AUSTRALIANS ON THE WESTERN FRONT
1916 –1918

Fromelles and the Somme
Bapaume and Buttecourt
Ypres
Villers-Bretonneux
Amiens to the Hindenburg Line
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Introduction

These educational activities, aligned to the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences (7–10) for Year 9, are designed to engage students with the Australians on the Western Front series. The series, published by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, is full of rich historical sources. It includes five titles:

- 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme
- 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt
- 1917 – Ypres
- 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel
- 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line

Australian Curriculum Links

These activities have been developed with specific reference to the content descriptions for Year 9 in the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences (7–10 History), where a depth study of World War I is required. The Historical Knowledge and Understanding, and Historical Skills, relevant to these educational activities are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 9 History</th>
<th>Historical Knowledge and Understanding:</th>
<th>Historical Skills:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth study: World War I</td>
<td>• An overview of the causes of World War I and the reasons why men enlisted to fight in the war</td>
<td>• Use chronological sequencing to demonstrate the relationship between events and developments in different periods and places</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I, including the Gallipoli campaign</td>
<td>• Use historical terms and concepts</td>
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<td>• The impact of World War I, with a particular emphasis on Australia, including the changing role of women</td>
<td>• Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The commemorations of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend</td>
<td>• Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>• Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument</td>
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<td>• Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop texts, particularly descriptions and discussions that use evidence from a range of sources that are referenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Select and use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The learning content and activities in this resource also allow for the development of the following general capabilities: Literacy, Critical and creative thinking and Personal and social capability. Furthermore, the material can be adapted for use with other levels and curriculum areas, particularly English and Geography.
Using the resource

All titles in the Australians on the Western Front series are available online, allowing students easy access at www.anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/publications. Images from the books can also be viewed in these online publications.

These learning activities support teachers in using the five books in their classrooms, though several activities can be completed without reference to the texts. Each activity highlights quotes and images from the series for students to analyse and investigate. Teachers are encouraged to select and adapt the activities to suit their own purposes.

The reflection tasks in Investigations 1 and 6 are adapted from Harvard visible thinking routines.

Answers: When the glossary words in Activity 2 of Investigation 1 are placed, the correct order will be:
Australian Imperial Force, Hindenburg Line, Boche, infantry, artillery, duckboards, creeping barrage, pillboxes, Fritz

Disclaimer

This resource encourages students to explore and interpret a range of historical sources. The Department of Veterans’ Affairs cannot be assumed to agree with or endorse any content or opinions expressed in websites or other publications quoted or referred to in this resource.

Overview of Activities

This educational resource has eight investigations, each one focusing on the service of Australians on the Western Front during World War I.

Investigation 1: The Western Front: Where? What? When?
Students become familiar with places and battles that took place on the Western Front.

Investigation 2: How did Australia work with allies on the Western Front?
Students explore sources to learn about the allied force that fought against Germany and what membership of this force meant for Australians.

Investigation 3: What were the experiences of Australians on the Western Front?
After analysing the reliability of historical sources, students investigate and reflect on what it was like to serve on the Western Front.

Investigation 4: What was the significance of leadership on the Western Front?
Students analyse primary and secondary written texts to explore the meaning of leadership and the consequences of decisions taken during times of conflict.

Investigation 5: What tasks did Australians perform on the Western Front?
Using visual literacy skills to analyse historical sources, students identify the tasks required to support Australian troops on the Western Front.

Investigation 6: What was the role of technology on the Western Front?
Students identify technologies used on the Western Front before deciding how best to use them in a strategic battle plan.

Investigation 7: How is Australian service on the Western Front commemorated?
Students look at different aspects of commemoration before planning their own tour of remembrance to France and Belgium.

Investigation 8: What can we learn from film footage of the Western Front?
After viewing historical film clips provided with the Australians on the Western Front eBooks or at the Anzac Portal website (www.anzacportal.dva.gov.au), students explore what film can tell them about Australian service on the Western Front.
During the First World War, the Western Front comprised opposing lines of trenches running almost unbroken from Belgium’s North Sea coast, through France, into Germany in the south and ending at the Swiss border. The term ‘Western Front’ was used by the Germans to describe their front line to the west of Germany. The German army was also engaged in action against Russia on its Eastern Front.

Members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) served on the Western Front as part of the British Army from March 1916 until the end of the war in November 1918.

**Investigation 1: The Western Front: Where? What? When?**

**Activity 1**

Read each of the following quotes, which highlight different battles that occurred on the Western Front. Use maps to locate each of the place names in **bold** and mark them on the map provided.

- At this time [June 1916] the British front line extended 150 km, from **Ypres** in Belgium south to the **Somme River** in France. 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 3
- At Fromelles the opposing trench lines faced each other across a boggy overgrown no-man’s-land … 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 4
- The artillery fire at **Pozières** was worse than anything the Australians would ever experience again, and more than men could be expected to endure. 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 10
- ‘I tell you I’m going to take Stormy Trench [near Bapaume]; and what’s more, let me tell you, I’m going to keep it’: 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 2
- The second battle of Bullecourt had lasted more than two weeks and cost the Australians a further 7000 casualties. 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 14
- It is no wonder that for a generation in Australia men flinched and women bowed their heads at the mention of places such as Merin Road, Polygon Wood, **Broodseinde** and, most of all, Passchendaele. 1917 – Ypres, p. 16
- There was some difficulty in getting the two brigades to link up on the eastern side of **Villers-Bretonneux** … The fighting had been vicious and many lives were lost on both sides … 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 9
- The capture of **Le Hamel** [in July 1918] thrilled the Australians and today many still regard it as one of their most important achievements on the Western Front. 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 14
- A mighty battle began in France at 4.20 am on 8 August 1918 … astride the Somme River 20 kilometres east of the city of **Amiens**, breaking through the German defences and forcing the enemy into large-scale withdrawal. 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 1

Use the map on which you have marked some of the places where Australians served on the Western Front to complete the following tasks.

- The Battle of the Somme, a series of engagements fought between July and November 1916, began east of Amiens on the British front, north of the Somme River, and on the French front to the river’s south. After five months of fighting more than a million men had become casualties. For the British and French the battle resulted in a small gain in territory, but such was the scale of loss on the German side that its army was compelled to retreat to a stronger defensive position early in 1917. Australia’s part in the Battle of the Somme was centred mainly on the village of Pozières and nearby Mouquet Farm.
- Mark the Somme River and Pozières on the map and use the scale to calculate how far forward the allied front line advanced during these five months.
- After the Somme campaign the German Army retreated to a new defensive line east of Bapaume. Australian and British troops followed the retreating Germans, advancing to Bapaume and, in April and May 1917 the Australians, as part of a larger British offensive, assaulted German positions at Bullecourt. During the two Bullecourt battles some 10,000 Australians were killed or wounded.
- Use the scale provided on the map, and calculate the distance between Bapaume and Bullecourt.

Consider these calculations using the following reflection questions:

What do they show? What do you think about that? What does it make you wonder?
Activity 2

Familiarise yourself with the following terms, which all relate to the Western Front campaign. Use them to complete each of the sentences below, which are taken from the Australians on the Western Front series.

- artillery
- Australian Imperial Force
- Boche
- creeping barrage
- duckboards
- Fritz
- Hindenburg Line
- infantry
- pillboxes

Australia had been quick to offer a volunteer army of 20,000 men; it was named the ______________________.

Through the winter [the Germans] had been constructing a deep and extensive rear defensive zone, which the British dubbed ‘the ________________________’.

I remember looking south of Zillebeke lake and seeing the ________________________ fairly pounding it there.

It would be a trench to trench attack between two roughly parallel lines; and the ________________________ would be supported by a dense ________________________ barrage, including smoke, shells, and by tanks.

Kilometres of ‘______________________________’—timber slat bridges or paths—allowed the slow movement of men across the soft ground and were essential for lining the bottoms of trenches.

The guns and howitzers allocated to assist the Australian Corps were to provide a ________________________, a curtain of fire behind which the infantry would advance.

The Australians began to encounter what was, for them, a new element in the German defences: concrete blockhouses, popularly known as ‘__________________________’.

As soon as our guns started ___________________ started his but his gunfire was nothing compared to ours.

Investigation 2: How did Australia work with allies on the Western Front?

Activity 1

Explore the following sources that relate to Australia’s role as a member of the allied forces during the Western Front campaign. Use your analysis of all the sources to answer the questions that follow.

Source A 1917 – Ypres, p. 1
At two minutes past eight on the morning of 4 August 1914, soldiers of the Imperial German Army began pouring across the Belgium border … Germany had already declared war on France and was hurrying to put its plans into operation, which would bring their armies through hitherto neutral Belgium, sweeping down towards Paris. The aim was a quick victory, knocking the French out of the war and freeing the German armies for what was thought would be the main struggle: the battering down of the supposedly mighty Russian Empire in the east. In all this, Germany took a risk that Great Britain, her empire and her self-governing overseas dominions, including Australia, might not stand aside.

Source B 1917 – Ypres, p. 1
Andrew Fisher, Leader of the Opposition, 31 July 1914: Australians will stand beside our own [Great Britain] to help and defend her to our last man and last shilling.

Source C 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 1
The Australians on the Western Front—the infantry, artillerymen, engineers, machine-gunners, signallers and others—were mostly serving in the five divisions of the newly created Australian Corps under General Sir William Birdwood, a British officer who had been with the AIF since the 1915 Gallipoli campaign.

Source D 1917 – Ypres, p. 11
For the men of the AIF, Broodseinde was always regarded as one of their greatest victories. Four Anzac divisions—the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Australian and the New Zealand Division—for the only time in the war, fought side by side that day ...

Source E 1917 – Ypres, p. 8
British artillery officer, 1917:
We were next to the Anzacs, splendid fellows. I remember looking south of Zillebeke lake and seeing the Boche fairly pounding it there; and all the time the Anzac guns kept on firing away, and we wondered how they could do it — how on earth they weren’t blown to blazes. Right in the thick of it you could see them firing every time.

Source F 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 14
Charles Bean, Official historian of Australia in the War of 1914–1918: Bullecourt, more than any other battle, shook the confidence of Australian soldiers in the capacity of the British command; the errors, especially on April 10th and 11th, were obvious to almost everyone.
Source G 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 49
A group of Australians and the French family with whom they were billeted, 1917 AWM H12020.

Source H 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 6
Since arriving in the area the Australians had seen some British troops falling back in disorder while others had bravely absorbed and then held German thrusts. None drew the diggers’ admiration more than the cavalrymen fighting mounted and often on foot. They were the remnants of the old British regular army …

Source I 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 14
Georges Clemenceau, Prime Minister of France, 1918: We knew you would fight a real fight, but we did not know that from the very beginning you would astonish the whole Continent with your valour. I have come here for the simple purpose of seeing the Australians and telling them this. I shall go back to-morrow and say to my countrymen; ‘I have seen the Australians; I have looked into their eyes. I know that they, men who have fought great battles in the cause of freedom, will fight on alongside us till the freedom for which we are all fighting is guaranteed for us and our children’.

Source J 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 81
British, American and Australian troops in a wood near Corbie, 3 July 1918 AWM E02697.

Source K 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 45
King George V speaks to Sir John Monash following the Australian general’s investiture as a Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath in France, 12 August 1918 AWM E02639.

Source L 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 107
King George VI of England and Queen Elizabeth, with the President of the French Republic and Australian Minister the Right Honourable Sir Earle Page at the unveiling of the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, 22 July 1938 AWM H17480.
Investigation 3: What were the experiences of Australians on the Western Front?

Activity 1

Analysis of primary and secondary sources allows us to learn about events from the past.

Take on the role of an historian and use the sources in this activity to find out about the experiences of Australians who served on the Western Front.

When using any historical source it is important to consider its context before drawing conclusions about what it may reveal. For example:

- How close to the time or event portrayed was the source created?
- Was the creator of the source present at the time or event?
- For what purpose was the source created?
- What factors may have influenced the creator when the source was produced?
- How useful is this source for learning about the past?
- How reliable is this source for learning about the past?

Discuss or reflect on each of these questions with reference to sources A – D.

Source A 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 45

Septimus Power, 8th August, 1918, (1930, oil on canvas, 178.5 x 261.5 cm, AWM ART12208) This artwork, depicting Australians participating in an allied attack on 8 August 1918, was completed in England in 1930.

Source B 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 9

Men blinded and cut to pieces also German wounded come down together … I had a couple of near goes with the big shells, it is worse than hell. A fellow may go at any moment. There is dead lying everywhere and the smell is awful. Can’t shift the dead men and have to walk over them.

This is an extract from the diary of Private David Roberts, describing an incident on 29 July 1916 during the battle for Pozieres. Roberts was a soldier of the Australian 17th Battalion.
Diseases, particularly respiratory ones, spread through the armies … In addition there was ‘trench foot’ caused by standing in the cold and wet for long periods. At worst, this serious affliction could become gangrenous and result in amputation. An Australian doctor who handled numerous cases later said that he had seen men suffer silently with battle wounds but with this ailment they ‘groaned and wept as children’.

Australian soldier writing a letter home during the campaign on the Somme, December 1916  
AWM E00030.

Dead and wounded Australians and Germans in a railway cutting on Broodseinde Ridge, 12 October 1917  
AWM E03964.

An official war photographer captured this image, which is part of the collection of the Australian War Memorial.

Meal time in a makeshift mess room near Villers-Bretonneux, 20 June 1918  
AWM E02557.

Activity 2

Look carefully at sources E–P, which explore the experiences of Australians who served on the Western Front. What value does each have as an historical source? What does each source tell you about the experiences of Australians? Complete the table provided.

Meal time in a makeshift mess room near Villers-Bretonneux, 20 June 1918  
AWM E02557.

Dead and wounded Australians and Germans in a railway cutting on Broodseinde Ridge, 12 October 1917  
AWM E03964.

An official war photographer captured this image, which is part of the collection of the Australian War Memorial.

Meal time in a makeshift mess room near Villers-Bretonneux, 20 June 1918  
AWM E02557.
### Source J 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 3

Corporal Edgar Morrow of the 28th Battalion, Battle of Amiens, August 1918:

After a day of drizzly rain, we had moved up to the front line. A broad white tape was stretched along the ground … we stayed on that, lying flat on the ground without removing any equipment. As the time approached I found myself trembling with nervous excitement and the cold. There was a strange silence over all the line. Not a gun was firing. My teeth began to chatter and I clamped them on my unlighted pipe. Word passed along the line that there was half a minute to go.

### Source K 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 37

The band of the 5th Infantry Brigade enter Bapaume, 19 March 1917 AWM E00426.

### Source L 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 46

Will Longstaff, Night attack by 13th Brigade on Villers-Bretonneux, (1919, oil on canvas, 131 x 208 cm, AWM ART03028).

### Source M 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 25

Troops move across the frozen Somme battlefield, 1917 AWM E00151.

### Source N 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to the Hindenburg Line, p. 44

Will Longstaff, Night attack by 13th Brigade on Villers-Bretonneux, (1919, oil on canvas, 131 x 208 cm, AWM ART03028).

### Source O 1917 – Ypres, p. 16

Sister May Tilton, Australian Army Nursing Service, Passchendaele, October 1917:

*When we switched on our torches we found the floor was literally covered with a mass of wounded men; men being sick, moaning in pain or crying out for a drink; pleading to remove their boots, which in some cases had not been off their feet for over a week.*

### Source P 1916 – Fromelles to the Somme, p. 24

Australian sleeping on duckboards in Flanders, June 1916 AWM EZ0052.
Analyse sources E–P and complete the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>What type of source is this?</th>
<th>How reliable and useful do you think this source is?</th>
<th>What does this source tell you about experiences on the Western Front?</th>
<th>What further questions does it raise for you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>It is reliable as it was taken by someone who was there. However, it looks a bit staged and may not reflect a typical mealtime.</td>
<td>1. camaraderie&lt;br&gt;2. equipment and clothing&lt;br&gt;3. use of temporary and improvised shelters&lt;br&gt;4. dirty conditions</td>
<td>What did the men eat? How far from the front are they?&lt;br&gt;Did German soldiers have the same experiences?</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As a class, discuss the questions these sources raised for you. Choose some of these questions and research the answers.

**Activity 3**

With your classmates, use the historical sources provided (Sources A – P) to develop a bank of words that relate to the experiences of Australian soldiers on the Western Front e.g. stress, mud.

Use the word bank to inspire a creative response to the service of Australians on the Western Front. This could take the form of a poem, short story, artwork or multimedia presentation.
Investigation 4: What was the significance of leadership on the Western Front?

Activity 1 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 40 AWM EZ0085

Use this image to respond to the questions provided.

Which of the men in the photo do you think is the leader?

What are some of the differences between the leader and the other men in the image?

How would you define a leader?

Activity 2

The Australian forces serving on the Western Front were under the command of a variety of British and Australian officers. Read sources A–E which relate to leadership and complete the questions provided.

Source A 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 2

Message to Australian troops by Lieutenant General John Monash, 7 August 1918:

For the first time in the history of our Corps, all five Australian Divisions will to-morrow engage in the largest and most important battle operation ever undertaken by the Corps. Because of the completeness of our plans and dispositions, of the magnitude of the operations, of the number of troops employed, and of the depth to which we intend to over-run the enemy’s positions, this battle will be one of the most memorable of the whole war. The work to be done to-morrow will perhaps make heavy demands upon the endurance and the staying powers of many of you; but I am confident that, in spite of excitement, fatigue, and physical strain, every man will carry on to the utmost of his powers until his goal is won; for the sake of AUSTRALIA, the empire and our cause.

Source B 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 10

When his company commander was wounded, [Sergeant William Ruthven] took over. Armed at different times with bombs, rifle and bayonet, and then a revolver, he captured a machine-gun that was holding up the advance and then, leading attacks, or at times acting alone, he helped capture vital ground. His citation [for the Victoria Cross] says:

Throughout the whole operation he showed the most magnificent courage and determination, inspiring everyone by his fine fighting spirit, his remarkable courage and dashing action.

Source C 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 11

Out of the line, Sir William Birdwood – the same British general who had become popular when he commanded the Anzacs on Gallipoli – met the divisions. The troops listened grimly as he praised them and said how he knew they wanted to get back to kill more Germans. ‘Birdie’s bull’ they called such talk. Later, after more heavy casualties, some men felt that not enough was done to spare them from further ordeal, and the general’s popularity began to wane.

Source D 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 11

Monash was nearly fifty when the war began and [by 1918] already had broad military experience on the staff and in command … His exceptional gifts were his powerful intellect, commanding presence, articulateness, determination and confidence. As a civilian engineer he had gained experiences on large scale enterprises, understood the need for management and organisation and embraced technology and new ideas.

Source E 1917 – Ypres, p. 13

In these conditions, bringing up the vital artillery to shield the infantry in further advances proved next to impossible. Guns became hopelessly bogged, slid off their supporting platforms or simply sank in the mud after firing a few rounds. Bringing up ammunition, food and supplies was equally hazardous. Added to this was the struggle it took for men to get across this treacherous quagmire … The effect of all this on men’s stamina, health and morale can only be imagined. But despite it all, [British commander in chief, General Sir Douglas] Haig decided to press on. It was a tragic decision.
1. What factors impacted on the success of allied leaders during the Western Front campaign?

2. What qualities made an effective leader? What qualities made leaders ineffective?

3. What were the consequences of ineffective leadership for Australians serving on the Western Front?

4. What personal qualities do you think leaders need?

Investigation 5: What tasks did Australians perform on the Western Front?

Activity 1

The work of Australians serving on the Western Front was varied and wide-ranging. Troops on the front line required supplies such as food and ammunition, and services such as communications and medical facilities. In this activity you will analyse images to identify some of the many tasks performed.

Look carefully at the following image. It can be analysed by answering two questions, as demonstrated below.

Example: 1918 – Villers-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 57 AWM E02318

What can you see in this photograph?

Three dogs on leads being held by a soldier who looks very serious. The dogs have small tubes attached to their collars. They are standing on train tracks which run through a cutting.

What can you infer from the photo about the jobs performed by Australians serving on the Western Front?

Dogs were used during the war to carry messages in tubes on their collars. Some soldiers were responsible for the care and work of these dogs. The handlers would have trained the dogs to leave the relative safety of trenches and reinforced areas to carry messages to commanders in different places.

Now use a similar process with sources A–I to explore the range of tasks that were performed by Australians on the Western Front. Complete the table provided.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 82 AWM E03143</th>
<th><strong>WHAT I SEE:</strong></th>
<th><strong>WHAT I THINK:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source H</td>
<td>1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 87 AWM E03323</td>
<td>What can you see in this photograph?</td>
<td>What can you infer from the photo about the jobs performed by Australians serving on the Western Front?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source I</td>
<td>1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 48 AWM EZ0064</td>
<td>A</td>
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</table>
Discuss or reflect on the following questions:

- What tasks and challenges were involved in supporting Australian troops on the Western Front?
- How might the tasks done by those serving in the First World War differ from those performed by Australia’s servicemen and women in contemporary conflicts? How might they be the same?

Activity 2

Activity 1 involved the analysis of photographs taken on the Western Front. Reflect on your analysis of sources A–I and respond to the following questions:

1. What are the advantages of using photographs as historical sources?

2. What are the limitations of using photographs to identify the tasks performed by Australians on the Western Front?

3. What other types of historical sources could be used to explore the varied tasks performed by those serving on the Western Front? What might they tell you? Where might you be able to access such sources?
Investigation 6: What was the role of technology on the Western Front?

Activity 1

Explore sources A–H, which relate to different technologies that were used during the campaign on the Western Front. Complete the activities that follow.

Source A 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 25

Source B 1918 – Vlères-Bretonneux to Le Hamel, p. 73

Source C 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 75

Source D 1917 – Ypres p. 68

Source E 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 102
Analyse each source to create a list of some of the technologies that were used on the Western Front. Sources may contain reference to more than one technology.

Source F 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 84

In all of the discussions too much was being claimed for the tanks’ unproven ability to precede the infantry through wire entanglements without adequate artillery support. Tanks had only been used for the first time several months earlier on the Somme, with very limited success … Most of the crews were inexperienced and the Australians had not operated with tanks before and knew little about them.

Source G 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 5

Throughout the night of 6–7 June [1917] the attack battalions of the division had been coming up through the wood in the midst of one of the most severe enemy gas shell bombardments to which the AIF was ever subjected. The air was soon rendered poisonous and, while men could avail themselves of gas masks, pack horses and mules were soon seen everywhere gasping for life.

Read the following quote about technology:

The fighting around Villers-Bretonneux had focused on the infantry. However no one could ignore the increasing role of technology on the battlefield. More machine-guns, including light machine-guns, were being used in attack and in defence. Aircraft were conducting vital spotting, reconnaissance and aerial photography. Tanks too were more plentiful and the much improved Mark V model was making its appearance. Most of all was the increasing sophistication and dominance of the artillery. The work of the gunners had now become a science and plenty of guns and ammunition were now at hand.

Reflect on this quote, and sources A–H to consider the role that technology played in the campaign on the Western Front. Do this by using the following question-starts to develop at least five interesting questions:

• Why .................................................................................................................................................... ?
• How would it be different if ................................................................................................................... ?
• What are the reasons ........................................................................................................................... ?
• What if ................................................................................................................................................ ?
• What would change if ........................................................................................................................... ?

Select one of the questions and write a response.
Activity 2

Take on the role of Australian Lieutenant General John Monash in August 1918. Imagine that you have responsibility for planning an attack to take the city of Peronne. You have three Australian divisions – the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th – available for the attack. You may also use any of the technology available to the allies at the time (refer to sources A–H).

Locate Peronne, Mont St Quentin and the Somme on a map, and consider the following three sources before planning the attack.

**Source I** 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 7
Peronne was a hard city to reach. For centuries it had been protected by the Somme River and its wide marshes and tributaries, and defended by ancient ramparts. Even for the modern soldier the river and marshes would be difficult to cross, and what bridges there were could be easily destroyed. The … key to taking the town and the ground beyond was the fortified hill of Mont St Quentin.

**Source J** 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 7
Chief of Staff of the Fourth Army, Sir Archibald Montgomery:

> The position of Mont St Quentin was an extremely strong one, and its slopes, covered with thick belts of wire and intersected with the remains of the old trench systems, afforded great possibilities for a stout and prolonged defence. From the ruins of the village on the west slopes of the hill, the country for a considerable distance lay exposed to the enemy’s observation and fire.

**Source K** 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 70
Fred Leist, Capture of Mont St Quentin, (1920, oil on canvas, 122.3 x 245 cm, AWM ART02929)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Plan for capture of Peronne, 31 August 1918</strong></th>
<th><strong>SECRET</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time of attack (including reasons)</strong></td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology to be used (including reasons)</strong></td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Division:</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Division:</td>
<td>-----------</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Division:</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map showing positions and movements of divisions</td>
<td>Key</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lieutenant General John Monash
Investigation 7: How is Australian service on the Western Front commemorated?

Activity 1

Analyse the following sources, which highlight some of the ways that the service of Australians on the Western Front has been commemorated. Complete the activities provided.

Source A 1917 – Ypres, p. 96

Tyne Cot Cemetery, Passchendaele, photographed in the 1920s before it received its permanent headstones. Of the nearly 12,000 burials in Tyne Cot, 1369 are Australians, of whom 791 are unidentified, their headstones carrying the words: ‘An Australian Soldier of the Great War, Known Unto God’.

Source B 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 17

On Anzac Day 1993, the sculpture ‘Digger’, by Melbourne sculptor Peter Corlett was unveiled at Bullecourt, a site that once saw some of the worst fighting during World War 1.

Source C 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 20

Even before the war ended, hundreds of thousands of graves of men from the British Empire became the responsibility of a special organisation called the Imperial War Graves Commission; it changed its name in 1960 to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. In the following years large war cemeteries were constructed on land given by the French and Belgian governments … On each of the Australians’ grave stones is engraved the ‘Rising Sun’ badge similar to the one each man had worn on his slouch hat.

Source D 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 143

Apart from those at Fromelles, the names of 11,000 Australians missing from Pozieres and all the other battles are engraved on the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, just as the 6000 Australians missing in Belgium are recorded on the Menin Gate at Ypres.

Source E 1918 – Amiens to the Hindenburg Line, p. 19

The 1st Australian Division placed its divisional monument at Pozieres; the 3rd chose the heights above the Somme River; the 4th’s was to overlook the Hindenburg line; while the 5th Division’s was built on the old buttes of Polygon Wood, near Zonnebeke in Belgium … Each monument was an imposing stone obelisk with a large bronze plaque bearing the division’s name and listing its main battles on the Western Front. Only the 2nd Division departed from this arrangement … and had a more elaborate memorial, consisting of a bronze figure of a digger bayoneting the German eagle, erected on Mont St Quentin.

Source G 1917 – Bapaume and Bullecourt, p. 101

Will Longstaff, Menin Gate at Midnight, (1927, oil on canvas, 137 x 270 cm, AWM ART09807)
Reflect on or discuss the following questions:

What is the purpose of war memorials?

What makes a memorial effective for you?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of having Australian war cemeteries overseas?

What impact might the high number of missing soldiers and unknown burials have had on Australian families during and after the Western Front battles?

How do you think Germany remembered the nearly two million German soldiers who died in the First World War?

Do you think that ‘winning’ or ‘losing’ a war influences the way a nation commemorates its war dead?

Source H 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 14

Inscription on stone tablet lying beneath French and Australian flags in Pozières:
The ruins of Pozières windmill which lies here was the centre of the struggle in this part of the Somme battlefield in July and August 1916. It was captured on August 4th by Australian troops who fell more thickly on this ridge than on any other battlefield of the war.

Source I 1916 – Fromelles and the Somme, p. 15

This sculpture shows stretcher bearer Sergeant Simon Fraser rescuing a wounded man. Created by Melbourne sculptor Peter Corlett, it is titled Cobbers, recalling the plea of a soldier at Fromelles to Fraser, ‘don’t forget me cobber’.

Activity 2

Thousands of Australians visit Western Front war memorials and cemeteries each year. Your task is to plan your own five-day trip of remembrance to the Western Front. You should research each of the memorials or cemeteries identified in sources A–I to select which sites you will visit. For further information, and to learn about other sites on the Western Front visit www.ww1westernfront.gov.au.

Complete the following itinerary to plan and explain your chosen route. You will need to factor in travel time and choose an efficient route. You may also like to consider the time of year that you will plan your visit.

Western Front Remembrance Tour Itinerary for __________________________

Day 1 Date: 
Location/s and site/s to be visited:
Reasons for visit:

Day 2 Date: 
Location/s and site/s to be visited:
Reasons for visit:

Day 3 Date: 
Location/s and site/s to be visited:
Reasons for visit:

Day 4 Date: 
Location/s and site/s to be visited:
Reasons for visit:

Day 5 Date: 
Location/s and site/s to be visited:
Reasons for visit:
Investigation 8: What can we learn from film footage of the Western Front?

Activity 1

Use the following questions to guide your exploration of one or more of the film clips provided with the Australians on the Western Front eBooks or at the Anzac Portal website (www.anzacportal.dva.gov.au), relating to the service of Australians on the Western Front.

- What is the context of this film clip? Where and when was it filmed? What stage of the Western Front campaign does it represent?
- What information about the experiences of those serving on the Western Front can you identify from this footage? What can you learn about the technology and equipment available to the troops?
- Does the footage look natural or staged? How can you tell?
- What scenes are captured in the clip? Why might these have been filmed? What might not have been included in films about the Western Front? Why?
- Why do you think this film was made? What impression does it provide about service on the Western Front? Is it propaganda? Why or why not?
- How might this footage have been used? Where would it have been shown on the home front? What impression would it have made on the Australian audience?
- How does the lack of sound influence your viewing of this footage? What are the advantages and disadvantages of sound?
- Does the clip include screens with text? What impact do these have? What purpose does the text serve?
- How do you think the behaviour of the troops in this footage may be different from, or similar to, that of Australian troops today?
- What technology was available to film makers at the time this footage was created? How would this have affected the filming process and result?
- How useful is this footage for learning about experiences of Australians serving on the Western Front? How does its usefulness compare to other primary sources, such as diaries, letters, official documents and photographs? Why?
- How does this footage compare to examples of war film today? How has the style and use of war related footage changed over the years? How has it stayed the same?