Introduction

2018 marks one hundred years since the end of the First World War. Coming Home allows students to investigate the impact of the war on those who served and those who welcomed them home.

Australians marked the signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918 with joy and celebration. However, the huge number of deaths during the war meant that many families were left devastated. In addition, the suffering of those soldiers who returned with physical and psychological damage both before and after the Armistice provided a constant reminder in communities across Australia of the cost of war. For some of those who served, there was little peace in their lives post war. Returning to civilian life was not easy, and many were unable to perform the jobs they had held prior to the war.

Both government and community rallied to support returned soldiers and numerous programs and charitable initiatives were established. Vocational education courses were offered to veterans along with loans to help them establish homes, businesses, or a life on the land. In addition, a range of medical and rehabilitation services, and a pension scheme were provided. To coordinate this range of programs, the federal government established the Repatriation Commission and Repatriation Department in April 1918. The Repatriation Commission, located today within the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, continues to provide support to Australian veterans.

It is hoped that this resource will encourage Australians to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who serve, and by those who support them.
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Note to reader:
This resource contains historical sources that readers may find confronting or distressing. It contains graphic images and descriptions relating to war wounds and those experiencing grief. Some historical sources include discriminatory ideas and language.

Readers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent should be aware this publication includes images of deceased Indigenous servicemen.
About this resource

Coming Home explores the aftermath of the First World War and its impact on Australians. The investigations are aligned to the Australian Curriculum, allowing Year 9 and senior secondary students to develop historical skills, knowledge and understanding.

Structure and components

This resource contains six investigations, each incorporating background information and structured learning activities.

Background information

This section provides historical information and expands on the themes that are explored in each investigation.

Learning activities

Each investigation provides:

- A learning sequence with suggested activities and strategies to engage students in an historical inquiry
- A rich selection of primary and secondary sources
- Reproducible student activity sheets, where appropriate.

The Australian Curriculum

This resource is aligned to the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences. By adopting an inquiry approach and presenting numerous historical sources, the investigations in Coming Home support the development of Historical skills identified in the curriculum. The themes explored in the investigations support the History content descriptions at Year 9 and senior secondary levels.

Year 9: World War 1 (1914-1918)

The impact of World War I, with a particular emphasis on Australia including the changing role of women (ACDSEH096)

The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend (ACDSEH097)

While History is the main focus of the learning activities, some activities also have relevance to English, Civics and Citizenship and the Arts.

Senior Secondary: Modern Nations in the 20th century, Australia 1918-1949

An overview of Australia in 1918 as background information for more intensive study of the period (ACHMH120)

The adjustment of national priorities in the 1920s, including the tensions between urbanisation, industrialisation and rural development; the difficulties of soldier settlement; the exclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; and the changing role of women (ACHMH121)
Learning Approach

The investigations in this resource adopt an inquiry approach. The aim is to engage students in a learning journey as they construct their own understandings about the end of the First World War and the repatriation of those who served. Each investigation focuses students on a question and provides a range of source material for them to explore and analyse. Students are encouraged to reflect on the inquiries and draw their own conclusions.

The resource offers a rich selection of primary and secondary sources, including photographs, artworks, letters, poems, media articles, and official documents. These sources are organised around themes and activities and encourage students to explore a variety of perspectives.

The activities within the investigations are also varied, catering for differing learning styles and developing a range of learning objectives. They aim to enhance not only students’ knowledge and skills, but also to develop their empathy.

While learning sequences are provided for each activity, it is intended that teachers will adapt the activities to meet the needs of their students and their own learning objectives. The resource is flexible, allowing teachers to share sources and worksheets with students in hardcopy or online.

Disclaimer

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs cannot be assumed to agree with or endorse any content or opinions expressed in websites or publications quoted or referred to in this resource.
Decide of cablegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated London, 11th November, 1918, 10.55 a.m.

E42.

Most urgent. Armistice signed 5 a.m. this morning.
INVESTIGATION 1

What did Armistice mean for Australia and Australians?

Introduction

In this investigation students explore the Armistice and the immediate aftermath of the First World War. While the end of the war was a joyous occasion for the nation, celebrations were tinged by profound grief and sorrow. The Armistice also brought new challenges for Australia, including bringing the remaining troops home.

Investigation 1 includes background information and three inquiry-based activities.

■ ACTIVITY 1
Reactions to the Armistice

Students analyse historical images to identify Australians’ differing responses to the end of the war.

■ ACTIVITY 2
The significance of Armistice

Students complete a document analysis of a speech prepared by Charles Bean for Australian school children as part of the peace celebrations.

■ ACTIVITY 3
Bringing the troops home

Using historical sources, students take on the role of a government official with responsibility for bringing the Australian troops home after the war.

The activities in this investigation support the Australian Curriculum, particularly the Humanities and Social Sciences. They align to the Year 9 Depth Study World War 1 (1914-18) and the Senior Secondary Modern History unit, Modern Nations in the 20th century: Australia, 1918-1949. Some activities also have relevance to the English Curriculum.
Background information

The First World War began in August 1914 and over the next four years 40 percent of Australian males aged between 18 and 44 volunteered to serve in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). In addition, over 2000 women served in the Australian Army Nursing Service. By the time the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918 ending the fighting in ‘the war to end all wars’, over 60,000 members of the AIF had died and 156,000 had been wounded, gassed or taken prisoner.

Although news of the Armistice led to celebrations across Australia, the huge cost of the war in human terms meant that many families and communities were grieving. The editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 12 November 1918 noted: ‘There will be many whom this news of victory will not save from personal grief. The sounds of rejoicing cannot but bring some reminder of their loss.’

The editorial went on to consider the broader implications of the Armistice:

> … *This peace frees the countries of Europe from the menace which has hung over it since the Germans first became intoxicated with their idea of domination. It is the end of one order and the beginning of another.*

Similar sentiments were presented to school children in a speech written by war correspondent Charles Bean, read to students across the country in 1919.

On 28 June 1919, after six months of negotiations, a treaty was signed between the Allies and Germany that established the conditions of peace. Australia was one of the 32 countries that signed the Treaty of Versailles. One of the outcomes of the treaty was the establishment of the League of Nations, an organisation that was dedicated to the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The Australian government also faced the challenge of bringing the troops home, a process that took more than a year from the Armistice. Charles Bean noted that at the end of 1918 large numbers of the AIF remained in almost every theatre of operations — with 92,000 in France, 60,000 in England and 17,000 in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. General John Monash was given the task of repatriating these men, which included responsibility for planning activities for them while they waited for ships to transport them home. Adopting the principle of ‘first come, first go’ long-serving soldiers were given priority. Arrangements were also made for 40,000 convalescing soldiers who needed specialist medical attention.
Reactions to the Armistice

The ceasefire that ended the First World War came into effect at 11.00am (Paris time) on 11 November 1918. Australia first learnt about the Armistice when the Prime Minister’s Department received the cablegram below.

After more than four years of war, the Armistice was a momentous event for Australians. However, the end of the war evoked a variety of responses.

Use sources A-J on the following pages to create a word bank of some of the emotions that different Australians may have experienced. Then write a poem to capture what this event meant to Australians.
Source A
Melbourne, 11 November 1918.
AWM J00348

Source B
A soldier is welcomed home, Sydney.
AWM H0440

Source C
Women waiting to welcome home their loved ones, including many wounded, Sydney, June 1919.
AWM H1576
The morning after Armistice, Basra, Middle East, November 1918.
NAA: A1861, 4320 Photo 22

Front page of the Sydney Mail, 20 November 1918.
NLA: Trove Collection

Arthur Streeton, Australian burning effigy of Kaiser in square, Armistice Day
(1918, watercolour heightened with white, with pencil on paper, 48.5 x 103 cm, AWM ART03523)
COMING HOME

Source H

An Australian soldier lays flowers on the grave of Private Roland Shawyer in a French cemetery, February 1919.

Source I

Permanently disabled veterans at Anzac Hostel, Brighton, Victoria, 1919.

Source J

The troopship Kaiser-I-Hind arrives in Port Adelaide carrying members of the Australian Flying Corps, 14 June 1919.

Source G

Sapper Arthur Dunbar with his family, Adelaide, 1919.
ACTIVITY 2

The significance of Armistice

Throughout 1919, Peace Souvenir Medallions were presented to Australian school children. School principals were provided with a speech *The Great War, 1914-19* to be read to students at the time of the presentation.

Read the speech and answer the following questions to analyse this historical document.

1. **Creator:** Who wrote this speech? What do you know about this person?
2. **Context:** When was this speech written? Where was it to be used? What was happening in Australia at this time?
3. **Audience:** Who was the intended audience for the speech? Is this evident in the language, tone or content? Provide examples.
4. **Content:** What information and ideas are presented in this speech? List at least three examples you think are significant.
5. **Purpose:** Why do you think the author wrote this speech? What reaction was he hoping for from his audience? Do you consider the speech to be a piece of propaganda? Use examples from the speech to answer these questions.
6. **Reliability and usefulness:** Do you think this speech is convincing? realistic? effective? Given its context and purpose how useful and reliable is it as an historical source?
7. **Interpretation:** What does this source tell you about Australian society (e.g. values, attitudes) after the Armistice? What does it tell you about Australia’s role in the world at this time?

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*Peace Souvenir Medallion presented to Australian school students in 1919.*

Image courtesy Australian National Museum of Education

By Mr. C. E. W. BEAN.
Official War Correspondent with the Australian Imperial Force.

(Written at the request of the Commonwealth Peace Celebrations Committee.)

IT is over. The enormous effort of the men—yes, and women and children—of every decent nation is finished. The last gun has sounded. The last troop-train winds homewards. The last big transports, turned homeward, are punching white foam out of the southern rollers. The vast ammunition factories will presently settle down to enrich the world with peaceful goods. The trains will carry busy passengers and commerce; the big steamers will move about the world with toning holds; the little trawlers will unship their guns and go forth to their fishing; the earth will become itself again and Australia will settle down to carve out her new and splendid future. For the submarines which scattered murder across the seas are now safely chained in a British port. And the Army which almost forced a wicked religion upon the world is beaten and harmless through the heroism of the world’s good men. We are free to be happy again. Sixty thousand Australians bought us this happiness with their lives.

Some of you may remember how, five years ago, when war fell upon the world they marched past our windows, men in every sort of civilian dress, with their white shirt sleeves rolled up and carrying wooden rifles. They drilled, they practised, they exercised. Some people even laughed at them. Nobody laughs at them to-day.

For they were Australians who rushed forward to prevent a dreadful thing from happening in the world. The rulers of Germany determined that, because Germany was a mighty power, therefore she should have her way whether right or wrong. A small sister nation had offended her and she determined to try upon the world her wicked rule that whoever stood in the way of a strong nation, right or wrong, should be crushed. She knew that she was strong—and that was all she cared for. She had practised soldiering with all her people and had prepared huge cannon and immense factories of ammunition. In that fateful week in August, 1914, when France and Russia were deeply occupied with other things, she fell on them swiftly at full strength. She had small chance with the French forts and mountain barriers. But because the little Belgian nation, which lay near by, possessed a flat country to march through, and was too weak to keep their great armies out of it, the Germans suddenly marched into its land which they had promised to protect, and struck at France a vile blow in the back. And when the Belgian nation, small though it was, struck back at them, burned the villages and killed the people in order to cow them into quietness.

Britain hated war and was hesitating to fight. But, on the moment when they heard of what happened in Belgium, the British people flung themselves straight in beside the French across the path of the Germans. In Australia and in New Zealand, 12,000 miles away, men said: "So long as we are alive in the world we shall give all we have so that this sort of thing shall not happen in it." They left their offices, their tools and farms, and hurried to offer themselves to cross the sea. They drilled in their shirt sleeves. In two months they were formed into regiments and the first splendid force of them sailed from the West.

So it was that this small army from the barely known lands of the South ranged itself by the side of every good and great nation of the world. Beside the splendid army of France the slender British line, barely one man deep in its early war-strengthened trenches amongst the sodden ditches and hedgerows, with scarcely ammunition even for its few guns, was holding the Germans who looked down...
with their monstrous artillery behind the opposing hills. Behind the Germans the valleys and woods were staked with their huge shell dumps; the explosives, the bombs, the machine guns had for years been pouring out of these whispering workshops as a river runs into the sea. They had fleets of aeroplanes, huge zeppelins; military railways crossed their country like a gridiron; troop-train swept after troop-train in constant procession; endless motor lorries streamed down their roads. They had prepared for generations. They were vastly strong. But all their strength could not crush the spirit of Belgium. Blow after blow was driven into France, burning the farmhouses, turning towns into ruins, splintering the forests, ploughing and shattering whole miles of land; yet the French people only set their teeth the more firmly. The Germans battered the British infantry with their huge guns, and the British guns had scarcely a shell to reply: weeks, months, years British soldiers had to suffer the crush of day-long bombardments and hear their own guns bark scarcely once or twice in return. Yet, with cannon against mere rifles, that colossal artillery could not tame their spirit. On to the weaker side, thank God, beside the great and generous and unprepared nations of the world, the small army of Australia and of New Zealand went.

They were only eight divisions amongst over two hundred in the great armies of Britain and France. But they played their part to the utmost. They fought with consummate loyalty to their friends beside them. Sunken in the Somme mud till the frost bit the flesh from their bones, or sweltering knee-deep in the dust of the Jordan valley, they shared their host with the others, heart and soul. Beside their friends and their Allies, in Gallipoli, in France, in Palestine, in Mesopotamia, in Russia, and on the seas, everything that was asked of them they gave. From the first hour to the last, in every turn of fortune, together they stood. Sustained by suffering such as the world has never known, holding fast long after all hope had died, struggling in unbelievable efforts, the great armies of the Allies at last turned back the tide. They broke the Germans in west and east. The sailors of Germany refused to sail. Her people and army gave up the fight. And the long struggle came suddenly to its close.

And what is the end? The nation which attempted to force on the world the rule that only the strong had rights, that small and weak things must go to the wall, that treaties were usurious and any powerful people could break its given word—that nation itself has been broken because the best men of all countries determined by their lives or their deaths to prevent it. A great fear has been lifted from the world. Treaties are become binding again. The world has rules that not even the strongest nation shall dare to break her given word; that be a nation never so small, if she has right upon her side a scrap of paper may protect her. The world has exacted from the great breaker of treaties a terrible punishment.

And our own young country—what does the peace mean to her? Australia rides safely in harbor to-day, a new nation. Five years ago the world barely knew her. To-day, the men who went to fight for her have placed her high in the world’s regard. During four long years, in good fortune and ill, they so bore themselves that when the tide changed, the great and free nations beside them they fought and with whom they emerged counted Australia amongst them. She has been given a place in the conference of nations; the great world has recognised her right to mould her future as she pleases. That is what the Australian force not only in France, Gallipoli, and Palestine, but in Mesopotamia, in Persia, in Russia, and on the seas, has done for Australia.

And while we offer thanks on their return to those who have won for us this right to make our country one of the greatest and our nation the happiest upon earth, while the flags flutter and hands are waving, let us not ever forget that, to many of those to whom we owe the most, our thanks can never be given. They who raised Australia to the very height of the world’s regard—the gay welcome in our streets is not for them. For others the cheers, the smiles. The rejoicings which they so often longed for, they will never see. Twelve thousand miles from home they sleep for ever on the bleak mudlands where by their lives the place of Australia in the world was won. Yet, could they speak, they would not call us to weep. Their lives they gave cheerfully, gladly, knowing the cause; and they have won for their country more than they ever hoped to win. Only by one means can we work out our thanks to them—by continuing the task which they were forced to drop when the battle took them, and devoting our lives to make this country the happy, great, and generous land whose future with their death they gave into our hands.

By Authority. ABERART J. McCARTY, Government Printer, Melbourne.
ACTIVITY 3

Bringing the troops home

The Armistice marked the end of the First World War, but many Australian troops were still overseas. Although thousands of sick and wounded men had been brought home during the war, repatriation of the more than 160,000 remaining soldiers presented ongoing challenges throughout late 1918 and 1919.

Take on the role of an Australian government official with responsibility for bringing the troops home. Explore each of the sources, which relate to the repatriation of Australian troops. Use them to help you complete the planning document that follows (examples are provided).

Source A

Letter from Prime Minister William Hughes to the British Minister for Shipping, 23 December 1918.

NAA CP358/4, 6

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Dear Sir Joseph Maclay,

I desire to bring under your notice a matter of vital importance to Australia, and one which, I feel sure, will have your fullest support.

You have already assisted us considerably in providing ships for the transport of Australian soldiers, but the position in this respect is far from satisfactory. Our men have come farther from their homes than any other troops in this war; they have had no home leave; they have been separated from their wives, their children, and their friends in many cases for more than four years. These facts alone, apart from any services which they have rendered, entitle them to priority of return.

Now that active hostilities have ceased, their relatives who have borne with patience the long absence necessitated by war, are clamouring for their return, but unless ships are made available at a far greater rate than at present, their early return is impossible. I appreciate the difficulties with which you are faced, but must draw your attention to the serious position which also confronts us. At the present rate of sailing, at least 20 months must elapse before our men return to Australia. Then one remembers the distance which separates them from their homes, and the years they have been away, this is by no means satisfactory. They have earned, and should receive, first call on any ships which become available.

Had the war continued, neither distance nor time would have caused us to relax our efforts, nor have interfered in any way with the discharge of our plain duties; but the cessation of hostilities has brought with it new responsibilities, and
**Source B**

Australian troops billeted in Belgium eat at a café run by the YMCA, 1919.

AWM H0567

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**Source C**

Graph relating to transport for the repatriation of Australian troops, March 1919.

AWM J00052E
Source E

Personal note by General John Monash regarding the challenges of keeping Australian troops ‘in good heart and usefully employed’ while they waited to be repatriated to Australia. Monash was responsible for repatriation following the Armistice.

AWM HLC216/0000638, Personal Files Book 21, 25 November – 31 December 1918, page 25

Source D

Troops attend an education class on board HMAT Euripides en route to Australia, September-October 1919.

AWM D00968
AIF DEMOBILISATION AND REPATUREATION

**TASK:** To bring home all remaining AIF troops from overseas

**Issues for consideration regarding troops awaiting transport:**
- accommodation

**Issues for consideration regarding transport to Australia:**
- facilities and care for injured soldiers while at sea
To your letter No. G 21/3124, dated 22nd March, 1921, I have the pleasure in renewing for a further period of six calendar months as from 1/4/1921, the existing agreement with the Repatriation Department whereby the rent and rates are to be paid for departmental use in the establishment into the Convalescent Homes Committee.

I am, Sir,

Manager.

[Signature]

Convalescent Homes Committee

[Stamp: AWM A03281]

[Stamp: AWM REL36520]

[Stamp: AWM PO1102_005]
What were the personal experiences of returned soldiers and their families?

Introduction

In this investigation students explore the experiences of five men that highlight some of the challenges faced by returning soldiers, such as injuries, illness and mental health problems.

Investigation 2 includes background information and one inquiry-based activity.

ACTIVITY 1

Returned soldier case studies

Students analyse five case studies of returned soldiers to explore some of the issues faced by the men, their families and the broader community.

The activity in this investigation supports the Australian Curriculum, particularly the Humanities and Social Sciences. It aligns to the Year 9 Depth Study on World War I and the Senior Secondary Modern History unit, Modern Nations in the 20th century: Australia, 1918-1949.
Background Information

The experiences of soldiers returning from the First World War varied enormously. Some men returned to their families in good health and resumed their previous lives and professions. Many others arrived home with physical or emotional injuries that shaped the rest of their lives, and had an impact on the lives of their loved ones.

Throughout the war over 100,000 men were repatriated to Australia due to wounds or illness. A short article in the *Adelaide Register* on 23 April 1919 gave some insight into the ‘nature and extent’ of these men’s afflictions, pointing out that most men were returned for ‘sickness’. It went on, however, to focus on those who received battle wounds:

*Two officers and 39 men have lost the sight of both eyes, and 18 officers and 920 other ranks have lost one eye. Twenty soldiers returned to Australia with both legs amputated, and 31 officers and 1,171 men have lost either the left or right leg. Strangely enough, the number of men who have lost arms as the result of gunshot and other wounds is only 600, of whom 16 are officers.*

While these men were not the majority, they were certainly a painful symbol for communities of the sacrifices made by those who had served their country.

Many other soldiers returned free of visible injuries, but with their health permanently compromised. Gas was a widely used weapon throughout the war and caused serious and ongoing respiratory and other problems for soldiers. Likewise, diseases such as typhoid, influenza, tuberculosis and dysentery were rife in the trenches and often caused long term damage to sufferers.

Mental health issues were an insidious and pervasive problem faced by many returned soldiers. While the official medical history of the war indicates 4984 men on active duty were discharged for ‘disorders of the mind’, the prevalence of mental illness was undoubtedly much higher. At the end of the First World War, little was known about the cause or treatment of ‘shell shock’ (known today as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and other depressive illnesses, and such a diagnosis carried social stigma in the community. As a result, many ex-servicemen were reluctant to acknowledge their problems and seek treatment and the burden of care was left for families to cope with in isolation. Throughout the 1920s and 30s the number of returned soldiers seeking treatment for mental health issues increased, and many committed suicide.

While soldiers adjusting to life after the war experienced a range of difficulties, the challenges facing many families were equally daunting. The most severely disabled men were settled permanently into veterans’ hostels or asylums, but most veterans returned to their family homes. At times, these men were so changed – physically or emotionally – that they were unrecognisable to their loved ones. Family members, believing that they should be thankful that their son/husband/brother had returned at all, were hesitant to complain or seek support. Unsurprisingly, many women also experienced mental health problems in the aftermath of war.
ACTIVITY 1

Returned soldier case studies

Explore the following case studies of five men who served during the First World War. Complete the table provided to identify the implications of each man’s experience for them, their family and the community on their return.

Captain Claude Stubbings

Enlistment date: 21 August 1914 (age 22)
Date of return (embarkation): 5 January 1919

Stubbings was awarded this Military Cross for his actions at the Battle of Messines in 1917.

Letter relating to Stubbings’ AIF service, 8 August 1921.

Summary of Stubbings’ AIF service.

NAA: B2455 Stubbings, Claude Henry, page 16
It is something of a coincidence that our young townsman started fighting on April 25, 1915, and on April 25, 1918 three years later, he received the wound which put him out of action permanently. He looks back on the entire round of the Great Adventure now as something in which he had to participate. Taking the hardships of the war, with all the stimulating impulses, the realisation of duty done, and the good time spent in the brief spells out of the trenches, he says it was an experience not to be missed. Captain Stubbings regards the entire campaign in the light of a long day’s work well done, and says he feels sure that the majority of the fit men who returned from the war would “hop over again” if the occasion arose. That is the spirit we want in Australia — the spirit of service and sacrifice when the nation demands it not for the sake of the excitement and the thrilling adventure of it but to affirm and emphasise the right of the nation to live, which is the first and highest call to its manhood.
Sapper Geoffrey Carter

Enlistment date: 30 October 1915 (age 19)
Date of return (embarkation): 19 April 1919

Casualty form relating to Carter’s AIF service.

NAA: B2455, CARTER Geoffrey James Flight, page 9

Sapper Geoffrey Carter

Enlistment date: 30 October 1915 (age 19)
Date of return (embarkation): 19 April 1919

Casualty form relating to Carter’s AIF service.

NAA: B2455, CARTER Geoffrey James Flight, page 9


AWM M00051

26 COMING HOME
Captain Eowyn Davies

Enlistment date: 23 February 1916 (age 24)
Returned to Australia (embarkation): 22 July 1920

Notification relating to Davies’ AIF service, 21 February 1919.
NAA: B2455 Davies, Eowyn Hugh H, page 24

Notification relating to Davies’ AIF service, 27 March 1918.
NAA: B2455 Davies, Eowyn Hugh H, page 25

Davies (on left of group) with other officers of the 45th Battalion at Haute Allaines, France, December 1917.
AWM E01547
File note relating to Davies’ death, 24 November 1920.
NAA: B2455 Davies, Eowyn Hugh H, page 18

Letter to Davies’ wife, Estelle, 12 December 1922.
NAA: B2455 Davies, Eowyn Hugh H, page 17
Private Douglas Grant

Enlistment date: 24 January 1916 (age 30)
Date of return: 1 June 1919

Grant (second row, seated fourth from the left) with a group of soldiers returning to Australia on HMAT *Medic* in 1919.

Statement regarding Grant’s AIF service.
NAA: B2455; GRANT D, page 12

Excerpt from Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau file regarding Grant.
AWM 1DRL/0428: 6020 Private Douglas Grant
COMING HOME

Letter regarding Grant’s pension, 15 November 1921.
NAA: B2455, GRANT D, page 11

The Register News-Pictorial (Adelaide) 3 September 1930, page 7.
NLA: Trove Collection

The Sun (Sydney) 15 September 1921, page 8.
NLA: Trove Collection

Letter regarding Grant’s death, 14 March 1952.
NAA: C138, C70396 DOUGLAS GRANT, page 4
Captain Herbert Foxton

Enlistment date: 19 January 1915 (age 24)
Date of return (embarkation): 12 November 1921

Portrait of Foxton taken during his service in France, 1917.

Excerpt from Foxton’s AIF service records.


The Sun (Sydney) 4 January 1922, page 8.
Images of Foxton while he was undergoing facio-maxillary treatment in London between 1918-1919.

AWM P06131.005 and AWM P06131.010

Foxton with his wife, Ruth, and their 12 grandchildren, Sydney, 1962.

AWM P1194.001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What were the implications of each man's experiences for:</th>
<th>the individual</th>
<th>their family</th>
<th>the community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claude Stubbings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Geoffrey Carter</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eowyn Davies</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With reference to my memo of the 15th November, 1920, reporting death of Captain E.H. Davies, M.C., 6th Field Company Engineers, please note that although he met with an accident a week prior to his death, he did not die of the result of same. At the Coroner's inquest yesterday, Dr. R.H. Cole, found that the late Captain E.H. Davies died from Strychnine Poisoning self administered.

Colonel
A.A.G., 3rd Military District.
What was the role of the Repatriation Commission?

Introduction

The Repatriation Commission and Repatriation Department were established in 1918 and have been providing assistance for veterans and their families ever since. In this activity students explore the role of the Commission and Department after the First World War.

In this investigation, students will explore the role of the Commission and Department, and reflect on how and why these roles have changed since the First World War.

Investigation 3 includes background information and two inquiry-based activities.

ACTIVITY 1
The work of the Repatriation Commission

Students interrogate historical documents relating to the work of the Repatriation Commission to identify the services it offered to returned soldiers after the First World War.

ACTIVITY 2
Repatriation then and now

Using statistics from the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, students explore the services provided to veterans in recent years and reflect on how and why these may have changed since the First World War.

The activities in this investigation support the Australian Curriculum, particularly the Humanities and Social Sciences. They align to the Year 9 Depth Study on World War 1 and the Senior Secondary Modern History unit, Modern Nations in the 20th century: Australia, 1918-1949.
Background information

Soon after the declaration of war in August 1914, Australian military and political leaders started to plan a scheme for providing war pensions and compensation to wounded soldiers. During the following years, planning for a pension scheme for soldiers continued to be a priority despite changes of government. There was widespread recognition across political parties and the community of the nation’s duty to those who had volunteered to serve.

Initially, it was proposed that the pension scheme follow the earlier practice of relying on private funding to pay support to wounded soldiers. However, patriotic funds in the community that raised money to support the war effort were administered independently, so there was no uniformity in the benefits they provided for returned soldiers. As the war progressed and the number of men enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) grew, it was accepted that a sustainable pension scheme would require government funding. On top of the cost of providing for returned soldiers, support was also needed for the widows, children and other dependants of dead soldiers.

Senator Edward Millen became Australia’s first Minister for Repatriation in 1917. By this stage of the war thousands of soldiers who had been declared medically unfit had already returned to Australia. In addition to war pensions funded by the federal government, State War Councils were providing services such as employment, education, medical assistance and soldier settlement to these men.

The federal and state governments agreed that a centralised body was required to administer repatriation services. In July 1917, when Millen introduced the *Australian Soldiers’ Repatriation Act* to parliament, he outlined a broad definition of repatriation:

> ...an organised effort on the part of the community to look after those who have suffered either from wounds or illness as a result of [World War I] and who stand in need of such care and attention ... a sympathetic effort to restore in civil life, all who are capable of such reinstatement.

On 8 April 1918, the Repatriation Commission was established at the same time as a federal department that provided administrative support. The volume of work soon became too great for the commissioners, who were part-time volunteers, and a smaller full-time commission was created to continue the work of drafting regulations and considering appeals relating to repatriation.

The need for a range of services for returned soldiers grew as the First World War generations aged, and veterans of subsequent wars returned to Australia. A century since the Repatriation Commission was established, it continues to provide support to veterans as part of the range of services provided through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.
The work of the Repatriation Commission

The Repatriation Commission was established in April 1918 to meet the needs of soldiers returning from the First World War. In describing its role in June 1918, Member of Parliament Arthur Rodgers stated:

*First of all, the Government, through the Repatriation Commission, undertake the complete and entire responsibility of restoring men to health. In the next place, they assume responsibility for securing employment for them in their old avocations in life, or, failing that, undertake to prepare them for some new occupation, and, where that is necessary, to provide them with sustenance in the meantime … The moment a man is discharged from the Australian Imperial Force he comes within the purview of the Repatriation Department, which undertakes to restore him to health, and to make the most complete provision for that purpose, no matter what the character of his wounds or illness may be."

In this activity, you will take on the role of an officer working for the Repatriation Commission after the First World War. Explore sources A-L, which all relate to the work of the Commission in the decades following the war. Use them to identify the responsibilities of the Commission and the services it delivered. Complete the Repatriation Commission document provided.

**Source A**

*A medical officer at the Repatriation Department examining an applicant, c1919.*

AWM P00158.6
Repatriation Commission memorandum regarding Tom Delbridge, 17 August 1926.
NAA: B741, V/553, page 2

Source B

Men receiving treatment at the Rosemount Repatriation Hospital, Brisbane, c1918.
AWM H02251

Source C

Repatriation Commission form regarding an application for assistance, 23 July 1920.
NAA: A2489, 1920/4755, page 3

Source D
Source E

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill) 25 November 1930, page 4.
NLA: Trove Collection

Source F

Returned soldiers undertaking vocational training in silverware manufacturing, c1919.
AWM P00158.012

Source G

Letter from a Member of Parliament to the Repatriation Commission, 7 September 1920.
NAA: A2489, 1920/5947, page 7
Patients at the Anzac Hostel, which cared for totally and permanently incapacitated men, Brighton, Victoria.

AWM H3066

Source I

Letter sent by the Repatriation Commission regarding John Burns, 22 Nov 1948.

NAA: B71, R2958, page 29
COMING HOME

Source J

Dubbo Dispatch, 3 January 1919, page 3.
NLA: Trove Collection

There is an uneasy feeling in the community that the Repatriation Department is not fulfilling the function for which it was created. It is only fair to discount some of the many complaints uttered against the department. Did it work with perfect equity and expediency, would there still be some dissatisfaction and grumbling from those whose merits did not coincide with their claims. There are, however, other evidences of trouble in the department. Six of the seven members of the Victorian Repatriation Board have tendered their resignations. In doing so they uttered a condemnation of the present system of centralised political control, which they describe as easily and mistakenly. Now, if there is one matter upon which the people of Australia are united, it is to do the best for our soldiers. If the Repatriation Department is allowed to degenerate into a costly and inefficient bureau, those responsible will be given short shrift—"Evening News."

Source K

Form used by a Victorian government inspector to assess the suitability of land for soldier settlement, 19 March 1920.
Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 5714/PO

Source L

Document sent to the Repatriation Commission by Angus McCallum to support an application for £35 loan, 14 May 1920.
McCallum, Angus Duncan – Service Number 6303, National Archives of Australia, PP2/8 R12923, Page 11.
The mission of the Repatriation Commission:

Those for whom the Commission provides services:

Services provided by the Commission:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Evidence or information considered by the Commission to determine if services will be provided:

- 
- 
-
Repatriation then and now

Today, the work of the Repatriation Commission is administered by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA), as part of its wider set of responsibilities. The chart below is from the DVA 2015-16 Annual Report. Study this chart to identify the services provided for veterans and answer the following questions.

- In what ways are the services offered to returned servicemen and women in recent years similar or different to those offered to First World War veterans?
- In what ways might the challenges facing veterans today be similar or different to those faced by First World War veterans? Why?

### Table 2: Numbers of benefit recipients by type of benefit 2011–12 to 2015–16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment population</td>
<td>220,300</td>
<td>223,101</td>
<td>217,526</td>
<td>230,191</td>
<td>200,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Card</td>
<td>185,321</td>
<td>174,169</td>
<td>165,278</td>
<td>153,033</td>
<td>143,625</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Card</td>
<td>48,769</td>
<td>47,813</td>
<td>53,794</td>
<td>55,148</td>
<td>56,100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**VEA pension and allowances**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service pension includes</td>
<td>155,956</td>
<td>145,697</td>
<td>136,138</td>
<td>176,447</td>
<td>118,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>82,229</td>
<td>74,523</td>
<td>71,266</td>
<td>66,916</td>
<td>61,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>73,227</td>
<td>69,774</td>
<td>64,872</td>
<td>60,531</td>
<td>56,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income support supplement</td>
<td>69,289</td>
<td>65,729</td>
<td>61,663</td>
<td>56,725</td>
<td>52,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA age pension</td>
<td>4,142</td>
<td>4,121</td>
<td>3,830</td>
<td>3,658</td>
<td>3,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Seniors Health Card</td>
<td>6,428</td>
<td>6,669</td>
<td>5,156</td>
<td>4,676</td>
<td>4,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability pension</td>
<td>110,544</td>
<td>105,105</td>
<td>101,059</td>
<td>96,470</td>
<td>92,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War widow/widower's pension</td>
<td>91,125</td>
<td>88,863</td>
<td>81,351</td>
<td>75,936</td>
<td>69,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWO Recognition Supplement</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphan's pension</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendee allowance</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent assistance</td>
<td>18,504</td>
<td>17,634</td>
<td>16,854</td>
<td>15,639</td>
<td>14,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote area allowance</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation allowance</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation transport allowance</td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>1,262</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Assistance Scheme</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral benefit</td>
<td>7,220</td>
<td>6,561</td>
<td>5,720</td>
<td>5,211</td>
<td>4,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans' Children Education Scheme</td>
<td>2,746</td>
<td>2,652</td>
<td>2,443</td>
<td>2,331</td>
<td>2,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing allowance</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Military compensation payments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent impairment (SRCA)</td>
<td>11,300</td>
<td>11,796</td>
<td>12,691</td>
<td>12,516</td>
<td>12,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent impairment (MRCA)</td>
<td>2,246</td>
<td>3,245</td>
<td>4,467</td>
<td>6,021</td>
<td>7,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incapacity payments (SRCA)</td>
<td>2,908</td>
<td>1,762</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>1,897</td>
<td>1,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incapacity payments (MRCA)</td>
<td>1,142</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>2,062</td>
<td>2,484</td>
<td>2,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholly dependent partner (MRCA)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible young person (MRCA)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRCA Education and Training Scheme</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Defence Service Homes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homes insured</td>
<td>71,371</td>
<td>68,491</td>
<td>65,229</td>
<td>62,127</td>
<td>58,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing loan subsidies</td>
<td>17,700</td>
<td>15,237</td>
<td>12,799</td>
<td>10,296</td>
<td>8,322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Madam,

I have much pleasure in forwarding hereunder copy of extract from Third Supplement, No. 30901, to the "London Gazette," dated 18th September, 1918, relating to the conspicuous services rendered by the undermentioned member of the Australian Imperial Force.

AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS.

"HIS MAJESTY THE KING has approved the following letter of congratulation of the above award to the mother of his gallantry and devotion,

Lieutenant

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. On the two consecutive nights this officer was responsible for the last night he foot-bridges across a river in "No Man's Land." On the first night he organized the operation and his covering party were able to cross to the other side and a half hour. The second night he launched a similar operation himself and was only, and, while on his way to launch the operation, he was attacked by a party of enemy."

Melbourne, 21st February, 1919.
In what ways did the First World War change the roles of men and women in Australia?

Introduction

The First World War was a huge drain on Australian finances, resources and manpower. Both men and women responded to the challenge, taking on new roles and responsibilities to support the war effort. This investigation explores how the First World War changed the roles of men and women within Australian society.

Investigation 4 includes background information and one inquiry-based activity.

ACTIVITY 1

Media coverage of gender roles

Students analyse newspaper items from during and after the First World War to explore differing perspectives on the roles of men and women in Australian society. Students then create their own historical newspaper item.

The activity in this investigation supports the Australian Curriculum, particularly the Humanities and Social Sciences. It aligns to the Year 9 Depth Study on World War 1 and the Senior Secondary Modern History unit, Modern Nations in the 20th century: Australia, 1918-1949.
Background information

The First World War had a significant and lasting impact on the roles that men and women performed in Australian society. Men who had previously been established in professions, trades or on the land were among those who volunteered to serve their nation and Empire. They were retrained for roles in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and shipped to distant lands. Early in the war many of those who enlisted expected a decisive victory and quick return to their lives in Australia, but this belief faded as months and then years passed. For those who did return after years of trauma and hardship, life in Australia would never be quite the same. Not only had they changed, but Australian society had also transformed.

With so many men serving overseas during the war, there was a severe labour shortage in Australia at a time of great need. As a British dominion, Australia was expected to contribute resources, including food, clothing and munitions to support the Allied war effort. Australian women, who largely performed unpaid domestic duties at the time, quickly mobilised into a formidable voluntary force. Thousands of groups formed across the nation mainly to fundraise and provide ‘comforts’ to the troops. One of the biggest organisations was the Australian Red Cross, which during the war years raised five million pounds for patriotic funds and sent 400,000 parcels to troops serving in Europe.

Throughout the war period there was also a small but steady increase in paid female employment, especially in the food, clothing and munitions industries. In some cases, these positions were filled by war widows and other women who supported dependants. While women demonstrated their capabilities in the workforce, they were nonetheless paid a lower wage than men filling equivalent positions. And while the community appreciated that women had come forward during a time of need, there was growing unease as men started returning from the front in need of work.

By the end of the war there was much public debate about the place of women in the workforce. As one disgruntled letter writer explained in *The Telegraph* on 22 December 1920:

> In olden times there was very little unemployment, because the girls were not given work suitable to men, and had to take on other positions suitable to their sex … At one time the young women used to look up to their young men with due respect; now they look above them with that haughty demeanour …

The situation was made more acute by harsh economic conditions and drought in the years immediately after the war.

As well as causing changes to the composition of the Australian workforce, the First World War created other changes to many people’s lives. Some women became permanent caregivers to wounded or incapacitated family members; others learnt how to make ends meet on a widow’s pension. And while some men could return to their previous employment, many more, especially the wounded, had to retrain before gaining a job.
ACTIVITY 1

Media coverage of gender roles

1. The First World War had a significant effect on the roles that men and women performed in Australian society. Such sudden change generated much public debate, which was reflected in the media. In this activity, you will explore seven newspaper items that reflect different perspectives on changing gender roles. Answer these questions for each of the seven newspaper items provided on the following pages:

- What type of item is this (e.g. editorial, news story)? Is its purpose to entertain, inform, analyse, or offer an opinion?
- What does the item say?
- What can you infer from it about the roles of men and women at the time?
- How reliable and useful is this as an historical source about the ways the First World War changed the roles of men and women? (Consider its creator, purpose and context).

2. Create your own item for a newspaper relating to the changing roles of men and women after the First World War. Choose one of the media types presented (i.e. letter, news story, cartoon) and adopt historically accurate content, style, and language in creating your item.

Source A

**FEMALE CLERKS IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES.**

(To the Editor.)

Sir,— it is astonishing the number of women who are employed in Government offices as temporary clerks. Is this as it should be? Why not give returned soldiers a chance? These women do not do their work at all, and also prevent others from doing theirs.

These women clerks as a rule have more influence with the various heads of the departments than the permanent hands have. This is a crying shame, and disgrace when one sees the number of returned soldiers on the streets. Should not these men who fought to keep their girls safe be more entitled to a job than the girls who should be at home doing the scrubbing, etc.?

I hope that someone in authority will take this matter up, and see that the “Diggers” are given a fair deal.

Yours, etc.,

T. J. MAHONEY.

The Daily Mail (Brisbane) 17 May 1921, page 9.

Source B

**Equal Pay for Equal Work.**

Mr. Slater (Cau., Dundas) has introduced a bill to the Legislative Assembly to amend the Shops and Factories Act, by giving equal pay for equal work. Provision is also made to repeal the clause in the existing act, which enables a board to fix special rates for female workers.

The Argus (Melbourne) 6 August 1919, page 10.
WAR WIDOW’S PLEA.

Sir,—It is with the greatest pleasure I read your paper from week to week, and I would like you to answer me a question. It is this: Is there a home for the children of fallen soldiers, and, if not, could you bring up this question in your paper? I myself am a widow, with four girls. I have just turned 30. If I go to seek employment, the first question is, “Where are your references?” None. “Well,” I’m told, “we don’t want people who have no references.” Do you think that fair? A widow is allowed £52 per year and so much for each child. From that there is 9s. per week for rent, and by the time these children are fed and clothed it is a hand-to-mouth existence. Don’t you think that they could do with a lot less of these billy-cans, sheepskin coats, etc., that they are collecting, and turn their thoughts to the fatherless children? If the widows are able and willing to work, give them a preference. The children are at school all day; time hangs on one’s hands now. There should be a home provided for these children, where a mother could visit them in the week. The money which is allowed for their support could go to their keep.—Yours, etc.,

THE WIDOW OF A FALLEN HERO.
MALE VERSUS FEMALE LABOUR.

It was stated by Mr. W. T. Willington, president of the Chamber of Manufactures, that the drain upon the manhood of the nations involved in the present war had brought about a striking change in the conditions relating to the proportion of male and female labour. While the man had been called upon to take his place as an active participant in this titanic struggle in the trenches, the woman had not less taken up the burden of filling his place in every branch of industry, whether in the workshops, the field, the mine, or the ordinary requirements of city and country life, with a wonderful aptitude and amazing success. This was bringing about the necessity of facing a great problem as to the adjustment of a condition which was arising, and which would intensify when our men returned from the front, not always ready or able to resume their previous avocations. Even in this outpost of the Empire we could but recognise the ability showed by our girls and young women who had taken up positions in the industrial and commercial world undreamt of five years ago. Generally they were making good, and it behoved our young fellows, who might view the situation with a careless or thoughtless mind, to recognise that the individual who takes the keenest interest and endeavours to give most satisfactory results would hold the advantage regardless of sex.

FACTORY EMPLOYES
WAR AND MALE ENLISTMENTS.
FEMALE EMPLOYMENT INCREASING

In the report for the year 1917 on the registered factories in Western Australia, the chief inspector lays stress on the fact that the enlistment of male factory hands resulted in an increase of female labor in the factories. On the average of the year’s figures, three out of eight hands employed in the registered factories consist of females. The following are the chief inspector’s notes on the subject:

The number of persons employed in registered factories, however, suffered a decrease to the extent of 116, which is probably accounted for by the splendid response made by the manhood of the State to the call of the recruiting officer, there being 369 fewer males employed in factories in 1917 than in 1916; the number of female employes, however, increased by 249, and of Asiatic workers by four, in the same period...

“GOVERNMENT JOBS.”
TO THE EDITOR OF THE AGE.

Sir,— In “The Age” of to-day “M.A.C.” takes exception to the appointment of a “female” typist at the Repatriation department. This particular position will demand the brains of a capable woman, whose salary will be £6 per year less than the maximum paid in the Commonwealth service. The Government might well look into the classification of its typists and stenographers. The best brains in the service are paid at the same rate as the “lead swinger,” and though we can’t call ourselves “returned soldiers” we can hold our heads high and say we are British. Our loved ones have died, and we women will have to take upon ourselves a share of the household cares which would have been cheerfully borne by our brothers who will not return.— Yours, &c., MAXIMUM 156
MEMORANDUM for -

The Director,
COMMONWEALTH INVESTIGATION BRANCH,
Queens House, Queen Street,
MELBOURNE.

re: TOM BELBRIDGE - 3350 -
Corporal 1st Pioneers.

War Pension at the rate of 21/- per
fortnight previously payable in the above name was
cancelled after instalment due 26.6.1924 owing to
ex-member's failure to present himself for medical
examination.

2. Recently the Commission approved a
restoration of payment on behalf of ex-member's wife
and two children, in view of their indigent circum-
stances and the fact that ex-member is regarded to be
unable to work ever again.
INVESTIGATION 5

What was the Soldier Settlement Scheme?

Introduction

The Soldier Settlement Scheme was one of a range of programs developed during the First World War to help returned soldiers transition to civilian life. Some of the soldiers who settled on the land were able to establish productive blocks and support themselves. Many others found that they could not make a living from the land they were allocated.

Investigation 5 includes background information and three inquiry-based activities.

■ ACTIVITY 1

The aims of the Soldier Settlement Scheme

After analysing a 1918 document, students identify the aims of the scheme.

■ ACTIVITY 2

Challenges facing the soldier settlers

Students consider the voices of different settlers to identify some of the challenges they faced.

■ ACTIVITY 3

The legacies of the scheme

Students consider the success, failure and legacies of the scheme.

The activities in this investigation support the Australian Curriculum, particularly the Humanities and Social Sciences. They strongly align with the Senior Secondary Modern History unit, Modern Nations in the 20th century: Australia, 1918-1949.
Background information

In 1916 the state and federal governments agreed to work together to make land available to men returning from the First World War. The aim of the Soldier Settlement Scheme was to provide an independent living for men (and later, women) who had served, and to assist in opening up undeveloped areas of Australia. By 1924, over 23,000 blocks of land across the country had been settled under the scheme.

Most soldier settler blocks were developed on Crown land that was either vacant or had been set aside for purposes such as forestry or Aboriginal settlement. Other blocks were created by splitting up large private estates. Much of the productive land had already been settled, so the land available to returned soldiers was often marginal. It was difficult to make an income on blocks with infertile soil or a susceptibility to droughts or flooding.

The government anticipated that large numbers of men would want to settle on these blocks, and they facilitated this by granting each settler a small allotment. Ballots were conducted to allocate the available blocks, and the federal government financed low interest loans for the purchase of land, stock, fencing and equipment. For many soldier settlers, these establishment loans became a debt that they were unable to repay.

Establishing a productive farm on undeveloped land was not viable for a large number of the men who took up blocks under the scheme. Lacking in rural experience, many of them had inadequate knowledge and skills, and no understanding of the demands they faced on the land. Those soldiers who returned with physical or psychological damage had additional hurdles to overcome, and in some cases were dependent on wives or other family members to do the work.

Fluctuating markets during the 1920s meant that even settlers who had initially been successful, were unable to cover the costs of production when prices fell. Whether they worked in dairy farming, cropping, sheep, poultry or orchards, the settlers were all exposed to economic fluctuations. In addition, environmental challenges such as drought, flood, bushfires and rabbit plagues affected large areas across Australia during this decade.

These challenges meant that many of the original settlers faced insurmountable hardship. Twenty years after the Soldier Settlement Scheme was established, fewer than half of the soldiers who took up blocks remained on their properties.
 ACTIVITY 1

The aims of the Soldier Settlement Scheme

Analyse the extract from *What Australia is doing for her returned soldiers*, a short booklet published by the Australian government in 1918. Use the source to answer the following questions:

- What does this source tell you about the aims of the Soldier Settlement Scheme?
- Why do you think federal and state governments implemented this scheme?
- List some reasons why returned soldiers might have taken up this offer.
- How might the returned soldiers have felt when they read this document? What would they have hoped for?
- For what purpose do you think the government produced this booklet? Consider the imagery, language and content when answering this question.

Image of page 5 from *What Australia is doing for her returned soldiers*  
Millen, ED, *What Australia is doing for her returned soldiers*, Melbourne, HG Green Acting Government Printer c.1918, State Library of Victoria, LTP 355.155 M61W
ACTIVITY 2

Challenges facing the soldier settlers

For many settlers the reality of the scheme did not live up to the promise, and many were forced to leave the land. This activity presents the ‘voices’ of some of those living on soldier settlement blocks. Use the quotes to identify the variety of challenges the settlers faced and complete the table provided.

### Frank Hanckel, Coonamble, NSW

**Letter to Land Department, 3 June 1927:**

I pointed out in an earlier communication that I could not meet any liabilities this year. I have had no crops since 1924 – simply one failure after another. I want more land so that I can run both sheep and wheat. I haven’t got any earthly hope of ever paying anything off until I get a living area of 1400 or 1500 acres.


### James Reeves, Nanango, Qld

**Letter to The Daily Mail, 19 April 1922:**

…it is time that something, was said concerning soldiers’ settlements, in the hope that it may be instrumental in averting blunders in the new settlers’ scheme. To call them blunders on soldiers’ settlements is much too mild; national disaster would be more appropriate, because the Government in most instances has loaned £625 on “rubbishing” land.

### Elizabeth Cameron, Narrabri, NSW

**Letter to the Returned Sailors’ & Soldiers’ Imperial League of Australia, 23 September 1929:**

My husband regrets not being able to forward £50 as he promised to do during Sept … However the sheep are shorn and he hopes to forward the money before or about November.

My husband has been very ill for 6 months, he is still lying in bed, his heart is in a bad state & to lift or move the smallest thing may prove fatal – with rest they say he will get stronger & he has improved lately.

These properties will not permit of ones employing labour & although I am very tired I am trying to keep the place going until he is able to get about, for the children’s sake…

… I have battled on the starvation block of mine for 6 years, lived in a hut with my wife and family only fit for animals, [drank] bore water only fit for stock … I had four years active service with the AIF as a Sergeant, and have a clean sheet and now I have to put up with ridiculous demands … I am fed up with the whole affair. They can have my block if they want it.

Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer, *The Last Battle: soldier settlement in Australia 1916-1939*, page 82

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**JC Patten**

Letter to *The Land*, March 1933:

… I applied for another loan of £125 for stock— only having one or two old horses that I had picked up for a song… I applied for the loan on June 15, and had the chance of getting a good team of horses cheap, as the owner wanted to get rid of same owing to the feed shortage. I have been writing to the [Soldier Settlement Scheme] and also to the Agricultural Bank, but have just had the usual red-tape answer — “Waiting on the inspector’s report.”

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**Wife of soldier settler**, Berri, SA

Letter to *The Mail*, 6 April 1929:

…Looking back, I marvel at the vast and blissful ignorance that was ours. We did not know, for instance, that the holding into which my husband put his gratuity bond and hard-earned savings was planted at the wrong angle with the wrong things; that the apricot trees were seedlings; that the peach trees were about to wave good-bye on account of seepage; that the cement tank leaked like a sieve; that the drying racks were swarming with white ants; that half the trellis posts needed replacing through the same pest; that in the three-roomed iron dwelling there was not a door that would close, let alone lock …
William Brown, Dunedoo, NSW

Report to Lands Department, c1923:

Have built on the property, done clearing, fencing etc. will have to abandon it unless water is provided. Carried water in buckets two miles and back every night after a day's work for the first five months. No water on the place now, except a tank on the house. Several shafts sunk, various depths, some dry, some went dry.

A Land Fit for Heroes? www.soldiersettlement.records.nsw.gov.au

Robert Mollison

Letter to the Lands Department:

Since 1926 conditions have been so bad in this district that very few farmers have been able to pay their way. 1926 season was too wet to allow sowing of full area. I could only sow 160 acres, out of 370… In 1927 we had a drought 140 acres totally failed … season 1928 I had to resow a large area owing to depredations of grasshoppers which added to expenses … 1929 was again a disastrous year for wheat growing …

Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer, The Last Battle: soldier settlement in Australia 1916-1939, page 94

Arthur Overall, Mudgee, NSW

Letter to Minister for Lands, 1936:

I grew wheat and couldn’t find a market at anything like a payable price but it had to go. The wool market as you know is at a very sorry stage and it [is] beyond me to fathom what a man on the land can produce and make ends meet.

Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer, The Last Battle: soldier settlement in Australia 1916-1939, page 109
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are some of the challenges this settler faced?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Hanckel</td>
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<td>James Reeves</td>
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<td>Charles Stevens</td>
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<td>William Brown</td>
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<td>Robert Mollison</td>
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<td>Arthur Overall</td>
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The legacies of the scheme

After the First World War, forty men took up soldier settlement farms in the Carnamah district of Western Australia. While most of these settlers left their farms as challenges arose, Tom White was able to remain. Today, members of the White family continue to live on his property, Rosedale.

Tom’s grandson, Bruce White is the current manager of Rosedale. In 2015 he told the ABC:

*Tom came to Carnamah in 1921. He signed over the leasehold documents and the government helped them set up with seed and the bare necessities. He had to grow feed for their horses, and there was about two-thirds wheat and one-third fallow, but without the government assistance it would have been impossible.*

Technological developments have changed farming practices on Rosedale over the decades. Bruce White explained:

*The horses were the mainstay of the farm, but after the Second World War we got into tractors and my father was progressive and ambitious, so he took the opportunity to buy land when it came.*

The current size of Rosedale is almost equal to the entire land granted to forty soldier settlers.

Reflecting on all the activities in this investigation, answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the factors that contributed to the success of the White family on Rosedale?
2. In what ways was the Soldier Settlement Scheme a success? In what ways was it a failure?
3. Harold Cazneaux captured this photo in the Bega district of New South Wales in the 1920s. It depicts the spirit of rugged independence that has contributed to development of a national identity. How did the Anzacs who took up soldier settler blocks reinforce and challenge notions of national identity and the Australian character?
COMING HOME
How did Australians respond to the hardship and loss caused by the First World War?

Introduction

While the end of the war brought enormous relief, it also marked the beginning of another difficult period for Australians. With the loss of loved ones affecting so many, the process of commemorating and remembering the fallen involved communities across the nation. At the same time, communities rallied to support individuals learning to cope with physical ailments, changed circumstances and a depressed economy.

Investigation 6 includes background information and two inquiry-based activities.

ACTIVITY 1

Lest we forget

Students analyse historical sources and reflect on the process of grieving and commemoration after the First World War.

ACTIVITY 2

Rebuilding community

Exploring historical sources related to various community groups, students identify how organisations helped rebuild a nation shattered by the war. They also research a contemporary community organisation.

The activities in this investigation support the Australian Curriculum, particularly the Humanities and Social Sciences. They align to the Year 9 Depth Study on World War 1 and the Senior Secondary Modern History unit, Modern Nations in the 20th century: Australia, 1918-1949. Some activities also have relevance to the English Curriculum.
In the years following the Armistice, the huge cost of the First World War continued to be felt across Australia. At a personal level, families mourned the loss of sons, brothers, husbands and fathers. Where there was no longer a wage earner to provide for the family, grief was compounded by financial hardship. Support from extended family, charitable organisations and government pensions assisted with basic necessities such as food and housing. Many challenges, however, such as coming to terms with loss or learning to care for those with physical or psychological injury were largely faced as private burdens.

Of the 330,000 men who enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), more than 150,000 were wounded and 61,000 died during or shortly after the war. In the face of such widespread trauma, communities reached out to support bereaved families and men facing the often painful adjustment to life after war. Many citizens volunteered to help established organisations that provided physical care and comfort, such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. In addition, individual community groups identified those in need and rallied to support them. Across the nation money was raised through raffles, concerts and selling badges to contribute to the cost of care for men and families in need. The collective grief of communities was also reflected in the construction of war memorials in small towns and large cities.

At the national level, the federal government recognised the need to honour those who had served. Beyond establishing the Repatriation Commission and Department to provide a range of services for returned soldiers, the government took a leadership role in the national commemoration of Armistice Day (later Remembrance Day) and Anzac Day. Further, they quickly started planning for an Australian War Memorial (AWM) to house records, relics, photos and artworks related to the war. The building was finally opened on Armistice Day in 1941 and these words from Charles Bean, the official First World War historian and a founder of the AWM, can be found at its entrance:

*Here is their spirit, in the heart of the land they loved; and here we guard the record which they themselves made.*
ACTIVITY 1

Lest we forget

With more than 60,000 deaths, the First World War remains Australia’s most costly conflict. The sources which follow highlight some of the ways that the widespread grief experienced by individuals and communities was acknowledged. Explore the sources and complete these activities.

1. Each of these sources provides an example of how grief and commemoration was acknowledged. What purpose might each example have served?

2. Explore the sources to identify symbols, themes or concepts that were associated with grief and commemoration after the First World War, for example nationalism. Use these to create or plan a plaque, memorial, poem, sympathy card or commemorative event that reflects the style of the First World War era.

3. Remembrance is an important aspect of commemoration. The Ode, which is still read at many commemorative events, was written in the early days of the First World War:

   They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
   Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
   At the going down of the sun and in the morning
   We will remember them.

   Do we still remember those who died in the First World War? If so, in what ways? How has commemoration of the First World War changed and stayed the same over the last century?

4. Can you find evidence in your local community of the impact of the First World War? If so, what form does it take? What does this suggest about your community’s experience during the First World War?

Source A

Memorandum from the Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Department, 1 November 1922.

NAA: A11804, 1923/598 Page 43
Source B

Unveiling of a war memorial, Burnie, Tasmania, 17 February 1924.

Source C

The Farrell family commemorative plaque, c1918.

AWM A05328
Source D

Memorial card with poem, c1917.

AWM RC03031

Source E

Sympathy card.

AWM RC01429

Source F

Next of Kin plaque sent to the mother of Captain William Braithwaite, c1922. Such plaques were often referred to as the ‘Dead Man’s Penny’.

AWM REL23860.004

COMING HOME  67
ACTIVITY 2

Rebuilding community

At the end of the First World War, Australians switched their focus from supporting the war effort to rebuilding shattered lives and communities. The following sources highlight some of the many groups that worked to rebuild Australian communities after the war. Explore them and complete the activities provided.

1. Use sources A-F to identify six of the groups that rallied to help communities after the war. List each group’s aims in the table provided.

2. Today, there are still a variety of community organisations that aim to assist veterans and their families. Select one of these and research its work. Create a feature for a promotional campaign (e.g. media release, digital advertisement, fundraising gimmick, logo) for your selected organisation that communicates its aims and values.

Source A

Red Cross Society volunteers distributing comforts to wounded men at Randwick Military Hospital.

AWM H6630

Source B

Page from pamphlet about the New South Wales branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers’ Imperial League of Australia.

NAA: C698/9, 55/6, page 168

Source C

Fundraising badge, c1918.

AWM REL4899
Brighton, Victoria, c1920.

Source D

The cottage in South Fremantle, WA, built in 1918 by the Ugly Men’s Association for war widow Ruby Luff and her children.

Source F

The Brisbane Courier, 7 June 1928, page 22.

Source E

NLA: Trove Collection
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of group</th>
<th>How did this group help to rebuild Australian communities?</th>
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References and further resources

**Books:**
- Bean, **CEW**, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*. 12 vols, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1942
- Millen, E, *What Australia is doing for her returned Soldiers*, Department of Repatriation, 1918

**Websites:**
- Australian War Memorial: [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs: [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)
There will be many whom this news of victory will not save from personal grief. The sounds of rejoicing cannot but bring some reminder of their loss.

Editorial, Sydney Morning Herald, 12 November 1918