973)

INVESTIGATIONS:

- 1 What were the roles and experiences of Australian nurses in Vietnam?
- 2 How were women involved in the war on the home front?

77



UNIT 6 Australian Women in the Australian Defence Force and in Peace Operations (1947 – Today)

INVESTIGATIONS:

- 1 Where have Australian women peacekeepers served?
- 2 What roles do women play as peacekeepers?
- 3 Should Australian women in the Australian Defence Force play a front line combat role in the future?

87



UNIT 7 Australian Women and Commemoration

INVESTIGATIONS:

- 1 How has Australian women's service in war been commemorated?
- 2 How should their role in peace operations be commemorated?

101

Using *Australian Women in War* in the classroom

The resource *Australian Women in War* has been produced by the Department of Veterans' Affairs as part of the Australian Government's Commemorations program.

Educational aims The purpose of this education resource is to provide teachers and students with self-contained classroom-ready materials and teaching strategies to explore the roles and experiences of Australian women during more than a century of conflict and peace operations. It covers all major wars and peace operations from 1899 to the present, and includes service roles as well as home front experiences.

The focus is on discovering the changing roles and status of women's involvement in conflicts over time.

It provides a rich collection of information and evidence for developing students' knowledge and ideas about those experiences. It also encourages students to develop empathy with those women whose lives have been affected by war and peace operations.

Components This resource comprises three elements:

- a **Teachers' Guidebook**, with classroom-ready documents and questions, and suggested teaching strategies on seven key aspects of Australian women's experiences;
- a **CD-ROM** containing interactive learning tasks that enhance students' knowledge and understanding of the topics — detailed suggestions on using the ten interactives on this CD-ROM are available in PDF format on the CD-ROM; and
- a **DVD** Museum Study of the Australian War Memorial's public displays on women's experiences of war. This is structured in sections to allow students to critically analyse how Australia's premier war museum represents the topic. A set of suggested questions for the various sections is on pages 8–11.

Each of these components can be used separately, or in an integrated way as suggested in detail in the Teachers' Guidebook.

Seven units The seven units provide students with resources for studying major aspects of Australian women's experiences of wars and peace operations — focusing on the changing nature of their military and home front involvement, the continuing impacts of wars on women, and the changing status of their contributions over time. The seven units focus on Australian women in war through:

- Second South African Anglo-Boer War (Boer War)
- World War I
- World War II
- British Commonwealth Occupation Force and Korea
- Vietnam War
- Peace Operations
- Commemoration.

Each unit contains:

- teaching suggestions, incorporating advice about learning outcomes, classroom approaches, connections to the CD-ROM and DVD components, and sources of further information;
- a key data table of basic information about the conflict;
- an introductory activity designed to stimulate and engage students in the main issues and concepts to be explored; and
- reproducible resource pages for each Investigation.

Inquiry methodology

The resource uses an inquiry approach — students are provided with a variety of evidence and information, and they analyse this material to form their own conclusions about the nature of Australian women's experiences, and the significance of their roles and status in the wars.

Curriculum outcomes

The materials have been shaped around the History/SoSE (Studies of Society and Environment) curricula in all states and territories, with an emphasis on activities that contribute to essential learning achievements. A summary of curriculum links for each state and territory is on page 7.

Curriculum levels

The resource has been designed for use with students from middle primary to upper secondary levels, but not all parts are suitable for all levels.

The **print and DVD materials** are designed to be used with **middle to upper secondary students**.

Some of the **CD-ROM activities** have been specifically designed for **younger students** — at primary and lower secondary levels. Some are suitable for **middle to upper secondary students**. How to use the interactive activities is indicated in the **PDF Guide** which is accessible on the CD-ROM.

Past, present and future

While this resource is about Australian women's experiences of major conflicts in the past, it provides information and raises questions about the present. It also asks students to speculate in an informed way about possible further changes and developments in women's roles in conflict in the future — and their own attitudes towards some possible changes.

This emphasis on the present and the future as well as the past provides an important **civics and citizenship dimension** to the resource. It asks students to think about what sort of society they want in the future, and what their own role can be in achieving that preferred vision.

Disclaimer

The inquiry approach which is the guiding methodology of this resource requires students to be exposed to a fair and balanced range of evidence for them to develop their own conclusions. The Department of Veterans' Affairs cannot be assumed to agree with or endorse any content or opinions expressed in websites or other publications quoted or referred to in this resource.

Integrated learning activities guide

UNIT	PRINT ACTIVITIES FOCUS	CD-ROM INTERACTIVES FOCUS	DVD CHAPTERS FOCUS
1 Second South African Anglo-Boer War (Boer War)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who were the Australian Boer War nurses? What was the nature of the war experience of Australian nurses in South Africa? What other major roles did Australian women have in the Boer War? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were Australian women's uniforms like over time? Create a National Australian Women's Memorial Create an Australian Women in War poster and timeline 	Chapter 1 <i>Boer War</i>
2 World War I	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What were the experiences of nurses and other medical workers during the war? How were women involved in the war on the home front? Was this involvement unifying or divisive? What were the continuing impacts of war after 1918? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were Australian women's uniforms like over time? Create a National Australian Women's Memorial Create an Australian Women in War poster and timeline Create a recruiting or information poster Who was Effie Garden? Researching Australian nurses who died in World War I — Using primary source documents 	Chapter 2 <i>World War I</i> Chapter 5 <i>A Local Community</i>
3 World War II	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What new service roles were open to women? What impacts did the war have on Australian women's home front roles and experiences? Did the war change the roles and status of Australian women? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were Australian women's uniforms like over time? Create a National Australian Women's Memorial Create an Australian Women in War poster and timeline Create a recruiting or information poster Investigating the story of Vivian Bullwinkel What decisions will you make about women's lives and roles during World War II? 	Chapter 3 <i>World War II</i> Chapter 5 <i>A Local Community</i>
4 British Commonwealth Occupation Force and Korean War	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What were women's main roles and experiences in BCOF? What were women's main roles during the Korean War? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were Australian women's uniforms like over time? Create a National Australian Women's Memorial Create an Australian Women in War poster and timeline 	Chapter 4 <i>Modern Conflicts and Peace Operations</i>
5 Vietnam War	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What were the roles and experiences of Australian nurses in Vietnam? How were women involved in the war on the home front? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were Australian women's uniforms like over time? Create a National Australian Women's Memorial Create an Australian Women in War poster and timeline Australian women and the Vietnam War — Create your own documentary 	Chapter 4 <i>Modern Conflicts and Peace Operations</i>
6 Australian Defence Force and Peace Operations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Where have Australian women peacekeepers served? What roles do women play as peacekeepers? Should Australian women in the Australian Defence Force play a front line combat role in the future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were Australian women's uniforms like over time? Create a National Australian Women's Memorial Create an Australian Women in War poster and timeline Create a recruiting or information poster How difficult is it to make decisions as a peacekeeper? 	Chapter 4 <i>Modern Conflicts and Peace Operations</i> Chapter 5 <i>A Local Community</i> Chapter 6 <i>Women in the Australian Defence Force Interviews</i>
7 Commemoration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How has Australian women's service in war been commemorated? How should their role in peace operations be commemorated? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a National Australian Women's Memorial 	<i>All Chapters</i>

Curriculum Guide

Areas of the curriculum where a study of Australian Women in War may be appropriate are:

State/ Territory	Major area	Level	Emphases
ACT	SoSE	4–10	Understand about Australia and Australians Understand and value what it means to be a citizen within a democracy Understand world issues and events
		11–12	Women in War Australian History Research Unit
NSW	HSIE	4–6	Change and continuity: Significant people and events in the development of Australian identities and heritage
	History	9–10	Australia in World War I Australia between the wars Australia in World War II Australia and the Vietnam War era Changing rights and freedoms (women) People power and politics in the post-war period (Australia and the UN)
	Modern History: National Studies	11–12	Depth Study: Remembering Australians in Wartime
NT	SoSE	7–8	Significant events in the past
		9–10	Events and ideas that have shaped Australian society Impacts of conflicts on domestic life in Australia
	History	11–12	Depth Study: Remembering Australians in Wartime
QLD	SoSE	4/5–6/7	Effects of change or continuity on different groups
		7–8	Situations before and after a rapid change
	Modern History	11–12	Possible themes: Conflict, The history of everyday lives, Studies of change
SA	SoSE	4/5–6/7	Australian History 1788–1918
		9–10	Interpretations and representations of events
	History	11–12	Depth Study: Remembering Australians in Wartime
TAS	Society and History		Historical inquiry — Students undertake historical inquiries in relation to continuity and change in society as specified at:
		3–4	Stages 5–9
		5–6	Stages 7–11
		7–8	Stages 9–13
	9–10	Stages 13–15	
Australian Studies	11–12	Australians at war	
VIC	SoSE	5–6	Australian History 1788–1918
	History	9–10	Continuing significance of major events shaping society
	Australian History	11–12	Testing the new nation 1914–1950
WA	Society & Environment	4/5–6/7	Importance of people, ideas and events Causes of major changes and continuities in the local area over time
		7–10	Exploring causes and consequences of events
	History	11–12	Australia in the 20th Century: Shaping a Nation — Australia 1900–1945 Australia 1945–1990

A guide to using the *Australian Women in War* DVD

The *Australian Women in War* resource includes a 25-minute DVD.

This DVD is intended to provide teachers with a starting point to help students to explore Australian women's roles in conflicts and in peace operations.

It is recommended that teachers preview the DVD.

The DVD is most effective as a teaching tool in the classroom if shown in segments or chapters. It can also be viewed as a continuous narrative to give an historical perspective of Australian women in war.

There are suggested questions to ask at the end of each segment or chapter that will help students discuss what they have seen and learned at each stage.

The DVD encourages students to examine the changing roles and experiences of women in conflicts and peace operations, but it is also a model to help them carry out a museum and/or community site study.

States' and territories' history curriculum documents ask students to consider how historical events and themes are represented, and a museum study is an excellent way of doing this.

One way to assess the information in a museum exhibit is to ask: 'If you only had this exhibit to tell you about the event or theme, would you be seeing a fair, accurate and balanced account?'

As students look at the way the Australian War Memorial has represented the roles and experiences of Australian women in conflicts and peace operations, they are asked to gather information, but also to critically analyse and evaluate the content.

The worksheet at the end of this guide helps students carry out their own analysis of a museum or site study.

BEFORE WATCHING THE DVD

- 1 What do you think have been the main roles of Australian women in conflicts over time?
- 2 Why do you think women have performed those roles, and not some others?
- 3 Do you think their roles have changed over time?
- 4 Do you think women's contributions have been significant in conflicts?
- 5 Do you think women can be considered part of the 'Anzac tradition' that you see so strongly represented each Anzac Day?
- 6 Why are museums important in helping us understand our history?
- 7 Museum Exhibitions are representations of history. How is the overall representation or message likely to be influenced by:
 - selection of materials on display;
 - arrangement of the materials;
 - commentary or interpretation of the materials;
 - meanings or messages;
 - graphic panels;
 - length of text panels;
 - lighting;
 - use of multimedia; and
 - balance of items displayed and number of items?
- 8 What are likely to be the strengths and weaknesses of a museum display? Consider such aspects as:
 - the range of material available;
 - the space available;
 - the aim of the institution; and
 - any other aspects.
- 9 The Australian War Memorial is a unique cultural institution in Australia. Its corporate goal is to "assist Australians to interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society." It does this through its three roles:
 - as a National Memorial to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australian servicemen and women;
 - as a museum to display the stories of service and sacrifice; and
 - as a Research Centre, an archive for research and information for the general public.

How are these roles likely to complement or help each other?
What difficulties might these different roles cause in the way information is presented?
Now watch the DVD and gather more information and ideas about how the Australian War Memorial displays show the roles, contributions and experiences of Australian women in conflicts and peace operations.

After you have viewed the DVD, return to these questions and see if you would change your responses.

You will be able to apply the understandings you develop through this analysis of the Australian War Memorial to any other museum or historical site study in your own community.

CHAPTER 1 SECOND SOUTH AFRICAN ANGLO-BOER WAR (BOER WAR)

- 1 List the evidence about women's roles in war that you see in this segment.
- 2 Classify the evidence (such as primary or secondary sources, and documents, objects, images, multimedia etc.).
- 3 What are the main roles that Australian women played in the war?
- 4 What are your impressions about the value of these roles in the war?
- 5 How effectively do you think the museum display presents these roles?
- 6 What would you say are the display's main strengths and weaknesses?

You can explore more about Australian women's roles in this war in the **print unit and CD-ROM activities** in the *Australian Women in War* resource.

CHAPTER 2 WORLD WAR I

- 1 List the evidence about women's roles in war that you see in this segment.
- 2 Classify the evidence (such as primary or secondary sources, and documents, objects, images, multimedia etc.).
- 3 What are the main roles that Australian women played in the war?
- 4 What are your main impressions about the value of these roles in the war?
- 5 Did Australian women's participation in World War I change or have an impact on their role and status in society? Explain your answer.
- 6 How effectively do you think the museum display presents these roles?
- 7 What would you say are the display's main strengths and weaknesses?

You can explore more about Australian women's roles in this war in the **print unit and CD-ROM activities** in the *Australian Women in War* resource.

CHAPTER 3 WORLD WAR II

- 1 List the evidence about women's roles in war that you see in this segment.
- 2 Classify the evidence (such as primary or secondary sources, and documents, objects, images, multimedia etc.).
- 3 What are the main roles that Australian women played in the war?
- 4 What are your main impressions about the value of these roles in the war?
- 5 Did Australian women's participation in World War II change or have an impact on their role and status in society? Explain your answer.
- 6 'Women's role and status changed more in World War II than in any other conflict.' Do you agree with this statement, and is it reflected in the Australian War Memorial display? If so, how?
- 7 How effectively do you think the museum display presents these roles?
- 8 What would you say are the display's main strengths and weaknesses?

You can explore more about Australian women's roles in this war in the **print unit and CD-ROM activities** in the *Australian Women in War* resource.

CHAPTER 4 MODERN CONFLICTS AND PEACE OPERATIONS

- 1 List the evidence about women's roles in war that you see in this segment.
- 2 Classify the evidence (such as primary or secondary sources, and documents, objects, images, multimedia etc.).
- 3 What are the main roles that Australian women played in these conflicts?
- 4 What are your impressions about the value of these roles in the war?
- 5 What impacts, if any, do you think Australian women's participation in these conflicts and peace operations had on their role and status in society?
- 6 How effectively do you think the museum display presents these roles?
- 7 What would you say are the display's main strengths and weaknesses?

You can explore more about Australian women's roles in modern conflicts and peace operations in the **print unit and CD-ROM activities** in the *Australian Women in War* resource.

CHAPTER 5 A LOCAL COMMUNITY

- 1 List the evidence about women's roles in war that you see in this segment.
- 2 Classify the evidence (such as primary or secondary sources, and documents, objects, images, multimedia etc.).
- 3 Is the evidence that you find in a local community similar to or different from what you find in a museum display? Why or why not?
- 4 What do you think are the strengths of the evidence that you find in a local community? What are the weaknesses or limitations of the evidence?
- 5 How and why might the interpretation of a memorial change over time?
- 6 Why do you think local communities gather and maintain historical stories?
- 7 Is it important to have and maintain local commemorative sites in a community? Explain your reasons.
- 8 List the commemorative sites that exist in your local community.
- 9 Visit a local community display and analyse it as a representation of history.

You can explore more about Australian women's roles in the **print unit and CD-ROM activities** in the *Australian Women in War* resource.

CHAPTER 6 WOMEN IN THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE INTERVIEWS

- 1 Identify the branches of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) of the three women interviewed.
- 2 What jobs have they done during their service?
- 3 How have they been involved in Australia's recent peace operations and military roles?
- 4 How do they see women's current and future roles in the defence force?
- 5 How do they see their place in Australia's Anzac tradition as we commemorate and observe it today?
- 6 What do you think are the main differences between women's roles in the military today, compared with early in the last century?
- 7 Do you think that women should hold equal roles to men in the Australian Defence Force today? Explain your reasons.

You can explore more about Australian women's roles in the **print unit and CD-ROM activities** in the *Australian Women in War* resource.

Museum Study

Investigate a museum exhibition as part of your historical studies. Use this table to help you explore the different elements in it.

Analysing a museum display

ASPECTS TO CONSIDER	THE MUSEUM DISPLAY
What is included in the display?	
Is the historical context explained clearly?	
Is the significance of this display clearly explained?	
Are the objects displayed authentic for that event or period?	
Are these objects the best possible ones to be displayed?	
Are the text descriptions clear and informative?	
Do the surroundings influence my impression of the display?	
How is the display arranged?	
Is there a particular message being conveyed?	
Is the nature of the event clearly identified (e.g. am I told if it is controversial or contested)?	
If so, are a variety of viewpoints clearly and fairly represented?	
Do I know where the evidence has come from and what sort of evidence it is?	
Is it giving me a particular message?	
Is its purpose to present objects (neutral), or to explain (impartial), or to argue a particular view (partisan)?	
At the end, do I feel that I really understand the themes and historical content?	
My initial impression of the display is:	
My final judgement about the display is:	
What have I learnt from this exhibition?	

An alternative thematic approach

The resource has been structured to provide material for what is expected to be the most common way of exploring aspects of women's involvement in war: a chronological approach in which each war is studied in a self-contained way. Some teachers, however, may prefer to explore some key ideas in a thematic rather than a chronological way. A list of possible themes has been included below to show how *Australian Women in War* can be used as a resource for a number of themes.

Women's roles, experiences and status have changed greatly over time.

Theme	Print Unit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What has been the military involvement of Australian women in wars and conflicts?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What has been the home front involvement of Australian women in wars and conflicts?		✓	✓	✓		✓		
How have women's roles and contributions changed over time?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Has the status of women's roles in war and conflicts changed over time?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Are women part of the Anzac tradition?		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
How are women's experiences commemorated?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
How valuable has the contribution of women been in Australia's military and peacetime engagements?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

1 SERVICE ROLES

Women have played a significant role as nurses over time. In the Boer War and World War I this was in effect the only role they had (together with a medical support role from the Voluntary Aid Detachments — VADs).

In all conflicts since World War II the nursing role has continued, but there has been an increase in other roles performed by women. World War II saw the initial development of these roles, with women being asked to do jobs to free men for the front lines. The modern Australian Defence Force recognises that women carry out these roles as well as men, and there is now a culture of equality, rather than of 'temporary substitution'.

There are still, however, some roles including front-line combat roles that are denied to women. This may, or may not, change in the near future.

2 HOME FRONT ROLES

Women's home front roles have always been varied and complex. In World War I many women embraced a voluntary role to support the troops. Some went further and believed patriotism required them to urge men into enlisting. This produced a reaction from other women, who had no desire to force men into service.

During World War I there had been some opportunities for women to expand their roles, but it was in World War II that this development was most significant. As with service jobs, women began to work in areas that had previously been male-only occupations — though usually at lower rates of pay. Were they there for good, or would they be expected to return to the kitchen after the war?

By the time of the Vietnam War women were far more integrated economically into society, and the war had no impact on women's economic roles.

3 OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

At the height of the Boer War over 200 teachers from Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia were recruited to work in concentration camps set up by the British to hold Boer women and children.

It is also known that civilian nurses and teachers paid their own way during the Boer War and World War I.

A number of women's organisations became very active during World War I, including the Australian Women's National League, the Australian Red Cross, the Country Women's Association, the Voluntary Aid Detachment, the Australian Women's Service Corps, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Some organisations, such as the Women's Peace Army, campaigned against the war, and against the conscription issue.

During the Vietnam War some older women, such as some members of the Save Our Sons movement and members of traditional peace groups, campaigned actively against national service. The main activity came from young university students, many of whom enthusiastically joined in political protests against, and more rarely for, the war, conscription, or both.

In current times the 'sleepers' issue is the question of whether women should be able to become front-line combat troops. This is an issue that the current generation of secondary students may one day have to face.