



Harsh conditions at Milne Bay, New Guinea.

AWM 013335

# TOPIC 5

## On active service

### Challenges for survival

Recommended levels

UPPER PRIMARY

LOWER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

## ESTABLISHING THE CONTEXT

### Background information

This topic introduces students to the living and fighting conditions that Australian servicemen and women faced during wartime. It helps them to understand the nature of service and the personal qualities of those involved. By understanding these conditions, it makes our appreciation of the achievements of these service personnel even more remarkable.

#### Focus questions

What are your basic needs and how do you meet them?

How were basic needs met on active service?

What can we learn from historical sources about fighting conditions?

What personal qualities do people display on active service?

In small groups, students now consider what would happen if two of these needs are to be taken away from them. They decide which needs these would be and give reasons for their choices.

Challenge students to think of alternative ways they could meet these needs. For example, if there was no bed, how could the need for sleep be met?

#### LEARNING CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Students focus on Gallipoli. They identify basic needs and wants and see how these were or were not met. They then search for evidence to consolidate their understanding about living conditions at Gallipoli. This helps them to identify some of the personal qualities that service people required.

### Activity 5.1 ■

#### Meeting your basic needs

Brainstorm the things everyone needs to live a happy and healthy life. Create a class list. Discuss the difference between 'needs' and 'wants' and eliminate these 'wants'. Students discuss and make a chart to show how each need is met in their daily lives.

#### Key terms for Topic 5

personal qualities

climate

environment

topography

rainforest

empathy

challenge

survival

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

### Activity 5.2 ■

#### How were basic needs met at Gallipoli?

##### Empathy task

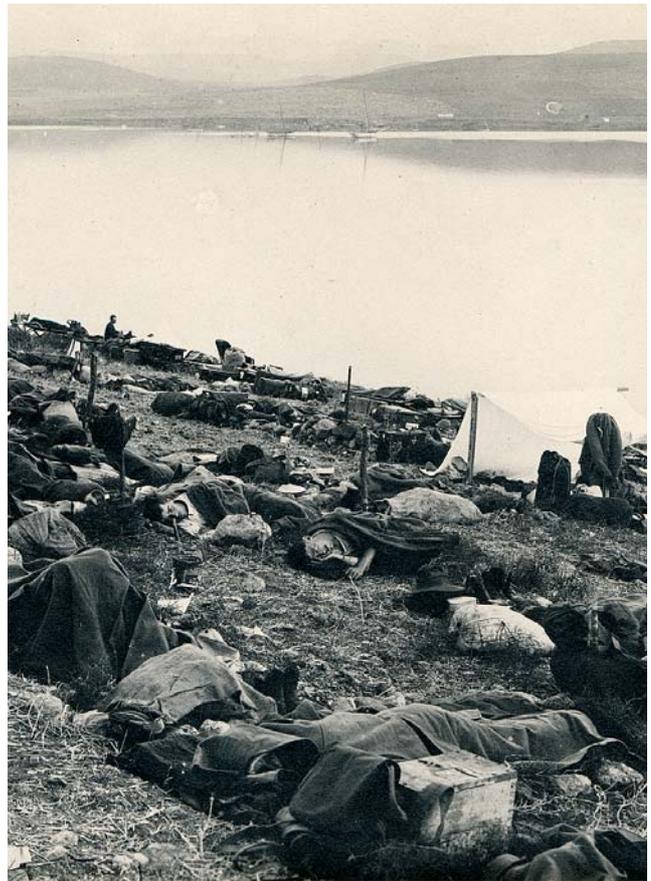
Students put themselves in the position of soldiers at Gallipoli. They are living in a very hilly, hot and dry area with few trees and little water. They live here for three days before new supplies are brought to them. Students list things to take, using their class list of basic needs from *Activity 5.1* as a guide.

As a class, decide upon a supply list for all students. Make a class collection of these items and/or photographs of the items. Students imagine that they will have to carry these supplies for the three days. Discuss what to discard and which items could be provided in an alternative form such as a sleeping bag, dried and tinned food and so on.

As they climb up these steep hills on their first morning they lose most of their food supplies. Their supplies roll down gullies into places it is impossible to reach. Ask:

- What would you do now to help you survive in this place?
- What would you do if, after four days, you were unable to return to the beach for fresh supplies, or your leg was injured and walking was difficult?

Explain to the class that they have now made some of the decisions the men had to make at Gallipoli.



Sleeping quarters of officers and men in the early days on Lemnos.

AW Savage, photo album, Lemnos 1915. PXE 698, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

On Lemnos, Matron Wilson and her nurses experienced the inefficiency of military administration in relation to the hospital. In her diary she described the steady flow of new patients during the August 1915 offensive on Gallipoli and the effect that lack of proper equipment and supplies had on the care of the wounded:

*11 August — Convoy arrived — about 400 — no equipment whatever ... Just laid the men on the ground and gave them a drink. Very many badly shattered, nearly all stretcher cases ... Tents were erected over them as quickly as possible ... All we can do is feed them and dress their wounds ... A good many died ... It is just too awful ....*

Grace Wilson, in Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches: Australian Army Nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992, p 46.



Members of the 4th Australian Field Ambulance watching over stretcher cases awaiting treatment at Walden Grove. AWM P1116/69/54

## BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

### Activity 5.3

#### Visual literacy

What can we learn from photographs and artworks about conditions on active service?



**GO TO CD-ROM**

**Work Sheet 5A: Visual Literacy Questions** (5A\_WS\_vislit.pdf)

Students first examine newspaper photographs about current events. They discuss why these photographs might have been selected and the message(s) they convey to the viewer. They discuss who would take photographs in theatres of war such as Gallipoli, and why. How might they decide what to include and what to exclude?



**CLICK AND FIND**

Web pages for this activity  
[www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/nbeach2.html](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/nbeach2.html)  
Men of the First Light Horse

[www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/nbeach3.html](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/nbeach3.html)

AIF supply depot

[www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/nbeach4\\_4.html](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/nbeach4_4.html)

4th Australian Field Ambulance

[www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/images.html](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/images.html)

Photographs and drawings by Major LFS Hore

[www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/nursephotos.html](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/nursephotos.html)

Nurses' stories and images of the Australian General Hospital at Lemnos

[www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/s\\_diary1915april.html](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/s_diary1915april.html)

Text and drawing by Signaller Ellis Silas

In groups, discuss the visual literacy questions listed in *Work Sheet 5A* to analyse the photographs and visualise some of the living and fighting conditions at Gallipoli. Share findings as a class and construct a simple mind map.



**ON THE WEBSITE AT THIS ADDRESS**

[www.anzacsite.gov.au/nbeachc.html](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/nbeachc.html)

In pairs, students then search for additional photographs on the website, to illustrate other aspects of living and fighting conditions. Students select photographs, listen to the accompanying audio presentation and read the adjoining section of text to develop a more comprehensive understanding of these conditions. Students again use *Work Sheet 5A* to guide their analysis.

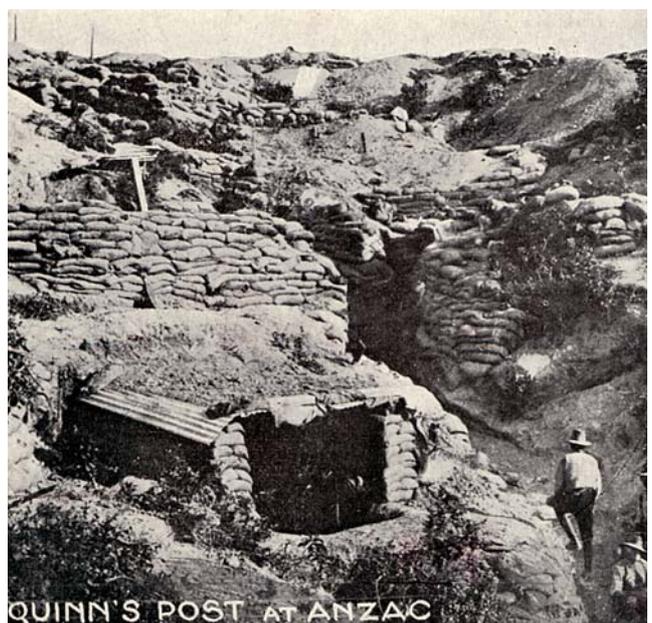
They then form larger groups to share their selections. As a group, they select two or three photographs to share with the class, using the photographs to explain the living and fighting conditions at Gallipoli.

#### ICT skills check list

- Website navigation
- Cut and paste



Major Leslie Morsehead, AIF, surveys the results of action at Lone Pine, August 1915. Australian and Turkish dead lie on the parapet of the trench.  
AWM A02025



The trench at Quinn's Post later in the Gallipoli campaign.

PXB 251.5.6.1 State Library of NSW

## THINKING ANALYTICALLY

### Activity 5.4 ■ ■

#### About the Kokoda Track



ON THE WEBSITE AT THIS ADDRESS

[www.wv2australia.gov.au/asfaras/kokoda.html](http://www.wv2australia.gov.au/asfaras/kokoda.html)

#### LEARNING CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

These activities are designed to develop student understanding of the living and fighting conditions of Australians on the Kokoda Track in World War II. By understanding these conditions, it makes our appreciation of the achievements of these service personnel even more remarkable.

Students learn to search for information relevant to the specific area of inquiry. They learn to find evidence in the written text and visual support materials about the conditions in which Australians served. Critical literacy and visual literacy skills are developed and refined.

Students use atlases to locate as many of the places referred to on the web page as they can. Discuss the location of New Guinea in relation to Australia. Students share any prior knowledge about New Guinea, rainforests and jungles.

Using school and local library resources, build up a classroom collection of photographs to help understand the climate and topography of New Guinea and the challenges for people from other countries living and working in that environment. Then consider how the conditions affected troops fighting in the region.

Working in pairs or small groups complete the following activities on *Work Sheet 5B*.

- Highlight all the text that suggests something about the conditions in which Australians lived and fought.
- List the challenges they faced on the Kokoda Track, including psychological effects and environmental factors.
- Describe in your own words what a soldier may have thought and felt about the situation.



GO TO CD-ROM

**Work Sheet 5B: On the Kokoda Track**  
(5B\_WS\_kokoda.pdf)



Papuan carriers carried the huge quantities of supplies and medical equipment necessary for the New Guinea campaign, August 1942. Sometimes they were assisted by the troops.

AWM 013002

## Activity 5.5 ■ ■

### Servicemen at Kokoda



**GO TO CD-ROM**

**Work Sheet 5C: Personal Challenges Faced by the Troops**  
(5C\_WS\_challenges.pdf)

Students work in two groups – one working from an Australian perspective; the other from a Japanese perspective. They each search the website for information about the troops in the New Guinea campaign on the Kokoda Track and for evidence of the challenges they faced and surmounted. They record their findings and conclusions on *Work Sheet 5C* and share them with the class.



**ON THE WEBSITE AT THIS ADDRESS**

[www.w2australia.gov.au/asfaaras/kokoda.html](http://www.w2australia.gov.au/asfaaras/kokoda.html)



Captain Alan Oliver Watson carrying out some emergency dental work assisted by another member of his unit. Between Myola and Kokoda Captain Watson treated 70 patients, performing 80 extractions as well as treating other dental conditions. He was unable to receive any more supplies on the Kokoda Track and had to 'make do' with the dental kit he had set off with.

Captain Watson also acted as the anaesthetist for the surgical team. In his diary he recorded giving 90 general anaesthetics between 16 October and 5 November 1942.

AWM P02424

## Activity 5.6 ■ ■

### Whose service?

Students are presented with two hypotheses on *Work Sheet 5D*. In summary these state that:

- 1 It is the military leaders who have made 'the real stuff' of history.
- 2 Without due recognition of ordinary servicemen and women, military history is only partly told.

Students then examine the websites and, in light of the evidence they gather, decide which hypothesis to support.

#### LEARNING CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

History has focused on different groups over time. Principally it has been concerned about decision-makers, and national and military leaders. As a result the lives, thoughts, ideas and responses of the majority of citizens have been downplayed or ignored. While examining this historian's issue, students also learn about the living and fighting conditions of ordinary men and women in extraordinary circumstances.



**GO TO CD-ROM**

**Work Sheet 5D: Whose Service?**  
(5D\_WS\_who.pdf)  
**Work Sheet 5E:  
Testing the Hypotheses**  
(5E:\_WS\_test.pdf)

## RESPONDING CREATIVELY

### Activity 5.7 ■ ■ ■

#### Lessons from the fronts

Students reflect on what they have found on the websites and discovered through the activities in this topic.

They consider the question: What did you learn about the living and fighting conditions, especially at Gallipoli and on the Kokoda Track.

List and organise students' initial ideas using the headings 'Gallipoli' and 'Kokoda'. Develop categories for information. Identify similarities and differences between the two theatres of war. Record information on *Work Sheet 5F* using a Venn diagram.



**GO TO CD-ROM**

**Work Sheet 5F:**  
**Gallipoli versus Kokoda**  
(5F\_WS\_venn.pdf)



More than 600 Australians were killed and some 1680 wounded during perhaps the most significant battle fought by Australians in World War II – the battle for the Kokoda Track.

Forced to repel a Japanese invasion force, the Australians fought in appalling conditions. The Japanese objective was to capture Port Moresby, the main Australian base in New Guinea, by an overland strike across the Owen Stanley Range. The most direct way across these rugged mountains was by a jungle pathway known as the Kokoda Track. Australian soldiers fought the Japanese, first to keep them from reaching Port Moresby and then to push them back over the Owen Stanleys to their north coast strongholds at Buna, Gona and Sanananda.

These men of the 2/31st Battalion rest and wash in a stream on the Kokoda Track between Nauro and Menari, watched over by a guard. AWM 027001

## Teacher resources

[www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp)  
[www.battleforaustralia.org.au](http://www.battleforaustralia.org.au)

Australian War Memorial Collection Databases  
Battle for Australia

## Summary of CD-ROM items for Topic 5

<b>Work Sheet 5A:</b>	Visual Literacy Questions
<b>Work Sheet 5B:</b>	On the Kokoda Track
<b>Work Sheet 5C:</b>	Personal Challenges Faced by the Troops
<b>Work Sheet 5D:</b>	Whose Service?
<b>Work Sheet 5E:</b>	Testing the Hypotheses
<b>Work Sheet 5F:</b>	Gallipoli versus Kokoda